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In their quest for markets, raw materials, and other strategic products in Africa and elsewhere, the European colonial powers perforce imposed upon the pre-colonial socio-economic systems forms of production and exchange relations consonant with the needs of the metropolitan economies. All in all, it was the introduction of the "cash nexus" in colonial economic relations which constituted the single most decisive agent for transformation.

Agricultural and mineral products were in pressing demand. Agricultural goods might be produced on capitalist settler farms or plantations, employing wage labor, an entirely new phenomenon. Alternatively, "subsistence" cultivators might be transformed into peasants - producing, within the framework of the traditional village work-life pattern, surplus crops for sale in exchange for cash income. In the majority of cases, capitalist agriculture usually co-existed with peasant cash crop production. This was the case in Tanganyika (colonial mainland Tanzania) where, in fact, the bulk of the cash crops were produced in the peasant sector. The initial involvement of the independent cultivators in the production of cash crops entailed at best vigorous exhortations or at worst forms of coercion on the part of the colonial authorities. But once cash needs had permeated rural life, the cultivators, with access to free land, would take to cash crop production without having to alter substantially their work-life pattern.

On the other hand, mining and plantation agriculture could only be carried out on the basis of hired labor and necessitated the transformation of the traditional work-life pattern of a section of the indigenous colonial population. Removed from its village-life environment, temporarily or otherwise, labor on the mines and plantations had inevitably to undergo a radically new experience, the process of proletarianization. Proletarianization is a process which is not only economic but also social and cultural: independent producers become increasingly dependent on the sale of their labor power for satisfying their day-to-day needs, and new forms of relationships take shape both between the producers and their employers and within the working communities themselves. The economic power of the "master" over the "servant" enables the former to impose stringent modes of work and social discipline within the framework of a capitalist workculture upon the latter. At the level of the work groups, social and cultural interactions are so transformed that over time new patterns of community and even family life emerge. Needless to say, this is not a painless process. Colonial subjects invariably resisted it, presenting both the state and the capitalist entrepreneurs with a serious problem.

Our ability to appreciate the dimension of the problem might be enhanced if we inject a European comparison into our analysis. From the mediaeval period right through to the late 18th century capitalism in England gradually nibbled through the bonds of pre-capitalist socio-economic relations. It can be argued that the last of the pre-capitalist encumbrances were dislodged by the enclosure movement. This is to say that, if the forces which engendered

parliamentary land enclosure constituted a slight problem, capitalist development in England was a "natural" process. The Industrial Revolution was greeted by a dispossessed peasantry willing, indeed impelled by market forces, to sell their labor power for wages. In fact, the system was plagued by an almost permanent, and sometimes socially explosive, glut in the labor market whose inadequate solution was found in the much loathed Poor Law legislation.[1]

One would not like to simplify this point by suggesting that the English peasantry did not put up resistance against the forces of proletarianization. The reluctance of the "free-born Englishmen" to work in the early cotton mills is well known. Recourse had occasionally to be had to such unfree labor as apprentice paupers. Equally well known are the early entrepreneurs' complaints about their workmen's irregular work habits, their wretched celebration of "Saint Monday," and their love of liquor and "pagan" feasts, all of which went on, the employers alleged, at the expense of industry. But resistance to proletarianization in England was so relatively weak that, by and large, such subtle weapons as the exhortations of Evangelism and Wesleyan Methodism, coupled with the well entrenched market forces, were enough to enable "industrialism" to triumph over "traditionalism."[2]

What the European powers experienced in their colonies was a qualitatively different story. The potential recruits into the colonial labor force had access to means of production in the shape of land and cattle. Inasmuch as these colonial subjects could furnish their basic needs by herding their livestock or tilling their land, their participation in wage employment would have to be discretionary. Even when cash needs became a necessity, they preferred to earn the money by selling some of their livestock or growing cash crops on their land because this did not radically disturb the social equilibrium within the traditional setting. In other words, market forces in the colonial economies developed too slowly to generate an adequate labor supply which would fulfil the pressing demands of mature capitalism in the metropole.

In the face of such a labor crisis there was need to make participation in wage employment "necessary" rather than "discretionary". Ordinarily, that could be achieved through the agency of the colonial state which employed mainly coercion, creating as it did what has been aptly characterized as "despotic relations of production."[3] The variants of such relations have naturally been shaped by the concrete historical forces obstaining in each colony. In South Africa, with a large politically powerful settler population, coercive measures were relatively easy to impose. African peasant production of a whole range of crops would compete with settler agriculture. A curb on peasant agriculture, in the interest of labor supply, was therefore unlikely to inflict serious damage on commercial agriculture or food supply within the South African formal economy. When such coercive measures as labor and poll taxes proved ineffective, the settler-controlled South African government responded to the labor shortage by enacting the Land Act in 1913 to restrict African access to land.[4] Similar, though less draconian, measures were taken in colonial Zimbabwe.[5] The inevitable consequence was the impoverishment of the peasantry, forcing it to seek wage employment.

