LABOUR MIGRATION AND ITS IMPACT ON NON-CAPITALIST SOCIAL FORMATIONS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE TONGA AND NGONI-TUMBUKA IN MALAWI, CIRCA 1880 TO 1940

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PREFACE

This thesis is a study of labour-migration from Malawi, specifically an examination of the impact of migrancy on the non-capitalist social formations of the Tonga and Ngoni-Tumbuka under colonial-capitalism until 1940. It is an attempt to locate and analyse transformations of the major social relations which structured and organised the lives of the Tonga and Ngoni-Tumbuka at the rural, village level during the period under review.

An academic thesis of this nature has severe limits in that it cannot begin to grasp the day-to-day lived experience of those who were subjected to the profiteering onslaught of colonial-capitalism. The separation of husbands from wives and children, the hunger and fear, the drudgery and humiliations and the brave resistance and struggles of ordinary people to maintain their self dignity under conditions of increasing impoverishment do not emerge clearly from official colonial reports concerned with tax returns, law and order and economic development for Imperial expansion. Without a presentation and understanding of these experiences an analysis of this nature is necessarily incomplete. This is not merely an ideological standpoint but one that recognises that social transformations are forged by people, day by day, reacting to conditions that confront their livelihood, their security and mental well-being. As such it is through these lived experiences that historical change takes place.

The economic development of Malawi has taken place along three

major lines. Under colonialism, the north of Malawi, where the Tonga and Ngoni-Tumbuka lived and still live, developed rapidly into a labour-reserve economy serving mines and farms all around the southern sub-continent. In the centre and south developed peasant cash-cropping with some labour-migration and a weak capitalist plantation economy. More recently, labour migration to neighbouring countries has been dramatically reduced and the labour redirected to peasant cash-cropping and to the capitalist plantation economy undergoing expansion in the central and northern regions. This has occurred under the direction of multinationals and a tiny national bureaucratic bourgeois class indistinguishable from the present regime.

Labour migration thus remains a crucial phenomenon in the present development and underdevelopment of the Malawian economy. Although migration is now more internal than external it still bears the same characteristics, in that migrants have retained material links with non-capitalist economies where their families undertake subsistence agriculture for their own survival, thus enabling plantation owners to pay single men's wages. The political and social forms arising out of these relations are thus crucial in the make-up of the State and for the future trajectory of the economy.

It is in the context of this that a historical study of the impact of labour migration on non-capitalist social formations in northern Malawi has relevance.

Chapter One sets out a broad theoretical position within which

the relationship between capitalist and non-capitalist modes of production can be analysed. This is argued in terms of the debate between those who opt for seeing a social formation as an articulation of constituent modes of production and those who see a social formation as containing one mode of production. The former position is seen here as the most useful.

Chapter Two theoretically defines and elaborates on what I have called the domestic non-capitalist mode of production. This sets out the theoretical basis for my analyses in Chapter Three and Four of the Ngoni-Tumbuka and Tonga domestic modes of production and social formations. This chapter looks at the relations and forces of production in terms of the agricultural cycle, relations of exploitation between elders and juniors and marriage organisation.

Chapter Three gives a concrete analysis of the Tonga social formation before colonialism, in order to locate major social relations later transformed under colonial-capitalism and the impact of labour migrancy studied in Chapter 7. As such it concretises relations posited in Chapter 2.

Chapter Four gives a similar analysis to Chapter Three, studying the Ngoni-Tumbuka social formation before colonialism as a precursor to Chapter Eight.

Chapter Five sets out some theoretical arguments on the nature of labour migration. The first part locates the available surplus labour-time in domestic economies. The second part

looks at the appropriation of this surplus labour-time and the nature of exploitation of domestic producers under the system of migrant labour in terms of the reproduction of migrant labour-power by migrants' families. Lastly the various concrete forms of labour migration in colonial Malawi are examined.

Chapter Six begins with some theoretical observations on the Colonial State and the nature of Imperialist intervention in Africa in the late 1800s. This is followed by a schematic analysis of the Colonial State formation in Malawi from 1890 to 1940 in terms of the development of labour migration.

Chapter Seven studies the impact of labour migration on the Tonga social formation until 1940. The first part gives background information on the patterns of labour migration from Tongaland. This is followed by an analysis of the role of missionaries, after which is a study of the role of the Colonial State and the political struggles, at the level of the local state, involved in the transformation of Tonga social relations. The next section deals with the social processes of migrancy within Tonga villages until 1917. After this subsistence and market production relations from 1917 to 1940 are examined followed by a study of the processes of dispersal of homesteads consequent upon shifting power relations from elders to junior migrants. Finally the re-organisation of marriage relations involved in the shifting of power relations is examined in greater depth.

Chapter Eight is a similar analysis to Chapter Seven, studying the case of the Ngoni-Tumbuka. The first three sections (patterns, missions and local state) are similar in approach to the previous chapter. The fourth section studies the under-development of the subsistence economy, followed by an examination of the transformations of relations linking the cattle economy to marriage organisation, with the development of labour migration. The chapter ends with a study of the dispersal of villages within the context of struggles between the Ngoni 'aristocracy' and Ngoni-Tumbuka commoners.

Comparisons and contrasts between developments in the two social formations are given in Chapters Seven and Eight.

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"There is a more deadly war today.
It is the mines of South Africa."

(Ngoni-Tumbuka elder, 1938. Quoted in Mzimba Medical Report, 1938)

"My wife receive
Receive this bundle of goods
Out of hardship it comes
When I was in Jo'burg
They lashed me with a sjambok
Twenty lashes of sjambok I received.
My wife you put me through hardship
They really brutalised me in Jo'burg.

(Ngoni-Tumbuka song)*

"Those of you going to Jo'burg!
Please convey this to him
That it's long they left
Without writing a letter
His father here is in rags

Chorus: His father is in rags
His mother is in rags
His children are in rags
I too am in rags."

(Ngoni-Tumbuka song)*

"The Native labour question is almost the most important question which can now claim the attention of those administering the Protectorate. Given abundance of cheap Native labour, the financial security of the Protectorate is established ... All that needs to be done is for the Administration to act as friends of both sides, and introduce the Native labourer to the European capitalist. A gentle insistence that the Native should contribute his fair share to the revenue of the country by paying his tax is all that is necessary on our part to ensure his taking a share in life's labour which no human being should avoid. At the same time the Administration is bound to see that the Native is fairly treated."

(Harry Johnston, Governor of Nyasaland, 1896, in Read, 1942:608)

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* Both songs were sung in the Mzimba district from before 1940. Given to me by Mrs Phiri, Zomba, March 1980.

CHAPTER ONE

BROAD THEORETICAL POSITION - MODE OF PRODUCTION AND SOCIAL FORMATION

A concrete analysis of the genesis and reproduction of labour migration necessarily concerns itself with the penetration of pre-capitalist modes of production by the capitalist mode. Marx did not devote much attention to this penetration, being primarily concerned with establishing "the specificity of capitalist property relations and of the direct producer as a free labourer" and revealing the nature of the capitalist mode's inner dynamics. (Wolpe, 1980:3) While migrant labourers in my case studies certainly undertook wage labour in the capitalist sector, they retained access to means of production within their rural, domestic communities of origin and cannot be called 'free labourers'. The problem is therefore to locate the structural position of migrants both as wage-labourers and peasant, subsistence, farmers.

Two distinct theoretical positions have emerged recently which attempt to define the nature of capitalist penetration in peripheral social formations. The one position is put most coherently by Banaji (1977) and Bernstein (1977), who argue that a social formation should be seen as always being characterised by one mode of production. Other positions put most coherently by Rey (1973) and Wolpe (1980) argue that a social formation is characterised by an articulation of two or more modes of production.

Banaji et al's position denies the survival of pre-capitalist modes of production under capitalism once relations formerly characterised as pre-capitalist have their conditions of reproduction destroyed by capitalist penetration. The conditions of reproduction of the subordinate mode are said to be so dependent on the dynamic of the dominant mode that it cannot be considered a mode of production in its own right. Surviving (e.g. non-capitalist) relations of exploitation change their character now that they are reproduced according to the dynamic or laws of motion (the functioning of the conditions of reproduction) of the dominant (e.g. capitalist) mode. Thus non-capitalist relations of exploitation become, essentially, capitalist relations of exploitation once their former conditions of reproduction or laws of motion are replaced by capitalist conditions of reproduction.

> "Banaji thus distinguishes 'relations of exploitation' such as wage labour, which he terms a simple category since it can occur in different modes ('epochs') of production, from relations of production and laws of motion. Determinate relations of production necessarily posit a determinate mode of production and therefore presuppose the laws of motion of that mode. For example, in order to establish that wage-labour ... involves capitalist production relations, it is necessary first to determine the laws of motion. Thus, in an economy where capitalism is dominant, 'pre-capitalist enterprises', contrary to formal appearances, are in essence capitalist since they are subordinated to capitalist laws of motion."
>
> (Goodman & Redclift, 1981:58)

This position is a critique of one of the articulation of modes of production positions put forward by Rey (1973), who

characterises a mode of production predominantly in terms of the relations of production without an appreciation of the importance of their conditions of reproduction or laws of motion. By doing so his conceptualisation of articulation of modes of production does not take account of the crucial processes of reproduction of particular relations of exploitation taking place under changed conditions of reproduction introduced by the other mode. Banaji, understandably, criticises this position but his alternative position of a singular mode social formation comes under attack from Wolpe (1980). Wolpe rejects Banaji's alternative, though accepting in part his critique and attempts to show that the articulation position holds and is most useful if the concept of mode of production is redefined.

He makes a distinction between a restricted mode of production and an extended mode of production: i) a <u>restricted</u> mode is constituted by a combination of relations and forces of production only, and ii) an <u>extended</u> mode by a combination of relations and forces of production, the mechanisms of their reproduction and the laws of motion. He refers to the functioning of the mechanisms of reproduction as the laws of motion.

> "... a restricted (mode of production) concept is defined by some combination of relations and forces of production. Conceptualised in this way the mode of production does no more than identify the possible relations between agents and the means of production within individual, isolated enterprises. The mechanisms by which enterprises are linked, that is, brought into relationship with one another and the processes by which the relations/forces are reproduced, are not at all encompassed in the restricted concept. These linking mechanisms and reproductive processes require additional concepts

> (e.g. circulation, distribution, the State and so forth) in order to be specified. The functioning of these reproductive mechanisms have been referred to as the laws of motion. The combination of relations/forces together with the laws of motion constitute the extended concept of the mode of production."
>
> (Wolpe, 1980:36)

With this position he argues for conceptualising a social formation in terms of articulating modes of production as follows: when two modes come into contact they meet as 'extended' modes of production, where each is for the most part subject to its own laws of motion. Here the relationships between the modes constitute only a moment in the reproduction of each mode. A process may set in where the mechanisms of reproduction of one mode are undermined so that its reproduction increasingly depends on its relationship with the other mode and becomes subordinated to the other's laws of motion. In other words, with a mode's laws of motion being undermined these are replaced by laws and mechanisms derived from the still extended and increasingly dominant mode. For Wolpe, the undermined mode, progressively stripped of its pre-existent mechanisms of reproduction/laws of motion becomes <u>progressively restricted,</u> so that

> "the unity of the social formation is constituted through the laws of motion and mechanisms of reproduction of the (dominant mode)."
>
> (Wolpe, 1980:39)

Banaji's analysis is particularly problematic when he attempts to conceptualise interactions between two different modes of production confronting each other for the first time. For him, this initial relationship is <u>a temporary, antagonistic</u>

transitional* one during which the one mode completely revolutionises the other by destroying the conditions of reproduction and replacing them with its own, forming a unitary mode. I will give a concrete example to show why this is problematic: in one of the case studies I will present, the Ngoni traded slaves and ivory for cloth indirectly with European and Arab merchant capitalists for several decades prior to colonial rule. It is true that this trade was instrumental in undermining domestic production of cloth and in making the Ngoni dependent on merchant capital for clothing requirements. But it is absurd to say as Banaji would (and has to say to back his singular mode argument) that this was either a temporary, antagonistic period or that it rendered the Ngoni social formation capitalistic.

The articulation position as argued by Wolpe would characterise this more acceptably as follows: the relationship between the Ngoni and the traders was initially structured by the articulation of two extended modes of production where the relations between them constituted only a moment in the reproduction of each mode, connected by circuits of exchange (a mechanism of reproduction) in the cloth for ivory and slaves markets. The mode of production characterising the Ngoni social formation proceeded to become restricted to the extent that the conditions of its reproduction laws of motion became more and more dependent on traded cloth.

This position allows us to examine processes of change within one

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* Banaji (1977) in Goodman and Redclift (1981:58)

> mode of production in relation to another without having to put everything under one mode at some arbitrary point in time when, as Banaji would have it, conditions of reproduction are sufficiently undermined over a temporary, antagonistic period, to herald the complete destruction of the mode and the immediate subsumption of what remains under another mode.

The articulation position does not deny the possibility that a social formation may be characterised by a single mode of production. When the process of restriction of one mode by another is taken to a point where its relations of exploitation disappear then only one mode may be said to exist. Thus I will conceptualise the Tonga and Ngoni-Tumbuka social formations prior to capitalist penetration as being characterised by singular modes of production.

I shall be using the concept of articulation of modes of production to structure my analysis of the capitalist penetration of the Ngoni-Tumbuka and Tonga social formations with particular emphasis on their development as labour-reserve economies, supplying migrant labourers to capitalist enterprises in the colonised southern sub-continent.

I shall be attempting to come to an understanding of the processes of re-organisation of production and reproduction in the Tonga and Ngoni-Tumbuka villages. Conceptualising these processes in terms of the articulation of capitalist and non-capitalist modes of production recognises the fact that they were, on the one hand, induced by capitalist penetration and colonial domination

according to the dynamic of international capital accumulation, and, on the other hand that they developed as struggles between chiefs, elders and juniors, husbands and wives etc on the basis of pre-existent and concrete conditions and relations pertaining to non-capitalist modes of production.

We will see how capitalist penetration with political impetus from the colonial state extended capitalist mechanisms of reproduction to the functioning of the relations of non-capitalist production, thus subjecting them to capitalist laws of motion.

Importantly, this position gives recognition to the struggles of the indigenous people in determining the way in which changes imposed on them took their course. We will see for example how the alliances made between chiefs, elders and the colonial state were prompted partly by the former's interest in reasserting non-capitalist relations of exploitation and not only the latter's interest in subordinating the indigenous people for Imperial profit according to capitalist laws of motion. The exploited classes fought and resisted these alliances not only as migrant workers but also as people struggling to survive within rural, subsistence non-capitalist economies.

CHAPTER TWO

THE DOMESTIC MODE OF PRODUCTION

Historically, one of the most common forms of agriculturally-based, non-capitalist social formations that have developed have been characterised by relations that connect family or kin members into productive cells living in villages and cultivating with relatively simple implements and according to a relatively simple division of labour with most produce being consumed directly by family members.

In these social formations, where family units generally correspond with productive cells there also exist relations between productive cells (families), predominantly marriage relations and defensive or military ties.

We may posit two levels of relations of social production and reproduction: those within productive cells and those between productive cells. It is at the second level that state formation takes place in the organisation of marriage, defence etc. or those matters affecting communities of productive cells. These relations can extend to the control and organisation of producers within family/productive cells in many crucial ways, most importantly in the control over ideology and the marriage prospects of unmarried juniors by elders (of the different family/productive cells), acting in reciprocal collusion. As such these relations contain important mechanisms of reproduction of the relations of production within the productive cells.

Within productive cells, relations of production between family or kin members, between those who organise production and those who produce, are structured a) by relations between productive cells (as noted) and b) by the nature of the processes of production associated with the given levels of development of the productive forces. By this I refer in particular to the simple level of technology and division of labour of these social formations and the nature of the agricultural cycle which, as we shall see, posit determinate relations between those who produce and those who organise production.

These relations of production, forces of production and mechanisms of reproduction combine to form the domestic mode of production. In the following analysis they will be elaborated upon, beginning with an investigation of the forces and relations of production, particularly in terms of the agricultural cycle. This will be followed by an analysis of the dominant relations of production within productive cells and an analysis of relations between productive cells which serve to reproduce relations of exploitation within cells and to constitute the unity of the social formation as a whole.

a) The agricultural cycle and the domestic mode of production

Agriculture is generally not a continuous but a seasonal process where returns are not immediate but eventual, appropriation of nature occurring at the end of each successive cycle with the ripening of the harvest.

A cycle begins with a non-productive period during which labour-power is invested in the land, clearing, preparing, planting, weeding etc. followed by a productive period when the crop is harvested. Prior to harvesting, producers must subsist either on food produced in the previous cycle or on food produced under an economy of immediate return.

> "It is as if the workers of one season would advance subsistence food and seed to those who will work the following season whose product they would consume and store in the next season. Of course from one season to the next, the majority of workers remain the same, but over time the work-team changes: the older workers disappear while young ones take their place. This progressive transformation of the composition of the group leads in the end to a change in generation."
> (Meillassoux, 1981:42)

The relationship between producers from one year to the next and the longer term generational change of the producers, determined by the nature of the agricultural cycle and, of course, natural ageing posit certain relations of production. Meillassoux continues:

> "The changing composition of the producing team is reflected in the evaluating hierarchy which dominates agricultural communities, and which divides those 'who come first' from those 'who come after'. This hierarchy relies on positions of anteriority. The 'first ones', the elders, are those to whom the seed and subsistence goods are owed; the oldest among them in the productive cycle owes nothing to any living person, only to the ancestors, while he concentrates on himself all that junior people owe to the community, which he therefore comes to embody.
>
> Because of this position at the apex of the community, the elder is logically appointed to store and centralise its produce. He is also

> in a good position to manage it. So the need for management to ensure reproduction of the productive cycle creates a function, and the structure of the productive cell points at the person to fill it. The cycle of advances and returns described above operates between the elder and his junior partners."
>
> (1981:42)

Thus through processes of generational change linked year by year to the agricultural cycle, control of production and reproduction to some extent tends to naturally concentrate more in the hands of older rather than younger members. This control, whilst having a certain functionality to it, is very often tied to and motivated by developed and exploitative class interests of elders. These class interests cannot be abstractly stated, taking historically specific forms according to the balance of class forces within different social formations. The gradual generational change can structurally posit an exploitative relation of co-option where the younger members submit to the control of their elders in the prospect of eventually joining or succeeding them. However this remains a fragile contradictory relation of exploitation in terms of: a) the intensity of exploitation that elders can enforce, against the will of junior producers on this basis; and b) the timing of succession, where elders attempt to delay this while juniors attempt to hasten it.

Whilst this co-optive exploitative relation of generational change may remain important, it cannot guarantee for the elders control over juniors. In many domestic social formations many members have no hope of becoming elders with authority or status.

To guarantee their position and pursue specific 'class' interests elders in these social formations retain control over processes of production and reproduction or important moments of them in many ways.

b) Control of the means of production

To the extent that elders are able to retain skills to the exclusion of junior producers necessary for production, this control is real control. For example, they alone may possess knowledge relating to seasonal change, soil fertility, crop disease control, seed selection, craft-techniques, etc., knowledge gained in the course of their progression through the age hierarchy either by experience or tutelage. Under capitalism, the bourgeoisie have real exploitative control over workers by virtue of their almost exclusive possession of technological know-how and management skills etc. However in domestic economies the elders' control in this respect is more partial and temporary as the simple division of labour and the low level of technology make it relatively easy (relative to capitalist production) for junior producers to take possession of the means of production. Indeed in most respects juniors do have possession of the means of production so that their exploitation cannot be strongly enforced by the elders through their very partial control of the means of production.

c) Control of ideology

We may identify two categories of ideology operating as relations of production. Both forms are integral to kinship ideology expressing relations of domination of ancestors over elders, elders over juniors and males over females:

i) Personal relations: in domestic productive units composed of family members, elders, where they enter into personal relations with producers and future producers (particularly in their childhood socialisation) can exercise a degree of control over them through various forms of personal, emotional domination/ dependence.

ii) Superstitious interpellations: the elders are logically placed to mediate with the 'ancestors' of the agricultural community. This mediation may take various forms but generally the ancestors are said to have control over the weather, soil fertility and a host of other natural phenomena. The ancestors thus 'control' certain aspects of the forces of production and as their agents elders, who are also future ancestors, derive power from them to exercise control over producers.

Important mechanisms of reproduction of exploitative ideologies are constituted in the organisation and practice of ceremonies, feasts, rituals, taboos etc. controlled by elders, which serve both to exhibit and validate status and at times to mystify contradictory relations of exploitation within productive cells.

d) The subordination of women

The subordination of women has traditionally received scant attention in anthropological research. There are two major reasons for this: firstly, male dominated social science combined with liberal paradigms have produced (and bequeathed) male-centred or 'androgenous' analyses where differing sex roles have either been ignored or seen more in terms of their functionality than in terms of exploitation, subordination and contradiction. Secondly, research into the position of women in domestic social formations is hindered by the very patriarchal nature of these social formations. The struggles of exploited and subordinated women are hardly ever preserved in folklore, songs or other historical media passed from generation to generation. Women, in these social formations, have traditionally been excluded from institutionalised politics and thus their struggles are not overtly evident in the more 'dramatic' and open conflicts and struggles between male chiefs, elders, juniors and armies. Thus while the struggles of women are no less real or determinate than those of men, they have remained hidden from the eyes and ears of missionaries and colonial officials, and are therefore missing from written records.

I will argue here that at the base of women's social subordination and economic exploitation in domestic social formations is their capacity to bear and nurse children(human reproduction). However their subordination only occurs as a result of the social manipulation and control of this capacity by men and particularly by male elders.

> "That symbolic expression of sexual asymmetry should be rooted in biological reproduction is not surprising, for differing reproductive systems are, after all, the basic physiological difference between men and women. The conversion from difference to asymmetry must, however, be socially motivated, that is, explained by reference to social practice."
>
> (O'Laughlin, 1977:316)

In most domestic social formations it is well-known that women do not normally hunt, fish, undertake military activities or certain heavier tasks of building construction or land clearance. Their productive roles are more or less confined to cultivation and almost all the housework and childcare. In addition they are generally excluded from formal political affairs and cannot aspire to positions of leadership except where it involves organisation and discipline of other women. The extent of their economic, political and ideological subordination obviously differs from social formation to social formation according to their relative social strength in each formation.

