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**Accumulation and Order:
State and Society in Colonial Malawi, 1891-1929**

By

Anthony Edward Woods, Jr.

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ABSTRACT

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This study uses a revisionist perspective recently established by African historians and political economists to examine how colonial rule affected the economic evolution of Malawi. The application of this theory demonstrates that Zomba's political autonomy created economic problems as the colonial state tried to fulfill its own prerequisites and imperatives. In particular, the administration's quest for hegemony and legitimacy caused it to pursue policies which hindered the process of primitive accumulation and thus thwarted the expansion of capitalism in the country. The economy consequently grew more dependent upon expatriate corporations whose interest was maintaining the production of raw commodities for metropolitan industries, not expanding Malawi's struggling economy. Thus, colonial rule created dependency in contemporary Malawi because of the state's failure to perform its own role rather than as a result of conspiratorial alliances with capitalist interests.

The key to this whole process was the disjunction between the society Zomba envisioned and the one the world economy created. Capitalist expansion generated relations

of production which contradicted the social schemes which Malawi's administrators designed to facilitate their rule. As the colonial government struggled to establish its authority, social conditions became increasingly chaotic and forced the state to work against the expansion of capitalist relations of production. These political constraints stunted Malawi's economy and made it dependent on the largesse of multinational firms.

Thus, this thesis demonstrates that colonial rule did create the structural conditions which left Malawi economically subordinated to Western capitalist countries. However, it shows that this development of dependency was not a result of a conscious plan but rather a consequence of maladministration and political failure. Understanding this fact allows us to avoid the ideological dialectics which typically dominate studies of colonial Africa's political economy and instead concentrate on the social and economic dialectics which cemented the continent's fate.

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Chapter 1 ...And the State Against All

Colonialism remains an enigma for African historians. Although most scholars will concede that imperial rule created enormous problems in African societies and sowed many of the seeds which created the continent's contemporary economic problems, there is little consensus about why colonialism failed. In large part, much of this uncertainty results from an inadequate understanding of the state's impact on social formation in colonial Africa. Various historians have discredited traditional theories which claim capitalism worked hand in hand with the colonial state to subordinate Africa to metropolitan economies.¹ But these scholars are still struggling to explain the colonial state's role in the impoverishment and economic subordination of Africa during the Twentieth Century.

This study seeks to fill this lacuna by examining the interplay between state policies and class formation in colonial Malawi. It shows that that country's imperial administrators never fulfilled the political imperatives of their state despite their continual efforts to create a legitimate and strong polity. This inability to build a functioning state initially kept Zomba from supporting nascent capitalist classes. When those classes did emerge inspite of the state's inactivity, Zomba found that their existence actually presented a new and dangerous threat to

the territory's political stability. Malawi's colonial administrators consequently strove to create a civil society actually antithetical to the formation of a capitalist economy. The failure of the administration to support primitive accumulation had a debilitating effect on Malawi's colonial economy and sowed the seeds of rural poverty which still exists in that country today.

Malawi is a natural subject for a study of this kind. Even the country's extraordinary increases in GNP, which made it one of independent Africa's most notable economic successes, have failed to eradicate the dire poverty which made this small central African country Albion's most notorious "imperial slum."² The inability to rescue the Malawian people from poverty and hunger despite remarkable economic growth underscores the devastating impact that colonialism had on Malawi's economy. Like their compatriots elsewhere, Malawian historians have thus far failed to explain why colonialism created such devastating poverty in a country whose productivity has been amply demonstrated in the independence era.

This historiographical confusion is in large part a reflection of continuing uncertainty about the nature of colonial Africa's political economy. This issue has always been a complex and controversial subject. Even as the imperial age dawned in Africa, critics argued that imperialism and, by logical extension, the colonial state were merely ways for Europeans to extract wealth from

Africa and transfer it to Europe.³ Colonial officials denied this calumny and protested that they were only serving progress and enlightenment, not to mention empire, by bringing modernism to primitive peoples. This debate reached new levels as Marxist scholars entered the fray during the First World War and denounced colonialism in several polemics.⁴ The establishment of a Russian Marxist state antithetical to the colonial powers in Western Europe ensured that the Marxist critique of colonialism would become an ideological standard around which left-wing critics could assail the colonial governments.

The raising of the Marxist banner soon generated new theoretical insights. The most popular of these Marxist revisions suggested that European capitalism systematically underdeveloped Africa in order to create greater wealth in the metropole and perpetuate dependent economic relationships between colonizers and colonized.⁵ Scholars have accorded the colonial state a very important role in this process. They argue that the natural anarchy of capitalism would have prevented the systemic creation of dependent economic relations unless the state, with the rational institutions and the political authority necessary for the successful consummation of economic plans, acted as capital's lackey.⁶

The Marxist perspective soon assumed a powerful position in academic circles, especially in inter-war Britain. Even the vociferous criticisms about colonial

administration which arose from within colonial bureaucracies or expatriate communities in Africa were seized upon as further vindication of an emerging Marxist orthodoxy. Only in the post-war period did Oxbridge scholars try to break the shackles of the Marxist critique by arguing that order and co-existence, not economic exploitation, were the real bases for colonial authority.⁷

Such revisions were swept aside in the tumult of decolonization. Throughout the continent, the winds of change ensured that only the darkest portrait of the colonial regime would be painted as Africans struggled to achieve self-government. The rhetoric of Africa's new leaders reinforced the notion of the colonial state as a capitalist lackey. Leaders like Nkrumah and Nyerere campaigned not only against European political control but also against capitalist exploitation. The African socialism which emerged from those campaigns, combined with anti-colonial struggles in Lusophone Africa, reinforced the theory that colonial rule and capitalism were two sides of the same coin.

The increasingly anti-capitalist sentiment in Africa dovetailed neatly with Western academic currents. Old World scholars, enthusiastic about the ascension of socialist governments in several Western European states, happily embraced any theory which would undermine both the traditional state and capitalism. American scholarship's slow emergence from the fear of McCarthyism caused young

American scholars to embrace the apparently fresh concepts of world economy and underdevelopment.⁸ Thus, even as Africa's new leaders extolled the theories of the old left, Western scholars heralded the apparent freshness and utility of the same material.

This coincidence soon created a hothouse climate of scholarship as universities expanded their African studies programs and Africans won their independence. New studies which elucidated the concepts of underdevelopment and dependency often mirrored work done by Marxists in the 1930s.⁹ By the late 1960s, the notion of political economy began to emerge from this framework and by the early 1970s, it established the colonial state as a principal villain in the economic despoilment of Africa.¹⁰ Some scholarly critics continued to argue that colonialism and the colonial state had actually helped Africa, but their critiques usually fell on deaf ears and the political economy model became paramount in African studies.¹¹

Ironically, even as Africanist scholars began to explore and apply Marxist theories, the concept of historical materialism was emerging from a Dark Age. Eurocommunists began to assert their political independence from the Kremlin while Western scholars began to revive the dynamism which had characterized Marxist studies before the Russian Revolution.¹² One of the most important ramifications of this renaissance was a reevaluation of the role of the state in capitalist society.

This revision ironically began undermining many of the precepts of the Africanists' theories even as those paradigms were maturing. Like the colonial state, the capitalist state had been a mere tool of the ruling classes in virtually all Marxist studies before the 1960s. The revitalization of left wing theory catalyzed a stimulating debate as Marxist scholars, most notably Nicos Poulantzas and Ralph Miliband, tried to develop a comprehensive theory of state and politics.¹³ Although the consequent debate frequently resembled a quarrel between British pluralists and French structuralists, it nevertheless produced startling innovations about the role of the state in modern society. Both Miliband and Poulantzas concluded that the state assumed a more neutral "autonomous" position in socio-economic affairs than Marxists had previously conceded.

Subsequent studies have strongly supported the notion that states in capitalist societies are autonomous.¹⁴ Marxists and their fellow travellers now feel that the state is more concerned with the transformation of class conflict into political clashes than with the actual repression of subordinate classes, especially because the latter requires an exorbitantly expensive level of constant violence. These scholars argue that the state's role is to organize ideology and tradition in such a way that the class conflicts inevitable in any mode of production will be channelled into political institutions which will settle

the disputes without a radical reorganization of the dominant modes of production. In essence, the state seeks to manipulate ideology and tradition so that they will mystify exploitive relations of production and defuse any violence which economic domination might occasion.

This theory obviously gives the state a much different role than previously assumed. Instead of defining class formation and structure, the state simply provides a venue in which the socio-economic conflicts inherent in any economic system can be reconciled with a minimum disturbance in production. Giving the state this role reinforces the crucial point that transformations in the mode of production, and not the dictates of a political superstructure, turn the wheels of history.

There are limits to the state's autonomy which have an impact on class formation. A state does need to maintain dominant classes so that it can obtain the revenue it needs to sustain its bureaucracy. Therefore, political institutions are designed to reproduce dominant modes of production, be they capitalist or non-capitalist, until transitions in productive activity create a new dominant mode. Thus, it is unlikely that a state will ally itself with a class from a nascent mode of production in any society. Only when a class represents a dominant economic system, and by extension is itself the dominant class in society, can the state even appear to take its side. Even then the state's primary function is to ensure that this

class maintains its hegemony by winning political victories rather having the state exerts its authority through coercive activities which drains the government's exchequer and undermines its legitimacy.

The ramifications of such a theory for African historians are obviously enormous. If the capitalist state itself only serves capitalist classes because they represent the means to reproduce a dominant mode of production, the orthodox position that the colonial state supported capitalist classes in the empire becomes very dubious. After all, capitalism was rarely the dominant mode of production in colonial areas despite the best efforts of both indigenous and expatriate populations. Thus, the state needed to adopt a policy which not only sought to transform traditional ideologies into political idioms compatible with European rule but also aimed to restructure class relations by encouraging primitive accumulation.

The nature of primitive accumulation itself makes it unlikely that any state would seek to pursue both these policies simultaneously. Primitive accumulation of course describes the process by which capitalism emerges. Although this process suffers from the same mystification which affects so many Marxist ideas, its central point is that society divides itself into "two very different kinds of commodity owners; on the one hand, the owners of money, means of production, means of subsistence, who are eager to valorize the sum of values they have appropriated by buying

the labour-power of others; on the other hand, free workers, the sellers of their own labour power, and therefore the sellers of labour."¹⁵ Only the transformation of a society into these two predominant classes can create capitalism.

This process is, as Marx himself admits, "anything but idyllic."¹⁶ Laborers have to become alienated from traditional means of subsistence so that individuals who have accumulated both capital and the means of production can hire them. That alienation fragments traditional society in such a manner that it becomes difficult to salvage traditions and ideologies which the state can manipulate to create a civil society which depends on hegemony rather than coercion. Therefore, unless the state can depend on a capitalist class which can sustain extended coercion until new ideologies mystify the exploitive characteristics of the newly socio-economic system, it probably will not seek to alienate labor because that process will make the establishment of legitimate authority far more difficult as traditions disintegrate.

Indeed, the state would fear using coercion in order to sustain primitive accumulation because of the possibility that it could not draw the conflicts inherent in any emergent economy out of the workplace and into the political arena. Not only would such a failure generate conflicts which the state sought to prevent, but it could also antagonize the capitalist class if the state failed to

apply its coercive power. Thus, the political imperatives of the state might lead it to discourage primitive accumulation rather than create it. Such discouragement would allow it to rely on traditional social patterns which it could manipulate to establish legitimacy and maintain order rather than depend on a costly coercive bureaucracy funded by a nascent dominant class whose future was at best uncertain.

This political perspective tends to demystify many of the enigmas surrounding colonial rule. For instance, it explains how imperial authorities could maintain order inspite of the small number of police each colony had. Such an explanation is especially important because unswerving support of capitalism and the capitalist class by the state would require the latter to exert enormous amounts of constant violence in order to maintain order. It also places the question of dependency within the framework of the socio-economic transformations which occurred as a result of the state's socio-political machinations rather than as a result of the numerous economic laws which the state passed and on which political economists tend to dwell.

The last point is especially important in terms of understanding colonialism from the perspective of historical materialism. All too often scholars have assumed that legislation created reality in colonial Africa. However, as our understanding of basic socio-economic units

such as households has become more refined, scholars have begun to realize that law had less to do with the way in which Africa evolved than did tradition, social organization and most importantly economic interaction with representatives of the metropolitan economy.¹⁷ As these revelations occur, the state's role becomes more ambiguous. Consequently one can legitimately ask whether its role in social organization may actually have subverted the process of primitive accumulation and thus actually undermined capitalism, at least as a mode of production, as colonial rulers tried to bridge the chasm between African and European culture.

Of course, laws did have some effect on African economies. They clearly did limit the ways in which socio-economic structures could emerge. But the state's insistence on maintaining socio-political structures inconsistent with primitive accumulation ensured that the capitalist class would always question the state's legitimacy, at least in economic matters. This generated tension between capitalists and colonizers, and many accumulators eventually developed productive systems which sought to avoid both the state's scrutiny and its intervention. Moreover, this tendency was crucial because it tended to signal to other groups that state policy vis-a-vis economic matters was irrelevant, leading to the establishment of economic formations, particularly in terms of articulation between capitalists and non-capitalists,

which were scarcely affected by the myriad rules developed by the central administration.

Little work has actually explored this vein. D.P. McCarthy's study certainly suggests that the state exhibited enormous autonomy in Tanganyika during the inter-war period.¹⁸ Nevertheless, McCarthy is virtually alone in his assertions. Other scholars interested in political autonomy, most notably Professors Berman and John Lonsdale, have until recently been preoccupied by attempts to establish the state's autonomy in the face of hostile historiography.¹⁹

This continued uncertainty has become more important as the role of primitive accumulation becomes increasingly important in African historiography. John Iliffe has recently addressed this issue in his investigation of capitalism in Africa.²⁰ Robert Shenton's fine analysis of capitalism in Northern Nigeria has furthered this trend by asking whether dependency is actually a consequence of capitalism's failure rather than its structural manipulation.²¹ Moreover, Shenton's questions about the effectiveness of primitive accumulation in Africa bring up the central question of this thesis; if primitive accumulation did not occur in Africa, what role did the colonial state play in that failure?

This question inexorably leads us back to the state's attempts to establish hegemony while fulfilling its prerequisite functions. While the type of hegemony upon

which the state is dependent does not completely organize relations of production, it does affect them enough to determine the viability of certain modes of production, most notably capitalism, and the effectiveness of socio-economic transformations such as primitive accumulation. If the state chooses to eschew indigenous traditions and ideologies and instead rely on other hegemonic devices, it will facilitate primitive accumulation by creating political institutions which are more compatible with capitalism and in which capitalists may participate. Such a course will also force the state to adopt a policy of strong coercion to maintain order as people try to retain their traditions and adapt to newly subordinate political and socio-economic positions. If, on the other hand, the state reduces the level of coercion it needs to exert by legitimizing a traditional social order, it will inhibit primitive accumulation by reinforcing non-capitalist social relations among the general population and reinforcing ideologies frequently antithetical to capitalism's prerequisites.

Colonial administrations did not follow perfectly theoretical paths, of course. Most states were simply too haphazardly organized to plan, let alone adopt, a systematic pattern of social control. Moreover, the state's initial conquest of a territory usually gave it a breathing space in which its legitimacy would not be questioned because of the viciousness with which it had established

imperial rule, thus reducing its need to establish a functioning socio-political structure. The early state also helped primitive accumulation by ensuring that its indigenous economy achieved some degree of articulation with metropolitan economies so that it could obtain the tax revenue needed to reproduce the state.

Articulation encouraged capital accumulation by linking Africa's non-capitalist economies to European capitalism. Colonial economies became monetized, and markets in which capital could be obtained emerged. But this linkage did not depend upon the formation of capitalist relations of production in Africa, and capitalists found that they needed either to entice and induce people to work in their enterprises or establish "labor-service systems" to maintain production.²² These requirements became even more pressing as it became apparent that colonial capitalists could not rely on the state for coercive assistance. Relying on cooption rather than coercion was costly and debilitating for nascent capitalists though, and primitive accumulation consequently stalled time and time again.

Under these conditions, capitalism as a productive system ultimately failed to establish itself as a dominant mode of production and left the various colonies at the mercy of multinational corporations built up with metropolitan capital. These conglomerates were able and willing to accept the non-capitalist modes of production

that they found in the colonies in order to produce the raw commodities needed for their capitalist enterprises back home. The arrival of these monolithic corporations considerably retarded local capitalism, either expatriate or indigenous, because the multinationals' objectives strengthened non-capitalist production and thus slowed down the transformation of the indigenous society.

The state further antagonized its own capitalist class by readily accepting multinational participation in the colonial economy. The state's reason for behaving in such a manner was a consequence of simple economics. The multinationals could provide the administration's treasury with badly needed finances without significantly altering the social organization upon which the state depended to maintain order. Moreover, the expatriate conglomerates did not need financial assistance for infrastructural development. Local capitalists simply could not provide revenue under the same conditions. Instead, their ability to produce revenue depended upon significantly larger outlays of financial assistance than the administration, constrained by a penurious Exchequer, could provide.

The state's dependence upon traditional authority and multinationals almost insured that primitive accumulation in Africa would be a torturous affair. Thus, the state's role in the creation of dependency in Africa was very large not because administrations supported capitalism but rather because they structurally constrained primitive

accumulation. The colonial state contributed to the impoverishment of Africa by inhibiting capitalism, not by assisting it. As a result, Africa today is not only hampered by excessively large amounts of non-capitalist production, but it still has to survive the debilitating social costs which primitive accumulation inevitably entails.

Certainly this kind of relationship between state and economy characterized colonial Malawi. Sir Harry Johnston's first administration openly worked against Malawi's expatriate capitalists because of the commissioner's alliance with the British South Africa Company. After Johnston and Rhodes suffered a falling out, the little commissioner legitimized the capitalists' position. But his tepid support for their enterprises and his focus on his administration's internal problems did little to help their position.

Things did not improve after Sir Alfred Sharpe succeeded Johnston in 1897. Even after a devastating recession at the turn of the century, Sharpe did little to help the economically beleaguered capitalist class. Moreover, new predatory multinationals such as the Imperial Tobacco Company moved into the colony and further threatened the local capitalist class. Despite Sharpe's benign neglect, capitalism nevertheless began to expand by the end of his regime.

