

THE COLONIAL STATE AND AFRICAN AGRICULTURE IN CHIPATA STRICT OF NORTHERN RHODESIA, 1895-1964

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Introduction and Historical Background

The colonisation of North-Eastern Rhodesia began in 1890 when two British emissaries set out for the territory in order to secure treaties with African chiefs. These were Joseph Thompson, despatched directly by John Cecil Rhodes the founder of the British South Africa Company (B.S.A.Co); the other was Alfred Sharpe, sent by the Consul for Nyasaland, Harry Johnston. Sharpe first saw Chief Mpezeni of the Ngoni people who refused to sign a treaty. Then he went across the Luangwa River and took it on himself to declare the whole of the country to the west to be under British protection.¹ After failing to secure treaties elsewhere in the territory, Sharpe and Johnston used force to subdue the local people.

In May 1895, the B.S.A.Co was granted land and mineral rights over 10,000 square miles of North-East Rhodesia by the Mozambique Gold, Land and Concession Company which it bought in 1893. This grant was made largely in respect of claims based on ill-defined concessions obtained from Chief Mpezeni by the German explorer Carl Wiese in 1886 and 1891.² In order to exploit the anticipated mineral wealth from that piece of land, the B.S.A.Co formed a subsidiary entity called the North Charterland Exploration Company (N.C.E.Co.) in 1895.

The formation of the N.C.E.Co marked the beginning of a new era for the local people in which the B.S.A.Co replaced the Ngoni people as the main military and political authority, while the N.C.E.Co assumed the position of landlord and entrepreneur. In 1896, the N.C.E.Co established its headquarters at Fort Young in the heart of the Ngoni kingdom. By October 1898, the B.S.A.Co had established a new administrative centre at Fort Patrick after defeating Chief Mpezeni's forces led by his heir apparent, Nsingo.³

Effective administration of North-Eastern Rhodesia was achieved by the end of 1899 when the B.S.A.Co moved its head office from Blantyre in Nyasaland (Malawi) to Chipata and extended its control throughout Chief Mpezeni's former dominions. The following year, through the North-Eastern Rhodesia Order-in Council, North-Eastern Rhodesia was formally placed under an Administrator and officials appointed by the B.S.A.Co (subject to ratification by the Commissioner for British Central Africa). With the capital at Chipata, Robert Edward Codrington was appointed as the territory's first Administrator.⁴

When the search for the gold wealth proved futile, the designation of the Eastern Province in the politico-economy of Northern Rhodesia was that of a farming zone in order to feed the labour force of the emerging mining industry.⁵ While the Eastern Province was to be a food supplying area, that enterprise was spearheaded by European settlers. For as John A. Hellen put it, the early development of the Eastern Province was in the hands of the settlers required Africans as labourers, not competitors.⁶ By 1904, twelve European-owned farms comprising 54,000 acres were given away for ranching and cotton-growing.⁷

However, the Company government was also anxious to develop, as quickly as possible, African peasant farming in order to solve some of the territory's financial woes. In Chipata district, this took the form of distributing vegetable and Irish potato seeds to African peasant farmers. In addition to ensuring that a cheap source of food for European consumption was readily available, this measure was intended to uplift peasantry livelihoods so that they could easily pay taxes to a government that was heavily undercapitalised and depended on land sales for survival.⁸ But it was the state's promotion of the cultivation of cotton by Africans for sale that took centre stage in the district. The Secretary of the B.S.A.Co. in London was directed by the Board of Governors to send Egyptian cotton seed for trial to the North-Eastern Rhodesian Administration in 1904.⁹ Regrettably, African-grown cotton did not fare well in comparison to that on European farms, and by 1907 it was clear that attempts to establish a cash crop within the local farming systems were not successful. The B.S.A.Co also instituted measures to

help the Ngoni replenish their cattle herds that were almost depleted during the 1898 Anglo-Ngoni War. By 1900, the Ngoni had less than 1,250 heads of cattle compared with more than 12,000 at the start of 1898.¹⁰

Except for these early and unsuccessful endeavours to promote peasant farming among Africans in Chipata, the agricultural sector was largely ignored by the authorities and continued in its traditional forms till the post-Second World War era. This was because the colonial government effectively employed the policy of land alienation that compartmentalised land in some parts of the country into 'white-owned' and 'African-reserves'.¹¹ Land expropriation in Chipata district began in 1895 when the N.C.E.Co. acquired a land concession of about 10,000 square miles. In this way, the most fertile lands in some parts of the country such as along the line of rail were reserved for Europeans at the expense of the local people.

In the same vein, the Department of Agriculture established in 1925 was, in the main, designed to serve the interests of settler farmers. Agricultural research in the colonial period supported the production of commercial crops by European farmers, especially maize for the mine workers.¹² This was reflected in the state's distribution of pesticides to settler farmers to deal with pests destroying crops like maize and cotton as well as diseases that threatened the beef industry. The colonial state also intervened in agricultural marketing starting in the 1910s because of the limited success of settlers' agriculture. Indeed many of them seemed to be struggling to survive.¹³ Settler farmers also enjoyed credit facilities from the government.

The Department of Agriculture was at the centre of agricultural policy formulation. For many years before the Second World War, the Director of Agriculture was a member of the local policy-making Advisory Board chaired by the Governor. It was the department's technical experts who, for example, provided information why African peasant farmers should not grow certain crops or why technical support for the mass of Africans was not feasible.¹⁴

However, during the Second World War, the state became less hostile to African peasant farmers. Increased production by the peasantry was encouraged through the establishment of collection points for farm produce in rural areas in order to meet the demands of the war. As Samuel N. Chipungu put it, the war forced the Northern Rhodesian government to review the condition of its domestic agriculture with a view to stimulate it as one of the arms of defence.¹⁵ The state's main concern was the quantity and not necessarily the quality of what was produced, irrespective of who did the production. By 1942, a number of depots for collecting maize from peasants had been set up in Chipata district.

In the period after 1945, broad agricultural policies and 'development plans' began to be mooted in Northern Rhodesia. For the first time in the colonial history of Zambia, African peasant agriculture appeared in colonial development plans such as the 1945 Ten Year Development Plan (T.Y.D.P.).¹⁶ Among other objectives of that plan was to encourage peasants to use cattle and composite manure, ploughs and conservation methods. In the Eastern Province, these measures were designed to combat soil degradation that had arisen in the reserves as a result of human and livestock congestion. The Peasant Farming Scheme (P.F.S.), an intensive agro-economic strategy, was started in Chipata in 1948. The first area where resettlement of promising subsistence farmers took place was in Chief Kawaza's area in what was known as the South Chewa Reserve. That programme was similar to the African Farming Improvement Scheme (A.F.I.S.) initiated in the Southern Province the previous year. Marketing of African peasant-grown crops further improved in the area following the Crown government's encouragement of the formation of co-operative societies beginning in 1948. Additionally, the Eastern Province Agricultural Marketing Board (E.P.A.M.B.) was formed in 1952 to coordinate the work of the province's three marketing boards especially with regard to the export of groundnuts. Britain's change of policy regarding Africa was mainly because of the need for colonies to assist her raise funds to pay off the debts which she had incurred during the Second World War.¹⁷ Moreover, the policy was in line with post-war reconstruction and industrialisation underway in Europe.

after the Second World War.¹⁸ The new development policy, therefore, was unveiled amidst hard-nosed British economic self-interests.

Further policy changes took place during the period of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland between 1953 and 1963. This was realized when the Ministry of African Agriculture was established in 1957. In the same year, a Memorandum on African Agriculture was circulated. It reaffirmed the objectives of the T.Y.D.P. Chipungu observed that:

Although maize remained the staple food and cash crop of Northern Rhodesia throughout the 1950s and early 1960s, the state made visible efforts . . . to broaden the scope of peasant cash cropping by introducing such crops as tobacco and cotton in select d areas of Southern, Central and Eastern provinces.

19

Therefore, although the state favoured European farmer within the dualistic structure of agriculture, its attitudes and policies toward African peasant farmers were not static nor the same throughout Northern Rhodesia.

This study critically examines the relationship between African peasant agriculture and the colonial state in Chipata district between 1895 and 1945. The study further investigates the reaction of the peasantry to colonial state policies. The study also examines how the shift in government policy after the Second World War positively impacted on African peasant farming in the district.

Existing historiography by scholars of the Underdevelopment Theory such as Maud Muntimba and Colin Bundy shows that colonial policies were always detrimental to African peasant farmers. To the contrary, this was not the case as these policies were neither static nor uniform. Chipata district is a good example of a region where the colonial state took an active interest in African peasant farming from time to time. This study, therefore, disputes the widely-held view that the colonial state thwarted the peasantry in Africa.

Rationale

This study is envisaged to fill a glaring gap in the e historiography on African peasant farming in Zambia by giving another dimension to the all-too-familiar notion that the colonial state neglected or frustrated African peasant farming. The study reveals some positive aspects of the colonial state unlike much of the present literature which has trightly condemned the colonial state as being hostile to African peasant farmers.

Geography of the Area of Study

The study focuses on Chipata (Fort Jameson) district which was one of the administrative districts of the Eastern (East Luangwa) Province (see aps 1 and 2).²⁰ Up until 1948, the district also included today's Katete and Chadiza districts.²¹ The district also served as the administrative capital for North-Eastern Rhodesia up to 1911. The indigenous inhabitants of the district were the Chewa, Ngoni, Nsenga and Kunda. Lying between Latitudes 13°S and 14°S and Longitudes 31° 7'E and 33°E, the district covered an area of 7,114 square miles and had an African population of 242,400 by 1963 while that of Europeans and Asians stood at 420 and 350, respectively.²² Its altitude ranged from about 1,200 metres near the border with Nyasaland to about 500 metres above sea level in the valley.²³

The district lay in what was basically part of the Eastern Province plateau. It was delimited on the east by the Lake Malawi drainage system, on the west the Luangwa River drainage system and on the south the Zambezi river drainage system. The dominant in the district was the Lutembwe while Msandile and Kasenengwa rivers were other important constituents of the drainage system.

In terms of vegetation, thorn trees, especially *Acacia Campylacantha* (*Ngobe* or *Ngowe*), and the tall *Hyparrhenia* (*Nsekela*) grasses dominated. This vegetation was found on dark s (*Nkande*) and denoted the best landscape. Then followed similar grass vegetation of the *Pterorcarpus-Comberetum* class and *Brachystegia Hockii* woodland. Tree sizes were useful indicators that helped the local people select possible locations for cultivation. The above class of flora in turn gave rise to the ordinary

Brachystegia-Isoberlinia (Miombo) woodland on variable light-coloured soils. The majority of tree species fell under this complex. They included species such as *Isoberlinia Paniculata*, *Brachystegia Longifolium*, *Brachystegia Spiciformis*, *Brachystegia Boissieri* and *Brachystegia Albizia*.²⁴

Another species found in the district was the *Combretum-Afromosia* Complex. Trees under this category were relatively rare, and therefore did not cover large areas. They were found on heavy and well-drained soils.²⁵ The district's classes of vegetation fell into distinct ecological communities depending on topography, wetness and soil depth. The tree canopy at the peak of the rain season could be up to thirty inches high and closed in at the top.²⁶

The district comprised of two slightly different ecological zones, namely the plateau and valley areas. Amongst the most valuable agricultural soils of the district were the red earths and deep chocolate-brown loams of the *Brachystegia Burtii* variety found on the plateau. These were clays and clay-loams with a comparatively high innate richness and resisted, to a great extent, the effects of leaching processes. The Chewa generally referred to these soils as *Katondo*. They were typically fairly fine-grained and compact loams. These soils were derived principally from basement schists or gneisses and local intrusive igneous rocks.²⁷ This was because the geological formation of the district was dominantly granite and quartzite rock, with occasional intrusion of gneiss and gneiss schists. The quantity of limestone was negligible. In connection with the correlation of the geology and the soils, the light-textured, fairly heavy grained sands were generally derived from granites, while the heavier red soils originated from the gneiss.²⁸ The Upper Valley soils were also agriculturally valuable. They were fertile and their texture varied from a light sandy loam to a stronger clay loam. The most widespread soil type, however, were the Sandveld soils. Developed on the mature topography of older surfaces, these were but agriculturally fair soils.

The average maximum temperature for the district was (87°F) and the average minimum about 24°C (76°F) during the hot season from September to November; in the cold season running from

late April to mid-August, this fell to a mean maximum of 24°C (76°F) and a mean minimum of 12°C (54°F).²⁹ The agronomic calendar of the district was divided into three: Hot-wet season during which rains fell, the Cool-dry season and the Hot-dry season. Rainfall averages during the Hot-wet season ranged between 914 and 118mm.³⁰

Literature Review

A survey of literature shows that a lot has been written about African peasant agriculture in Zambia. This study gives another aspect to the literature by disputing the notion that the colonial state was hostile to African peasant farming.

Gann's works were critical to our study.³¹ They provide some of the earliest important sources of information regarding colonial legislation on such issues as colonial taxation and labour recruitment in Northern Rhodesia. The studies observed that colonialism affected traditional agricultural practices like *Chitemene* among the Bemba-speaking ethnic groups. However, these works only provided relatively general surveys of the effects of colonial policies on Africans. As a result, they did not give much detail regarding African agriculture. It is this gap the present study hopes to fill.

Clayton's study of agrarian policies in colonial Kenya brought to the fore the way in which African agriculture was neglected during the early period of British rule in that country while that of European settlers was protected and harnessed.³² When the Department of Agriculture was set up in 1903, its emphasis despite the limited resources was to deal with the problems of European agriculture which was in its infancy. Just as in most parts of Africa, the study observed a shift in agricultural policy in the aftermath of the Second World War as the British government embarked upon a process of trying to make its colonies self-reliant. Consequently, the Ten Year Development Plan was promulgated in 1946. "Out of £15½ million made available, it allocated £8½million to the agriculture sector ... related to both European and African areas, but over half was devoted to the latter."³³ This study gave us a comparative perspective on colonial agricultural policies.

Allan's *The African Husbandman* is a critical examination of the various traditional agricultural systems of Zambia and other African countries.³⁴ The study observed that traditional land-use systems of Africa adapted to the limitations of their environment and further observed that the danger of disregarding or underestimating these limitations, even with all the resources of Western science, technology, and capital would not suffice.³⁵ This was because Africa's traditional agricultural systems were capable of producing enough within their limitations. The analysis put forward by this study formed a useful framework for examining how colonial legislation affected the traditional land-use systems practised in the Chipata area by Africans. This would help us contribute to an understanding of what it meant to be an African peasant farmer during the colonial period.

A number of scholars, among who are Hall and Roberts, have written on the history of colonial Zambia.³⁶ However, these are general works on such issues as colonial taxation and labour migration. Nonetheless, they were useful for they gave us an appreciable amount of background information on colonial taxation and labour migration in Northern Rhodesia which was vital to our study.

One of the earliest and most important geographical studies on Zambia's Eastern Province was done by Kay.³⁷ This study described the way settlement patterns changed in that part of Northern Rhodesia following the expropriation of some 10,000 square miles of land by the North Charterland and Exploration Company towards the end of the nineteenth century. He observed that the forty years during which the concession was in place was a period of the paramountcy of European interests while Africans were comparatively neglected. But shortly before the Second World War, austere despotism and passive paternalism began to give way to active benevolence and a genuine concern for African welfare.³⁸ However, this study did not show the relationship that existed between the African reserves and the European areas. This is what this study hopes to do.

In order to understand the history of the people who lived in the Chipata area before the imposition of colonialism, Rennie and Rau's studies were useful.³⁹ These studies discussed the nature

of Ngoni states on the eve of European intrusion and observed that cattle was central to their economic life. They also noted that unlike the Ngoni of Malawi who first came into contact with Europeans because of the spread of Christianity, Mpezeni's Ngoni encountered them in the form of capitalism as his territory was rumoured to have large quantities of gold deposits which the Europeans wanted. Some of the effects of European intrusion in Ngoniland included the abolition of cattle raiding, seizure of livestock and colonial taxation. Rau, particularly, observed that an estimated 61 percent of all Ngoni men between the ages of sixteen and forty-five were absent from their homes in 1936, one of the highest percentages for any Zambian society.⁴⁰ We used these findings to investigate further into how colonialism impacted on the societies of the region.

Some studies have emphasised peasant differentiation and resilience in the face of constraining colonial policies. One of these was done by Baldwin who examined government policies on agriculture in relation to the growth and export of cash crops in Northern Rhodesia.⁴¹ He observed that African farmers were largely ignored or discriminated against when their interests conflicted with those of the settlers. This discrimination was particularly with regard to land policy adopted by the government, the measures enacted to control grain prices, and the steps taken to influence cattle prices.⁴² He also argued that African farmers were capable of responding to price and income opportunities, contrary to the views of European settlers. Vickery made similar observations about the Tonga peasantry of southern Zambia who gained from market opportunities along the line of rail, at mission stations and most importantly, the emergent Copperbelt in the late 1920s.⁴³ In this way, the peasantry reflected a form of resistance not only to the colonial labour regime but also to the discriminatory policies on agriculture. These are important observations related to our study.

Hellen's work discussed Zambia's geographical set up and government initiatives aimed at economic development.⁴⁴ His main argument was that development in a country could only take place by improving the livelihoods of the majority of the people who lived in rural areas and were engaged in

agriculture. Being a colonial scholar, Hellen also observed that a few subsistence cultivators benefited from the government's agricultural schemes after 1939. We used the findings of this study to investigate the extent to which African farmers profited from colonial rule in Chipata district after the Second World War.

Some scholars have argued that nationalism arose in Africa primarily due to the negative agricultural changes that took place following the imposition of colonialism. These included Thomas Rasmussen and Jotham Momba.⁴⁵ Unlike Henderson⁴⁶ who stressed the role of African proletarians in the origin and development of nationalism, Momba and Rasmussen argued that it was protests by rural peasants that propelled nationalism in some parts of Zambia. The latter scholars observed that the basis of peasants' political action was the land problem and a differential marketing system to which they were subjected by the colonial state. These works were important sources on the Zambian colonial economy. Their discussion of the capitalist interests in the colony and peasants' struggle against capitalism endowed us with useful insights into colonial Zambia's settler community, and how the rural communities reacted after the 1940s. We used these observations in discussing how peasants reacted to state policies in Chipata district during and after the Second World War.

Studies undertaken by Dixon-Fyle argued that despite constraints during the colonial period, the peasantry benefited.⁴⁷ He observed that the Plateau Tonga peasants were direct beneficiaries of the government sponsored African Farming Improvement Scheme introduced in the Southern Province in the colonial period as they were given loans, farming implements and training in modern farming. The studies also observed that the Plateau Tonga learnt better agricultural techniques from Jesuit missionaries at Chikuni and Seventh-Day Adventist missionaries at Rusangu. These works were very useful to our study as they broadened our perspectives on African peasant resilience.