<u>To a certain extent</u> the sexual division of labour may be related to the dangers involved in women performing some of those tasks normally performed by men since for a large part of their productive lives women are pregnant and/or breastfeeding. Pregnant women can cultivate at less risk than hunting, fishing etc. But there is no necessary reason why men cannot share the housework or childcare.

Women's <u>general</u> social subordination to men does not flow <u>necessarily</u> from any functional division of labour, although as

we will see, it is connected to it, and as we have seen it is only functional to a certain extent. The pertinent question here is why is it in the interests of male elders to reproduce women's subordination and how do they do so?

The sexual division of labour divides exploited men and women from each other, thus separating their work experiences, which serves to disorganise possible united action by female and male producers against their elders' exploitative authority. Male producers themselves can aspire to eldership, and unmarried males can aspire to positions of dominance over their wives-to-be. This effectively co-opts the struggles of exploited male producers, to their elders' advantage, so that men become supporters and instruments of women's subordination.

It is possible to argue that because women have a certain control over their reproductive capacities and cannot be completely separated from such capacities, (in the way that workers under capitalism are materially separated from control over the means of production) they possess an inherent/potential power derived from that control. Elders and males have a direct interest in control over the offspring and to retain that control must see to the political and ideological repression of this power owned by women. In addition women are also exploited workers and could conceivably use their reproductive powers to challenge their elders' exploitative authority.

The nature of their subordination takes specific forms in

different domestic social formations. Generally it begins in childhood through the constant separation of male and female socialisation processes and is reproduced in many other ways (for example, through initiation or menstruation rites and rituals and in many cases, through the exchange of women into other villages, on marriage, where they enter into strange and insecure surroundings).

The next section will study in further detail the organisation of marriage and its importance in reproducing relations of exploitation.

e) The control of marriage organisation

This section will show how relations of marriage organisation combine with the relations of production as posited above to constitute the power of the elders and the reproduction of productive cells under the elders' authority.

I will first study the relations between productive cells and then show how, on the basis of these relations, elders were able to reinforce their control over producers within productive cells.

A productive cell can reproduce itself in terms of the production of subsistence goods but cannot on its own guarantee, over time, human or biological reproduction:

> "Since the proportion of reproducers, (i.e. women) in relation to the whole population is always lower than the number of producers, there is less chance that a cell which is organised strictly around the activities of production will, at any given time, count enough fertile women for their progeny to replace the active members of the group as far as number, sex and age are concerned."
> (Meillassoux, 1981:13)

Left to the vagaries of fecundity of its mothers a productive cell must enter into relations with other productive cells to ensure continual reproduction of the productive cell. These relations revolve around the mobility of fertile women between productive cells which enables productive cells to import reproducers (and therefore future progeny) to make up for imbalances resulting from possible infertility or premature deaths.

Generally there are two ways in which this can be achieved: i) Women are formally exchanged between cells. ii) Women remain in the cell of their birth and shortfalls are compensated for by the intermittent importation of women who elope, are abducted or captured in warfare or through the peaceful absorption of unattached cells.

i) <u>The exchange of women between cells</u>: The importance of women not only as producers but as reproducers means that cells are naturally possessive of their women. The peaceful exchange of these women between cells will therefore only occur if it can be done in an orderly manner where those cells which give up fertile women, for marriage into another cell, do so only with

the guarantee that they will immediately or at a later stage be able to peacefully import women when required. In this way a surplus of fertile women of one cell can be exchanged peacefully into a cell experiencing a shortage. Reproduction of this kind therefore depends on the political or social capacities of cells to negotiate an adequate number of women at all times. It necessitates the constitution of a civil power binding together productive cells for the civil exchange of women.

This civil power or state formation is constituted predominantly in reciprocal relations between elders of all the productive cells. Its structure may be characterised on the basis of equality between elders or on the basis of a hierarchy of elders, which is more common, dominated by tribal Chiefs. In either case, there exists a congruence of interests binding elders together in reciprocal collusion.

Kinship rules governing residence of wives and progeny are therefore of a virilocal and patrilocal nature and rules governing inheritance tend to be patrilineal, as mothers circulate and fathers remain in their patrilocality.

The most common arrangement governing the exchange of women is through the simultaneous exchange of bridewealth. Thus a cell giving up a woman receives a recognised payment of bridewealth which can be sooner or later used to buy from other cells, another woman. The state (relations between elders especially) guarantees that the bridewealth is a recognised form of 'bride currency' or bridewealth and creates conditions whereby cells

experiencing shortfalls can either produce their own bride-wealth or be supplied with it under the civil power, holding bridewealth for redistribution.

We will see in the case of the Ngoni-Tumbuka how in the hierarchical organisation of elders, placing the Paramount Chiefs and Chiefs as agents responsible for the orderly conduct of marriage and redistribution of bridewealth to cells, the Chiefs were able to accumulate wealth not only for redistribution of bridewealth but also to enrich themselves and consolidate materially their dominant position among elders.

Thus under this system cells exist in a reciprocal relationship (through the organisation of elders) with each other where none are doomed to extinction simply because of accidents in fertility or premature deaths of women or producers. It provides for the equal distribution of women among cells and has the advantage of doing so not only in space but also in time, since bridewealth can be stored and used when needed.

In patrilocal/bridewealth marriage organisation, elders who control the bridewealth thus control their juniors' access to spouses and can use that control in other areas of the juniors' social life. In particular this control can be translated into a relation of exploitation binding juniors to their elders for productive work. In this way necessary marriage relations between cells are used by elders to enforce exploitation within cells. We will see in Chapter 4 that this constituted a crucial relation of exploitation in the Ngoni-Tumbuka social formation.

ii) The retention of women within cells: Under this system, women born into a productive cell remain there and their husbands circulate between cells. Kinship rules here are uxorilocal, matrilocal and tend to be matrilineal.

The retention of fertile women in the productive cells poses several problems for the cells' reproduction. There is an inherent instability in such a system where shortfalls can only be compensated for by means other than the peaceful circulation of women.

Domestic matrilocal/matrilineal communities, such as the Chewa in central Malawi, tended to develop complex and multiform social practices, to contain the tensions and contradictions under this system. These will not be examined here both because of their complexity and because neither the Tonga nor the Ngoni-Tumbuka social formations operated in this way.

Another system which may operate under a constituted civil power is the organisation under that power of an army from the cells used to raid neighbouring social formations for fertile women (e.g. the Bemba of Northern Zambia). Here the community of cells may retain matrilineal/matrilocal rules of marriage organisation with the contradiction inherent in this existing at the level of constant warfare between the community of cells in question and neighbouring communities.

In the case of the Tonga, their productive cells were organised into several groupings who were engaged in the East-coast slave-

trade. Kinship rules were uxorilocal/matrilocal and matrilineal for Tongas of full-status. Circulating between cells or being drawn into cells were Tongas of akaporo (inferior) status, who may be called 'domestic slaves' and as such they functioned to cater for shortfalls in fertile women and producers within productive cells. The details of this organisation will be given in the next chapter, the important point here being that the Tonga made use of the socially inferior class of akaporos to resolve contradictions inherent in their matrilineal/matrilocal organisation. In addition, Tonga elders, we will see, collaborated (reciprocally) to control juniors' access to spouses by refusing to allow or recognise marriages conducted without the elders' permission. Without such sanction juniors could not gain social recognition as married members of cells and thus transform their status from juniors to elders.

Necessary relations between productive/family cells for marriage organisation thus provides a basic framework within which elders acting in reciprocal collusion can occupy a dominant position within cells. We will see in the following case studies how elders used their control over marriage organisation to bind unmarried juniors to productive cells thereby enhancing their juniors' exploitability. In particular, control by elders over access to spouses limited the ability of juniors to leave or segment from the villages of their elders or transform their status from juniors to elders since only with spouses and the resultant offspring could juniors establish productive cells independent of their elders' exploitative authority.

A note on the possible transformation from matrilineal/matrilocal to patrilineal/patrilocal kinship and marriage organisation.

Meillassoux maintains that matrilineal/matrilocal social formations have a tendency within them to develop into patrilineal/patrilocal formations if the material conditions exist for the constitution of a civil power which can oversee the orderly circulation of women. Before the exchange for women can become systematic and stable, a civil state of sufficient power (organisation of elders) would have to emerge, a) to establish a recognised, guaranteed form of bridewealth, and b) to cope with an unstable mixture of matrilineal/matrilocal and patrilineal/patrilocal kinship rules or to preside over an orderly transition from the former to the latter. (1981:31-32)

Another way in which social formations can move from matrilineal/matrilocal systems of demographic reproduction to patrilineal/patrilocal systems is through conquest where the conquerors provide the conditions under which this transition can be effected. This happened, as I will later show, both in the case of the Ngoni conquest of the matrilineal/matrilocal Southern Tumbuka in the mid-1800s and in the case of the Tonga, who, under the civil power of the colonial state, began to develop forms of a patrilineal/patrilocal system, involving the exchange of fertile women for bridewealth in the form of sterling earned by migrants, constituting a universally recognised currency. It must also be noted that the colonial state provided the conditions under which the patrilineal/patrilocal system of the Ngoni-Tumbuka could be maintained. These arguments will be elaborated on later.

CHAPTER THREE

THE TONGA OF NKHATA BAY - MODE OF PRODUCTION AND SOCIAL FORMATION BEFORE COLONIAL-CAPITALIST PENETRATION

This chapter is a study of the Tonga domestic mode of production and social formation as it existed prior to colonisation and capitalist penetration. The chief aim here is to identify major social relationships between members of the Tonga communities, in particular the relations and forces of production including those relations and mechanisms of reproduction involving marriage organisation. This is not an attempt to provide an in-depth study of pre-colonial, pre-capitalist Tonga history but rather to conceptually reconstruct the Tonga mode of production that was to articulate with the capitalist mode under colonialism. In doing so I am most concerned with the identification of relations of production later subjected to mechanisms of reproduction and laws of motion extended from the operations of the capitalist mode of production. As such I will be concentrating more on the restricted form of the Tonga domestic mode of production, though not exclusively on this.

The period I will be dealing with is taken from the breakdown of the Tonga stockades in the 1880s and the dispersal of villages into the countryside consequent upon the reduced threat of Ngoni-Tumbuka raiding. The stockades were large fortified collections of villages into which the Tonga had retreated when the Ngoni invaded Northern Malawi in the mid-1800s, incorporating

the Tumbuka and raiding surrounding areas. Very little is known about the social organisation of the stockades but one can surmise that they were organised under the authority of the Tonga elders in a close defensive alliance (a reciprocity) and that when Ngoni-Tumbuka raiding declined, the elders led their direct dependents out of the stockades into the surrounding countryside. The elders retained marriage relations between villages (as they would have had to) thus acting to reproduce the Tonga state constituted in these relations.

I will begin with background information of environment and early history followed by a presentation of the major relations of production, a study of production and the labour process and ending with an analysis of relations of marriage organisation and mechanisms of reproduction.

a) Environment

The area now called Nkhata Bay district, where the Tonga originally settled and have lived since, is roughly 130 kilometres long and 30 to 50 kilometres across, situated in the Northern region of Malawi. It is bounded on the eastern side by Lake Malawi, the Mtoghame mountains to the north, the Vipya plateau range along the western side and the Kuwire and Kwandama mountain ranges to the south.

In the northern quarter, the land is very mountainous right down to the lakeshore and is generally unsuitable for cultivation,

although a few arable pockets do exist and here the patrilineal, patrilocal Usisya live. In the southern quarter there is a considerable area of flat-land interspersed with numerous rivers and swamps, suitable for rice and moderate crops of millet and cassava, inhabited by certain Chewa clans who are matrilineal and matrilocal. In and beyond the Vipya plateau to the east live the patrilineal, patrilocal Ngoni-Tumbuka.

The matrilineal, matrilocal Tonga occupied the central portion of the district which is one of steep, broken hills stretching eastwards down from the Vipya, giving way to a flatter strip of hilly land a few miles wide and 50 miles long against the lake.

Tongaland, as I shall call it, is well-watered by several rivers and numerous perennial streams, receiving on average 200 cm of rain per year, the second highest in the country after the Mlange tea plantation district in Southern Malawi.

b) Historical Overview

The origins of the Tonga are obscure. I have gathered most of my information from Van Velsen (1959), the West Nyasa District Book IV and the 1932 District Annual Report for the area, all of which give histories based on Tonga legends. But these legends must be treated with a great deal of scepticism not only because they contradict each other but also because they were obviously reworked by their inheritors to justify claims to lineage titles, land etc. during the colonial period (see Van Velsen, 1959).

Sometime in the late 18th century the Chikulamayembes arrived from across the lake to obtain ivory and slaves for the east coast trade. Some kind of political authority was established collecting various scattered tribal groupings together for protection against Bemba raids from the west and for ivory and slave hunting. The fate of these people is unclear but it seems that the Phiri clan under the Kabundulis and Kanyendas survived and settled in the inland, hilly area around the upper reaches of the Luweya River where they have remained since. (Van Velsen, 1959:108)

At some stage in the early 1800s the Kapunda Bandas split off from the Chewa under Mwase of Kasungu and trekked north east to settle between the Dwambazi River in the south and the Luweya River to the north. (op. cit.:109 and WNDBIV)

Also in the early 1800s Mankhambira came across the lake with his people settling just to the north of the Luweya River. Kamisa and his followers, the Nyaliwanggas are said to have split off from Mankhambira and settled inland around Chikwina by the Limpasa River although by some accounts (their own) they were the very first inhabitants in the district. (op. cit.:112)

These four groupings, the Phiris, the Bandas, the Mankhambiras and the Nyaliwanggas were later to comprise the Tonga. They all followed matrilineal, matrilocal kinship rules. Their common Tonga identity appears to have been spawned out of a tenuous solidarity that the four groupings developed against the Ngoni raids.

Relationships between and within these groups before the raids and stockades were antagonistic. As the West Nyasa District Book IV records:

> "There was at this time fighting between the various families and villages of the Atonga over trifling (sic) matters arising out of the peculiar marriage customs."

I will deal with this more fully later but note here that this state of affairs stemmed most probably from the unstable nature of the relations of human reproduction implicit in the matrilineal, matrilocal arrangements (of the Tonga) which I discussed in Chapter 3.

In 1853 the Ngoni arrived in what is now called the Mzimba district, settling around Ekwendeni and raiding surrounding peoples for cattle, food and captives. Most Tongas withdrew into stockaded villages (malingga) while others sought refuge in the hills.

The Mankhambiras built a stockade north of the Luweya River, between its mouth and the Chinteche stream. The Bandas built two or three stockades south of the Luweya River, one of which they shared with a large part of the Phiri Tongas. It appears that the Nyaliwanggas and several other Phiri families sought refuge deeper into the hills around their respective areas. Physically the stockades may be characterised as a collection of villages with common fortifications consisting of natural barriers, such as rivers, swamps, and strong pole-fencing and trenches. (WNDBIV). Several Mankhambira families are said to have fled to the Likoma islands from where "they conducted

a relentless war against the people on the eastern shoreline". (WNDAR 1932)

The Ngoni were only interested in raiding the Tonga for young captives since the latter had no cattle or stored food. Tonga men were carried off to cultivate the maize fields of the Ngoni aristocracy and to reinforce the impi regiments for raiding other peoples to the north, west and south of Ngoni-land. (op. cit.)

In 1877, there was a revolt of the Tonga who were serving in the Ngoni regiments when they fled to Mankhambira stockade and successfully beat off an Ngoni impi who pursued them. (Pachai,1975:19

It appears that this and the intervention of the missionaries served to reduce significantly the Ngoni threat leading to a gradual dispersal from the stockades of Tonga families into the surrounding land. This chapter concerns the Tonga social formation from the end of the period of the stockades.

In 1891, the Tonga were formally incorporated into the Nyasaland Protectorate, guaranteed protection against the Ngoni, although a few raids are reported to have taken place since. (Vail, 1975:29)

c) Social Structure - a description

It appears that even during the period in which the Tonga lived in stockades there were no Chiefs of any significance and certainly none after.

Leadership was confined to the village level in the hands of the village elder and hamlet elder. The authority of the village elder was limited to his own hamlet, usually the largest, and to indirect control over the marriage of village daughters and sons, through his control over village initiation and marriage rites, and other matters arising out of inter-village relations such as defence. Production itself was in the hands of hamlet members under the authority of the hamlet elder. In fact if one is to locate a ruling class it would be the collection of hamlet elders acting in reciprocal collusion. The nature of these reciprocal relationships will be dealt with below.

Hamlet members may be divided into two groups: those of full Tonga status and those of Akaporo status. Every Tonga of full status (hereafter a full Tonga) held that status by virtue of having a mother of full status. With this status a Tonga, whether male or female had a right, once married, to a cassava garden in his or her matrilineal locality. They would have some say over their marriage partner although final say would be the hamlet elder's and to a certain extent the village elder. The hamlet elder would usually be the maternal uncle of the village sons and daughters. (OD 12, 15, 16)

The Akaporo Tonga (hereafter the Akaporo) were those members who did not have mothers of full status and as such they could not acquire rights to cassava gardens, had no control over their own labour-power, their marriage partners or their children. Other forms of social status were generally denied to them and they were in many other ways regarded as inferior. (OD 8, 12, 16)

They were either 'refugees' from other Tonga groupings (a major source of conflict between groupings) or from further afield, who attached themselves to hamlets, or they were the children of Akaporo mothers. Subject to the domination of hamlet elders they constituted the most exploited section of the population. Their crucial role in the social formation however was not only productive but also reproductive. I will show below how the contradiction inherent in a matrilineal, matrilocal society due to the immobility of the women, which I discussed in Chapter 3, was contained in Tonga society through the social manipulation of the Akaporo under the dominance of hamlet elders.

The Tonga social formation then contained these groupings and divisions:

1) Four large groupings which had no formal or civil cohesive power, i.e. no wider tribal authority or state. Relations between these groupings were often antagonistic, derived from the struggles of each grouping to 'attract' dependents (Akaporos) from each other. Co-operative relations developed to an extent to provide a united defence against the Ngoni but these did not lead to the emergence of a wider political authority or civil power.

2) Within each group were several villages, claiming common ancestry (real or fictitious), each with a village elder who had some wider control and responsibilities outside of his own hamlet.

3) Within each village were hamlets with hamlet elders who exercised control over their own hamlets but in reciprocal relationships with each other. This class of reciprocally dependent

elders which included village elders constituted the dominant class.

4) Within the hamlets were Tongas of full status (male and female) and Akaporo Tongas. Two dominated exploited classes or strata existed out of these: a) male and female juniors of full status; and b) male and female akaporos.

5) Sexual divisions were socially significant with a clearly defined sexual division of labour and a looser discriminating division of other social roles. Akaporo men and women seem to have been subject to a similar denial of social status. (OD 5, 8, 12)

This was the structure of Tonga society at a descriptive level. What follows is an explanation of how the social formation and its constituent corresponding and contradictory social relations were integrated and reproduced by the Tonga.

d) Tonga and Ngoni-Tumbuka Subsistence Production

This section looks at the characteristics of certain aspects of the forces of production and their implications for the organisation of the Tonga social formation.

i) Cassava and Maize production:

Cassava was and remains to the present day the chief subsistence crop of the Tonga. I will compare its production with the production of maize, the chief subsistence crop of the Ngoni-Tumbuka.

The cassava plant grows well in the humid conditions of Tongaland. The nutritious part of cassava plants are their roots or tubers. The 'seed' of the cassava is a section of the root/tuber or stem which must be cut off from a newly-harvested plant and replanted almost immediately, from which will grow another plant. The plant takes about a year to reach maturity but is only harvested after that when it is required for consumption. Therefore the Tonga did not harvest and store the cassava but rather stored it in the ground and harvested it when required, replanting a section of it for a new plant. This activity carried on continuously throughout the year. In other words, neither the 'seed' nor the product including the surplus product were stored in the villages.

Maize on the other hand does not grow well in Tongaland. The nutritious part, the cob, which also contains the seed, ripens at a specific time of the year and must be harvested and stored before it rots or is eaten by birds, insects or monkeys because it grows above ground. The seeds, taken from the cobs, must also be stored until planting time 6 months after harvesting. Therefore the maize seed and product including the surplus product must be stored in the villages.

These characteristics had crucial implications. The fact that there was no storage involved in cassava production meant that neither the seed, product, nor the surplus product could be centralised, appropriated and controlled to facilitate the constitution and reproduction of a strongly exploitative class. It is my thesis that this partially explains why there never

emerged a strong civil power, aristocratic class or 'tribal state' amongst the Tonga. Furthermore, as we showed in Chapter 2, (pp. 23) in the absence of a civil power it is difficult for a social formation of this nature to change from the unstable social organisation built around matrilineal, matrilocal kinship rules to a more stable organisation based on patrilineal, patrilocal rules (involving the mobility of all marrying women and their exchange for bridewealth). This therefore partially explains why the Tonga remained politically fissiparous and matrilineal and matrilocal.

Maize production on the other hand can be more easily controlled because its seed, product and surplus product must be stored and thus lends itself to the constitution and reproduction of a stronger exploitative class. Struggles by producers to segment from elders or chiefs are therefore hampered by the control that can be exercised over product and seed. The elders or chiefs, given the existence of other forms of coercion, can appropriate a storable surplus product to reinforce or even extend their positions.

It must be noted here that in both cases the nature of the subsistence crop cannot in itself determine the nature of the mode of production but that it does set certain limits and conditions on the struggles between contending classes.

The different agricultural cycles for cassava and maize production also have important characteristics and implications:

Maize, like other cereal crops, must be planted just before the rainy season which lasts from late November to February in Malawi, and harvested in April within a short period of time. Between planting and harvesting the maize fields must be irrigated, if possible, weeded and the furrows maintained and the crops kept free from marauding animals. In addition grain stores must be built or repaired. Planting, including land preparation and harvesting, including the preparation of maize for storage, are the two most intense periods of activity followed by the intervening period. In the case of the Ngoni-Tumbuka this means that for this cycle lasting 5 to 6 months, labour must be mobilised and/or recruited for intensive work particularly for harvesting and planting when all producers are engaged, and for maintaining the crops, engaging all the women producers (for weeding, furrow maintenance, etc.) and some men (for grain store building and repairs and keeping marauding animals at bay).

By contrast, the agricultural cycle of cassava is an almost continuous process of harvesting the plant, when required for consumption, and replacing it with a section of the stem or root, throughout the year. Additional gardens of cassava are planted, like maize, prior to the rainy season, requiring more intensive labour but not the mobilisation of all producers.

In addition cassava requires less maintenance and less protection against insects and animals and diseases than does maize (since the root is below the ground).