Tanganyika under German rule experienced brutal forms of labor coercion which have been well documented in previous researches.[6] During most of the period of British rule the shortage of labor for the mines and plantations was still quite serious. In their desperate attempts to obtain labor, the employers tried to prevail upon the British colonial state to launch an assault upon the independence of the peasantry, almost on the South African model. Government response was not as prompt and as far reaching as the employers would have wished, mainly for two reasons. First, unlike South Africa or Zimbabwe, Tanganyika was not, strictly speaking, a settler colony. With the exception of

sisal and rubber, the colony's assortment of much needed cash crops was produced by the peasantry. Government could not have resorted to indiscriminate forced labor without adversely affecting the colony's output of food and cash crops. Officials had to strike a careful balance between the labor requirements of capitalist industry (mainly mining) and agriculture on the one hand and the interests of the essential peasant sector on the other. Second, Tanganyika was a mandated colony which the British administered under the watchful, and often critical, eye of the League of Nations and later the United Nations. Measures such as forced labor or a wanton alienation of peasant land were more likely than not to earn international reproach. This is not to suggest that there was no labor coercion in British Tanganyika. Rather, these factors prescribed the limits within which such coercion was exercised.

Ability to draw labor from the villages to the mines and plantations, in any case, did not guarantee a triumph of proletarianization, for the peasants' resistance to the process died hard. That labor which in one way or another found its way to the centers of employment often failed to sever its peasant links, and brought with it a baggage of pre-industrial work habits which were incompatible with the demands of industrial capitalism. Employers complained mainly about the high labor turnover and the irregularity of attendance at work. The solutions devised by both the employers and the colonial state to combat this problem alternated between the issue of the proverbial carrot and the use of the proverbial stick; sometimes the two went hand in hand.

But, pressing as it was, the labor question in the political economy of colonialism was fraught with contradictions. Some of the employers and, in particular, the colonial state did not find it always desirable to encourage a complete proletarianization of the peasantry. In the case of Tanganyika, plantation owners tended to pursue a 'migrant labor policy' mainly because such a policy enabled them to reap what Meillasoux has described as a "labor rent" equivalent to the cost of reproducing the worker and his family in his village where he lived and worked when he was not at his place of employment, and where the rest of his family was permanently stationed, providing for its own subsistence. On the other hand, mine owners on the whole belonged to the "proletarian school" of employers who set store by labor efficiency and therefore preferred a policy of labor stabilization.[7] But the colonial state, operating as it did in a situation of contradictions, usually found itself on the horns of a dilemma in its search for a labor policy. Whereas the state shared the concerns of some employers over labor efficiency, it trembled at the prospects of a full-fledged proletarianization of the peasantry. It never tired of crying wolf about the peril of "detribalization," a euphemism for the growth of proletarian consciousness and a general decline of African subservience to colonial authority. During the serious labor shortage of the late 1920s the Tanganyika government still worried about the spectre of the detribalized wage-earning native, "freed from wholesome traditional restraints, and without moral fibre which might form a safeguard against evil influence." "Presumably," warned the labor commissioner in 1928, "a black artisan class will be evolved, divorced from the soil, and closely identified with the company; trade unionism of the secret society type, colour antipathy, alcoholic prohibition, political representation, and other kindred problems, will doubtless arise to perplex the administrator of such a society; the prospect is scarcely attractive."[8] Such were the contradictions of "colonial capitalism."

In the rest of this essay, based on a study of the social history of the Tanganyika mining industry between 1920 and 1955, I examine, within the framework of the issues raised above, the problems encountered by the mine owners in their attempts to recruit, control and stabilize labor for their

operations. The development of the mining industry as part of Tanganyika's "colonial capitalism" generated multifaceted contradictions between the mine owners, the state, and those colonial subjects who became involved mainly as workers or potential workers in the industry. These contradictions, along with the responses which they evoked among all the parties concerned, constitute the theme of this study.

The Mining Industry and the Crisis of Labor Scarcity.

Mining under capitalist conditions of employment started in the German colonial period during which minerals worth about 1/2 million pounds were produced from small-scale workings of mainly gold in Sekenke and Musoma, mica in Uluguru, and salt in Uvinza. When the British took over the colony in 1918, they suspended mining and prospecting till 1921 when the Mining Ordinance (1920) came into force. Prospecting for minerals by government, companies and individuals then began in earnest. By the end of the decade many of the derelict properties had resumed production and fresh discoveries had been made: the Lupa goldfield in 1922, the Karagwe tinfield in 1924 and a diamond field at Mabuki, Kwimba district, in 1925. Between 1923 and 1929 minerals worth £929,293 were produced. By 1929, some 38 companies and 220 individuals, supported by a labor force of 6,212, were involved in mining and prospecting.[9]

Prospects in the mining industry appeared so bright that from 1928 government launched an advertising campaign in an attempt to interest Western mining and finance capital in the mineral potential of the territory.[10] In 1929 a new Mining Ordinance was enacted to encourage large companies to invest in the colony's mining industry. The new law provided for more liberal grants in respect of claims, leases and exclusive prospecting licences.[11]

Throughout the 1920s mine operators persistently complained about the scarcity of labor which, they claimed, seriously frustrated their output targets. In 1927-28 it was reported that in some mining districts less than half of the labor requirements could be found and that, in fact, some mine owners were obliged to suspend operations for lack of labor. In the Karagwe tinfield 65 percent of the labor force had to be recruited from outside the territory in Uganda, Ruanda and Burundi.[12] The budding mining industry needed labor at a most inopportune moment, the "age of improvement," when peasant production of marketable crops was gaining momentum.[13]

