

A HISTORY OF KAWAMBWA TEA COMPANY, 1970-1996

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BY

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DECLARATION

I, **Wickson Mulobelwa Mwandu**, do hereby declare that this dissertation represents my own work, and it has not been previously submitted for a degree at this or any other University.

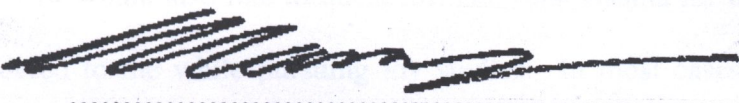
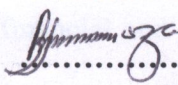

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APPROVAL

This dissertation of *Wickson Mulobelwa Mwandu* is approved as having fulfilled part of the requirements of the award of the degree of Master of Arts in History at the University of Zambia.

EXAMINERS

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation reconstructs a history of the Kawambwa Tea Company. It covers the period between 1970 and 1996. Its first chapter describes the beginning of rural development schemes in British Colonial Africa and accounts for their establishment. The chapter has shown that the first attempt made to develop colonies in Africa by the British government was in 1929 when the British Parliament passed a Bill which allowed the government to spend a sum of £1 million annually on the development of all the African British Colonies. Chapter two discusses the problems of undercapitalisation and maladministration and the political interference in the running of the Company. It demonstrates that undercapitalisation and the administrative problems and political interference had negative effects on the performance of the Company.

The third chapter examines the performance of the Company in the context of national and regional political economy. In this chapter, we show that the poor economic situation that prevailed in Zambia negatively affected the company's tea sales because it permitted the influx of cheaper tea into the country and also affected the financial position of enterprises and individuals who used to purchase the Kawambwa tea.

The last chapter shows that in spite of the numerous problems the Company faced, it had both economic and social impact on the people of Kawambwa and surrounding districts. The employment the Company provided led to an increase in cash flow in the area and this in turn boosted trade in industrial and local goods while the clinic and the schools initiated by the Company provided essential health and educational services to the local population.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CDC	Commonwealth Development Corporation
GDP	Gross Domestic Products
IDZ	Intensive Development Zone
IMF	International Monetary Fund
KTC	Kawambwa Tea Company
LBB	Lyons Brooke Bond
MMD	Movement for Multi Party Democracy
PAM	Personnel and Administrative Manager
NAZ	National Archives of Zambia
RDC	Rural Development Corporation
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
UNIP	United National Independence Party
ZIMCO	Zambia Industrial Mining Corporation

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation discusses the history of Kawambwa Tea Company. It proceeds by first examining why colonial and post colonial governments in Africa decided to develop their rural areas. Thereafter, it discusses the constraints of the Kawambwa Tea Company . The dissertation also examines the company in the context of national and regional economy. It further discusses some social and economic impact of the Company on the local people.

The first attempt to facilitate rural development in British Colonial Africa was made in 1929 following the provision by the British Parliament of a sum of £1 million per annum for the development of all British African colonies.¹ Even so, this effort did not achieve much development in colonial Africa because the money provided was not only too little but ended up benefiting the British citizens. Seeley notes that:

This Act was designed primarily to relieve unemployment in Britain; the funds provided for the colonies were expected to service the interest on loans raised by those colonial governments which gave contracts to British firms.²

In addition, some colonial administrators who governed the British Colonies in Africa had developed a thinking which alleged that Africans did not need any development because they were satisfied with their way of living.³ As a result, colonies were neglected. Britain's neglect of colonies has been discussed by a number of scholars who include Patrick Ollawa. Discussing lack of rural development in Zambia, Ollawa observed that:

Under the benevolent despotism of British Colonial government in what used to be known as Northern Rhodesia there was almost a total neglect of rural development ... there was no definite set of policies or goals which

guided the actions and orientations of the colonial administrators towards incorporating the rural sector in the overall framework of economic and political development.⁴

It was therefore, not until after the Second World War that Britain earnestly decided to develop the rural areas of her colonies in Africa.⁵ The change of heart by Britain was prompted by a number of factors. These included the need for the colonies to raise funds to pay for their own services so as to relieve pressure on the British pound,⁶ the need to frustrate the nationalist movement's mobilisation of fellow Africans for the struggle for independence⁷, and to assist Britain to raise funds to pay off her loans which she had incurred during the Second World War.⁸ However, not all the colonies got substantial amounts. Zambia, for example, could not get substantial amount for rural development because her soils were considered to be too poor to produce exportable crops.⁹ In addition, the colonial government only supported development of those sectors and structures which supported the mining industry.¹⁰ The out come of this practice was the creation of the dual economy in the country, where the line of rail provinces were developed while the rest of the country remained underdeveloped.¹¹

In Zambia balanced development only came towards the terminal stage of colonialism. This was after the adoption of the balanced regional planning. Even then, not much was done. Hellen states that the schemes which were set up after the adoption of balanced regional planning were ineffective. Therefore, the new government required a lot of effort to correct the lopsided economy.¹² To solve the problem of lopsided development, the government planned in its First National Development Plan to transform the economy and social structures which were inherited from the colonial era. The government added that its first task was to reduce the imbalance between the urban

and the rural areas.¹³ To reduce the imbalance between the rural and urban areas, the government established a number of rural development schemes in various parts of the country. The Kawambwa Tea Estate set up in 1970 in Luapula Province was one of them.¹⁴ Apart from being a means of reducing the imbalance between the rural and urban areas, the Kawambwa Tea Company was also charged with the responsibility of producing tea for domestic consumption and a surplus for export.

Tea growing in Zambia had begun on experimental basis in 1962 by the colonial government in order for the country to begin producing its own tea and save the money which was being spent on tea imports.¹⁵ Encouraged by the positive results, the post colonial government in 1965 invited the Commonwealth Development Corporation, hereafter CDC, to investigate the possibility of establishing commercial estates in the country.¹⁶ Experiments carried out in Mbala, Mpika, Solwezi and Kawambwa districts showed that the country had the potential for setting up of commercial tea estates. Since CDC did not choose a place for the location of the estates, the government invited AGRAR UND HYDROTECHNIK, GMBH in 1966 to carry out further experiments and choose the place. The tea experts carried out experiments between March and June in 1966 in Mbala, Mpika, Kawambwa, Solwezi and Makutu Hills. Kawambwa was chosen because it had the best climatic conditions, well drained soils and adequate water and labour supply.¹⁷ Then out of the seven places investigated in Kawambwa district, the area near the Luena River was chosen. Surveying of the area began in June 1969 and the following year, the estate was established after 40 hectares of land had been cleared and 22.26 hectares of it was brought under tea bushes.¹⁸ Thereafter, the estate grew steadily,

for example, in 1974, the size of the field was 141.43 hectares and by 1996 it was 450 hectares.¹⁹

Initially, the subject of this study was called the Kawambwa Tea Scheme, under the Projects Division of the Ministry of Rural Development. In 1974 the Ministry transformed it into a corporate entity called the Kawambwa Tea Company (KTC).²⁰ Thus throughout this dissertation the term Company will be used in place of scheme. KTC was one of the seven subsidiary companies of the Rural Development Corporation (RDC). Having been founded, KTC. was charged with the responsibility of expanding the tea fields and building of the tea factory. The company was in 1984 brought under the supervision of the Zambia Industrial Mining Corporation (ZIMCO) following the dissolution of RDC.²¹ In 1993, ZIMCO was dissolved and KTC stood on its own until 1996 when it was sold to Metal Distributors (UK) Limited, a member of the Binani Croup of Companies.²²

Objectives of the study

This study aims at reconstructing a history of Kawambwa Tea Company from 1970 to 1996. It further aims at assessing the social and economic impact of the Company on the people of Kawambwa District and the surrounding areas.

Review of Literature

Literature on Kawambwa Tea Company is scanty. To date, there is no comprehensive study carried out on the Company from a historical perspective. The few articles on Kawambwa Tea Company have mainly discussed the plans to establish the

Estate and its expected performance. Kawambwa Tea Company is a rural development scheme; for this reason the study reviews literature dealing with rural development schemes in Zambia and other third world countries.

Megan Vaughan has discussed rural development in Zambia and Malawi during the colonial period. She stated that institutionalised rural development in the two countries began in the period after the Second World War. She noted that the post Second World War development policies of the colonial government of Northern Rhodesia aimed in part at addressing the imbalance between mining and farming by stimulating agricultural production so that the sector could provide employment to the rural people. Vaughan noted further that post-independence rural development programmes did not achieve much because of confusion in agricultural policies.²³

John Hellen's work is another valuable source of data for our study. Hellen noted that until the terminal stage of colonialism, very little was done to develop the rural areas of Zambia. He further observed that the schemes which were undertaken were ineffective in most cases. He attributed their poor performance to government's late adoption of regional planning. Hellen concludes that the new government would require a lot of effort to correct the lop-sided economy.²⁴

By and large Vaughan and Hellen's works are necessary to the present study because they provide some useful background information to the history of rural development schemes in Zambia.

Bonard Mwape argued that Zambia's intention of introducing agricultural programmes in rural areas was to solve the problems of unemployment, income inequalities and malnutrition among the rural people.²⁵ This argument was echoed by Joy

Kalyalya²⁶ and Ngandu.²⁷ Ngandu went further to argue that the economic stagnation of rural areas triggered off massive exodus of people from rural to urban areas and to reverse the trend, the government decided to set up enterprises such as agricultural schemes in rural areas.²⁸ This argument is shared by Doris Jansen Dodge,²⁹ Lombard and Tweedie.³⁰ Chris Dixon who has written on rural development in the third world countries also makes more or less the same argument. He observed that rural development was a strategy designed to improve the economic and social life of the rural poor. It entailed the extension of benefits of development to the poorest people seeking a better living.³¹

In addition Lipton argues that rural development in the third world countries is a solution to urban poverty. He explains that rural inhabitants migrate to urban areas due to poverty in rural areas. As more people migrate into towns, urban areas get congested and since the migrants cannot get jobs, their misery increases. In the end, urban poverty is created. To avoid the creation of urban poverty, governments of third world countries made efforts to development rural areas and by so doing discourage rural people from migrating to urban areas he argues.³²

Henry Meebelo argues that rural development in Zambia was a way of implementing the country's Philosophy of Humanism. The philosophy called for equal distribution of the country's wealth between the urban and rural areas.³³ Therefore, Meebelo does not see the role of politics in the implementation of rural development programmes in Zambia.