"Cassava ... is possibly the easiest of all

> crops to grow. It is remarkably free from pests and diseases and can be grown by simply planting the cut stems in shallow soil."
>
> (Owen, 1973:74)

Comparing the two crops, we can see that for the production of maize a greater degree of labour control would be necessary than for the production of cassava. For maize production, all labour must be mobilised for very intense work at planting and harvesting and all women and some men for the intervening period. For cassava, labour-time is spread more evenly over the year with only one period of relatively intense work. Generally, cassava production requires less effort and labour mobilisation than does maize production.

What is important here is that cassava production posits a less coercive form of labour mobilisation than does maize production because it is easier to produce and has a more protracted, less intense cycle of labour input for its production.

Taking all the implications discussed above together one can see a logical correspondence between the nature of the chief subsistence crops and the modes of production of the Tonga and Ngoni-Tumbuka

ii) Cassava production - the labour process:

Cassava was produced by Akaporo men and women and women of full status. Production consisted of cleaning gardens, hoeing the

soil, planting, minimal weeding and harvesting. Once harvested food preparation was done by women. (OD 4, 8, 12, 15)

Continual production, called Chimira by the Tonga, that is production performed continuously on established gardens, was done within the hamlet unit by members of the hamlet. (OD 4, 10, 12) More specifically this was done within each household unit by the wife or wives, children and Akaporos attached to the household on gardens owned by each household. Control here rested with the parents who benefited from the labour of their children and Akaporos.

One might include here secondary activities such as the cultivation of mangoes, collection of forest foods, tending chickens etc., i.e. activities done individually for each hamlet or household.

Intensive production, called Chibikizga by the Tonga, that is production involving the establishment of new gardens just prior to the rainy season, was more of a communal enterprise. (OD 4, 10, 12) Work teams recruited from within the village worked on every garden in turn with the owner of the garden providing nourishment each time. The benefactors (exploiters) in this case are the elders who are not only parents but also the maternal uncles of the village.

The Chibikizga labour process had two important functions distinct from Chimira. Firstly it provided a cohesion to the constituent hamlets of the village both from the nature of the work and the

rituals of communal eating, singing etc. Secondly, and flowing from this, it placed collective pressure on individual members to work harder thus intensifying exploitation for the reciprocal benefit of the elders.

iii) Fishing:

My information on fishing prior to colonialism is very poor but it seems that each hamlet had its own canoes under the elders' control and had free access to any part of the lake which was abundant in fish of the Talapia species. Fishing was done solely by men and boys as was the building of canoes and construction of nets. The fish were prepared for consumption by women. (WNDAR 1934)

Fish was the Tongas' major source of protein supplementing cassava which contains only 0,9% protein (fresh weight) compared with maize which contains 9,2%. (Owen, 1973:196)

e) Control over marriage organisation

i) Elders and Akaporos

I noted in Chapter 3 that in domestic economies production could generally be carried out by productive cells working independently of each other. For the Tonga the productive cells were contained within hamlets. It was also noted that for human reproduction to take place a collectivity of cells was necessary since a

single productive cell could not guarantee its own human reproduction and that this collectivity of cells constituted the social formation. For the Tonga this collectivity operated at two levels. Firstly there was the collectivity of those hamlets and villages in the same Tonga groupings. Here relations of marriage and destination of offspring (human reproduction) were generally civil although there is evidence that prior to the Ngoni raids there was antagonism and even feuding between families over these matters. (WNDBIV) It is possible that the experience of the stockades brought about a resolution of these antagonisms within the groupings.

At the second level are the relations between groupings which, I have noted elsewhere, were always antagonistic and stemmed from the movement of Akaporos from one grouping to another. This movement must be seen in terms of the struggle of Akaporos against the elders from whose hamlet they moved and the competitive struggle of elders to accumulate under their authority Akaporos who could work for them but also, crucially, to make up for shortfalls in fertile men and especially fertile women or to expand the number of dependants.

This movement of Akaporos probably occurred <u>within</u> groupings prior to the coming of the Ngoni but since then it stopped under civil arrangements between hamlet elders of the same groupings. Under these arrangements Akaporos would be denied a place to live by all other elders except the elder who owned them. (OD 18, 36) This prevented possible antagonisms between elders but it also effectively constituted a relation of production by resolving

the struggle between elders and therefore reducing the struggle of the Akaporos themselves who were forced to remain with their elder where they could (now) be more intensively exploited. Akaporos could not set up their own hamlets because they would be denied access to land and to a collectivity necessary for human reproduction. They could, as has been said, struggle by moving to another grouping but would run the risk of being recaptured and burnt to death. (WNDBIV) Movement beyond Tongaland was possible but extremely hazardous because of the dangers of wild animals. These were limits to the struggles of the Akaporos but because they could move between groupings their exploitation was kept in check to a degree.

Akaporos either remained under the control of their elder or were given to their children to marry or were sold to other elders. Van Velsen (1959:110) says that they were sometimes sold to slave traders but I have been unable to find out their going price.

Thus the relations of human reproduction involving the control and function of Akaporos as reproducers constituted here a crucial relation of production as well. These relations were consolidated to a large degree by the kinship ideology conferring inferior status on Akaporos. It was in terms of this ideology that Akaporos were subordinated not only by the elders but also by all Tongas of full status, denying them access to cassava gardens of their own and to control over their own marriages and offspring.

ii) Elders and Tongas of full status:

The other section of the population under the control of the elders were unmarried males and females (juniors) of full status.

Until they were married, when they would acquire their own gardens, these juniors owed their labour-power to their parents in chimira production and fishing and to their parents and the elders of the village under chibikizga (collective) production.

The relations of exploitation are constituted here: a) in the direct control of juniors by parents from birth under relations of personal dependence; b) within a wider kinship ideology through which they found themselves members of a village (whose elders they owed their labour-power to); and c) in the control of their marriage by their parents and maternal uncle structured in the wider collectivity of villages.

In reality these three combine in very complex ways but are separated here for analytical clarity.

I will concentrate here on the last aspect, c), the marriage of juniors, which I see as central to the relations of production.

Control over marriage was crucial because it was at the same time control over the locality of juniors and their future children, since labour was performed within the locality.

The parents, particularly the father, and the maternal uncle (the oldest uncle) supervised the marriages of juniors. Of particular importance is the control they had over the marrying age of their dependents, since the longer marriage was delayed, the longer would be the labour-time of juniors under the elders' control. For males this age seems to have become institutionalised at 26 to 28 years, and for females 20 to 22. If juniors married before this age without the consent of the father and uncles they would remain juniors in the matrilocality, denied access to gardens and be shunned by elders in other villages under the reciprocal arrangements.

> "Boys were expected to marry at ages well above twenty. Some got married in their thirties. In fact elderly men recommended that a particular boy was old enough to marry. If one married faster than the elders recommended him, he would still be regarded as a boy."
> (OD 36)

The difference between the male and female marrying ages was probably due to the disadvantages of delaying their childbearing for too long.

f) Anticipation of Chapter Seven

With the gradual cessation of raiding the unity of the Tonga social formation to the extent that it was constituted in the organisation of defensive stockades began to break down. In substance this undermined the reciprocity of elders based on defensive alliances and thus weakened the Tonga state constituted by that reciprocity. The organisation of marriages however continued to provide for the unity of the Tonga social

formation, in other words, the reproduction of the reciprocity of the elders based on the common control by elders of their juniors' marriage prospects and the destination of offspring. In the seventh chapter we will see how in a short space of time this reciprocity came under attack as many juniors sought and found ways to circumvent the hold that elders had over them, through engagement in wage labour, peasant and petty-commodity production and through subordination to the colonial state.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE NGONI-TUMBUKA OF MZIMBA - MODE OF PRODUCTION AND SOCIAL FORMATION BEFORE COLONIAL-CAPITALIST PENETRATION

This chapter is a study of the Ngoni-Tumbuka domestic mode of production and social formation prior to colonisation and capitalist penetration. As with the preceding chapter the aim is to identify major social relations of production later transformed under colonial capitalism subjected progressively to mechanisms of reproduction extended from the capitalist sphere.

The organisation of this chapter differs from that of the preceding one due to the markedly different nature of the data I collected on the history of each social formation. In addition the important transformations which occurred in each case differed and required specific approaches.

a) Historical Overview

I will begin with a historical overview, setting out important events leading to colonisation followed by a more detailed examination of the major social divisions within the Ngoni-Tumbuka social formation. This examination will locate the pre-existing relations within and between social groupings later transformed through struggle under changed conditions induced by capitalist penetration and the process of domination by the Colonial State.

a) Historical Overview

The narrative history of the Ngoni-Tumbuka prior to colonisation is well documented in the literature* and so it will only be briefly reconstructed here in order to illustrate the historical constitution and reproduction of the dominant social relations of production

The Ngoni of Northern Malawi were one section of a larger group of Swazis who had trekked north from South Africa following the Mfecane. In the 1850s, the large group split into several smaller groups, one under M'Mbelwa I. This group, which practised patrilineal and patrilocal kinship and marriage organisation, settled in Northern Malawi in the late 1850s in the Kasitu River Valley, a highland zone free of Tsetse fly but containing limited areas of fertile alluvial soils with poor rainfall. (Vail, 1975:18) The decision to settle in a Tsetse fly-free zone was obviously made because of the large herds of cattle the Ngoni possessed and the importance they attached to them, chiefly as bridewealth and food, including crucial political and ideological functions (examined later).

Having already absorbed many peoples into their lineages on the trek north, they proceeded to subordinate the local Southern Tumbuka (S. Tumbuka) and the surrounding Tonga, Henga, NKonde and Chewa peoples to their rule. The S. Tumbuka, who had practised matrilineal and matrilocal kinship and marriage organisation were conquered and some incorporated into the central Ngoni

* See Vail (1975), Read (1956), Pachai (1975) and (1973).

chiefdoms whilst the rest were left in amilaga, or outlying villages, where they produced iron and ivory as tribute for the central kingdom, and supplied warriors for the army. Ngoni patrilineal/patrilocal kinship rules were extended to them. (See p.5

The surrounding peoples were subjected to Ngoni raiding for captives and cattle. Children and young men and women were seized and absorbed directly into the villages in the central Ngoni chiefdoms as Ngoni juniors. (Vail, 1975:19-23, and Pachai, 1973:24)

Over the 1860s, the Ngoni aristocracy established a large and powerful militaristic State under chiefs led by the Paramount Chief, M'Mbelwa I. Their conquest of the indigenous peoples must be seen as a combined process of military aggression and formation of alliances between the various contending forces. Important to Ngoni rule were the alliances forged between Southern Tumbuka and Ngoni elders which gave to the former a certain autonomy in their control over Tumbuka juniors of the amilaga, although Tumbuka elders were themselves subordinate to Ngoni chiefs. The Southern Tumbuka had been engaged in the east-coast slave trade until the Ngoni put a stop to it, preferring to absorb captives into their own villages. Through these alliances the Ngoni established a form of indirect rule over the Tumbuka of the amilaga, (through Tumbuka elders) exacting tribute in the form of iron and ivory and military service from Tumbuka males. (Vail, 1975:20-21) The nature of these relations will be detailed in the next section.

Although the Ngoni had suppressed the east-coast slave and ivory trade (for cloth and beads) in the area when they arrived, preferring to incorporate captives and keep the ivory over the 1860s, from the middle to late 1870s they appear to have begun actively engaging themselves in the trade. Vail states that this was because of an ivory surplus and because of population pressure on the infertile land and possibly because they were unable to prevent the Tumbuka of the amilaga from trading in ivory autonomously. (Vail, 1975:24-25)

By the mid-1870s, maize production per head had declined as the land became exhausted. In an attempt to reduce consumption it appears that the aristocracy planned to kill off older Northern Tumbuka and Tonga captives. (op. cit. 26-27) This sparked off the successful Tonga and unsuccessful Northern Tumbuka rebellions in 1875 and the late 1870s. (Vail, 1975:26-27) It can be seen here that the Ngoni-Tumbuka social formation contained a major contradiction between the declining capacity of the domestic and raiding economy to supply food for the population and the military training of the subordinated Tumbuka and Tonga.

The military training of male captives, subordinated to Ngoni rule and absorbed into a declining subsisting economy, gave to these captives the wherewithal to resist their exploitation. Although the Ngoni chiefs managed to reassert their authority and prevent further armed rebellions, it was now a weakened authority based on a weakened economy.

By the 1880s the population density was as much as 80 per square

mile with a further limitation on and erosion of land productivity in the grazing requirements of large herds of cattle. (Vail, 1975:29)

With the coming of the Scottish missionaries in the 1880s and increasing defensive capabilities of the surrounding raided communities, who acquired guns through the east-coast trade, the Ngoni-Tumbuka found raiding increasingly difficult, although it remained an important occasional source of food until the mid-1890s. (Vail, 1975:28)

By 1895, the Colonial State had effectively squashed the slave trade, an important outlet of the 'surplus population', and imposed a blockade on raiding through the incorporation of surrounding populations into the Protectorate. This cut from under the Ngoni State its most important support, the use of its military apparatus. Although sporadic raiding continued it could no longer be conducted on a scale large enough to supply the needs of the population. From 1895/6 Southern Tumbuka communities began to separate themselves from Ngoni control and move into the more fertile surrounding land previously depopulated by the Impis, some of it Tsetse fly area. (Vail, 1975:29)

It is possible and quite likely that this move was prompted by the Rinderpest epidemic. Writing in the late 1890s, a Scottish missionary, Elmslie, noted:

> "The old Ngoni were wholly a pastoral people, and only in recent years have gone in for agriculture to the extent they now do. Before the cattle plague the herds were numerous and large, but now there are only tens where

> before there were hundreds. The cessation of the war raids also accounts to some extent for the decrease in the number of cattle owned, as cattle-lifting was a constant occupation in the dry season."
>
> (1970:50)

Labour migration to the Shire Highlands began to take place, though in small numbers, providing calico to the Ngoni-Tumbuka, who could no longer obtain it via the east-coast trade, and food for the migrants at work.

In 1902/3 a famine occurred, precipitating labour migration of 1000s of men to colonial Zimbabwe and a mass southward movement of Ngoni-Tumbukas into the remainder of what was to become the Mzimba District, accompanied by widespread cattle-stealing. (Vail, 1975:30 and MDAR 1934) With the prohibition on raiding and the spreading of communities, the Ngoni State was rapidly withering away and so in 1904, the Paramount, (now Chimtunga Jere) and his chiefs, acting through Scottish missionaries, sought alliance with the Colonial State. This led to the formal subordination of the Ngoni-Tumbuka on the 24th October 1904 to the Colonial State and the securing of legal title and the preservation of certain traditional powers by the Paramount and chiefs over all Ngoni-Tumbukas in the District. (Pachai, 1973:28)

b) The social organisation of the Ngoni-Tumbuka

The Ngoni-Tumbuka social formation contained several social divisions under the domination of the Ngoni 'aristocracy'. The major social divisions were: i) the juniors and elders of the

Southern Tumbuka; ii) the captives and Ngoni juniors; iii) the Ngoni chiefs and elders.

i) The juniors and elders of the Southern Tumbuka.

Prior to the coming of the Ngoni, the Tumbuka had practised uxorilocal, matrilineal residence and kinship patterns similar to those of the Chewa, their southern neighbours. (Read, 1956: 25) They were involved in the east-coast slave and ivory trades and had developed iron manufacture. (Vail, 1975:20-21) Their submission to the Ngoni had two aspects:

The children of some Southern Tumbuka communities were drawn directly into the Ngoni 'central kingdom' and assimilated into the lineages as warriors and/or cultivators. The remaining Southern Tumbuka communities were placed in a tributary relationship with the Ngoni, living in amilaga (outlying villages) where they produced iron, ivory and food for the Ngoni and supplied warriors for the raiding Impis. (Vail, 1975:20) Vail says (rather vaguely) that they continued to follow "their own customs and way of life", and that "they were permitted to worship in their own way and not compelled to join in the Ngoni form of religion". (op. cit.:21) However, Read states that Ngoni marriage organisation was extended to them. (op. cit.:25) My own evidence shows that by the late 1880s, many Tumbuka commoners had adopted virilocal marriage organisation using iron hoes as bridewealth. (OD 40)

It seems likely that whilst certain religious practices may have

survived, processes of adoption of Ngoni marriage practices and cultivation methods occurred. Read recounts that:

> "One of the often repeated grievances of the older Ngoni was that the Europeans 'arrived' too soon before the Ngoni were able to establish effective authority over the whole country."
>
> (1956:17)

The subordination of the Southern Tumbuka appears to have occurred through 'alliances' formed between Tumbuka and Ngoni chiefs and elders but where the Tumbuka elders remained responsible to the Ngoni chiefs and elders.

The nature of these 'alliances' were based on a certain congruence of interests. The Southern Tumbuka elders organised Tumbuka impis who joined Ngoni impis on raids where the Tumbuka elders received a portion of the plunder and where they retained their former control over Tumbuka juniors. In return they directed iron and ivory to the Ngoni chiefs from their junior producers as tribute and helped to enforce the cultivation of the chiefs' fields by their warrior juniors. (Vail, 1975:20 and Read, 1956: 172)

Some Tumbuka elders were given Ngoni military rank. (Vail, 1975: 21) It was however a set of alliances where Tumbuka elders remained firmly subordinate to Ngoni elders.

The adoption by the Tumbuka of patrilocal bridewealth marriage organisation made possible the intermarriage of the Ngoni and the Tumbuka. This probably helped to secure the subordinate alliance and provided for the transfer of relatively more women and

bridewealth (possibly including hoes and ivory) from the Tumbuka to the Ngoni villages to the benefit of Ngoni elders rather than the reverse, through imposed differential bride-price rates.

It was however a contradictory alliance so that when the east-coast ivory trade re-emerged (with the importation of guns), certain Tumbuka amilaga clans united behind Baza in 1882 and rebelled in an attempt to retain and sell the ivory they hunted. (Vail, 1975:21) However the rebellion was easily crushed by Ngoni impis. Used in this way, the impis were an important apparatus of social control within the social formation itself.

By the middle of the 1890s, conditions for the subordinate alliance had collapsed with the cessation of raiding and shortages of food and cattle (following the Rinderpest epidemic). The amilaga Tumbuka elders began to lead their juniors out into more fertile land probably under pressure from juniors until colonial occupation and capitalist penetration overtook them. (Vail, 1975:29) But that is the subject of the eighth chapter.

ii) The captives and Ngoni juniors

The captives taken by the impis were mostly children abducted and brought into the Ngoni villages, attached to the end of the tribal age and lineage system and pushed according to their sex through different socialisation processes.

The socialisation processes of the juniors contained within them

the dominant relation of exploitation binding juniors to their elders until they reached marriageable age, the men at 21 years and the women at 17. (OD 31)

From the end of weaning until the age of seven for boys and puberty for girls, children were left in the care of their grandmothers, sleeping in their huts and subject to their discipline. Grandmothers had the time, since they were no longer producers, to instruct them in the various chores that children performed around the household and to instil a consciousness of the history and customs of the community. (Read, 1956:147) It was from the age of seven that boys and girls began to be organised separately. What follows will be an analysis of the different processes through which juniors were put and the social relations of production under which they were subordinated into their adult lives.

Male juniors:

At the age of seven the boys would enter the lawini system where they slept in dormitories and worked in age-sets. They began to herd cattle, instructed by the age-sets above them, learning team and authoritative discipline, developing personal attachment and a camaraderie, re-enacted in dormitory and play life. This discipline began to include fighting (playfully and not so playfully) to prepare the boys for contests, where they learned to fight with wooden spears and shields, and ultimately for warfare. Like many boarding schools of today, the lawini system contained many informal internal practices of social discipline:

> "Lawini life was vigorous and was dominated by the senior boys living in the hut. The younger ones were at their mercy ... Once members of the lawini group they were disciplined into obedience by threats and beating."
>
> (Read, 1956:144)

Organised according to age-sets as herders and trained in the rudiments of warfare, the lawini system provided the basis for their later role as warriors and as disciplined groups cultivating the fields of the Ngoni chiefs:

> "In pre-European days the division into cattle-herders or pre-warriors, warriors, and post-warriors or senior men, regulated the tasks and responsibilities of boys and men in other spheres besides those of warfare."
>
> (op. cit.:143)

At the age of 17, the young unmarried men would leave herding and join the impi regiments, fighting in the dry season and in the wet season and being "kept busy in and around the Paramount's village and the head villages of the alumuzana (lesser chiefs), mending fences, making shields, and clearing new land." (Read, 1956:172) Here they were fed from the aristocracy's herds and grain stores and given periodic feasts, where the status of the chiefs was exhibited and validated thereby cementing the ideological subordination of the younger impis under 'aristocratic' control. (ibid)

Once married, juniors would devote more of their time to supervising and producing in and around their own households although they still took part in raiding.

However, control of Ngoni juniors by chiefs and elders was

extended not only from the lawini system and the army but also from control over their marriage prospects. A male junior's accession to adulthood and possible accession to eldership began with marriage, for which he required cattle to pay bridewealth, controlled and distributed by his elders. As a herder a boy looked after the cattle which would be used to buy his wife. As a young warrior he would join raids to acquire both cattle to add to the common herds, and girls and young women which would be traded for cattle, also added to the herds from which elders would assign him the necessary bridewealth. Thus, as a relation of human reproduction it was simultaneously a relation of exploitation binding juniors to their elders.

The struggle of juniors to marry was a struggle to acquire their own homesteads and access to the means of production, independent of their elders, through the labour of their wives and children. It was on the one hand used by elders to exploit juniors but was on the other hand the means by which juniors ended their exploitation and became exploiters in their own right. It was thus a co-optable struggle but remained contradictory as long as elders were unable or unwilling to release bridewealth to juniors for their marriages.

This relation of control over marriage and bridewealth was one of exploitation on the one hand and on the other embodied a congruence of interests between elders and male juniors. It was an important mechanism of dividing male from female exploited producers, the exploitation of male juniors being more temporary in this respect. However we will see how this relation of

marriage and bridewealth control became a crucial site of struggle under colonialism as male juniors found it possible to break from their elders' authority by earning their own bride-wealth through wage labour.