To show that agricultural production by African farmers was discouraged during the early phase of colonial rule, Dodge's work was crucial.⁴⁸ This study argued that the limited funds spent on

agriculture by the government were allocated primarily for the development of European farming. Such a policy resulted in a highly uneven development of agriculture, that is, both between European and African production, and between the line of rail and outlying provinces. Though a vital source of material for this study, Dodge's book simply gave glimpses of the results of colonial rule on African peasant agriculture. Our study goes further by analysing the peasant-state relationship in Chipata district.

There have also been studies undertaken to examine the impact of colonialism on the environment in various parts of Africa. They included works by Leroy Vail, Mwelwa Musambachime, John Iliffe and Helge Kjekshus.⁴⁹ Vail, especially, discussed how colonial policies resulted in major ecological disturbances in eastern Zambia. The daily realities of colonial control, labour migrancy and village consolidation interacted with the natural disasters of the 1890s to precipitate an ecological collapse.⁵⁰ This affected the indigenous people with regard to food production as they had been made to abandon centuries-old agricultural practices. Being one of the earliest works on the environmental history of Zambia, we used this study to investigate how peasant productive capacities were affected in Chipata district. Musambachime also noted similar ecological disturbances with regard to the consequences of game laws, mining activities, *chitemene* farming and the construction of the Kariba dam in colonial Zambia.⁵¹

Land expropriation in colonial Africa was not unique to Northern Rhodesia. A study undertaken by Kowet showed a similar trend in Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland.⁵² The study examined how colonial penetration and internal economic and political organization interacted to maintain a structure where the three countries served as labour reserves for the South African economy. The study also observed that the way in which people were dispossessed of their land or prevented from obtaining land was the most essential factor for the resultant labour migration southwards. This scholarly observation

gave us the basis for finding out how the Ngoni, Chewa and Nsenga reacted to land alienation and colonial taxation in Chipata district.

Naidoo's study focused on reasons some of the indigenous people of the Eastern Province faced a serious shortage of land following the alienation of 10,000 square miles of land by the N.C.E.Co. in the area.⁵³ It was further observed that the N.C.E.Co brought untold suffering on the people of North-Eastern Rhodesia due to the formation of African reserves. This work, therefore, apart from providing a serious general appreciation of Zambia's transformation under British rule was also rich on the relationship between the colonial state, settler capitalist classes and the colonised indigenous people.

Writing in the 1980s about the forms of African resistance in colonial Mozambique, Leroy Vail and Landeg White discovered that songs sung by different groups of people rejected various topical themes as expressed by the singers.⁵⁴ They found, for example, that songs sung by the Lomwe-Chuambo ethnic groups reflected the grief, suffering, anger and loneliness that resulted from labour migration to the mines of South Africa. The songs attacked particular labour-recruiting companies, chiefs and headmen.⁵⁵ Additionally, it was observed that Sena-Podza songs reflected the abuse of power by ruthless supervisors on the cotton *prazos* (plantations) as well as the cruelty of policemen. The Vail-White analysis demonstrated that songs reflected a very strong anti-colonial sentiment. We benefited from this study because it helped us examine how Africans in Chipata district reacted to similar colonial state policies on land alienation, taxation and labour migration.

Whereas most works on the Zambian peasantry have concentrated on the role of the colonial state and market forces in the emergence of the peasantry, Chipungu went further to include the contribution of technology in this process.⁵⁶ The study examined the changing political, economic and technological conditions and how these contributed to the differentiation of the peasantry into rich, middle and poor classes between 1930 and 1986. This study was useful because it showed the shifting trends of state policies regarding African agriculture both during the colonial and post-colonial eras.

Our study benefited from these findings as we also show shifting tendencies in government policy regarding peasant agriculture in Chipata district.

One study which looked at the effects of colonial rule on African peasant agriculture in Zambia was undertaken by Chabatama.⁵⁷ His argument was that the peasants of Zambezi district produced a considerable amount of food in spite of the area having some of the highest rates of labour migration in North-Western Province during the colonial period. The study showed that proletarianisation failed to undermine peasant farming in Zambezi district. This work is important to the present study because it disputes earlier arguments that African farmers were not resilient enough to survive during colonialism.

A study done by Nkhata showed the extent to which the colonial state tried to stimulate African peasant agriculture in Chipata district after the Second World War.⁵⁸ This arose at a time the British government was heavily indebted due to the war effort. In the post-war era, colonial administrators realized the need to improve the living conditions in the African reserves. As a result, resettlement schemes were established in the district. Although some form of social differentiation occurred in these schemes, they were, in the main, a failure. Tembo's work shared similar views as Nkhata's study which also examined resettlement schemes in the Lundazi area.⁵⁹ We benefited from these studies as this study also examines shifting colonial state policy *vis-a-vis* peasant agriculture.

One of the most recent studies undertaken on the Zambia peasantry was done by Kaira.⁶⁰ He argued that the advent of colonialism and the subsequent development of modern capitalist industries created poverty in rural Central Province. The study further postulated that policies pursued by the colonial state such as land alienation and labour migration were detrimental to peasant farmers in the area. The present work benefited from this study as we were made aware of the extent to which colonial land alienation in Chipata district affected the peasantry.

Methodology

Data for this study was collected from four main sources over a period of seven months from April to November 2009. The first part of the research was devoted to collecting published and unpublished data in the University of Zambia library. Here we consulted books, theses, dissertations, journal articles, Hansards of the Legislative Council and official government reports such as the *Pim Report*. These sources yielded information pertaining to theological debates related to the B.S.A.Co and Crown government, the creation of African reserves in the Eastern Province, colonial taxation and male labour migration from the Eastern Province. They also gave us information concerning the ecology of the area, land tenure, land usage, and agricultural schemes.

We also collected information from the National Archives of Zambia (N.A.Z.) where unpublished primary documents such as the Fort Jameson District Notebooks, Fort Jameson District Tour Reports and Annual Reports of the Department of Native Affairs and correspondence of the Department of Agriculture and Ministry of Agriculture were consulted. From these documents, we obtained official statistics and other data on colonial taxation and labour migration as well as the reaction of the peasantry to government policies. Annual and Monthly reports of the Department of Agriculture were also consulted. Other Annual Reports of the Department of Agriculture were consulted at the Zambia Agriculture Research Institute (formerly, Mount Makulu Central Research Station). These yielded information pertaining to official government policy on African peasant agriculture, various statistical data on crop production and the general state of the agricultural sector.

Lastly, oral interviews were conducted in Chipata district. These were most useful in providing first hand information on labour migration and peasant reaction to government policies. The interviews were conducted by myself in English, Chewa and Nsenga. Interviewees included staff of the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, former labour migrants, retired government employees and African peasant farmers.

Organisation of the Study

The study is divided into five chapters. Chapter One is the Introduction. Chapter Two examines the relationship between African peasant agriculture, labour migration and agricultural schemes in Chipata district between 1895 and 1945. Chapter Three examines the reaction of the African peasantry to colonial state policies in the district before the Second World War. The fourth chapter discusses the development of African peasant farming in the district in the post-war period. The final chapter is the Conclusion, which sums up the findings of the study.

ENDNOTES

1. Lewis H. Gann, *The Birth of a Plural Society: the Development of Northern Rhodesia under the British South Africa Company* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1958).
2. N.A.Z. BS1/25 B.S.A.Co to the Mozambique Gold, Land and Concession Company Ltd, 8 May, 1895. See also Gann, *The Birth of a Plural Society*.
3. William Rau, 'Mpezeni's Ngoni of Eastern Zambia, 1870-1920', Ph.D Thesis, University of California, Los Angeles, 1974. See also Gann, *The Birth of a Plural Society*.
4. Gann, *The Birth of a Plural Society*.
5. See Chewe M. Chabatama, 'The Colonial State, the Mission and Peasant Farming in North-Western Province of Zambia: a Case Study of Zambezi District, 1907-1964', M.A. Dissertation, University of Zambia, 1992. See also Adrian D. Wood and E.C.W. Shula, 'The State and Agriculture in Zambia: a Review of the Evolution and Consequences of Food and Agricultural Policies in a Mining Economy', in Thandika Mkandawire and Naceur Bourenane (eds.), *The State and Agriculture in Africa* (London: CODESRIA, 1987), pp. 272-316.
6. John A. Hellen, *Rural Economic Development in Zambia, 1890-1964* (Munich: Welt Forum, 1968), p. 188.
7. Wolfgang Dopcke, 'Aspects of the History of European Agriculture in Northern Rhodesia', Dip. Historical Studies, St. Johns College, 1980, p. 41.
8. Dopcke, 'History of European Agriculture', p. 41.
9. McPaison George Mwalukanga, 'Constraints on Cotton Production in Northern Rhodesia: the Case of Fort Jameson Area, 1900-1945', M.A. Dissertation, University of Zambia, 1983, p. 11.
10. Rau, 'Mpezeni's Ngoni', p. 336 and p. 282. See also J.A. Barnes, *Politics in a Changing Society: a Political History of the Fort Jameson Ngoni* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1967).
11. Samuel N. Chipungu, *The State, Technology and Peasant Differentiation in Zambia: a Case Study of the Southern Province, 1930-1988* (Lusaka: Historical Association of Zambia, 1988), p. 10.
12. V.J. Eylands and B.K. Patel, 'Agricultural Research', in Adrian Wood, Stuart A. Kean, John T. Milimo and Dennis Michael Warren (eds.), *The Dynamics of Agricultural Policy and Reform in Zambia* (Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1990), p. 308.
13. J. Lukanty and Adrian Paul Wood, 'Agricultural Policy in the Colonial Period', in Adrian Paul Wood, Stuart A. Kean, John T. Milimo and Dennis Michael Warren (eds.), *The Dynamics of Agricultural Policy and Reform in Zambia* (Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1990), p. 10.
14. Lukanty and Wood, 'Agricultural Policy', p. 9.
15. Chipungu, *The State, Technology and Peasant Differentiation*, p. 67.
16. Chipungu, *The State, Technology and Peasant Differentiation*, p. 11.
17. Mike Cowen, 'Early Years of the Colonial Development Corporation', *African Affairs*, 83, 330 (1984), p. 63.
18. Tiyaambe Zeleza, 'Political Economy of British Colonial Development in Africa', *TransAfrican Journal of History*, 14 (1985), Pp. 147-8.

19. Chipungu, *The State, Technology and Peasant Differentiation*, p. 84.
20. Until 1964, Fort Jameson was the name used to refer to the present-day Chipata district. This study has, however, employed the use of the name Chipata.
21. N.A.Z., EP4/20/7, Eastern Province District Boundaries 1938-52. See also N.A.Z., SEC2/32, District Boundaries, Eastern Province, 1938-46. For purposes of this discussion, Katete and Chadiza districts are not covered after 1948 as they were not part of Chipata district anymore.
22. N.R.G., *Ministry of Native Affairs Annual Report for the Year 1962* (Lusaka: Government Printer, 1963).
23. Hellen, *Rural Economic Development in Zambia*, p. 169.
24. N.R.G., Department of Agriculture Land Survey Section, *Chipata Land Survey May-August, 1964*, p. 2.
25. N.R.G., *Chipata Land Survey*, p. 2.
26. N.R.G., *Chipata Land Survey*, p. 2.
27. C.G. Trapnell, *The Soils, Vegetation and Traditional Agriculture of Zambia vol.2 North-Eastern Zambia [Ecological Survey, 1937-1941]* (Bristol: Redcliffe Press Ltd, 1943), p. 3.
28. N.R.G., *Chipata Land Survey*, p. 1.
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CHAPTER TWO: AFRICAN PEASANT FARMING, LABOUR MIGRATION AND LAND ALIENATION

Introduction

Policies pursued by the colonial state in Chipata district, based on expediency or fright, self-indulgence or lack of knowledge did not contribute to a fundamental disturbance of peasant agriculture in the district in the period up to the end of the Second World War. The chapter argues that although Chipata district had the highest rate of male labour migration from the Eastern Province, proletarianisation failed to undermine African peasant farming due to the local peoples' industriousness

and social organisation. This chapter further notes that in spite of the early attempts by the colonial state to commercialise African peasant agriculture in the district, the land policy instituted after 1903 did have an impact on the traditional Chewa-Ngoni land-use system.

Early Attempts at Commercialising African Agriculture

The initial years of the British South Africa Company (B.S.A.Co.) rule in Northern Rhodesia up to about 1910 saw active steps taken to promote African peasant agriculture. This was viewed as one way of developing the territory as quickly as possible. In Chipata district, this took the form of distributing seeds of vegetables and Irish potatoes to African farmers so that they would act as a cheap source of food for the incoming white settlers. In this way, African farmers were to be empowered economically as a market for their produce was created. In addition, the Company also encouraged the cultivation of cotton as a cash crop among Africans, especially in the valley area. Consequently, 30 African growers were issued with Egyptian *Abassi* and *Affifi* cotton seed.¹ Cotton cultivation received the most attention from the colonial state. This was confirmed by the Administrator of North-Eastern Rhodesia, Robert Edward Codrington at an *indaba* with local chiefs of the Eastern Province in December, 1904 when he stated that:

We have given out a lot of cotton seed and anybody who wants any can get it from the Boma. The people should grow cotton for sale to the Whiteman and so become rich and buy goats, sheep and clothes . . . the Wakunda [Kunda] have had a lot of seed and should be able to pay their taxes easily by selling cotton . . . All the people can see the Boma Cotton Plantation and how the Whitemen hoe with oxen. Any native who has cattle can buy a plough from the Boma for next year.²

The state did not stop at the disbursement of cotton seed to African growers. Instructions were also given in the weeding and pruning of aged trees as well as in the cleaning of the picked cotton.³ The colonial state was of the view that a highly developed cotton industry would go a long way in solving the territory's financial woes.⁴ However, the African-grown cotton did not fare well in comparison to that on European farms. Despite the pre-existing cotton culture in Chipata district, the growing of

cotton as a cash crop proved difficult because the growers paid more attention to their subsistence crops.⁵ Cotton growing was encouraged in the district because it had a long history among the local people, especially the Kunda people.⁶ Its cultivation, therefore, was not an alien undertaking. Furthermore, cotton husbandry employed simple agricultural requirements which peasants could easily implement. As the Administrator put it at another meeting with chiefs in the area:

White men are now planting cotton and this will have to be carried . . . Your young men can go to work on the cotton plantations where the work is the sort of work they will understand and do well. Tell your young men this.⁷

Nonetheless, prospects of a viable African cotton industry in the district had dwindled by 1907. African response to cash cropping had been met with mixed feelings. While the Kunda responded favourably to the grow-cotton campaign, the Ngoni did not. This was so because the Ngoni people were still suspicious of Europeans following their defeat in 1898.⁸ The administration, however, decided to promote other ventures with a view to uplifting the livelihoods of Ngoni peasant farmers. It was noted by the Administrator in 1907, for example, that:

It seems that the Angoni do not grow cotton well. Perhaps it is the soil . . . You Angoni who can not grow cotton, I want you to try to improve your livestock . . . I want the Angoni to be rich in cattle again as they were before the war.⁹

This plea was in accord with Ngoni views, and a discernible increase in herds of cattle was noted by 1914.¹⁰ The Chewa and Nsenga who had few herds of beasts in the previous years, also built up large herds. Yet, cattle were not a commodity for sale and therefore had little impact on the lives of the people.

Apart from these efforts to commercialise African peasant agriculture in the district, the sector was largely ignored by the Company government until after the Second World War. However, surplus

staple produce such as millet, sorghum, sweet potatoes and groundnuts were sold at the local market in Chipata. In effect, therefore, agriculture remained largely subsistence.

Labour Migration

The incorporation of the district into the world capitalist system through the activities of the B.S.A.Co changed the economy of Chipata. The earliest effect of the colonisation of Chipata district was the introduction of colonial taxation on all adult males as the local people now had to pay an annual tax to the colonial state, something of a novelty to them.

The B.S.A.Co's African tax and labour policies were dictated largely by the needs of growing capitalism in southern Africa. Partly to raise money for the administration and to stimulate the flow of labour to Southern Rhodesia that was labour-poor because of the Shona's reluctance to engage in wage employment in preference to a flourishing peasant economy, the North-Eastern Rhodesia administration decided to institute a three Shilling tax as early as 1898 soon after defeating the Ngoni.¹¹ A Hut tax was introduced by Proclamation No. 9 of 1900. The first official collections, however, were not done until 1903.¹² The tax was levied as a money tax on each adult male with a hut and also on each wife with a separate hut except the first one.¹³ Also exempted from tax payments were the aged while families blessed with twin children were not taxed for at least two years.¹⁴ The Company soon increased the tax to five shillings in 1914 and then ten in 1918 as Poll Tax. There were three basic ways in which tax could be collected, that is, through cash, in kind or offering one's labour power to the government. From 1905, however, the government only accepted cash as the mode of paying tax.¹⁵ Local colonial administrators rejected payment of tax in kind because the Company government wanted to compel African men to become labour migrants.¹⁶ African men would in turn offer their labour power to the local European farmers to grow food such as maize needed to feed the growing urban population and cash crops like cotton and tobacco for export. This was in line with the designation of the Eastern Province as a food supplying area in the economy of Northern Rhodesia.

As cash became more and more essential in the payment of tax obligations and to buy manufactured articles, Africans began to look beyond the horizons of their traditional life. Many began to take to wage labour in the employ of local European settler ranchers. However terms and conditions on the local farms were poor, prompting the local men to seek employment in South Africa, Southern Rhodesia and, later, on the Northern Rhodesian Copperbelt.¹⁷ In fact, labour migration from Chipata district had a long history having started in the late nineteenth century from “where large groups of Angoni went down to Southern Rhodesia” to work as early as the 1880s.¹⁸ It should be stressed here that in discussing labour migration from the district, taxation did not constitute its original or indeed its only cause. People had been migrating to Southern Rhodesia and South Africa to look for better employment opportunities in order to buy clothes and other manufactured articles even before colonial rule began.¹⁹ Taxation, therefore, only acted as a push or pull factor in a process that was already in motion.