Some scholars have considered political reasons to have influenced the governments to establish rural development projects. Among them is Jeremy Gould who

argued that the colonial government set up the intensive rural development schemes in Luapula after mid 1950s in order to curb African influx into towns so as to frustrate nationalist movement's mobilisation. He argued that by developing rural areas, the government wanted Africans to remain in their villages and this would make it difficult for nationalist movement to mobilise them for the struggle for independence.³⁴

Henrietta Moore and Megan Vaughan's *Cutting Down Trees: Gender, Nutrition and Agricultural change in the Northern province of Zambia 1890-1990* and Kate Crehan and Achim von Oppen³⁵ have also echoed Gould's argument that rural development projects were politically motivated.³⁶ Moore and Vaughan particularly argued that some officials in the colonial government wanted rural areas to be developed so as to prevent possible political unrest likely to be caused by the influence of nationalist movement.³⁷

There are scholars who believe that even after independence rural development was still politically motivated. One of them was Robert Bates who points out that the UNIP government was forced to undertake rural development programmes in various parts of Zambia, in particular in the Western, Eastern, North-western and Luapula Provinces in order to deny disgruntled politicians support, especially from their home Provinces. He explains that in 1966, Nalumino Mundia, a politician from Western province was dismissed from the cabinet. Then the following year Ruben Kamanga, a politician from Eastern Province, was defeated by Kapwepwe, a Northerner for the post of Vice President of UNIP. These developments created discontent among politicians from Western and Eastern provinces. Furthermore, politicians from North-Western and Luapula Provinces also complained of having been given a raw deal, for they did not win influential positions in the Central Committee of UNIP during the 1967 General

Congress.³⁸ Consequently, it became apparent that the ‘disgruntled’ politicians from the aforesaid provinces would come together and put up a formidable front against the government. Bates thus notes that:

Pressure from its own agencies and the proven capacity of politicians to utilize discontent to undermine the position of the government led in the period 1968 to 1970 to major adjustments by the government in its development program. In response to these pressures the problem of rural development moved closer to the top of the governments agenda.³⁹

These works are relevant to our study in that they provide insights into the genesis and dynamics of rural schemes in Zambia. More important, they provide a challenge to the analysis of the post-colonial rural development schemes. For instance, independence having been won meant to us that the fear of African uprising against colonial rule as a factor in the establishment of these schemes does not hold any more; hence the need to revisit the history of rural development schemes.

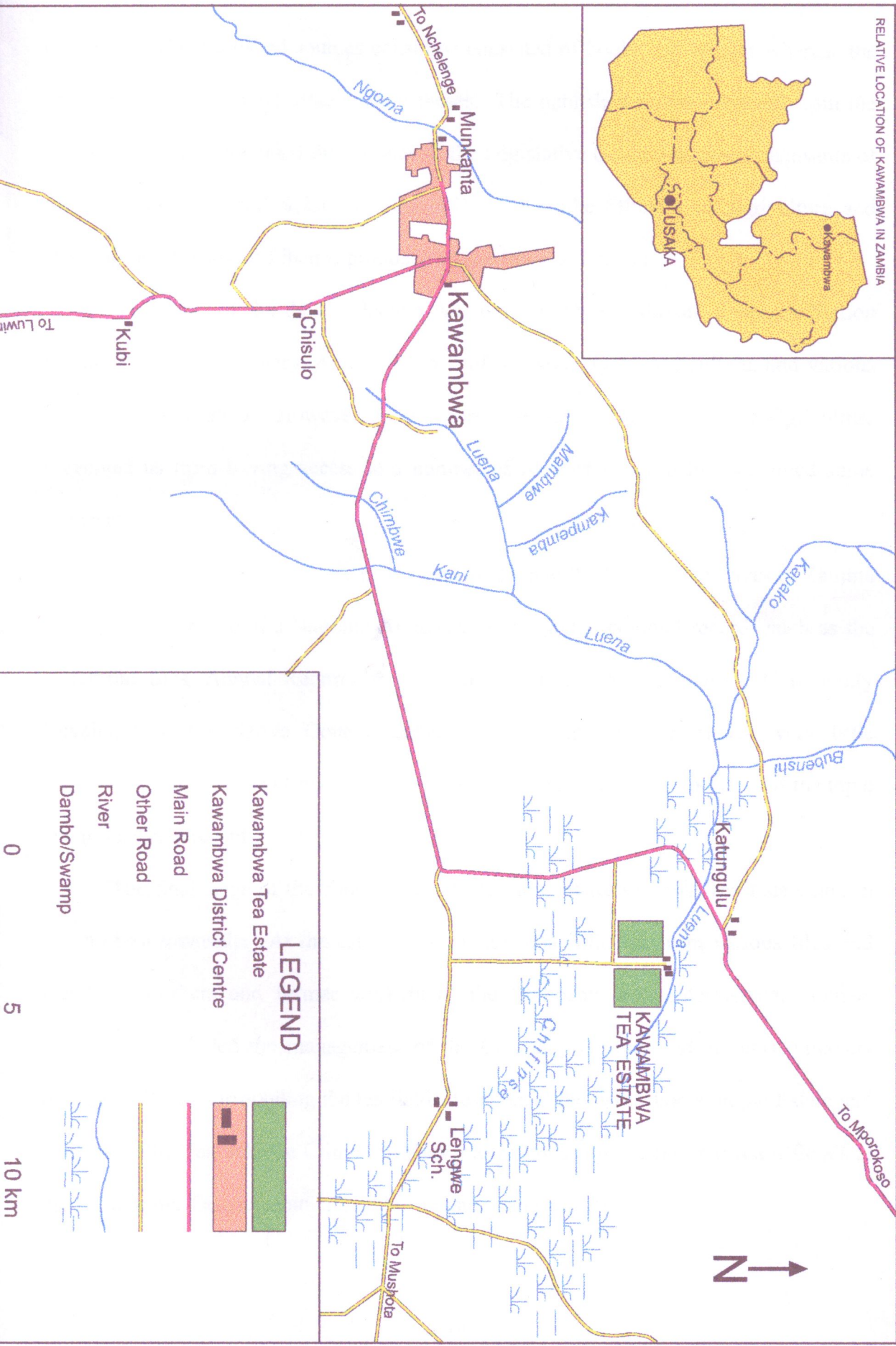
Location of the area of study

Kawambwa Tea Scheme is located in Kawambwa district, 25 kilometres north-east of Kawambwa township. Kawambwa district is one of the seven districts which make up the Luapula Province. It lies between latitudes 9°00’ and 10°30s and longitude 28°30’ and 30°00E.’

Methodology and Data Collection

The collection of data for this study was done between July 1999 and April, 2000. Data was collected from various sources. Initially, the research was conducted from the University of Zambia Library where both the published and unpublished sources were

LOCATION OF KAWAMBWA TEA ESTATE, LUAPULA PROVINCE



consulted. The published sources consulted consisted of books and articles whereas the unpublished were the dissertations and theses. The published primary sources from the University Library included the minutes of the Legislative Council meetings, Hansards of the Legislative Council Sessions, Annual Reports of the Ministry of Agriculture and those of the Ministry of Finance produced by the Bank of Zambia.

Stage two of the data collection was done at Mount Makulu Research Station Library. From this Library, Annual Reports of the Ministry of Agriculture, and various books were consulted. However, poor record keeping by the Ministry of Agriculture prevented us from having access to a number of files which probably contained some information.

The third stage of our research was carried out at the National Archives of Zambia (NAZ) in Lusaka. In the National Archives, we consulted colonial records such as the secretariat files, Annual Reports of the Ministry of African Agriculture, Community Development, Legislative Council debates and newspapers. However, very little information was obtained from the National Archives and this was so because of the topic being relatively recent.

The final stage of the data collection was done at Kawambwa Tea Estate and in Kawambwa township. At the estate, information was collected from various files and thereafter workers and former workers of the Company were interviewed. Others interviewed included the management of the Company (former and current), villagers living in villages surrounding the tea fields, teachers at the two schools on the Estate and workers at the Tea Scheme Clinic. In Kawambwa township, we interviewed officials at the Kawambwa District Council and businessmen and women.

We were unable to carry out research at the company Headquarters in Ndola because the company's files were alleged to be kept by ZIMCO but by then ZIMCO had been dissolved. Even though the liquidator was willing to allow us to use the sources, they were jumbled up. Besides they were being ferried to the National Archives of Zambia to be classified and to be closed for 20 years.

Organisation of the Study

The dissertation has four chapters. The first chapter is a general background one; it is an overview chapter which points out that before the Second World War, Britain had paid little attention to the development of the colonies in Africa. However, the situation that prevailed after the Second World War compelled Britain to set up a number of rural development projects in many of her colonies in Africa. This was so because Britain wanted to raise funds to repay the loans she had obtained from the United States of America during the Second World War and to overcome the food and fat crises she had experienced in 1947.

The second chapter looks at the administrative problems, political interference and the economic constraints the company faced. The chapter argues that maladministration, political interference and undercapitalisation affected the performance of the company.

Chapter three examines the performance of the company in the context of the political economy of the country and that of the region. It demonstrates that the economic problems the country faced negatively affected the performance of KTC.

The fourth chapter argues that although the company faced many problems, it had a positive impact on the local people. It shows that the employment the company created for the local people provided them with incomes which boosted trade in industrial and local products. Furthermore, it provided health and educational facilities which the local people were lacking. The last part of dissertation is the conclusion which summaries the main argument of the study.

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CHAPTER ONE

RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN COLONIAL AND POST-COLONIAL AFRICA: AN OVERVIEW

Introduction

This chapter discusses the concept of rural development during the colonial and post-colonial periods in the former British African colonies with particular reference to Zambia. It is relevant to the study because it gives the reasons for the establishment of rural development schemes during and after the colonial period. The explanation the chapter gives constitutes the background information for many rural development schemes in Zambia including the Kawambwa Tea Company. In away, therefore, the chapter suggests that Africa's post-colonial rural development approaches have a colonial legacy attached to them.

The chapter is divided into three sections. The first section discusses the reasons for setting up rural development projects in British Colonial Africa and also looks at some of the rural development schemes which were established. The second section examines the reactions of the African nationalists to the rural development programmes that were undertaken by colonial governments. The third part discusses the change of mind that was shown by the nationalist leaders when they started supporting rural development after protracted opposition to them.

British Colonialism and Rural Development in Africa

The first attempt to facilitate rural development in British Colonial Africa was made in 1929 when the British Parliament approved a sum of £1 million per annum for the development of all British colonies in Africa.¹ The funds could be obtained either as free grants or as loans and were meant to assist colonies pursue development beyond their own revenues.² However, the money did not help to develop the colonies very much because it ended up servicing the interests on loans raised by the colonial governments which gave contracts to the British firms. At the same time, the money was too little to meet the developmental needs of the colonies. In addition there was a thinking, among the Europeans who administered African colonies, which alleged that the majority of Africans were not craving for a higher standard of living as they were often happy in their squalor, dirt and customs. All that was required was, the thinking alleged, to encourage them to live in their 'natural' setting. The failure to supplant this ideology made it persist into the 1940s.³

This means, therefore, that before 1945, the British government had paid little attention to the development of her colonies in Africa and the British colonial administrators had their own interests to serve. Consequently, 'the development of colonies was never a priority.'⁴ Development was mainly confined to those regions where colonial governments expected to derive wealth. In Zambia, for example, development was concentrated in the line of rail provinces of Copperbelt, Central and Southern. The rest of the country was deliberately neglected in order to induce able bodied men to migrate to the mining and farming areas to sell their labour.⁵

It was not until after the Second World War that rural development in earnest 'became apparent, as the governments increased their efforts to raise the living standard in all parts of their respective territories.'⁶ British colonial governments established rural development schemes in Africa after 1945 because of a number of factors. One of them was that, they wanted to encourage Africans to produce enough food to feed themselves. In Zambia, for example, a cassava and groundnuts cooperative society was set up in Mansa district in 1947 to solve the problem of periodic food shortages which had become common in the area.⁷

In some other British colonial African countries, rural development schemes were established in order to help Britain raise money to pay off her debt which she had incurred from the United States of America during the Second World War of 1939-1945 and to overcome the food and fat crisis of 1947. Commenting on the debt, Cowen pointed out that Britain had lost her independence to America because of the debt she had with that country. To secure her independence, Britain set up a number of schemes in her colonies to produce exportable commodities. In 1947, for example, she spent £55 million on the establishment of the Groundnut and Palm Oil Scheme in Nigeria.⁹ In Kenya, Britain shifted the emphasis she had laid on the Mwea Scheme as a settlement scheme to a scheme that was to produce for the market.¹⁰ In Tanzania the British tried to convert an empty stretch of land into a large groundnut producing scheme in 1947.