The labor shortage eased up at the beginning of the Great Depression when a sharp general drop in mineral prices was followed by a drastic cutback in production. In Uluguru, for example, mica mining was reported to be "practically at a standstill." Diamond export earnings dropped from 88,030 pounds in 1929 to 9,865 pounds in 1931. As the laying-off of workers in the different sectors of the colonial economy gathered momentum, the mining areas, almost invariably, reported that labor was more readily available, except for such skilled underground labor as "drill boys".[14]

This satisfactory situation, however, was soon to be overtaken by the gold boom consequent upon Britain's abandonment of the gold standard, and later by the general revival of the mining industry as a whole around the mid-decade. From late 1931 there was a "gold rush" to the Lupa goldfield. Many an expatriate farmer, planter or trader, who had fallen on evil days on account of the Depression, came to the Lupa "in the hope of being able to tide over the present bad times." The digger population (the employers) on the Lupa increased from barely 100 in the first half of 1931 to 300 at the end of the year. By 1936 it had jumped to 1,000. Laborers on the field had increased from 5,000 in 1931 to 20,000 in 1936, and production from 8,278 oz. to 46,058 oz. in the

same period. In the meantime new reef mines were opened in Musoma, Geita, and on the Lupa itself. The colony's earnings from the export of gold increased from 38,630 pounds in 1931 to 988,597 pounds in 1939.[15]

Significant developments also took place in other branches of mining. Around the mid-1930s wolfram was discovered in Karagwe. In the same district tin mining expanded markedly. In 1937 Uruwira Minerals, a Belgian firm, came across large lead concentrates at Mpanda. The most phenomenal development was the discovery by a Canadian geologist, Dr. John T. Williamson, of the Mwadui diamond deposit in 1940. Mwadui soon became one of Africa's richest mines, with a large plant capacity and a township endowed with many facilities. Whereas in 1939 Tanganyika produced a bare 3,445 carats of diamonds worth £12,225, in 1955 she produced 322,000 carats worth £3,199,000. About 97 percent of the diamonds were produced at Mwadui. Although the post-war mining industry was dominated by developments at Mwadui, production of such important minerals as fold, lead, mica, salt and tin increased modestly but steadily. From 1930 to 1960 the colony's mineral export earnings increased in money terms by 6,610 percent.[16] This rather impressive record of the mining industry, however, was frequently plagued by serious labor crises.

As early as 1932 an assistant inspector of mines complained that in alluvial mining on the Lupa labor shortage was so critical that "the native may pick and choose whom he serves."[17] A more serious crisis came to a head in 1935 during the general economic upswing when mining competed for labor with other sectors, especially sisal. Gold companies in Geita, Musoma, Sekenke and Lupa made representations to the government complaining about the lack of labor. In the Lake zone, for example, it was reported that of the 5,000 to 6,000 laborers required by the mining firms, only 1,200 to 1,400 men could be obtained. Employers in some cases had to recruit from neighboring colonies. More than 40 percent of the Lupa labor force came from Zambia and Malawi. The Geita gold mines and the Karagwe tin mines relied quite heavily on labor from Ruanda and Burundi.[18] The labor issue was so critical in 1935 that it was discussed not only in the colony's Legislative Council but also in the British Parliament. Legislative Council members unsuccessfully urged government to resuscitate the Department of Labour - closed down in 1931 during the Depression - as an important step towards solving the labor crisis. Government nevertheless took the labor question seriously as it appointed an increasing number of administrative officers to attend exclusively to labor matters, including housing, rations, care of the sick, sanitary conditions in the labor camps, contracts, hours of work, tasks, employment of women and children, compensation for deaths and injuries, safety at the work place, repatriation of destitutes, and estates of deceased laborers.[19]

Many employers as well as colonial officials attributed the labor problem to the self-sufficiency of Africans within the rural economies. The major target of attack by the employers at this time was the government's agricultural policy, popularly known as the "plant more crops" campaign. Government had embarked upon a campaign for an increase in the production of cash crops by the peasantry to counteract the effects of the Great Depression which saw a drastic contraction of activity in public works, railway construction, private building, plantation agriculture, and such industry as there was. Without increased peasant production of marketable crops, the "native" tax, railway traffic and customs revenue would have declined to a dangerously low level. Also, there was a danger that a significant proportion of the population might withdraw from the market economy, thus threatening the very existence of the colonial economy. The government campaign caught on. Cotton exports, for example, increased from 3,670 tons in 1930 to 10,000 tons in 1935. In those regions which had not been so deeply penetrated by the money economy some

initial prodding from the chiefs became necessary in order to effect a meaningful participation in the campaign by the peasantry. Production of cash crops was further encouraged by the good prices which followed upon the end of the Depression. By the second half of the decade many Africans had taken to cash crop production as a normal activity in the peasant sector.[20]