Up to about 1924, nevertheless, most people in the district were able to meet their tax responsibilities using local resources. Even the compulsion to pay tax in monetary form from 1905 did not overwhelm most men in the district. Neither did the tax increases of 1914 and 1918 significantly uproot the Chewa and Ngoni from peasant production. They were able to meet their tax obligations from the sale of their grain and livestock.²⁰ It was only when the land alienation programme had reached its peak after 1924 that the effects of reducing the productive capabilities of the traditional economy were felt. This was because having been pushed into the less fertile parts of the land, the Africans had, of necessity, to complement the little they produced from the poor land by engaging more and more in wage employment in order to pay the taxes. It was, therefore, the deterioration of the living conditions in the African Reserves in the late 1920s and the poor working conditions on the local white farms that increased the tempo of labour migration from the area.²¹

The importance of local employment within the confines of the district declined after 1927 although the proportion of men in employment continued to rise due to the development of a cash-

oriented Northern Rhodesian economy. To the Ngoni, Chewa and Nsenga people who evaded work on the local white farms, Southern Rhodesian labour markets proved most congenial because they were near, and also, because the main route passed through ethnically close people in the Tete Province of central Mozambique.²² Moreover, in addition to a high wage, a migrant worker was also given larger food portions in Southern Rhodesia than on the local settler farms in Chipata.²³ The most commonly used route by labour migrants from Chipata district to the south was through Sinda Misale in today's Chadiza district.²⁴ Second in rank as absorbers of labour from Chipata district were South Africa, and from the late 1920s, the Northern Rhodesian Copperbelt Table I below summarises the rate of labour migration from Chipata district in comparison with the other two districts in the province in 1926. In the 1930s the trend was the same.²⁵

As can be deduced from Table I below, Chipata district had the highest percentage (almost 60 percent) of absent adult males in the province. By 1937, the proportion of women to men in Chipata district was estimated to be as high as ten to one.²⁶ The absence of such a large number of the most able bodied members of the population in the district was significant in the changed circumstances because male labour played a key role in the preparation of gardens.

TABLE I: LABOUR MIGRATION FROM EASTERN PROVINCE, 1926

	CHIPATA DISTRICT	PETAUKE DISTRICT	LUNDAZI DISTRICT	EASTERN PROVINCE
Total number of adult males	27 715	13 105	8 202	49 022
Percentage employed outside Northern Rhodesia	21.6	24.6	19.0	19.8
Percentage employed within Northern Rhodesia	36.2	11.4	11.2	25.4
Percentage in employment	57.8	36.0	30.2	45.2

Source: N.R.G., *Annual Report on Native Affairs, 1926*

The temporal withdrawal of male labour did not undermine African peasant farming in Chipata district. Since the operation of the socio-political and economic activities greatly depended on male labour, the adaptability of the rural community to proletarianisation was important. In Chipata district, this came to hinge on two variables. The first was based on the type and efficiency of the existing cooperation in the community that helped it adapt favourably to the absence of male labour migrants.²⁷ This variable worked so well that the traditional socio-economic order was not disrupted. The other variable was based on the community's degree of control over the timing and length of the migrant's absence from the household.

We argue in this section that the local people of Chipata district utilised the above variables in the new economy. As Chondoka observed for the Senga, African rural dwellers were not as irresponsible as was argued by missionary and early anthropological studies.²⁸ The Chewa, Ngoni and Nsenga in Chipata district controlled the timing and length of the migrants' absence. This was because not all able bodied men left their villages for wage employment without making any form of arrangements about who were to take care of the village economy in their absence.²⁹ The removal from Chipata district of as much as 60 percent of the active men from the subsistence economy was only possible through the cooperation in agricultural production of the people left behind in the villages.

African peasant farmers devised strategies that allowed sufficient able-bodied men to remain at home to continue with the daily village activities. The local people simply reorganised their labour force.³⁰ They carefully deployed their labour force on both fronts namely, wage employment and the traditional economy. By doing so, they benefited from both. Some informants explained that they tried as much as possible to leave for labour markets immediately after the main cultivation was finished for the year, that is, in the lean period before the harvest, and tried to return by December in time for the demanding work of cultivation.³¹ They would, therefore, have a period of six months in which to earn money before returning home. Those who worked on the local white farms of the district were not absent from their homes for very long because some returned home on weekends, while others lived near enough to return home each evening to participate in their own fields' cultivation.³² In so doing, African peasant farmers showed their industriousness to survive in a society where proletarianisation had taken root.

Moreover, patrilineal groups like the Ngoni people were better able to cope with labour migration because their villages were organised on cores of related male relatives, and thus had a stability and solidarity that could be missing from matrilineal societies. The system of matrilocal marriage enabled Ngoni peasant farmers to plan and organise labour in such a way as to ensure that sufficient numbers of males remained behind. Brothers in the same generation as the absent husband were likely to be suitable replacements for absent men. The phenomenon of labour migration in this way reinforced the bond of relationship in households and village communities.³³ This remained the cornerstone of the continued availability of male labour for agricultural activities in the absence of some able-bodied males. The absent wage-earner could, therefore, leave his wife and family behind knowing very well that they would have food and shelter.³⁴

Even among ethnic groups such as the Chewa and Nsenga which were matrilineal, there was easy adjustment for the women left behind by migrant labourers because they would still be among the same relatives with whom they had always lived because of the uxorilocal marriage system. The major source

of labour for the household among the Chewa people was kinsmen. On account of its extreme consanguineal organisation, Chewa society was well-adapted to a high labour migration rate.³⁵ It was the duty of a man to help his sisters if they were in need. Brothers had very close and protective relationships with their sisters, whose children were the brothers' direct descendants. In this regard, a labour migrant, could solicit for the help of the young sons of his sister to herd his cattle in his absence. This was because he was more likely to succeed in inducing them than he would his own sons because inheritance was matrilineal, and the nephews and nieces were potential heirs to his cattle and therefore showed a lot of interest in the animals. For as Marwick noted, the consanguine matrilineage, consisting typically of a man, his sisters and his sisters' uterine descendants, was the basic social group among the Chewa; and it was the group which remained functional under a disturbed sex ratio as a result of the proletarianisation of Chewa men.³⁶

Another important source of labour that existed among the people who remained in the villages in Chipata district amidst high rates of male labour migration was communal support. This was especially common in instances where certain tasks were beyond the labour resources of the household such as weeding and hoeing. The cooperative system which hinged on the provision of beer or other foods at the end of a task favoured those with surplus foodstuffs.³⁷ Whether a household could organise a working party depended on whether its members had enough maize and its womenfolk the requisite skill for making beer; for beer was the traditional entertainment given to the people.³⁸ These working parties attracted not only kinsmen, but neighbours in the same village and beyond who were in need of food or beer. In spite of the strategies employed by African peasant farmers in Chipata district in the face of high labour migration, we still remain alive to the fact that labour migration also had negative social effects on African societies.³⁹

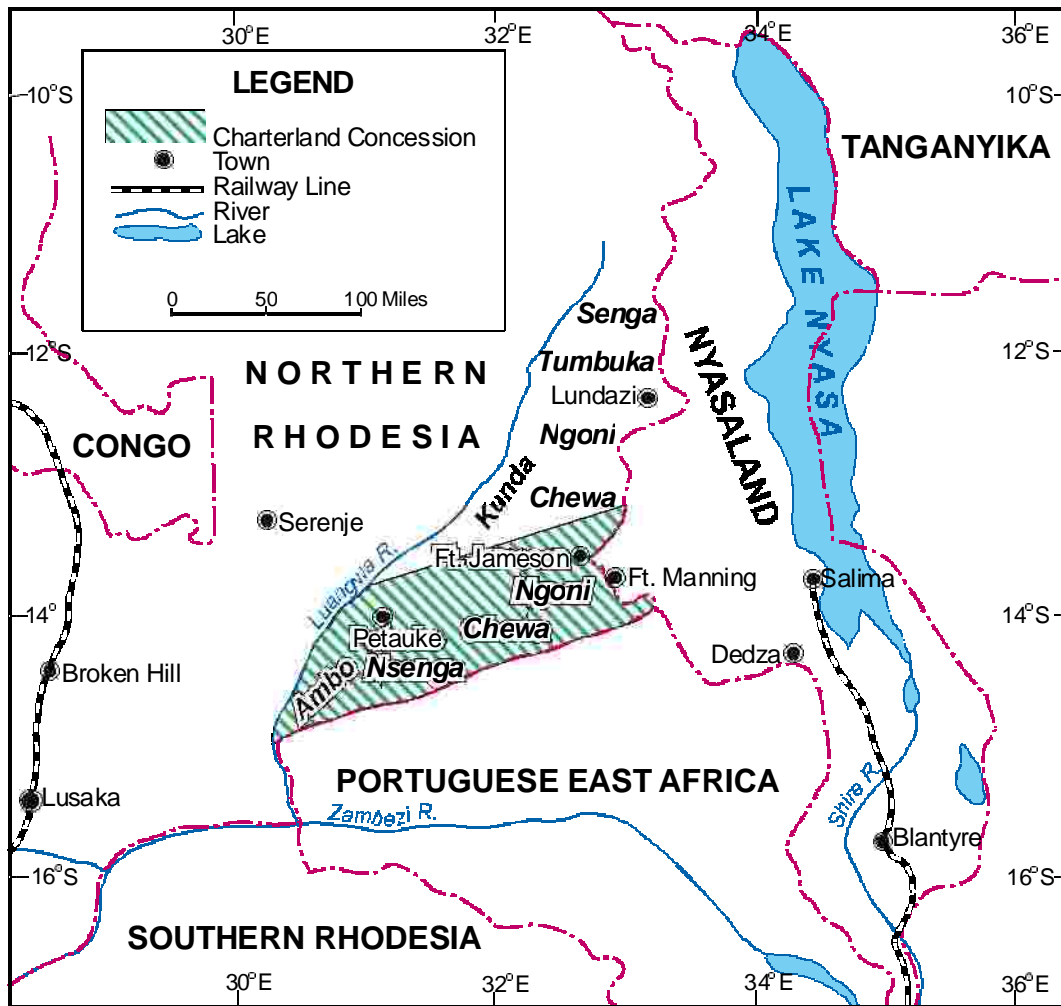
Land Alienation

The theme of land forms the core of any discussion on African farming in Chipata district during the colonial period. The genesis of the topic emanates from the North Charterland and Exploration

Company (N.C.E.Co.)'s claimed ownership of 10,000 square miles of land in the southern half of the Eastern Province (see Map 3); their concession being derived from various treaties that had been signed by Carl Wiese, Alfred Sharpe and other European concession hunters with various African chiefs in the nineteenth century.⁴⁰ It was this alienation of land by the N.C.E.Co that most disturbed African agriculture in Chipata district. The N.C.E.Co reserved the right to sell or lease land within the Concession. The B.S.A.Co held similar rights elsewhere in the province. The North-Eastern Rhodesia Order-in-Council of 1900 had given the Administrator at Chipata the right to evict Africans from their land provided adequate compensation was paid. It was stated in Clause 40 of that Order that:

The Company shall from time to time assign to natives a portion of the North-Eastern Rhodesia land sufficient for their occupation, whether as tribes or portions of tribes, and suitable for their agricultural and pastoral requirements, including in all cases a fair and equitable portion of springs or permanent water.⁴¹

Map 3: North Charterland Concession, 1895 - 1948



Source: Simon N. Nkhata, 'Resettlement in Chipata District, 1951-1980', in Ackson M. Kanduza (ed.), *Socio-Economic Change in Eastern Zambia: Pre-Colonial to the 1980s* (Lusaka: Historical Association of Zambia, 1992), p. 1 .

From the preceding discussion, it is clear that a legal framework for the alienation of land and creation of reserves, similar to those in existence in South Africa and Southern Rhodesia, existed. This was brought into partial operation soon after the turn of the twentieth century when European farming began in earnest. It was soon realised, however, that land alienation in Chipata was not going to be an easy undertaking mainly due to the presence of a large African population living there.

In view of the above, Administrator Codrington, appointed a three-member East Luangwa Land Commission on 24 December, 1903 with the sole purpose of establishing a pattern for future land sales

and the creation of reserves in later years. The Commission was chaired by Mr Justice Leicester Pau Beaufort, a Judge of the High Court. The other two commissioners were Christian Purefoy Chesnaye, the Magistrate and Civil Commissioner at Chipata (Secretary), and the Chief Surveyor Lawrence Audrey Wallace (Member). As there was an expected inflow of European settlers in the district, and as a way of ensuring that there was as less friction as possible between the settler farmers and the Africans, the Commission recommended that:

For many reasons of policy it is imperative that the land within a certain radius of Fort Jameson should be mainly in the occupation of Europeans; and that the natives, especially the Angoni, would be 'better off' and more happy and prosperous if removed to land permanently reserved for them.⁴²

Two reserves were created as a direct consequence of the above recommendation. The first reserve, Chewa Reserve, was set up in 1904 on the Lower Lutembwe Rive, south-west of Chipata district for the sole occupation of Africans and into which the evicted African peasants were to be moved. Two years later, another reserve, the Ngoni Reserve was established. This Ngoni reserve was meant to accommodate Paramount Chief Mpezeni and his immediate following, and was completely surrounded by European farms.⁴³ By 1907, about thirty farms had been occupied for ranching and the growing of cotton by European farmers. Among the prominent European farmers were Henry Langeley, Douglas Thorncroft, Peter Leach, Thomas Thompson, Ode, Lachensky and Frankwood.⁴⁴ After that date, however, cattle ranching became less and less attractive mainly because of tsetse fly resulting in many animals dying of trypanosomiasis. The numbers of tsetse fly had increased in the district owing to the government's ban of Africans from hunting game and its other policy of village amalgamation.⁴⁵ Protection of wildlife and merger of villages gave chance for a significant quick rejuvenation of both bush and game. Besides, by 1909 ideal land for cattle ranching near Chipata was running out due to a large number of farmers in the cattle industry and prospective white ranchers were being advised to go to Serenje district.⁴⁶ Also because of the uncertainty in cattle ranching, beginning from about 1908,

some of the white farmers in Chipata had started cotton cultivation. However, cotton never became a major cash crop in the district.

Thereafter, the issue of land expropriation rested until the promise of a flourishing European tobacco industry began to take root after 1912. The high tobacco prices on the world market and a ready market in South Africa resulted in a flow of European settlers to Chipata district.⁴⁷ These settlers, unlike their predecessors, the cattle farmers, put large acreages under cultivation and hence demands were made for more land and labour. It was only then that the land question was revived. Another important change that had a bearing on the land question took place within the N.C.E.Co itself when it became bankrupt in 1910.⁴⁸ When that occurred, the B.S.A.Co became the largest shareholder in the former enterprise. Having proved that tobacco could grow well in the district starting in 1912, the 'new' N.C.E.Co pressed the B.S.A.Co to demarcate more reserves for Africans as many applicants for land were expected.

Meanwhile, as early as 1912, internal pressures had already begun to cause the local Africans to move in search of arable land for new gardens. For example, it was the encroachment of European farms on Chief Mishoro's villages which forced Chief Mishoro to leave his chiefdom in the area north of the Dutch Reformed Church mission station at Madzimoyo.⁴⁹ Many of the dispossessed peasant farmers were made to settle in the land that had remained uninhabited for many years to the west of the Lutembwe River and north of Msoro Road. But as it was observed later, that piece of land was new country to the Ngoni people and in some ways unsuitable to them because it was broken by hill ranges and isolated *kopjes*. It also lay within the tsetse fly belt and that even if it were free from tsetse fly, it was still unsuitable to cattle since it contained few *ambos* which were the first consideration of Ngoni stock-owners in selecting a new country.⁵⁰

Up until the beginning of the First World War, African agriculture did not suffer much. In 1913, efforts were renewed to create more reserves in the province. Nineteen were proposed of which six

were to be in Chipata. However, two other reserves were devised for Chipata district in that year. The North Chewa Reserve (Msandile) was to encompass the Chewa under chiefs Nyongo, Mafuta, Chanje and Chinunda. The other, South Chewa Reserve (Zumwanda) was to include villages under chiefs Kawaza, Mbang'ombe, Kathumba, Mwangala, Pembamoyo, Mlolo and Zingalume. Nevertheless, the onset of the First World War halted the implementation of this scheme. As can be deduced from the above developments, the B.S.A.Co's policy in Chipata district was not satisfactory.

When the Colonial Office assumed responsibility of Northern Rhodesia on 1 April 1924, it immediately took an active interest in the question of land holding. Upon assumption of authority, the Crown Government established another three-member Native Reserves Commission on 10 October 1924 whose task was to enquire into and recommend upon the matter of African reserves in the Eastern Province in pursuance of Clause 40 of the 1900 Order.⁵¹ The Commission was chaired by Mr Justice P.J. MacDonnell while E.H. Lane-Poole was Secretary and a local farmer, J.N. Phipps, was a member.

The Commission was influenced by the existing pattern of land holding and its recommendations, in respect of Chipata district, represented the first visionary reserves with various additions and extensions. Msandile Reserve and Zumwanda Reserve were created in 1924 in addition to the Chewa Reserve and Ngoni Reserve formed earlier. They were legalised by the enactment of the Native Reserves Order-in-Council of 1928. These reserves were set apart in perpetuity for the sole and exclusive use and occupation of the Africans.⁵² About 3,500 square miles of the Charterland concession were removed by that Order from the N.C.E.Co without compensation.

As soon as the Reserves had been legally constituted the provincial administration began pursuing a vigorous policy of moving Africans into them. However not soon after the Order of 1928 had been passed than it was also realised that the reserves were not sufficient for the needs of the relocated people. The movement of Africans into the reserves continued in 1930 where 67 villages containing a population of 6,003 had still to move.⁵³ The Africans were forced into areas too small for their needs

which in turn accelerated their movement abroad in search of employment. The soils in the reserves were over-cultivated to permit the production of a surplus for sale on the local or regional market place.⁵⁴ The reserves in Chipata district also suffered from water shortage.⁵⁵

The Native Reserves Order-in-Council of 1928 initiated a policy of removing African from the company's land particularly to the west and north of the district which nonetheless was abandoned to nature as no Europeans settled there. By 1930, it was an established fact that most of the reserves were infested by the *Glossina morsitans* tsetse fly and therefore unsuitable for stock-owning people like the Ngoni. But nothing was done to rectify the situation. The end result was that many African households lost their livestock to the fly. Some people, too, died of sleeping sickness.

The colonial state was very quick to realise its mistakes and began to rectify them. It was for this reason that for the first time, in the history of the an Agricultural Officer, R.H. Fraser was posted to Chipata in 1929. His appointment was impelled in part by the declining fortunes of European tobacco farming. But he was also to be responsible for the needs of the African peasant farming community. In 1934, Fraser computed that the density in the Chipata reserves was fifty-seven persons per square mile while in places like Chiparamba, population density was as high as 450.⁵⁶ As a result of this it was found that the reserves were being rapidly denuded of their timber, soil erosion was a serious problem and some portions were approaching the nadir of their productivity.⁵⁷

Further government interest in African peasant farming in Chipata district was sustained when an Ecologist from the Department of Agriculture at Mazabura, J.N. Clothier investigated the conditions in the Chewa and Ngoni reserves in 1936. The findings were appalling. He found that the southern areas of the Ngoni reserve were overpopulated by 7,500 people and that Chief Mpezeni's area contained about double the population the land could reasonably be expected to maintain in perpetuity.⁵⁸ Table II below summarises the population density in the Chipata Reserves in 1924 and 1942.