In 1948, yet other schemes were established in Ghana and the Gambia. Ghana had the Conje Scheme to produce foodstuffs for domestic consumption and a surplus for export¹¹, whereas the Gambia Egg Project was set up mainly to produce 20 million eggs

per annum and dressed poultry for the British market.¹² The Gambia Egg Project was meant to assist Britain overcome the food shortage she had suffered in 1947.

The other reason for Britain's need to develop rural areas in her colonies was that of 'opening up' of rural areas in many of her colonies. The concept of 'opening up' of the rural areas had its origins in the post Second World War politics. After the War, nationalist movements were formed in many countries in Africa and the struggle for independence intensified. Apprehensive about the support given to the nationalist movements by the rural people in colonial Africa, some colonial officials alleged that political activists were hiding in rural areas.¹³ They, therefore, strongly felt that the development of rural areas would make it difficult for political activists to hide there. The Bangweulu and Chambeshi marshes in Zambia were some of the rural areas which got some development with a view to 'opening them up.' L. Bean, the Provincial Commissioner for Northern Province even went further to suggest that a road be constructed through the Bangweulu Swamps to link Mansa with the Great North Road. Once that was done, he believed, all the nationalist activities in the region would be thwarted.¹⁴

Colonial governments set up some rural development schemes also to curb the rural-urban migration and to attract back unemployed Africans to the rural areas. In Zambia, for example, the government introduced in 1957 the Intensive Rural Development Programme in Northern and Luapula Provinces in order to attract back to the two provinces some Bemba speaking people who had settled in urban areas.¹⁵ The Mungwi Agricultural Settlement Scheme in Kasama was one such a scheme established for this purpose. Moore and Vaughan pointed out that:

The Mungwi was devised to satisfy the urban expectations of Bemba men and at the same time to entice them back to an essentially rural livelihood. The existence of which would render migration to the copperbelt less attractive, both economically and socially.¹⁶

The plan to use rural development approach to lure 'loafers' in urban areas to return to rural areas was supported by R.A. Nicholson, the Financial Secretary of Northern Rhodesia. In his address to the Legislative Council in 1957, Nicholson informed the Council that he fully supported the creation of the Intensive Rural Development Projects because they would help in taking away 'loafers' from the urban areas. He further pointed out that 'loafers' would, in fact, be doing good to themselves and the country if they went back to the rural areas and make a living from the land. He, however, observed that unless rural areas were developed, it would be very difficult to lure them back to the rural areas.¹⁷ Six years later Nicholson's point was emphasised by yet another senior government official. Richarly Luyt, the Chief Secretary of Northern Rhodesia, also informed the Legislative Council that:

If the countryman increasingly in search of better life is to be kept in the countryside, he must find there the satisfactions that he seeks for himself and his children, and not to have to go to towns for them.¹⁸

Some rural development programmes in British Colonial Africa were set up in order to enable colonies pay for their services. Discussing rural development in Central Africa, Vaughan observed that:

African colonial economies were drawn into closer relationship with the metropole in an attempt to make the empire pay and to relieve pressure on the pound sterling. Rural East and Central Africa were seen as having the potential to produce more dollar-earning crops and money from the Colonial Development Welfare Fund was directed towards raising incomes and income-producing capacity of rural dwellers.¹⁹

In another development, there was a realisation by the colonial governments that depending on a mono economy for all the revenues of any country was dangerous. Hence, the need to diversify the economies developed. In Zambia, Vaughan noted that:

Colonial administrators and commentators in Northern Rhodesia had long recognised the danger of over-dependence on copper industry, and the experience of the depression of the 1930s had deepened these fears.²⁰

The fear of problems in the country was another factor that compelled the colonial government to set up rural development schemes in various parts of the countries. In Zambia, for example, the colonial government feared that concentrating of development projects in one area would lead to problems in the country. Wishing to avoid the problem of unbalanced development, the Governor of the country, Sir Arthur, Benson informed the Legislative Council in 1963 that development in the country was confined to an area of 20,000 square miles out of the total area of 290,000 square miles. He added that, that kind of development could not only create problems in the country, but was a real danger if it was not matched with development in other areas of the country.²¹

African Nationalism and Rural Development

The nationalist stood opposed to the establishment of the rural development programmes. In Zambia, for instance, the nationalist leaders opposed the Mungwi Intensive Development Scheme set up in 1957 because of mainly two reasons. The first was that the nationalist leaders conceived the development effort of that time not to have been genuine. Kapasa Makasa, one of the nationalist leaders, said that:

We realised that Africans could not benefit much from the development of the colonial government because the colonial government was not convinced that Africans needed development.²²

Makasa's sentiments have been echoed by Vaughan who also points out that:

Although nationalist leaders were themselves 'modernisers' who shared much of the agenda of the post war colonial development 'experts'; they concluded that Africans were unlikely to gain significantly from these efforts while they remained disfranchised.²³

The other reason was that nationalist leaders considered rural development of the post-war period to have been a mere ploy aimed at frustrating the nationalist's mobilisation of fellow Africans for the struggle for independence. Discussing the constraints of the Mungwi Settlement Scheme, Ngandu made more or less the same observation, when he wrote that:

The scheme was recognised by African politicians as a serious obstacle to their cause. By agricultural development, they thought that the support of the people could be undermined and this endanger the political campaign. The whole development scheme therefore laboured under a considerable disadvantage.²⁴

Infact, as time went by, Africans went to the extent of nearly attacking the schemes as a way of showing their opposition. Incited by the leaders of the United National Independence Party (UNIP), for example, Africans in Kasama got together and decided to attack the Mungwi Intensive Development Centre. The planned attack was only averted by the presence of the police.²⁵

Nationalists Rethink Rural Development

In Zambia, however, as independence drew closer, the nationalist leaders made up their mind and began supporting the rural development programmes implemented by the

colonial government. Nationalist leaders did not only call for balanced regional development, but also promised, once in government to develop rural areas in order to improve the standard of living of the people. African representatives in the Legislative Council continued to demand for balanced regional development in the country. In addition, they even went to the extent of suggesting the type of schemes to be set up in various parts of the nation. Arthur Wina, for example, proposed in the Legislative Council in 1963, that coffee and tea be grown and processed in the Northern Province of Zambia, maize be milled in Southern Province and milk and hide processing industries be established in the Western Province.²⁶

Nationalist leaders' change of mind to start supporting the programmes of the colonial government was induced by a number of factors. One of them was the constitutional change of the 1962 which led to the inclusion of the leaders of the nationalist movements in government. Kaunda,²⁷ for example, became Minister of Local Government and Social Welfare initially and later on, Prime Minister while Harry Mwaanga Nkumbula²⁸ and Simon Mwansa Kapwepwe,²⁹ became Ministers of African Education and African Agriculture respectively. Having become part of the government, nationalist leaders were obliged by their positions to support the rural development programmes.³⁰ The other reason was that by supporting the rural development programmes, the nationalist leaders were demonstrating to the fellow Africans that they were committed to improving the standard of living of the people in the country.

Thus at independence in 1964, the new Zambian government inherited a dual economy. On one side were the developed Copperbelt, Central and Southern Provinces while on the other were the backward rural areas inhabited by Africans. This situation

had existed for many years and came about because the colonial government wanted to develop only those areas they expected to derive wealth from while the rest of the country was treated as a labour reservoir.³⁶

Upon the attainment of independence the Zambian government immediately embarked upon the task of developing rural areas so as to reduce the imbalance that existed between the rural and urban areas. Besides the government intended to use rural development to discourage the rural-urban migration which had become rampant following the removal of colonial restrictions on people's movement. Addressing the participants at the Rural Development Seminar in September, 1974, Kaunda pointed out that:

We need to develop our rural areas so as to persuade the young men and women to stay in there and make themselves useful lives there. If development goes far enough, and success stories in the villages become an every day occurrence, not just an occasion for special feasts and awards, then it might be even possible to attract into rural areas some of our youths who cannot make it in towns.³⁷

Another factor that compelled the post-colonial government to set up rural development projects was the need to diversify the country's economy. The need for the diversification of the country's economy had been realised by a number of people in the country long before independence. In 1964, for example, J.H. Dommen wrote that the future of Zambia did not depend on copper mining alone but on the contemplation of the country's enormous and practically untouched land and water resources.³⁸ After independence, the government decided to diversify the country's economy so that copper mining was not the only main employer in the economy.³⁹

In a related situation, the government intended to use rural development to support the industrialisation of the country. Bates notes that:

At last and the major reason for the government investments was the growing realisation toward the end of the 1960s and in early 1970s that its policy of industrialisation was not going to be successfully fulfilled without the increased production of... goods. The lag in rural sector threatened to produce scarcities of food and this in turn threatened to deplete foreign reserves through the importation.⁴⁰

Consequently, the government set up a number of rural development schemes in various parts of Zambia. In April, 1967, the Mununshi Banana Scheme was established in Mwenze district in the Luapula Province⁴¹ while the Mwinilunga Pineapple Canary followed in North-Western Province in 1970.⁴² Other schemes set up in 1970 include the Kasama Coffee in the Northern Province⁴³ and the Kawambwa Tea in the Luapula Province. The Rural Reconstruction Programme which commenced in 1975 was another programme aimed at developing the rural areas. It's main objective was:

To recruit and train school-leavers in all skills of rural development, including agro-industries and then to help them settle in rural occupations within a co-operative organisational framework.⁴⁴

The programme opened centres in all the districts in the country.

Even though both the Kawambwa Tea Company and the Rural Reconstruction Programme shared similar objectives such as reducing rural-urban migration and improving the general living conditions of the rural people, their approach differed in that KTC was a profit oriented entity while the other was not.

The Mpongwe Wheat Company began on experimental basis in 1978 but was eventually established in 1980⁴⁵ in Ndola rural of the Copperbelt and the Cashewnut Company was set up in the Western Province in 1986.⁴⁶

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that before the Second World War, Britain was reluctant to develop her colonies in Africa. However, after the Second World War, she set up a number of development schemes in a number of colonies in Africa. This was so because Britain wanted to raise money to repay the loans she incurred from America during the Second World War and also to overcome the food and fat crisis of 1947 which she experienced.

In addition, the chapter has shown that in Zambia, rural development schemes were introduced in order to frustrate the nationalist movement's mobilisation of fellow Africans for the struggle for independence, 'opening up' of rural areas and for reducing the rural-urban migration.

The chapter has shown that initially the nationalist leaders were opposed to the development effort of the colonial government because they saw it as being detrimental to their struggle for independence. However, the constitutional change of 1962 which paved the way for their inclusion in the government obliged them to support the rural development undertaken by the colonial government. The chapter winds up its discussion by demonstrating that after independence rural development was aimed at correcting the lop-sided development inherited from the colonial era and providing rural people with incomes through provision of employment.