Female juniors:

Until they showed signs of approaching puberty, girls remained under the discipline of their grandmothers, performing chores, learning new tasks for which they would have to take responsibility later in life, and receiving instruction in "correct behaviour" as girls and later wives. (Read, 1956:147)

After their first menstruation they were separated from their younger brothers and sisters, put through various rituals and began to play a more rigorous, productive role, working in the fields, preparing meals and learning more about their subordinate roles as future wives. Although they would be exchanged out of their homes when married, the better prepared for their married life they were, the higher the bride-price demanded by their elders could be. (ibid)

At the age of seventeen or thereabouts they would be married off for a number of cattle negotiated between the elders of the prospective bride and groom and sent to live in their husband's village. They were, in the village of their husband, immediately subordinated as newcomers and as women under the discipline of the elders and more directly the senior women or senior wives if their husbands were already married to one or more wives.

Being exchanged for bridewealth they effectively became bound to the homestead and the village of their husbands. If their husbands died or were killed in warfare, as many were, they remained in the village, remarrying one of the brothers or relatives of the deceased husband. The organisation of marriage involving bridewealth exchange was thus a relation of exploitation ordering the destination of women and their binding to their husband's village. Women were not only important as producers but also as reproducers, valued in terms of the labour of their offspring and the bridewealth equivalent of their female children. Elmslie, the missionary, recounts an incident, sometime in the 1880s or 1890s, where a man's wife "offended at some scolding he gave her" had run off.

> "I inquired how many wives were left to him and he said he had still five. I advised him to let the run-away stay where she was, but the great matter for him was that she represented so many head of cattle and he could not lose them as, by having children by her he could give them out in marriage, and so get his cattle-fold restocked."
> (1970:43)

However, it was mostly through the senior women and in many cases senior wives that male elders controlled the lives of the junior women and girls. Most elders had more than one wife, with the chiefs and the Paramount married to several wives.

Women, particularly unmarried women and junior wives, were the most dominated, divided and exploited grouping in the social formation. They played the major role in day-to-day subsistence and household production and in many ways it was their labour – that underpinned the material reproduction of the social formation. As human reproducers they were exchanged from elder to

elder, homestead to homestead, clan to clan and as such constituted a crucial basis for the reciprocity of their elders and thus the political unity of the social formation as a whole. We will see later how under changed objective conditions under colonial capitalism, they challenged their subordination, finding ways, successfully and unsuccessfully, to struggle against the domination of their elders and husbands both as subsistence producers and human reproducers of mothers.

iii) The Ngoni chiefs and elders

Much has been said of the aristocracy and elders above. Below is a brief summary of their social position as the ruling 'class'. The Ngoni-Tumbuka state was constituted dominantly in relations between male elders organised according to kin or military rules with a hierarchical form headed by the chiefs, each of whom led clans occupying different land areas within the social formation. The leading clan was headed by the Paramount chief.

The strength of the chiefs and elders lay in their control over crucial political and ideological relations, in particular their control of cattle, their position as mediators with the ancestors and their central role in military and marriage organisation. Military organisation was both an enterprise of exploitation most beneficial to chiefs and elders, and a repressive apparatus used to stamp out internal resistance to exploitation and the unequal distribution of plunder. Sections of the army were often used to suppress internal rebellions, most significantly in the 1870s

and 1880s against Tonga and Tumbuka impis. The army was commanded by the Paramount, the chiefs and the induna, or war leaders, who were also elders.

Raiding injected captives into the central villages and cattle into the herds distributed according to law and custom, itself determined by the balance of forces within the hierarchy of chief and elders (politically and ideologically) usually more favourably to the villages and herds of the chiefs and particularly the Paramount. The Paramount and chiefs used many cattle in rituals and feasts, thereby providing material support to these apparatuses of ideological domination. They were used to feed the junior impis that worked the aristocrats' fields and redistributed as food in times of shortage. Importantly, they were redistributed by the chiefs and Paramount for cementing political, military and social ties and allegiances between chiefs and elders and for guaranteeing the civil organisation of marriages through bridewealth/cattle exchange between elders. Through this the aristocracy also guaranteed the general subordination of juniors through the control of their marriage prospects by their elders. (See Read, 1956:165-178)

Marriage organisation also provided a channel for the accumulation of cattle and dependants by chiefs who enforced a higher bride-price for the marriageable female juniors from their villages. (OD 30, 34, 40)

The chiefs, having larger villages (and therefore more impis), and cattle stocks and through the above forms of social control

were thus in a position to accumulate dependants, cattle and other forms of wealth (e.g. food, ivory) at a faster rate than subordinate elders. They were more likely to ride out food or cattle shortages in times of crisis using accumulated stocks for redistribution to subordinate elders to cement and reproduce the reciprocity of elders within which they occupied a dominant position.

c) Anticipation of Chapter Eight

We will see later how the material conditions for the power of chiefs and elders became undermined in many ways under colonial capitalism but were reconstituted, as the chiefs and elders were progressively absorbed by and sought access to the Colonial State. Importantly we will see how the military basis for that power was smashed but replaced with the military power of the Colonial State, guaranteeing certain judicial and customary powers to chiefs and elders which enabled them to gradually re-establish in certain ways an objective economic basis to those powers. On the other hand we will see how juniors were able partially or wholly to break from certain dominating non-capitalist relations, particularly those associated with marriage organisation, but only by subordinating themselves to the Colonial State, wage-labour and petty commodity production.

CHAPTER FIVE

THEORY OF LABOUR MIGRATION - EXPLOITATION AND THE ROLE OF NON-CAPITALIST ECONOMIES IN THE REPRODUCTION OF MIGRANT LABOUR-POWER

It is now commonly accepted that non-capitalist, domestic economies in the southern sub-continent have performed important functions in the reproduction of migrant labour-power employed in capitalist mines, farms and factories. This chapter examines this relationship, theoretically, in terms of the exploitative appropriation of non-capitalist surplus labour-time by capitalists through the employment of migrant wage-labour. In the first section, it traces the source of domestic surplus labour-time available to capitalists for exploitation, followed by a section examining various forms of migrant labour based on the various possibilities posed by available domestic surplus labour-time (subject of course to the conditions of class struggle). In this latter section I will concentrate on those forms of migrant labour that developed historically in Colonial Malawi until the Second World War.

a) Surplus labour-time in domestic economies

Most domestic, non-capitalist agricultural economies are subject to the rhythm of the agricultural cycle where intensive agricultural production takes up a particular period of the year, say 5 months. During this period (which I will call the wet-season) food is produced on which members of the agricultural community

will subsist until the next harvest at the end of the following period or wet season. This means that an intervening period of roughly seven months (variable) exists (which I will call the dry season), during which little or no agricultural production takes place leaving producers free to undertake other necessary productive tasks such as building reparations, hoe-making, cloth manufacture, hunting etc. Dry season production is less intensive and is interspersed with periods of surplus labour-time during which no necessary production takes place, producers being fed on stored food produced in the wet season. This surplus labour-time can be appropriated either by the producers themselves in the form of leisure or other 'unnecessary' activities or it can be appropriated by an exploitative class using extra-economic means to force producers to work for them.

We saw in Chapter 4 how the Ngoni 'aristocracy' appropriated dry season surplus labour-time of the Tumbuka producers by employing them in raiding activities. If agricultural production yields more food than is necessary for the reproduction of producers until the following harvest then the potential exists for exploitative classes to take advantage of this and appropriate wet season surplus labour-time as well. This happened in the Ngoni-Tumbuka social formation, as we saw, with the use of age regiments to cultivate the Ngoni aristocracy's fields.

Thus two possible forms of surplus labour-time structured within the agricultural cycle may be isolated in domestic agricultural economies: short periods during the wet season and longer periods during the dry season.

With the penetration of merchant capital, these periods could be extended. Imported articles such as cloth and hoes began to replace locally produced necessary articles. In terms of labour-time spent on the production of cloth and hoes etc., the imported manufacturers were cheaper because of the higher productivity of the industries in Europe where they are produced. For indigenous producers this meant that they could spend less time procuring ivory and slaves, for example, which they may have traded for cloth and hoes, than they would have spent producing cloth and hoes themselves. The introduction of imported necessary manufacturers thus resulted in more dry season surplus labour-time being available. In a similar way imported agricultural implements (i.e. the plough) served to increase the productivity in cultivation and thus increased the wet season surplus labour-time available.

In the above examples it must be noted that concrete appropriation of surplus labour-time occurs only under conditions dictated by the struggles between exploiters and producers. The level of development of the productive forces only poses <u>possible</u> amounts of surplus labour-time <u>available</u> for appropriation, <u>actual</u> appropriation being determined by class struggle.

<u>b) Migrant labour and the exploitation of domestic producers</u>

We are now in a position to categorise and understand the exploitative basis of the system of migrant labour, in other words to analyse how domestic modes of production articulated with the

capitalist mode in terms of the appropriation by capital of non-capitalist surplus labour-time.

My definition of migrant labour in this thesis refers to the migration of workers between non-capitalist economies and capitalist economies not merely to the long distance movement of workers from country to country. In fact, included in my definition of migrants are workers who return to their homes (within non-capitalist economies) from their work (within the capitalist economy) every day. (See p.68 on plantation labour.)

i) The reproduction of labour-power under the migrant labour system:

In his article on migrant labour, Michael Buraway (1980) states that the reproduction of labour-power under any economy consists of a combination of two processes - the maintenance and the renewal of labour-power. Maintenance refers to the day-to-day reproduction of present producers as producers and renewal to the rearing of children who will be future producers. Under "pure" capitalism domestic work "simultaneously provides for both maintenance and renewal requirements of the labour force". (1980:138) Under the system of migrant labour however, domestic work tends to provide more for the renewal of labour-power in the family home, whilst the maintenance of labour-power is provided for at or near the place of work (e.g. the mining compounds).

The two processes are however "indissolubly interdependent, as

reflected in the oscillatory movement of migrants between work and home". (138-139) Remitted wages become a crucial input for the renewal process organised under the state and non-capitalist economy, while at the same time migrants depend on those involved in the renewal processes at home for support "because they have no permanent legal or political status at the place of work" (139) and require subsistence when unemployed or retired.

This enables capitalists to externalise a proportion of the costs of renewal to the non-capitalist economies of the migrants' origin. Basically this means that whereas under "pure" capitalism wages paid to workers (or indirectly by the State) must include the cost of rearing children (future workers), under the migrant labour system the migrant's family bears part of this cost, to the benefit of the capitalists employing the migrants. In some cases where migrants return daily to their homes within non-capitalist economies then capitalists can externalise a proportion of the maintenance costs as well.

In addition to this, as has been intimated, non-capitalist economies are often forced to absorb unemployed workers for capital and the State. We will see in Chapter 7 that when capitalist production and accumulation went into decline during the Great Depression, the political and economic consequences of unemployment of Tonga migrants was effectively transposed onto the Tonga domestic economies. (See Chapter 7 and Castells, 1975:33-36)

These renewal functions performed by migrants' families are equivalent to the appropriation of non-capitalist surplus labour-

time by capitalists and state. This non-capitalist surplus labour-time is reproduced within the non-capitalist/domestic modes of production under the coercive regulation of the Capitalist State subject to the reproductive requirements of capital accumulation.

The exploitation of migrants and their families through non-capitalist surplus labour-time appropriation was combined with a process of pure capitalist exploitation. The day-to-day maintenance of workers at the workplace gave rise to capitalist surplus labour-time appropriated as capitalist surplus value in the production process.

ii) Forms of labour migration in Colonial Malawi:

Labour migration took several forms in Colonial Malawi. The most widespread and deep-rooted form was that of the migration of men to capitalist farms and mines outside of the country, chiefly to Colonial Zimbabwe, South Africa and Zambia but also to Mozambique, Tanzania and Zaire. However this was preceded by and ran concurrent with forms of internal migration namely porterage labour, labour on public works and labour on settler plantations in the Shire Highlands in southern Malawi.

Porterage (mtengatenga): the African Lakes Company and missionaries were employing Manganjas, Tongas and others to carry goods through Malawi to Tanzania from as early on as the late 1870s and early 1880s. (Boeder, 1974:10) Porterage services were

often combined with road building for the company seeking to develop exchange circuits through the region. Payment was made in calico (cloth) and the men were employed mostly during the dry season when they were free from intensive agricultural work. (op. cit.:11) As such porterage constituted the appropriation/ exploitation of domestic dry season surplus labour-time. The costs of maintaining workers from day-to-day were paid by the employers but they benefited from non-capitalist production which had catered for the initial rearing of the migrants (renewal) and their maintenance between periods of employment.

Public Works labour: labour on public works developed significantly after the formal establishment of colonial rule and led to the replacement of certain kinds of porterage work after the construction by public works labour of motorised and rail transport networks (roads and railways). Labour was recruited chiefly from the ranks of tax-defaulters throughout the period under review with the help of tax collectors, District Residents and capitãos. (District Annual Reports)

Public Works labour was often employed on construction projects in the area from which it was recruited which meant that not only renewal costs but also day-to-day maintenance costs (food, housing and recreation) could be externalised onto the domestic economies from which the workers were recruited since the workers worked close enough to their homes to return there for food and shelter every night. Wages could therefore be extremely low and often barely covered tax requirements. I was informed by a priest in the Mzimba district that many of those recruited were

women, young boys, old men and other men too weak or unhealthy to undertake the long and arduous journey out of the country to earn cash for tax and other obligations. (Conversation at Ekwendeni mission, 10/5/1980)

Plantation labour: this labour can be divided into two categories: local labour and labour from other districts:

Local labourers on the settler plantations in the Shire Highlands were caught up in a highly exploitative system known to them as Thangata. The workers and their families lived on the plantations cultivating their own crops on land owned by the plantation and supplying labour to the planters. They were essentially labour tenants, forced to work for the planters under the threat of eviction, the destruction of their own crops or similar threats. (Kandawire, 1979:12)

Domestic production catered for a considerable portion of both renewal and maintenance costs throughout the year with workers returning daily to their homes for subsistence and shelter. Wages were used mostly to pay for taxes and necessities (clothing, hoes etc.) not produced domestically. It seems that domestic production was kept largely intact and thus the settler capitalists were able to take full advantage of all forms of surplus labour-time produced under the domestic/non-capitalist economies of the labour-tenants. (See Kandawire, 1979, for a useful analysis of Thangata.)

The second category of labour were those workers who migrated

from other districts, many of them Ngoni-Tumbukas and Tongas. Migration of this kind started as early on as 1885, prior to the introduction of taxation, (Boeder, 1974:11) with wages being paid in "beads, calico, or coloured cloth". (Kandawire, 1978:12) After the introduction of taxation much of the labour was recruited from the ranks of tax defaulters or those intent on earning wages to pay taxes. (Sanderson, 1961:261)

Planters were usually able to acquire this labour from other districts only during the dry season since workers could not be away from their fields during the wet season and anyway wages were not high enough to replace lost production at home had they migrated. During the early 1900s the economies of South Africa and Colonial Zimbabwe experienced booms whilst many of the Shire Highland plantations folded after a crash in commodity prices (particularly coffee). Migrants from other districts and particularly from the north began to avoid the plantations and seek work outside of the country to the south. After the war this process accelerated dramatically and there is very little evidence of either Tongas or Ngoni-Tumbukas migrating to the plantations during the 1920s and 1930s, except for those who were handed over as tax-defaulters. (See Chapters 7 and 8)

'International' or 'External' migration:

A common feature of the types of internal migration discussed above is that the migrant workers generally left home only during the dry season, returning in the wet season to perform crucial

agricultural work in their domestic economies. At the level of production then capitalism and non-capitalist production articulated, with agricultural production kept relatively intact, and imported manufacture replacing necessary articles formerly produced in the dry season or acquired through the east-coast trade.

For the first twenty-five years of colonialism, until the First World War, internal migration was the dominant form of productive activity linking capitalist and non-capitalist modes. Peasant cash-crop production was also significant in some areas in the south, particularly food production for markets in the Shire Highlands.

International migration began to develop from the late 1800s and by 1910 some 23 000 Malawian men were working in Zimbabwe and South Africa. (Boeder, 1974:10) It appears that this number was stabilised until the War, possibly because of the development of cash-crop peasant farming and to some extent the revival of plantation agriculture after tea, cotton and tobacco production had replaced coffee production following the decline of the latter.

With the advent of the First World War, the State ordered the forced conscription of all adult males into the Carrier Corps for porterage to serve in the East African Campaign. 87 726 Malawians were conscripted but many fled south to Zimbabwe or South Africa to escape conscription. (Page, 1979:178) The result was a widespread and devastating absence of male labour for domestic agricultural work over several consecutive wet seasons and the

abandonment of peasant cash-cropping in many areas. (See Chapters 7 & 8) After the war, the men returned with accumulated war wages, injecting considerable amounts of cash into the indigenous social formations with dramatic effects on the bride-price in certain areas and other exchange relations. All of these points will be examined more closely in Chapters 7 and 8, but what is quite clear is that the War brought in its wake a massive disruption of indigenous economies and social relations. This resulted in a significant acceleration of the process of international migration so that by 1921 over 50 000 migrants were working outside the country and by 1926 over 66 000 men. (Coleman, 1972:116)

International migration, in contrast to internal migration, left domestic economies without male labour during the agricultural season. For the Tonga the effects were less drastic as Tonga women could perform the bulk of the work which was spread fairly evenly over the year because of the peculiar nature of cassava production. (See Chapter 7) For the Ngoni-Tumbuka and other peoples who produced cereal (mostly maize) crops, which require intensive labour input over a few months, the absence of male labour dramatically increased the work load of the women and forced into the production process previously inactive members such as young children and old men and women.

> "In districts from which migration is extensive a great burden rests therefore upon older people if they help the wife. Only too often they cannot and do not bear it."
> (T-L rep.:35 and see Chapter 8)

For those working in the non-capitalist sphere engaged in the

renewal process of labour-power reproduction for capital, their exploitation was thus further intensified and extended with the development of international migration under colonial capitalism.

* * *

This chapter has examined theoretically the nature of the articulation between domestic and capitalist modes at the level of the economic exploitative links between them, i.e. the appropriation of non-capitalist surplus labour-time by capital through the reproduction in domestic economies of migrant labour-power. The wider social forms of this articulation are covered in the following chapters involving the struggles, political, economic and ideological, through which these processes took concrete historical form.

CHAPTER SIX

THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF IMPERIALISM AND THE COLONIAL STATE IN MALAWI 1890-1940

This chapter begins with some theoretical observations on the Colonial State and the nature of Imperialist intervention in Africa in the late 1800s. This is followed by a schematic analysis of Colonial State formation in Malawi from 1890 to 1940 with particular reference to its development as a labour reserve economy serving capitalist mines, farms and industries in the southern sub-continent.

a) The Colonial State - some observations

Lonsdale and Berman (1979) offer the most useful analysis on the Colonial State that I have come across and much of what I have to say is informed by their article.

The Colonial State is conceptualised here as more than the institutions set up by colonial authorities, as most liberal historians have chosen to see it. Rather it should be seen as the complex and contradictory set of social relations, economic, political and ideological, arising out of the struggles between the various classes, class fractions and strata, formalised in and mediated through the state apparatuses. These classes, fractions and strata consisted of the bourgeois classes, i.e. metropolitan capitalists, settler-plantation capitalists, merchant capitalists, non-capitalist classes of Chiefs, elders, juniors,

peasants and migrants, the emergent petit-bourgeoisie - i.e. intellectuals (teachers, clerks, etc.), small traders and missionaries. As a variant of the capitalist state, the Colonial State developed primarily as the social (particularly the political) instrument of the bourgeois classes to re-orient non-capitalist production to suit capital accumulation.

However, although the bourgeois classes were clearly dominant, they did not have a free hand, having to contend with the strength of other classes, fractions and strata. The various bourgeois classes themselves competed amongst each other for access to state power. Their interests and demands often conflicted (e.g. the competitive struggle over labour between plantation and mining capitals) so that the Colonial State at times had to act "against the perceived interests of particular segments of the dominant class in order to renovate the structures and ideology of domination and accumulation". (Lonsdale & Berman, 1979:490)

Where the struggles of the dominated classes in any way contradicted the relations of domination, enforced on them by the bourgeois classes, then this provided a check on the bourgeois classes' use of the state apparatuses and therefore on the institutionalised development of the state apparatuses themselves. We may say then that the Colonial State apparatuses developed according to the balance of class forces at each conjuncture where the bourgeoisie and particularly the metropolitan bourgeoisie remained dominant.

One of the crucial repressive apparatuses of the Colonial State was the use of certain pre-existent non-capitalist relations of production in which Chiefs and elders held dominance. Through the system of Indirect Rule Chiefs and elders were co-opted to carry out certain administrative and repressive tasks for colonial authorities using traditional powers and allegiances, serving in part to 'legitimise' colonial rule and blurr the contradictory divisions between colonisers and colonised. (Lonsdale and Berman, 1979:490)

Indirect Rule enabled (as will be seen in Chapter 8) Chiefs and elders to consolidate their powers, with the material backing of the State from above through building an economic base for themselves, reproducing and extending relations of dependency within the non-capitalist domestic sphere.

As such Indirect Rule was the political expression of the articulation of capitalist and non-capitalist modes of production.

b) The origins of Imperialism in Africa

By the 1880s the world capitalist system was confronted with a crisis. The rapid expansion of commodity production in most but not all sectors during the 1800s since the Industrial Revolution had led to a crisis of overproduction and saturation of existing markets and at the same time a shortage of vital raw materials. With the rate of capital accumulation threatened, the Imperialist

industrial nations began to compete with each other for preferential access to the non-capitalist economies of Africa for their markets and resources.

However, while the economic impetus for the colonisation of Africa may seem obvious it cannot in itself explain the pace of the colonisation of Africa achieved in only ten years during the 1890s.

Finance capital was at first reluctant to pour vast sums of money into the political conquest and economic development of a continent about which so little was known. The exception to this was South Africa with its gold and diamonds. The speed with which the process took place must rather be explained in terms of: a) competitive speculative Imperialism; b) the ideology of nationalist rivalry between Imperial nations whipped up to smother social contradictions within the nations themselves; and c) the realisation amongst certain sections of the ruling class that African colonies could act as "a safety valve for states menaced by internal agitations". (Nuova Antologia, 1884 in Davidson, 1978:80)

Growing contradictions internal to these nations, stemming from the greater organisation and discontent of the working masses, attendant on the increasing socialisation of industry, posed an immediate political threat to the rule of capitalism. This was expressed in the growth of socialist parties everywhere, militant trade unionism, frequent bloody riots in England and Italy and organised class warfare in France during the

Paris Commune.