TABLE II: POPULATION DENSITY IN CHIPATA RESERVES IN 1924 AND 1942

No.	RESERVES	AREA IN SQUARE MILES	1924 POPULATION		1942 POPULATION	
			NUMBER OF PEOPLE	DENSITY	NUMBER OF PEOPLE	DENSITY
1.	Msandile	264	15 151	57	22 539	85
2.	Ngoni	784	42 961	55	63 561	81
3.	Chewa	756	37 045	49	53 350	70
4	Zumwanda	177	5 707	32	9 800	55
	TOTAL	1 981	100 864	51	149 250	75

Source: Allan Pim, *Report of the Commission Appointed to Enquire into the Economic and Financial Position of Northern Rhodesia*, (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1938), p. 364. See also, L.W.G. Eccles, *Report of the Land Commission on the North Charterland Concession Area*, (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1942).

C.J. Lewin, the Director of Agriculture, agreed with the findings by Clothier. This was confirmed in his correspondence with the Chief Secretary C.G.S. Follows at Lusaka in which he described the Ngoni Reserve as a “distressing picture” where “only drastic administrative action” could relieve the situation.⁵⁹ The reserves were far too densely populated. Most of the remaining portions were tsetse fly infested and uninhabited.⁶⁰

The inequity of the colonial policy on land can be appreciated when one considers the population of Europeans living in the district during the period under discussion *viz a viz* the land alienated to them. The European population in the district was small. Yet, the effects of that minute European population on the very much larger African population were substantial.⁶¹ These consequences

manifested themselves in the inter-war period. It should be emphasised here that though huge tracts of land had been alienated for European occupation, the numbers of their arrival did not materialise as expected. Many settlers had become absentee-landlords because the world tobacco market crumbled due to over-production in the late 1920s with the effect that many of them abandoned their farms while the expected white settlers did not arrive in Chipata district.⁶² By 1931 there were only 325 Europeans including administrators and traders in the whole of Chipata district compared to the total African population estimated to be 123,956.⁶³ During the same year only about 15 percent of the alienated land was actually cultivated by the European planters and the rest lay unused. The end result as Vail noted was that the land tended to revert to bush which was a natural haven for the wild animals and tsetse fly.⁶⁴

To the government, the poor state of African agriculture recorded in the reserves was due to what it termed as “wasteful methods of native agriculture.”⁶⁵ The crux of the matter, however, was that the 1924 Native Reserve Commission had underestimated the population that would be accommodated in the reserves. In addition to that, there were other pertinent issues that had contributed to overpopulation. Prominent among these was the world economic recession of the early 1930s which exacerbated the situation as many migrant workers returned home following the closure of many mines in the region.⁶⁶ Arising from the same economic meltdown was that the Department of Agriculture could not carry out the much needed agricultural education and building of dams in the reserves due to a reduced number of professional staff. The recruitment of field staff had been halted while some of those already in employment were laid off as a cost-saving measure.⁶⁷ Compared to a total staff level of twenty-three in 1932, the department only had five members for the whole territory in 1935.⁶⁸

Further, the situation was complicated by a large number of immigrants from Portuguese East Africa (Mozambique). Such migrations had been a long standing phenomenon in the region partly due to the difficulty settlers faced to obtain African workers locally and also because labour from a distance was more amenable and less inclined to desert.⁶⁹ It was also during this period that the Chewa

Paramount Chief Kalonga Gawa Undi immigrated into Zambia from that territory as a result of the brutality of the colonial state in Portuguese East Africa.⁷⁰ Gawa Undi's arrival in Chipata district also brought many Chewa-speaking people whose major reason for resettlement was the desire to live near their paramount chief and not necessarily to seek employment. The Member of the Legislative Council (Legco) representing the North-Eastern Electoral Area, T.G. Page, estimated that the number of people who had moved into the Chipata reserves from Mozambique by 1940 was 20,000 and not the 11,000 which was the government's official figure.⁷¹ Additionally, increasing herds of cattle also contributed to the excessive pressure on land as the Ngoni people steadily rebuilt their stocks (see Table III below). The Chewa people had also taken to cattle rearing. Stock densities of 36 head of cattle per square mile had been noted in the inhabited areas of the Ngoni Reserve.⁷² Other livestock, notably, pigs, sheep and goats equally contributed to the rising pressure on the land.

TABLE III: AFRICAN-OWNED CATTLE, 1900-1937

YEAR	1900	1910	1915	1925	1930	1935	1937
NUMBER OF CATTLE	1,200	4,090	7,230	17,870	22,490	24,880	27,080

Source: N.R.G., *African Affairs Annual Report for the Year 1962*, (Lusaka: Government Printer, 1963).

Colonel Stewart Gore-Browne, a Member of the Legco nominated to represent African interests in Northern Rhodesia, best described the density of the reserves in Chipata thus:

I have never travelled in the Reserves in the Eastern Province, but I have flown over that part of the country and it is significant the way in which the dense Native population shows up from the air bordered by enormous unoccupied areas where the dead hand of vested interests, as I have heard it expressed, lies light a blight over the land.⁷³

During the same session, the Legco acknowledged that reserves in Chipata district unlike those in the Northern and line of rail provinces were by far very congested.⁷⁴

Traditional Land Use Systems

In order to value the extent to which the creation of native reserves impacted on African agriculture in the district, it is important to bring to the fore the conventional land use system of the area before people were relocated. According to Trapnell, the system used by the Ngoni-Chewa, based on cultivation mounds, was called the Eastern Plateau Agricultural System.⁷⁵ The mounds were known in Chewa as *mbunde*.⁷⁶ For a virgin piece of land, the first procedure involved cutting down trees (*kugunthula*) using axes or simply by burning them. Under this system of cultivation, maize was first planted on small heaps of soil and the earth from these was subsequently shifted and heaped over the weeds so as to make fresh mounds between the growing crops. These mounds were used first for subsidiary pulses, mainly sweet potatoes and then for the next season's maize planting. Weeds between the *mbunde* were hoed down (*kutsotsa*) and placed in heaps (*vikuse*): the earth was then drawn away from the *mbunde* and thrown over the heaps to make a series of small mounds throughout the growing crop. In October, towards the end of the dry season, the *vikuse* were burnt, leaving small patches of ash mixed with incinerated soil.⁷⁷

As the main rains set in after October, finger millet was sown in the ash-fertilised strips together with a sparse planting of maize. Then in December, the garden was weeded, the mounds broken down from around the maize and the soil piled over the weeds to make small mounds. At this juncture, beans, groundnuts, peas and cowpeas were also planted. During the subsequent years the field was re-cultivated in a similar fashion except that the maize and pulses were interplanted throughout the whole area and the finger millet crop was not usually repeated. Maize was planted on mounds vacated by pulses and vice versa, thus making the best use of any nitrogen the legumes may have fixed in the soil. The gardens were worked on till the land had been exhausted. Thereafter, they would be abandoned to allow for a bush fallow in order to recover their fertility. In general, the gardens lasted for about four to

five years before the next shift took place.⁷⁸ The fallow period ranged from 25-30 years for the poorest soils to 20-25 years for the better soils.⁷⁹ Fallowing prevented permanent soil degradation.

This system of agriculture made full use of the resources of the plateau within the limits of the knowledge and technology of peasant farmers in Chipata district. The location of gardens as well as the methods of cultivation were closely adapted to the physical environment and were well calculated to obtain optimum returns from the labour involved. This was what Allan Kenten observed when he observed that the African systems of land-use had their own protective devices against soil erosion, the chief of which was the fallow.⁸⁰ Unfortunately, the land set aside for the reserves during the colonial period proved inadequate under customary forms of land-use and consequently disturbed local food supply.

The traditional cultivation and fallow periods were disturbed during the colonial era. Where there was shortage of land and high population density, land was worked on for long despite poor returns and fallow periods were reduced in the reserves. This meant that the traditional system was not practised in the reserves that had been created because the system could not support a dense population without endangering the vegetation, soils, and water supplies. The maximum average population density the plateau could carry under such a system of land use or the land carrying capacity was approximately 22 persons per square mile for large areas where the systems were practised.⁸¹ When that carrying capacity was exceeded without a compensating change in the system of land usage a cycle of degenerative changes set in motion which resulted in deterioration or destruction of the land. Yet, as Table II shows above, reserves in Chipata district had population densities of as high as 85 per square mile in 1942. Under such circumstances, the local traditional agricultural practices involving fallowing could not be used. Peasant farmers continued using the same small fields every season without giving them chance to renew their vitality. The end result was that soils were depleted of their nutrients. This was because when cultivation was continued year after year, tree stumps were killed and there was no chance of them coppicing because sheet erosion assumed alarming proportions and was closely followed by the formation of gullies which lowered the water table and led to soil ruin.⁸²

The above discourse shows how African peasant agriculture was marginalised in the district. Yet the colonial administrators constantly blamed African methods of cultivation for the deteriorating agricultural production. But as was observed by Lukanty and Wood, the reason for the poor state of African agriculture was that both the quality and quantity of land reserved for Africans was generally far from satisfactory as those allocating the land did not understand both the nature of the traditional farming systems with their need for bush fallow land and the prospects for African population growth.⁸³

When the Pim Commission visited the reserves in Chipata district in 1937, serious observations were made. About the Ngoni Reserve, the most devastated, the commission observed that one third of the area was useless for cattle because it was infested with tsetse fly, while for the same reason and owing to the absence of water, a quarter of the reserve was uninhabited.⁸⁴ Similarly, debating in the Legco in 1944, Captain R.E. Campbell complained about tsetse fly in Chipata district terrorising stock kept by Africans and wanted the Director of Medical Services, Dr. J.F.C. Haslam, to do something about it. He stated that farmers and cattle owners were growing more and more anxious regarding the spread of trypanosomiasis in the cattle areas and that government should take more active control measures than was being done at the moment.⁸⁵

Serious soil degradation had by 1940 taken root owing to human and livestock congestion leading to shortage of cultivatable land. More and more Africans were forced to cultivate in the mountains, a very tedious undertaking made worse by the presence of boulders.⁸⁶ Cultivating in mountain slopes, however, was not a new phenomenon in Chipata district. It had been practised by the Chewa people for hundreds of years because many of them lived near mountains. As a matter of fact, this was how the Phiri (Hill) clan of the Chewa people acquired its name.⁸⁷ By the late 1930s, the Ngoni people too had begun to cultivate along mountain slopes. In Chief Kapatamoyo's territory arable land was in such short supply that local people started cultivating on mountain tops with government officials acknowledging that only necessity could account for the cultivation of gardens in such sites.⁸⁸ District Commissioner J.S. Moffat noted on one of his tours that:

The cutting goes on to the summits of the hills in many cases, and the hills are eroding into gullies. The swifter flow of the water from these hills has resulted in erosion in the valleys. Chasms 15 to 20 feet can be found all over Mpezeni's country. The land is hopelessly inadequate for the needs of the people⁸⁹

As a way of surviving in the new environment, African peasant farmers also intensified the use of riverside gardens (*madimba*). The cultivation of crops along river banks militated against food shortages. Siamwiza noted that this was the main survival strategy adopted by African societies over a long period of time through man's ability to read the long-term ecological changes.⁹⁰ This method was advantageous for the reason that soils along river banks retained moisture longer than did the soils elsewhere and were also easy to till because they were composed mainly of silt deposits.⁹¹ There was no need for the use of fallowing under this system of cultivation because the soil's fertility was replenished by the rivers' flood water. While some African peasant farmers could manage to feed themselves, the majority could not produce a surplus for sale. This situation caused food shortages in some sections of the district. "Every village without exception complained to me of hunger and lack of gardens", remarked the District Commissioner in 1940.⁹² The following year, a similar situation was recorded in the villages of chiefs Mkanda and Chanje in the North Chewa Reserve where it was observed that the food situation had evidently deteriorated since the area was last toured and that mealie meal was scarce.⁹³

The account above shows that on the eve of the Second World War, the district's affluence observed in the late nineteenth century had declined. In 1896, a Scottish prospector Crawford H. Angus noted that Chipata district was a prosperous area when he visited Chief Mpezeni's chiefdom during the middle of the rainy season. As he descended the Mchinji Hills into the heart of the Ngoni kingdom, he reported that:

Village after village [were] surrounded by cornfields, green plains dotted with herds of cattle stretched away in the distance. Never before in any of my wanderings have I seen such an extent of land un

cultivation, the cornfields seem unending . . . I realised what a powerful and prosperous people were those whose acquaintance I was about to make.⁹⁴

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that the policies of the colonial state were neither static nor detrimental always, contrary to allusions by scholars of the Underdevelopment school of thought. This chapter has noted that the B.S.A.Co government tried to develop African peasant farming in the early years of colonial rule through the promotion of cash cropping. It has additionally been observed that colonial taxation and labour migration did not thwart African peasant farming in Chipata district. The new colonial land policy instituted in the district impaired the centuries-old established Ngoni-Chewa agricultural practices based on fallowing. In spite of the vast tracts of land made available to European settlers, most of these remained unoccupied while Africans were squeezed in reserves leading to food insecurity in some places in the 1930s and 1940s.

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CHAPTER THREE: PEASANT FARMERS' REACTION TO COLONIAL STATE POLICIES

Peasants . . . generally failed to mount large-scale opposition which lends itself to detailed historical analysis. Instead peasant protests tended to be isolated, covert and often passing their limited aims and systematic importance hard to measure and easy to ignore.¹

Introduction

This chapter argues that African peasant farmers in Chipata district were not passive to colonial state policies on taxation, land alienation and labour migration which had a bearing on their agricultural enterprise. This was because they voiced their concern with the colonial authorities both overtly and covertly. By and large, the patterns through which discontent against *pax britannica* was expressed in Chipata district reflected differences in the political systems between the Ngoni and Chewa ethnic groups. A broad range of techniques of resistance emerged: there was widespread use of delegations and oral petitions by Ngoni chiefs; and with greater effect, passive resistance methods included the refusal to pay taxes, encroachment on European-owned farms, migrations to neighbouring countries, songs and satirical overtures by the Chewa *Nyau* secret society.

Ngoni Forms of Resistance

From the inception of colonialism, African resentment of colonial measures was deeply rooted and widespread in Chipata district. As in many other parts of Northern Rhodesia after the initial resistance to colonial conquest, much African protest came to centre on land alienation, African taxation and forced labour migration.² For Chipata district, the type of ethnic organisation determined the pattern of conflict and political change. The system of governance of the Ngoni was centralised and this determined the framework of their resistance.³ Vansina observed that a centralised authority of government in an African kingdom meant that there was one person from whom all authority in the kingdom was derived.⁴

In this way, anti-colonial sentiments among Ngoni peasant farmers were expressed within the traditional power structure and emphasised chiefly leadership. At the forefront of all this was Mpezeni, their paramount chief. The main avenue of contact between chiefs and colonial state officials was the annual two-hour *indaba* at which Africans were expected to make their problems such as hardships in the African reserves and taxation known to the colonial government.⁵

After initial Ngoni resistance against colonisation in 1898, much African protest came to border on the colonial tax policy. Africans used various methods to air their displeasure at the payment of taxes to government. The most common method was vocal appeal by the Ngoni Paramount Chief Mpezeni. The first officially recorded protests were in 1914, that is, the year when the British South Africa Company (B.S.A.Co.) government announced the first tax increase since its introduction in 1901. The government intended to raise the African Hut Tax from three Shillings to five Shillings effective 1 July 1902.

Protests by Africans were delivered to the government by Chief Mpezeni and various Ngoni chiefs at an *indaba* with Magistrate H.C. Marshall on 19 June, 1914. They asked the Magistrate to fix a higher producer price for all African livestock and other agricultural produce than what existed so that they could meet the new tax requirement.⁶ Peasant farmers raised concern over their inability to raise the additional two shillings at a time when it was already difficult for them to pay the existing rate of three shillings. The Magistrate's reply, however, was a blow in the face of African farmers. His reply was that the colonial authorities could neither interfere between employers and employees nor between buyers and sellers.⁷ In fact, it was pointed out to the traditional leaders that Africans were not reasonable in their demands because "high wages could be paid in rich countries, usually in mineral producing areas – neither tobacco nor cotton nor cattle raising was sufficiently remunerative to allow high wages."⁸ The meeting ended with a warning from the Magistrate that an illegal hike in the price of African farm produce would force European settlers to seek other alternatives to supply their wants.

The rationale for the rise in African taxation apart from the need for more revenue was to have a corresponding increase in labour supply on the settler farms in the district. The colonial state had already made up its mind regarding wages and prices of African produce even before the tax was hiked. This was because it had been pressurised by the highly influential North-Eastern Rhodesia Agricultural and Commercial Association, the first such white farmers' club in Northern Rhodesia having been established in 1904. In a correspondence between the farmers' association and the Magistrate in February 1914, before the indaba of 19 June 1914, the settler farmers lobbied the government not to raise wages for African labour in spite of the pending rise in the Hut Tax the coming year. In part, the letter read:

The native tax would be raised to 5/ this year; it is in the interest of all employers of native labour to cooperate and, in spite of the raising of Hut Tax [we ask that you] keep the native wages at present, viz:

Dry season labour: 3/ and *posho* [food portion]

Wet season labour 4/ and *posho*.

They [the white farmers] hope that you will help them by keeping to these rates and not forcing the price of labour.⁹

The settler farmers wanted low wages for African labour with a view that African peasants would become perpetually dependent on employment on their farms in order to meet their tax obligations. By applying the principle of cost minimisation and profit maximisation, settler farmers hoped the perennial labour shortages on their farms due to poor working conditions would come to an end.¹⁰

When it became apparent that the Magistrate was not going to budge on the wage-tax problem, Paramount Chief Mpezeni decided to appeal to the Administrator for Northern Rhodesia at Livingstone. He was accompanied to Livingstone by his uncle, Chief aguya. When they met Administrator Lawrence Wallace on 8 December 1915, it was also made known to him that there was need to raise the three shilling wage paid to African workers relative to the new tax regime. Wallace, however, pointed out that the only men who earned such a small wage were unskilled labourers.¹¹ Africans were advised

to raise tax money by supplying food to Mpika district for use by troops fighting in the First World War and to desist from depending on working as porters (*mtenga tenga*) but that they should endeavour to secure work on tobacco estates, roads and government service when possible.¹²

Wallace further castigated Africans for being “lazy” and that instead of protesting they should look for “war load” work as well in order to raise enough money to meet the increased rate of taxation. He observed that:

In other districts where war loads are passing, natives have had to turn out two or three times. The Awemba sometimes even six. Their women who unlike the Ngoni never do any *tenga tenga* have had to do so this year.¹³

Africans were warned that if they did not volunteer to provide their labour, the government would make them do that type of work if it so wanted. All those who would default in the payment of the new five shillings tax rate were to be fined two shillings six pence for delayed payment.¹⁴ At the end of the meeting the Administrator duped Mpezeni into agreeing to a vague promise of having his annual subsidy raised so that he could help the government recruit troops for the war effort.