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CHAPTER TWO

SOCIO-ECONOMIC, ADMINISTRATIVE AND POLITICAL PROBLEMS OF THE KAWAMBWA TEA COMPANY, 1970-1996.

Introduction.

This chapter focuses on the problems the company faced in running its Estate. It argues that the administrative problems, political interference and the economic constraints negatively affected the development and performance of the company in general and that of the Estate in particular. Administrative problems were mainly caused by the general managers whose laxity in supervision of workers made a number of duties stall and whose lack of dedication to duty resulted in failure to put in place all the necessary logistics. On the other hand, political problems became a factor in the administration of the Company only in the period between 1973 and 1991 following the introduction of the one party state. During this period, the United National Independence Party which was ruling the country used to get the Company's workers during the Humanism Week and deployed them on the community based development programmes. Even though economic problems were numerous, undercapitalisation affected the performance of the Company most.

The chapter is divided into three sections. The first section discusses the administrative problems which affected the Company. Section two looks at political interference on the development and performance of the Company. The last section examines the economic constraints which the Company faced.

Administrative problem of the Estate

Kawambwa Tea Company faced numerous administrative problems. Some of these problems began immediately the estate was established in 1970 and continued to haunt it for a long time. Yet other problems emerged in the course of the development of the estate. One of the administrative problems which emerged soon after the Company was established and which slowed down the pace of the development of the estate was the decision by the Ministry of Rural Development to administer the estate from Lusaka. The 1976 government report on development in Luapula Province revealed that:

Since the estate is run directly from Lusaka the farm manager is supposed to consult with the headquarters on important day-to day issues. However, there were no communication facilities linking the farm directly with Lusaka and the distance between the headquarters is great. From purely physical point of view it is difficult to run a scheme directly from Lusaka.¹

Apart from having the trouble of consulting the managing director in Lusaka on all important issues, the farm manager had to wait for a feedback from the managing director before taking any action. However, bureaucracy in the government quite often delayed the process of decision making. In the period between 1970 and 1974, for example, when the estate was administered by the Projects Division of the Ministry of Rural Development, bureaucracy used to delay the process of decision making which in turn affected the pace of development of the Company.² This was so because all major decisions were required to be made by a committee of officers mainly from the Ministry of Rural Development and one other official from the Ministry of Finance and National Planning. However, as from 1973, a representative of the Party from the Office of the Central Committee in charge of rural development was included in the committee. Apart

from the need to form a quorum for the meeting to take place, sometimes deliberations took long.³ After the decision had been made, there was also the task of passing it down to the staff in Kawambwa where communication was not all that easy. We have noted that such a situation was not unique to the Kawambwa Tea Company; many other African countries administered their rural development schemes from their capital cities and Kenya was one of them. Writing on rural development in Kenya Uma Lele noted that:

Until recently, the administration of rural development programs in Kenya has been highly centralised. This has resulted in several problems in the design and implementation of various specific projects. First the hierarchical structure of various ministries involved in rural development has resulted in most decisions having been made in Nairobi and passed down to the field staff. As a result, much of the rural development planning has been based on inadequate knowledge of the local constraints.⁴

Tanzania was another country where rural development programmes were affected by centralised administration. In Tanzania, it is noted that 'decisions took an inordinately long to reach the field personnel and often overlooked local resource endowments and environmental factors.'⁵

In addition to the development constraints caused by red-tapes, Kawambwa Tea Company was also a victim of lack of vision by some of its General Managers particularly those who administers it between 1982 and 1987.⁶ The General Managers depended so much on the advice of Mackwoods Development Limited's tea experts. Although the Mackwoods Development Limited's tea experts were knowledgeable people, they gave advice based on conditions which prevailed in their home country, Sri Lanka and not Zambia. Their advice, therefore, did not yield positive results for the

Estate and the company in general. The agreement, signed between the company and Mackwoods Development Limited of Sri Lanka helps to illustrate the point under discussion. Under this agreement, Mackwoods Development Limited was required to provide the company with a tea expert to advise the management on how to run the tea plantation. The expert was required to visit the Estate for at least a week every year and advise the management on how to manage the tea fields. The expert visited the Estate once every year between 1982 and 1986. Each visit he made to the plantation cost the company K13,249.09, a fairly large amount for an enterprise that was not adequately funded. In spite of the several costly visits of the 'expert' the Company did not benefited much from his advice because it continued to perform badly. Realising that the company was not benefiting much from the agreement, the company's Board of Directors noted that:

Whereas there may be need for a tea expert, the present one may certainly not be the best. This is in view of the fact that though he started visiting the Estate in June 1982, he has not been of help in arresting the deteriorating trend at KTC. In addition we think that what is required to be done at KTC. is very basic and does not need a consultant. The expert comes to tell us that our tea bushes should be fertilised, weeded, pruned and irrigated. This we know and can do but our problem has been lack of funds to enable us do all these things.⁷

Had the company management been able to understand and make a quick judgement on the usefulness of the so called expert's advice in the period between 1982 and 1986 it would have not allowed the agreement it signed with Mackwoods Development Limited to go on for that long. It should have advised the Board to terminate the agreement within one or two years and the company would not have lost K66,245.45 which was paid to Mackwoods Development Limited for the five trips its tea expert made to the tea

plantation. The K66,245.45 at that time was a very large amount of money which could have been spent on buying fertilisers which the Estate needed so much and on pruning the plants and for irrigation.

Another administrative constraint which contributed to the poor performance of the plantation was lax supervision by some General Manager's, especially those who administered the Company in the period between 1982 and 1987.⁸ The managers in question allowed many company workers to make numerous trips to the Copperbelt and Lusaka. They also quite often did the same. Even though it may be difficult to find out how much the company lost on the trips some workers and some managers made, it is evident that the company's money was spent on the movements and lodging in hotels, especially by some Managers.⁹ Besides, excessive movements of workers made some duties stall. In order to safeguard the resources of the company the Managing Director of the Rural Development Corporation in 1984 appointed a person to run the affairs of the company in Lusaka and ensured that the company office on the Copperbelt was well staffed. Thereafter, he pointed out to the company management that:

There has been excessive movement of people from the estate to Copperbelt and Lusaka. Now that one other person has been employed here in Lusaka to look after the affairs of your company and that you have got a reasonable establishment in Ndola, there should be very few trips of the top management from the estate.¹⁰

Financial mismanagement among some General Managers was yet another problem which contributed to the poor performance of the company. This problem emerged in 1982 when the post of General Manager was Zambianised. The Managers who administered the company in the periods between 1981 and 1985 and between 1987 and

1990 misused the company's meagre resources. Evidence suggests that the General Managers who administered the company between 1981 and 1985 were so extravagant that they used the company's resources to stay in the expensive suites of high-class hotels whenever they went to the Copperbelt and Lusaka. Very often, they spent more money than allowed in their conditions of service. This trend did not please the Managing Director for Rural Development Corporation who on December 12, 1983 decided to reprimand the General Manager. He thus wrote that:

Coming to other general expenditures it was found that while you were in Lusaka you have been living in a suite at Pamodzi Hotel costing a lot of money. I do not understand why you had decided to live in a suite at Pamodzi and Savoy in Ndola when you could have been booking yourself either in a single room or a double room.

Particularly, I would like to mention that there has been no respect for the budget. In other words, over-expenditures have been effected without due regard on how much the Board had approved for each vote.¹¹

The Managing Director's sentiments were echoed by the Executive Director in charge of agriculture in the Zambia Industrial Mining Corporation (ZIMCO) who noted in 1986 that Kawambwa Tea Company had suffered from financial maladministration.¹²

Evidence suggests that the period between 1987 and 1990 was also characterised by misuse of company resources. Both former and serving workers interviewed who worked for the Kawambwa Tea Company during the aforesaid period pointed out that the General Manager during this period spent the company's resources on travelling to Kazembe and Mansa on beer drinking sprees.¹³ In fact, the very Manager had on many occasions to be phoned for a decision over a number of situations which arose when he

was out of the station.¹⁴ With this kind of mismanaging of the resources by the Managers the company was unable to perform well economically.

Financial mismanagement cited as one of the problems which affected the performance of the company and its Estate was a wide-spread scourge in Zambia. In fact, it affected many institutions including the Zambia Industrial Mining Corporation (ZIMCO), the holding company that supervised the operations of Kawambwa Tea Company. Vaughan explains that after Zambia's independence certain sectors of the economy were nationalised and massive parastatals such as ZIMCO were created. Nevertheless, parastatal organisations such as ZIMCO passed in the hands of increasingly powerful and corrupt local elites. These elites accumulated capital for their own ends. In addition, the government's expansion of the state control of the economy simply put vast public resources at their disposal.¹⁵ The more the local elites mismanaged the money for ZIMCO the more difficult it became for the parastatal to fund its subsidiaries adequately. In fact, Vaughan's revelation explains why ZIMCO Managers found it difficult to discipline the managers of Kawambwa Tea Company; for all that they could do was to merely reprimand them.

Apart from mismanaging the finances of the company, the General Managers for the period between 1981 and 1987 were so inefficient that they failed to put in place all the logistics needed to make the company operate effectively. For example, pipes meant for irrigation were left lying idle for a long time and so did the steam boiler which lay from 1981 to 1987 without being used. Unhappy with the inefficiency of the Managers of the company, ZIMCO Group Financial Director wrote to the company management on February 21, 1987, pointing out that:

Concern has been expressed that a steam boiler furnace supplied by E.E.C. in 1981 for £55,000 has not been installed at Kawambwa. Trivial excuses have been given for failure to install the furnace.¹⁶

This failure to fix irrigation pipes, a job which did not require the knowledge of an expert just shows how inefficient the General Managers were. Furthermore, the failure to install a steam boiler for such a long time meant that the company could not process a lot of tea. It can, therefore, be argued that inefficiency among some General Managers was one of the factors that induced the poor performance of the Company.

Another administrative problem which contributed to poor performance of the Company and other industries located in the rural areas of Zambia was the use of unqualified staff in managerial positions. In the case of Kawambwa Tea Company the situation was even worse because the unqualified staff were not only too many but also lacked effectiveness.¹⁷ To try and save the company from collapsing, the Appraisal Mission recommended to the Government that all division and sub Managers be trained and their training should combine with the right technical guidance.¹⁸ Nevertheless, only very few managers were sent for training at the President Citizenship College¹⁹ while the General Manager went on study tour to Malawi.²⁰ The courses done by the few Managers at the President Citizenship College were short ones, lasting only three months. Hence, things could not change much. The *JASPA EMPLOYMENT ADVISORY MISSION* attributed the use of unqualified staff to administer rural industries to the government's failure to offer good conditions of service to attract qualified people to rural areas. The uniform conditions of service and salaries prescribed by the Salaries Commission for workers in rural and urban areas made qualified people shun rural areas.²¹ Malawi as well was another country where rural industries were administered by unqualified

personnel. Pryor and Chipeta noted that, 'many of the new estate holders lacked required technical and managerial skills to run the estates.'²² It should, however, be noted that in Malawi it was only the new industries which used the unqualified personnel to run estates whereas in Zambia even old industries did so.