In so far as the "plant more crops" campaign enabled the Tanganyika peasants to earn money without having to subject themselves to the rigors of wage labor, employers and their organizations saw it as the greatest obstacle to the availability of labor. They took a special dislike to the way in which the local chiefs and headmen, vying with each other for praise from their colonial masters, zealously enforced the growth of cash crops among their subjects at the expense of the expatriate employers. Mine operators in Musoma alleged that the chiefs in that part of the colony required a minimum acreage of cotton even from individuals employed at the mines.[21] A proprietor of gold and diamond mines in Shinyanga district felt impelled to send a personal memorial to the governor in October 1935 complaining that the "sentiment" to plant more crops had been "carried too far." It was time, the memorialist insisted, for the government to "put its foot down," abandon the whole agricultural campaign and instead impose a higher hut tax which he regarded as an essential goad to African industry.[22]

The mine owners' appeals to the government gave rise to a long-drawn debate among the top officials of the colonial regime. Not a few colonial officials agreed that the ability of the peasants to furnish their subsistence and cash needs on the land constituted an impediment to the availability of wage labor. Many were particularly attracted to the Wasukuma of the Lake zone whom they found physically fit and "progressive." On the other hand the groups which grew no cash crops, and would therefore constitute a potential labor reserve, were generally regarded as unsuited for the arduous mine work. The Waha of Kibondo, for example, did not appear to a colonial medical officer "to be the type for work in deep mine shafts." Employers turned to them, he said, out of need, for "half a loaf is better than no bread." In the officer's description, "They are of very poor physique, riddled with helminths, yaws and jiggers, and are badly nourished. They have no stock (and a proportion of them have taboos against milk or fish), and live on the verge of starvation on a diet of sweet potatoes and beans." The Nyiramba and Nyaturu, close to the Sekenke gold mine, were described by the governor as "miserable specimens physically ... of little use for mining."[23]

The chief secretary to the government went so far as to suggest that the highly prized Sukuma labor supply could be tapped without any adverse effects on agricultural production in the region. The increase in the acreage under cultivation in Usukuma, the chief secretary argued, had resulted in land famine, soil erosion, and overpopulation. He suggested that the government's "plant more crops" campaign be relaxed in favor of a policy of encouraging the Wasukuma and other peoples in the Lake Province to take up mining. [24]

The governor agreed that labor at the time was "without question the matter most exercising everyone" in government. But he was for a more balanced approach in the interest of the overall colonial economic strategy. He thought it was "dangerous and impolitic" for the government to abandon its 'peasantization' campaign in order to satisfy the labor requirements of the mines and other employment centers. He would rather that the mining firms competed with the peasant sector for labor by paying good wages and offering attractive working and living conditions at the mines: "Serious mining in competent hands never anywhere has any difficulty in drawing labor from agriculture. ... There are always many thousands of young unmarried men available for the labor

market, but Sukuma and Nyamwezi labor has a very good idea of its own value and won't work for less." The governor, mindful of the colony's commitment to the League of Nations' "Convention Concerning Forced and Compulsory Labour," was opposed also to the idea of increasing the hut tax as a means of propelling labor to the mines. Taxes, he insisted, ought to be fixed in proportion to the services which the Africans got in return.[25]

The governor's view in the end prevailed as official labor policy. But despite government's insistence that the labor problem of the mining industry be solved through market forces, certain steps were taken to bail out the industry. In August 1935 government appointed F. Longland, a provincial commissioner, to make a thorough investigation into the problem of labor shortage for the mines. Pending Longland's report, government decided as an interim measure to relax its restriction on labor recruitment in some of the tse tse fly control areas of the Western Province. Also, employers were advised to recruit among "wandering natives" and "occasional tax defaulters." In December 1935, after Longland had submitted his report, a government circular to the provincial commissioners urged the latter to encourage Africans in areas which grew no cash crops to take up employment in the mines.[26]

Because labor was a general problem pertaining to the whole wage sesctor, government had instituted a full-blown inquiry into the labor question earlier that same year when it appointed a committee to "Consider and Advise on Questions Relating to the Supply and Welfare of Native Labour." The Committee's four "guiding principles" enshrined in its report constituted, in effect, the cornerstone of subsequent government labor policy. First, there would be no compulsion of Africans to work for wages. Secondly, production of food had priority over any other form of African economic activity. Thirdly, "too much migration of males" from the villages was to be avoided, as it tended to disrupt "tribal life." Lastly, cash crop production was to be encouraged where conditions were favorable, but in areas "unsuited" for such crops the Africans would be "encouraged" to take up wage employment.[27]

These principles were translated into two important policy practices. First, the production of cash crops in areas classified as "unsuitable" was discouraged. Since some of these areas had been penetrated by cash needs via government taxes and the imported articles of Western material culture, many of their male inhabitants turned perforce to wage employment. Whole districts of Songea, Njombe, Kasulu, Kigoma, Biharamulo and Ngara became labor reservoirs, the so-called non-growth areas.[28] Second, government got more actively involved in the recruitment of labor through licensing, supervision of recruitment activity to prevent "detribalization," enforcement of labor contracts through the courts, and even giving material help to employers or their recruiting agents. As will shortly be evident, the colonial authorities were not as good as their word about their renunciation of force in obtaining labor for the mines.