This expansion brought about new problems. The state

belatedly realized that it lacked effective control in rural areas and began investigating the establishment of traditional political systems. Meanwhile, African proletarians and capitalists became increasingly restive about their subordinate positions in colonial society. Matters came to a head when John Chilembwe led a rebellion of indigenous workers and capitalists in 1915. The state realized it needed to gain more control over the African community and asserted that Malawi would be an indigenous, not expatriate, colony.

The territory's expatriate capitalists rather naturally resented this decision, and a few planters even threatened to rebel. These threats became hollow as the postwar recession undermined their position, and the government stood by and watched them wither. The capitalist class had one last chance to initiate primitive accumulation in the mid-1920s, but class fractionalization made it virtually impossible to start the process without state assistance. By 1930, even the faint hope of the mid 1920s had evaporated and capitalism had clearly failed.

Thus, the making of an imperial slum had less to do with administrative support for capitalists than it did with government inhibition of primitive accumulation. The continued poverty of the Malawian people is not a consequence of the population's exploitation by capitalism but rather a result of the colonial state's refusal to allow the social basis for capitalist exploitation to

occur. Colonialism did create dependency in Malawi, but it was a result of a design far different from the one scholars have traditionally ascribed to the colonial state.

ENDNOTES

1. The best example being Walter Rodney, How Europe Underdeveloped Africa (Washington, 1974).
2. The best summary of Malawi's economic achievements, as well as the structural limitations of those developments can be found in the proceedings of a conference held in Edinburgh during the summer of 1984. See John McCracken, ed., Malawi: An Alternative Pattern of Development (Edinburgh, 1985). The best description of Malawi's continuing cycle of poverty can be found in Louis Msukwa and Vim Ettema, Food and Malnutrition in Malawi (Zomba, 1985).
3. For instance, J.A. Hobson, Imperialism (Ann Arbor, 1965).
4. Nikolai Bukharin, Imperialism and World Economy (New York, 1973); V.I. Lenin, Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism (New York, 1979).
5. An excellent example of this genre is Andre Gunder Frank, Dependent Accumulation and Underdevelopment (New York, 1979), 157-163.
6. As some Malawian historians still believe. For instance, see Leroy Vail, "The State and the Creation of Colonial Malawi's Agricultural Economy," in Robert Rotberg, ed., Imperialism, Colonialism, and Hunger (Lexington, 1983). Even the Elias Mandala's recent revisionist study, while conceding that Malawi's administration "was not the obedient servant of European enterprise that many writers have made of colonial states, ultimately discusses its "historic mission...as an agent of metropolitan capital." See Elias Mandala, Work and Control in a Peasant Economy (Madison, 1990): 131 and 277.
7. Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher, Africa and the Victorians (Garden City, 1968).
8. Perhaps best exemplified by the work of Immanuel Wallerstein, whose first effort was Wallerstein, Africa: The Politics of Independence (New York, 1961).

9. A.G. Frank, "The Development of Underdevelopment," Monthly Review (September, 1966); a prime example of work from the 1930s is A.T. Nzula, et al, Forced Labour in Colonial Africa (London, 1979).
10. For instance, see E.A. Brett, Colonialism and Underdevelopment in East Africa (London, 1973).
11. The critics being L.H. Gann and P. Duignan, Burden of Empire (New York, 1967).
12. The key study in this emancipation is probably Louis Althusser and Etienne Balibar, Reading Capital (London, 1970); for more on the vivacity of Marxist theory before the Russian Revolution, and its subsequent degradation, see Leszek Kolakowski, Main Currents of Marxism: Vol. 2. The Golden Age (Oxford, 1985), and ibid, ...Vol. 3. The Breakdown.
13. Ralph Miliband, The State in Capitalist Society (London, 1969); and Nicos Poulantzas, Political Power and Social Classes (London, 1973).
14. Anthony Giddens and David Held, eds., Classes, Power, and Conflict (Berkeley, 1982).
15. Karl Marx, Capital, Volume One (New York, 1977): 874. By far the best summary of primitive accumulation and its meaning can be found in Part Eight of this volume, especially chapter twenty six. Others have picked up the theme, most notably Lenin in V.I. Lenin, The Development of Capitalism in Russia (Moscow, 1977). But depressingly little work has focussed on this central issue in either African historiography or Marxist scholarship, and the term remains unclear.
16. Marx, Capital, 874.
17. As recent studies on colonial Malawi demonstrate. See Landeg White, Magomero: Portrait of an African Village (Cambridge, 1987); Megan Vaughan, The Story of an African Famine: Gender and Famine in Twentieth Century Malawi (Cambridge, 1987); and Mandala, Work and Control.... Law has not been abandoned though, and I eagerly anticipate the publication of Kristin Mann and Richard Roberts, eds., Law in Colonial Africa (Portsmouth, 1991).
18. D.M.P. McCarthy, Colonial Bureaucracy and Creating Underdevelopment (Ames, 1982).
19. Bruce Berman and John Lonsdale, "Coping with the Contradictions; the Development of the Colonial State

in Kenya, 1895-1914," JAH, 20, 4 (1979); Berman and Lonsdale, "Crises of Accumulation, Coercion and the Colonial State," CJAS, 14, 1 (1980). Another interesting attempt by Anne Phillips to unravel the mysteries of the colonial state has also emerged recently, but like other studies has fallen short of its potential. See Phillips, The Enigma of Colonialism (London, 1989). In Central Africa, Karen Fields has done some interesting work on the autonomous state which, like McCarthy's, appears to have occasioned little comment. See Fields, Revival and Rebellion in Colonial Central Africa (Princeton, 1985). Berman's long awaited book has also just appeared, and promises to resolve many of the questions which still persist about the nature of the colonial state. See Bruce Berman, Control and Crisis in Colonial Kenya: The Dialectic of Domination (Athens, 1990).

20. John Iliffe, The Emergence of African Capitalism (London, 1983).
21. Robert Shenton, The Development of Capitalism in Northern Nigeria (Toronto, 1986).
22. As Lenin described them in his discussion of the transition from a corvée to capitalist economy in Russia. See Lenin, The Development..., 195-207. The kind of system developed in Malawi on these lines was the notorious thangata production.

Chapter 2
Crown and Charter:
The Establishment of Colonial Rule in Malawi

Malawi's colonial state faced a difficult task at the end of the 19th century. It not only had to establish its own authority over a violent territory populated by diverse peoples, but it also needed to establish political institutions to administer what it seized. Nor could it depend on a strong socio-economic structure since the country's dominant productive activity was slave raiding. Thus, the state had to encourage the creation of an economic system around which it could create a civil society based on hegemony and not coercion.

Unfortunately, the state failed almost completely. Johnston's dependence on the largesse of the British South Africa Company made him ignore the territory's existing, albeit nascent, capitalist community. As a result, that community began to develop in a number of ways which created deep schisms within the European population and contradictions among commodity producers. Johnston simultaneously made a bad situation even worse by relying on violent coercion so much that even the sympathetic British community became alienated.

That alienation became a problem as Johnston's relations with Rhodes soured. As the South African's largesse ended, the colony's first commissioner desperately cast about for new sources of revenue. He consequently

failed to rationalize the class fractions established by the immigration of new settlers seeking their fortune in Britain's new territory. Instead, he strengthened the schisms in the European community by granting wholesale land grants to practically anyone who wanted them.

This land plan made Malawi's economic future unclear. Virtually all of the Shire Highlands were alienated, making peasant production impossible in the country's most fertile areas. What type of estate production would predominate was uncertain. Large estate owners, mostly settlers from the pre-colonial era, apparently wanted to depend on tenant laborers while small estate owners, principally new immigrants, depended on local labor supplies and migrants from the central and northern regions. The contradiction between these two kinds of production effectively hobbled both of them and thus hindered primitive accumulation.

Nor was economic policy Johnston's only foible. He also failed to establish more than a primitive bureaucracy which could establish British hegemony even if the economic contradictions were resolved. The northern and central parts of the country remained remote areas governed by a handful of administrators. Even in the south where he stationed more administrators, Johnston neglected to demarcate districts and establish any routine other than terror. Moreover, the commissioner virtually disdained traditional authorities and society once his administration was in place.

The net effect of these policies was that Malawi changed masters but not its future. A colonial anarchy replaced the chaos of the pre-colonial period and left many questions hanging. The kind of production around which the country would organize as it entered the imperial economy was uncertain. Definitions of law and order in any new society which did emerge were equally unclear. Indeed, the only certainty was that the Union Jack had been run up the pole. But that could do little for the territory's economy or society until the state began working in concert with a class which effectively utilized the country's rich resources.

In many respects, it was ironic that Britain ever became interested in Malawi.¹ There was little to attract the British in the small, narrow country between modern Mozambique and Zambia. Indeed, Malawi was not prime property: it had none of the mineral deposits which drew so many African adventurers to the continent; nor did it harbor the kind of geographic mysteries which attracted other Europeans to the continent.

Most importantly, the British faced a daunting task in creating a unified polity from the territory's disparate cultures and peoples. In the Shire River and Shire Highlands, the Nyanja and Mang'anja dominated. The Chewa who today dominate the country's politics inhabited the central region. Farther north, a number of distinct

peoples, most notably the Ngonde, the Tonga and the Timbuka, lived.

The northern groups were the most distinct and shared few cultural and political traditions other than their common Bantu origins.² The Chewa, Nyanja and Mang'anja were far more closely related; they shared mutually intelligible languages and a common culture. However, while they had once been able to unify into relatively large states, such as Undi's kingdom, by the nineteenth century they lived in "a number of separate and more or less independent chieftainships."³ Indeed, although there were theoretically paramountcies which dominated vast regions, by the mid nineteenth century nothing "could destroy the reality of village autonomy" and traditional political systems "did not form a tightly integrated system."⁴

The decentralization of political authority in central and southern Malawi made the village, or mudzi, those regions' most important political institution. Each village was ruled by a headman, or nduna, who had a loose allegiance to a chief, or mfumu. This loose system not only ensured that there was "instability in the hierarchial system of leadership" but also guaranteed that societies in the southern two-thirds of Malawi were becoming more "atomistic as the number of hierarchial systems was multiplying."⁵

Ironically, the instability which characterized the Chewa domains also spread to the north in the

eighteenth century when Balokwa clans moved into the northern lake regions. These groups, who were interested in establishing trade routes from Zambia to Lake Malawi, did not establish political control in northern Malawi, but their presence began to upset traditional relations in the more centralized northern societies.⁶ Thus, throughout the territory, change, instability and disunity characterized indigenous societies by the dawn of the nineteenth century.

These problems made the country a natural target for predatory groups, and by the mid-nineteenth century foreigners intent on exploiting local conditions began to arrive. The first of these groups were slave traders who travelled from the coast and began to prey on the local population.⁷ Simultaneously two new groups, the Ngoni and the Yao, displaced from their own homelands, migrated into the area and established new states.⁸

These interlopers made a shambles of indigenous society, displacing thousands of people.⁹ People in the Shire Highlands, the southern region's most fertile territory, feared Ngoni raids so much that they fled the more habitable plains for more defensible hills.¹⁰ Further north, Ngoni raiders and slave traders laid siege to Timbuka, Tonga and Ngonde settlements and severely disrupted those societies. Thus, the country's already anarchic conditions grew even worse as the nineteenth century progressed.

The disruption caused by these intruders was not

entirely negative though, and, left on their own, the immigrants might have developed more stable and unified polities. For instance, when the Ngoni eventually settled in the north central part of the country, they established relatively stable states which effectively kept other predatory slave raiders at bay. The Yao and "Arabs" also built new political and economic systems based on caravan trade to the coast.¹¹

The societies dependent on caravan trade had problems than the emerging Ngoni polities. Since slaves were the most coveted commodity in Mozambique's entrepots, both the Yao and the "Arabs" became suppliers and began raiding their neighbors to obtain the human cargo needed. These military expeditions naturally undermined indigenous culture even further and made its replacement with more stable systems more imperative. Indeed, Yao raiding became so common that one scholar has claimed that it produced "anarchy" in pre-colonial Malawi.¹²

The slave societies created Yao and "Arabs" also experienced difficulties because they did not reproduce traditional societies in a new setting but instead sought to create new systems. Consequently, leaders fought bitter civil wars to establish their legitimacy, and traditional figures, displaced by the transformation of the political economy, bitterly resented the new men and took every opportunity to subvert the new paramounts.¹³

Nevertheless, these emerging societies also had

positive influences on the region. They were heavily populated by people seeking sanctuary from the slave wars. And by the late nineteenth century, some of these polities, like Mlozi's, had become very powerful, thus providing bases from which social systems more unified than traditional Malawian societies might emerge. But their dependence on the slave trade increased the level of violence throughout the territory in the interim.

The slave trade did more than undermine traditional society. It also brought Malawi into British consciousness through the work of David Livingstone. The missionary had first ventured into Malawi during an exploration of the Zambezi.¹⁴ Appalled by the rampant slave raiding he witnessed, he decided that he needed to return and establish missions which could offer sanctuary and protection for the beleaguered indigenous community. Like many of his plans, Livingstone's vision for Malawi foundered upon reality. His most notable contribution to Malawi occurred when he abandoned his Makololo porters in the Shire Valley, and these well armed interlopers established states which grew strong enough from commodity production to resist slave raiders.¹⁵

Livingstone's death stimulated his fellow Scots to take up the gauntlet in Malawi and strive to end the slave trade. Scottish missionaries set out for both the lake regions and the Shire Valley.¹⁶ Their stations eventually became centers around which other expatriate activity,

particularly economic enterprises, organized. Malawi was, however, very remote from other commercial centers in southern Africa. Goods either had to be transported overland by porters or up the shallow Zambezi and Shire Rivers. The absence of a navigable entrance to the Zambesi, resulting in a need to tranship goods from the KwaKwa River, further complicated communications.¹⁷ As a result of these problems, there was little European interest in Malawi, and by 1889 only one expatriate corporation, the African Lakes Company (hereafter A.L.C.), operated in the territory.

Even this company would never have been founded if the country's large missionary population had been able to provision itself.¹⁸ But selling supplies to Christian proselytizers was not very profitable, and without large profits the A.L.C. was unable either to develop or encourage economic operations which would interest metropolitan investors or governments. The local managers gamely tried to improve their situation, but throughout the pre-colonial period only the ivory trade kept the company out of the hands of its creditors.¹⁹

Despite its poverty, the A.L.C. did influence the transformation of Malawi's economy. It not only provided the only regularly scheduled boats from the coast inland to the ivory-rich areas, but it also established trading posts where people could sell a few agricultural commodities.²⁰ This consumption allowed a small number of European

planters, primarily former missionaries, to begin operations on a very small scale. The development of this planter class was important. Despite its small size, this new group experimented with crops and began to develop the type of commodities which were most compatible with Malawi's climate.²¹ They also advertised the viability of profitable enterprise in a region more noted for its missionaries than its capitalists.²² Most importantly, they advanced the argument that Malawi ought to be under the Union Jack by establishing British commerce as well as Christianity in the small country. Indeed, the planters frequently petitioned the Foreign Office to assume formal control of the country.²³

The lobbying was not entirely in vain. In 1883, Whitehall established a consulate in order to monitor the slave trade.²⁴ Though there were frequent disputes between the ambitious expatriate community and the more cautious officials, the latter's presence reassured the European community that Britain would not abandon them in the scramble for Africa.²⁵ Nevertheless, to the consternation of the local expatriates, Whitehall obstinately refused to be drawn further into Malawian affairs, and it certainly appeared that this small territory with such marginal potential warranted little consideration or concern in Whitehall. So the situation remained static vis-a-vis the Portuguese claims to the country.²⁶

Two events changed that apathy forever; the

establishment of the British South Africa Company (hereafter the B.S.A.C.) and the participation of Sir Harry Johnston in its affairs. It was hardly coincidental that Johnston and the affairs of the early B.S.A.C. were inextricably linked. Johnston was an ambitious young adventurer who had decided to fulfill his destiny in the growing empire; by the late 1880s, he already had conducted delicate negotiations for the Foreign Office over the Oil Rivers.²⁷ By the late 1880s, he tried to further his reputation by proposing that the empire establish a domain from the Cape of Good Hope to Cairo.²⁸

These activities ensured that Johnston would gain an important position in the establishment of British hegemony north of the Limpopo, and in 1888 he was appointed Her Majesty's Consul to Mozambique. This was a difficult position because while Britain was willing to grant a charter to the B.S.A.C. for administering the area between Mozambique and Angola, the Portuguese still claimed that region as part of their empire. Johnston's first task was to resolve this problem by traveling to Lisbon in order to negotiate an agreement with the Lusitanians.²⁹

Johnston stunned everyone by reaching a provisional agreement which actually excluded the Shire Highlands from the British zone. In some respects, Johnston's abandonment of Scotland's most important Malawian outpost remains inexplicable. The consul was certainly aware of the presence of a small but well entrenched British community

there. He also recognized that the area was a potential gateway into the rich African interior.³⁰ But Johnston's decision allowed him to obtain a larger area for Rhodes' nascent empire, and he appeared more than willing to sacrifice a few Scottish clerics and entrepreneurs for the sake of his patron's imperial ambitions and his new charter company.

Johnston's rash action distressed Lord Salisbury, the Foreign Secretary. The government's slim majority depended upon Scottish voters, and any abandonment of the Shire Highland's large community of Scottish missionaries, especially for the aggrandizement of a South African charter company, was certain to raise the hackles of Her Majesty's Caledonian subjects.³¹ Salisbury consequently decided that the provisional agreement was completely unacceptable and impressed this lesson upon Johnston by sending him to Edinburgh to explain the treaty to the Scots. The tumultuous and acrimonious welcome which he received convinced Johnston that any settlement would have to place the Shire Highlands in Britain's territory.³² Salisbury gratefully accepted the commissioner's new appreciation of the situation, and with Johnston's acquiescence London denounced the treaty.