Party Politics and the Performance of the Company 1973-1991

Between 1970 and 1972 party politics was not an issue in the administration of the Kawambwa Tea Company. However, party politics became a real factor in the running of the Company soon after the country became a One Party State in 1973. This constitutional change made the Party superior to all the organs of the government. In fact, formal responsibility for policy-making and implementation lay with the UNIP National Council and the Central Committee.²³ During this period political interference became a major problem and affected the performance of the company and the Estate in particular. The United National Independence Party controlled all government funded organisations in the country. As a result, UNIP which was the ruling party, for example, interfered in the running of almost all government funded organisations including the Kawambwa Tea Company and its Estate.

One event that disturbed the Company's operations was the Humanism Week. The Humanism Week, was an annual event running from 18 to 24 October of each year. During this Week the Party used to direct the company management to send on average of about fifty workers to its Luena Ward offices in the period between 1973 and 1986.²⁴ Thereafter, the number was increased. In 1987, for example, seventy workers were asked for.²⁵ Most of the workers were, especially from the Estates Department, deployed to work on community based development projects. The Estates Department needed a lot of

people to pluck tea leaves from the fields. The absence of these pluckers certainly affected the Estate's performance. The company's participation in community based development projects may not have been necessarily a bad thing, rather what was bad was the large number of workers asked for and the long period of time they were absent from the company's work. Each employee worked for the company for eight hours per day. Thus the absence of fifty workers from company work for seven days meant that the company lost 2,800 man-hours during each Humanism Week during the period between 1973 and 1986 and 3,920 man-hours after 1986. This was a substantial loss by the company.

In addition to the use of the company employees during Humanism Week, the Party often asked the company to provide some employees for Party functions as well. Party programmes such as ward, district and provincial conferences demanded that the company provide some of its workers to erect shelters at conference centres.²⁶ The Party conferences did not only demand for workers, but for motor vehicles as well to transport building materials and delegates to the conference centres and back to their homes. This made the operations of the company and in particular of the Estate even more difficult considering the fact that the company did not have sufficient number of motor vehicles.

Party politics also encouraged absenteeism and laziness among the workers of the company because many of them held political positions in the Party at section, ward, district or provincial levels. Such employees often absented themselves from work in order to go round villages to sell and renew Party cards. Yet others kept away from work because they were involved in addressing or attending Party meetings. In January 1991, for instance, 13 workers were absent from work the whole day because they were

attending a meeting which was being addressed by the District Women's chairperson for Kawambwa.²⁷ Nevertheless, the Company was required to treat them as having worked. On face value, this may seem trivial an issue to discuss or to point out as having been a setback on the smooth running of the Company, but a close examination reveals that, as a common occurring situation, the Company was from time to time negatively affected. If UNIP was after promoting the spirit of hardwork, it would not have allowed these employees to carry out its duties during the company's working time. Moreover, it was not in order for all those employees to stay away from work just because they had to attend meetings addressed by district Party officials who were not only fellow local persons but also very junior persons in the Party hierarchy.

The situation got worse whenever high ranking Party leaders visited the area because almost all the workers were required to turn out to welcome them and attend their meetings. In March 1991, for instance, the Secretary General of UNIP visited the area and the personnel officer at the company was directed to write a circular to the workers to inform them about the Secretary General's meeting. The circular read in part thus:

On Sunday at 09.00 hours His Honour the Secretary General of the United National Independence Party will hold a public meeting and all KTC employees should attend. All workers of KTC are ordered to (i) come on Saturday afternoon at 15.00 hours to welcome the Honourable Secretary General (ii) come on Sunday at 08.00 hours to attend a public meeting to be addressed by His Honour the Secretary General at 09.00 hours.²⁸

During the peak period Saturday was a full working day. The peak period ran from November to April. This was a time when the fields had plenty of tea to be harvested. Therefore, abandoning work by workers to welcome the Secretary General was counter

productive. Despite realising that abandoning of the work by the workers in order to welcome UNIP leaders had negative impact on the performance of the company the management and the workers of the company could not disobey the Party's orders. They feared to be accused of being anti-Party which at that time was a very serious offence. The punishment for the offence was instant dismissal from employment with harassment from Party cadres. Since the visits, especially by the local UNIP leaders were many the company work was interrupted many times. The Governor for Kawambwa district quite often visited the company and every time he did so his visit almost brought to a halt work at the company²⁹.

The political interference in the running of the Kawambwa Tea Company was not only confined to the UNIP era. Evidence suggests that the trend continued even during the Movement for Multi-party Democracy, hereafter the MMD, era. In 1992, for example, the company decided to evict the 2,000 unemployed people who illegally settled on its Estate land. This was so because the company suspected this group of being responsible for the numerous thefts which were taking place at the company premises. Through the thefts, the company lost property such as motor vehicle tyres, water pipes, roofing iron sheets, processed tea and motor vehicle spare parts. In spite of being aware of the effects of these thefts on the company, the MMD directed the company's General Manager to postpone the exercise until after the local government elections were held. After the elections the Party told the company that it would support the exercise only if the company would provide transport to all the evicted people to their destinations.³⁰ This was going to be carried out at an enormous expense, consequently the company failed to evict them. The failure meant that the loss of company property continued.

Tea thefts made the company's tea sales reduce even further. This was so because local people who often bought from the company opted to buy cheaper tea from the thieves.

What exacerbated the situation was the fact that even Company workers also took part in stealing of the company property. They took advantage of the presence and activities of the illegal squatters to be stealing company property; and knowing the operations of the Company too well, they found it easy to steal as much as they could. Confirming the indulgence of the workers in theft of the Company property, the Factory Manager's report for 1993 stated that stealing of Company property by employees was rampant.³¹

It can be argued that even though it might be difficult to quantify the losses the company incurred because of these political interference it is evident that losses were there and had a negative impact on the performance of the company and the Estate in particular.

Political interference in the administration of rural development programmes was also rife in other African countries. In Tanzania, for example, party resolutions influenced the formulation and implementation of rural development programmes.³² Besides, the party ensured that it was represented on all committees charged with the implementation of rural development programmes and was in fact responsible for the overall policy making.³³ The situation was the same in Mali where the Groundnut Project Manager was required to surrender his official vehicle to the circle commandant for as long as a week. The circle commandant in the English speaking countries would be equivalent to a district governor. Lele notes that the Project Manager had no choice

but to comply with the order.³⁴ Undoubtedly, such activities did not only interrupt the smooth running of rural development programmes but contributed to their poor performance as well.

Economic Constraints in the History of the Estate and Company

Economic constraints were more acute than the administrative problems and political interference and affected the performance of the Company more than these factors. One of the major economic constraints which affected the development of the Estate and the company in general and its viability was undercapitalisation. Evidence shows that the government, which was the major funding agency, did not meet the financial requirements of the company, usually it provided less finances than was budgeted for. In some instances, the amount was so little that the company could not buy enough fertilisers for the Estate. In 1975, for example, the company planned to spend K752,632.00 but the government provided only K500,000.00³⁵ which was less than two thirds of the required amount. Because of the insufficient funding, it was difficult for the Estate and the company to develop fully. In the 1984/85 financial year, the company, planned to spend K750,000.00, however, it received only K350,000.00 from the government.³⁶

Undercapitalisation of the company occurred at the time when the inflation was running high. In 1985 inflation rose to 36 per cent from 20 per cent in 1984.³⁷ Because of the inflation the government reduced subsidies on its funded projects and organisations. This development evidently affected the company in a negative way.

The undercapitalisation of the company had its own negative by product. One such negative by product was the company's failure to employ and retain qualified manpower which in the process led to the poor performance of the Company. One department that was badly hit by lack of qualified personnel was the accounts department. For many years in the history of the company, the department failed to employ a qualified accountant because it had no money to attract and retain a qualified person. This problem was evident in the General Manager's report for 1984 which in part read that:

One problem that has affected the operations of this company has been the Accounts Department. The Company has never had a continuous person to run the Accounts Department resulting in a lot of accounting principles being changed from time to time depending on the holder of the post. In 1983, the Accountant resigned. His deputy took over and after sometime, Mr. Mwila was employed. His former employers used to pay him K14,000.00 and our company offered him K10,000.00. After five months he resigned.³⁷

The report further stated that as time went by the accounts of the company became confused and this led to the rejection of the accounts report of 1984 by the auditors. The rejection of the company's account's report illustrates the extent to which the company was forced to make do with ill qualified personnel due to poor funding.

The problem of undercapitalisation did not affect the Tea Company alone but other rural development programmes funded by the government. Between 1971 and 1975, for example, the government planned to provide the Intensive Development Zone (IDZ) a sum of K10,000,000 per year for each of the aforesaid years. However in 1972 the IDZ received only K208,000 and in 1973 and 1974 it got only K400,000. The amount was later reduced to K230,000 in 1975.³⁹ With such severe undercapitalisation

the IDZ's performance could not be different from other poorly funded programmes such as the Kawambwa Tea Company.

Our investigation shows that the causes of undercapitalisation of rural development programmes were many. Nevertheless one prominent factor was the country's over-dependence for almost all its revenues on copper mining; and when mining began performing badly, all government funded programmes were affected. Gould concurs with this observation. Discussing the poor performance of Mulukuma Scheme in Luapula Province, he noted that 'pursuant to the second copper prices crash in 1975, the whole sector went into recession from which it has still not recovered'.⁴⁰ The problem of the country's poor economy being one of the factors which contributed to poor performance of the Company is fully discussed in chapter three.

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that Kawambwa Tea Company faced numerous problems which affected not only its development but its performance as well. One of the problems was poor management, especially in the years after 1981 when the post of general manager was Zambianised. The chapter has also shown that political interference in the period between 1973 and 1991 when Zambia became a One Party State was another factor that contributed to unsatisfactory performance of the Company and its estate. The chapter has further demonstrated that among the numerous economic problems the company faced poor funding was the most outstanding.

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CHAPTER THREE

THE KAWAMBWA TEA COMPANY IN THE CONTEXT OF NATIONAL AND REGIONAL POLITICAL ECONOMY, 1976-1996

Introduction

This chapter examines the performance of the Kawambwa Tea Company in the context of the political economic situation that prevailed in the country and the region in the period between 1976 and 1996. It also assesses the effects of social problems such as shortage of essential commodities which in the process triggered off absenteeism of Company workers from duty. Our argument in this chapter is that the poor economic performance of the country during this period greatly affected the development and performance of the company. Kawambwa Tea Company began processing consumable tea in 1976, the time the country's economy began experiencing a downturn because of the fall in the price of copper, the principal earner of the country's revenue, on the international market. This was also the time when Zambia's external debts went up and the price of fuel was increased. The country's economy thus became weak and this affected the performance of many industrial and commercial enterprises in the country. It can be argued that the economic problems of the country were responsible for the poor performance of KTC because they affected the financial capacity of the customers of the company's tea and thus making them unable to purchase as much tea as they used to. It is also the argument of the chapter that Zambia was sharing tea trade with Malawi, Tanzania and Zimbabwe, countries whose economies were relatively doing well when her economy was experiencing a downturn. This meant that tea from these countries was

produced cheaply than the *Zambian* one and hence sold cheaply too. Since Zambia had an open economic policy, tea from the three neighbouring countries found its way on the *Zambian* market and competed with *Zambian* tea. We demonstrate that the *Zambian* tea was bought less on the market, to the detriment of the company's financial well-being.

The chapter is divided into three sections. The first section discusses the effect of the poor national economy on the performance of the company. Section two discusses the company in the context of the regional political economy. The last section looks at the social consequences of the country's economy on the company.