On the basis of areas mapped out by traders and missionaries, Africa was divided amongst competing Imperial powers and colonised forthwith. Vanguards of expeditionary forces, financed by Imperial treasuries and chartered companies, moved inland making strategic alliances with indigenous ruling classes here and bloody conquests there. In a very short time the bulk of Africa south of the Sahara was incorporated formally under the political rule of the Imperial nations under colonialism.

Until colonisation the economic exploitation of the continent had been sporadic and confined to a few luxury goods and slaves. Africa was now opened up for the systematic exploitation of its peoples and resources, for the production of a wide range of primary commodities such as cotton, vegetable oils, tobacco, coffee, tea and minerals, particularly gold.

* * *

The colonial occupation of Central Africa towards the end of the 19th century and the setting up of repressive and administrative state apparatuses there must be seen under two lights. Firstly it was necessary, once the decision to colonise particular areas had been taken, for each imperial power to retain preferential access to resources and markets from each other. Secondly it was necessary to effect the systematic reorientation of indigenous economies both to pay for the costs of military occupation and administration and to serve the needs of

capitalist industries and farms.

Whilst the penetration of commodity relations prior to colonialism had certain significant effects on pre-capitalist societies it laid very little basis for the systematic exploitation by capitalism of indigenous producers. Indigenous social structures which emerged with the production or acquisition of ivory, slaves, hides etc. traded for cloth, guns, hoes etc. remained rooted to the organising principles of non-capitalist modes of production. It is possible that, given time, the penetration of commodity relations without the political intervention of the Colonial State could have re-oriented production relations more systematically towards integration with the capitalist world market. But Europe could not wait since indigenous economies were on the whole too resilient and resistant to rapid economic penetration and imperialist competition too intense.

c) The Colonial State in Malawi and the development of a labour-reserve economy

The British South Africa Company's penetration of the interior of Malawi prior to the 1890s, the subjugation of many of the 'tribes' and setting up of trade routes from the lower Shire river in southern Malawi through to the north, gave rise to the establishment of a British Colonial 'Protectorate' and appropriate administration subsidised by company funds and enforced by the company's military arm.

The military expeditionary forces had been sent in in the wake of explorers, traders and missionaries to enforce and formalise colonisation. The existence of many localised tribal formations, independent of each other, meant that occupation could be carried out piecemeal. There were several strategies:

Military conquests took place where resistance was met with. Often a show of strength was enough to exact peace treaties. Tribal divisions were exploited, alliances made and Chiefs tricked into trading away land often for little more than a few bales of cloth.

The east-coast trade in slaves and ivory was effectively put down by the colonial army. The slave states in many areas had been dominated by Arab and indigenous 'moslemised' armed intermediaries in alliance with local Chiefs and elders. With colonial occupation these states were completely smashed, often after protracted battles and sieges. There was no room for the slave states within the colonial occupation: economically they would have competed with the colonialists for labour and markets and politically it was unthinkable to accommodate a slave state which by its very nature had to rely on military force. However it seems probably that the internal market networks established alongside the slave and ivory trades persisted to some extent, becoming transformed and built into networks established by the chartered companies and Colonial State administration.

Once the tribal formations had formally surrendered to colonial

rule, it required only small but well-equipped and mobile army and police units to exercise control and maintain order. Initially the instruments of direct subordination, these units began to play a more indirect threatening repressive role of last resort as the Colonial State apparatuses acquired more sophisticated means of supervising occupation (although on a number of occasions they did not hesitate to use force).

The 1890s saw the administration of the territory falling under the Colonial Office and the appointment of Harry Johnston as the first Commissioner and Consul-General. Johnston was determined that the administration should assert its independence, financially, from the British South Africa Company and appealed to the British Treasury for funds, which they supplied initially but stipulated that the colony must increasingly generate its own source of revenue and become financially independent. (Krishnamurthy, 1975:384)

In the early establishment, prior to the 1890s, of settler plantations, at that stage particularly coffee plantations, Johnston saw the beginnings of a (taxable) economic base. For this, vast tracts of the most fertile land in the Shire Highlands were alienated and a tax imposed on the indigenous population to force them to work on the plantations. In addition, taxation provided much-needed revenue.

In 1891 a hut tax of six shillings to be paid in cash was imposed. Chiefs, with the aid of the notorious 'capitaos' were

required to collect the tax, with the former receiving a stipend of 10% and foregoing "any other form of exaction from the people". (Smith, 1937:6) By 1901 regulations stipulated that a maximum rate of 12/- a hut be paid by male adults living in and around the Shire Highlands with a rebate of half if one month's work on a plantation could be proven; and that for people living outside of the Highlands, 6/- be paid with a similar rebate if they worked for one of the plantations, transport companies or for the administration. (ibid:6-7)

The Colonial State imposed a system of Pass laws under the Native Labour Regulations of 1894, requiring that a pass be obtained from the local magistrate proving updated payment of taxes and provision for the family of those men seeking work at home or abroad.

For Johnston the development of capitalist plantation agriculture was the priority, as was the attendant discipline and organisation of labour:

> "As the one hope of this country lies in plantation work and in the cultivation of coffee, tobacco, sugar, etc., for which cheap labour is necessary, it is before all things essential that this labour should now be placed under proper regulations."
> (Johnston to Foreign Secretary, 12/1/94 in Boeder, 1974:33)

By the late 1890s a pattern of development was well established with the Shire Highlands being the centre of infrastructural development and the northern districts being progressively

underdeveloped, tax-paying labour reserves.+ Most migrants were Ngonis from the Dedza and Nchen districts in the early 1890s and from the mid-1890s, Tongas from West Nyasa and Ngoni-Tumbukas from Mzimba. (BCA Gazette, 15/11/1896) Migration from these northerly districts began in the 1890s, initially and more obviously it would appear in order to obtain cash for taxes, but possibly also in an attempt to regain herds lost to colonial forces and the Rinderpest epidemic in 1897. (See M. Read, 1938: 22)

Significantly, Anguru/Lomwe families began to migrate in from neighbouring Mozambique into the Shire Highlands to escape the brutal Portuguese taxation and forced labour systems,* eventually becoming the chief source of labour for the plantations. (Legco Meeting, 12/4/32) Local peasants in the Highlands were finding it more remunerative to produce and sell their own crops on the market and Northerners had begun to migrate in greater numbers to the mines and farms abroad. Since colonial markets for their produce were inaccessible, for these Northerners, migration or tax-evasion presented themselves as the only real alternatives. Wage rates abroad were at that stage much higher (and have always been so) than the wages paid by the settler planters. (C.A. Times, 26/11/98)

+ The most useful source of information I have come across on the Colonial State on migrant labour is Boeder's (1974) doctoral thesis. His documentation on this is a lot more detailed than mine and is well worth referring to. Unfortunately his analysis is rather thin and restricted within a liberal (and occasionally apologist) paradigm.

* See Perry Anderson (1962) for a good account of Portuguese colonialism in Africa, which led to the mass emigration of indigenous Mozambicans.

By the early 1900s recruitment of labour for employment abroad was already viewed by the government as desirable. In 1901, Johnston stated:

> "Many an enterprise in Rhodesia or in the Transvaal or in Bechuanaland might be worked at a profitable rate and with results most beneficial to the country if a supply of cheap labour could be obtained from Central Africa ... I can only see that real good would result from this filling up of the labour market in South Africa from the Protectorate North of the Zambezi."
> (Quoted in Boeder, 1974:34)

Such recruitment required official sanction from the colonial government in terms of the Native Labour Regulation No.1 of 1898 which allowed the commissioner to grant employers permission to recruit, provided that they submit lists of all recruits to the magistrates of the districts or origin, who were supposed to see to it that hut taxes had been paid and families provided for in the migrants' absence. (Travers-Lacey Report, 1936:9)

Recruiters, however, found it much easier to engage labour from just outside of the Protectorate borders in North Eastern Zambia (British South Africa Company controlled land), sending in labour 'touts' to recruit labour clandestinely. (C.A. Times, 8/4/1899)

Reacting to intense pressure from the settlers, who were short of seasonal labour in 1902, the new Commissioner, Sharpe, attempted to control independent migration by having migration routes policed and the pass system rigorously enforced.[+] However,

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[+] Sanderson in "The Development of Labour Migration from Nyasaland 1891-1914" J.A.H. II, 2 (1961), p.262, states that the labour market was flooded at this stage due to Lomwe immigration and the success of increased taxation in 1901, whilst Krishnamurthy (1975:393) maintains that a seasonal shortage still existed. In view of Sharpe's response, the latter is more likely.

this drew sharp criticism from both the Foreign Office and the British South Africa Company officials in North East Zambia for whom such a move contradicted the ethic of the freedom of the individual to seek the most remunerative employment. (Krishnamurthy, 1975:393) Then in 1903, after a drought struck the Ruo and Lower-Shire Districts, leaving thousands starving. Sharpe, in response to this, granted WNLA permission to recruit an experimental 1 000 labourers for the Transvaal mines and thereafter 5 000 each year. (Boeder, 1974:39 & 42)

In 1904, however, only 1 193 were recruited due to reports from returning 1903-recruited workers that conditions of employment for WNLA-engaged labour were terrible. Migrants, right up until 1963,[+] generally preferred independent migration because they could choose more easily which mines or farms to work on; they could desert if conditions were bad, and were not subject to repatriation laws. Forced to migrate, these migrants responded by migrating independently by which some could evade taxation altogether, and/or be in a position to withdraw their labour from mines or farms where conditions were harshest. It was in one way a form of the economic struggle against the system of taxation and the repressive conditions of many mines and farms.

Because of the high mortality rates on the mines, ranging from between 110 to 166 deaths per thousand and with the coming to power of the Liberal government in England, recruiting was banned from inside Malawi in 1907. (Sanderson, 1961:267) But the

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[+] In 1963, for the first time recruited migrants outnumbered 'non-contract' independent migrants. (Ministry of Labour Report 1963-1967, Government Printer, Zomba table 24a.)

RNLB and WNLA reacted by setting up recruiting posts on the borders and Sharpe, realising that he was unable to stem the exodus, attempted to maintain some control over it by forwarding prospective migrants, usually tax defaulters, to Fort Jameson (on the Zambian border, Northern Malawi) on the proviso that the recruiters paid the migrants' tax, that half of the wages would be deferred and that migrants would be repatriated on completion of contract. (Boeder, 1974:58)

The influx in 1904 of 26 000 Lomwe from Mozambique had temporarily solved the planters' seasonal labour shortage. This and the guarantee by the South African government that planters' products could be exported duty-free into the Transvaal, if recruiting was allowed, reduced settler pressure on the Colonial State against migration abroad. However, in 1908 the Transvaal farmers' association had pressured its government into ending this duty-free arrangement and the settlers, by 1910, facing another shortage of labour, renewed their demands for migration control. (See Boeder, 1974:61)

It has been noted that from early on the interests of the settler planters had been supported by the state who saw the capitalist plantation economy as the potential economic base for Malawi's development. Taxation policies designed to secure labour for the plantations and revenue for the administration to provide other necessary political, social and infrastructural conditions appropriate to this path of development, had been pursued. However, plantation agriculture never really got off the ground, the coffee schemes failing with the swamping of the world market

with cheap Brazilian coffee and the cotton and tobacco schemes recording disappointing crops. (C.A. Times, 21/3/1903) As an economic base, settler agriculture

> "was too weak, the international markets were too unstable, the plantations depended upon under-nourished and inefficient labour that was paid too little and was, as a result, disinclined to sell its labour within Nyasaland, and transport difficulties hindered the export of cheap bulk crops."
>
> (Vail, 1977:367)

Migration abroad on a mass scale continued and there seemed to be nothing the Administration could do to check the rampant flow which was draining the economy of its most productive labour. The settler classes' position politically, economically and geographically, left them in a weak bargaining position for labour vis à vis the southern economies based as they were upon highly profitable mineral extractive industries and precluded any satisfactory agreement being reached with these countries with regard to labour migration. Negotiations had failed and attempts to stop the flow at its source proved impossible.

In 1911, the new governor, Manning, attempted to restrict the exodus by fining and imprisoning returning migrants who had left the territory without first obtaining passes. He furthermore terminated the agreement with the RNLB in 1912 taking advantage of the prohibition of recruitment (by WNLA) by the South African state of labour from countries north of latitute 22° South. But migrants were not deterred and continued to trek south independently.

The pass system remained the only form of control over migration abroad enforced by the Colonial State until 1934. (Travers-Lacey Report, 1936:12) The rate of migration abroad mounted rapidly over these years so that from an estimated 23 000 migrants in 1909, by 1921 there were over 50 000 migrants, by 1926 over 66 000, by 1931 over 105 000 and by 1935 some 120 000 migrants. (Boeder, 1974:10; Coleman, 1972:116 & Travers-Lacey, 1936:15)

Unable to stem or control the flow of migrant labour abroad through the pass system, which was largely resisted by migrants, the Colonial State decided in 1934/5 to actively encourage recruitment:

> "It is the policy of Government to encourage the organized engagement of Nyasaland labour for work outside the Protectorate by the issue of licences to recognised agents provided that suitable arrangements are made to keep trace of the emigrants, and for a system of deferred pay or family remittance."
> (Honorary Chief Secretary, quoted in Nyasaland Times, 26/3/35)

By doing so the State could ensure tax-payments which had dropped off as migration had increased, and attempt to prevent the further decline of Malawi's domestic non-capitalist economy particularly in the northern region (apart from Tongaland) which was fast becoming a poverty-stricken rural slumland affected by periodic famines, resistance to Chiefs, elders and local State structures and an appalling high incidence of tropical diseases and rate of infant mortality. (See Chapter 8)

In March 1935, the London and Blantyre Supply Company was granted

exclusive rights to engage labour in the Northern Province for employment in S.Rhodesia and South Africa. (Circular to District Commissioners, 29/3/35, NNM 1/9/2)

In 1936, the Travers-Lacey Report on "the exodus of natives from the Protectorate for work outside and the probably future effect on the Protectorate" gave a well-documented account of the phenomenon and its causes and effects. Apart from the above-mentioned effects it noted that in the Northern districts some 25-30% of migrants (known as Machona) were leaving the country permanently. (Travers-Lacey Report, 1936:83)

Reacting to liberal responses in Britain on the report, the State approached the colonial Zimbabwean and South African administrations to formalise conditions for the extension of controlled recruiting and control over migrants who left the country independently. (Vail, 1977:385) Consequently in August 1936 the 'Salisbury Agreement' was signed with colonial Zimbabwean authorities and a month later, the 'Johannesburg Agreement' with the South African authorities. In addition to gaining the compliance of the employer country authorities to existing laws on recruitment, these agreements made provision for the collection of taxes from all known migrants (including the unrecruited) and the deferral of pay. (See Boeder, 1974:147)

In 1938, WNLA was given permission to recruit in Malawi, thus beginning a long period of extensive recruitment, discipline and control over Malawian men sent to work the gold mines of South Africa. (Labour Office Report, 1938, LB 10/4/3)

* * *

The enforcement of State control extended to migrants in the 1930s must be seen as a response to: a) the resistance of migrants to pass laws and taxation; and b) the breakdown of rural domestic economies which presented a threat not only to social control within Malawi but also to the basis of 'cheap' labour for capitalist enterprises which relied upon externalising onto domestic economies a portion of the costs of reproduction of labour-power.

This chapter has traced the role of the Colonial State in Malawi's development as a labour-reserve economy for capitalist enterprises in the southern sub-continent, focusing on the operations of the State at a more national and inter-territorial level. The following chapters take the analysis to the level of production and reproduction in Ngoni-Tumbuka and Tonga villages where the determinations on State policy of their struggles under Colonial capitalism will be investigated in more specific detail.

CHAPTER 7

THE DEVELOPMENT OF LABOUR MIGRATION FROM TONGALAND UNTIL 1940

This chapter examines the internal processes of transformation of the Tonga domestic social formation from its pre-colonial inward-looking subsistence orientation to its functioning as a labour-reserve reproducing migrant labour-power for capitalist enterprises.

The chapter begins with background information on the patterns of labour-migration from Tongaland. This is followed by an analysis of the role of missionaries after which is a study of the role of the Colonial State and the political struggles, at the level of the local State, involved in the transformation of Tonga social relations. The next section deals with the social processes of migrantisation within Tonga villages until 1917. Unfortunately my data on this period is very thin due to the lack of written records, which were destroyed by fire in the archives in 1919. The next section examines subsistence and market production relations from 1917 to 1940, followed by a study of the processes of dispersal of homesteads consequent upon shifting power relations within villages. Finally the re-organisation of marriage relations involved in the shifting of power relations within villages is examined in more depth.

a) Patterns of Tonga migrancy

i) 1885 - 1917*

This period marked the consolidation of colonial rule beginning with the arrival of the missionaries, their successful influence in mediating both peace between the Tonga and the Ngoni and also treaties between Tonga elders and the Colonial State culminating in the formal subordination of the Tonga to the new colonial government in 1894 with the first taxes being paid in 1898.

The missionaries were the first to employ Tonga men when in April 1885, 150 left the District to help build the northern end of the Stevenson road. In May of that year, "the first twenty-five Tongas" were recruited with mission help on six month contracts for work on the Shire Highlands plantation. (Boeder, 1974:11) Increasing numbers were recruited in the following years until by 1904, some 4 000 Tongas were working on the plantations to the south. (Pachai, 1973:21) The African Lakes Corporation employed Tongas as porters over this period, numbering over 1 400 in 1904. In addition Tonga men served since the 1880s in the colonial army inside the country and in the Tanganyikan army under the Germans (where wages were higher than in Malawi) until 1897, when this was apparently stopped after British complaints to the Germans. (Boeder, 1974:11-12)

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* It has been impossible to obtain reliable statistics relating to migration chiefly because the Tonga were extremely resistant to applying for mandatory passes or co-operating in census-taking (see below) so that even at a local level colonial officials were unable to gauge accurately migration rates. (See p.107)

By the turn of the century "large numbers" of Tonga were heading south of the Zambesi for work on farms and mines there (Boeder, 1974:12) and by 1902 the District Resident could report that "the yearly exodus to Salisbury is becoming more general and a surprising amount of gold money is in circulation". (WNDAR 1902/3)

Pachai (1973:21) claims:

> "By 1904 over 1 400 of them were working for the A.L.C. in various capacities while over 4 000 were in the employment of planters in the Shire Highlands ... In the same year hundreds moved off to work south of the Zambesi ..."

He quotes no sources. The Government Blue Book for 1904 records a total male population of 13 000. Less than half of these (maximum of 6 000) could have been physically capable of migrant labour, internal or external, which means that according to Pachai, 90% of potential migrants undertook wage labour.

It is from 1906 that District Residents begin to report more dramatic yearly increases in external migration although it was not until after the First World War that external migrancy reached the 1904 internal migrancy level. (WNDARs) Progressive increases were reported from 1912 - 1917 by the Residents but no figures were given.

ii) <u>1917 - 1940</u>

In 1917, 3 066 Tonga men were forceably impressed into the Carrier Corps and Kings African Rifles, constituting almost all

fit adult males who had not migrated, or who had escaped army recruiting squads. (WNDAR 1918) The total male adult population was 11 988 so that if we can count the total fit male population at about 10 000, this means that by 1917 probably between 50% and 60% of all Tonga men had migrated. (op. cit.)

District Annual Reports for the following twenty years give only the figures for the number of passes issued to migrants, who comprised only a fraction of all those migrating. However, fluctuations in the numbers of passes issued over the years may indicate fluctuations in the total number of those migrating each year. Until 1929, the number of passes issued remained constant at ± 900 per year, rising to 1 043 in 1930, declining to 801 in 1931, 416 in 1932, 733 in 1933, 1 487 in 1934, after which it remained at ± 1 500 until World War II. (WNDAR's for those years.) The decline from 1931 and the rise from 1933 reflects economic conditions of the Great Depression and recovery in capitalist mines in Zimbabwe and South Africa.

In 1934, the District Resident reported that

> "Following rumours that work was available in the mines there was a rush on passes to leave the Protectorate, the majority making for Southern Rhodesia whence they hoped to trickle into South Africa."
>
> (WNDAR 1934)

The fluctuations in the migration rate here clearly illustrate the extent to which migrantisation was subject to the dynamic of world capital accumulation particularly in the demand for labour and not the changing conditions of supply (i.e.

fluctuations in the Tonga economy). Very importantly it indicates the role of the Tonga domestic economy in absorbing unemployed migrants at a time of low demand in the capitalist sector and releasing them onto the labour market immediately the capitalist enterprises began recovering after the Depression. (Refer to p.65)

It is possible that the rise in 1930 was a result of increased demand for labour with the opening of the copper mines in Zambia in 1929.

In 1934, roughly 60% of Tongas were migrants. (Travers-Lacey Report, 1936:36) The 1937 Adult Male Population and Labour Statistics Survey was the only comprehensive survey which published detailed statistics relating to migrant labour.

Migrancy Statistics, 1937

	A	B		C		D		E	
	Total Fit Adult Males	Known Migrants	% of A	Migrants in Zimbabwe	% of B	Migrants in South Africa	% of B	Lengthy or Permanent Migrants (Machona)	% of B
Tonga*	12 812	7 791	60,9	2 856	36,6	2 540	32,6	541	7
Ngoni-Tumbuka*	41 399	18 767	45,7	12 396	66	3 517	18,7	4 634	24,6
Southern province	207 749	22 350	10,8	17 172	76,8	1 810	8	2 986	13,4
Northern province	235 772	67 737	28,6	46 906	69	12 128	17,9	19 252	28,4

* Both the Tonga and Ngoni-Tumbuka lived in the Northern province.

(Source: 1937 Adult Male Population and Labour Statistics Survey, S5/1/2/18)

It shows that in 1936 60,9% of Tonga men were migrants absent from the district at any one time, the highest rate in the country. Furthermore it shows that only 36,6% of Tonga migrants worked in Zimbabwe compared with 69% of migrants from the Northern Province as a whole whilst 32,6% of Tonga migrants worked in South Africa compared with only 17,9% from the Northern Province. These figures reflect the greater proportion of Tonga migrants who had been educated and obtained skilled posts (more of which were available in South Africa) compared with migrants, from other areas, who were generally unskilled. As I will show the role of mission education in determining Tonga migrancy patterns from early on in the century was crucial. By 1931, 57% of Tonga males had at least a basic literate education compared with 27% of all males in the country. (Population Census, 1931) The other interesting statistic is that of the percentage of Tonga migrants who left the district permanently, known as Machona. The survey shows that only 7% of Tongas were Machona compared with 28,4% for the Northern Province. This clearly reflects upon the nature of the Tonga social formation compared with other indigenous formations in terms of the long-term security that they offered for migrants. This will be analysed later.