Perhaps it is pertinent at this stage to ask what positive steps were taken by the mine owners themselves to deal with the labor problem. One obvious method was recruitment on long-term contracts, provided for in the 1923 Master and Native Servant Ordinance, of six months to one year, whether directly or through a recruiting agent. Many mining companies embarked upon this exercise from 1935. Ideally, only willing villagers were supposed to sign the labor contracts. In practice, since willing labor was difficult to come by, recruiters either decoyed men into signing documents whose unfavorable repercussions they could not anticipate, or they caught unwilling villagemen with the violence and cruelty attributable to a press-gang. The recruiters invariably enjoyed the active assistance or at least connivance of the

provincial and "native" administrators. It was not uncommon for the district officer or the local sub-chief to round up tax defaulters, tie their hands behind their backs and hand them over to a recruiting agent.[29] The colonial authorities might invent some casuistry to explain away such acts. There was talk, for example, of "benevolent violence" intended to inculcate values of industry into the mind of "the lazy native."

The story of Sixtus Olach of Tarime is a classic one, reminiscent of practices in the slave trade era. One day in 1938, while Olach was tending his cattle in the field, he was overpowered and caught by three men working for a recruiting agent. The men were accompanied by the village headman. Olach's hands were tied behind his back and he was taken to spend the night at the headman's house together with three other men who had been hounded from their businesses in a similar manner. The four hapless captives were later sent to Musoma where they underwent a medical examination. They were subsequently transported to the Mwanza recruiting office of the Geita Gold Mine where they were, according to Olach's account, forced to sign one-year 'contracts' to work at the Geita mine.[30]

The proportion of contract labor on any mine was invariably smaller than that of 'voluntary' labor. The main reason was that the level of funds which employers needed to sink into recruiting activity, to finance capitation fees, transportation, feeding, transit care, recruiting offices and so on, was far beyond what the majority could afford. Also, because of the degradation to which contract labor was often subjected, this form of labor was generally unpopular, and, of course, there was a limit to which recruitment by force could achieve. Most of the labor had therefore to be attracted by creating conditions which purported to compete with peasant agriculture.

One trick employed by the Geita Gold Mine was recruitment by allurement. The company would send back home on a recruiting errand an employee who had worked for barely a month at the mine. The man would receive "free of charge" from the company a few imported trappings of "progress": attractive clothing, shoes and stockings, sunglasses, and possibly a wrist-watch. Back in his own village, the laborer was supposed to display his speedily acquired items of wealth and talk favorably of the mine. He would invariably return to the Geita with a few recruits, thus earning his new position as a supervisor.[31]

Some mining companies tried to attract labor by improving conditions at the mines. Colonial employers almost invariably believed that good mine compound conditions, rather than high wages, were the answer. Inspired by the so-called theory of the "backward-bending labor supply curve," the employers believed that too much money in the pockets of the African workers would only lead to indolence, drunkenness, absenteeism and desertion. The big mining firms, convinced exponents as they were of the 'board and lodging' myth, concentrated on compound management. Many tried to put up what they considered to be decent compound huts, improved compound amenities, provided housing for workers' families, and recruited experienced compound managers from South Africa, Zambia and the Katanga to take charge of the welfare and discipline of African labor. One such compound manager at the Geita Mine believed in the proper feeding of labor. A man, he asserted in 1952, was "best approached through his stomach." "While the cost of increased wages defeated its own object," he argued, "the cost of increased foodstuffs might well prove a stabilizing influence as well as an inducement to return to work when the laborer's belt becomes unduly tight at his own shamba."[32] But, insofar as cost minimization remained the paramount consideration, the conditions created were not so good as to attract the necessary labor supply. The employers could not have it both ways.

Despite the efforts of the mine operators and the state, the problem of labor scarcity was a lasting one. The outbreak of World War II aggravated the situation. The main war effort of the territory was concentrated on the production of sisal, rubber and food crops. These areas could, by law, obtain conscripted labor. Mining, however, was accorded no priority. In fact, the territory was closed to prospecting for reef gold to prevent diversion of labor supplies from essential wartime production. Many mines suspended operations and others curtailed their development and production programs. Producers of strategic minerals, especially mica, tin and wolfram appealed to government for requisitioned labor as a way out of the wartime shortage of labor. Only the Kibanda wolfram mine in Karagwe was allowed to conscript labor, a factor which gave rise to constant friction at the mine.[33]

There was hardly any improvement in the immediate post-War period. Skilled African labor was still not easily available locally. Uruwira Minerals company at Mpanda was obliged in 1947 to import a gang of 60 men from Basutoland to work on the sinking of a shaft.[34] Even unskilled labor was a scarce commodity. In the early 1950s several mining companies accused other employers, especially the sisal growers, of poaching labor from the surrounding areas which they regarded as their natural preserves.[35] Early in the 1950s government received complaints about labor shortage from mining companies in Karagwe, Geita, Mpanda and the Lupa.[36] In 1951 government ammended the law to allow recruitment on contracts of up to three years. In 1952, after some lobbying by mine owners in Geita district, the governor, Sir Edward Twining, ordered the reopening of the tse tse fly controlled district of Biharamulo to labor recruitment by the mining companies. Wage employment, Twining argued, rationalizing his measure, would rescue the Wazinza of Biharamulo, for "in their environment," they were "a depressed and depressing tribe and seem to be going down-hill, surrounded by taboos of very sort and almost lacking the will to survive."[37]

The crisis of labor shortage for the mines seemed to have finally disappeared, or at least abated, towards the late 1950s when mining firms could even afford to declare a good number of their workmen redundant. Many employers were increasingly having recourse to the sanction of the sack.[38] The general explanation is that the process of proletarianization had gained an upper hand over the pre-capitalist modes of production. But to state this is to assert and not to explain. We shall, however, shelve the explanation until the concluding part of this essay. Let us now turn to the more subtle and in many respects more persistent aspects of peasant resistance to the forces of proletarianization.