Similarly, when the tax was raised to ten shillings as Poll Tax in 1918, Ngoni chiefs voiced the annoyance of their subjects who continued earning low wages. They warned that unless their wages were raised, there would be a large exodus of Africans to mines abroad. In reply the Magistrate reiterated that he could not force planters to pay high wages any more than he could force Africans to work on the plantations; and that possibly if Africans worked harder, they would command a higher rate of pay.¹⁵

In the 1920s, verbal protests by Ngoni men continued. Paramount Chief Mpezeni raised Ngoni concerns with the Secretary of Native Affairs, Mr Coxhead when he visited the Eastern Province in 1921. At an indaba on 27 September, the traditional leader stated that all men in Chipata district complained of not getting enough wages in their employment.¹⁶ In reply, Coxhead accused the chief of

just complaining about himself and brushed aside his views. Noting that nothing positive was forthcoming from the local administration in Northern Rhodesia concerning the wage-tax issue, Chief Mpezeni decided to seek audience with the British High Commissioner at Cape Town.¹⁷ Unfortunately, the trip did not materialise because the government said it was too expensive to undertake.

Other issues of concern regarding taxation related to taxing plural wives and headmen. In 1928, Chief Mpezeni requested the Governor, Sir James Maxwell, to exempt headmen from paying tax. His argument was that headmen could not manage to look for rent opportunities because the nature of their positions entailed that they be in their villages always.¹⁸ At the same meeting, Chief Kawaza requested that tax on plural wives be abolished for the assumption behind it was unfounded. It did not follow, Kawaza argued, that a polygamous man was rich.¹⁹ As a direct consequence of that petition, taxation on plural wives was abolished by the government with effect from 1 May, 1930.

Incessant oral protests and reluctance to enforce colonial tax measures by Ngoni traditional leaders earned them bad names from the colonial government. One government official remarked that:

Ngoni peasants suffer considerably from their useless and degenerate chiefs . . . the fact that Ngoni Authorities are making no effort to collect their tribute revenues is a measure of their selfishness and incompetence.²⁰

What annoyed government officials more was the fact that Paramount Chief Mpezeni refused to accompany them on tour of his kingdom as was the norm. On many occasions Chief Mpezeni showed his disgruntlement with the colonial state by outright boycott of touring parties or keeping them waiting for hours on end, or sending his son instead.²¹

Right from the early phases of its introduction in the district, Africans had shown their reluctance to pay the Hut Tax. The government also observed this active resistance in some parts of Chipata district. The Administrator for North-Eastern Rhodesia, Robert Codrington, in his first report on the

collection of Hut Tax, could not help but mention that some people had moved their villages into remote parts of the district where they hoped not to be reached by tax collectors.²²

Apart from the Hut Tax, Africans in Chipata district detested the land reservation policy embarked upon by the colonial authorities in 1903 which had led to the creation of reserves for Africans. Initially, however, European settler farmers allowed African peasant farmers to continue living on their estates as tenants on condition that they worked for them for two months in a year. This system had been copied from southern Nyasaland (Malawi) where it operated on settler cotton plantations as *thangata* (rent-in-labour). African peasant farmers in Chipata district, however, did not want to be limited in their agricultural enterprise as pieces of land allotted to them on settler plantations were very small. They found conditions of *thangata* “too irksome” to tolerate.²³ Consequently, they began to encroach on land set aside for the exclusive use of their white landlords, in this way defying the colonial land policy. Mckerrow, a European tobacco planter complained that Africans resident on settler farms did not confine their cultivation to one area in the vicinity of their huts, but picked and chose such areas as they wanted for cultivation.²⁴ These encroachments became a constant source of conflict between the white settlers and African peasant farmers.

It was further observed that in order to alleviate the shortage of land in the African reserves, some peasant farmers had reacted by completely encroaching on European-owned farms. For instance, Farm 82 and Farm 83 which belonged to Mr Jollyman and the North Charterland and Exploration Company (N.C.E.Co.), respectively had been taken up illegally by Ngoni peasant farmers.²⁵ Additionally, seven other villages of Chief Mpezeni were on Farm 31 which they had “cut to pieces.”²⁶ Others still marched on land which belonged to the Dutch Reformed Church mission station at Magwero where they later started to pay a one shilling annual rent per individual to the mission station in order to cultivate crops.²⁷

When the brunt of the creation of further African reserves began to take its toll on African peasant farmers in the late 1920s and 1930s, Paramount Chief Mpezeni took the government head on. In 1929 he complained to the Acting Governor for Northern Rhodesia, A.W.M.S. Griffin that many parts of the reserves in Chipata district consisted of unusable land.²⁸ Griffin, however, insisted that the land set aside by the Reserves Commission in 1924 was adequate. As a way of protest, some African peasant farmers refused to enter the reserves because of the aridity of the land. For example, those who were expected to enter the eastern section of the Chewa Reserve simply crossed into Nyasaland “rather than occupy the poorer country in this reserve.”²⁹

Another source of conflict between Ngoni peasant farmers and the settler community was over grazing land. Once more, discontent over pastureland had the covert support of Mpezeni, the Ngoni paramount chief. The Ngoni regarded their king as the owner of all cattle and land and was thus the mouthpiece of the population.³⁰ At the same time, collective expression of anti-colonial feelings was demonstrated by the refusal of some village heads to restrict their subjects’ cattle from grazing on alienated land.³¹ This friction over pasture was very common around the most fertile areas of Chipata district such as Msekera, Msipazi and on the plains of the Lutembwe River.

Chewa Forms of Resistance

As a decentralised group, the Chewa people had varied political structures through which they showed their dissatisfaction with colonial state policies. Unlike the Ngoni, the Chewa were a segmentary people whose main subject of division was the desire by junior chiefs of the Paramount Chief Kalonga Gawa Undi to be independent. The root cause of this state of affairs was that until 1938 Chief Kalonga Gawa Undi was resident in Portuguese East Africa (Mozambique).³² This made it very difficult for the paramount chief to govern properly. As a result, Chewa history was characterised by a continual struggle between the paramount chief and his sub-chiefs, led by Kawaza in Northern Rhodesia.³³ The southern Chewa kingdoms were led by Chief Kawaza while the northern ones were under Chief Mkanda. Both chiefs Mkanda and Kawaza paid weak loyalty to Kalonga Gawa Undi.³⁴

The Nyau Secret Society

Due to the decentralised nature of the kingdom, much Chewa resistance to the colonial policies on land and colonial taxation was expressed by localised protest groups, notably, the *Nyau* secret society, alias *Gule Wamkulu* (the great dance). Chewa mythology holds two theories regarding the origin of the *Nyau* secret society. The first was that *Nyau* masks were copied from the female puberty institution of *Cinamwali*, a secret Chewa institution which was exclusively attended and practised by the womenfolk.³⁵ In this case, certain zoomorphic objects (*Vinyau*) were used to inculcate the Chewa traditions in the young women who had matured into womanhood. Men who trespassed on these occasions were heavily punished by the womenfolk. Some men however became fed up with this female power, and in protest, started their own secret organisation of *Vinyau* which they coined *Gule Wamkulu*, literally emphasising the greatness of the new institution in comparison to *Cinamwali*. It was because of this background that since its founding, the *Nyau* society seemed to have picked on the woman as an instrument of ridicule and scorn. Very often, *Nyau* songs were overtly sexually provocative and directed at women.³⁶

The second myth believes that the *Nyau* society was started by a mad man called Nyanda. Nyanda liked dancing in fancy attires and invented many dance styles which often attracted many people.³⁷ When famine hit the Chewa people, Nyanda was unaffected because people who liked his dances continued to give him food. Since that time, desperate hungry men took to the bush and began to imitate Nyanda's behaviour in order to receive gifts of food from spectators. When the famine ended, these men continued to dance and formed a fraternal secret organisation which was boosted by witchcraft, medicine and magic to invoke spirits of the dead.³⁸ Like the first myth, the last one is a clear manifestation of the secular role that *Nyau* came to be associated with in traditional Chewa society in pre-colonial times.

The role of the *Nyau* society in traditional Chewa society was two-fold; firstly, it performed a religious function, and secondly, functioned in the socio-political sphere. Religiously, *Nyau* was closely

linked with ancestral veneration and territorial religious festivals. Under his function, *Nyau* was considered a medium through which people sought to normalise strained family relationships and appease the enraged lineage spirits.³⁹

In the socio-political field, *Nyau* performed three tasks. The first was in the transitional rites of death known as *Nyau ya maliro*. This type of *Nyau* dance was performed at funerals of important people to express mutual sympathy and to comfort the bereaved people, for in traditional African society people believed that mourning and burials were activities through which one demonstrated how much one cared.⁴⁰ The other social role was displayed during puberty rites where the *Nyau* played the role of castigator. Young adults who had come of age were reminded, through various tests and ordeals of the importance of good citizenship in Chewa society.⁴¹ Lastly, *Nyau* was once strongly connected with Chewa local politics due to its various myths regarding its origins. For as Linden and Linden observed, the vituperative behaviour from male performers provided some resolution of conflict within the Chewa matrilineage because the *Nyau* societies offered husbands living in their wives' village some relief from the social pressures on them, and the obscenity bound together men of different villages.⁴² Politically, therefore, the *Nyau* society acted as a "protest of reversal".

In all occasions described above, *Nyau* adherents wore masks painted with figurines representing animals, or masks caricaturing a particular human being. They performed at specially prepared arenas. Behind the masks were considered to be spirits of dead men and animals so that when the *Nyau* moved into the village from the bush or cemetery, there occurred a re-enactment of the Bantu primal myth in which men, animals, and spirits lived in harmony.⁴³

During the colonial period the *Nyau* society came to oppose the African reserves essentially because the reserves had affected the internal labour supply, driven people out of the district and was a constant source of irritation.⁴⁴ Authority to control a village group among the *Nyau* originated from a *bungwe* (committee) of individuals due to the society's autonomous nature.

As a secret brotherhood organisation whose dances were performed by masked men, offences committed by *Nyau* members against ordinary villagers, or indeed the colonial government were outside the jurisdiction of village heads. Thus, a masked *Nyau* while performing his dance could, for example, beat up his mother-in-law who may have offended him at one time or the other.⁴⁵ No offence would be taken against the culprit even if the victim knew who had beaten her because *Nyau* dancers had jury immunity. This same 'licence' which the *Nyau* masquerade had in society was extended to the politics of twentieth-century Northern Rhodesia. The *Nyau* regarded colonialism and Christianity as threats to the traditions for which the society stood. Consequently, in an effort to free itself from foreign influences, the cult reinvented itself by incorporating certain aspects of colonialism into its dances.

The *Nyau* dancers satirised the colonial administration. This began with the wearing of Caucasian masks and adopting new characters in the *dramatis personae* of *Nyau*. One of the earliest satirical characters which emerged in the drama of *Nyau* in the twentieth century was known as *Muzungu* or *Bwana* (Whiteman). He was often depicted moving in a 'car' (made of reeds) being pushed around by other masked *Nyau* characters who impersonated African chiefs. In this humorous scene full of symbolism, the *Muzungu* wore a western coat, hat and a smoking pipe. Such costume added more flavour to the satire. Indeed, costume and make-up were part of the non-verbal forms of communication in African drama and together with objects carried by the performers, they formed "visual speech".⁴⁶ The use of European style dress in *Nyau* dances was specifically meant to portray an emerging colonial society in which the district commissioner, messengers, policemen and other officials were easily identifiable figures. In spite of the fact that colonialism affected all Africans in the district, it was chiefs who were portrayed by the *Nyau* as pushers of the white man's 'car'. This satire of portraying colonial rule through chiefs actually cost chiefs respect from their subjects as they were viewed to be collaborators of the colonial administration due to their participation in tax collection and male labour recruitment.

Other inclusions in the *dramatis personae* of *Nyau* were biblical characters like The Virgin Mary, Joseph and Simon Peter who were portrayed as *Maliya*, *Yosefe* and *Simoni*, respectively. Masks were invented which held these important Christian figures in ridicule and began to appear with increasing frequency at performances.⁴⁷ This was a way of protesting against the growing influence of missionaries in the area. Africans distinguished missionaries from settler farmers and colonial administrators but took them seriously both as powerful Europeans and as religious leaders. Christianity was seen as an intrusive religious system in its own right as well as an aspect of European rule. For instance, the Dutch Reformed Church operating from the highly influential mission stations at Madzimoyo and Magwero campaigned against 'pagan' worship. According to the missionaries, *Nyau* was ungodly because they danced naked in the presence of many people and sung shameful things.⁴⁸

With the assistance of the colonial administration, *Nyau* activities were banned in 1934 in areas close to these mission stations, but the *Nyau* society retaliated by forcing all boys to boycott schools which were run by missionaries.⁴⁹ The apparent cause of antagonism was that parents preferred their children to herd livestock and thereby contribute to the well-being of their families than attend school. A more deeper reason, however, was that the western school system threatened the existence of indigenous societies of *Nyau* for boys and *Cinamwali* for girls.⁵⁰ The withdrawal of children from schools yielded the desired result because the ban on *Nyau* performances was lifted a few months later.

Apart from the use of satire in their drama, *Nyau* devotees also evaded tax payments by moving their camps into Portuguese East Africa, especially during the dry season, the most active period for tax collection. Such periodic migrations by the *Nyau* not only reduced the amount of revenue collected, but also made it difficult for settler farmers to engage African labour for their needs. The migrations additionally showed local Africans' independence from their chiefs who had come under control of the colonial government through their enforcement of the Native Authorities Ordinance of 1930. This law had given Chewa chiefs significant central authority to deal with matters which affected law and order in their respective areas.⁵¹ Many Chewa chiefs hence banned *Nyau* activities in order to please the

colonial state. As a result, increased numbers of *Nyau* members crossed the border into Portuguese East Africa where they easily assimilated into similar groups.

Since time immemorial, music has played a very important role in articulating topical issues and themes in African societies. The basic communication media in *Nyau* drama was music and dance.⁵² One humorous Chewa song common during *Nyau* shows went as follows:

<i>S'uja abwela m'madzulo</i>	It's he who comes in the evening
<i>Taona chumba</i> ⁵³ <i>uyo</i>	Look the unproductive one comes
<i>Madzulo;</i>	In the evening;
<i>Kamkonda madzila!</i>	He [who] likes eggs! ⁵⁴

Such songs proved very popular especially in scenes about the *Muzungu* character and by so doing showed African defiance of coercive colonial policies. In other songs, colonial tax collectors were likened to the *Kaluvangu* bird which was renowned for eating chicken eggs.

Music alone, however, could not always fully convey the desired meaning. In traditional African dance dramas such as *Nyau*, the lyrics of the songs must be understood in relation to the dance as a whole and not only within the historic context within which they were created and performed. A number of elements including music, dance, costume, mime, song and speech constituted traditional African drama. As Barber observed, the meaning of songs cannot be extrapolated from words alone but was conveyed by all the elements in combination.⁵⁵ Thus, *Nyau* dance drama by using this combination, was able to play a crucial role in sensitising the Chewa populace to the injustices of the British colonial system.

Cross-Border Migrations

Ordinary Chewa people also emulated the actions of *Nyau* dancers by migrating to either Nyasaland or Portuguese East Africa in order to avoid tax collectors. This mainly applied to those villagers who lived near the border with those countries. C.R.B. Draper, the Native Commissioner

complained about this problem in his correspondence with the District Commissioner on 17 November 1914 when he stated that:

As you are well aware the inhabitants of these village (on the periphery) are naturally truculent and difficult to deal with, largely owing to the proximity of a large foreign territory in which they can so easily take refuge if at any time wanted.⁵⁶

As some informants observed, many people in Chipata district had relatives across the border where they ran to at their convenience.⁵⁷ Such migrations defied coercive state policies.

Not only did the Chewa people hide in neighbouring territories, but in many cases also culled there. Peasant farmers in chiefs Mwangala and Zingalume's areas, for instance, easily found fertile land for cultivation across the border in Portuguese East Africa. In order to do their agricultural activities there, they paid a yearly rental of seven shillings six pence to the Portuguese government.⁵⁸ This was very easy to do because such arrangements were facilitated by their relatives living there.⁵⁹

Tours undertaken by tax collectors were disliked by the Africans. There was a lot of despondency in the villages each time a district commissioner arrived to collect taxes.⁶⁰ People devised other ways of evading tax payments. Some hid in the bush every time they saw government officials and stayed there for as long as one month until the tax collectors left.⁶¹ And when the district commissioner complained that there were few men in a particular village, a clever headman would say they had gone to look for employment elsewhere.⁶²

Tax collectors' visits were detested by Africans because aside from the tax which they paid, the entourage also obtained livestock, eggs and maize from them. Due to this, it became common to hear people say that befriending government messengers was advantageous because one tended to benefit from the lavish "gifts" they received from Africans in the company of the district commissioner.⁶³ Africans could not refuse to "donate" their foodstuffs to the tax collectors for fear of reprisals from the colonial authorities. If anything, Africans were not pleased in the sense that although they gave away

their foodstuffs to the district commissioner's party, many households were short of food.⁶⁴ Africans' displeasure at the government's requisitioning of their food and other injustices was expressed through songs especially at *Nyau* festivities.

Conclusion

The preceding discussion has demonstrated that African peasant farmers in Chipata district were not passive to colonial state policies which affected their agricultural activities. Colonial policies which had a bearing on African agriculture related to the formation of African reserves, imposition of colonial taxation and male labour migration. Due to the differences in ethnic organisation between the Ngoni and Chewa people, however, two different paths of resistance were adopted in Chipata district. The voice of Ngoni peasant farmers was put across through *nyau* institutions. Although the *Nyau* was a secret and at many times violent society, it did not lose its appeal to the mass of Africans in Chewa areas who saw in it an assertion of their identity against the colonists.

ENDNOTES

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CHAPTER FOUR: THE DEVELOPMENT OF AFRICAN PEASANT FARMING

Introduction

Post-Second World War developments in Europe compelled the colonial government in Northern Rhodesia to annul the dispossession of land owned by Africans and embark on agricultural development schemes. In addition to conservation and anti-soil erosion strategies adopted, the government developed extensive agro-economic schemes which brought about a small but dynamic African peasant farming class in Chipata district in the 1950s. The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate that contrary to Underdevelopment theorists, the colonial state was practical in reversing the adverse effects of its policies. The shift in Britain's policy regarding her colonies was due to the effects of the Second World War on her economy. Britain came out of the war heavily indebted and wanted the colonies to help her pay back the loans owed. Further, Britain and other imperial powers were aware that increased colonial production would serve to aid reconstruction of Western Europe in the post-war era.