The rejection left the fate of Malawi in the air. Stung by his reception in Edinburgh, Johnston was anxious to go to Mozambique and conduct a treaty making expedition which would firmly entrench Malawi in Britain's sphere of

influence. Salisbury, however, refused to provide the consul with the necessary funds, which were finally offered by Rhodes.³³

Rhodes' generosity was an ominous sign for Malawi's capitalists. Johnston had already demonstrated that he was willing to sacrifice Malawi for the B.S.A.C.'s benefit even without any formal obligation to Rhodes; now that Johnston was economically tied to Rhodes, his capacity to act impartially began even more suspect. The commissioner's bias became even more problematic when Rhodes purchased the A.L.C. in June 1889.³⁴ Although Whitehall denied it, it certainly looked like the charter company was about to expand its operations north of the Zambezi.³⁵

The question of charter rule was very troublesome for Malawi's expatriates. No one doubted that the B.S.A.C. could establish an administration which would curtail the slave trade and improve communications. However, the expatriates did not expect the South African colossus to tolerate the presence of competing economic enterprises, and they feared that charter rule would inevitably cause the loss of their estates and businesses. Johnston himself experienced this uneasiness upon his arrival in Malawi: after landing at Katungas, the Mozambique consul found that some of the planters and traders were unhappy about his association with the B.S.A.C. and concerned about his real purpose in traveling to the country.³⁶

The expatriate community, however, was even more

worried about the immediate threat presented by the presence of a large Portuguese force at the confluence of the Ruo and Shire Rivers. Major Serpa Pinto, the Portuguese commander, insisted that his party was only interested in conducting scientific inquiries along the west side of the lake, but no one doubted that the Lusitanians would be more than willing to collect treaties as well as specimens as he travelled to the lake.³⁷

Johnston's timely arrival stalled the Portuguese advance after the consul sternly warned his Lusitanian counterpart that London could not allow Pinto to march through the Shire Highlands with such a large military force.³⁸ Not wanting to start an international incident, the major agreed to wait at the junction of the Shire and Ruo Rivers until he received instructions. But his refusal to demobilize his troops made it imperative for Johnston to establish a cordon of allies around the territory before Lisbon decided to test London's mettle.

The expatriate community was keenly aware that Johnston needed to gather his treaties quickly, and they readily facilitated his negotiations with local leaders.³⁹ John Moir, the territory's leading trader, and his compatriots not only translated for the consul, but they also used their considerable influence with the region's chiefs to assure Johnston's success. As a result, the consul rapidly obtained a series of treaties among chiefs on Malawi's southern frontiers.

The accords did not actually establish British sovereignty in place of traditional authority: instead, they simply prohibited the chiefs from signing covenants with other powers.⁴⁰ But the chiefs' acceptance of the treaties ensured that Portugal could not legitimately claim southern Malawi. Johnston now turned to securing a viable route into the interior, which meant establishing British hegemony along the lake.

This task was far more daunting. Many chiefs' dependence upon the slave trade made them suspicious of British aims.⁴¹ Moreover, Portugal's willingness to send guns into the interior, which the British vehemently opposed, reinforced the paramounts' reservations about abandoning Lisbon in favor of London.⁴²

Johnston nevertheless had some advantages. Among the Yao, the disunity created by the evolution of a new political economy provided the consul with an opportunity to force the chiefs' acquiescence. If the new paramounts refused to sign, Johnston could always make agreements with displaced leaders, thus eroding the new men's legitimacy and authority.⁴³ Such a policy was not applicable to the "Arabs," but the consul succeeded with them by implying that he would not disturb their sovereignty and unquestionably accepting the frequently inflated descriptions of their territory.⁴⁴

Like the southern treaties, Johnston's accords did little to change the indigenous economy. Indeed, the

consul's discussions with the Arabs indicate that he was willing to accept the status quo indefinitely, despite the prevalence of the slave trade.⁴⁵ Such tolerance is not surprising: Johnston's principal aim was establishing his cordon of authority, not the formal reorganization of the region's economy. Indeed, it is hard to escape the conclusion that Johnston had no intention of making any decisions about the eventual redefinition of the territory's economy until he returned to London and worked out a plan for the country's administration with Whitehall and Rhodes.

The expatriate community had no intention of allowing Johnston this period of grace. They fervently hoped that the crown would assume control of the territory as soon as possible. Upon his arrival in southern Malawi, Johnston had tried to explain that he had no intention of declaring a protectorate unless Serpa Pinto actually entered the highlands.⁴⁶ Convinced that he had impressed his audience with the narrow criteria needed to declare a protectorate, Johnston named John Buchanan acting consul to Nyasaland and left for the lake.

Buchanan's appointment gave the expatriates exactly the opportunity they had been seeking for years. For the first time, one of their number had the authority to establish British sovereignty in Malawi. Buchanan lost little time in taking advantage of this rare chance. On August 19, he sent a dispatch to Serpa Pinto in which he

unofficially informed Lisbon's envoy that the Shire Highlands had become a British protectorate.⁴⁷ By October, he made the announcement official.

Some commentators feel that Johnston actually instructed Buchanan to make these declarations in order to escape blame if London did not approve.⁴⁸ Such an assertion clearly underemphasizes Johnston's links with Rhodes and his sympathy with the eventual establishment of charter rule in Malawi. Johnston still hoped to establish charter rule in Malawi: just before his departure for the lake, he informed Salisbury that the A.L.C. (i.e. the B.S.A.C.) could "maintain order in South Nyasa-especially if strengthened by a charter."⁴⁹ Yet, establishing charter rule would be far more difficult if the territory was already a protectorate. The expatriates' allies in the United Kingdom, particularly the Scottish churches, would view such an action as acrimoniously as they had received news of the draft treaty.⁵⁰ In their mind, there was little difference between the "decadent" Catholic Portuguese and the rapacious B.S.A.C..

It seems scarcely conceivable that Johnston, who had learned about the Scots' influence from bitter experience, would cooperate with the expatriates to establish a state which would undermine charter rule. It is more plausible that Buchanan seized the opportunity offered in order to make it more difficult for the B.S.A.C. to gain control of the country. By declaring a protectorate, the laird of the

Mulunguzi had established a government which prohibited both Portuguese and B.S.A.C. authority, thus protecting the planters from the imposition of a hostile political economy.

Johnston was not pleased about this turn of events. He cut his northern expedition short and scurried off to London.⁵¹ There he found an unhappy Lord Salisbury, who was especially displeased about having to finance an administration for his new protectorate. Johnston tried to allay these concerns by continuing to champion charter rule, which of course would relieve Whitehall of the burden of paying for Malawi's administration.⁵²

Events were rapidly making charter rule even more untenable. By the fall of 1889, the A.L.C.'s board of directors reconsidered their agreement with Rhodes and tried to abrogate it.⁵³ Rhodes' complaints led to new negotiations, but the A.L.C. reasserted its independence and refused to follow the B.S.A.C.'s instructions.⁵⁴

This split obviously discouraged charter rule. The B.S.A.C. could no longer argue that it had a preeminent position in Malawi's economy once the A.L.C. had reasserted its claim to that honor. Rhodes' company consequently had no economic rationale for assuming authority. Indeed, granting charter rule would only make it harder for the A.L.C. to regain its autonomy from the B.S.A.C., lending credence to metropolitan concerns about the sacrifice of Christianity and Commerce on the altar of the City stock

exchanges.⁵⁵

The influx of a number of new settlers further complicated the establishment of charter rule. The declaration of a British protectorate catalyzed a surge of expatriate immigration. In April 1891, the Blantyre missionaries complained that

the paper demon is absorbing tract after tract of fair country into his insatiable paunch. Of course nothing like the amount purchased can ever be occupied, but the purchase confers power of exclusion and possible resale, which may from a political and commercial point of view justify purchase.⁵⁶

The powers of exclusion mentioned by the missionaries was especially damaging to any illusions about charter rule, since any governing company would be not be able to exploit vast tracts of alienated land in the very country it was administering. Johnston recognized this danger and warned Rhodes that he needed to arrange an administration before "a hundred bogus claims and interloping companies...contest with you the exclusive right to mine and govern."⁵⁷

Finally, the A.L.C.'s refusal to purchase land at Rhodes' behest made the B.S.A.C.'s position even more tenuous since the company was obtaining virtually none of the country's land.⁵⁸

The settlers' poverty undermined the B.S.A.C.'s ambitions even more. Hector Duff, an important chronicler of the protectorate's early years, noted that "the great majority [of the settlers] were poor men" who scarcely had enough money to buy their new estates.⁵⁹ They hoped that

their investments would make their fortunes and were unlikely to easily surrender their new domains to an already profitable corporation.⁶⁰ In essence, expatriate immigration established economic conflict between independent planters and large corporations, particularly the B.S.A.C..⁶¹ If Whitehall granted a charter to any large company, let alone the B.S.A.C., this friction would inevitably cause political troubles too.

Johnston nevertheless continued to believe that charter rule was the best way of governing Malawi.⁶² Despite Salisbury's opposition to charter rule, Johnston hoped that the B.S.A.C. might benefit from the cabinet's decision to have one commissioner oversee the company's territory in Zambia and the Crown's in Malawi.⁶³ The two administrations would in theory be fiscally independent; the B.S.A.C. would contribute an annual subsidy for transportation and police forces in Zambia, while the commissioner would pay for Malawi's administration through taxes on the local economy.⁶⁴

But reality was very different from theory. Although the commissioner was supposed to keep separate accounts, Malawi's local community simply could not yet provide enough revenue to support an administration. Since Whitehall refused to give Johnston any money to hire administrators, the commissioner could not expect to establish an administration in Malawi without using B.S.A.C. funds theoretically earmarked for Zambia.⁶⁵

Moreover, the woebegone nature of Malawi's economy made it obvious that the commissioner could not repay these "loans" in the near future. Thus, the agreement in effect placed much of the burden of administering the protectorate upon Rhodes' shoulders.

The B.S.A.C.'s directors were not happy about this state of affairs, but they accepted it after Johnston, the champion of charter rule, was named as the territory's first commissioner. Johnston soon justified the company's faith by inhibiting the economic activities of other firms in the protectorate. For instance, he refused to sanction accords made between the Central Africa Company and Malawian chiefs because he felt that "it would be very hard if this greedy Central Africa Company were to worm its way in and try to oust the other company [the B.S.A.C.] from its rights."⁶⁶ Captain Cameron, the C.A.C.'s founder, not deterred by a mere commissioner, eventually complained directly to the Foreign Office.⁶⁷ Whitehall, concerned about maintaining the fiction that its commissioner ruled separate territories, insisted that he provide the company with some land, but Johnston circumvented the intent of these instructions by endorsing leases to some fairly worthless and inaccessible land west of the Shire River.⁶⁸ Johnston's actions so frustrated the company's directors that they abandoned their efforts, thus eliminating one potential rival for the B.S.A.C..

Johnston's land policies also affected the planter

community. The commissioner not only refused to recognize the titles of companies like the C.A.C., but, to the consternation of the Foreign Office, he also ignored the claims of the growing settler community.⁶⁹ This obstinacy obviously did not inhibit production on estates where planters had already settled. However, the commissioner's refusal to confer formal titles made it impossible for the planting community to obtain loans on their estates since no one would accept land as collateral without a legitimate title. Johnston further restricted the capitalists' ability to raise capital by refusing to allow them to sell any of their land. In at least one case, the commissioner physically removed a planter who had bought land from another expatriate.⁷⁰ Thus, the commissioner's land policy, or, more accurately, his refusal to adopt a land policy, severely inhibited the planters' capacity to acquire capital and thus thwarted primitive accumulation at an early stage.

Johnston's tax policies made these restrictions even more damaging. Scholars have traditionally claimed that most colonial taxes were instituted in order to support capitalist production.⁷¹ Yet, in Malawi, the commissioner's levies not only consumed the planters' small capital reserves but disrupted production as well. The taxes naturally undermined the planters' position and thus hobbled the process of primitive accumulation even more. But sacrificing primitive accumulation did not necessarily

contradict the state's role (at least as it was defined by Johnston) since the taxes provided revenue for the administration.

Johnston decided to impose a poll tax of six shillings upon his African subjects before he had even reached the Shire Highlands. This levy, which the commissioner insisted was only a response to indigenous inquiries about taxes, had a devastating impact upon the local economy.⁷² Because cash was in such short supply, Johnston was forced to accept agricultural payment-in-kind.⁷³ Meanwhile, his military force and porters stretched the Shire Highland's limited food resources to the limit by placing unprecedented demands upon local producers. Extracting even more food through taxation devastated the subsistence sector, and the highlands suffered a severe famine.⁷⁴

The crisis immediately affected the production of exportable commodities. Since "migrant workers suffered principally" during food shortages, planters could not obtain laborers who would not work in the highlands if the price was starvation.⁷⁵ The planters' situation was made even more desperate as the famine reached its peak in the fall of 1891. Since Malawian cropland has to be prepared for cultivation during this season, the planters were deprived of labor when they most needed it.

Many planters consequently developed a system of labor tenancy known as thangata.⁷⁶ Thangata is justifiably described as one of colonial Malawi's darkest stains. It

was a system of labor tenancy in which people would be given land on an estate in return for a specified amount of labor, usually one or two months worth. Since thangata was supposedly a system used in traditional societies, estate owners made lucrative offers to various chiefs in order to convince them that their followers should move onto the alienated land and work in the fields.⁷⁷ But the planters soon learned that thangata was expensive because the state made them pay the poll tax for their tenants.⁷⁸

Johnston had to obtain revenue from somewhere, and the estates were a golden goose. Their owners were not protected by the legal ambiguities of the treaties Johnston had signed with the country's chiefs.⁷⁹ They had to accept the dictates of the little commissioner, like it or not. Moreover, the estates' proximity to the centers of administrative control, most particularly Zomba and Blantyre, made it easier for the administration to collect revenue there than among the more remote, inaccessible and unalienated areas. Taxing planters did not require the commissioner to appoint numerous district officers because he could use officials from the central administration.

Ironically, Johnston's attempts to force the chiefs to assent to taxation and collect revenue caused even more hardship for the planters. The traditional authorities' obstinacy soon forced the commissioner to conduct a number of punitive expeditions.⁸⁰ His campaign was remarkably effective: throughout the Shire region, authorities bowed

down before the administration's superior armaments.⁸¹

Resorting to arms hurt the planters because the consequent mistrust and animosity physically threatened them. A group of Mlanje planters complained that "the burning of huts is, by native interpretation, a declaration of war, and seriously endangers the life, property and capital of the white residents."⁸² Certainly the number of violent acts aimed at the the planter community increased. A Mlanje expatriate informed her sister that

last week a man was caught going to burn Mr. Bradshaw's house on Thursday Mr. Hastings was going home [and] stepping outside was fired on...We have men out watching all night here for fear of anyone coming with fire at night.⁸³

Thus, the commissioner's poll tax policies not only siphoned capital away from the planters but actually reduced their physical security as well, adding a heavy psychological burden to a community already suffering considerable stress.⁸⁴

The planters' hostility grew even more intense when Johnston sought more revenue by placing duties on both imports and exports.⁸⁵ Reducing the profits from exports was bad enough, but the higher cost of imports fueled a cycle of inflation already initiated by the administration's enormous consumption of foodstuffs and labor. Now planters not only had to expend more goods for services and food, but they also had to pay more for those goods.⁸⁶

The expatriates bitterly complained about the impact

of the commissioner's policies upon their enterprises, but Johnston could do little to ease their burden.⁸⁷ The Foreign Office's wanton refusals to offer more assistance drove the beleaguered commissioner into increased dependency on the B.S.A.C..⁸⁸ After only seven months in the protectorate, he reported that

At present this administration costs about 22,500£ of which 20,000£ are found [sic] the British South Africa Company, i.e., 10,000£ for police, 7,500£ for administration (2,500£ of this sum being devoted for the present year to expenditure by Mr. Rhodes in the Barotse country), and 2,500£ subsidy paid to the Lakes Company for the water transport of the administration; and about 2,500£ by the Foreign Office (my salary, Sharpe's, and Marshall's police allowance).⁸⁹

Six months later, Johnston confessed that "I am compelled to employ nearly all the men and money of the British South Africa Company's establishment north of the Zambesi on the development of Nyasaland, and especially of the Shire Province."⁹⁰ In December 1892, The Foreign Office admitted that "the whole sum [of the B.S.A.C. subsidy] has been applied to the exceptional expenditure required for Nyasaland."⁹¹

Nor was the subsidy itself enough for the growing administration. Within a year of return to Malawi, Johnston began to borrow money from the B.S.A.C. in order to meet his mounting obligations.⁹² Penury was, to a large extent, the basis for all of the commissioner's policies, and he desperately needed money with which he could repay the charter company. If the means needed to collect this lucre bankrupted the struggling planters, so much the better:

their collapse would leave the B.S.A.C. as the only enterprise which could pay for Malawi's administration and thus make charter rule more acceptable to Whitehall.

Johnston's tax policies therefore provided the potential for clearing Johnston's I.O.U.s with the B.S.A.C. while paving the way for the company's ascension to authority.

Although Johnston's policies implicitly supported the company's ambitions, Rhodes, beset by financial problems, decided that he could no longer rely on the commissioner's loyalty alone. By spring 1893, the B.S.A.C. demanded that Johnston formally recognize the company's "preferent rights" in the protectorate.⁹³ The commissioner, aware that the expatriates' continued presence ensured that Whitehall would veto charter rule, tried to avoid a showdown, but Rhodes persisted.⁹⁴ As a result, Johnston travelled to Capetown and made a provisional agreement with his patron on May 3 1893. This accord guaranteed that Johnston would give the B.S.A.C. four-fifths of the protectorate's territory in return for an annual subsidy of £17,500 over the next five years.⁹⁵

The Foreign Office was not pleased with this agreement; Lord Roseberry, the new Foreign Minister, insisted that "the Protectorate is not included in the charter granted to the British South Africa Company."⁹⁶ Nevertheless, the Foreign Office's determination to avoid the cost of administering the country caused Whitehall to attempt negotiating a compromise which would continue

B.S.A.C. subsidies without actually giving the protectorate to the company.⁹⁷ Rhodes, leery of further compromise, refused to parlay and insisted that the Foreign Office immediately recognize his preeminence in Malawi.⁹⁸

London refused, aware that Rhodes' demands were really the first step towards an eventual amalgamation of Malawi and Zambia. The government simply could not hand a territory already populated by plucky British subjects over to a charter company. Therefore, the Foreign Office, noting that the 1891 agreement was renewable until 1895 "at the discretion of Her Majesty's Government," finally informed Rhodes that "the 1891 agreement shall continue" without amendment.⁹⁹

Rhodes was livid and felt that Johnston had first deceived and then betrayed him.¹⁰⁰ These feelings ensured that the commissioner could no longer depend upon his patron's largesse but also guaranteed that the company would expend no capital developing the protectorate's floundering economy. This decision was almost fatal: Johnston had restricted the introduction of capital into the country under the assumption that the B.S.A.C. would make good the loss. Rhodes' unbridled hostility now made that idea untenable, and Johnston had to develop a scheme which would revitalize the protectorate's economy.