The Persistence of Agrarian Society

Writing in 1946, Major Orde-Browne, the colonial 'expert' on African labor, complained that "the dominant problem throughout East Africa" was "the deplorably low standard of efficiency of the worker."[39] Orde-Browne was echoing the views of many an employer in East Africa, the mine owners included. To the European mine owners and managers, the African laborer was as inefficient as he was unreliable. He was slow to learn the requisite skills, required constant supervision and, above all, was extremely irregular and unstable.

Mining, like factory work, requires a stable labor supply, at least to those mine operators who set store by efficiency. The kind of laborer whom the mining firms wanted was one that would learn his task, continue in his job for a reasonable length of time, and observe the demands of industrial work

discipline, especially regularity, synchronization of labor, and a strict sense of time. In the mines of colonial Tanganyika this kind of worker was a trifle slow in emerging.

Mine operators experienced a high labor turnover. The rates of desertion among contract laborers were extremely high. For example, half of the 70 men recruited by a Karagwe tin mining firm from Tabora in July 1952 had deserted by the end of the month. This kind of experience was by no means unique to Karagawe as is exemplified by similar events at Geita and Mpanda.[40] The laborers who came to the mines on their own equally found the harsh environment of the mining camps to be intolerable. Many left after only a month or two, some not even bothering to collect their pay. During the planting season laborers left for agricultural activities in their villages. At the Ikungu mine in Musoma, which had some 250 workers on its roll, only 50 of them remained during the planting season of 1939.[41]

Employers and colonial administrators usually explained this phenomenon away by conjuring up the figure of the "target worker". An assistant inspector of mines claimed in 1931 that to many an African worker the employer was nothing more than "a potent source for the provision of his tax money, and such odds and ends of steel as he requires to supply himself with spears and hoes for twelve months." Having got these by working for one month, the assistant inspector asserted, the worker left for his home village.[42]

It would be naive to dismiss offhand the concept of the target worker, but one must ask such pertinent questions as (1) what gave rise to the target and (2) did it, indeed, remain fixed over time? As Van Onselen says, recourse to the concept constituted in a large measure an ideological rationalization for the low wages paid to colonial labor.[43] To understand the instability of labor in colonial industries we need a systematic analysis of the nature of the juncture between agrarianism and capitalist industrialism. Such an analysis constitutes the central concern of this essay.

The major source of employers' dissatisfaction with their workmen was the latter's desultory habits of work -- their irregularity, their absenteeism and their idling at work. In other words, the African workers were guilty of a failure to make a distinction between work and leisure, between the employers' time and their own time. This factor militated against the profitability of the enterprises. Mining concerns, like those in Musoma, Sekenke and Karagwe, which depended heavily on labor from the surrounding country, were the worst hit in this respesct. Labourers would stay away from work as they pleased and return after a period lasting from a few days to several months either to resume their employment or simply to collect their owed pay.

The evidence available indicates that absenteeism among mine workers assumed immense proportions. At some mines the average daily rate was as high as 60 percent. At one Musoma gold mine, with 238 workmen on its roll, it was reported in 1935 that the daily attendance average was 80-90 people. During the same period Sekenke mine estimated the daily turnout at 50 per cent of the laborers on its roll. The Banyambo, an ethnic group living around the Karagwe tinfield, were said to be particularly remiss in this respect. A labor officer recorded in 1939 that they "appeared generally drunken and totally undisciplined." Employers had informed him that, on average, the laborers took three to four months to complete a one-month labor card. Reports on the Musoma mines at about the same time read hardly any better.[44]

The average colonial employer or administrator could only view this type of conduct as an ingrained characteristic of the "lazy native" whose "primitive" environment could not allow him to appreciate the value of money. The European employer or supervisor, firmly rooted in an industrial way of life, was generally incapable of comprehending the forces at work when a

people, attuned to the 'natural' work rhythms of rural life and able to furnish its basic needs by self-employment on the land, was being forcibly introduced to wage labor. More often than not his racial prejudice and bigotry prevailed over reason. The resident geologist in charge of the Colonial Development Corporation's coal project in Southern Tanganyika concluded his 1950 annual report with this impression of African labor:

> These [laborers] are mainly of the Wangoni tribe and represent ... about the lowest grade of labour to be found anywhere on the African continent. They are of medium to poor physique and require constant supervision to attain any standard of efficiency or workmanship and to prevent idling.... They will work with the greatest reluctance and complete lack of interest and, when they have earned the little money they need, will retire to their villages to present themselves for work some months later, having completely forgotten any training they may previously have received.[45]