Conservation, Resettlement and Rehabilitation

Prior to the close of the Second World War, few Africans, if any, in Chipata district sowed with the intention of selling the whole or large part of their crops. At the end of the war, however, Northern Rhodesia faced an acute shortage of foodstuffs, and there was a worldwide shortage of primary products. Market opportunities for increased agricultural production from the territory, therefore, were good. Furthermore, the Colonial Office was committed to raise the standards of living for Africans in all British colonies. The first post-war report from the Department of Native Affairs appeared in 1947 and set the tone of future policy. It was stated that the more leisurely days of paternal administration was phasing out and Britain was entering the field of world economic competition and of an uneasy progress in the political sphere.¹ In effect, the Crown government was noting the passing of an era and 1947 marked the beginning of nearly all modern development in Northern Rhodesia inspired by

governmental agencies rather than private enterprise. It was in this context that the Ten Year Development Plan (T.Y.D.P.) for Northern Rhodesia was finalised by April 1945. On 11 February 1947, the T.Y.D.P. was approved.² The plan allowed for expenditure of £13 million- albeit with a total expenditure of £776,000 for agriculture for the territory.³ The plan's essence, according to Makings, was based on the concept that economic and social stability must be founded on agricultural betterment.⁴ In the agricultural sector, the plan envisaged to increase extension services by recruiting more staff for the field with emphasis on African peasant farming.

Chipata district was in a position to benefit from the post-war development plans because it had for long been a major problem area due to the impact of the creation of African reserves. This was confirmed in a correspondence between the Commissioner for Native Development and the Provincial Commissioner where the former made an apt warning, thus:

The position is far too serious to permit of one mincing matters, and I should be lacking in candour if I failed to point out that in the opinion of local officials, including myself, government will be shouldering a very heavy responsibility for the consequence if they allow "Development" in more spectacular form to take priority over the extremely urgent needs of the Eastern Province.⁵

During the late 1930s a great deal had been learned about the land, people and agricultural systems of Chipata district through various studies undertaken by the Department of Agriculture. Increased agricultural productivity was largely dependent upon the adoption of improved farming techniques which had to be simple and inexpensive. By 1940, the Department of Agriculture recommended soil conservation measures to be implemented in Chipata district. The innovations were easy to understand and required minimum supervision. They involved the prohibition of cutting trees and cultivation of land on steep slopes and along watercourses.⁶ The late burning of bush fires was also proscribed. However, the lack of funds derailed the implementation of most of these programmes. It was for this reason that the District Agricultural Officer R.H. Fraser complained that the whole local

staff of the Department had for some time indignantly complained of their impotence “to make the wheels go round . . . lacking authority and powers of compulsion, their efforts are fruitless.”⁷

The colonial state embarked upon a land reclamation and resettlement programme. The first step taken by the government to resettle Africans was its purchase, *en bloc*, of the North Charterland and Exploration Company (N.C.E.Co.) concession. After protracted negotiations, the Colonial Office eventually paid £155,481 to the N.C.E.Co for an area covering 3,776,741 square miles in 1941.⁸ This was with a view to diluting the population in the congested reserves by moving Africans to planned settlements where they were to follow strict soil conservation methods. The newly acquired land was divided into blocks into which people began to move in 1941. In there, infrastructure such as roads, wells and weirs were to be built by the Water Development and Irrigation Department.⁹ The high number of dams and wells was of considerable importance to the extension of cattle ownership in the resettlement areas and to the general improvement elsewhere.

In 1942 alone, about 1,800 people were moved from the reserves to the new lands, and by the end of 1946, 182 villages with a total population of some 8,000 had been resettled.¹⁰ Among the earliest villages resettled from the most distraught Ngoni Reserve were Ngocho, Chipungo, Chingoni, Lukezo, Kampala, Masala Jere, Nyandeka, Michumo and Lufu.¹¹ This group of villages formed what became known as the Chipangali and Rukuzye resettlement schemes. In addition, in the years between 1947 and 1949, certain unoccupied European owned farms were purchased directly by the government for the resettlement of Africans. To provide additional land to Africans, Farms 22, 31, 82 and 83, a total of 42 square miles, were bought by the government after the purchase of the North Charterland Concession.¹² In 1952, the Development Authority set aside a further £4,270 for resettlement in Chipata district.¹³

The type of agricultural method adopted in the resettled areas was called Ten-Yards though it widely became known as *tenyadis*.¹⁴ By this system was meant leaving strips of uncultivated land, ten paces wide and between each strip of uncultivated land, forty paces wide. These strips were to follow

the contours which were pegged out at intervals by staff of the Department of Agriculture. After that African peasants were at liberty to make their gardens in the normal way with no restriction other than the averting of the non-cultivation areas. This system of cultivation was extremely unpopular because African peasant farmers were able to recognise that one fifth of their land was thrown out of cultivation by the ten yard strips.¹⁵ They were also not efficient in the prevention of soil erosion. The ten-yard method of cultivation had been adopted because it was simple to understand and represented a system which could be implemented without much delay. It had been estimated that the control measure would be sufficient in the new areas for at least fifteen years before it could be substituted for contour ridging.

Consequently, the ten-yard method was abandoned in 1944 and replaced by a system of terraces or banks along contours at a vertical interval of about thirty inches. These contours, too, were selected, surveyed and pegged out by the staff of the Department of Agriculture while the building of the terraces was done by African peasant farmers themselves.¹⁶ Those who failed to implement the new farming method were either fined or simply imprisoned.¹⁷ These contour ridges were built up to a base width of not less than six feet and a height of more than six inches in the first year, and were increased yearly by at least one foot in base width and six inches in height until the ridge was big enough not to break or allow water to spill over.¹⁸ The extension of conservation of gardens by the contour ridging method was to be confined to those areas where it was most urgently required, or which were likely to deteriorate. Chief Mpezeni's village and other areas in the vicinity were to benefit from this measure due to congestion and soil erosion. By early 1947, the District Commissioner was able to record that fields which had adopted contour ridges were excellent as the size and condition of the maize crop was that associated with in February rather than January and that he expected a good harvest.¹⁹ However, the achievements of these measures were sluggish.

The Peasant Farming Scheme (P.F.S.)

In view of the slowness in the transformation of the village agricultural system, especially where pressure on land was intense, the government felt that in addition to normal extension work an

“impact scheme” should be introduced in the district. For such a system, progressive African peasant farmers could be relieved of the economic and social difficulties of village life. In light of the above, the P.F.S. was developed experimentally in 1948 in Chief Kawaza’s area in Katete district where a block of ten farms was formed. According to the principles of the P.F.S., the peasant farmers recruited to occupy the demarcated farms were to be successful farmers before being allocated a unit. They were also required to grow the traditional food crops the territory needed for urban consumption, and exportable cash crops.²⁰ Among other reasons for the implementation of the P.F.S. was that the government hoped to benefit financially from exportable cash crops such as groundnuts and tobacco, revolutionise traditional farming, stabilise the rural communities, and specifically, anchor the African producer to the land by providing him/her a means of earning an income on the land instead of merely extracting requirements from it.²¹

From Katete district, the P.F.S. was implemented in Chipata district in 1949 when a block of 26 farms was set up in the Kanyanja area in the heart of the Ngoni Reserve. In subsequent years, peasant farming schemes were established in other parts of Northern Rhodesia.²² The factor that limited immediate progress, however, was shortage of development funds. But in January 1954, the Secretary of State for Colonies agreed to provide £240,000 under the Colonial Development and Welfare Scheme while the Northern Rhodesian government provided a further £107,000 to develop the P.F.S. in the whole territory.²³ The total sum was credited to the Peasant Farming Revolving Fund which was to finance the establishment of about 400 farms each year.²⁴

By providing medium term loans for simple farm planning, land clearing, implements and oxen, the P.F.S. enabled African subsistence cultivators in suitable areas to be established as improved farmers.²⁵ In planning this scheme, it was envisaged that it would not violate either the traditional social structure or the customary land tenure.²⁶ Commending the P.F.S., the Provincial Agricultural Officer had this to say:

It cannot be emphasised that this scheme is the most important facet of rural development . . . It is only through the creation of a class of landed gentry, farming on a commercial scale and producing the necessary cash crops that a solid foundation can be laid for the Eastern Province agricultural industry. Penny packet production from the scrums (*sic*) of village subsistence agriculture cannot create wealth of any kind.²⁷

Arising from the P.F.S. was the Parish System. This was a group of villages with a centralised social and economic infrastructure including wells, schools, roads, business centres and clinics. Around these villages were to be selected individuals operating under the P.F.S. In praising the viability of the scheme, the Acting Secretary for Native Affairs, W.F. Stubbs stated that:

With the growth and establishment of the Parish System, it is quite possible that we may get to the stage, and I hope we will, which is followed in Europe, where a parish centre is established, and in that centre, instead of the African village as at present, would live the craftsmen, blacksmiths, carpenters and other tradesmen who are not directly concerned with agriculture.²⁸

Extension services were offered to all peasant farmers under the Kanyanja Peasant Farming Scheme. Between 1952 and 1953 the Kanyanja area was declared a Parish. The district had fifteen parishes divided as follows: thirteen for the Chewa, and one apiece for the Ngoni and the Kunda people.²⁹

Once settled the farmer would realise he/she could produce much better yields by applying new techniques of farming such as the use of kraal and green manure, rather than depending on fallowed pieces of land. The peasant farmers had to sign a Peasant Farming Agreement (P.F.A.) which set the terms of occupancy, including rights to the land and obligations although the land was held under customary land tenure.³⁰ Some of the conditions attached for settlement were that the African farmer would reside upon and cultivate the farm and manage his/her livestock according to instructions of the Department of Agriculture and Department of Veterinary Services. The size of the farms varied from 18 to 30 acres of which nine to 18 acres, respectively, at a time, were under plough cultivation.³¹

The Department of Agriculture stumped and cleared the land allocated to the African peasant farmers. The African peasant farmers were issued with implements, seeds and fertilisers for the first year's sowing, and with oxen where applicable. It was noted, for instance, that farming implements on the scale of one single mouldboard plough, one ridging plough, one scotch cart and four oxen per farm had been issued in the Khokwe Peasant Farming Block in Chief Chanje's area.³² Further, under the supervision of an African Agricultural Assistant, Musa Banda, peasant farmers under that scheme had been shown how to cultivate in the approved manner.³³

Principally, there were two types of African peasant farmers under the P.F.S., that is, Block Farmers and Individual Farmers. The block farm catered primarily for the African peasant farmer who had no capital assets of his/her own and who in any case would probably open a new field in the near future. Many former labour migrants opted for this type of farm. The other type catered for the progressive individual who generally had some tangible assets of his/her own and had already developed his/her holding to a great extent. Such farmers were naturally unwilling to abandon their partly developed fields to take up virgin land entailing much hard work to break up elsewhere.³⁴ It cost between £130 and £170 on the one hand, and £40 on the other, to open up and establish a peasant farm in a block of farms and an individual farm, respectively.³⁵ Improved Individual Farms cost less because many of these farmers already owned a certain amount of equipment, stock and the farms were also partly cleared of tree stumps. The loans given out had to be repaid within ten years – the first payment not due until the end of the second year of farming.³⁶ The original ten farmers under this scheme completed their first full year in 1948 with a fair production of 245 bags of grain and 190 bags of pulses with a total income amounting to £475 15s. 8d., while each peasant farmer received an average of £47 11s. 6d.³⁷ By 1953, the first farmers under the P.F.S. were earning an average of £75 per annum.³⁸ Each farmer had by 1951 made a substantial repayment of £40 on the loans obtained which averaged £113.³⁹

However, in the early 1950s, several agricultural and district administrative officers working in the Eastern Province started to advocate for the scrapping off of the individual improved peasant farmers. Their apprehension was due to the difficulty foreseen in supervising a very large number of individual farmers scattered throughout the district unlike those who were cultivating under the block system.⁴⁰ However, many capable and progressive peasant farmers who had improved their farming methods were reluctant to abandon their own developed possessions in order to take up a block farm on virgin land somewhere else. The individual farms proved very popular in regions where large areas of good arable land were not available. In fact, the Provincial Commissioner also agreed with the farmers when he said that the stage did not appear set yet for too sudden expansion and that it seemed a pity to talk in terms of changing a system which was only beginning to establish itself.⁴¹ Individual farms proved so popular that by 1957 they outnumbered those under the block system as Table IV on the next page shows.⁴² Therefore, although a lot of efforts were directed towards the block farms, individual farms also received substantial assistance from the Department of Agriculture.

TABLE IV: AFRICAN FARMERS UNDER THE PEASANT FARMING SCHEME IN CHIPATA DISTRICT, 1950-1964

FARMING SEASON	NUMBER OF BLOCK FARMERS	NUMBER OF INDIVIDUAL FARMERS
1950-1951	26	0
1951-1952	34	0
1952-1953	59	4
1953-1954	83	20
1954-1955	112	55
1955-1956	154	134

1956-1957	193	346
1957-1958	235	542
1958-1959	238	668
1959-1960	273	734
1960-1961	275	662
1961-1962	282	694
1962-1963	**1 100	
1963-1964	**1 206	

Source: N.R.G., *Eastern Province Annual Reports of the Department of Agriculture for the Years 1950-64*.

**From 1962 there was no distinction between Individual Block Farmers in the nomenclature of African peasant farmers.

Both types of farms, however, proved very successful such that by 1953 it was reported that the experience in Chipata district had been so encouraging that there was need to extend the P.F.S. in any part of the territory.⁴³ The District Commissioner also observed in the same year that there could be little doubt that the P.F.S. was of very great benefit to Africans.⁴⁴

The remarkable development in African agriculture in the district was due to the government's agricultural policy in the Eastern Province.⁴⁵ The P.F.S. rekindled enthusiasm on the part of the ordinary villagers for growing crops such as groundnuts, maize, millet, beans and sorghum for sale. Additionally, the United Kingdom Groundnut Mission's visit to Northern Rhodesia in 1946 drew attention to the global deficiency in vegetable oils and fats. It was realised that the low food stocks seemed unavoidable unless supplies were improved. The on was so serious that the British government even set up a Ministerial Committee on World Food Supplies under the chairmanship of

the Prime Minister. The committee recommended that the only viable solution lay in increasing colonial agricultural production.⁴⁶

Thus, a ready market for groundnuts from Chipata district was readily available.⁴⁷ In 1947 Natal Common and Virginia Bunch varieties of groundnut seed were distributed freely to African peasant farmers.⁴⁸ Improved cultivation techniques were encouraged and gradually adopted by African peasant farmers. This way, groundnut production increased. Previously African peasant farmers had been growing groundnuts solely for their consumption. The espousal of the crop under the P.F.S. as a cash crop influenced its widespread cultivation by African peasant farmers. Between 1948 and 1950 members of the P.F.S. received 51s. 6d. for a 180lb bag of groundnuts while non-members were paid 30s.⁴⁹ This was an incentive to the members of the P.F.S. Consequently, the number of bags of groundnuts sold at official markets increased from nine hundred in the 1951-52 farming season, to 22,122 bags two years later.⁵⁰ Such a feat in cash cropping did not come about incidentally. It was the result of deliberate cumulative government policy, embodied upon some five years before of encouraging groundnut production by increasing the producer price and guaranteeing a market.⁵¹

The price of groundnuts rose from 24s. per bag in 1947 to 60s. in 1952.⁵² The latter price proved to be decisive in the development of the sector. At that price per bag, groundnuts were regarded as a highly profitable crop in comparison to maize selling at 16s. 6d. per bag.⁵³ In 1953, however, the price of groundnuts fell to 51s. per bag, but the price and sales of groundnuts recovered three years later.⁵⁴ As a result, there was a growing desire of the rural population to earn cash from their agricultural activities in addition to securing their food supply. Another reason that accounted for the success of the groundnut sub-sector was the Department of Agriculture's sustained effort in the provision of extension services to African peasant farmers by encouraging the use of selected seed, close and early planting and improved weed control.⁵⁵ The measures improved the method of cultivation and yield per acre.

Groundnuts grown in Chipata district were generally of high quality, and further efforts were made to improve them for the export market. It was for this reason that the giant Chalimbana variety was distributed to African peasant farmers in order to replace the Natal Common and Virginia Bunch varieties in the 1950s. The Chalimbana variety had a lower oil content compared to the Natal Common and Virginia Bunch varieties hence making it ideal for confectionery purposes.⁵⁶ The successes achieved in this industry made the Financial Secretary for Northern Rhodesia to proudly acknowledge in 1956 that it was satisfactory to record that groundnuts from Chipata district appeared to be establishing themselves in overseas markets where they mainly found use in the confectionery trade.⁵⁷ Exports of groundnuts from Chipata district were mainly destined for markets in South Africa, Western Europe and Canada. As a result of paying more to members of cooperative societies, groundnut production increased and was a major source of revenue for African peasant farmers in the district throughout the 1950s and 1960s.⁵⁸

The widespread cultivation of traditional crops like groundnuts by African peasant farmers under the P.F.S. was in line with the scheme's object. It had been designed in such a way that the peasant farmer would grow traditional foods because he/she knew how to grow them and because the territory also needed them for local consumption. It was hoped by the time satisfaction by the government in the cultivation of traditional crops had been attained, the improved farming practices would be familiar to the African peasant farmers to enable them diversify into growing different crops.⁵⁹

Although groundnuts remained the main cash crop grown by African peasant farmers, other crops such as tobacco, maize and cotton were also gradually adopted. See Table V below for details.

TABLE V: CASH CROPS SOLD IN CHIPATA DISTRICT, 1951-1962

FARMING SEASON	COTTON (lb)	MAIZE (lb)	BURLEY TOBACCO (lb)	TURKISH TOBACCO (lb)
1951-52	35 631	58 500	24 000	*
1952-53	62 678	64 934	20 696	*
1953-54	43 531	39 528	44 774	*
1954-55	48 875	65 954	6 876	*
1955-56	28 794	87 534	6 890	6 714
1956-57	*	49 397	12 154	7 902
1957-58	*	2 510	19 688	24 809
1958-59	*	8 960	29 647	26 721
1959-60	*	36 311	64 621	110 696
1960-61	*	24 229	247 662	58 266
1961-62	*	*	225 658	57 256

Sources: N.R.G., *Department of Agriculture Annual Reports* and *Eastern Province Annual Reports for the Department of Agriculture for the Years 1950-1962*.

*Data for these seasons not available for the district.