The commissioner's options were extremely limited. The recent collapse of the B.S.A.C.'s stock on the London exchanges made it highly improbable that metropolitan

financiers would invest in any Central African territory and forced the commissioner to create a revival of the country's established industries.¹⁰¹ Johnston consequently became the planters' champion, and he sought to provide them with the legal tenure which he had refused to cede. In October 1893, Johnston finally submitted a land settlement for the Foreign Office's approval.¹⁰²

The plan was a crucial watershed in Malawian history. Johnston's final demarcations alienated virtually all of the arable land in the Shire highlands and firmly established estate agriculture, rather than peasant production, as the territory's dominant system of production. Although most historians feel that Johnston's decision was really based on his desire to confirm white supremacy in the country's economy, the commissioner's acquiescence was more accurately the result of economic necessity.¹⁰³ Malawians were unprepared for the "legitimate" world economy and thus could not develop a peasant economy capable of producing the revenue so desperately needed by the state.

Most indigenous societies were structurally ill suited and technologically unprepared for peasant production.¹⁰⁴ Developing indigenous production would require both capital and time, and the commissioner had neither. He therefore had to rely on productive systems which were already integrated into the imperial economy and at least had a potential for immediate capital accumulation. Aside from a

few ivory hunters, only the estate owners could satisfy these prerequisites. Yet, establishing the primacy of plantation agriculture through the distribution of land was at best a partial solution. Johnston had not only dangerously weakened the estate sector by inhibiting additional investment, but his precipitous land policy also created fundamental economic contradictions which needed to be resolved before the process of primitive accumulation could take off.

Resolving these contradictions was especially important because of the Shire region's ecological limitations. Unlike other African regions, the dense indigenous population completely used the resources of the highlands to feed itself.¹⁰⁵ The dislocations caused by the slave wars and Yao/Ngoni invasions had partially relieved the pressure on the area's ecology, but new demands made by plantation agriculture were bound to create serious problems. Estate cultivation required an enormous number of laborers, and it was inevitable that the planters would soon have to rationalize their enterprises in a way which would provide resources for both the sustenance of life and the production of export commodities.

They could only do so by developing a harmonious relationship between themselves and indigenous producers. Such consonance would allow the continued production of foodstuffs for the ever growing number of workers without inhibiting plantation activity. However, this integration

depended on the presence of a unified capitalist class. Any fractionalization of this class would inevitably establish contradictory systems of production and hence strain the area's finite resources by placing too many demands upon them.

But the land settlement made fractionalization of the capitalist class inevitable because it established large, medium and small sized estates.¹⁰⁶ Such diversity was not unique in Africa: many colonies had different sized plantations and farms within their territorial boundaries. In most cases, however, these industries were geographically as well as economically differentiated. In other words, variably sized estates existed in their own particular regions of a colony, not contiguously within one province.

Malawi's estates, however, were all mixed up in the highlands. Huge spreads were immediately adjacent to small and medium sized estates. Such proximity was devastating because the variation in estate size ensured the emergence of different types of production. As a result, the capitalist sector's articulation with indigeous production established itself through a wide range of competing channels. This diversity eventually placed too many demands on the area's economy and created havoc in the subsistence and commodity producing sectors.

To some extent, the adoption of labor tenancy already demonstrated the impact of capitalist fractionalization

upon the nascent export economy. Only large estates could support subsistence tenancy and commodity production: smaller estates simply did not have enough land to do both. Instead, they depended on "free" labor for the operation of their enterprises. But the tenant system reduced local potential for the production of foodstuffs by withdrawing male workers from the villages during crucial periods of cultivation.¹⁰⁷ The subsequent decrease in the area's food surplus inhibited the flow of labor into the area and constrained production on small sized estates.

Johnston was not concerned with such esoteric problems as economic contradictions or articulation. He decided that the plantation sector was the key for the territory's economy and acted accordingly. What was important was the legitimization of the planters' position; any problems which arose from this process could be dealt with later. Indeed, the commissioner faced far more serious problems than stress created by the establishment of plantation agriculture. He still had no authority in large sections of the country, particularly among the lakeside slave traders. Even in the territory he did control, there was virtually no administration on the ground: he had not even made district boundaries by January 1894.¹⁰⁸ Nor had he developed any administrative departments which could improve the communications system or conduct horticultural experiments. In short, Johnston still had not established a state. His uncertainty about the future of the territory

already created delays in the establishment of an administration and the definition of the region's political economy.

Once Johnston did act, the best he could do with the country's political economy was lionizing a deeply divided class virtually bankrupted by his policies. This policy augered ill for the territory's future, but at least the commissioner established an economic base around which he could organize an administration. Disaster might yet be averted if the state proved itself able to cope with the contradictions and conflicts inherent in the export sector of the economy. But Johnston would have to perform far better than he had done so far in order to stabilize the country's economy.

ENDNOTES

1. Malawi, of course, is the name given the country after its independence. During colonialism, Malawi was actually called British Central Africa and then Nyasaland. For purposes of simplicity, I have identified the territory as Malawi throughout this project.
2. The northern groups still remain relatively understudied, possibly due to their precarious position in contemporary Malawi. Dr. Leroy Vail and Dr. Owen Kalinga have done the best work on the Timbuka and the Ngonde respectively, see Owen Kalinga, "Cultural and Political Change in Northern Malawi, c. 1350-1800," African Studies Monographs 3 (1983); Owen Kalinga, A History of the Ngonde Kingdom of Malawi (Berlin, 1985); and Leroy Vail, "Suggestions towards a reinterpreted Timbuka history," in B. Pachai, ed., The Early History of Malawi (Thetford, 1972).
3. H.W. Langworthy, "Chewa or Malawi political organization in the precolonial era," in Pachai, The Early History..., 104. The pre-colonial history of these

sections also remains obscure although Kings Phiri and Matthew Schoffeleers have done important work on this subject. See Kings Phiri, "The Pre-Colonial History of Southern Malawi: An Interpretive Essay," Malawi Journal of Social Science, 8 (1980-81); Owen Kalinga, "Cultural and Political Change in Northern Malawi, c. 1350-1800," African Studies Monographs 3 (1983); Owen J.M. Kalinga, A History of the Ngonde Kingdom of Malawi (Berlin, 1985); and Matthew Schoffeleers, "The Zimba and the Lunda State in the Late Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries," Journal of African History, 28 (1987).

4. Mandala, Work and Control..., 17.
5. J.A. Kamchitete Kandawire, Thangata: Forced Labour or Reciprocal Assistance? (Blantyre, 1979), 40.
6. Melvin E. Page, "Malawians in the Great War and After," Ph.D. thesis, Michigan State University, 1977, 2.
7. The best discussion of the slave trade moving into the region is Edward Alpers, Ivory and Slaves in East Central Africa (Berkeley, 1975). For more on the impact of slavery in the region, the best sources are Marcia Wright, "Women in Peril...", African Social Research, December 1975; and P.R.O. O'Neill to Foreign Office, October 3 1884, F.O.84/1671.
8. Three of the best studies about the Yao are Yohannes Abdallah, The Yaos (Zomba, 1919); Edward Alpers, "Trade, State and Society Among the Yao in the 19th Century," Journal of African History, X, 3 (1969); and Kings M. Phiri, "Yao Intrusion into Southern Malawi, Nyanja Resistance and Colonial Conquest, 1830-1900," Transafrican Journal of History, 13 (1984). For more on the Ngoni, see J.K. Rennie, "The Ngoni States and European Intrusion," in E. Stokes and R. Brown, eds., The Zambesian Past (Manchester, 1966); A more general treatment of the period can be found in John McCracken, "The Nineteenth Century in Malawi," in Terrence Ranger, ed., Aspects of Central African History (Evanston, 1968), 25.
9. Diary of Henry O'Neill, enclosed in O'Neill to F.O., March 23 1884, F.O. 84/1671.
10. Oral Interview, Ndawinga Skamu, Skamu Village, July 15 1985.
11. For more on these "Arab" states, Marcia Wright and Peter Lary, "Swahili Settlements in Northern Zambia and Malawi," African Historical Studies, IV, 3 (1971); O'Neill to Foreign Office, February 12 1889, F.O.

- 84/1671. The term "Arab" is used to describe three kinds of people: real Arabs from the coast, Swahili, any indigenous person who became thoroughly Islamized. See H.W. Macmillan, "Notes on the Origins of the Arab War," in B. Pachai, ed., The Early History..., 276. For more on the confusion on these early states, see Melvin Page's revisions of Shepperson's work on the Jumbe of Kota-Kota: George Shepperson, "The Jumbe of Kota Kota and Some Aspects of the History of Islam in British Central Africa," in I.M. Lewis, ed., Islam in Tropical Africa (London, 1966); Melvin E. Page, "The Manyema Hordes of Tippu Tib: A Case Study in Social Stratification and the Slave Trade in Eastern Africa," International Journal of African Historical Studies, 7, 1 (1974); and Melvin E. Page, "David Livingstone and the Jumbe of Nkhota-kota," Rhodesian History, 3, 1 (1972).
12. Andrew Ross, "The Origins and Development of the Church of Scotland Mission Blantyre, Nyasaland, 1875-1926," Ph.D. thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1968, 11.
 13. Ian Linden, "Mponda Mission Diary, 1889-1891," International Journal of African Historical Studies, VII, 2 (1974), 281.
 14. The best study of Livingstone in Malawi is probably Tim Jeal, Livingstone (Suffolk, 1985), 197-215.
 15. W.H.J. Rangely, "The Makololo of Dr. Livingstone," The Nyasaland Journal, 12, 1 (1959); and Hugh Macmillan, "The African Lakes Company and the Makololo, 1878-1884," in Roderick J. Macdonald, ed., From Nyasaland to Malawi (Nairobi, 1975), 66.
 16. There are a number of solid studies on these early missions. For instance see John McCracken, Politics and Christianity in Malawi (Cambridge, 1977); Andrew Ross, "The Origins...,"; and George Herbert Wilson, The History of the Universities Mission to Central Africa (Freeport, 1975).
 17. John Buchanan, The Shire Highlands (Edinburgh, 1885), 7-38 and 77-78.
 18. The A.L.C. was originally incorporated as the Livingstonia Central Africa Company in June 1878 and changed its name in 1879. By far the best study of the company's origins and development is Hugh Macmillan, "The Origins and Development of the African Lakes Company," Ph.D. thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1970.
 19. National Library of Scotland, ms. 8021, "Prospectus of

the African Lakes Company, 1879." This document noted that "the shareholders have become satisfied that a larger capital is needed than was at first contemplated." The company dependence on ivory is demonstrated by the fact that the Moirs exported some £20,000 worth between 1879 and 1889, Macmillan, "The Origins...", 161.

20. Murlene McKinnon, "Commerce, Christianity and the Gunboat; An Historical Study of Malawi Lake and River Transport, 1850-1914," Ph.D. thesis, Michigan State University, 1977, 186; Buchanan, The Shire Highlands, 38.
21. Unfortunately little is known about these early settlers, but certainly John Buchanan developed a number of crops on his Mlunguzi estate, most importantly coffee, see Buchanan, The Shire..., 60-71.
22. Buchanan was chief in this activity, and his book is clearly a chamber of commerce type of tract.
23. For instance, see Hawes to Foreign Office, March 30 1886, F.O. 84/1751.
24. Alan Smith, "The Anglo-Portuguese Conflict over the Shire Highlands," Macdonald, ed., From Nyasaland..., 49.
25. Goodrich to Foreign Office, August 29 1885, F.O. 84/1702.
26. As Smith makes clear, see Alan Smith, "The Anglo-Portuguese...".
27. The best study of Johnston is Roland Oliver, Sir Harry Johnston and the Scramble for Africa (London, 1957).
28. Oliver, Sir Harry..., 140-44.
29. Sir Harry H. Johnston, British Central Africa (London, 1897), 81.
30. Indeed, Johnston wrote an article about the importance of including Malawi in the empire, The Times, August 22, 1888.
31. The Scottish churches demonstrated this concern by sending literally hundreds of petitions to the F.O. demanding the inclusion of the Shire highlands in the British sphere, see F.O. 84/2013-2015.
32. Ross, "Origins...", 182.

33. Harry Johnston, The Story of My Life (London, 1923), 234-238.
34. F.L.M. Moir, After Livingstone (London, n.d.), 176.
35. Indeed, in July 1889 Salisbury reminded his subjects that the company would not be allowed north of the Zambezi, Macmillan, "Origins and Development...", 318.
36. Johnston, British..., 85-86.
37. Johnston to Salisbury, August 9 1889, F.O. 84/1969.
38. Ibid.
39. Johnston to Salisbury, August 29 1889, F.O. 84/1969.
40. The first treaties were enclosed in ibid.
41. As early as 1884, the problems of Britain's abolitionist posture had been apparent, O'Neill to Foreign Office, February 20 1884, F.O. 84/1671.
42. Ian Linden, Catholics, Peasants & Chewa Resistance in Nyasaland (Berkeley, 1974), 26-27.
43. Johnston demonstrated the potential of this approach when he bypassed Mponda in his negotiations with that Yao chief, Johnston, British..., 90; see also, Oral Interview, Ndawingu Skamu, Skamu village, July 15 1985.
44. See, for instance, what Johnston did with the Jumbe at Kota-Kota, Johnston to Foreign Office, October 10 1889.
45. Hanna claims that Johnston "thought Britain could use [the Arabs] as fellow workers in the task of civilizing Africa", Hanna, The Beginnings of Nyasaland and North-Eastern Rhodesia (Oxford, 1956), 154.
46. Johnston, British..., p. 85; Johnston to Salisbury, August 9 1889, F.O. 84/1969.
47. Buchanan to Serpa Pinto, August 19 1889, enclosed in Buchanan to Salisbury, September 10 1889, F.O. 84/1942.
48. Hanna, The Beginnings ..., 145.
49. Johnston to Salisbury, August 9 1889, F.O. 84/1969.
50. Especially since the missionaries were already

complaining that "a large company aided by Government is welcome indeed; but the relegation of all interests to...a large monopolizing commercial concern is not and never has been considered help at all [and] is certainly not protection," Life and Work in British Central Africa, August 1890; see also L.W.B.C.A., October 1890.

51. Edinburgh University Library, Gen. 717/11, Mrs. Moir to Jeanie, January 29 1890. Mrs. Moir complained that Johnston left "without a word" to anyone.
52. Ross, "The Origins...", 196; Macmillan, "The Origins and Development...", 302.
53. Macmillan, "The Origins...", 320-321.
54. Macmillan, "The Origins...", 322.
55. Especially because of the company's traditional links with the missions.
56. L.W.B.C.A., April 1891.
57. Rhodes House Library, Mss. Afr. s. 228/c3a, #18, Johnston to Rhodes, July 25 1890.
58. Hanna, The Beginnings..., 175.
59. Sir Hector Duff, African Small Chop (London, 1932), 73. Duff was a devoted civil servant who rose from assistant collector in the mid-1890s to the position of acting governor after the First World War.
60. Oral interview, Eric Emtage, Newslands Rest Home, June 15 1985. Emtage, the Society of Malawi's librarian emeritus, originally came to Malawi in the mid-1920s, and held a variety of official and unofficial positions through the years. His sensitivity and intelligence make him an invaluable source of information.
61. Oral interview, A.F. Stark, Lauderdale Estate, February 28 1986. Stark, the grandson of R.S. Hynde's partner and current general manager of Blantyre & East Africa, emphasized the antagonism between estate owners and large corporations, particularly the A.L.C. and Imperial Tobacco.
62. Macmillan, "The Origins...", 331.
63. MacMillan, "The Origins...", 336.

64. This distinction has often led scholars to underemphasize the presence of the B.S.A.C. in Malawi, see Ross, "The Origins...", 98.
65. Johnston to Salisbury, December 6 1891; Margin note dated September 30 1891, F.O. 84/2114.
66. Johnston to F.O., January 21 1893, enclosed in Bowler to Roseberry, June 9 1893, F.O. 403/185.
67. Central Africa Company to Salisbury, April 28 1891, F.O. 881/5950. It is worth noting that this corporation was not the British Central Africa Company which played such a large part in the colony's history.
68. Johnston to Roseberry, January 5 1892, enclosed in Bowler to Roseberry, June 9 1893.
69. Johnston to Roseberry, October 13 1892, F.O. 403/174.
70. Johnston to Roseberry, October 13 1892, F.O. 403/174; L.W.B.C.A., October 1892.
71. These works are the progeny of Arrighi's classical study, G.A. Arrighi, "Labour Supplies in Historical Perspective," Journal of Developmental Studies, VI, (1970). The most notable examples of this trend in Malawian historiography are Simon Myambo, "The Shire Highlands Plantations: A Socio-Economic History of the Plantation System of Production in Malawi, 1891-1938," M.A. Thesis, Chancellor College, University of Malawi, May 1973; B.S. Krishnamurthy, "Economic Policy: land and labour in Nyasaland, 1890-1914," in Pachai, ed., The Early...; and Leroy Vail, "The State...".
72. Johnston, British..., 110.
73. Johnston to Salisbury, December 10 1891, F.O. 84/2114. It is worth noting that Krishnamurthy insists that taxes were paid in cash from the early years even though Duff discusses taxes in kind and local documents record taxation in goods well into the 20th-century. see Krishnamurthy, "Economic Policy...", 392 and Hector Duff Nyasaland Under the Foreign Office (London, 1906), 352.
74. Nyasaland Times, XI, 44, November 2 1911. Henry Brown, asserted in this issue that "some may yet remember the famine that took place the year after the administration came, due to taking grain for taxes." See also L.W.B.C.A., September 1891, October 1891, February 1892; and Megan Vaughan, "Social and Economic

- Change in Southern Malawi," Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1982.
75. Vaughan, "Social....," 117.
 76. For more on this system, see J.A. Kamchitete Kandawire, Thangata.....
 77. For instance Eugen Sharrer enticed a number of Angoni groups onto his estates, Lonrho (Malawi) Company Archives, Sharrer to Polliott, July 8 1925. I am grateful to Mr. Gordon Davies of Limbe for making this material available to me; A.L. Bruce also adopted this policy, Oral Interview, Laiden Chitsulo and Laiton Juma, Nchemba village, July 23 1985.
 78. Messrs. Emmanuel and Simonds to Roseberry, May 26 1893, F.O. 403/185.
 79. Most notably since it was unclear whether Johnston had the right to collect taxes from indigenous inhabitants. See Duff, Nyasaland...., 351; Vaughan, "Social....," 20; A.J. Swann, "A Nyasaland Pioneer Looks Back," East Africa and Rhodesia, 155, September 8 1927. Dr. Vaughan points out that many of her informants never paid taxes to the colonial administration (!) while Swann, the first administrator at Kota-Kota remembered that Johnston "instructed me to choose my own time for introducing the hut tax."
 80. N.L.S. mss 7534/692, McMurtie to Salisbury, March 24 1892; mss. 7534/744, Hetherwick to Scott, June 13 1892; mss. 7534/762, Rev. Henry Scott to Dr. Scott, June 12 1892. This need was especially pressing since most chiefs just wanted to be left alone, see Johnston to Salisbury, December 10 1891, F.O. 84/ 2114; Royal Geographic Society, Sharpe to Keltie, November 30 1894.
 81. Oral Interview, Andrew and Michael Likambale, Likambale village, July 4 1985.
 82. Moir to Roseberry, November 23 1893, F.O. 403/197.
 83. E.U.L., 717/12, B. Moir to J. Moir, October 12 1895.
 84. "Recapitulation," enclosed in Messrs. Emmanuel and Simonds to Roseberry, May 26 1893, F.O. 403/185.
 85. Johnston to Roseberry, October 21 1892, F.O. 403/185.
 86. L.W.B.C.A., August 1892, analyzed this inflation and

blamed the administration for the higher costs.