One further point that needs to be made is that although at any one time not more than 60-65% of Tonga men migrated, it seems that almost every man migrated at some stage in his life.

> "Suffice it to say that sooner or later every able-bodied man goes to seek work abroad."
> (District Resident: WNDAR 1935)

As will be shown the Tonga organised their migrations in such a

way that enough men remained behind to perform necessary tasks and also to retain control of homesteads in male hands.

b) Missionaries and Migrants

The historic role of the missionaries of the Free Church of Scotland in the colonisation of the Tonga people and the transformation of their economy into a labour reserve is of particular significance.

At the political level the missionaries found themselves well placed to intervene in the war between the Tonga and the raider Ngoni-Tumbuka shortly after their arrival in the area in 1878, and to mediate a tense peace which was later guaranteed under the Colonial State. (Pachai, 1973:21) The alliance made between the missionaries and Tonga elders was translated by 1889 into a formal treaty between the Tonga and agents of the Colonial State, notably Harry Johnston, paving the way for real and direct colonial domination in 1894 with the establishment of administrative structures and forced tax-payments from 1898.

From early on the staunch Protestant missionaries actively delivered the word of God and Capital to the Tonga, establishing churches, industrial training schools and trading stores in Tongaland. By 1883 there were already 3 schools in the area, by 1894, 18 schools with over 1 000 pupils and by 1906 there were 107 schools with over 3 500 pupils, the vast majority of whom were males. (Pachai, 1973:21) By 1931, 57% of adult Tonga

males were literate, whereas for the country as a whole only 27% of adult males had received any formal education. (1931 Population Census)

Many of the schools were offshoots of mission schools established by mission-trained teachers and priests but operating independently. So-called "Native missions" sprang up, chief amongst them The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, The Messenger of the Covenant Church and the African National Church, each of them setting up rudimentary schools within villages. (WNDAR 1932, 1935)

Moreover the nature of mission education given to the Tonga appears to have been more extensive. Apart from religious instruction and basic reading, writing and speaking skills, the Tonga were trained to be book-keepers, carpenters, brickmakers, bricklayers, storekeepers, telegraphists and medical assistants. (Pachai, 1973:169-171)

Education enabled most Tonga migrants to secure skilled or semi-skilled work all over the southern sub-continent from the early 1900s, as carpenters, mine clerks, bricklayers. (Boeder, 1974: 14-17; and WNDAR 1932) Part of the high wages remitted by the migrants were used to pay for the education of their male children and thus the skills of the Tonga were reproduced in their children who would later migrate to similar high-wage earning jobs. The Tonga remitted considerable amounts of money to their families in Tongaland from the 1900s. In 1937, of the £48 100 remitted to Malawi from outside the country through

post offices, £11 800 (24%) went to Tongaland and yet Tonga migrants constituted only 5% of all Malawian migrants. (Pachai, 1973:21; and 1937 Population survey)

The wider implications of this injection of money into the economy will be examined later but the important point here is that wage remittals were sufficient to pay for the education of most prospective migrants thus continually reproducing Tonga migrants as skilled or semi-skilled workers.

Missionary education was thus crucial for Tonga migration but we need to ask why the Tonga were exceptional in this respect or what it was about Tonga social formation that enabled missionaries to institute a foreign educational system in the District with such ease.

It would seem that resistance to missionary education, where it takes place in non-capitalist "tribal" social formations, can often be linked to the threat it poses to relations of domination, particularly between elders and juniors. Thus the Chewa elders, in Central Malawi, repeatedly resisted attempts by the Catholic Church to attract juniors to their schools, as these competed with the tribal initiation schools organised under the Nyau societies,* important for the ideological subordination of juniors to elders. In contrast to the Chewa, the Tonga had no strong initiation structures and nor did they have centralised state structures through which resistance could be focused.

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* See Report of the District Commissioner, Lilongwe 9/5/1929: NS1/23/6 and Schoffeleers (1975).

Indeed the rivalry between Tonga groupings may have encouraged the sending of juniors to missions and certainly the role of the missionaries in mediating peace between the Tonga and the raiding Ngoni-Tumbuka must have created favourable conditions for educational intervention. Indeed there are reports that the missionaries were often drawn into local disputes as arbitrators and generally found themselves in positions of trust. (Pachai, 1973:21)

In many ways then the missionaries were crucial in the transitionary stages in the subordination of the Tonga to colonial rule and in instituting educational structures that prepared the Tonga for migrant exploitation in the colonial economy. As such missionary intervention in Tongaland was the pioneering arm of the Colonial State and continued to constitute the crucial component of the educational and ideological state apparatuses after the direct political intervention of the Colonial State in 1898.

c) The Colonial State - Rule and Resistance in Tongaland

When the Colonial State extended administrative structures to Tongaland in 1894 there were no centralised aristocratic hierarchies that could be grafted onto the state apparatuses to extend authority to a grassroots level. On the one hand the existing political disorganisation of the Tonga had made their formal subordination relatively easy but on the other hand it meant that rule had to be of a direct nature.

A Collector of Revenues was appointed to the District in 1894. His duties were

> "to collect customs duties, to assess and levy taxes, to direct the police force of Sikhs and Zanzibaris, to administer justice, to act generally as political officers, and, in many cases, to be responsible for the postal services."
>
> (Baker, 1975:331)

The collection of taxes was then and remained the chief concern of the Collector (later known as the Resident).* The Collectors (and later the Residents) appear to have been under considerable pressure to make sure that the costs of colonisation were borne by the Tonga themselves through hut tax payments and of course taxation was used to recruit labour for the plantations.

However, the politics of tax collection extended into almost every aspect of administration. On several occasions, the army had to be called in to facilitate collection, huts were destroyed, attempts were made to prevent the spread of hamlets which made collection difficult, passes for migrants were instituted to ensure payment before emigration, the State tried to set up a workable system of "Native Authorities" for effective collection and efforts were made to generate peasant enterprise to this end. At every stage the State actions were met with determined resistance. (See pp.101-106)

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* A look at any of the District Annual Reports will show how central to a Collector's or Resident's duties tax-collections were. A good part of the information I have drawn from District Annual Reports comes from sections dealing with tax-collections where numerous issues were seen by Residents chiefly in terms of their effects on collections.

From 1898 to 1917, taxes were collected by the Collector and paid Tonga functionaries who had no 'traditional authority' since it was only in 1917 that a system of 'Native Authorities' was set up. (Baker, 1975:337) For the first four years from 1898 less than one third of potential taxes were collected and in 1902 when taxes were doubled with the proviso that 50% rebates would be offered on the production of a labour certificate (showing that each Tonga male had worked for the planters, traders or the bureaucracy), the Tonga refused to pay. (WNDAR 1902) The Collector reported at the time that

> "When the new scheme of hut taxation was first muted, I heard it constantly mentioned that the natives would not pay. That they would offer no resistance but they simply would not pay."
>
> (op. cit.)

A contingent of the Kings African Rifles was sent into the villages and soon after there was "not the slightest difficulty in getting in the revenue". (op. cit.) For the following few years, the Tonga migrated en masse to the plantations and taxes were paid but as they began to look abroad for employment tax payments dropped off gradually.

Once migrants had left the country it was much more difficult for the State to trace them. As such external migration was a better means of tax-evasion than internal migration, where migrants could only obrain jobs (mostly on the plantations) on production of a pass and passes could only be obtained on payment of taxes. But the Tonga generally refused to apply for passes for external migration, preferring to migrate independently both to avoid tax payment and recruitment by WNLA who had set up

depots in the area. Resistance to passes and recruitment will be dealt with later.

In 1912, the State passed the District Administration Ordinance in an attempt to draw upon and, to a certain extent, create, 'traditional authority' to facilitate administration in the country.

This move came as a response to the "decay of the power of native Chiefs and the tendency all over the Protectorate to the splitting up of villages into small family groups". (Protectorate Annual Report, 1911, in Pachai, 1973:183) The spreading of hamlets and villages greatly hampered tax collection and it was hoped that through this new system the spreading could be contained, records kept of movements and general control exerted through 'traditional authorities'.

Under the Ordinance, the District was divided up into eight sections, each under a Principal Headman, appointed by the State (in collusion with missionaries and traders), each supported by two Councillors, the whole forming a District Council. (WNDAR 1932) It was not until 1917 that the Tonga

> "agreed to accept this Ordinance, on the understanding that it was a measure for Administrative convenience, not designed to interfere with the rights of the individual chiefs within those declared Sections"
>
> (op. cit.)

The statement by the Resident that the Tonga "agreed to accept this Ordinance" must however be examined in the light of two events which occurred between the passing and execution of the

Ordinance. Firstly, in 1914, the West Nyasa Native Association was formed by a "collection of headmen who did not recognise the authority of the government appointed Principal Headmen" and included several intellectuals, Tonga teachers and priests. (WNDAR 1935) As I will show, this association formed the nucleus of effective opposition to this system in the late 1920s. Secondly, by 1917 a great many Tonga adult males had either been forced into the colonial army or had migrated abroad. The State was thus able to foist the Ordinance onto the Tonga under conditions where organised resistance was made difficult with most men absent from the District.

The Principal Headmen and their Councillors were responsible for general law and order and for keeping and updating lists of tax payers and their movements. In addition they received salaries of £8 and £2 respectively. (Pachai, 1973:184) Under the District Administration Ordinance of 1924, the powers of the Principal Headmen were extended when village and sectional courts were set up, over which they presided, to deal with civil and criminal cases. (op. cit.)

However, the new system failed to check the spreading of villages and hamlets or give effective authority to the appointed functionaries and the State found it difficult to prevent the migration of tax-defaulters or to enforce the collection of taxes from those already abroad. By 1929 resistance to tax payments reached an all-time high with a £2 300 shortfall representing over two-thirds of potential payments. (WNDAR 1930)

The State responded to this in two ways. Approaches were made to known employers abroad to send taxes to the District. In Durban, police raids on compounds had

> "revealed several Atonga tax defaulters. Tax money is constantly being sent from there by by the Manager of the Municipal Native Affairs Department on behalf of the emigrants employed by the Durban Corporation"
>
> (WNDAR 1929)

Secondly, brute force was used on Tonga villagers. The Resident reported that

> "Every village area which could be visited by an administrative officer was checked, 1 929 defaulters arrested and imprisoned and after due warning the huts of defaulters who had run away declared forfeit and burnt. These measures have adjusted the deficit and taxes are now being freely paid ..."
>
> (WNDAR 1930)

In 1931, the State approached Tonga elders with a view to revamping the administrative system at the village level. The Resident reported that

> "The Atonga people were asked to decide for themselves on what organisation they would base their Native Authorities ... The result was fatal. It brought to light all those grievances fostered by chiefs who had not received their proper recognition under the District Administration Native Ordinance system of Administration ..."
>
> (WNDAR 1932)

The West Nyasa Native Association (W.N.N.A.) was now playing its card and managed to mobilise elders and villagers to such an extent that the State found it necessary to send Yao Askari troops into the villages to live there until the disturbances had died down. (WNDCN 1/3/32)

It is quite likely that resistance was more effective given that

many Tonga migrants had returned home with the onset of the Depression and fewer were leaving than usual. The Yao Askari eventually left but their threat remained.* However the government was forced to negotiate with the W.N.N.A. and in late 1932 the members "repudiated their Principal Headmen" and had 32 of their number installed as "Native Authorities" under the title of the Council of Atonga Tribal Chiefs or the Atonga Tribal Council. (WNDAR 1934) Each Tonga "Chief" had several "Village Headmen" under them each of whom was an elder in his own village. As a result the W.N.N.A. disbanded, since, as the Resident commented:

> "Where you have representation by heads of families there can be no need for an association, especially one such as this, which came into being largely because the Principal Headmen were not recognised by the majority of the people."
>
> (WNDAR 1935)

The Atonga Tribal Council (A.T.C.) was given powers of tax-collection, village courts and various other administrative functions. However they were either unwilling or unable to carry out the collections to the satisfaction of the State. By 1935 resistance to taxation had increased once more with a default rate of nearly 40%. (WNDAR 1935) In 1938, the Resident reported that

> "It has been whispered that there are a number of youths in the villages who are old enough

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* At a District Council Meeting in early 1932 the Resident reminded those present of the "occasion when you talked too much and the Government had to send up Yao Askari to stay in your villages: these men are still talking about the good food they had up here, and are willing to come back". (WNDCM 1/3/32)

to pay tax but whose names are being deliberately withheld from the Census (by Chiefs) ..."
(WNDAR 1938)

* * *

The A.T.C. was a unique system of "Native Authority" in Malawi, more broadly representative of elders and more resistant to the Colonial State than "N.A.s" in other Districts. This was partly due to the fact that it was not a body controlled by one or two Chiefs or Principal Headmen as in other Districts with more exclusive access to the State and State material support. With salaries and other State material support spread more thinly to 32 "Chiefs", they were more dependent on their villagers' labour and wages (than their counterparts were in other districts) and thus more likely to see their interests as tied closer to those of the villagers than to those of the State.

Resistance to State Control of Migrant Labour

Almost every District Annual Report makes mention of the fact that the majority of Tonga migrants left the country without passes. There were two reasons why it was against migrants' interests to do so: firstly, as stated, applying for a pass would entail payment of hut-taxes and secondly, it enabled the State, in collusion with the wider bureaucracies in the countries

of employment, to keep track of a migrant's origins and movements, facilitating the remittance of taxes and the migrant's repatriation.

In the mid-1930s, the State stepped up its efforts to control the flow of migrant labour, through the introduction of passports and organised recruitment by the London and Blantyre Supply Company and Wenela. The Tonga of all the peoples in Malawi, put up most resistance to these moves. Eric Smith, who led the Adult Male Population and Labour Statistics Survey in 1937, wrote to the Governor:

> "After the census had been proceeding for about five weeks it was found necessary to abandon work in the West Nyasa district due to lack of co-operation, amounting to antagonism, on the part of the Tonga people and their Tribal Council ... They do not like recruitment which they refer to still as 'nchito ya chibalo', and despite repeated assurances that voluntary emigration would not be restricted provided the emigrants were in possession of Identity certificates which would be freely issued, they still maintain that there is 'a catch in it'.
> (E. Smith to the Governor, LB 10/4/3)

Wenela had erected recruiting shelters at Karonga and Nkhata villages in 1935 but "practically no recruitment" took place. (WNDAR 1935) Again in 1938, Mr Don, an agent of Wenela, arrived to recruit but received no response. The District Resident commented on this:

> "The Atonga ... regard all forms of recruiting with suspicion due, they say, to the maltreatment which they allege they received from a European recruiter as long ago as 1909."
> (WNDAR 1938)

However the Tonga were well aware that recruitment amounted to control, restricting their movements, enforcing repatriation

after the termination of contracts and ensuring tax-payments. Most migrants were not interested and continued to migrate independently.

d) The development of labour migration and early transformations of domestic production and reproduction - 1885 to 1917

When the missionaries arrived in Tongaland and mediated peace between the Tonga and the Ngoni-Tumbuka and the necessity of stockaded settlement fell away, Tonga groupings began to gradually move out from the stockades and occupy fertile land all along the lake shore and deeper inland towards the Vipya plateau. The formal incorporation of the Tonga into the Protectorate in the 1890s which provided a stronger guarantee of protection from Ngoni raids possibly encouraged a quicker dispersal of villages into the countryside as observed by the District Resident in 1902. (WNDAR 1902)

The Tonga groupings moved into lands they had formerly occupied, prior to the Ngoni invasions, under the authority and leadership of their elders in each grouping, who still maintained control over their juniors' marriages and labour-power. This is evidenced by the fact that elders were at the time responsible for organising, on a communal basis, migrant labour to the plantations and for porterage labour. (OD 22, OD 17) It is also unlikely that juniors could in any significant numbers have broken away from their elders since to have done so they would have required sufficient resources to obtain necessary

commodities to establish independent homesteads. Migrant wages were very low (the vast majority of migrants working inside the country as unskilled migrants at that time) and insufficient for this.

In the northern third of the country around the Limphasa Lambo and swamp area, the Mankhambira grouping combined dry season migration with wet season rice production for the market, to supply cash needs, for taxes, cloth, hoes and fishing nets etc. Like maize, rice production required intensive labour at planting and harvesting times requiring female, child and male labour during the wet season organised by the elders who also conducted the sale of the rice. The State had introduced rice to the Tonga in 1902 and bought the bulk of the crop from them, the rest being sold on local markets or consumed by the producers themselves. (WNDB IV and Agricultural Survey of the five most northerly districts of Nyasaland, 1938)

Until 1917, migration, both internal and external, was less heavy in this northern section than other sections as rice production catered for an important part of cash requirements. (WNDB IV) However, with the forced recruitment in 1917 of Tonga males for porterage services for the War, when many Tonga men either fled the country to the south or were pressed into the army, rice production fell into a decline from which it never recovered. During the 1920s and 1930s, external migration rapidly took the place of rice production for the Mankhambira Tongas' cash needs. The reasons for this will be examined more closely later. The figures below illustrate the yearly production of rice which bore rough inverse relation to the rate

of migrant labour, over the period under review.

YEAR	AMOUNT (TONS)	YEAR	AMOUNT (TONS)
1900	80	1920	53,5
1901	100	1921	98
1902	150	1922	60,5
1903	120	1923	63
1904	100	1924	16
1905	80	1925	14,5
1906	120	1926	9,5
1907	120	1927	22,5
1908	100	1928	NIL
1909	90	1929	26
1910	110	1930	30
1911	110	1931	NIL
1912	100	1932	13
1913	188	1933	NIL
1914	158	1934	NIL
1915	160	1935	NIL
1916	174	1936	NIL
1917	67	1937	NIL
1918	64	1938	NIL
1919	59,5	1939	4

(Source: District Book IV)

In the other areas of Tongaland it was not possible for the Tonga to produce cash crops, either because the land was not suitable (eg. for rice) or because transport costs for exportable crops would have been too high, and so they migrated. Until the decline of the plantations in the mid-1900s, the Tongas migrated en masse for employment there for a few months every year. It seems that in many areas external migration began to replace internal migration but as it was still organised by

the elders (until the War), this enabled fewer Tongas (the younger and more educated) to migrate as wages were higher (most migrants were skilled) and could cater for the cash needs of the migrants' wider families. Wages remitted or brought home were distributed by the elders to their dependants, at that stage. (OD 8, 13, 17, 22)

We can therefore characterise Tonga settlement and migration patterns in this way: the various Tonga groupings moved out of the stockades under the leadership and direction of the elders, who retained by and large their control over juniors through reciprocal relations and other forms of control over marriage etc. Until the mid-1900s most Tonga migrated internally for a few months each year to supply immediate cash needs. From then until the War, migration appears to have been organised by elders in such a way that fewer migrated for longer periods (now abroad where wages were higher), in order to supply the cash needs of those remaining behind. In the northern section rice production was intensified which helped to limit migration. These were the general trends but it is quite possible (though I have no evidence) that in some cases juniors had already begun to migrate in order to finance the establishment of their own homesteads breaking from their elders' authority. It was only later, after the war, that this became a more general phenomenon, as we will see.

e) The organisation of subsistence production and the penetration of commodity relations, 1917-1940

Throughout the period under review cassava remained the chief subsistence crop of the Tonga and fish their principal source of protein.

The relative ease with which cassava could be grown and processed for consumption, requiring little intensive labour, as I described in Chapter 4, meant that in the absence of men, the production of cassava was not undermined. Women and children continued to produce the crop under the same climatic conditions as before, with the same kind of implements, in particular the hoe, now purchased from local trading stores.

Fishing continued to be male-dominated, but with the introduction of a variety of manufactured nets, productivity was increased releasing many men for migrant labour. (WNDAR 1934) The more men absent for long periods, the less cassava needed to be ground or fish caught for local consumption, which meant that either more food could be produced for the market, or more time could be spent on other activities.

Women began to engage themselves in production for the market, producing cassava, rice, beer, certain vegetables, artefacts such as baskets, mats etc., (OD 8, 17) thereby gaining access to an independent source of income, and enabling them to challenge in various ways their domination by elders and husbands. Many women could pay their own taxes, buy fish and other commodities

so that when they wished to break from their elders' domination with or without their husbands, or if they were abandoned by their migrant husbands, as many were, they could assert a certain financial independence. The atomisation and spreading of homesteads and the progressive undermining of the elders' authority, which occurred from after the First World War, analysed in the next section, must be seen to have had crucial impetus from the changing control of and access to subsistence and marketable resources on the part of the women. It will be seen in the next section how this was combined with the new power that male juniors gained from control over their migrant earnings.

With the atomisation and spreading of homesteads and the undermining of traditional elders' authority, the relations of production of subsistence and now market commodity production were, in a sense, revolutionised, becoming more located within the needs of smaller, producer-controlled families tied to local and foreign market conditions and migrant-employing capitalist enterprises. The injection of cash into the local economy created market relations for the exchange of simple commodities replacing relations of barter, co-operation and communal support and thus effectively doing away with a whole gamut of elder-dominated ideological relations which had previously ordered production relations.

Thus by the 1920s and 1930s, chimira production (producers working their own gardens) became more dominant with the atomisation of homesteads, and chibikizga production much less

common, but in some areas transformed into wage labour production. (OD 9, 15, 16, 20) (Refer to p.32)

Chibikizqa production had previously involved the organisation by elders of circulating work parties drawn from different homesteads, with the owners of the gardens which were being worked each time supplying nourishment, usually beer. In many places this became transformed from a reciprocal, elder-ordered activity into simple wage labour where families began employing destitute Ngoni-Tumbukas, Tonga from Likoma islands* and people from Karonga to work in their gardens in the wet season for a shilling a day and/or food, producing rice and cassava for the market. (OD 16) This activity retained its name of chibikizqa possibly giving ideological support to the incipient wage labour relations of exploitation which gave the activity structure.

Fish could now be obtained for cash so that juniors, male and female, with access to cash could discount their elders' authority to the extent that it was supported through the elders' control of access to family canoes and nets.

b) The atomisation of families, and the transformation of relations of production and reproduction - 1917 to 1940

The movement of the Tonga out of the stockades into the countryside signified a 'withering away' of the political relations or

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* The Likoma islands were too infertile to feed the population living there.

alliances between elders of the Tonga groupings as the conditions for stockades, i.e. the Ngoni raids, were withdrawn. This movement was, as we have seen, led by elders of each grouping who still retained control over production and reproduction in 'traditional' ways.' Within a few years however, new conditions rapidly emerged which began to place in the hands of juniors, male and female, economic power with which they would challenge their elders' exploitative authority. From a few years prior to the First World War but in particular after the war, a second or further movement of villages and homesteads, spreading in smaller family units further into unoccupied Tongaland and the wholescale re-organisation of relations of production and reproduction, occurred, led by Tonga juniors flexing their newly-acquired economic muscle.