The P.F.S. was decisive in the emerging African peasant differentiation in the district. The Agricultural Officer in charge of the Ngoni area, H.T. Bayldon, observed in 1950 that there was a new improved farmer in the Kanyanja Parish, Lazarous Lukhero who had just returned from South Africa with a lot of money. He had purchased a two furrow mouldboard plough from Salisbury, had been

allocated nine acres and had also built a brick and an aluminium roofed store at a cost of £100.⁶⁰ Other prominent farmers in the Parish were Yohanne Tembo and another known simply as Ajisoni.⁶¹ Two outstanding examples of private agricultural enterprise existed in the area in 1952; these being Stedman Phiri of Muma village and Headman Mdika. Of the two, Mdika had the best organised and largest farm and had asked to buy a shot gun to protect his field whose application the District Assistant supported.⁶²

The District Commissioner noted in 1958 that there were seven individual African peasant farmers dotted throughout the north eastern part of Chief Nzamane's area in the Kwanji Parish. This was in addition to one block of twenty farms near Chikulu Mission, a further eight farms near the Mtetezi Dam, and another small block of four farms in the Chambakata village block area.⁶³ Such African peasant farmers had taken up improved farming methods.⁶⁴ One of the most thriving individual farmers there was Wodwala Soko who had thirty acres under cultivation and had even won a prize of a double furrow plough as the best peasant farmer in the Eastern Province in 1957.⁶⁵

The numerous scattered individual peasant farmers were especially useful in demonstrating the techniques and values of improved farming because in many cases, they still lived in the villages with the rest of the Africans unlike those cultivating under the Parishes. Touring Chief Sayiri's chiefdom in 1958, P.F. Scheme, the District Commissioner, observed that there were 54 improved individual African peasant farmers, all with a heartening enthusiasm for the benefits of improved agricultural methods, and provided demonstrations of their efficiency with the rest of the community.⁶⁶ In this way, the benefits of the P.F.S. were immense.

Peasant differentiation in the district was further widened by the establishment, in 1953, of the Eastern Province African Farming Improvement Fund (E.P.A.F.I.F.). The Fund was established with an initial capital of £26,928.⁶⁷ This scheme worked so closely with the P.F.S. that it may well be considered to have been an appendage to it rather than an entirely separate unit. The E.P.A.F.I.F. was administered by a board whose chairman was the Provincial Commissioner and the Provincial

Agricultural Officer being the executive officer. The Fund was raised from a levy of 2s. 6d. per bag of maize exported to the Grain Marketing Board (G.M.B.) in Lusaka which was responsible for maize marketing throughout the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland.⁶⁸ The object of the Fund was to encourage improved farming among African peasant farmers. It did so mainly by giving bonuses to farmers for good farming practices.

The major innovation promoted was crop rotation. Over a four year period, maize fields were to be initially planted with green manure followed by maize fertilised with superphosphate, followed by a pulse crop, then maize grown with farmyard manure.⁶⁹ African farmers received bonuses for using manure, averaging £12 each for the fully established field, and in 1958 alone the Fund spent £2,199.15 for good farming practices while £464.26 was expended as an Improved Village Bonus.⁷⁰ These bonuses were paid to growers early in February when crops were still in the fields and reserves of cash and food in homes were low.⁷¹ It also subsidised the purchase of basic farm equipment, improved seed, and fertilisers. Money for soil conservation and water development programmes was also given by the Fund. A number of dams and wells for irrigation were constructed under this Fund at a cost of £9,380 between 1949 and 1950 in the Ngoni area.⁷² In this way, the Fund made African peasant farming an attractive proposition, thereby raising its popularity among Africans. The Manure Bonus Scheme served an exceedingly useful purpose and produced the desired effect of popularising the green manuring practices.⁷³

So flourishing had African peasant farming become in the district that others even began to engage in agro-processing. In the Ngoni area, a successful dairy project was started by a peasant farmers' cooperative society due to high production of milk. Apart from selling milk at the *Boma*, the cooperative society also started the manufacture of butter. In 1950, Bayldon commented that the dairy was running at top pressure and the supply of butter was sufficient to meet the requirements of the district for the following two months.⁷⁴ The butter was sold mostly to Europeans in government service, Indian shopkeepers, African clerks, messengers and police in town.⁷⁵ African-owned sugar

plantations also increased in the district. Previously, sugar cane had been grown extensively in *dimba* gardens and assumed importance in local commerce where it was mostly bought in individual sticks for chewing by the local people.⁷⁶ One outstanding place where cane came to assume commercial production was in the Sumbi Farm Block, situated north of the Sumbi Hills on the plains of the Lutembwe River in Chief Mishoro's locale. There, African peasant farmers created an industrious sugar processing factory in the mid-1950s. The block consisting of five farms grew sugar cane under irrigation by pumping water from the Lutembwe. Touring the region in 1962, the District Commissioner remarked that:

These five farmers cut approximately 160 tons of sugar cane this year, from which they produced approximately 16 tons of jaggery. This produce is marketed through the Agricultural Department and sold at £4½ per lb. A good portion of the jaggery is sold locally as well. The jaggery is produced with the aid of a crusher and four boilers – quite an efficient little factory.⁷⁷

The farmers powered the two engines in their sugar factory using diesoline. To improve the quality of sugar they used the open pan method by means of a simplified form of the single sulphitation process.⁷⁸

Cooperative Societies and Crop Marketing

Improvements in African agriculture in Chipata district were also due to the role of producers' cooperative societies which emerged in the post-Second World War period. An efficient marketing system was necessary to meet the demands of commercial crop production by African peasant farmers. The Director of Agriculture also acknowledged that the success of the P.F.S was dependent, to a large extent, on the development of efficient marketing arrangements for the disposal of farm produce.⁷⁹ This was in line with the government's view in the post-war era of promoting rural development through marketing organisations developed on the lines of cooperatives.⁸⁰ This was how the first cooperative society was formed in the Eastern Province at Petauke became operational on 1 January 1947.

The Department of Cooperative Societies, formed in 1947, posted its first representative at Chipata in July 1948 in order to set the cooperative movement in the Eastern Province in motion. Work soon began through local producers' cooperative societies which were responsible for setting up and running buying stations in rural parts of the district. Each station had a buyer who covered an average of seven to eight villages.⁸¹ These societies in turn constituted a marketing union. In Chipata district, the earliest cooperative society was formed in the Kunda Valley area.⁸² In 1952, all existing cooperative societies in the district formed a mother body called Chimi Cooperative Marketing Union (A.C.M.U.) to coordinate their activities. By 1964, the district had a total of fifteen cooperative societies as shown below.

TABLE VI: COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES IN CHIPATA DISTRICT, 1948-1964

COOPERATIVE SOCIETY	YEAR ESTABLISHED	NUMBER OF MEMBERS	NUMBER OF BUYING STATIONS
Kunda valley	1948	491	8
Kanyanja	1950	228	6
Mgubudu-Kasenga	1952	384	5
Kapatanthope	1952	265	7
Makungwa	1954	151	6
Chikungu	1955	287	8
Kawala	1955	96	5
Chiparamba	1955	244	8

Khokwe	1956	35	1
Sinda Misale	1956	154	2
Mboza	1957	101	5
Chingazi	1957	137	6
Chalumbe	1957	106	6
Chipangali	1957	61	1
Feni	1961	40	4
TOTAL		2,780	78

Sources: N.R.G., *Annual Reports on Native Affairs for the Years 1947-1960* and *Annual Reports of the Registrar of Cooperative Societies for the Years 1947-63*.

The Kunda Cooperative Society which started operations on 1 January 1949, mainly marketed maize and cotton. Its central buying station was based at Masumba in Chief Mnkhanya's region. Touring the station in 1952, the District Officer D.J. Lewis noted that the marketing of crop was assured and African growers had no fear of having surplus crops left on their hands or having to sell cheaply to exploitative Indian traders.⁸³ The new circumstances not only assured the people of food security, but equally ensured that the area became stabilised by retaining able-bodied men in the villages because of the inflow of cash. The value of crops purchased at Masumba in 1952 is indicated below:

TABLE VII: CROP PURCHASES AT MASUMBA BUYING STATION, 1952

COMMODITY	SALES/£
Maize	3 500
Cotton	1 500
Kaffircorn	120
Nuts	60
Rice	30

TOTAL	5 210
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Source: N.A.Z. EP4/2/45, Fort Jameson District Tour Report No. 13 of 1952

The statistics above show remarkable progress in African peasant agriculture. That such large sums of money flowed into just one buying station in the valley shows how developed African peasant agriculture had become in the district, all due to colonial state interventions. The valley has been deliberately cited here because it had for long been prone to acute food shortages even during times of plenty elsewhere. So incredible was the progress among the Kunda people that whereas the crop situation there had been described as ‘disgraceful’ in the 1930s⁸⁴, the situation had completely changed in the 1950s and 1960s with government officials using adjectives such as ‘generally good’, ‘fair’, ‘extremely good’, ‘very good’ and ‘abundance’ in describing the region’s food security.⁸⁵ Under such circumstances, the District Commissioner proudly acknowledged in 1957 that his area alone was enjoying an annual income of £168,000 from African peasant agriculture.⁸⁶ Such aspects of commercial crop production contributed to the growing prosperity of Chipata district, and reflected the emergence of the district from a subsistence agricultural economy into a commercial agricultural economy.

But in the 1957/58 season, problems of marketing came to a head, especially with regard to the sale of maize and groundnuts.⁸⁷ For instance, the price of groundnuts exported through the port of Beira via Salima in Nyasaland fell from £66 to £55 per ton, while the price for local consumption dropped from £51 to £49 per ton.⁸⁸ Many peasant farmers failed to dispose of their crop due to low prices being offered on the market. At the same time, a considerable export trade in groundnuts had emerged in the district which also posed teething challenges regarding overseas sale. In this light, the Eastern Province Cooperative Marketing Association (E.P.C.M.A.) was established in 1958 as a loose federation of the province’s three cooperative unions.⁸⁹ To facilitate the export of confectionery-quality groundnuts, the marketing association installed Gunson’s electric graders at Chipata in order to reduce on the use of the inefficient manual selection of the nuts.⁹⁰ The effectiveness of the E.P.C.M.A was shown by the fact

that by 1960, confectionery-grade groundnuts averaged £78 per ton c.i.f. London and the African peasant farmer received £37 per ton.⁹¹

The three-tier cooperative marketing structure employed in the district was significant in the growth of cash cropping among African peasant farmers. Apart from providing marketing facilities, cooperatives established a system of interaction amongst peasant farmers which facilitated the flow of ideas.⁹² Most of the primary societies also opened shops for selling agricultural implements, seed, fertilisers as well as a wide range of other consumer goods. Some even set up grinding mills at their headquarters in the mid-1950s.⁹³ These lightened the burden of women from the toil of pounding maize meal using pestles and mortars. They also encouraged members to implement improved agricultural techniques. By and large, the African peasant farmer had far greater access to loan funds in the cooperative societies and thus owned more cattle and ploughs than the ordinary farmer who did not belong to any.⁹⁴ Members of cooperatives also received higher prices for their produce than non-members. Some of these African peasants even built brick houses with iron sheets while others bought bicycles, cattle, sewing machines, guns and radios.⁹⁵ Cooperative societies also owned scotch carts of the steel-wheeled and pneumatic-tyred type which they lent to their members who did not own any and in this way became handy especially during harvest time. A large number of the improved African peasant farmers owned carts and these had become an absolutely necessary part of their agricultural equipment.⁹⁶

The Mechanisation of Farms

Ox-drawn ploughs became an important constituent of the African peasant farming industry in the post-war era in the district. However, the Department of Agriculture cautiously encouraged the use of ploughs in the district as it was fully aware of the benefits as well as the dangers associated with ploughs if not properly used. Both of these observations had been ably demonstrated in the Southern Province of Northern Rhodesia.⁹⁷ For this reason, for several years after the war, a permit was required for the purchase of a plough as applicants were required to accept conditions regarding the proper

maintenance of the implement and the adoption of contour ploughing.⁹⁸ Consequently, the Department of Agriculture took it upon itself to spread the use of ploughs under close supervision. While the entire district had only three ploughs in 1935, these had risen steadily to about 5,560 by 1962.⁹⁹ The use of ploughs greatly increased mechanisation levels on farms in the district, not only among those who owned them but others as well. This was because borrowing of implements such as ploughs among kinsmen was widespread and occurred within the traditional framework of assistance and social obligations. For example, a plough-owning family would upon completion of its cultivation lend the implement to relatives or hire it out to others at a small fee. For instance, in Chief Nzamane's area, there were 26 plough owners, six of whom also had scotch carts.¹⁰⁰

Additionally, the early 1960s witnessed the acquisition and use of tractors by some wealthy African peasant farmers. The acquisition of tractors by Africans was also carefully watched to ensure that the machines were used in a proper manner and did not lead to bad farming on a much bigger scale than was possible through the use of ox-drawn ploughs and the hoe. The Department of Agriculture encouraged a system of subsidised contract ploughing so that the benefits of mechanisation could trickle down to as many peasant farmers as possible. In this regard, it subsidised the cultivation of peasant farms whose owners did not have tractors. This was done by paying £1 per acre cultivated while the owner of the field was also required to pay the tractor owner £1. 5s. per acre ploughed.¹⁰¹ In 1963, for example, two tractor owners in Chief Chanje's area had ploughed a total of 161 acres under that arrangement.¹⁰² These emergent African farmers began to lean more on the right to make wills and to obtain freehold tenure of land which symbolised a significant new prosperity in the district.

The success of colonial state interventions in African peasant agriculture was proved during the 1957/58 season which was described as the poorest in the post-war period that it would "remain in the annals of the Eastern Province as the most disastrous season experienced during the last twenty years."¹⁰³ That season was a blessing in disguise for the reason that it confirmed, on the other hand, the benefits of improved farming techniques. This was because the improved African peasant farmers had

recorded good yields with a surplus for sale whilst in areas of traditional agriculture, yields had fallen below subsistence levels and famine had crept in.¹⁰⁴ Even the heartland of the Ngoni Kingdom which for long had been the most ecologically distressed area, had increased its agricultural productivity. A district official, P. Smith summarised this when he remarked in 1962 that farming in the Ngoni area had shown intelligence and enterprise and that the fields were much better cared for than were the villages to which they belonged.¹⁰⁵ This was a manifestation that the P.F.S. had played an important role.

Conclusion

The chapter has demonstrated that the colonial state showed versatility in its relationship with the African peasantry in Chipata district because it noticed its mistakes and rectified them. The sensitivity of the Crown government to pressures exerted even by such an unsuccessful capitalist enterprise as the N.C.E.Co was demonstrated by its purchase of the company's concession in 1941. The government also instituted various soil conservation measures which helped to promote African peasant agriculture. The most important innovation introduced was the Peasant Farming Scheme which emphasised the growing of cash crops such as groundnuts, beans, tobacco and sorghum by African peasant farmers. The increased adoption of ploughs and tractors was vital in expanding the acreage under cultivation. The change in Britain's policy concerning African agriculture was due to the negative effects of the Second World War on her economy as she became the most heavily indebted country in Europe and wanted the colonies to help her. Additionally, Britain realised that increased colonial production would serve to assist in the reconstruction of Western Europe embarked upon after the war. The chapter has also examined how the formation of cooperative societies improved the marketing of African peasant produce. As a result, a sprouting class of rich African peasant farmers came about in the district in the 1950s.

ENDNOTES

1. N.R.G., *Department of Native Affairs Annual Report for the Year 1947* (Lusaka: Government Printer, 1948), p. i.
2. N.R.G., *Legislative Council Debates Hansard No. 56 (Official Verbatim Report of the 3rd Session of the 8th Council, 30th November 1946 - 12th February, 1947)* (Lusaka: Government Printer, 1948), p. 779.
3. John A. Hellen, *Rural Economic Development in Zambia, 1890-1964* (Munich: Welt Forum Verlag, 1968), p. 137.
4. S.M. Makings, *Agricultural Change in Northern Rhodesia, 1945-1965* (Berkeley: Food Research Institute, 1966), p. 205.
5. N.A.Z., KDG5/1, vol. II. Commissioner for Native Development to Provincial Commissioner.
6. Interview, Ziononga Banda, Undi village, Chipata District, 07/11/2009.
7. N.A.Z., SEC2/178, Extension of the Fort Jameson Reserves, 1940 contained in District Commissioners' Conferences, Eastern Province, 1936-57.
8. N.A.Z., SEC3/305, The North Charterland Award, 3rd October, 1941. For a detailed discussion on the conflict that arose between the North Charterland and Exploration Company and the Colonial Office, see, for example, Sundhrabala Dhasaratha Naidoo, 'North Charterland

- Exploration Company Land Dispute with the Colonial Office, 1895-1941', M.A. Dissertation, University of Zambia, 1983, pp. 45-54.
9. N.A.Z., EP4/2/28, Fort Jameson District Tour Report No. 15 of 1950.
 10. Joseph Phillip Mtisi, 'The Economic Impact of Colonial Rule on Eastern Zambia, 1900-1953: the Experiences of Chipata and Petauke Districts', Ph.D Thesis, University of Ibadan, 1979, p. 174.
 11. Interviews, John Nyirongo, Zala village, Chipata District, 29/10/2009 and George Mwanza, Mtenguleni, Chipata District, 29/10/2009. See also N.R.G., *Ministry of African Agriculture Department of Agriculture Annual Report for the Year 1960* (Lusaka: Government Printer, 1961), p. 16.
 12. N.A.Z., EP4/11/31, Ngoni Land Utilisation Survey, 1954-55 by P. Greening and W. Priestley.
 13. Hellen, *Rural Economic Development*, p. 176.
 14. *Tenyadis* was a corrupted pronunciation of the term "Ten Yards" by the local people.
 15. N.A.Z., SEC/AG/58, Notes on Meeting held at Lusaka on 13th June, 1944 to Discuss Future Policy with regard to Native Settlement in the Fort Jameson District. See also N.R.G., *Department of Agriculture Annual Report for the Year 1944* (Lusaka: Government Printer, 1945), p. 5.
 16. Interview, Ntengeni Phiri, Undi village, Chipata District, 07/11/2009. See also N.A.Z., EP4/2/56, Fort Jameson District Tour Report No. 4 of 1953; *Department of Agriculture Annual Report for the Year 1944*, p. 8.
 17. Interview, Banda. See also N.A.Z., EP4/2/107, Fort Jameson District Tour Report No. 16 of 1958; N.A.Z., EP4/2/124, Fort Jameson Tour Report No. 3 of 1959 and on the same file, Tour Report No. 7 of 1959.
 18. N.R.G., *Department of Agriculture Annual Report for the Year 1946* (Lusaka: Government Printer, 1947), p. 8.
 19. N.A.Z., EP4/2/10 Fort Jameson District Tour Report No. 2 of 1947. See also N.R.G., *Legislative Council Debates Hansard No. 53 (Official Verbatim Report of the 2nd Session of the 8th Council, 27th March - 6th April, 1946)*, (Lusaka: Government Printer, 1947), p. 367.
 20. Chewe M. Chabatama, 'Peasant Farming, the State and Food Security in North-Western Province of Zambia, 1902-1964', Ph.D Thesis, University of Toronto, 1999, p. 289.
 21. N.A.Z. SEC2/336, Peasant Farm Blocks: Experimental Scheme, 1948-49. See also Chabatama, 'Peasant Farming', pp. 287-9.
 22. Hellen, *Rural Economic Development*, p. 139.
 23. Hellen, *Rural Economic Development*, p. 139. See also N.R.G., *Department of Agriculture Annual Report for the Year 1960*, p. 13.
 24. Hellen, *Rural Economic Development*, p. 139.
 25. N.R.G., *Department of Agriculture Annual Report for the Year 1960*, p. 13.
 26. N.A.Z., SEC2/336, Peasant Farm Blocks.
 27. N.R.G., *Ministry of African Agriculture Annual Report for the Year 1960*, p. 13.
 28. N.R.G., *Legislative Council Debates Hansard No. 71 (Official Verbatim Report of the 3rd Session (Resumed) of the 9th Council, 9th June - 6th July, 1951)*, (Lusaka: Government Printer, 1952), p. 510.
 29. N.A.Z., EP4/2/28, Fort Jameson District Tour Report No. 9 of 1950.
 30. N.R.G., *Department of Agriculture Annual Report for the Year 1950* (Lusaka: Government Printer, 1951), p. 13.
 31. N.R.G., *Department of Agriculture Annual Report for the Year 1951* (Lusaka: Government Printer, 1952), p. 17.
 32. N.A.Z., EP4/2/56, Fort Jameson District Tour Report No. 12 of 1953.
 33. N.A.Z., EP4/2/56, Tour Report No. 12 of 1953.