87. For instance, Sharrer to Simonds, May 4 1892, enclosed in Emmanuel and Simonds to Salisbury, May 14 1892, F.O. 403/174.
88. Foreign Office to Johnston, June 8 1892, F.O. 403/174; Treasury to Foreign Office, January 25 1893, F.O. 403/185; Treasury to Foreign Office, November 7 1894, F.O. 403/198.
89. Johnston to Salisbury, December 10 1891, F.O. 84/2114.
90. Johnston to Salisbury, May 11 1892, F.O. 403/174.
91. F.O. to Treasury, December 5 1892, F.O. 403/174.
92. Royal Commonwealth Society, microfilm of Central African Archives files, CT 1/16/4, Johnston to Wetherby, March 13 1892; Johnston to Roseberry, October 21 1893, F.O. 403/185.
93. R.C.S., CT 1/16/4, Rhodes to Johnston, April 30 1893.
94. R.C.S., CT 1/16/4, Johnston to Rhodes, January 8 1893.
95. Johnston to Rhodes, May 3 1893, enclosed in Johnston to F.O., May 3 1893, F.O. 403/185.
96. Foreign Office to Emmanuel and Simonds, June 7 1893, F.O. 403/185.
97. Foreign Office to B.S.A.C., August 24 1893, F.O. 403/185.
98. B.S.A.C. to Foreign Office, October 18 1893; B.S.A.C. to Foreign Office, November 6 1893, F.O. 403/185.
99. Memo by Percy Anderson, November 6 1893, F.O. 403/185; Foreign Office to B.S.A.C., March 17 1894, F.O. 403/197.
100. Rhodes to Johnston, September 16 1893, enclosed in Johnston to Roseberry, October 8 1893, F.O. 403/185; Memo by Percy Anderson, November 19 1894, F.O. 403/198.
101. Arthur Keppel-Jones, Rhodes and Rhodesia (Kingston, 1983), 294; Ian Phimeister, untitled manuscript, 90. I am deeply indebted to Dr. Robin Palmer for allowing me access to the latter. It is interesting to compare the B.S.A.C.'s problems in the city with its increasing demands on Johnston, suggesting that the company

simply could not afford to subsidize Malawi any longer.

102. Johnston to Roseberry, October 14 1893, F.O. 403/185.
103. Bridgal Pachai, Land and Politics in Malawi. 1875-1975 (Kingston, 1978); Krishnamurthy, "Economic Policy...."; Vail, "The State...".
104. As was demonstrated by the Makololo, see Vaughan, "Social....," 287-288. This concept is especially important within the context of the contributions made in Gavin Kitching, Class and Economic Change in Kenya (New Haven, 1980).
105. Macmillan, "The African Lakes Company and the Makololo."
106. Actual estate size is hard to determine for reasons which will soon be clear. However, from a map Johnston sent to the Foreign Office, the following table can be made:

Estate Size	<u>SMALL</u>	<u>MEDIUM</u>	<u>LARGE</u>
Number of Estates	39	20	7
107. Vaughan, "Social....," 186.
108. Johnston had established judicial districts in October 1892 in response to dunning notices from the Foreign Office, but he did not actually establish administrative districts until February 1894. F.O. to Johnston, July 26 1892; Johnston to Roseberry, October 11 1892, F.O. 403/174; British Central African Gazette, I, 2 (February 1, 1894); Malawi National Archives, Historical Manuscripts AD 1/2/1/1, "The Provincial and District Administration, 1891-1979: Historical Notes."

Chapter Three
The Lost Decade:
The Conquest State in Malawi, 1894-1904

The establishment of a colonial administration in Malawi was a confusing and contradictory process, as even a brief review of the period's historiography shows. From the administration's beginning, some commentators have argued that the state and its administrators did an effective job of establishing imperial authority which benefited the country.¹ Others have argued that the state acted as a virtual stooge of capital and grievously harmed the indigenous community.²

The early state really fit neither description well. Instead, it could most accurately be described as a "conquest state" which introduced "unprecedented levels of violence" into a territory in order to accomplish its goals.³ Some dismiss that violence as a necessary byproduct of the country's subjugation, but it is clear that the military characteristics of the early administration defined its very structure and aims.⁴ The state during this period revolved around expeditions and the glory obtained from them. Even when the country became more peaceful, administrators still restively awaited excuses to take up the sword again.

The consequences of these military ambitions were devastating. Administrators paid little heed to mundane activities, and the state's ability to establish hegemony foundered as coercion became the only coin of the realm.

The subjugation and humiliation of indigenous authorities created by the state's violence further hampered the development of a new hegemony which could replace the pre-colonial structures. Finally, the conquest state hampered the establishment of order by creating a state dependent on the caprices of its governors rather than the political imperatives of its departments. Zomba mirrored local administrators' lassitude by neglecting to create bureaucracies which could address the colony's problems, and the governor consequently had to adjudicate issues about which he had little information or expertise.

These deficiencies were especially serious because of the territory's economic and social transformations. The economy experienced a brief boom as planters developed their estates. But the continued vitality of the country's economy depended on a number of factors which needed the state's intervention. Producers needed roads and agricultural advice as they struggled to get their produce to market and maintain the land's fertility. More importantly, the nascent capitalist economy needed rationalization as various capitalist factions competed for labor, food and land.

The precarious nature of the economy was best demonstrated by the dramatic decrease in the number of settlers. By the mid 1890s, the expatriate population peaked at a little under four hundred Europeans. But as planters experienced growing difficulties producing

profitable crops, the population began declining as settlers failed.⁵ The collapse of the economy obviously hindered primitive accumulation and left the economy at the mercy of metropolitan capital far more than before. Moreover, the continuing economic crisis effectively kept the north out of the country's economy and left many Malawians with no means of obtaining a living. Finally, the state's failure to assist entrepreneurs and producers caused many Malawians to abandon the bleak prospects of their homeland for the seemingly sunnier fields in Southern Africa's mining regions.⁶

Ironically, the population lost through labor migration was offset by immigration into the country from Mozambique. Districts in the lower Shire region experienced close to a doubling of their population during this era.⁷ This immigration was not entirely beneficial though. Most of the new immigrants settled in the colony's southern region. Simultaneously, migrants from Malawi's central and northern regions poured south to seek their fortunes. This influx destroyed the last vestiges of traditional authority in many districts as diverse people settled together. That collapse of indigenous cohesiveness became especially pressing as population pressure, made even worse as Chewa and Mananja groups moved from their hilltops back onto the fertile plains, created new problems such as thangata.

These problems were not the only indigenous difficulties confronting the state. New forces were

stirring in Malawi's indigenous community as preachers like Joseph Booth began sowing dissension.⁸ Land pressure and thwarted ambitions ensured that these messages fell on receptive ears, and control of the indigenous population gradually became more tenuous than ever.

Zomba's conquest state ensured that none of these problems would be redressed during this era. Only when the economy finally collapsed at the turn of the century did the state begin to respond. But even then, the state undertook little real reform, and the situation continued to deteriorate. Thus, the first ten years of the administration were a lost decade; primitive accumulation foundered as capitalists received little substantive government assistance and social relations generated a restive and potentially rebellious indigenous community.

The state had one asset in 1894, Johnston's land plan. This agreement produced salutary effects despite the structural flaws it created. Planters were not only psychologically reassured, but they also gained assets which could be mortgaged or sold for badly needed capital. At least one large company, the Buchanan Brothers, mortgaged their vast land holdings to two London merchants shortly after they gained their titles.⁹ Eugen Sharrer, another prominent planter, also apparently mortgaged the vast holdings of the British Central Africa Company to a Hamburg merchant.¹⁰

Of course, obtaining capital in such a way only accentuated the class divisions within the unofficial community. It was fine for people like Sharrer and the Buchanan brothers to borrow against their estates; they had thousands of acres which could be used to raise fairly substantial amounts of capital.¹¹ But the smaller, and to some extent, the middling farmers could scarcely hope to get the same kind of capital by risking their land titles. Thus, in many respects, the land plan allowed the rich to get richer while the poor remained the same, accentuating the inequities within the so-called capitalist class.

Nor was the fractionalization of the capitalist class the only problem besetting Malawi's commodity exporters. Although they now had some land security, the planters still faced a number of other problems. They had little knowledge and information about tropical agriculture and faced enormous difficulties in developing profitable crops. Moreover, a virtual absence of any roads in the territory ensured that marketing would be difficult even after the horticultural questions were resolved.

Transportation was probably the region's most pressing problem. R.C.F. Maughan, then a government official, claimed that:

there were no roads, or, at least, none worthy of the name. For the most part, nothing more ambitious connected even important centres than mere tracks cut through forest, which in the summer or rainy season, speedily became overgrown with high grass where indeed, they were not rendered impassable by surface water or deep quagmires of adhesive mud.¹²

The planters protested the absence of communication networks, and even the commissioner conceded that he should "commence at once" to build roads throughout the territory.¹³ But despite the assertions of recent historians, Johnston typically did nothing.¹⁴ Even at the end of his reign, he still conceded that that "road-making, next to native labour, is now the most important problem for solution."¹⁵

Johnston's administration also provided little horticultural assistance to the planters. Although Johnston established a scientific department and appointed Alexander Whyte as the government's botanist, neither Whyte nor his department did much which could be usefully applied to estate cultivation. Indeed, things eventually got so bad that the Central African Planter, the planters' newspaper, complained that it was "true [that] he [Whyte] has discovered a 'Wellingtonia Whytei' but of what value is that to us."¹⁶ Moreover, Whyte compounded his problems by refusing to work with the botanists at Kew Gardens, thus cutting the territory off from one of the world's best botanical institutes.¹⁷

Of course, it is hard to fault the commissioner entirely for his administration's failings. The withdrawal of Rhodes' support had been a serious setback. The commissioner had liberally borrowed from the charter company's resources to pay for Malawi's administration, and the "disentanglement of accounts" after the estrangement

led Whitehall carefully to investigate Johnston's finances.¹⁸ The ensuing inquiry found "financial irregularity of very grave character," and the Exchequer, always concerned about finances, consequently insisted that "the administration would have to reduce its spending considerably."¹⁹ In such circumstances, the commissioner could scarcely start expensive public works projects or establish new departments which required even greater expenditures.

But keeping costs down only partially explains the commissioner's failings; the voluntarist imperatives of the state and Johnston's idiosyncratic personality also played an enormous role in the administration's structure and actions. The individual often ruled supreme in the frontier atmosphere of the colony, and institutions frequently served the ambitions of men rather than vice versa. Nothing demonstrates this point quite as well as Johnston's war policies. Despite his repeated assertions that he could not find enough money to build decent roads, Johnston mounted several military expeditions to the north even after the BSAC left the scene.²⁰ These forays ostensibly aimed at ending the slave trade on the lake, and certainly no British subject could then condemn a government servant for trying to end that noxious trade. Nor were Johnston's military activities confined to the northern regions; during the mid 1890s, he mounted expeditions against numerous southern chiefs as he "cashed[ed] in...those

'treaties' of 1889."²¹

Johnston's expeditions kept his discontented officers pacified. In this age, of course, it is hard to believe that military operations could keep men happy, but for the Victorian officers under Johnston's command, war was the perfect antidote for the misery and drudgery associated with day to day administration of a strange new colony. And there can be no doubt that Johnston's officers viewed their daily duties with considerable opprobrium. The young Francis Poole complained "I am getting rather tired of this life, there is nothing much doing."²² Edward Alston seconded these sentiments by complaining about "this blasted, much bucked up country."²³ Even Alfred Sharpe, Johnston's eventual successor, pointed out that the expeditions were "pleasant little interludes" in an officer's life.²⁴

Indeed, at least one historian claims that going to war was an ideal "form of amusement for the military officers, and a means of acquiring medals."²⁵ The latter was as important as the breaking of the tedium because it provided a way in which officers from various regiments could "get their [army] promotion."²⁶ Indeed, one early official advised his brother to join the staff because it was "an excellent chance for you."²⁷ The same officer later advised his mother that "you'll hear that two of your sons are occupied in that noble design of suppressing the slave trade [a] fine bit of cant but a good leg up the

ladder."²⁸

The officers themselves recognized the value of the campaigns. One pointed out that "we form a mutual admiration society."²⁹ Johnston tried to make sure that "the fighting in [these] small wars becomes boomed at home so that the combatants may duly get the coveted honours."³⁰ And get the honors they did. Major Edwards and Commander Cullen, two of Johnston's better officers, received a C.B. and a C.M.G. respectively.³¹ Another, the peripatetic Lieutenant Alston got an even more valuable prize, a letter from one of the Princesses Imperial.³²

These appeals to vanity and ambition were especially important for Johnston because there were virtually no other rewards for serving in the colony other than honor and decoration. Hector Duff, later an acting governor of the territory, remembered that salaries were so low that his comrades were "often put to acute embarrassment."³³ The absence of pensions and reasonable home leaves made it even harder to induce men to serve Queen and Empire in Malawi. Finally, mortality rates were extremely high, a condition made more dangerous by the "almost ludicrous" number of duties an officer had to assume.³⁴

In these circumstances, the commissioner had to allocate resources in a manner which would attract the best civil servants, and building roads in the middle of nowhere was hardly as appealing as earning honors against slave traders. So the imperative of keeping the administrators

happy dictated that the state would undertake a "forward" policy in the north and an aggressive one in the south while neglecting to establish wise government anywhere. Consequently, the administration fulfilled the peculiar needs of the conquest state while undermining its ability to fulfill those of a capitalist state.

It is wrong nonetheless to place all the blame on the state's structural imperatives. The commissioner's own personality had much to do with the wanton mismanagement of the territory. Sir Harry Johnston was certainly an adventurer and imperialist par excellence, but, despite the assertions of his biographers, he was not much of an administrator.³⁵ The planters' newspaper complained bitterly that although "Johnston had unquestionable literary and artistic ability...we fancy that there are no two opinions in this country as to his administrative capabilities."³⁶ He did little to establish sound government and drafted legislation almost at whimsy. The commissioner's prickly personality, characterized by "flamboyance and asceticism" rather than sobriety and rationalism, seriously affected the management of Malawi's early government.³⁷

Johnston's dealings with Kew demonstrate how the commissioner's sensitive ego could impede sound administration. The Queen's chief gardener suggested that Zomba establish a "central experimental station or botanic station under the eye of the commissioner" in order to help

the planters develop marketable export crops.³⁸ But Sir Harry, oblivious to the interests of his expatriate charges, took umbrage at the botanists' suggestions; he not only refused to establish this station but also excluded the Royal Gardens from the list of institutions to which he sent botanical specimens. Such exclusion, of course, cut Malawi off from the Empire's most important agricultural research institution and thus deprived the government of precisely the expertise which the planters needed.³⁹

Nor did Johnston show any better judgment with local affairs. He caused an enormous commotion over the management of the territory's first library. In 1896, Wordsworth Poole, an administration official, ordered a number of books for a literary society he had organized.⁴⁰ After the books arrived, he asked Johnston if he could print a catalogue at the Government Printer. Johnston agreed, but, much to his chagrin, Poole found that Sir Harry "had drawn out a lot of rules for a new library consulting no one, whilst he was only a private member like anyone else'."⁴¹

Poole complained about this tyranny, and Johnston replied with a pointedly worded four page memorandum. Poole responded to this missive by asserting the "he never asked anyone whether they wanted it. Just threw his rules at our heads'." And when Johnston mentioned that he broached his scheme because of a "'desire for the common good'," Poole proclaimed "'Read--by a desire to have the whole thing

under my control'.⁴²

Here was the real Sir Harry Johnston: capricious, tyrannical and extremely sensitive. He was not above whimsically redesigning affairs to his own advantage even if it did upset others. Moreover, he reacted with almost unbelievable pique to the fairly justifiable criticisms from one of his subordinates. Indeed, a later commentator declared that "Poole's long preparation of the new library had come to grief on the rocks of another man's [Johnston's] pride."⁴³ And although the library incident was a small affair, it clearly showed how the commissioner's personality affected his dealings with his staff.