The Company in the Context of the National Economy, 1976-1996

Zambia's economy largely depended on copper. Emphasising the degree to which Zambia depended on copper mining Molteno and Tordoff observed that: 'Foreign exchange, government revenue and the general level of economic activity in Zambia are particularly dependent on the out put and price of copper.'¹

Revenue from copper, however, dropped from K251 million in 1970 to K51 million in 1972. This was as a result of low prices for copper, the Mufulira mine disaster of 1970 and the heavy capital expenditure programme of the mining companies which was being implemented at that time.² In 1974 the price of copper fell from K1,326.00 per tonne to K793.00 in 1975.³ The fall in copper price led to further decline of government revenue which in turn led to poor funding of state owned companies. The *Kawambwa Tea Company* was thus developing at a time when the country was experiencing an economic downturn. This had a negative impact on the development and performance of the company.

The decline of revenue for governments in Africa as a result of falling prices of export commodities was not unique to Zambia alone, other countries experienced similar situations as well. Kofi noted that between 1974 and 1975 most African countries lost substantial revenue because the prices of their principal export commodities declined.⁴ Meanwhile the prices of imports continued rising. In 1974 for example, import prices rose by forty-five percent; Zambia, Kenya and the Democratic Republic of Congo were the hardest hit.⁵ This development adversely affected the economy of Zambia and even contributed to the deterioration of the terms of international trade for the country. The purchasing power of one tonne of copper reduced to only 50 per cent of that of a barrel of oil.⁶ Zambia was, therefore, compelled to seek the assistance of the International Monetary Fund, hereafter, the IMF. The IMF prescribed measures, if anything, which merely exacerbated the economic situation in the country. The auctioning of foreign exchange, which commenced on October 4, 1984, led to massive devaluation of the Zambian currency. The value of the kwacha to the US dollar, which before the auctioning system commenced was K2.20 to 1 dollar, dropped to K5.01 during the first week of auctioning. By the end of December 1985, the kwacha had depreciated by approximately 61.7 per cent and in 1987, 1 US dollar was equivalent to K21.28, a devaluation of more than 700 per cent.⁷

The devaluation of the kwacha had serious repercussions on the country's economy; it created high inflation. In September 1985, for example, the inflation was 36 per cent and by October 1986, it increased to 46 per cent.⁸ What followed was an upward adjustment of prices of nearly all the commodities in the country. But wages were kept to a minimum.⁹ Because of this adverse economic situation that prevailed in the country,

commodities such as tea were considered luxuries and thus the majority of Zambians spent their money on those commodities they considered really necessary for their survival. The eroded purchasing power for many Zambians contributed to low sales of Kawambwa tea and this was one of the factors responsible for the perpetual financial problems the company experienced, especially after 1976.

Debt servicing was another factor that enormously contributed to the weakening of Zambia's economy and which in turn affected the Zambian industries particularly those which entirely relied on the government for funding. Zambia's external debt increased from US\$3,080 million in 1984 to roughly US\$7,146 million in 1991.¹⁰ Increase in the loan plus the country's inability to repay the loans in time resulted in piling up of interest arrears so much that in 1989 they stood at US\$800 million.¹¹ What worsened the situation for Zambia was the fact that while both the loan and the interest arrears were increasing, export earnings fluctuated widely.¹² As a result, the country failed to raise enough money to fund sufficiently its companies and at the same time pay the loans. Although the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) increased access for Zambia to borrow money from the IMF and the World Bank, that money was not used to improve the economy, instead it was used to service the external debt.

The poor economic performance of the country led to high production costs which forced the company to charge "economic" prices for its tea so as to make profits. In order to produce, for example, 1kg of processed tea in 1991, the company spent K107.00 but in 1995 the company was required to spend K1,074.00 to produce 1kg.¹³ However, the "economic" prices charged by the company forced the consumers to shun the

company's tea. The more the consumers avoided the company's tea, the less profits the company made.

Found in financial problems, the company tried to borrow money from the commercial banks, but failed because of very high interest rates charged on loans. Rates, in fact, kept on rising. In 1985, for instance, interest rate was 35 per cent, in 1987, it rose to 56 percent¹⁴ and in 1991 it increased further to about 150 per cent¹⁵. Realising that the tea sales were low and slow the company did not see how it could manage to pay back loans if they were obtained. Hence it was reluctant to obtain loans from banks. The financial problems thus continued and this led to poor performance of the company.

High cost of fuel and electricity charges were also responsible for poor economic performance of the company. The price of fuel was increased at the time the company was facing financial problems which made it difficult for it to procure enough fuel to sustain its operations. In 1985, for instance, the price of fuel went up; one litre of premium petrol rose from K1.41 to K2.82 and that of regular petrol was increased from K1.29 per litre to K2.58 while diesel was increased from K0.97 per litre to K1.87.¹⁶ These prices were for Lusaka town. Other places charged their own prices after taking into consideration the transportation costs. Thus the price of fuel in Kawambwa which is about 1000 kilometers away from Lusaka, was very high. The high fuel prices made the company fail to procure enough fuel and this led to erratic transportation of tea to market centres, resulting in reduced tea sales.

High electricity charges also had a negative impact on the economic performance of the company. The *Times of Zambia* story of 27 June, 1986 stated that electricity charges had been increased twice in six months. The first increase was in December

1985 which pushed up the tariffs by 75 per cent while the second one was in June 1986. The second increase obliged consumers in commercial rates (E4) to pay K55 and a unit charge of K7.80.¹⁷ The *Ten Year Contingency Plan* pointed out that the high electricity charges had a terrible effect on the economic performance of the company. This was so because the charges kept on increasing at a time the company's financial problems were intensifying.

Kawambwa tea versus Regional tea, 1976-1996

In section one we discussed how Zambia's poor economic performance affected the Kawambwa Tea Company. In this section we discuss the impact of the tea trade from the neighbouring countries had on the performance of KTC.

Tea industries from Malawi, Tanzania and Zimbabwe waged stiff competition on KTC's tea and this had a negative impact on the performance of the company. These industries were not only more advanced than KTC but were established long before it. In fact, the company got its tea stumps and seedlings from Malawi Tea Industry which was established in 1891.¹⁸ In Tanzania, tea growing began in 1924 while in Zimbabwe in 1955.²⁰ Besides, these industries came from countries whose economies were performing better than that of Zambia, especially in the period between 1980 and 1990. Zimbabwe, for example, had an economy which was stronger than that of Zambia. A survey of exchange rates shows that 1 Zambian Kwacha was equivalent to 15 Zimbabwean Cents in December 1986.²¹ This meant that for every Kwacha spent by KTC as production cost, the Zimbabwean Tea Industry spent about 15 cents. It also meant that KTC's production costs were higher than those of the Zimbabwe Tea Industry by 85 per cent. Therefore, even if the Zambian government imposed 100 per cent tax on

imported tea from Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwean tea still remained cheaper than the Zambian one. This scenario did not only make it difficult for the company to compete effectively with tea industries from neighbouring countries but had negatively affected its performance. Delighted with her country's positive performance, the Zimbabwean government reported that:

During the traumatic decade (1980-90) for much of Africa, Zimbabwe made impressive progress witnessing great strides while both key sectors of the country, agriculture and mining performed well thereby giving the country solid growth through most of the decade. The period 1980-81 for instance, was a period of high growth, about 12%.²²

In another development Zimbabwe's debt was less than that of Zambia and thus its debt burden was lighter than that of Zambia. Then while the Zambian currency had been massively devalued, the Zimbabwean one was not. Moreover, the Zambian export earnings were less than those of Zimbabwe.²³

The Malawian industries also had an advantage over the Zambian one because the Malawian economy was recovering at a time when the Zambian economy was going down. Therefore, Malawi was able to subsidise the production of tea. Mhone pointed out that Malawi's post independence economic performance was reasonable if not good compared to other sub-Saharan countries endowed with great natural resources. Its GDP in normal terms grew from 3.3 per cent in 1988 to 4.3 per cent in 1989 and was estimated to have grown by 4.8 by 1991.²⁴

Although the Tanzania economy was not necessarily stronger than that of Zambia, it had some advantages over Zambia. While both Tanzania and Zambia had debts with IMF, the Tanzanian situation was better than that of Zambia. This was in view of the fact

that Tanzania's debt had a large concessional component while the Zambian debt did not have.²⁵ Zambia's debt had a component which was either short term or simply owed from commercial lenders. This means that the Tanzanian economy had a relief when paying debts while the Zambian one did not. The latter was obliged to pay as per the terms of agreement.

It is evident from the discussion that the competition the tea industries from the neighbouring countries waged on KTC was one of the factors responsible for its poor performance. Since those industries belonged to countries with relatively stronger economies than that of Zambia, those industries had less production costs compared to KTC. Besides, Malawi, Tanzania and Zimbabwe's economies subsidised production whereas the Zambian economy did not. Consequently, the imported tea was cheaper than the locally produced brand and this coupled with the economic hardships Zambians were passing through KTC was unable to sell enough tea to raise reasonable amounts to run the company effectively. The Zambian consumers opted for the imported brands and the less tea the company sold the poorer it performed.

The poor economic performance of the country affected tea sales of the company, which in turn led to its poor performance. From the commencement of tea production in 1976 up to 1986, the company sold all its tea to Lyons Brooke Bond Limited (LBB Ltd).²⁶ Initially, the arrangement worked in favour of the company because it protected the young tea industry from the stiff competition posed by the older tea industries from the region. LBB Ltd., had made the brand unknown because after buying the tea from the company it used to blend it with imported varieties. This was so because blending was meant to improve the quality of the imported brands which were of low quality Company

to KTC's tea. Furthermore, it was a common practice in tea business for poor and quality tea to be blended. Writing about tea production in Central Africa, Harkema stated that tea grown in Malawi and Zimbabwe was of low quality. Consequently, its main use was for blending.²⁷ Mwangilwa confirms Herkena's observation by revealing that in 1996, the Limbe Auctioneers imported tea from KTC to blend with their brand.²⁸ Thereafter the tea was packed under different trade names and labels. However, from 1980, LBB Ltd. was no longer able to purchase all the company's tea instead it only bought little quantity because the poor country's economy seriously had affected its financial position.

In 1985, the government of Zambia introduced the foreign exchange system, decontrol of interest rates and reduction on subsidies of consumer goods.²⁹ These developments did not only lead to the devaluation of the local currency and to the subsequent price increase of almost all commodities on the Zambian market but also led to the further deterioration of financial position of many industrial and commercial enterprises in the country. The LBB Ltd. was one of the enterprises negatively affected to such an extent that its tea trade monopoly was undermined as the country began importing cheaper tea from Malawi, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. In December 1985, for example, 100 grammes of Tanganda tea imported from Malawi cost K1.45 while the same quantity of the local tea cost K1.60.³⁰ By June 1986 100 grammes of imported tea was costing K2.68 as against K2.71 for the Kawambwa tea.³¹ Since the imported tea was cheaper than the locally produced one, the Zambian consumers shunned the local tea and opted to buy the imported one. Consequently, LBB Ltd was stuck with large quantities of tea. Since LBB Ltd. could not buy any more tea, Kawambwa Tea Company was

unable to sell its tea. In 1986, for example, the company was stuck with 200 metric tonnes of unsold tea.³²

Realising that LBB Ltd was no longer able to buy its tea, the company cancelled the contract in September 1986 and adopted an open trade policy.³³ The company contacted Copper Harvest, Speciality Foods, Banks and Wholesalers to buy its tea.³⁴ It also allowed individuals to purchase small or large quantities of tea from the factory as well as from the outlets which it established. In addition, mobile sales were also carried out in a number of districts and commercial centres in Luapula Province.³⁵ The government also tried to help the company sell the tea by imposing a 100 per cent tax on all imported teas.³⁶

In spite of the measures adopted the company continued to face some problems because its tea was not known to many Zambian consumers.³⁷ In addition some of the companies which bought the company's tea, because of the economic problems the country was going through, could not manage to make reasonable payments for that tea. In 1986, Speciality Foods, for example, bought tea worth K210,000, but because of its financial problems, it was able only to pay K75,000³⁸, the remaining amount could be paid later. With such kind of sales, it was difficult for KTC to overcome its financial problems. To some extent such problems were responsible for the privatisation of the company in 1996.