Somewhat more recently, an economic historian of considerable repute attributed the African colonial labor problem partly to what he calls African social inertia. "African society," he asserted, "possessed a certain inner cohesion, a natural resistance to new ideas and new values."[46]

An exceptional few colonialists, however, understood the African laborers' casual attitude towards wage employment with remarkable sharpness and perception. F. Longland, the man who was appointed in 1935 to look into the labor problem of the mining industry, appreciated that, unlike his European counterpart, the African laborer did not have to sell his labor as a matter of life and death. Commenting on workers' absenteeism on the Musoma goldfield, Longland explained:

> In Europe the manual worker is entirely dependent on his earnings for his livelihood, he may cultivate a garden in order to supplement his earnings. In Musoma the picture is reversed. The natives are not at all dependent on their earnings in the mines or elsewhere for their livelihood -- far from it. At present the whole time job of a Musoma native is to live his village or clan life and the little bit extra, the garden allotment, as it were, is to be gained by casual work on the mines or elsewhere.[47]

This check by the subsistence capacity of the rural economies on the development of industrial work discipline was reinforced in many areas by the availability of the cash crop alternative. The harsh and regimented life of the mining camps, coupled with the pitifully low wages, served only to further repel labor from these areas.

The foregoing economic argument, convincing as it sounds, remains inadequate and incomplete. Peasant resistance to proletarianization must also be seen as a culturally mediated function. The first-generation mine worker had his roots in rural life. He was enmeshed in a network of social relationships which exerted on him a centripetal influence, drawing him back to his own village.[48] Inextricably intertwined with this was laborer's access to free land, which further strengthened his sense of security in his village life. Even while he worked at the mine, it was impossible for the laborer to shed

all the traits of an accustomed way of life in which the rhythm of work was dictated by the peculiar nature of the largely pre-industrial rural environment.

To a large measure, the complaints of the employers about their laborers lack of proletarian work discipline were but symptoms of a confrontation between two work cultures: the one industrial, based on supervised time thrift and synchronized labor; the other pre-industrial or agrarian, characterized by independence, self-supervision and 'task orientation'. Two salient features of task orientation have been pointed out. One, that in such a system there is hardly any demarcation between work and social intercourse -- that the working day or season lengthens and shortens according to the tasks to be attended. It is the dictation not of the clock nor of the machine, but of the task.[49] The field may have to be cleared just before it begins to rain so that planting may be done in time. In that case the working day may last from dawn to dusk. In the dry season whole communities might be involved in interminable beer parties as a way of relaxing from the paroxysms of their labors during the hectic planting, weeding and harvest seasons. On any day the allocation of time to different tasks, including leisure and social intercourse, might depend on a whole range of factors: whether a neighbor's house has to be finished so that he may have the shelter he desperately needs; whether the boys have returned from a successful hunting trip; whether it is a rainy day; and so on. As one historian has succinctly pointed out, men used to labor timed by the clock will find such a pattern of life wasteful of productive labor time, an extreme indulgence in idleness.[50] This pattern of thinking is to some extent shared by many social scientists whose conception of work is molded by the industrial work culture of which they are a part. Thus we are told by one historian that pre-colonial Kenyan society was characterized by an "underutilization of labor time."[51]

In some respects the failure of the laborers to meet the expectations of their employers regarding employment stability, regularity of attendance, and efficiency reflected the laborers' conscious, though quiet, resistance to the employers' attempts to impose on them an industrial work discipline, and to the harshness and stringency of mining social life. Students of African colonial labor history who find workers' early or pre-organizational protests "in the nooks and crannies of the day to day situation" - in desertion, pilfering, loafing, sabotage or violence against foremen - have argued their case compellingly. Also many laborers, not used to being controlled, wished to assert their independence, including the freedom to change employers whenever they wanted to do so.[52]

Measures adopted by the mine owners to inculcate industrial work discipline and to stabilize their labor supplies varied from crude deterrent violence to subtle methods of social control and a system of rewards. Deserters and those absenting themselves from work without notice were liable for prosecution under the 1923 "Master and Native Servants Ordinance." Punishment under this law for workmen's 'breach of contract' were extremely severe.[53] Nevertheless, many mine owners, operating as they did in areas remote from administrative centres, found the process of litigation an extreme encumbrance upon their attempts to enforce the "despotic relations of production." They therefore tended to take the law into their own hands. At best they would set up kangaroo courts within the mine compounds to try offenders. At worst, and most often, they would mete out punishment without the pretence of such a charade. By many oral accounts, the use of a kiboko whip, though an illegal act, was common on many mines. At the Geita Gold Mine deserters who had the misfortune of being caught were publicly flogged, no doubt as exemplary punishment. Minor mistakes were normally punished by wage deductions or, as

the exercise was called, "cutting days."[54] At many mines, employers retained their laborers through a system of deferred payment. Contract laborers were, in many cases, and contrary to law, not paid till the end of their contracts.[55]

However, there was also a positive side to the employers' attempts to achieve labor stability and industrial work discipline. The practice of encouraging positive behavior through the offer of rewards was fairly widespread. In the late 1930s, for example, many mines in Musoma rewarded laborers who attended work regularly. At the Ikungu mine, if a man completed a 30-day card within 35 days, he was paid a one shilling bonus, and for every six cards completed, he was given a blanket. At Kiabakari if a man worked straight through the card, without missing a single day, he received an extra day's wages.[56] At the Geita Gold Mine contract laborers who opted to stay on at the end of their contracts received an increase of three shillings upon their monthly wages.[57]