Unfortunately, Johnston's relations with the settler community were not much better.⁴⁴ The commissioner made no secret of his contempt for the territory's unofficial community. He complained that "all this trouble and worry with the Shire Highlands planters and missionaries is at bottom based on one fact--that they are Scotch and they want to make the whole country Scotch, and if possible to do it with English money."⁴⁵ Johnston's antipathy became so great that he eventually proclaimed that he "intend[ed] to fight them...by starting my own newspaper--The British Central Africa Gazette."⁴⁶ Of course, the Gazette could also be used for other purposes, most notably establishing a record which Johnston could dictate. One official pointed out "that reports [in the Gazette] never tell the whole

truth [and] nothing but the truth. They are made to suit various ends. A little care in writing makes things appear so different."⁴⁷

This comment demonstrates another of Johnston's less appealing traits, his disregard for the truth. The same writer later pointed out that "there is something intensely pathetic about the way that historians like Freeman insisted that they wrote out the truth as in all cases they had gone to the original documents. One can imagine some stupid old historian taking infinite pains to get to the original [Johnston's]...dispatches and thinking that at last he had hit upon the truth, the plain and uncontroverted truth."⁴⁸ And there can be little doubt that Johnston's original documents described the commissioner's desires as much as actual fact. Both his dealings with the BSAC and his basis for the forward policy showed a duplicitous side to Johnston's character. Combined with his thin-skinned nature, this combination was deadly for sound government.

Johnston did provide some assistance to estate owners. His military campaigns brought the chiefs into line, and he gradually increased the number of Africans required to pay hut taxes.⁴⁹ His success not only shifted the burden of finance to the indigenous community but also forced more Africans to participate in the cash economy, mostly as laborers. He also insisted that customs duties be cut so that the planters could import vital goods at a lower cost.

But these policies took place at a time when the planters were already in crisis, and their impact has generally been overestimated.⁵⁰

Johnston's admitted failures demonstrate this historiographical tendency. Probably the most notable example of this inconsistency was the commissioner's complete inability to solve the labor crisis besetting the territory. Johnston himself admitted that managing the labor situation was crucial for the well-being of the estate sector, and he even implemented a number of laws which were designed to regulate the hiring of labor, especially Ngoni workers from the central region.⁵¹

Historians have traditionally described this legislation as an important benchmark in the history of the country, claiming that it helped the planters gain the upper hand.⁵² But finding evidence to substantiate such a claim is extremely difficult. Europeans complained that "the...labor regulations threaten unless they are modified or removed to press very heavily on the planting interests if not to extinguish it in many places."⁵³ Responding to a deputation of planters, the commissioner later commented that he "had no intention of suggesting...that labourers were unfairly treated" when he drafted his labor regulations.⁵⁴

Johnston compounded these problems by refusing to help regulate the Shire ferries on which many of the laborers from outside the estate region arrived. This issue was

especially important because the more affluent planters were sending their capitaos to hire workers as soon as they stepped off one of the ferries, thus reducing the labor available for smaller planters and accentuating the already tense relations within the European community. Even the Gazette, hardly the most objective source, reported that "unfair play has taken place on the Upper Shire."⁵⁵ But Johnston's only response to these reports was a survey asking whether planters wanted the ferries to be government run, and he failed to follow through with any other action or regulations.

Johnston's rather chaotic administration rapidly eroded the planters' faith in the state. Although historians insist that the official and unofficial communities worked hand in hand, much evidence suggests that very real antagonisms were developing between the two.⁵⁶ The state further accentuated the differences between the two groups by placing the capital at Zomba, some forty odd miles away from the business center at Blantyre. A serious schism amongst the planters kept them from unifying against the commissioner for a while, but by 1895, it was apparent that a real rupture between state and European society had occurred.

The settlers' newspaper, the Central African Planter, demonstrated the antagonism by lambasting Johnston and his administration on several occasions. At one point, R.S. Hynde, the paper's fiery editor, pointed out that "the

administration...has undoubtedly been mostly of 'whims and fads'."⁵⁷ By 1897, the paper bitterly complained that

the B.C.A. administration has not encouraged the development of its territory nor has it been overmindful of the interests of the residents in it. The administration so far as promoting the welfare and advancement of British Central Africa has been, we regret to say, a failure. This is in no small degree due to the rule of autocracy inaugurated by Commissioner Johnston...that is a disease that kills every effort and every attempt of private enterprise.⁵⁸

Hynde also added that "Residents and planters in B.C.A.... would hail a change...which would give them a new lease of life and some chances of realizing their first estimate of the possibilities of Nyasaland." One of Johnston's own officers underlined these declarations by pointing out that "in the minds of some of our residents there is unfortunately a strong prejudice against all members of the administration and should an Archangel be ill-advised enough to accept the collectorship...I have no doubt that he would be abused like a pickpocket within a week."⁵⁹

It is not hard to understand why estate owners had such violent prejudices against the state. In late 1895, one of the territory's prominent planters complained that "we never make money on anything--only slave away + make nothing...I can't see that we will be better in another year than now."⁶⁰ Indeed, things were so bad that Sir Harry began to draw up plans calling for the mass immigration of Indian peasants to replace the planters as the principal producers of export commodities.⁶¹

But the obstinate planters were luckier than anyone could imagine. Armed with their mortgagable land grants, they borrowed enough money to start up coffee production. And as their estates began producing, a temporary aberration in the world coffee market allowed them to eke out meager profits.⁶² The period of relative prosperity immediately had salutary effects. The unofficial community settled the quarrels within its midst and finally established a unified association, the Nyasaland Chamber of Commerce and Agriculture.

Africans also began to participate in the economy much more.⁶³ The most lucrative activity was producing food for estate laborers, and it soon became apparent that many Africans were living on food production. The Blantyre resident reported that his indigenous subjects could "supply their wants and pay their taxes by the sale of a few fowls or a little grain."⁶⁴ The West Shire resident added that an African in his district could "sell foodstuffs so well that he can get calico and money without having to work for it."⁶⁵ A year later, the same resident pointed out that his subjects could earn a 100% profit by selling food in Blantyre.⁶⁶

This kind of production initially created a few problems for the local economy. It reduced the amount of local discretionary labor available to estate owners. Moreover, it put a strain on the local money supply as Africans began demanding cash instead of calico for their

produce.⁶⁷ Nevertheless, it eventually had some salutary effects on estate production. One of the most important reasons for Africans' refusal to work in the southern region was "the food question."⁶⁸ As indigenous production answered that question, more people from the north and central regions began to trek into the southern region and settle on estates.

Ironically, the development of this cash economy formed strong bonds between the planters and the indigenous community.⁶⁹ A pattern soon emerged in which Africans and unofficial expatriates developed a close relationship beyond government purview. Part of this phenomenon stemmed from the absence of colonial officials on the ground; part of it emerged as a result of the *thangata* systems and the recruitment of workers from the central region for settlement on estates. But whatever the reasons, it established an economic system in which the government was only marginally involved and in which both Europeans and Africans viewed administrative interference with distrust and distaste.

Political events also seemed to auger well for the estate sector too. In 1897, the planters' bete noire, Sir Harry Johnston, finally left for Uganda and was replaced by his lieutenant, Sir Alfred Sharpe. Sharpe's appointment was welcomed with "great hopes," and the Central African Planter noted that "Sharpe has done his best under great disadvantages and no man can do more."⁷⁰

But these expectations were bound to be disappointed--for Sharpe was scarcely different from his predecessor.⁷¹ He complained about the "obstinate, malicious, unruly, troublesome, ungrateful white population of this protectorate," and added that "it is the whites who cause all one's anxieties here! They are all at sixes and sevens with one another. Also + only agree in one thing--viz to oppose everything in the shape of government."⁷² Moreover, the new commissioner began his term with little stomach left for life in Malawi. Even before he took office, he complained that "I am beginning to feel that I have been in Central Africa long enough." As he departed for home a year later, he prayed "please providence I may never return here."⁷³

Nor was Sharpe's distaste for the local environment his only drawback. Like Johnston, he was more of an adventurer than an administrator. Indeed, he liked hunting elephants so much that he crippled his shoulder by shooting large caliber guns.⁷⁴ His memoirs are replete with tales of tracking down massive pachyderms, but embarrassingly slender about the actual affairs of state in East Africa.⁷⁵ In short, there was little to indicate that his administration would be much different from that of his immediate predecessor.

If anything, Sharpe proved to be even less diligent than Johnston. Through his administration's early years about all he managed to do was to request pay increases⁷⁶

One of the worst results of his inactivity was a continued erosion of traditional authority in rural areas. Instead of working with the chiefs, Sharpe refused to grant them any judiciary powers and instead decided to allow "the British officers of the Protectorate" to administer justice.⁷⁷ This decision simply expanded the void created by the establishment of colonial rule. Sharpe himself recognized this problem and pointed out that "during the past year there has been a marked diminution of the autocratic power formerly held by native chiefs."⁷⁸ Two years later, another officer commented that "the village chiefs have been deprived of nearly all power."⁷⁹

Unfortunately, any diminution of traditional authority endangered the state's ability to maintain order. The administration on the ground was at best minimal throughout this period. Officers were not required to know indigenous languages or customs, and therefore were scarcely able to make important decisions about the fate of many people. Moreover, the capitaos in the government were hardly the kind of people who engendered respect among either the indigenous or the European community.

This state of affairs did not go unnoticed. In 1899, Captain Close, a Foreign Office official sent Lord Salisbury a devastating memorandum about conditions in the Protectorate to Lord Salisbury.⁸⁰ Close began by averring that "most of the accounts of British Central Africa...are so inaccurate, that...it may not be out of place to notice

the following facts." He then pointed out that "three of the most important districts were...administered by notorious drunkards" and that "the Protectorate has done little or nothing towards improving the communications. The roads are not creditable to the administration. The public works department, in the charge, I believe, of another drunkard, appears inefficient." Close further asserted that Malawi was ruled by "an administration which at present has done nothing to improve the country."

But Close was also concerned about the administration's insensitivity towards the unofficial community. He pointed out that the territory's survey department was virtually useless and that its high fees hindered the sale of land, an important method of acquiring capital. He also claimed that Zomba was "a most unsuitable place for the head-quarters of government" because of its remoteness from the centers of trade and agriculture. He ultimately lambasted the administration as a "Government by officials for officials, who waste much paper in writing to each other, who frame ingenious and unnecessary regulations, and the nett [sic] result of whose labour is nil."

Even more ominous, though, were Close's comments on the estate sector. After claiming that "so far as can be ascertained nearly every planter is bankrupt," Close claimed that "it would be a questionable proceeding to encourage whitemen to engage in planting." Of course, there

had been signs that the economy had been in trouble for some time. Coffee production had tailed off dramatically because the plants yielded fewer beans as they matured.⁸¹ Simultaneously coffee prices had been falling in London as Brazil coffee finally recovered its dominance in the world economy.⁸² And even as the colony's most important commodity became less remunerative, employers from south of the Zambezi began recruiting labor and thus driving up the cost of production.⁸³

But the early signs were only a mild forecast of what eventually happened when drought again gripped the country and Rhodesian mines began full production. The coincidence of these events practically wrecked the planters, and they begged Sharpe to reduce the duties imposed on goods so that they could husband their meager capital.⁸⁴ But the new commissioner, upset about editorials in the Central African Times, simply asserted that "settlers in British Central Africa can in no way complain of heavy duties."⁸⁵

The unofficial community's internal divisions allowed Sharpe to maintain this kind of sangfroid. In what would eventually become a characteristic of hard times, the planters divided against themselves as they cast about for ways to solve their dilemma. The best example of this occurred when the Chamber of Commerce requested that the state set up an experimental station for the cultivation of tobacco and hire an expert for that commodity.⁸⁶ This was an eminently good suggestion since it was clear that

Malawian agriculturists needed to find an alternative to coffee.

Before Sharpe could even consider this proposal, the Mlanje Planters Association, led by Henry Brown, protested that the appointment of a tobacco expert would be unfair because "money has already been spent by us in raising tobacco crops."⁸⁷ Brown did mention that the commissioner might approve a bonus for the first planter to sell a ton of tobacco on the London market, but this was not even a well disguised attempt to gain a pig in the poke since the Mlanje planters already had much tobacco on the London market.

Such disunity was devastating for the settlers because it afforded the state virtually unlimited political autonomy. The administration could freely pursue its own prerogatives and ignore the demands of the planters. This situation was especially galling because settler dissension inevitably reached its acme during periods of economic hardship, precisely the time when the capitalists most needed the state's assistance.

The state did not hesitate to take advantage of its autonomy. For example, as the drop in Malawi's coffee production caused revenue to decline, the Foreign Office, concerned about the administration's continued deficits, subsequently refused to allow Sharpe to hire a coffee expert because it was not the "proper function of the Protectorate administration."⁸⁸ Instead, the Foreign Office

decided that the producers should hire their own man since acquiring an expert was "designed immediately to benefit the coffee industry, [and] might very well be undertaken by some cooperative effort on the part of the planters and firms directly concerned." In short, the imperial modus operandi dictated that the state should look after itself and entrepreneurs after themselves.

Imperial policy was not the only problem confronting Malawi's unofficial community; the state's own ramshackle organization made it even more difficult for the planters to obtain government assistance. Until the administration could actually take care of all the duties with which it was entrusted, there could be no thought of it assuming extra responsibilities. Thus, even as the the economy collapsed, Sharpe was still hiring district residents so that he could actually make direct rule work, a diversion of spending from economic areas which needed immediate attention.⁸⁹

The state's prerogatives were not only material. The commissioner's ambition caused him to delay reporting the full extent of the crisis. For instance, he reported that 1899-1900 showed a "a satisfactory advance...in the development of new exports" and that "several industries...give substantial profits" even though he proposed military reductions because of a drop in revenue, especially from customs duties.⁹⁰ Colonel Manning, Sharpe's stand-in while he was on home leave, continued this

their leaders. Such a diminution of authority naturally made efficient administration even more difficult. As it was, the district officials scarcely made any impression in many parts of the country. Without chiefs helping to maintain order, there was little doubt that political stability in rural areas would be more mythical than real.

Sharpe, however, had to resolve continuing personnel problems before he could establish administrative authority in rural Malawi. The commissioner had to fire a clerk because he was illiterate and freely commented that at least one of his officers was not interested in his own district.⁹⁸ He also reported that "all departments in this protectorate are suffering from being shorthanded at the present date."⁹⁹ He backed up this assertion by telegraphing that "unless vacancies are filled as they occur great disorganization" will result.¹⁰⁰

The history of the legal department illustrates this point. The first judge in the territory left in 1899 and was replaced by an ambitious legal authority named J.J. Nunan.¹⁰¹ Much to his surprise, Nunan found the legal department in a shambles. Nunan not only lacked an adequate staff, but he also found that he occasionally had to prosecute cases which he judged!¹⁰² Even after the state hired a prosecutor to avoid this situation, the new man found himself forced to act as judge while Nunan was on home leave.

Sharpe also had problems with his indigenous

duplicity by claiming that "the affairs of this protectorate, inspite of the very serious state of the labour market, are still flourishing."⁹¹

But not even the most optimistic reporter could continue to cover-up the impending crisis. By 1901, even Sharpe had to admit that "the commercial development of the country itself has already begun to decrease." By then, exports had dropped from £79,349 to £38,723, and imports had also fallen some £30,000.⁹² A famine which required relief compounded the country's problems even more.⁹³ In this environment, the number of bankruptcies increased so much that the judiciary department's work doubled.⁹⁴

Things became so bad that even Sharpe felt constrained to act. In July 1901, he suggested a two tier tax system.⁹⁵ Under this plan, Africans had to pay six shillings a year in hut tax unless they worked for a European for a month. In such cases, the tax payer would be given a three shilling rebate. Such a policy was clearly designed to encourage more Africans to work for the beleaguered planters.⁹⁶ The plan also allowed Sharpe to collect more revenue from the indigenous population and thus avert a dramatic decrease in total revenues.

The new tax policy accelerated the decline of the chiefs' authority in the villages. Africans were outraged by the doubling of their taxes and protested vociferously.⁹⁷ As it became clear that their chiefs could do virtually nothing to assist them, they lost faith in

employees. For example, when a battalion of Malawian soldiers marched through the southern region in the fall of 1902, the troops ran amok, looting and raping almost indiscriminately.¹⁰³ The unofficial community raised a storm of protest about this behavior. They felt that it endangered the good relations which they had worked so hard to establish with the indigenous community and caused unnecessary turmoil and anxiety. R.H. Hynde, the Nyasaland Times founder and editor, complained that this incident was illustrative of numerous abuses. He even claimed that "every case of arrest by police without a white man being present is accompanied by stealing."¹⁰⁴ He also added that this rampage was not an isolated incident and that many local people were terrified of the government's capitaoos.

But Sharpe was not having any of it. He merely pointed out that "the trifling incidents in connection with the transit of the native troops through the Protectorate have been seized upon by those inimically disposed towards the Administration..as a reason for attacking military officers and officials generally."¹⁰⁵ He dismissed the other allegations by commenting that the "accusations were greatly exaggerated and largely incorrect." So, in the end, the state antagonized the settlers and Africans even more by disregarding the very real abuses of government authority.

The administration was not, however, completely insensitive to the Protectorate's economic needs. At the

turn of the century it tried to bolster the economy by including Malawi in the new South African customs union and restricting indigenous emigration outside to mining regions.¹⁰⁶ The customs union issue was especially important because membership would provide a close and potentially lucrative market for the territory's beleaguered agriculturists, especially the tobacco farmers. If the administration could gain access, farmers could sell their produce in the south rather than shipping it to the United Kingdom; if it could not, the high duties on goods would effectively bar Malawi's commodities from South Africa.

Ironically, the customs union issue catalyzed dissension among the expatriates, again demonstrating how capitalist fractions immobilized the unofficial community at crucial times.¹⁰⁷ The planters, of course, were all for inclusion, but traders and transporters feared that their undercapitalized enterprises would be swamped by better financed South African companies. Thus, even as the state pushed for the customs union, the settlers divided over the issue.

Their disunity was especially debilitating because Sharpe could not overcome the reservations of the Colonial Office. The policy makers were far more concerned with developing South Africa's agriculture than with helping Malawi, which was a Foreign Office protectorate.¹⁰⁸ Whether or not support of Malawi's capitalist community could have guaranteed inclusion in the customs union is obviously

moot, but clearly the settlers' inability to unify and lobby Whitehall made Sharpe's efforts more onerous.