Social Consequences of the Country's poor Economy on KTC

The poor economic situation that prevailed in the country had a number of social consequences which affected the performance of the Kawambwa Tea Company. One of

the consequences which greatly affected the operations and success of the company was the shortage of essential commodities such as mealie-meal, sugar, salt, soap, cooking oil, paraffin and matches. The shortages were caused by the economy's inability to procure enough raw materials for use in the manufacturing of essential commodities to cater for the citizens in the country. In order to procure the aforesaid commodities, workers used to be absent from duty quite often. Many a time, they were unable to purchase the commodities, especially mealie-meal, cooking oil and soap and this compelled them to keep away from work for as long as a week or more. On December 21, 1988, the General Manager told the District Contingency planning meeting that absenteeism at the company had not only reached alarming proportions but was also a real threat to the prosperity of the company. He added that an average of 80 employees were absent from work everyday and each worker was away from work for an average of seven to ten days every month. He appealed to the Kawambwa District Council to help the company to procure essential commodities to sell to workers so as to reduce the rate of absenteeism.³⁸

Each employee worked for the company for 8 hours in a day. If eighty employees' man-hours were absent in a day, then the company lost 640 man hours that day; in a week it lost 4,480 man-hours. The loss in a month was 17,920 man hours and in a year, it was 215,040 man-hours.

Conclusion

This Chapter has shown that the country's poor economic performance affected the performance of KTC a great deal. It affected the financial position of the buyers of KTC's tea and thus making the company get stuck with its tea.

The chapter has demonstrated that Zambia's dependence on copper mining did a lot of harm to KTC especially in the period between 1976 to 1996 when copper production and prices began to fall. The fall in the production and prices of copper led to reduction of the government revenue and this resulted in poor funding of those companies which depended on the government such as KTC.

The chapter has further shown that the competition waged on KTC by industries from relatively stronger economies was another factor that had a negative impact on the local company. Those tea industries flooded the Zambian market with their cheaper tea; and this affected the tea sales of the company which in turn worsened the liquidity problems of KTC.

The chapter winds its discussion by demonstrating that the social consequences which resulted from the country's poor economy had also a share in the KTC's poor performance. One social consequence that stands out was the shortage of essential commodities. It was responsible for the rampant absenteeism at the company which in turn led to loss of many man-hours.

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CHAPTER FOUR

SOME SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE COMPANY, 1970-1996

Introduction

In chapters two and three, we have demonstrated and argued that Kawambwa Tea Company did not perform well in the period between 1970 to 1996 because it faced numerous problems. This chapter seeks to show that in spite of the numerous problems the Company faced, it still made positive contributions to the lives of the local people. The chapter argues that the Kawambwa Tea Company contributed to the socio-economic transformation of Kawambwa district by providing employment to the local people and increasing money in circulation in the district through workers' earnings. The chapter points out that the company created a market for industrial goods and local products. Furthermore, we argue that the company provided social services such as health and education hitherto unavailable to the local people.

The chapter is divided into four sections. The first section discusses how the company led to the creation of employment for the local people and how its workers' earnings increased money in circulation in Kawambwa district and to a lesser extent, in the Laupula province in general. The second section analyses the contributions of the Company to the coffers of Kawambwa District Council. The third section looks at how the Company led to the promotion of trade and commercialisation of the locally brewed beer. Section four discusses some social services the Company provided to the local community.

The Company and Employment Creation

The establishment of the tea Company in Kawambwa district led to the creation of employment for the local people. In 1969 the Projects division of the Ministry of Rural Development began employing local people when the area where the tea plantation was to be set up was being surveyed.¹ Thereafter, the task of clearing the land commenced. The area chosen for the plantation was a thick forest (locally known as *Umushitu*) with a lot of big trees and other forms of vegetation. The D10 caterpillar that was used to clear the area was unreliable; it broke down frequently² and fearing to stall progress of the estate, the Ministry of Rural Development employed many local men to do the work. Since the Company was in its initial stage, there were many other tasks that were undertaken manually. Tasks such as the construction of the water-pump-house, the building of administrative offices, workers' houses and the construction of the Lengwe road to join the Kawambwa-Mushota road led to the engagement of more men. In 1970, the Company employed 180 people.³ In a rural area, lacking industries to provide employment to the local people, the engagement of 180 people all drawn from the local community by an industry in its infancy was a relatively great achievement for the Company. In addition to the 180, more local people were employed to perform tasks such as planting of stumps, tea seedlings, mulching, centering and tipping. As a result, the number of workers increased to 600 in 1973.⁴ Even though the tea processing factory was still under construction, more people were employed in 1974⁵, when the first set of tea plants reached maturity. These workers picked green tea from the fields so as to keep under control tea bushes. They also received training in tea picking, a role they came to play after the completion of the construction of the factory in June 1976, and

once operations commenced in September that year.⁶ The beginning of tea processing was another task that prompted the Company to engage yet more people to work in the factory to process green tea and to pack the processed tea. In 1976 the Company had a total workforce of 1,657 out of which 1,257 were permanent employees and 400 were casual workers.⁷

From its inception, the Company's workforce was dominated by men. However, the situation changed when the first set of tea plants reached their maturity, as women were now employed to pluck the green tea from the plantation. The completion of the tea factory led to the creation of further chances for employing more women. The women worked mainly in the tea fields as pluckers and in the factory to pack processed tea.

The use of women to pick tea in plantation agriculture has been a common practice. In Sri Lanka, for instance, women were favoured for the job because of their efficiency. Furthermore, their demands for salaries and allowances were not as high as those of men, a trend which assisted plantation owners to maximise profits.⁸ However, in the case of the Kawambwa Tea Company, evidence shows that women were preferred to men because they were faster and thus picked more tea than men. The field supervisors interviewed on this issue attributed women's efficiency to the fact that harvesting has been women's traditional role in that part of the country. Evidence suggest that women actually begin learning how to harvest crops, especially finger millet when they are quite young, and this made them better pickers of tea than men.⁹ This evidence fits in Elizabeth Isichei's argument that work in Central Africa was always gender specific¹⁰ especially during the colonial period when wage labour was male dominated, and women looked to men for all their requirements. But as soon as the Company was fully

established, many women got employed and earned money, which they used to buy for themselves most of the needs which their husbands previously used to buy for them. Narrating how the Company led to the change in gender relations, Mandalena Mukonde said that:

We even supplemented the incomes of our husbands and quite often we pooled resources together to purchase big items such as beds, mattresses, bicycles, radio and furniture.¹¹

In another development, the employing of women encouraged joint ownership of household property between husbands and wives. In the past, all household property belonged to men, for it was they who earned the money. Thus setting up of the Company in the area transformed the lives of the local people. Men who previously partly depended on subsistence farming and fishing for their income and livelihood came to depend on wage labour. Evidence suggests that most of the workforce at the Company became proletarianised and just like the workers of Maamba mine, they had little possibility of settling down as peasant or commercial farmers while still in employment.¹² The proletarianisation of the Kawambwa Tea Company 's workers was not only realised but also clearly seen by all the people in the area in 1994 and 1995 when the workers were subjected to severe suffering because the company was unable to pay them their salaries for a period of fourteen months. The failure by the company to pay its employees was caused by the government's withdrawal of subsidies from all the parastatal companies in the country. The company was thus stranded and as a result failed to pay all its workers. In order to survive, workers together with their families resorted to working for food in the surrounding villages.¹³ This demonstrates, the extent to which these employees had come to depend on selling labour for their livelihood.

Besides, a fairly large number of men who from time to time left their villages in search of employment in the urban areas now looked to Kawambwa Tea Company for employment.¹⁴ The Kawambwa Tea Company was the only major commercial venture in the area and for this reason, it led to an increase in the flow of money in the district and to some extent in Luapula province as a whole through the workers' earnings. In 1976, for example, 208 daily classified employees earned an estimated total annual income of K51,390¹⁵ and from this amount each worker earned K247.67 per annum. At that time, the national per capital income was K194. The Company, therefore, paid its employees relatively substantial salaries.¹⁶ By March 1993, 371 male workers were paid a total amount of K10,640,769.38, while 124 female workers earned K6,709,491.60¹⁷. These workers spent much of their money in Kawambwa district.¹⁸ The scenario whereby the employees of Kawambwa Tea Company spent much of their money on buying some industrial goods in Kawambwa township also obtained in Mazabuka among the workers of Nakambala Sugar Estate.¹⁹

The Company and Kawambwa District Council

The development of the Company in the area benefited Kawambwa District Council as well. The workers paid Personal Levy to the Council. The amount of money paid to the Council as levy during the early years of the Company is not known because the company's early financial records and even the Council's could not be located. However, the records for the 1990s show that in 1990, the company paid the council K46,811.58 and K72,141.00 in 1991. In 1992, the amount rose to K460,983.54 while in 1994 it further increased to K1,234,971.00.²⁰ Although the money appears to be little, it

helped the Council greatly for it was able to purchase stationery such as reams of paper, pens, file, curtains for some offices and floor polish.