34. N.A.Z., EP4/2/33, Department of Agriculture Eastern Province Annual Report for the Year 1955, p. 18.
35. N.A.Z., EP4/2/33, Eastern Province Annual Report for the Year 1955, pp. 14-15. See also N.R.G., *Department of Agriculture Annual Report for the Year 1 54* (Lusaka: Government Printer, 1955), p. 10.
36. N.A.Z., SEC2/336, Peasant Farm Blocks.
37. N.R.G., *Legislative Council Debates Hansard No. 71, 3rd Session of the 9th Council*, p. 533. See also *Department of Agriculture Annual Report for the Year 1951*, p. 17.
38. Hellen, *Rural Economic Development*, p. 139.
39. N.R.G., *Department of Agriculture Annual Report for the Year 1 1*, p. 17.
40. See, for example, N.R.G., *Department of Agriculture Annual Report for the Year 1951*.
41. N.A.Z., SEC2/336, Peasant Farm Blocks.
42. N.A.Z., SEC2/336, Peasant Farm Blocks. See also N.R.G., *Legislative Council Debates Hansard No. 92 (Official Verbatim Report of the 4th Session of the 10th Council, 17th June - 9th August, 1957)* (Lusaka: Government Printer, 1957), pp. 442-443.
43. N.A.Z., EP4/2/56, Fort Jameson District Tour Report No. 12 of 1953. See also N.R.G., *Department of Agriculture Annual Report for the Year 1 53* (Lusaka: Government Printer, 1954), p. 16.
44. N.A.Z., EP4/2/56 Tour Report No. 12 of 1953.
45. For instance, in 1946 three of the eight agricultural stations in Northern Rhodesia were in the Eastern Province and of the fifteen Agricultural Officers and Supervisors on field services in the territory, six were based in the province. For details, see N.R.G., *Annual Report of the Department of Agriculture for the Year 1947*.
46. Tiyambe Zeleza, 'Political Economy of British Colonial Development in Africa', *TransAfrican Journal of History*, 14 (1985), p. 147.
47. N.A.Z., SEC2/90, Fort Jameson District and Provincial Administrative Annual Reports, 1948-50.
48. N.A.Z., EP4/2/34, Department of Agriculture Eastern Province Annual Report for the Year 1957.
49. N.A.Z., SEC2/90, District and Provincial Administrative Annual Reports, 1948-50.
50. N.A.Z., EP4/2/34, Eastern Province Annual Report for the Year 1957, p. 6. See also N.R.G., *Department of Agriculture Annual Report for the Year 1 54* (Lusaka: Government Printer, 1955), p. 4; and N.R.G., *Department of Agriculture Annual Report for the Year 1957* (Lusaka: Government Printer, 1958), p. 3.
51. N.A.Z., EP4/2/34, Eastern Province Annual Report for the Year 1957, p. 6; and N.R.G., *Department of Agriculture Annual Report for the Year 1954*, p. 4.
52. See, for example, N.R.G., *Annual Report of the Ministry of Agriculture for the Year 1960*, p. 13.
53. N.R.G., *Department of Agriculture Annual Report for the Year 1960*, p. 41.
54. See, for example, N.R.G., *Department of Agriculture Annual Report for the Year 1958*, (Lusaka: Government Printer, 1959), p. 3.
55. N.A.Z., EP4/2/33, Department of Agriculture Eastern Province Annual Report for the Year 1957. See also *Department of Agriculture Annual Report for the Year 1960*, p. 4.
56. Interview, Kennedy Kanenga, Msekera Regional Research Station, Chipata District, 27/10/2009.
57. N.R.G., *Legislative Council Debates Hansard No. 92 of the 4th Session of the 10th Council*, p. 442. See also N.R.G., *Legislative Council Debates, Hansard No. 105 (Official Verbatim Report of the 3rd Session (Resumed) of the 11th Council, 19th June - 7th September, 1962)*, (Lusaka: Government Printer, 1963), p. 918.
58. See, for example, Hellen, *Rural Economic Development*.

59. N.A.Z., SEC2/336, Peasant Farm Blocks.
60. N.A.Z., EP4/2/28, Fort Jameson District Tour Report No. 2 of 1950.
61. N.A.Z., EP4/2/28, Tour Report No. 2 of 1950.
62. N.A.Z., EP4/2/45, Fort Jameson District Tour Report No. 2 of 1952.
63. N.A.Z., EP4/2/107, Fort Jameson District Tour Report No. 4 of 1958.
64. N.A.Z., EP4/2/107, Tour Report No. 4 of 1958; see also on the same file, Tour Report No. 16 of 1958.
65. N.A.Z., EP4/2/107, Tour Report No. 4 of 1958.
66. N.A.Z., EP4/2/107, Fort Jameson District Tour Report No. 8 of 1958. See also, on the same file, Tour Report No. 6 of 1958 and Tour Report No. 7 of 1958.
67. N.R.G., *Department of Agriculture Annual Report for the Year 1 52* (Lusaka: Government Printer, 1953), p. 14.
68. N.A.Z., EP4/2/34, Eastern Province Annual Report for the Year 1957, p. 21. See also N.R.G., *Department of Agriculture Annual Report for the Year 1 53* (Lusaka: Government Printer, 1954), p. 16.
69. N.R.G., *Department of Agriculture Annual Report for the Year 1950*, p. 13.
70. N.A.Z., EP4/2/34, Department of Agriculture Eastern Province Annual Report for the Year 1958; and N.R.G., *Department of Agriculture Annual Report for the Year 1953*, p. 15.
71. N.A.Z., EP4/2/45, Fort Jameson District Tour Report No. 13 of 1952.
72. N.A.Z., EP4/11/31, Ngoni Land Utilisation Survey, p. 21.
73. N.A.Z., EP4/2/33, Department of Agriculture Eastern province Annual Report, 1955.
74. N.A.Z., EP4/2/28, Tour Report No. 2 of 1950.
75. M.G. Marwick, *Sorcery in its Social Settings: a Study of the Northern Rhodesian Cewa* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1965), p. 30.
76. *Dimba* is a term derived from the word *dambo* which referred to small water courses found all over the savannahs of central Africa. A *dimba* (plural = *madimba*), therefore, was a garden cultivated on rich moist black soils along such water bodies, especially in the dry season. These gardens were a source of “fast foods” and provided insurance against hunger in households.
77. N.A.Z., EP4/2/124, Fort Jameson District Tour Report No. 7 of 1962. See also N.A.Z., EP4/2/34, Eastern Province Annual Report for the Year 1957 p. 11; N.A.Z., EP4/2/34, Eastern Province Annual Report for the Year 1958, p. 8; and N.R.G., *Department of Agriculture Annual Report for the Year 1960*, p. 5.
78. N.A.Z., EP4/2/34, Eastern Province Annual Report for the Year 1958, p. 8.
79. N.R.G., *Department of Agriculture Annual Report for the Year 1 49* (Lusaka: Government Printer), p. 8.
80. See, for example, *Legislative Council Debates Hansard No. 73 of the 4th Session (Resumed) of the 9th Council, 28th June - 17th July, 1952* (Lusaka: Government Printer, 1953), p. 381; and Edson A.M. Banda, ‘The Impact of the Petauke Cooperative Marketing Union on the Peasant Economy in the Petauke District of the Eastern Province in Northern Rhodesia, 1947-1964: a Case Study’, M.A. Dissertation, University of Zambia, 1984.
81. N.A.Z., SEC1/272, Eastern Province Maize Pool: Agenda and Minutes of Meetings.
82. N.A.Z., EP4/2/45, Tour Report No. 13 of 1952; and Edson A.M. Banda, ‘The Impact of the Cooperative Movement in the Eastern Province, 1947-1980s’, in Ackson M. Kanduza (ed.), *Socio-economic Change in Eastern Zambia: Pre-Colonial to the 1980s* (Lusaka: Historical Association of Zambia, 1992), p. 99.
83. N.A.Z., EP4/2/45, Tour Report No. 13 of 1952.
84. N.A.Z., EP4/2/5, Fort Jameson District Tour Report No. 3 of 1939.

85. See, for example, N.A.Z. EP4/2/28, Fort Jameson District Tour Reports Nos. 1, 11 and 16 of 1950; N.A.Z., EP4/2/75, Fort Jameson District Tour Report No. 4 of 1955; and N.A.Z., EP4/2/124 Fort Jameson District Tour Report No. 11 of 1961.
86. Hellen, *Rural Economic Development*, p. 180.
87. N.A.Z., EP4/2/34, Eastern Province Annual Report for the Year 1958.
88. N.R.G., *Department of Agriculture Annual Report for the Year 1957*, p. 3.
89. These were the Petauke Cooperative Marketing Union (P.C.M.U.), Katete Cooperative Marketing Union (K.C.M.U.) and Alimi Cooperative Marketing Union (A.C.M.U.).
90. N.R.G., *Department of Agriculture Annual Report for the Year 1958*, p. 3. See also *Department of Agriculture Annual Report for the Year 1960*, p. 4.
91. Hellen, *Rural Economic Development*, p. 191. See also N.R.G., *Department of Agriculture Annual Report for the Year 1960*, p. 4.
92. Banda, 'The Impact of the Petauke Cooperative Marketing Union.'
93. Banda, 'Impact of Cooperative Movement', p. 102.
94. N.A.Z., SEC2/90, District and Provincial Administrative Annual Reports, 1948-1950.
95. Interview, Never Pakapaka, Mutowe village, Chipata District, 31/10/2009.
96. N.A.Z., EP4/2/28, Tour Report No. 2 of 1950.
97. See, for example, Samuel N. Chipungu, *The State, Technology and Peasant Differentiation: a Case Study of the Southern Province, 1930-1986* (Lusaka: Historical Association of Zambia, 1992) and Allan Pim, *Report of the Commission Appointed to Enquire into the Financial and Economic Position of Northern Rhodesia* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1938), pp. 223-4.
98. N.R.G., *Department of Agriculture Annual Report for the Year 1949*, p. 10.
99. N.R.G., *Annual Report on Native Affairs for the Year 1962*.
100. N.A.Z., EP4/2/56, Fort Jameson District Tour Report No. 2 of 1953.
101. N.R.G., *Department of Agriculture Annual Report for the Year 1963* (Lusaka: Government Printer, 1964), p. 21. See also N.R.G., *Department of Agriculture Annual Report for the Year 1949*, p. 10.
102. N.R.G., *Department of Agriculture Annual Report for the Year 1963*, p. 21.
103. N.A.Z., EP4/2/34, Eastern Province Annual Report for the Year 1958.
104. N.A.Z., EP4/2/34, Eastern Province Annual Report for the Year 1958, pp. 14-15.
105. N.A.Z., EP4/2/124, Fort Jameson District Tour Report No.1 of 1962.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Our study has highlighted the dynamics of the link between the colonial state and African peasant agriculture in Chipata district between 1895 and 1964. The study had three objectives. It set out to critically examine the relationship between the colonial state and African peasant farming in Chipata district in the period up to the end of the Second World War. Further, the study sought to investigate the reaction of Africans to colonial policies on land reservation, colonial taxation and labour migration in Chipata district. The study also set out to examine how post-Second World War state policies impacted on African agriculture in Chipata district.

From the study, several conclusions have emerged. One of these is that prior to the First World War, major efforts were made by the colonial state to foster African peasant agriculture through the promotion of the cultivation of vegetables and cotton. These measures were intended to solve the financial problems of Northern Rhodesia. However, the measures did not yield successful cash-cropping because African peasant farmers paid more attention to their subsistence crops.

The remarkable development of European tobacco farming in the district starting from 1912 led the British South Africa Company (B.S.A.Co.) government to focus much on European agriculture. In this regard, huge tracts of land were set aside for European settlement while Africans were moved to native reserves which had been created for them. Due to the onset of the world economic down-turn of the early 1930s, however, few European farmers arrived. As a result, much of the alienated land turned to bush. In the meantime, reserves set aside for Africans were too small to permit successful cash-cropping.

Another conclusion that has come out of this study is that while Chipata district had the highest rate of labour migration from the Eastern Province, privatisation did not hamper food production. This was because not all able-bodied men left their villages for labour migration without making any form of arrangements about who were to take care of the home economy in their absence. Strong family bonds enabled women whose husbands were away to be helped during cultivation. Moreover, among the Chewa where matrilineal-uxorilocal marriage was practised there was easy adjustment for the women left behind because they were still among the same relatives with whom they had always lived before they got married.

Further, it has been noted that contrary to other views, Africans in Chipata district were not passive to colonial state policies which had a bearing on their agricultural activities. They voiced their concerns with the colonial government. But due to different social systems, local resistance took two separate paths. The Ngoni people, due to their centralised nature, mainly used their chiefs to express their dissatisfaction with the colonial system. On the other hand, the Chewa people employed localised protest groups, notably the *Nyau* secret society.

Another conclusion reached by the study is that the Crown government was able to notice the mistakes of its earlier policies and reversed them. The first step taken was the government's purchase, in 1941, of the concession owned by the North Charterland Exploration Company (N.C.E.Co.) in order to resettle Africans from the congested African reserves. The Department of Agriculture instituted soil conservation measures in the former reserves when it introduced the Ten-Yard method and promoted contour-ridge farming.

The adoption of the Peasant Farming Scheme (P.F.S.) in 1948 was intended to commercialise African peasant farming by giving Africans medium-term loans, implements and oxen. The P.F.S. led to the emergence of prosperous peasant farmers, especially through the encouragement of the growing of traditional crops like groundnuts, sorghum, beans and millet. Additionally, it has been established

that the P.F.S. was aided by the Eastern Province African Farming Improvement Fund (E.P.A.F.I.F.) which encouraged the adoption, by African peasant farmers, of acceptable farming practices such as green manuring and crop rotation. It also subsidized the purchase of basic farm equipment and improved seed. This was done by giving bonuses to African peasant farmers who heeded advice from the Department of Agriculture.

It has been demonstrated that the establishment of producer cooperative societies contributed to an efficient system of African crop marketing because the success of the P.F.S. would have been negligible without arrangements for the disposal of cash crops. The three-tier cooperative marketing arrangement employed at village, district and provincial levels was vital in farmer awareness and the provision of extension services. Members of cooperative societies received higher producer prices for farm produce than ordinary peasant farmers. The change of heart by Britain regarding Northern Rhodesia and other colonies was in line with post-war reconstruction and industrialisation underway in Europe after the Second World War. These developments led a nervous British government to conveniently become paternalistic and less hostile towards African peasant farming. Britain's unveiling of a new colonial 'development' policy, therefore, was in the midst of the throes of economic hardships.

Lastly, the study has observed that the steady increase in the usage of ploughs and tractors by African peasant farmers in Chipata district contributed immensely to mechanisation levels on farms thereby enlarging acreage under cultivation. This made the local people to emerge as an identifiable peasantry, that is, prosperous rural cultivators who engaged in a long distance relationship with a larger polity, the imperial markets.

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3. Oral Interviews

No.	NAME	DATE OF BIRTH	OCCUPATION	DATE AND PLACE OF INTERVIEW
1.	Banda, Ziononga	1924	Peasant Farmer/Formal Labour Migrant	7/11/2009, Undi village, Chipata.
2.	Daka, Davidson (Headman Zumani)	1957	Peasant Farmer	9/11/2009, Zumani village, Chipata
3.	Jere, Chikomeni	1940	Peasant Farmer	12.11/2009, Chipangali, Chipata.
4.	Kanenga, Kennedy	1956	Agro-Scientist	27/10/2009, Msekera Regional Research Station, Chipata.
5.	Lungu, Peter	1958	Agro-Scientist	27/10/2009, Msekera Regional Research Station, Chipata.
6.	Majula, T.R.	1942	Retired Civil Servant/ Farmer	30/10/2009, Buzima Farm, Chipata.
7.	Mwale, Madalitso	1947	Peasant Farmer	8/11/2009, Chipangali, Chipata.
8.	Mwanza, George	1941	Retired Civil Servant/ Peasant Farmer	29/10/2009, Mtenguleni, Chipata.
9.	Nyirongo, John	1945	Peasant Farmer	29/10/2009, Zala village, Chipata.
10.	Pakapaka, Never	1935	Peasant Farmer	31/10/2009, Mutowe village, Chipata.
11.	Phiri, Amos	1947	Peasant Farmer	7/11/2009, Undi village, Chipata.
12.	Phiri, Edward	1939	Former Labour Migrant/ Peasant Farmer	7/11/2009, Undi village, Chipata.

13.	Phiri, Faindani	1942	Former Labour Migrant/ Peasant Farmer	7/11/2009, Undi village, Chipata.
14.	Phiri, Fanwell	1943	Headman/Peasant Farmer	7/11/2009, Undi village, Chipata
15.	Phiri, Ntengeni	1922	Former Labour Migrant/ Peasant Farmer	7/11/2009, Undi village, Chipata.
16.	Sitima, C.K.	1935	Retired Civil Servant	1/11/2009, Radio Maria Station, Chipata.