To his credit, Sir Alfred was equally concerned about the loss of labor to the region's expanding mining activities and fought vociferously to keep Malawi's workers at home.¹⁰⁹ Ironically, one of his chief opponents in this struggle was none other than Sir Harry Johnston, who decided that Malawi was an ideal spot from which to draw labor for the southern mines. In an uncharacteristically perceptive letter, Sharpe complained that Sir Harry's plans would only ensure that the Protectorate's "industry...would be doomed."¹¹⁰ The commissioner backed up his letter by informing Whitehall he had been issuing instructions to discourage outside recruiters for the "last three or four years."

By 1902, however, the commissioner was beginning to concede defeat. Noting that there was "some decrease in planting activity," he admitted that he might have to devise a labor emigration plan if the indigenous inhabitants continued to express a desire to go.¹¹¹ As it became clear that "at present the industries of the country are not very flourishing," Sharpe agreed to send Milner some "3000 or 4000" men.¹¹² Sharpe tried to soften the blow by adding that the plan could only be implemented "provided that local needs for labour do not increase." Yet he knew that the settlers would be apoplectic and covered himself by pointing out that they were "not of a very high

class, and are as a rule, and as a matter of policy, opposed to all forms of Government and control."

Sharpe's decision was momentous. It officially sanctioned the idea of using Malawi as a labor reservoir for the southern mines and established an economic tradition which persists today.¹¹³ It also occasioned a major retrenchment in the colony's systems of production. For as the state decided that it could not stem the flow of free labor from the territory, various landowners decided to legitimize labor tenancy so that their supply of workers would not be threatened by mass emigration.

Labor tenancy had been an established practice since the Protectorate's founding. The most notorious system, known as thangata, was at least nominally a legacy of the pre-colonial era, when chiefs coopted the labor of their followers. Acquiring labor through this practice had questionable legal standing, and Johnston had tried to thwart it by placing non-disturbance clauses in the settlers' claim certificates. However, the clauses had little effect on estate activities, and planters still forced their tenants to work. But coercion was theoretically illegal in many cases, and the question of indigenous rights always made tenuous the future of labor tenancy. The massive labor emigration at the turn of the century forced large planters to adopt thangata on a grander scale, forcing the government to act in the spring of 1903.

The first landmark was a court case, Supervisor of Native Affairs versus Blantyre and East Africa.¹¹⁴ The case focused on what indigenous rights Johnston had established in his certificates of claim. Typically, the judge found that "there is no direct evidence as to the intention of the administration at the time this clause was inserted." The magistrate nevertheless concluded that it would be impossible to determine who was originally excluded from thangata in the certificates of claim and suggested that "the interest of the native will be best served by a new arrangement by which, without distinction between old occupiers and new settlers, he engages to pay a moderate rent." Thangata had survived its first test and actually was legalized for the first time.

After the court case, both the Chamber of Commerce and the state established land commissions to investigate the issue further.¹¹⁵ Both concluded that labor tenancy required new legislation, and Zomba rapidly enacted the Native Lands Ordinance.¹¹⁶ This law followed Nunan's lead and stipulated that all planters leave aside ten percent of their land for indigenous allotments. In return for occupying this land, African tenants would have to pay 4/-, approximately one month's work, a year to the landlord. if they could not pay, they would have to work for the estate owner.

In one stroke, the planter community gained an important source of labor. Thangata was now accepted in

law, and the minimal protection offered by Johnston had been swept aside. Moreover, the state pressured indigenous inhabitants into becoming tenants by restricting their ability to buy land. Since the Shire Highlands were overcrowded, the effect of limiting land sales virtually forced people to live on estates. Africans had to move onto the estates as the population increased. And so the estate owners finally got the state to sanction a policy which provided them with a steady stream of labor.

It was at best a Pyrrhic victory. The new law still did not address the needs of smaller proprietors whose estates did not have enough room to house all their workers. It also destroyed chiefly authority by undermining their capacity to intercede with the land owners. Moreover, it established a system that less than a dozen years later catalyzed a serious rebellion in the territory.

Most importantly, however, it tacitly admitted that capitalism's first efforts had failed miserably. Abandoning the consumption of free labor in favor of labor tenancy was a serious regression in relations of production and indicated that the planters needed to accumulate more capital in non-capitalist production before they could begin another attempt at primitive accumulation. Many settlers openly recognized this and lamented their naviete.

The state also bore an ugly responsibility. Contrary to the assertions of several historians, Zomba had refused to assist the settlers in several critical areas.¹¹⁷ It had

not provided agricultural assistance, failed to resolve the labor issue and neglected any infrastructural improvement. The central authorities had instead relied on an almost surreal faith that if they said things were fine, they would be.

The administration's inaction might have been more comprehensible if an orderly state had emerged, but even after emphasizing its own prerequisites the state had failed to establish any real political order. The power of the chiefs had been smashed, but district administration was so haphazard that the countryside had no real order.¹¹⁸ Various departments were undermanned, and employees were at best rouses and adventurers. African employees continued to act so cavalierly that they antagonized both European and African subjects.

Thus, the protectorate's first ten years were an unmitigated disaster. The economy had failed, the official and unofficial communities were at loggerheads, and authority over the indigenous population had essentially disappeared. Virtually nothing had been gained in over ten years. The only advantage was that things could not get any worse, at least in theory. But only practice would tell if that were really true.

ENDNOTES

1. For instance, see Hanna, The Beginning...; C.A. Baker, Johnston's Administration (Zomba, 1971); and P.A. Cole-King, "Transport and Communication in Malawi to

- 1891, with a summary to 1918," in B. Pachai, ed., The Early History of Malawi.
2. The best examples are Krishnamurthy, "Economic Policy..."; Myambo, "The Shire..."; and Vail, "The State...".
 3. John Lonsdale, "The Conquest State of Kenya," in J. de Moor & H. Wesseling, eds., Colonial Warfare (Leiden, 1986), 1. I have borrowed this term from a manuscript generously given to me by Professor John Lonsdale. At the time he indicated that it should be cited as I have. Unfortunately, I have never tracked that volume down and am unsure whether it has ever been published.
 4. R. Tangri, "African Reaction and Resistance to the Early Colonial Situation in Malawi, 1891-1915," Central Africa Historical Association, Pamphlet # 25 (1968), 2; and Robin Palmer, "Johnston and Jameson: A Comparative Study in the Imposition of Colonial Rule," in Pachai, ed., The Early History..., 306.
 5. The reason for this drop was the collapse of coffee as a crop. Unfortunately, little has been published about the country's export trade, and the best summary remains Baker's somewhat suspect study, see C.A. Baker, "Malawi's Exports: An Economic History," in B. Pachai, G.W. Smith and R. Tangri, eds., Malawi Past and Present (Zomba, 1968). Ironically, Dr. Tangri told me that one of the conclusions of the conference which produced this study was a pressing need for an economic history of Malawi, something which the historiography still lacks. Population is also an understudied phenomena, and I have used Robin Palmer's figure for maximum European settlement, see Palmer, "Johnston and Jameson...", 295. Perhaps the best way in which to observe the drop in European population is by comparing addresses in the territory's postal directories in 1899 and 1901. Doing so demonstrates that numerous planters left between these years as their estates fell, see British Central Africa Postal Directory, 1899 (Zomba, 1899); and British Central Africa Postal Directory, 1901 (Zomba, 1901). To the best of my knowledge, the only copies of these directories are in the Royal Commonwealth Society's library.
 6. The story of Malawi's labor emigration has been most extensively told by Robert Boeder and F. E. Sanderson. See Boeder, "The Effects of Labor Emigration on Rural Life in Malawi," Rural Africana, 20, 1 (Spring, 1973); Boeder, "Malawians Abroad," Ph.D. Thesis, Michigan State University, 1974; Sanderson, "The Development

of Labour Migration from Nyasaland," Journal of African History, 2, 2 (1961); and Sanderson, "Nyasaland Migrant Labour in British Central Africa, 1890-1939," M.A. Thesis, University of Manchester, 1960. See also, Mandala, Work and Control..., 115.

7. As both Mandala and Schoffeleers have pointed out, see J.M. Schoffeleers, "From Socialization to Personal Enterprise: A History of the Nomi Labor Societies in the Nsanje District of Malawi, c. 1891-1972," Rural Africana, 20, I (Spring, 1973), 13; and Mandala, Work and Control..., 95. Perhaps the biggest impetus for this change was the imposition of Portuguese rule in neighboring Mozambique. As Lusitania's representatives exerted local control for the first time, at least one Lomwe historian claims that "the people suffered greatly....They were butchered without mercy; even women, boys and girls and little children became victims of this savagery." Under these conditions, thousands fled to Malawi to escape, and one of my informants bluntly declared that his people came to the Bruce estate because it was better than Mozambique. See B. Pachai, ed., Memoirs of a Malawian: The Life and Reminiscences of Lewis Mataka Bandawe (Blantyre, 1971), 43; Oral interview, Edward Sapato, Yavi village, July 10 1985.
8. Booth's influence is best demonstrated in George Shepperson and Tom Price, Independent African (Edinburgh, 1958). For more on the influence of Booth's students, such as Eliot Kamwana and Peter Nyambo, see Harry W. Langworthy, "Peter Nyambo of Malawi, c. 1884-c. 1970," mimeo, n.d.; W. Ndopa Chijere Chirwa, "Masokwa Elliot Kenan Kamwana Chirwa: His Religious and Political Activities, and the Effects of Kamwanaism in South-East Nkhata Bay, 1908-56," History Seminar, Chancellor College, March 12 1984; and John McCracken, "African Politics in Twentieth Century Malawi," in Ranger, ed., Aspects of Central African History.
9. Lonrho Company Files, Limbe, Land Title # 869, September 10 1902.
10. Malawi Department of Lands, Valuation and Water, Lands Register, Deed 88, Revd James Rankin to A.J.P. Meezies, April 23 1902. In both these cases, the mortgages were recorded in later land sales.
11. Indeed, both the Buchanan and Sharrer holdings eventually became the basis for large Malawian companies, Blantyre & East Africa and British Central Africa Company, which played important roles in the

colonial economy.

12. R.C.F. Maughan, Nyasaland in the Nineties (London, 1935), 151.
13. British Central African Gazette, II, 7 (June, 1895). Johnston actually made this statement at a May 23rd meeting at Blantyre about the Zomba-Chiromo road. From personal experience, the author is confident that neither the Commissioner nor his successors ever did much about this road.
14. Most notably Baker and Cole-King, see Baker, Johnston's Administration, 46-54; and Cole-King, "Transport...", 86-87.
15. "Report on Trade and General Conditions...", enclosed in Johnston to Salisbury, April 29 1896, F.O. 403/229.
16. Central African Planter II, 7, December 1 1897.
17. M.N.A., A 1/1/1, Kew to Foreign Office, June 4 1895.
18. Foreign Office to Treasury, July 4 1894, F.O. 403/198.
19. Treasury to Foreign Office, August 16 1894, F.O. 403/198.
20. As the numerous entries in Poole's and Alston's diaries demonstrate.
21. White, Magomero, 85; Dachs points out that these expeditions came later because Johnston's initial weakness forced him to crush the Yao and others piecemeal, see A.J. Dachs, "Politics of Collaboration: Imperialism in Practice," in Pachai, ed., The Early History of Malawi, 288.
22. M.N.A., H.M. PO 2/1, F. Poole to Mother, 18-3-98.
23. M.N.A., H.M. AL 1/1/1, Alston Diaries, June 1 1896.
24. Royal Geographic Society, Sharpe to Keltie, May 1 1905.
25. Macmillan, "The Origins...", 373.
26. M.N.A., H.M. PO 1/1/1, W. Poole to Mother, June 14 1895. Indeed, even imperial historians concede the value of military expeditions for this purpose. For instance, L.H. Gann and Peter Duignan claim that "there was plenty of friction between Johnston and his subordinates, but none suggested that a professional military man would be disgraced by serving under a

self-taught soldier who had never worn a uniform,"
L.H. Gann & Peter Duignan, The Rulers of British
Africa (Stanford, 1978), 85.

27. M.N.A., H.M. PO 1/1/1, W. Poole to F. Poole, January 8 1896.
28. M.N.A., H.M. PO 1/1/1, W. Poole to Mother, January 16 1896.
29. M.N.A., H.M. PO 1/1/1, W. Poole to Mother, January 16 1896.
30. M.N.A., H.M. PO 1/1/1, W. Poole to Isabelle, April 30 1896.
31. M.N.A., H.M. AL 1/1/1, Alston Diaries, Sept 15 1896.
32. M.N.A., H.M. AL 1/1/1, Alston Diaries, April 6 1896. In our rather jaded age, such a letter might not mean much, but for a hot-blooded young Victorian, the Princess' favor was wonderful indeed.
33. Sir Hector Duff, African Small Chop, 24.
34. N.L.S., Mss 7874, ff 35-38, "Medical Report," by Kerr Cross, n.d.; Maughan, Nyasaland..., 14.
35. Most notably Baker and Oliver. See Oliver, The Scramble...; and Baker, Johnston's Administration. Palmer has a more balanced view, but still hesitates to stress his incompetence. See Palmer, "Johnston and Jameson...", 229-230.
36. Central African Planter II, 222, August 16 1896.
37. M.N.A., H.M. PO 1/1/1, W. Poole to Mother, June 11 1896.
38. M.N.A., A 1/1/1, Kew to Foreign Office, June 4 1895.
39. Johnston to Kimberley, October 13 1894, enclosed in Kew Gardens to Foreign Office, October 9 1894, F.O. 403/198.
40. Extract from James A. Edwards, "Storm over Zomba: The Tale of Nyasaland's First Library," Library Association of Rhodesia and Nyasaland Newsletter (February 1963), 3-12. A typed manuscript of this interesting article is contained in the Society of Malawi's photographic collection, and I suspect it was done by that group's emeritus librarian, Eric Entage. Mr. Entage's fine historical sense and commitment to Malawian history remove many reservations I would

normally have about using such a source.

41. Edwards, "Storm....," 6.
42. Edwards, "Storm....," 8.
43. Edwards, "Storm....," 10.
44. Palmer points out that at least one settler found him "a thoroughly unlikeable person'," Palmer, "Johnston and Jameson....," 299. For more on the official unofficial schism, see Andrew Ross, "The African-'A Child or a Man';-The Quarrel Between the Blantyre Mission of the Church of Scotland and the British Central Africa Administration, 1890-1905," in Stokes and Brown, eds., The Zambesian Past. Gann and Duignan also imply that Johnston's relations with the less than satisfactory by claiming that Johnston established his capital at Zomba because he "appreciated the blessing of living at some distance from the Scottish traders and preachers at Blantyre," Gann & Duignan, British...., 163.
45. Royal Commonwealth Society, microfilm, CT 1/16/4, Johnston to Cawston, December 9 1893.
46. CT 1/16/4/1, Johnston to Rhodes, June 7 1893, quoted in Ross, "The Origins....," 199.
47. M.N.A., H.M. PO 1/1/1, W. Poole to Mother, November 13 1895.
48. M.N.A., H.M. PO 1/1/1, W. Poole to Mother, November 13 1895.
49. Johnston to Salisbury, August 5 1895, F.O. 403/213.
50. Most notably by Krishnamurthy, Vail and Mandala, see Krishnamurthy, "Economic Policy....,"; Mandala, Work and Control; and Vail, "The State....,".
51. Johnston to Roseberry, January 12 1894, F.O. 403/197.
52. Two of the best examples are Krishnamurthy, "Economic Policy....,"; and Simon Myambo, "The Shire Highlands Plantations....".
53. L.W.B.C.A., no. 73, March 1894.
54. B.C.A.G., II, 22, December 1 1896.
55. B.C.A.G., II, 10, July 15 1895.

56. As I have pointed out elsewhere. See Tony Woods, "The Myth of the Capitalist Class," History in Africa 16 (1989).
57. C.A.P., December 1 1896.
58. C.A.P., June 15 1897.
59. Letter from L.T. Moggridge, C.A.P., April 26 1896.
60. E.U.L. Gen 717/12, B. Moir to Jean, October 12 1895.
61. Johnston to Kimberley, June 1 1895, F.O. 403/213.
62. C.A. Baker, "Malawi's Exports...", 83. The aberration involved a precipitous fall in coffee production in Brazil, which forced up the price of the bean in world markets and thus gave greater profits to Malawian producers.
63. Vaughan, "Social and Economic Change...", 158.
64. "Extracts from Mr. McMaster's Report...", B.C.A.G., III 5, March 1 1896.
65. "Extracts...", B.C.A.G., III 8, April 15 1896.
66. "Extracts...", B.C.A.G., IV 8, May 1 1897.
67. Royal Geographic Society, Sharpe Correspondence, Sharpe to Keltie, October 12 1896.
68. Vaughan, "Social and Economic...", 184; for more on this topic, see Megan Vaughan, "Food Production in Early Colonial Southern Malawi," History Seminar, Chancellor College, December 16 1981.
69. As I have suggested elsewhere. See Tony Woods, "Planters, Administrators and Chiefs," International Journal of Oral History, 10, 3 (November 1989).
70. C.A.P., June 15 1897.
71. Despite the assertions of his biographer. See Robert Boeder, Sir Alfred Sharpe: Builder of Empire (Zomba, 1981).
72. Royal Geographic Society, Sharpe to Keltie, December [?] 1897.
73. R.G.S., Sharpe to Keltie, Novemeber 25 1896.
74. R.G.S., Sharpe to Keltie, December [?] 1897.