In addition to the money received as Personal Levy, the Council also received some money from the Company for the ground rent which was a tax for all rentable assets of the Company. Ground rent payment began in 1992 after the assets of the KTC had been assessed and fixed at K168.7 million. The Council got three Ngwee from every Kwacha of the aforesaid figure. This gave the Council an annual income of K5,061,000.²¹ This was a fairly large amount for a rural district council. The money was used to solve the numerous problems the Council faced. Using the same money, for example, the council was able to buy chrolin which was much needed to treat water for human consumption.²²

Trade and Commercialisation of Local Products

By increasing the amount of money in circulation in the district, the tea Company stimulated trade in the area. Before the establishment of the company, the area where the Estate came to be situated had neither a market nor a shop. The nearest market and shops for the people in this area were in Kawambwa township, 25 kilometres away. This situation changed as soon as the Estate was set up. In 1972, for instance, the first shop was opened at the Estate. In 1976, two more shops were opened. By 1980 there were four shops at the Estate.²³ More shops were also opened at Kawambwa township. The owners of the shops did not only come from Luapula but also from other provinces as well. They were by and large attracted to Kawambwa by the Tea Company. Luke

Chifumbe, one of the most prominent businessmen attracted to Kawambwa by the Company had this to say:

I left the Copperbelt to set up a shop in Kawambwa township in 1983 after finding out that there was plenty of money in circulation in the district brought about by the incomes of the workers of KTC. I discovered this during my visits to the district in 1980 and 1981 when I was selling books for the Seventh Day Adventist Church. Upon arrival in 1983, I set up a small shop in Kawambwa township but two years later, I expanded it. When my retail business reached its peak in the early 1990s, I diversified the operations by venturing into transport business. I operated a bus service between Kawambwa and Kitwe.²⁴

In addition to boosting trade in industrial goods in the area, the establishment of the Company also contributed to the creation of a large consumer market for food crops. Prior to the setting up of the estate, the area had no market for food crops which it produced; peasant families, therefore, produced only enough to feed themselves and a small surplus to sell to the residents of Kawambwa township. The establishment and development of the Company stimulated local agricultural production for the market. This development prompted the local peasant producers to expand their fields. The increase in demand for the local peasant produce was evident in the reduced period in which crops such as cassava could be harvested. In the past, cassava was harvested after it had been planted for three years. But because of the increase in demand for the tuber, the period for harvesting it was reduced to two years.²⁵ The trend of responding to markets created by development projects is a widespread thing. In Tanzania, Africans who lived around the plantations increased their produce which they sold to the workers.²⁶ The same thing happened in Kabwe when mining started. The local people began selling maize and milk to mine workers whose 'ration' requirements were so

meagre that they supplemented their dietary requirements by buying from vendors. Even fishermen from Lukanga also responded to the market created by the mines of Kabwe. 'Initially they traded with main land people who acted as middle men and travelled to Broken Hill'.²⁷ Thereafter, they, themselves took the fish to Kabwe.

The Social Impact of the Company

In sections one, two and three of this chapter, we demonstrated the contributions of Kawambwa Tea Company to the economic development of Kawambwa district. In this section we discuss some of the social benefits the community derived from the presence of the Company in the district. At the same time, we are aware of the social vices which usually are by products of development. One such a vice is prostitution or commercial sex work among young ladies who get attracted by development. In South Africa, for example, the diamond mines attracted many young ladies who later on indulged themselves in commercial sex.²⁸ This same trend has been observed in other areas where development has taken place. However, in the case of Kawambwa Tea Company, evidence to support the existence of this scourge is lacking. Consequently, the study is unable to cover it and instead, it has focussed on the deliberately planned social services meant to benefit the local people. Among the numerous social services provided by the Company which this section has discussed are the provision of educational and health facilities. The section observes that the development of the Kawambwa Tea Company did not only contributed to the socio-economic transformation of the district through provision of commercial enterprises, creation of consumer markets for the local agricultural produce and local beer, but also led to the provision of some vital social

services in the area. The management of the company noted, for example, that many children of its workers were unable to attend school because of lack of a school in the area. The children had to choose between going to either Mushota Primary School, 12 kilometres away from the estate or to go to Kawambwa Boma Primary School, 25 kilometres away.²⁹ The long distance to either of the schools discouraged many young children from going to school. Concerned with the plight of the children of its workers, the company management requested the government to build a primary school in the area. The government responded positively and the Tea Estate Primary School was opened in 1975.³⁰

The opening of a Primary School at the estate did not meet all the educational needs of the area; many children who completed grade seven from the area were unable to enter secondary schools in Luapula because of limited secondary school places. In order to fully solve the problem, the company donated its field offices to the Ministry of Education so that a junior secondary school could be opened at the estate. The Tea Scheme Junior Secondary School was thus opened in 1984.³¹ Like the Tea Estate Primary School, the Tea Scheme Junior Secondary school catered for both the children of workers and those of the local people. Children from far afield also enrolled at the School. Such children stayed with their relatives who either worked for the company or lived in the nearby villages.

The government employed and paid the teachers of the two schools; the company provided them with free accommodation, electricity and water. By supporting the two schools, the establishment and development of the company contributed to the provision of basic education in the area.

The area where the plantation was located did not only lack schools but lacked health facilities as well. The people from the areas surrounding the estate hitherto went to Kawambwa District Hospital for their treatment, so did the workers of the Company. In due course, however, the company management realised that most of the workers who went to Kawambwa District Hospital either came back very late or never reported for duties until the following day. This did not only result in the loss of many man-hours but stalled some company's work. To solve the problem, the management decided to build a clinic on its premises. The clinic opened on 19 November 1980.³² It extended its services to the local people and apart from providing medical services, the clinic also provided some maternal and child health care facilities. Since 1980, all the people in the area received their health remedies from the Company Clinic; only those with complications or very ill were referred to the district hospital at Kawambwa township. In the case of the critically ill, the clinic arranged for their transportation to the district hospital. Provision of free transport for the sick, however, ceased following the privatisation of the company in 1996. Although the clinical officers were employed by the Government, the company assisted them by giving them free accommodation, electricity and water. The company thus contributed to the provision of primary and health care services in the area. The provision of education and health services by Kawambwa Tea Company to the local people confirms Courtney's argument that plantations such as tea are renowned for providing social services to the local community sometimes at no charge to the government.³³

The Kawambwa Tea Company also contributed to the easing up of transport problems in the district. The management of the company had been complaining of bad

roads leading to the estate.³⁴ From its inception, the company had been complaining of bad roads in the area. The company's concerns were later supported by the Appraisal Mission of 1986 which stated that unless the road leading to the estate was improved, the company would not produce positive results.³⁵ Residents of Kawambwa district had also asked the government to tar either the Kawambwa road or the valley road. The former ran from Mansa to Nchelenge via Kawambwa township while the latter run from Mansa, passed through the valley and proceeded to Nchelenge. The valley road did not pass through Kawambwa township. However, a small road branched off the valley road at Mbereshi Mission and ran through Kawambwa township. In response to the company's request, the government decided to tar the valley road in 1989.³⁶ It also tarred the Mbereshi-Kawambwa road and the Kawambwa Tea Scheme-Mporokoso road only going up to the estate. The tarring of the Kawambwa Tea Scheme-Mporokoso road induced the development of the estate.

Improved transportation has always played important roles in the lives of business entities as well as those of people. Fromm, cited in Bertha Zimba, points out that:

Transportation plays a many-faceted role in the pursuit of development objectives. Its function as a factor input requirement is obvious-it enables goods and passengers to be transferred between urban and rural areas; transport supplies an essential ingredient in extending the money economy.³⁷

Zimba has echoed Fromm's sentiments and pointed out that the benefits of an efficient transport system, such as the good road network saved time for passengers and goods, reduced the number of accidents and maintenance costs.³⁸ The tarring of roads in Kawambwa because of the Company made it easy to transport tea and inputs to and from

other parts of Luapula Province and beyond. Local businessmen also benefited; they could now quickly go to Mansa, buy goods and return to Kawambwa the same day. The travelling public now found their journey more comfortable than ever before and saved time.

The setting up and development of the Kawambwa Tea Company was also responsible for the commercialisation of the local beer and the changing of the pattern of beer drinking in the area. Coslon and Scudder argued that in the Gwembe Valley and probably in most central and Southern African communities beer was brewed in small quantities and was not sold.³⁹ They further pointed out that it was consumed largely by senior men and their immediate juniors who were already established household heads.⁴⁰ This was also true of rural areas of Kawambwa district where beer brewing was done in small quantities and very often for rituals, wedding ceremonies and work parties. This situation drastically changed after the establishment and development of the estate; beer became commercialised and instead of being consumed by senior men and their immediate and established juniors only, it was now consumed by young men and even women. Women who did not seek employment at the Company took advantage of the large consumer market created by the estate to brew beer for sale in large quantities. The villages surrounding the estate became weekend beer gardens. Not only was beer brewed by indigenous local women, but also by women from other districts within Luapula and yet others came from Northern Province especially those who had relatives either working at the estate or living in the surrounding villages. They came to the area, brewed beer several times and after raising enough money, returned to their districts.

The money raised from beer sales tremendously helped to lift the standard of living of the women who partook in brewing and selling of the beer. Apart from helping in the acquisition of household goods, money from beer sales also helped the local people to educate their children. Bupe Chitotela, for example, educated her son who later worked in a Lusaka bank by raising money through beer brewing at the Estate.⁴¹ Many other women paid for their children's education by selling beer at the company. When the concept of cost sharing was introduced in 1988 by the Ministry of Health many women in the district, particularly those near the Estate used money earned through beer sales to pay for their treatment and that of other family members.⁴²

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that the Tea Company contributed to the socio-economic transformation of Kawambwa district. The Company created employment for the local people and increased cash flow in the area through the salaries workers earned. In addition, the chapter demonstrated that the Company promoted trade in the area in industrial goods and local products and also led to the commercialisation of the local beer. Furthermore, the Company provided social services to the local community through the provision of educational and health facilities.

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CONCLUSION

Our study intended to reconstruct a history of Kawambwa Tea Company from 1970 to 1976 from a historical perspective. It also set out to assess the economic and social impact of the Company on the local people.

The study has shown that the Company laboured under the weight of many problems. One administrative problem which emerged soon after the estate was set up was the decision by the government to administer the estate from Lusaka. This decision obliged the Estate Manager to consult with Lusaka on important day-to-day issues. However, there were no communication facilities to link the estate directly with Lusaka. Besides, bureaucracy in the government used to delay the process of decision making. Therefore, it took long for the estate to get a feedback from Lusaka. This affected the development and performance of the Company.

In addition, some of the managers who administered the Company, especially after the post of General Manager was Zambianised in 1982 lacked vision. Those General Managers depended so much on the advice of foreign experts who quite often gave advice based on conditions which prevailed in their countries. This trend in the process affected the performance of the Company.

Political interference was another factor which disturbed the operations of the Company, particularly in the period between 1973 and 1996. The country having been declared a One Party State under UNIP, interfere in all government funded organisations in the country became life. The Humanism Week Programme was one event which empowered UNIP to get workers of KTC and deploy them on the community based development projects. Quite often many workers were taken from KTC and this affected

its performance. In addition, visits of high ranking party officials almost brought work at the estate to a halt, for workers were not only required to turn out to welcome them but also obliged to attend their meetings. As a result, many man-hours were lost.

The study has also demonstrated that undercapitalisation by the government did affect greatly the performance of KTC. Since its establishment up to the time of privatisation, KTC used to be undercapitalised and this was responsible for its sluggish growth and performance. In fact, undercapitalisation was responsible for the Company's failure to employ a qualified accountant.

In a related development, the poor economy of the country also dealt a serious blow on the performance of the Company. The poor economy of the country forced it to pursue the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) of the IMF and the World Bank. SAP worsened the economic situation of Zambia and this affected KTC's tea sales for inflation was high in the country and cheaper tea from neighbouring countries flooded the Zambian market.

In spite of the numerous problems KTC faced, on a local level, it had some positive impact. The study has shown that it created employment for the local people whose incomes did not only increase the cash flow in the district and the province but also boosted trade in industrial and local products. Besides, it even led to commercialisation of the locally brewed beer.

The study has also demonstrated that the provision of health and educational facilities to the local people through the clinic and the schools the Company initiated was another positive impact of KTC.

KTC fitted well into the overall development policies of the UNIP Government in that just like other rural development projects, it strove to meet many of the objectives set out in the First National Development Plan. It, for example, aimed at providing employment to the rural dwellers and by so doing, it aimed at increasing personal incomes of the people in the rural areas. Furthermore, by creating job opportunities in the rural areas, KTC helped in the reduction of the rural - urban migration.¹

End Notes

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