The District Resident reported in 1930 that "groups of 3 or 4 huts ... are often found scattered over 10 miles of country" and in 1934 he noted of those Tonga living further inland: "the increasing tendency of natives to break away into small hamlets of two or three huts, miles from any other of their village ... " (WNDAR 1930 and 1934)

The basis of the juniors' newly-acquired power was cash, acquired through local production but more significantly through migrant labour. Male juniors, migrating in rapidly increasing numbers to skilled or semi-skilled jobs abroad were acquiring the means with which they could challenge or circumvent their elders' authority. Beinart (1980), in his analysis of the Pondo migrant society, explains similar processes to those

occurring here:

> "Tension in the family was resolved through the movement of brothers and sons into their own homesteads at a stage earlier than was formerly the practice, a process well advanced by the 1930s. Sons were no longer as dependent on their fathers as before, for they could obtain what they needed by purchase. There was no longer any need for them to settle close together for defensive purposes as there had been in the pre-colonial period ... The late nineteenth-century family structure was not destroyed in a generation; these processes worked unevenly through the society. But new technology, coupled with a wage, gradually enabled a smaller family unit to survive and reproduce itself."
>
> (1980:86)

The struggles between elders and juniors were being rapidly advanced under colonial capitalism to the comparative advantage of juniors, while the outcome was successfully contained by the Colonial State within the confines of the requirements of capital accumulation. By creating, consciously or unconsciously, conditions favourable to the struggle of the juniors against their elders, capitalism under colonial rule in this way provided impetus for male juniors to migrate and female juniors to produce for the market.

For the Colonial State however the spreading of homesteads over Tongaland made administration, in particular, tax collection, to which the main thrust of local administration was geared, increasingly difficult. With reference to the movement of homesteads in the inland areas (see above) the Resident reported in 1934 that

> "it is becoming impossible for the Village Headmen to exercise any real control over

> his people, and the Native Authorities themselves have experienced great difficulty in finding tax defaulters in these areas."
>
> (WNDAR 1934)

The report continues:

> "Each of the Native Authorities is at present considering the advisability of issuing an order requiring the people of certain villages to build their huts within a reasonable distance of their village headmen."
>
> (op. cit.) (my emphasis)

However, not all Tonga juniors established new homesteads in the more remote regions of Tongaland. Many acted in different ways: in 1934, the Resident, reporting on complaints received from Tonga Native authorities that many of their villagers and family members had moved to other villages, wrote:

> "None of these members were formerly allowed by native custom to leave their villages and settle elsewhere without the full consent and permission of the village Headmen first obtained ... Nowadays from a variety of causes, of which I am afraid education is one, the younger generation have lost to a large extent that respect for tradition ... They are resentful of discipline, and if anything the Village Headman says or does upsets them, they pack up their goods and chattels, and go and settle in another village."
>
> (WNDAR 1934)

This is most significant, showing as it does the breakdown of reciprocal relations between elders which had previously acted to prevent competition between elders seeking to accumulate exploitable juniors thus binding juniors to their elders. Juniors now possessed "goods and chattels" and moved freely to villages where they could establish homesteads.

It is seen here that many juniors remained in their matri- or patrilocalities. Possibly they were able to increase their standing within their homesteads and villages at the expense of the elders' exploitative authority (both personal and political). The threat of moving out must have constituted a day-to-day source of power to juniors.

The State, again worried about losing track of tax-payers, issued an order:

> "that no Village Headman shall accept a newcomer in his village without a letter from the newcomer's chief to the effect that notice has been given to his former village headman"
> (WNDAR 1934)

This administrative order carried out by the A.T.C. and Village Headmen was designed to keep census and tax records up to date.

g) The transformation of marriage organisation

It is recalled that, in pre-colonial times, a crucial component of the relations of exploitation was the elders' control over the marriages of their juniors. Elders decided when their juniors could marry, generally at the age of 27 for males and 22 for females. If marriage took place prior to or without the elders' consent, the husband and wife would be denied access to land and 'communal' property both within their villages of origin and in other villages under reciprocal relations between elders. (Refer to p.42) Marriages were generally uxorilocal or if virilocal then the offspring would eventually return to the wife's original village. Akaporo Tonga had functioned

to compensate for shortfalls in husbands or wives under these inherently unstable marriage arrangements.

Thus through a complex set of social relations, the Tonga ordered their marriages and destination of offspring. This compares with the Ngoni-Tumbuka who used more stable and less complex virilocal/patrilocal arrangements involving the use of bride-wealth, made possible by the existence of a centralised unitary state and a generally recognised form of bridewealth, cattle.

How, then, did the Tonga re-organise human reproduction in the process of the undermining of the elders' authority by the juniors after the First World War? And how did juniors challenge that part of their elders' authority that was rooted in the latters' control over marriage arrangements?

Tonga male juniors solved these problems by resorting to virilocal marriages involving the exchange of women for bridewealth. This became possible with the introduction of a centralised state, in the form of the Colonial State, and the existence of a universally recognised currency that could be used as bride-wealth, i.e. British Sterling. (See pp.19 & 23)

I have been unable to gather evidence of the precise ways in which the process of re-organisation of marriage arrangements took place but by 1935 the District Resident could report:

> "The patripotestal (patrilocal) custom of taking the wife to the husband's home has become

> universal. This latter custom was, doubtless, taken direct from the Angoni and many other instances of borrowed customs could be cited." (WNDAR 1935)

It is possible that contact with the Ngoni did influence the transformation and equally possible that Christian teachings on marriage (also virilocal) did as well, but what is crucial here is that two vital conditions, i.e. centralised state and recognised bridewealth, were laid down, for the transformation under colonial capitalism.

As a result, juniors, using their migrant earnings, could thus discount their elders' former control, and obtain wives for money for the establishment of independent homesteads. Several of the Tonga men interviewed stated that it had been their express purpose to earn bridewealth when they migrated. (OD 7, 18, 28) The brideprice in Tongaland was extremely high, being in the region of £10 to £30 in the 1930s. (OD 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 12, 28)

It was probably due to access to cash and with the conditions described above, that Akaporo Tonga were able to free themselves materially of their subordinate status to a degree.

Some Tonga women divorced their husbands, who in most cases had left the country to work and effectively abandoned their wives, sending them no money or returning only after long intervals, if at all. (WNDAR 1929, 1936) It was probably because of this possibility that Tonga women retained links with their matri-locality and in many cases worked gardens in both localities. (Van Velsen, 1964:54) A women's parents for their part were

anxious to keep these links principally because they wanted their daughters and/or their grandchildren to return to the matrilocality to increase their 'following' and thus their security. (op. cit.:55)

The women responded to their changing conditions in various ways. But the majority were dependent on the wage of their husbands which opened the way for many forms of exploitative personal relationships. The continued social subordination of women was also linked to the politics and ideology of the patriarchal local state. Men still assumed traditional roles of village elders and controllers of the land distribution to some degree.

Conclusion

Colonial capitalism provided the conditions for the development of domestic economies from village to more independent homestead production by undermining links between homesteads and villages and forging direct links between villagers and the produce and labour markets.

In this way capitalist exchange circuits (part of capitalism's mechanisms of reproduction) began to provide more and more for the conditions of reproduction of domestic, non-capitalist production, geared towards the reproduction of migrant labour power.

These mechanisms of reproduction were extended to the functioning of domestic production as non-capitalist mechanisms became progressively restricted. Relations of marriage organisation linking villages were transformed from matri- to patrilocal residence rules with the use of bridewealth earned by migrants; juniors could challenge traditional elders' authority with cash earned from migration or peasant cash-crop production. Homesteads generally became more independent of each other, their reproduction becoming more individually linked to the labour and produce markets.

The extension of capitalist mechanisms of reproduction also contained a very strong political content and impetus where the role of the Colonial State was critical: taxation was a crucial element in initially and continually enforcing a minimum degree of monetisation of the economy. In addition, homesteads and migrants were dealt with individually and not communally by the State and employers. Taxation was enforced from the beginning on an individual hut-to-hut basis, workers recruited individually and wages paid to individual workers.

This re-organisation of social relations of production under changing mechanisms of reproduction did not however do away with non-capitalist relations of production. Rather such relations were transformed, increasingly shifting power relations within homestead production towards male and female juniors (who acquired cash) and away from elders.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE DEVELOPMENT OF LABOUR MIGRATION FROM THE NGONI-TUMBUKA SOCIAL FORMATION TO 1940

This chapter studies the impact of labour-migration on the non-capitalist Ngoni-Tumbuka social formation until the Second World War.

The chapter begins with a look at the extent and patterns of migrancy and some aspects of rural change. This will be followed by a study of the role of missionaries and education. The next section examines the struggles at the level of the local state in the form of the institution of indirect rule and resistance to taxation, passes and labour recruitment. Following this is an analysis of the development and underdevelopment of the subsistence economy and after that an examination of the transformation of relations linking the cattle economy to marriage organisation with the development of labour migrancy. The chapter ends with a study of the dispersal of villages within the context of struggles between the Ngoni aristocracy and Ngoni-Tumbuka commoners.

a) The extent and patterns of migrancy

It is possible that some Ngoni-Tumbukas were engaged in migrant wage-labour towards the end of the 19th century as porters, plantation workers or even work outside the country, given the poor state of their subsistence economy and the increasing

limitations on raiding. However, the first reliable record I have come across reports that "a mid-year drought in Northern Angoniland (in 1902) had driven thousands of men to look for work outside the country". (From Aurora no.32, 1/6/1902, in Boeder, 1974:14) Although it is unlikely that "a mid-year drought" prompted the migration since mid-year is the dry season in the country, it is probable that food shortages were the main cause.

The fact that thousands left the country for work in 1902 indicates that at least some migration routes had already been established prior to this date, confirming the possibility of earlier migration referred to above.

In 1904, the Ngoni-Tumbuka were formally colonised and began to pay taxes in the following year.

> "£2,698 in tax money (was) collected from Mombera's Ngoni in 1906-07 ... Most of the tax payments were made in gold which the Ngonis had earned in Rhodesia and Transvaal."
> (op. cit.:25)

The extent of migration until the end of the First World War is very difficult to determine without the monthly and yearly district reports, destroyed in the fire in 1919. However thousands of men were forcibly impressed into the army carrier corps and many left the country to evade conscription. The District Resident makes reference in his December 1920 Monthly Report to the

> "actual forcible seizure of men, to which all districts were reduced for the raising of the vast numbers of men required from the outbreak of the war to the end of 1918"

and

> "The compulsion of labour for the 1918/19 rains (nominally for war work, but really for plantation work with none of the gratuities for death or sickness associated with true war work) (sic) still rankles most obstinately in the native mind here."
> (MMR December 1920)

In the same report he notes in connection with hut tax payments,

> "The total number of taxes paid will, however, be considerably lower than that of last year, partly owing to ... evasions - mostly cases where the hutowners are out of the district and have not remitted to their wives. Payments of money orders through this office continue to increase and are now higher than ever before. The money mostly comes from South Africa."
> (ibid)

An earlier monthly report relates how "News of the raised Hut Tax has caused large emigration in search of work to the Shire Highlands and to South Africa and the Congo". (MMR 30/4/1920)

In 1924/1925, the area was hit by a drought and a consequent famine of catastrophic proportions. No rain fell in November 1924 and 1,9 inches fell in December compared with 9,53 inches the year before. These are the most crucial months for maize production just after planting when the seedlings must sprout in damp ground. In the following month, 12,49 inches fell, the highest recorded to date, flooding the ground. (Rainfall records 1914-1934, MDAR 1934) As a result the Ngoni-Tumbuka produced almost no food for subsistence for the ensuing year. It is worth quoting District Reports at length:

> "Every week the famine gets more acute. There is practically no food of any sort in Mombera district except that which is brought in by the natives from the neighbouring districts.

> There is a constant stream to and fro of natives, men and women, journeying to Kasungu and North Nyasa in search of food. Some pay for it, others work a week and return with sufficient to tide them over some days. Many have emigrated and others are crossing into Rhodesia with money or meat to exchange for food. Everywhere cattle in large numbers are being slain and sold, and it will therefore be advisable to make a new census of cattle when the famine is over. Everywhere, villages appear to be empty, men and women being away in search of food. It is, therefore, really impossible to get in taxes and I anticipate that the tax revenue will be short of the estimate by £850."
>
> (MMR February 1925)

In his annual report the Resident noted that,

> "The famine which threatened early in the year has become very acute. There is now no food in the whole of the Mombera district except what has been brought in from other districts. The whole attention of the natives is occupied in keeping themselves and their children from starvation. Streams of natives are to be seen travelling along the main road south to Kasungu district in search of food. Until recently supplies from there have been good, but latterly many natives, especially women, have been turned away and return to their villages in despair. Along the border natives are searching food in (Northern) Rhodesia. Large numbers of Mombera cattle and sheep have been slaughtered and the flesh exchanged in Rhodesia for food."
>
> (MDAR 1925)

Annual food shortages continued to occur, most severely in 1927, 1930. In December 1930, the Principal Headman, Lazaro Jere, stated:

> "Many are suffering from hunger, famine is likely to be as bad as in 1925."
>
> (MDCM 18/2/29, 18/12/30)

By 1938, the Medical Officer for the District reported that

> "They have a yearly famine now ... Primarily this food shortage is due under the present agricultural system to lack of labour for

> cultivation; this lack of labour is due to emigration."
>
> (Mzimba Medical Report 5/2/38, M3/3/18)

It is from the mid-1920s that migration appears to have really taken off, bound up intimately with the increasing precariousness of the economy both as cause and effect. In 1928, the District Resident reported that

> "... emigration from the District is the most serious problem in the (Northern) Province. Annually the exodus of able-bodied males becomes greater, and as many of them stay away for as long as five years there is a consequential decrease in the birth rate. For years the District has been a feeder for the farms and mines outside the territory ... A few go to Mlanje (Shire Highlands) for work, and a fair number to the Lilongwe District, but the total employed each year for any length of time in any of the Districts may not exceed 500, many of them under twenty-one years of age, as against a probably 5,000 working in Rhodesia and other territories. Everything possible has been done to assist local recruiters or their native agents, but with little success. It is estimated that the proportion of adult males to females, between the ages of 21 and 35, resident at any given time in the Mombera District would be 1 male to about 15 females."
>
> (MDAR 1928)

By 1930 it was

> "unusual to find any young man in the villages ... their wives live empty uninteresting lives; often their one child dies, leaving them childless and their huts fall gradually into disrepair and eventually wives become virtual widows."
>
> (MDAR 1938)

The Great Depression slowed down the rate of migration to a degree, it being reported by Ngoni Headmen at a District Council Meeting in 1932 that "... the wages per month in Rhodesia at present were only 7/6 to 10/- per month and that large numbers

are returning from Rhodesia penniless". (MDCM 3/6/32) When the Great Depression began to lift and the gold mines in South Africa stepped up production, the Ngoni-Tumbuka migrants moved en masse to employment outside the country. The Travers-Lacey Commission of Inquiry into Migrant Labour estimated that by 1934/35, between 60% and 70% of Ngoni-Tumbuka male adults were working "outside the Protectorate". (Travers-Lacey Report:116) The Adult Male Population and Labour Statistics Survey of 1937 stated that there were 18 767 known migrant workers working abroad, comprising 45,7% of the adult male population of the District. (See preceding chapter, p.94) Nearly 25% of migrants had not been heard of since 1930. (op. cit.) They were known as the Machona, the missing ones, by the Ngoni-Tumbuka, many of whom had relinquished their ties to tribal life and become fully proletarianised.

b) Missionaries and Migrants

Mission education was an important factor in reproducing patterns of social differentiation amongst the Ngoni-Tumbuka. From the early 1890s mission schools were established chiefly near the major villages of the Ngoni aristocracy. Although

> "No schools for the sons of chiefs were specially established ... In practice, however, the breakdown of the isolated position of the missionary elite led in Ngoniland to the substantial identification of leaders within the traditional political structure with the newly educated classes."
> (McCracken, 1975:209)

Margaret Read (1942) tells of certain relatively well-off Ngoni

villages in the mid-1930s with three generations of educated people contrasting with villages near the Zambian border, 40 miles from the nearest mission station where "cereals are scarce, there are no cattle, houses are small and roofs in need of repair". (1942:9)

In the first example, 75% of the men of these villages were away working outside of the country, many in relatively skilled positions. In the second only 14% migrated externally for long periods, with the rest of the men going off for short periods to the Lupa gold-field in Tanganyika, or to unskilled road work in the district, to earn the necessary money for taxes. (op. cit.:9-10)

Whilst one cannot correlate levels of education with types of migrancy and differences in standards of living in isolation from factors such as differential access to the state, better grazing lands etc., it would seem that once instituted from generation to generation within particular villages and not others, education (which ultimately led to higher wages) in this way helped to continually reproduce social differentiation from area to area. Certain Ngoni families, having gained initial preferential access to mission education were able to retain that access by re-employing the higher wages earned into schooling fees. Many Tumbuka, with difficult access to schooling reproduced from generation to generation, were thus consigned more to low-paying, unskilled migrancy closer to home and for shorter periods. Another important factor determining types of migrancy for the Tumbuka living in the outlying areas, as we shall see later, was

that many of these areas were infested by Tsetse fly, which made it impossible to invest wages in cattle, making it less worthwhile for migrants to undertake lengthy migration. In a similar way the lower possibilities for the unskilled Tumbuka of earning reasonable wages by lengthy migrations would have made short-term, closer to home migration more viable.

The 1931 population census shows that by 1931, 36% of Ngoni-Tumbuka men were literate compared with 57% of the Tonga, yet still higher than the national average of 27%.

c) The Colonial State - Rule and Resistance in the Ngoni-Tumbuka Social Formation

i) Brief history of the establishment of the local state

The history of the subordination of the Ngoni-Tumbuka to the Colonial State is a history of the processes of incorporation and transformation of pre-existent Ngoni State apparatuses into the apparatuses of the Colonial State. In the other areas of Malawi, traditional leaders were generally not recognised by the Colonial State on colonisation. Rule in these districts was direct through District Residents, local armed police forces, capitães and salaried village headmen with no necessary claim to traditional authority, each dealing directly with the Residents. (Pachai, 1973:181) However, in Mzimba, in the words of one Resident,

"The Angoni were found to be in possession of a

> constitutional organisation on which it has been possible to make an immediate start in building a native administration."
> (WNDAR 1937)

When, in 1904, the Ngoni Chiefs and elders (Ngoni 'aristocracy') hastily sought alliance with the Colonial State leading to formal colonisation, it was agreed that they would "retain their former traditional positions". (Pachai, 1973:197) In fact, colonisation meant for the Ngoni Chiefs the re-establishment of their authority over many people who had effectively rejected their rule in the mass dispersal of villages and cattle-stealing in the years prior to that. (See Chapter 4) Certainly the chiefs still retained control over many impis and it was probably this that weighed heavily on the minds of the colonial negotiators when they made an exception of the Ngoni. However for the thousands of Tumbuka who had struggled to rid themselves of their subjugation under the Ngoni aristocracy, colonisation was a re-imposition of exploitative relations added to and backed by the Colonial State and capitalist penetration. Ultimately it was the capitalists and Colonial State who established themselves as the dominant exploitative class but they used the transformed Ngoni State structure as an instrument of their oppression.

Chimtunga Jere, the Ngoni Paramount, and five other Ngoni chiefs were granted control over the six sections making up the Ngoni-Tumbuka area of the Mzimba (then Momberas) District and Ngoni elders were assigned as headmen to the villages. They moved into the areas where the Tumbuka had previously dispersed, occupying favourable ground on the Mzimba Highlands and setting

up courts, which enabled them to exact fines. In addition they received annual salaries of £30 for the Paramount and £15 for the chiefs. (Pachai, 1973:197)

However, by 1915 the closer relationship between the Ngoni 'aristocracy' and the Colonial State suffered a temporary set-back after Chimtunga, the Paramount Chief, refused to sanction the forced recruitment of Ngoni-Tumbuka men for carrier corps service in the War. He was banished to another district and his chiefs reduced to the status of lower-paid headmen. (Pachai, 1973:198)

When in 1933 a stronger form of indirect rule was introduced in all districts, revamping the status of headmanships, the Ngoni aristocracy (the Jere clan) managed to resecure all important 'group headmanships' and most 'village headmanships' within the M'Mbelwa African Administrative Council of the district. (Pachai, 1973:199 and MDAR 1934) The political revival of the Ngoni Chiefs clearly reflected the growth in the material wealth of the chiefs and their families over the previous decade amidst the progressive impoverishment of lesser Ngoni and Tumbuka villagers. This will be examined in more depth later but suffice to say at this stage that the initial privileged access to mission education, Tsetse fly-free land and State salaries, referred to earlier enabled the Ngoni families to invest the higher wages of migrants and State salaries in cattle and to weather the periodic famines which hit the district over the 1920s and 1930s. We will see later how economic relations of

dependency redeveloped over these years between Ngoni elders and their Tumbuka villagers precluding any real political challenge by Tumbuka elders to the Ngoni chiefs' access to the State.

The 1934 Mzimba District Annual Report refers to the activities of a certain Tumbuka called Reverend Manda of the Baza Tumbuka, who had

> "conceived the dream of reconstructing the chieftainships of the Tumbuka as they were before the Angoni invasion ... In actual fact his subterfuge met with little success as the Baza following failed to respond and expressed themselves satisfied and contented, dispersed as they are living under Angoni headmen."
>
> (MDAR 1934)

The Resident also notes similar activities in Chief Pickford Jere's area. Whilst the Resident's interpretation of the phenomenon must be treated with a certain amount of scepticism, this does indicate continuing tensions between Ngoni and Tumbuka elders over access to the State (through acquiring chieftainships status) and possible deeper undercurrents or tensions between the Ngoni chiefs and Tumbuka commoners.

ii) Taxation, Pass Laws and Resistance

The exactment of hut taxes was closely bound up with labour migration in most colonial countries, being both a method of forcing people to engage themselves in the colonial-capitalist economies and the most crucial source of income for state administration and development programs.