Mining companies which had at their disposal both financial resources and professional advice approached the question of labor stabilization with a touch of finesse. Firms like the Williamson Diamonds and the Geita Gold Company operated an elaborate system of welfare and crafty social control. One aspect of the system is specially interesting. In 1952 E. B. Kirkman, a Native Labour Adviser at the Geita worked out a plan which, he claimed, would come to terms with the African Labourer's rural background and thus stabilize the mine's labor force. The company, he advised, ought to try and bring the "tribal" village to the mine compound in order to make it unnecessary for its laborers to return to their villages. Kirkman urged the company to constitute "a socially well organized community which is essentially African in its behaviour, pattern and conduct." The "organized community" would consist of workmen housed according to their "tribal" origins, with each 'tribe' housed in its own cluster of huts at the center of which was to be the headman's house. The tribal headman was to be appointed by the chief in the district of recruitment. The headman would not only be the leader of his tribesmen, but would also act as the link between the company and the tribal chief, promoting the company's public relations and thus ensuring its constant supply of labor. Behind each tribal site there would be open ground for small shambas (gardens) to keep the laborers' wives "busy and more happy." This plan began to be implemented in the same year.[58] Until the late 1950s the African compound at the Mwadui diamond mine was managed on similar lines.[59]

It is worth noting that Kirkman's plan, based as it was on some aspescts of the South African model of mine compound management, was a double-edged sword which would both stabilize labor and keep in check the emergence of a proletarian consciousness among the mineworkers. The compound would be an abode of "happy and contented tribesmen" whose tribal consciousness would restrain them from recourse to any collective action against their employers.

Conclusions

In contemporary East Africa the concern over the drift of the rural population to the wage sector is proverbial. It is no longer necessary to employ political mechanisms in order to obtain labor for industry. The market forces have transformed the rural sector to such an extent that the peasantry moves spontaneously into wage employment. What, we may ask, is the nature of these market forces?

Through the agency of colonialism money relations have deeply penetrated the rural areas. Much of the importation of manufactured goods from the colonial "mother country" meant the demise of many traditional industries, and

with them the barter method of exchanging their products. It also created new needs. Besides, such traditional transactions as bride price have in time acquired a cash value. Some peasants have concentrated on cash crop production at the expense of the production of food which they have to buy with cash. Payment in cash also often has to be made for such new needs as formal education for children and hospital treatment for common ailments.

In the face of the growing cash requirements, however, the capacity of the rural economies to satisfy them has been on the decline -- hence the increasing proletarianization of the peasantry. One authority has attributed the inability of the rural economies in Africa to satisfy the cash needs of the population to the increase in the 'comparative effort price' of the peasants' participation in the produce market. This increase is, in turn, a result of (1) the growing disequilibrium between the means of production (mainly land) and rural population, and (2) the weakening of the peasantry's competitive position in the produce market, i.e. their declining terms of trade.[60] In colonial Tanganyika the effects of population pressure on land in propelling the Wanyakyusa to wage employment has been demonstrated.[61] Similar trends are currently observable in Kilimanjaro and Buhaya. The role of the almost constantly downward trend of agricultural commodity prices in reducing peasant income probably needs no emphasis. The collapse of the price boom for cash crops in the mid-1950s was a turning point in this respect. Economic compulsion, in other words, has come to supercede political compulsion in creating employable labor for capitalist enterprise.

But the problem with the "comparative effort price" thesis on its own is that it becomes a form of economic reductionism. It overlooks factors which do not easily lend themselves to economic computation. One observes, for example, that employment in urban areas, where workers enjoy a casual existence, is generally preferred to employment in isolated and regimented mine compounds, even when the latter offer substantially higher wages. There is also the spector of the urban unemployed who suffer a wretched existence and will not return to their villages even when the latter promise better material conditions.

The proletarianization of the peasantry is a complex process involving not only economic but also social and cultural changes. The growth of the cash economy must also be viewed in terms of its role in the disintegration of the traditional social system. The social cement that bound together traditional society has been crumbling under the assault of individualism, acquisitiveness, new notions of independence and the collapse of the redistributive traditional economy. The cash nexus has also intensified social differentiation among the rural population, giving rise to the marginalization of a section of this population. The proletarianization of the peasantry has thus become an inevitable and irreversible process.

FOOTNOTES

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12. Ibid. 1923, 1927-29.

13. Iliffe, Modern History; idem, Agricultural Change in Modern Tanganyika (Nairobi), pp. 19ff.

14. Department of Mines Annual Reports, 1931 & 1934. See also TNA 25294, Inquiry into labour problems in connection with future mineral & agricultural enterprises.

15. Dept. of Mines Annual Reports, 1931, 1934, 1936, 1939, 1945; O. R. Khamsini, "The Gold Miners and the Mine Workers on the Lupa Goldfield, 1922-63" (M. A. Thesis, University of Dar es Salaam, 1977), Ch. II.

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58. TNA 23047 Vol. II E. B. Kirkman, memorandum to the consulting engineer.

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