In the Mzimba district, as in Tongaland, hut taxation carried with it a basic contradiction. The chiefs and headmen played an important role in assisting the enforcement of taxation by providing information on the whereabouts of taxpayers and on new taxpayers through updating censuses. However the more direct their role in this respect, the more it undermined their 'traditional authority' over common villagers, on which the State relied for control at a grassroots level.

Resistance to taxation and the State's attempts to counter it took several forms:

During the wet season rudimentary huts (called Vilindo) were built out in the fields in which people, assigned to guard crops against wild animals, lived during the wet season. They were used now in the dry season by those who wished to avoid the rounds of the tax-collectors (usually capitaos). The minutes of a District Council Meeting in 1919 record that:

> "The habit of living in garden huts out of the garden season was condemned by all Chiefs; it is practised mainly in the hope of hut tax evasion and makes proper control by village headmen impossible. Decided that all vilindo are to be destroyed by August 1st; any found inhabited after that date are to be taxed forthwith. They can be resurrected at the beginning of the garden season - say December 1st."
>
> (MDCM 2/9/19)

The destruction of vilindo by the State continued until the 1924/25 famine when reprieves were granted to many tax-defaulters but then resumed from 1927. (MDCM 18/2/27 and 3/6/31)

The most common method of hut tax evasion was through migration (although this was not the only reason for migration as will be seen). The Resident reported in 1922 that:

> "It seems that of the large number of natives who migrate from these Districts (referring to Mzimba and Tongaland) only a small proportion are prompt in sending the money for their taxes with a result that towards the end of the financial year a large number of women become liable for the payment of the outstanding tax on their hut. The majority of these women have not the means with which to pay and have no property upon which distress can be levied in default; their relations are unwilling to shoulder the responsibility and the consequence is a considerable loss of revenue to the Government."
>
> (MDAR 1922)

The State responded the following year by arresting and holding hostage wives of tax-defaulters until their relatives came forward with the money. This raised an outcry from chiefs and elders, and the practice was discontinued. (MNAM 12/6/24)

By 1926, the State began resorting to the destruction of village huts (not vilindo). The minutes of a District Council Meeting in October 1926 record:

> "There was still a deficit of several hundred pounds in the Hut and Poll Tax collection for 1925/26 and he (the Resident) found that it is nearly all represented by the unpaid taxes on huts belonging to people who are said to be away in Southern Rhodesia ... P.H. Simon Nhlane complained that the wives of absentees were in a bad state owing to the fact that their houses were being destroyed if no tax had been paid for last year ... The meeting was informed that severe punishment had been inflicted on young able-bodied men who had been caught evading the Tax. The Village Headmen will have to be punished if they continued to assist the young men of their village to evade the Tax."
>
> (MDCM 26/10/1926)

Hut destruction continued to be the major threat to tax-defaulters over the period under review. Refusal to pay taxes escalated considerably in the 1930s: out of a taxable population of about 37 000, some 22 000 taxes were unpaid for the combined 1933, 1934 and 1935 years and 15 000 alone for 1936, representing a total loss of some £11 000 (R22 000). (MDAR 1936) It is in the light of tax losses of this scale that the State sought to control migration through encouraging organised recruitment (referred to in Chapter 6, see p.87).

Resistance to taking out passes for migration abroad was highest amongst the Ngoni-Tumbuka for the country as a whole. As was the case with the Tonga, the Resident reported every year in the District Annual Reports that only a fraction of those migrating applied for passes before they left.

> "It is believed that for every one native who comes to the station to take a Pass to leave the Protectorate at least five cross the border without. When it is remembered that there is a stretch of about 100 miles of this border it will be seen that control of this emigration without the voluntary and wholehearted assistance of the Chiefs and Headmen is quite impossible."
> (MDAR 1931)

By 1935 it was thought that about 2% of migrants obtained passes. (Travers-Lacey, 1936:94) It is recalled that a pass was issued on payment of taxes.

Of particular concern to the Resident was the migration of young men from the district and the withholding of their names from the village census by their headmen. It is worth quoting the Resident at length:

> "This brings us to the question of the considerable

> exodus of youths before they are entered in the census. There are no records which can be consulted, but comparing figures of population in the Protectorate Census with the District Census, there is no doubt that the latter is not increasing as it should as the young men are growing up. This supposition is confirmed by the number of natives who on returning from work abroad say that they left the District when they were 'small boys'. I think it certain that numbers of the young men of about the ages 16 to 20 leave the District each year before they entered in the census. Many of them are 'married' except that perhaps all the dowry is not paid; in some cases the 'wife' has a child or children. These youths do not take passes for the very obvious reason that were they to apply for them the fact that their names were not entered in the census would soon be discovered. The unmarried men would of course not be liable for tax here while they were away unless they left a hut, which none of them do, for if they had a hut, it would be found by the census clerks or enumerators. Without a great number of court messengers to raid villages at night it is almost impossible to get into touch with the young men who are deliberately hidden in the villages by the Village Headmen, and short of instituting a census of all male children giving their apparent ages at a certain date the only solution is to endeavour to persuade the village headman to do his duty."
>
> (MDAR 1935)

When organised recruitment was restarted in the 1930s, the response was "very disappointing". (op. cit.) The Resident's comments on this are revealing:

> "In asking why natives do not sign on more freely one gets the reply that they do not wish to be weighed, or again that the injections given them make them very ill; but chiefly, they are in my opinion, suspicious of the scheme owing to the incidence of the Government enquiry* right on top of the inauguration of the scheme. I think there is a feeling in the back of their minds that Government itself was suspicious and for that reason set up the Commission.* Then again, the native

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* The enquiry referred to was the Travers-Lacey Commission of Enquiry into migrant labour (see p.88).

> recruited under the scheme realises that he is under control. Ever since this exodus in search of work (and perhaps adventure) started, he has been entirely free to go where he liked, and to find work where & when he could, communicate with his home when he wished and return when the spirit moved him. He realises that if he recruits, that he has to go where he is sent, that he is within reach of his people at any time, and he does not like it."
>
> (op. cit.)

d) The Transformation of Subsistence Production

The subsistence economy of the Ngoni-Tumbuka under colonialism prior to the Second World War stood in stark contrast to that of the Tongas. It is recalled that the Tonga subsistence economy based on cassava remained fairly healthy under conditions of heavy migration of men, chiefly due to the relatively unintensive nature of its cultivation performed by women. The Ngoni-Tumbuka subsistence economy based on maize, on the other hand, became progressively undermined with the periodic famines and consistent food shortages in the 1920s and 1930s, referred to in the first section of this chapter.

There were several related aspects to the increasing precariousness of maize production: firstly, the absence of male labour for crucial periods of clearing land, planting and harvesting and the poor maintenance of grain stores, traditionally a male occupation; secondly, the partial shift from maize to beer production which had devastating effects on the ecology; thirdly, the enormous growth in the number of cattle overstocking the land and contributing to the widespread erosion in the district; and fourthly, the increasing incidence of

debilitating tropical diseases lowering the productivity of producers. These will be examined in detail below.

The Mzimba district was, and still is, plagued by poor and erratic rainfalls, being in the rain shadow of the Vipya plateau range. With poor soils exacerbated by a pre- and early-colonial history of overpopulation, cattle overstocking and slash and burn cultivation methods, by the 1920s, the lands' productivity/ fertility had progressively declined.

With this decline accelerated by the absence of men during the war, by the 1920s a vicious circle began to set in of increasing external migration, leaving the economy short of crucial wet season male labour, reducing food production and forcing families into further dependence on migrant labour wages, increasing migration, further reducing food production and so on. (See first section of this chapter.) By 1935, the Travers-Lacey Report stated:

> "In districts from which emigration is extensive (e.g. Mzimba), a great burden rests therefore upon the older people if they help the wife. Only too often they cannot and do not bear it. Huts, grain stores, garden fences are allowed to fall into disrepair. Gardens are not properly cultivated and food supplies are depleted."
> (1936:35)

Faced with this shortage of male labour, women began to resort to labour-saving cultivation. One of the most significant changes in this respect was the greatly increased production of beer made from finger millet (Visoso). Visoso grows well in soil mixed with wood ash which provides an excellent seedbed with

good germination after the first rains, reducing weeding to a minimum. The women would cut down trees near rivers or streams on the banks of which they would plant the seed, also reducing irrigation to a minimum. (Mzimba Agricultural Survey, 1938)

Beer, very importantly, could be sold and was an important source for women of cash for taxes and imported manufactures. (OD 29, 32, 39 and Read, 1938:43)

But the consequences of resorting to beer production were devastating, listed in the 1938 agricultural survey as having been one of the three chief causes of poor soils which plagued the district. Cultivation of visoso on the banks of rivers and streams loosened the structure of these banks which resulted in the drying up of the rivers and streams, depriving large areas of land downstream of water, particularly when cultivation was undertaken in catchment areas. This occurred frequently because of the abundance in these areas of wood, burnt for wood ash. (Mzimba Agricultural Survey, 1938)

In addition to this, the 1938 Agricultural Survey for the district noted the uncontrolled clearance by fire of "far larger areas than are actually needed for agricultural purposes and the subsequent abandoning of them", contributing heavily to soil erosion. (ibid)

By 1938, the Kasitu River, which supplied the bulk of the population settled in the eastern and north-eastern areas of the district, had dried up completely, largely due to forest

cultivation of beer. (MDAR 1938)

Overstocking of cattle was listed by the 1938 Survey as one of the chief sources of erosion.

The Ngoni 'aristocracy' began to make increasing use of impoverished Tumbuka casual labour, who were increasingly separated from their own means of production, with the progressive undermining of the subsistence economy. (OD 42) Margaret Read relates how "The bulk of the cereals and some of the beans and other vegetables used in his (the Paramount Chief's) house came from his fields worked by hired labour". (1956:103) I have been unable to find any statistics on the extent of casual labour for wealthier families but this did become more prevalent during the 1930s as "More and more so some people began to employ people to tend their gardens". (OD 42) These incipient capitalist relations however seem to have been restricted to agriculture. Within the cattle economy, boys and young men continued to herd their families' cattle under non-capitalist relations of exploitation. In addition "small lads worked the land of the headmen at no pay". (OD 39)

Generally subsistence production in Mzimba continued to be organised within the domestic unit increasingly supplemented with wages from migration and casual labour within the district.

e) Cattle, Marriages and Migration

Cattle had always been a crucial 'commodity' in marriage

organisation and political relations, as noted in Chapter 4. In Mzimba, particularly after the First World War, cattle became a major object of investment of migrant wages.

Year	No. of cattle in the district
1905	20 864
1908	21 699
1918	21 808
1919	22 348
1920	25 957
1924	30 917
1925	27 000
1928	31 500
1930	33 065
1931	37 065
1932	38 037
1933	41 445
1935	58 388

Sources: MDB II, Blue Book and Mzimba Census summary file 2/1/32.

Of interest here is the rapid growth of cattle numbers only after the War when migration abroad accelerated. The decline from 1924 to 1925 reflects the number of cattle killed for food or sold during the 1924/25 famine (see first section of this chapter).

In the early 1920s, the chiefs and elders had repeatedly asked the Resident that "to enable people to get money for taxes, the export of cattle from the district might be allowed". (MDCM 2/9/20, 9/2/21, 28/4/22) But the belts of land infested with east coast fever between Mzimba and market links to the south

prevented this at the time. (ibid) By 1923, a clear route had been found by the State but the prices offered for export cattle were too low and nothing came of this initiative. (MDCM 4/10/23) Why was this the case?

The link between migration and the cattle economy was a crucial one over the 1920s and 1930s. With the progressive precariousness and undermining of subsistence production, cattle became the only safe source of security for migrants and their families:

> "Money earned in wages was invested in cattle. The drive therefore was all the time to increase the herds, in order to be able to convert them into cash when the need arose ... The primary value of cattle was the security they represented."
>
> (Read, 1956:174)

Cattle was a hedge against future food shortages or famines in terms of its direct food value, convertability into cash and its 'convertability' into women, both as producers and reproducers to augment the size of the family for subsistence production and future migrants upon which migrants could hopefully depend in their old age.

The increasing inflow of cash from migrants receiving initial stimulus from the injection of wages earned by men in the First World War was partly responsible for the increase in the price of cattle (from increased demand bound up with the use of cattle as bridewealth). The Resident in 1935 made this observation:

> "As has been said before the Angoni-Tumbuka people make singularly little use of their cattle, except as payment of dowry, or at feasts for ceremonial purposes. The price

> asked for cattle is ridiculously high, a legacy from the Great War period fostered by a demand by men who had returned from abroad in more prosperous times with considerable sums of money to invest, and the price is kept up by the fact that cattle paid as dowry then changed hands at this value, and, in cases, were paid back in cash at this price subsequently."
>
> (MDAR 1935)

It is logical that with this inflow of cash, the rate of bride-price would have increased rapidly because the amount of cash replacing cattle that circulated between elders would have been continually augmented by the cash paid by the wage-earning juniors: the total amount of cash circulating by way of bride-price would have increased therefore much faster than the number of marriages that this would have allowed, hence the rate of each particular bride-price should have increased.

It therefore became more difficult to pay bridewealth (lobola) and for many, migration in itself was undertaken for this express purpose. (OD 30, 32, 37, 41, 42)

Chiefs continued to demand a higher price for marriageable women under their control. Where the price was two to three cows for 'commoners' it was six to eight cows for 'daughters of the Jeres' (chief's clan name). (OD 30, 34, 40)

In addition, the high bride-price reproduced exploitative dependence relations between the 'aristocracy' and the ordinary villagers:

> "No-one was forced to go to South Africa for

> lack of bridewealth ... could go to the Inkosana (Chief) who paid for them. When the Chief paid for him he had to live at the Chief's home for the rest of his life to work for him as an appreciation for the generosity and kindness of the Chief."
> (OD 35)

Another interesting side to the Chief's continued dominant position within the local polity and economy is revealed by this statement:

> "Lots of people migrated for bridewealth, even sons of Chiefs ... Chiefs had lots of cattle and this induced them to marry a lot of women consequently having more than fifty children. Some of these children could be neglected in times of marriage and (migrated) to get some money for lobola."
> (OD 41)

It is clear that having started off with preferential access to grazing lands and to material support from the State, referred to earlier, the Ngoni Chiefs could continually bolster their socially dominant position in very material ways. This process of marked social differentiation reproduced in the case of the Ngoni-Tumbuka did not happen in the case of the Tonga. In Tongaland it was not possible for wages to be invested in cattle because of Tsetse fly there and so a local material basis did not exist for methods of material accumulation.

In addition, at the political level, pre-existent relations of domination/subordination were not as developed amongst the Tonga as they were in the case of the Ngoni-Tumbuka. For the latter, these relations had become more solidly integrated into the Colonial State apparatus to the continued benefit of the

'aristocracy'.

f) Struggles against the Ngoni 'aristocracy' and the dispersal of villages

Over the 1920s and 1930s, Tumbuka families broke away in large numbers from their 'father' villages controlled by Ngoni Headmen. The Mzimba Native Association, a collection of Ngoni headmen and elders, noted at a meeting in 1924:

> "This question has often arisen, and the Government have always insisted on a bigger collection of villages, but it is plain that this has not been carried out with effective results ... (Families) break away from their villages, and the result is that villages of one, two or three huts are formed everywhere."
> (MNAM 12/6/24)

A year later, they "agreed that the scattering of villages is becoming worse and worse". (MNAM 24/7/25) There were clearly two aspects to this. The decline of subsistence production due to the increasing impoverishment of the soil was forcing Tumbuka families to move to more fertile areas. Related to this was an increasing incidence of "Chimsompara" which meant couples eloping and building homesteads away from the main villages, without the husband paying the bride-price. (MNAM 12/6/24) Payment of the bride-price in certain areas had by 1919 become "widely disregarded". (MDCM 2/9/19) The practice continued through the 1920s and 1930s and in 1935 the Association suggested to the Resident that the husbands must be captured and forced to pay lobola and fined, concluding that

> "As every tribe in the Mzimba District is

> incorporated with the Ngoni, and follows other Ngoni laws and customs, even in marriage affairs, kraal or church marriages should be performed. Going beyond this, a law-breaker must be punished."
>
> (MNAM 24/7/35)

Margaret Read found in the 1930s that in the more marginal Tsetse fly-infested areas of the district some Tumbuka families had reverted to uxorilocal/matrilocal kinship and marriage organisation.

> "... some of these groups formed their own villages and reverted to their former practices of matrilineal descent and uxorilocal residence ..."
>
> (1956:25)

The men generally undertook intermittent labour migration

> "for short periods to the Lupa gold-field in Tanganyika (Tanzania), or to unskilled road work in the district, to earn the necessary money for taxes. The general level of living is low. Cereals are scarce, there are no cattle, houses are small and roofs in need of repair."
>
> (Read, 1942:618)

Unable to invest their wages in cattle to see to long-term security, the men from these villages undertook short-term migration to cater for immediate cash needs for taxes. With no form of bridewealth available for patrilocal marriages they reverted to matrilocal marriage organisation.

The break-up of villages within the cattle areas under Ngoni headmen was made possible by the use of migrant wages, by those who formed new villages, to finance the moves. Whereas before the Ngoni aristocracy had provided stable conditions for marriage organisation, using cattle, and through that exerted forms of

control over Ngoni-Tumbukas, it was now the colonial-capitalist State and economy that functioned to do this. See Chapter 7 for similar processes in Tongaland.

Conclusion

The development of the Ngoni-Tumbuka social formation as a labour-reserve bore many resemblances to that of the Tongas. The rates of labour migration from the two areas were by the late 1920s and 1930s similarly high, reaching levels of between 50% and 70% of the active male adult population, the highest figures for the country. Resistance to taxation and passes and increasing challenges to the elders' authority, most obviously in the form of the break-up and dispersal of villages, became more and more commonplace. However, marked social differentiation, more absent in Tongaland, remained a fundamental characteristic of the Ngoni-Tumbuka social formation under colonialism. The Ngoni aristocracy gained lucrative access to the Colonial State, to better grazing and agricultural land and to education which resulted in a higher inflow of cash wages to their village economies. Their Chiefs began to employ Tumbuka commoners to tend their fields and generally benefited from the changed circumstances under Colonial Rule.

The Tumbuka and the more junior and poorer Ngoni on the other hand, comprising the vast majority of the population, were subjected to rural poverty and periodic famines, migrating en masse or entering into the employ of the relatively wealthy

aristocracy. Some families withdrew completely from the control formerly exerted on them by the Ngoni aristocracy by moving into marginal lands and reverting to matrilineal/matrilocal kinship and marriage organisation.

From early on Tumbuka commoners' access to mission education was limited, producing unskilled migrants who, because of their low wages, determined that they could not afford school fees for their children, thus continually reproducing poorly paid Tumbuka migrants. Lacking the resources of the aristocracy, droughts or increased taxation drove many men to migrate, forcing the women to resort to ecologically destructive farming methods, undermining future subsistence production.

This undermining of the Ngoni-Tumbuka subsistence economy, which did not occur in Tongaland, developed here to a grave degree, (more characteristic of other labour-reserve economies in the southern sub-continent) reproducing an increasing dependence on migrant wages for survival. The struggle for survival also took place as a struggle for access to dependants, i.e. wives and children. Migration was one way of earning bride-wealth to acquire dependants, a struggle made more acute in the face of the monopolising tendencies of the Ngoni aristocracy.

The development of the Ngoni-Tumbuka social formation as a labour-reserve progressively tied to the dynamic of the world capitalist system was seen as having occurred as a process of struggles - political, economic and ideological - between chiefs and commoners, elders and juniors, in addition to the struggles

between colonisers and colonised, capitalists and migrant workers.

As in the case of the Tonga, these struggles took place on the basis of pre-existent and concrete conditions pertaining to the non-capitalist Ngoni-Tumbuka mode of production transformed under altered conditions induced by colonial rule and capitalist penetration.

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30/1/25
27/3/25
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2/9/20
9/2/21

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Dates: 28/4/22
4/10/23
26/10/26
18/2/27
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3/6/31
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OD 3 Mr Spy Phiri - Nkhata Bay 23/12/80 (pp.9-11)
OD 4 Mr Malaya - Nkhata Bay 26/12/80 (pp.12-15)
OD 5 Mr Chibanganle - Nkhata Bay 27/12/80 (pp.16-18)
OD 6 Mr Kamung'ona - Nkhata Bay 27/12/80 (pp.19-22)
OD 7 Mr Mutwana - Nkhata Bay 30/12/80 (pp.23-25)
OD 8 W. Chibwana - Nkhata Bay 31/12/80 (pp.26-28)
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OD 17 Mr Chilivumbu - Nkhata Bay 2/1/81 (pp.67-69)
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OD 24 Mr David Kunnanga, Masasa, Nkhata Bay 24/12/80

OD 25 Mr Abel Singa, Tindi, Makhumba, T.A. Timbiri, Nkhata Bay, 27/12/80

OD 26 Mr Marydon Phiri, Musinziyŵi, T.A. Timbiri, Nkhata Bay 30/12/80

OD 27 Mr Zimwane Moto Mwenda, v/h Gulawe, T.A. Timbiri, Nkhata Bay, 1/1/81

OD 28 Mr Sahero Phiri, Musinziyŵi, T.A. Timbiri, Nkhata Bay 2/1/81

OD 29 Mr Mpuzamazi Muntali, Babvi village, T.A. Mtwaro, Mzimba 21/12/80

OD 30 Mr Sriya Hara, Mophojere village, T.A. Mtwaro, Mzimba 22/12/80

OD 31 Mr Khumbo Kaumvenda, Babvi village, T.A. Mtwaro, Mzimba 26/12/80

OD 32 Mr Hezrou MFuni, Ebangweni village, T.A. Mtwaro, Mzimba 27/12/80

OD 33 Mr Suncon Jere, Ekwendeni village, T.A. Mtwaro, Mzimba 26/12/80

OD 34 Mr Mpama Jere, Enkuzgeni village, T.A. Mtwaro, Mzimba 31/12/80

OD 35 Mr Robert Cibambo, Kapandazuwa village, T.A. Mtwaro, Mzimba, 1/1/81

OD 36 Mr Mkhalapaminga Mphande, T.A. Malenga, Chintechè/... 22/12/80

OD 37 Mr O. Hara, Ebubeni village, T.A. Mimbelwa, Mzimba 30/12/80

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OD 39 Mr Z. Mbabe, Mpezeni village, T.A. Mzukuzuku, Mzimba 22/12/80

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