75. Sir Alfred Sharpe, The Backbone of Empire (London, 1921). As early as 1894, Sharpe complained that "my right arm is at present disabled" from shooting, R.G.S., Sharpe to Keltie, October 12 1896.
76. See for instance, Foreign Office to Treasury, July 5 1898, F.O. 403/265.
77. Memo by Sharpe, August 29 1898, F.O. 403/265.
78. "Report on Trade...., April 1 1896 to March 1897," F.O. 403/245.
79. Foreign Office to Colonial Office, December 22 1898, F.O. 403/ 265.
80. Close to Salisbury, January 27 1899, F.O. 403/286.
81. White, Magomero, 84.
82. Baker, "Malawi's Exports....," 87.
83. Boeder, "Malawians Abroad".
84. Pearce to Foreign Office, November 1 1899, F.O. 2/210.
85. Sharpe to Foreign Office, May 9 1899, F.O. 2/209.
86. Sharpe to Foreign Office, August 2 1899, F.O. 2/209.
87. Sharpe to Foreign Office, August 2 1899, F.O. 2/209.
88. Foreign Office to Sharpe, November 1 1900, F.O. 2/304.
89. Sharpe to Clement Hill, December 17 1899, F.O. 2/210.
90. "Report on Trade and General Conditions, 1899-1900," F.O. 2/307.
91. Manning to Foreign Office, October 29 1900, F.O. 2/309.
92. "Report on Trade and General Conditions, 1900-1901," F.O. 2/468.
93. Sharpe to Foreign Office, February 11 1901, F.O. 2/469.
94. Sharpe to Foreign Office, April 9 1901, F.O. 2/470.
95. Sharpe to Foreign Office, July 8 1901, F.O. 2/470.
96. Once again though, there is a tendency to overestimate the impact of this change. For instance, Mandala claims that taxes were actually increased to twelve

shillings, the legal maximum under the new law. However, correspondence after his cited reference clearly shows that the rates were six and three shillings, while his second reference, Pachai, points out "the twelve shillings limit existed on paper only; it was too high in 1901. In actual practice the upper and the lower limits were six and three shillings." See Mandala, Work and Control, 112; and Pachai, Malawi: The History of the Nation, 114.

97. Sharpe to Hill, April 3 1902, F.O. 2/605.
98. Manning to Sharpe, December 5 1900, F.O. 2/469.
99. Sharpe to Foreign Office, April 9 1901, F.O. 2/470.
100. Sharpe to Foreign Office, April 9 1901, F.O. 2/470.
101. E.U.L., Gen 717/13, B. Moir to Jan, December 30 1898.
102. Sharpe to Foreign Office, February 27 1899, F.O. 2/208.
103. Sharpe to Hill, November 14 1902, F.O. 2/608.
104. Sharpe to Foreign Office, Decemeber 2 1902, F.O. 2/608.
105. Testimony of R.H. Hynde, enclosed in Sharpe to Foreign Office, December 2 1902, F.O. 2/608.
106. Sharpe to Foreign Office, Septemeber 30 1901, F.O. 2/471.
107. Woods, "The Myth...": 366.
108. Milner to Sharpe, December 6 1902, F.O. 2/608.
109. Sharpe to Milner, December 18 1902, F.O. 2/608.
110. Sharpe to Foreign Office, March 10 1902, F.O. 2/605.
111. Sharpe to Clement Hill, December 18 1902, F.O.2/608.
112. Sharpe to Milner, December 11 1902, F.O. 2/608.
113. Boeder, "The Effects of Labor Emigration...". Mine remittances still play a valuable role in Malawi's economy.
114. B.C.A.G., April 30 1903.
115. M.N.A., S 1/385/23, enclosed Pearce to Lansdowne, July

7 1903.

116. M.N.A., S 1/385/23, enclosed in Pearce to Lansdowne, July 7 1903.
117. Most notably Vail and Pachai. See Vail, "The State...,"; and B. Pachai, "Christianity and Commerce in Malawi: Some Pre-Colonial and Colonial Aspects," in Pachai et al., eds, Malawi Past and Present.
118. Indeed, Tangri has pointed out that demonstrations against colonialism had begun as early as 1902 in Nkata Bay, Tangri, "African Reaction and Resistance...," 10.

Chapter Four

The Conquest's State's Last Hurrah, 1904-1911

1904 promised great change in Malawian politics. London finally decided to place the territory under the Colonial rather than the Foreign Office and within a year authorized the appointment of the country's first "experts."¹ But many of the old guard, most notably Alfred Sharpe, remained firmly entrenched in Zomba and fought comprehensive reform vigorously. Consequently, the conquest state clung tenaciously to life until 1911 and continued to inhibit the emergence of a more rational bureaucracy capable of coping with the territory's expanding problems.

Unfortunately, the need to establish a new administration grew more pressing as the state dithered. The planting community struggled to recover from the collapse of coffee as an export crop. As they did so, they grew more antagonistic towards Zomba and more dependent on large metropolitan concerns. The net effect of this process was that much of the export economy slipped away from the state's purview and control. Zomba tried to rectify the situation by allowing unofficial representation on the Legislative Council formed in 1908, but the divisions within the European community and the small number of seats available ensured that many settlers still felt unrepresented in the administration's upper echelons.

Ironically, while the planters struggled, the indigenous community apparently experienced a brief

economic boom as more Malawians worked in the region's mines and on the construction of the country's new railroad. However, just as the planters finished recovering in 1908, the bottom fell out of the African economy. New restrictions on labor emigration combined with the completion of the railroad and curtailed indigenous prosperity. Malawians consequently had to emigrate illegally or accept lower paying jobs in the territory. This change increased indigenous anxiety and sparked a number of incidents in the country.²

These events were especially dangerous because changes in indigenous society had undermined Zomba's ability to rule. Continued Lowwe immigration, internal labor migration and the state's continued disdain for traditional authorities all caused an erosion of pre-colonial social organizations. What kind of new structures emerged in the new society still remains unclear, but there is no doubt that new family and village patterns were developing.³

Simultaneously, new ideological forces were exerting an increasingly important influence on Malawians. The independent churches which had established themselves earlier began to influence people, and millennial movements grew stronger each day.⁴ Moreover, Malawians began to develop closer contact with outside elements of the black diaspora, most notably the African-American community in the United States.⁵

These developments were an ill omen for Zomba.

Colonial administrators were gradually losing control of the economy as well as the "unofficial" community, both European and African. Zomba could still depend on the politics of kith and kin to keep the planters relatively passive, and the continuing legacy of the conquest state's terror placed a damper on indigenous discontent. But the state could ill afford to ignore the country's changes as it tried to fashion a workable bureaucracy.

Governor Sharpe was keenly aware that he faced considerable problems in 1904. In his Annual Report, he frankly admitted that a "somewhat difficult question for consideration is the extent of power which should be allowed to Native Chiefs...the people formerly subject to them often refuse to obey or take any notice of their directions."⁶ This gradual dissolution of traditional authority left the administration with a potentially rebellious and dissident population, and the presence of numerous Lomwe immigrants made the situation even more unstable. The commissioner had already pointed out that they had been responsible for a number of highway robberies in 1898 and 1899.⁷ Unless the state could find some way of establishing a legitimate hierarchy in the villages, the potential for indigenous unrest was extremely high.

The dissolution of indigenous authority was not the country's only problem. The recession triggered by the collapse of coffee cultivation still gripped the country,

and capital was scarce.⁸ New crops, most notably tobacco and cotton, were being developed, but these ventures were still not profitable.⁹ Indeed, the British Cotton Growers Association frankly admitted that cotton cultivation had failed in 1903.¹⁰

Ironically, the recession aided the state in an entirely unexpected way by widening the schisms among unofficial community's classes. This intensification of class fractionalization soon produced a political fragmentation of Malawi's white community.¹¹ Late in 1903, a new association, the Nyasaland Planters' Association, challenged the Chamber of Commerce's authority to claim it was the voice of the planters. Relations between the two groups eventually became so bad that the The Central African Times complained that "if the two bodies exist as at present, there is little hope of united action...a condition which would annul any good they may possibly contemplate."¹² The disunity provided the state an enviable opportunity to maintain political autonomy since capitalist fractionalization inhibited the unofficial community's ability to pressure Zomba.

The state now had an opportunity to act, and for a brief period, it appeared that a new era of reform was at hand. The Colonial Office assumed control of the territory from the Foreign Office in early 1904. At the same time, Sharpe uncharacteristically admitted that new labor regulations were needed since the old ones "have, in fact,

for some time past been almost a dead letter."¹³

Old habits die hard though, and the promised reforms never arrived. To some extent, Zomba's failure to implement change was understandable. Sharpe spent much of his time weeding out incompetents, drunkards and reprobates. One of his department heads was an emotionally unstable individual who frankly admitted that he practically suffered a nervous breakdown in 1903 and was cashiered because of "acute mania" in late 1904.¹⁴ In an even more spectacular case, a district officer was invalided home because he claimed that Mbona, a local rain spirit, had possessed him.¹⁵ Zomba also found that it had to fire at least one official for drunkenness and another because of financial problems.¹⁶ But the most intriguing case involved the dismissal of an officer accused of a "breach of financial instructions."¹⁷ The man defended himself by asserting that his alleged embezzlement was normal and implied that other officers likewise supplemented their salaries.¹⁸

Resolving these personnel problems was a daunting task for Sharpe. Working conditions in the country were onerous and pay small, and the governor admitted that the "general conditions of life [here] are such as to render highly inadvisable prolonged residence without change."¹⁹ Nor had the work load improved since the colony's early days. One department head frankly advised his superiors that proposed legislation should not be passed because he had only one officer to complete his department's work.²⁰

Sharpe did not help matters by insisting that his officers should not be married.²¹ The Colonial Office admonished the commissioner that "such a rule may often prevent...the sending of a specially competent man."²² Indeed, a petition from district officers argued that it is in "the best interests of Government, for the comfort, health and contentment of the individual, and for the settlement and progress of the Protectorate, that officials should enter the married state."²³

The outcome of these problems was quite clear. District administration was at best shoddy, and on at least two occasions Zomba reported that residents were not fulfilling their obligations.²⁴ Indeed, things got so bad that the Mandarins in Whitehall eventually concluded that district administration was in a shambles and "require[d] immediate improvement."²⁵

The state's disarray did not auger well for the future of the country, and Zomba's initial movement toward reform soon petered out. By September 1904, Pearce replied to complaints about transportation by insisting that the country's roads were "distinctly good."²⁶ Zomba also argued its willingness to "do anything possible to assist planters, short of coercing labour," while simultaneously ensuring that London knew the settlers' labor problems stemmed from the "poor housing and indifferent food" given to estate workers.²⁷ In essence, the state insisted that the solution to the labor problem "lay in the planters' own

hands."²⁸

The state also demonstrated its autonomy in its response to continuing land problems. Sharpe best demonstrated this independence when he informed the planters that the administration should not only cease selling crown land to plantation producers but that Zomba should also take advantage of the shortages by raising the rents on any leases.²⁹ A month later, he testily pointed out that land really was available around Blantyre.³⁰

The state's refusal to address the land question was dangerous indeed. Settlers used up valuable capital obtaining acreage from large landowners rather than devoting it to developing better crops.³¹ Moreover, land leases might have kept planters from obtaining loans to expand their operations.³² But the state was convinced that "no Europeans come to Nyasaland with the idea of permanent settlement; but rather with the object of temporarily taking up planting and other industries, which they hope may enable them after a certain number of years to leave the country in bettered circumstances."³³ So it was not keen to help the beleaguered planters as they tried to reestablish themselves.

The state also hurt the planters by not providing any agricultural services.³⁴ In 1904, the British Cotton Growers' Association pointed out that the country's Scientific Department "is not at all well organised, and the planters have no-one to help them in case of

difficulty."³⁵ Sharpe confirmed this observation by complaining to the department's head that its work was "extremely humiliating for me."³⁶

It is hard to blame Sharpe entirely for this problem. Whitehall tied his hands by refusing to sanction more votes for agriculture because "it would be out of the question...to approve so large an expenditure...until it is possible to forecast with great certainty the lines which the agricultural development of the protectorate is likely to follow."³⁷ But while the reasons for the state's inactivity were unclear, the outcome was not. By 1905, commentators observed that the lack of extension services had led to an "absolute ignorance of the planters on all matters connected with cotton growing."³⁸ More importantly, the state's inertia insured that "thousands of pounds have been wasted by the planting community owing to lack of advice."³⁹

The state also undercut the planting community by trying to encourage indigenous cotton production. As early as November 1904, Sharpe asserted that "there is a far greater future for native grown cotton in this Protectorate than for any quantity which can be produced, or is likely to be produced, by European planters."⁴⁰ Sharpe did more than comment on this industry though; he also encouraged its development by giving a labor rebate on hut taxes to any African who produced 36 pounds of cotton.⁴¹ This policy sought to entice Malawians to stay home rather than migrate

to the neighboring mines, but even Sharpe conceded that one side effect would be a diminution of labor available for estate cultivation.⁴²

Reducing the planters' workforce was not so crucial as responding to threats made by authorities in the mining territories. In September, Lord Milner requested that the Rand mines be allowed to pay Malawian workers before they left South Africa rather than remit their salaries home.⁴³ Such action would naturally decrease the flow of money pouring north from the mining districts and eliminate the prosperity many indigenous inhabitants consequently enjoyed.⁴⁴ Sharpe thwarted Milner's plan by claiming that at least two-thirds of the miners' salaries had to be remitted or the "constant and continued opposition" of local capitalists would boil over.⁴⁵ But Sharpe was concerned that the remittances from the south did not outweigh the socially devastating consequences of labor emigration, and he became determined to develop other sources of revenue for the local community by doing all "that I can to encourage the growth of cotton by natives."⁴⁶

Sharpe remained as inconsistent as ever though; even as he argued for peasant cultivation, he began stultifying village capitalism by passing legislation which made lending Africans more than one pound illegal.⁴⁷ Yet, if Africans were to cultivate crops, it was clear that they would eventually need advances for tools, seeds and

fertilizers. By strictly limiting the amount of capital they could borrow, the commissioner was in effect inhibiting their capacity to become agrarian capitalists even as he was extolling the virtues of peasant production. Nor did he provide any services which might make up for these difficiencies. Indeed, it appeared that the government was not even able to pass out the cotton seed it had decided to provide African growers.⁴⁸

The state also hurt the local economy by failing to supervise construction of the railroad. Though a contract had been awarded in late 1903, apparently not one mile of line had been laid by December 1904.⁴⁹ Instead, the British Central Africa Company, a large planting concern which had won the contract, had been using the railroad's duty free status to import goods with which it paid its agricultural workers as well as the rail laborers.⁵⁰ The British Central Africa Company apparently used this ruse to seek a preeminent economic position. Eventually, the Crown Agents claimed the railroad was just part of a scheme in which "the British Central Africa Company are doing everything in their power to crush out opposition in the Protectorate."⁵¹

But even with the duty free privileges, the strain of building the railway proved too much for the British Central Africa Company. By January 1905, the Crown Agents reported that the company's stock did "not represent money, but paper only" and that the company "is nothing but a paper company."⁵² A year later, the same agency reported

that the company was in critical condition.⁵³

The collapse of the company was just one sign of a general economic malaise which occurred during the decade's middle years. By April 1905, Sharpe himself admitted that in the Cholo area "there are now not more than two estates which may be considered at all prosperous, and few estates are now worked."⁵⁴ By 1906, the British Cotton Growers Association reported that "in all probability the total [cotton] losses incurred by planters and others in the colony [since 1904] are very little short of £20,000."⁵⁵ In July, the Association's local representative reported that only Mr. Ashcroft of Chirala made a profit from cotton cultivation.⁵⁶ And the recession continued through that year as exports fell some £6,531.⁵⁷

Ironically, the recession did not have as much impact on the indigenous community. Although the British Cotton Growers Association pointed out that rail construction delays "must have a very serious effect on...the extension of cotton growing," evidence demonstrates that the indigenous community enjoyed considerable prosperity at this time.⁵⁸ In 1905, the administration reported that the villages experienced a "freer circulation of cash."⁵⁹ A year later, another report indicated that prosperity was continuing and that "the native's wants are increasing year by year; what he was content with a few years ago will not do for him now."⁶⁰

Although the reasons behind this prosperity are

obscure, African affluence merits further discussion because it indicates that indigenous society was rapidly changing in a way which threatened the state. Many indigenous inhabitants now opted to alienate themselves voluntarily in order to earn wages, and as they did so their migration threatened family structure and the stability of indigenous society. In particular, the state now faced the possibility of having to cope with increasingly large numbers of families made destitute by the loss of productive males. Moreover, as marginalized members of the indigenous community obtained enough capital to change their status, their social mobility threatened to destabilize further the country's already tattered social organizations, thus contributing to anarchy in the countryside. The apparent correlation behind prosperity and alienation presented Zomba with a potentially volatile situation because it created a new social order which traditional hegemony could not control.

The most obvious example of alienated laborers generating income for the villages involved mine workers. The 1905 Annual Report freely admitted that African prosperity stemmed from "the large sums paid to...natives from the Transvaal mines."⁶¹ Both Boeder and Sanderson stress that Malawian participation in the mining economies blossomed after the 1903 agreement with the South Africans.⁶² Unfortunately, modern historians have ignored the local effects of labor migration in depth,

and it is hard to determine its impact on colonial society.⁶³

Nevertheless, the country's colonial historiography allows us to conclude that labour migration tore indigenous society apart.⁶⁴ J. van Velsen claimed that labor migration created an environment in which "struggles for political power are won and lost, and titles appear and disappear. The Tonga political system shows relatively little continuity of titles and produces great numbers of rival claimants for political titles."⁶⁵ Margaret Read seconded the idea that emigration created political chaos by stressing that "for the most part the Chewa chiefs and headmen were only just holding their own."⁶⁶

Labor migration further eroded indigenous social structures as well. Read claimed that one Chewa informant told her that "'our son-in-law used to be our servant...now...it is we who are his servants, looking after our daughter, his wife'."⁶⁷ Read ultimately concluded that Chewa marriage was moving from a matrilineal pattern to a patrilocal ceremony.⁶⁸ Van Velsen supported this assertion of a shift from matrilineal to patrilocal traditions and insisted that the offspring from migrants' "quasi-marriages" in foreign territory often were sent to Tonga villages instead of their mothers' homes.⁶⁹ Such changes undoubtedly put villages under enormous strain and threatened to undermine traditional social patterns.⁷⁰

Labor migration also had other debilitating effects,

bringing "poverty and misery to hundreds of thousands of families" as vital male labor left the villages.⁷¹ Although both Read and van Velsen argued that emigration did not impoverish local villages, other evidence suggests that the departure of husbands and fathers created serious problems.⁷² Moreover, even when the machona, or "missing ones," returned, they often brought alien ideologies which further disrupted indigenous society.⁷³

The ambiguity about emigration's impact on traditional society does not mask the fact that it generated fundamental changes within traditional society. Read perhaps gave us the best description of the effects of labor migration when she claimed that the "labour demands of an alien economic enterprise have completely undermined the old economic life of the country and are going to undermine its social life as well...Nor is it only the economic progress in rural areas which is threatened. The future of 'indirect rule', which can only be built on stable social life in the villages, is at stake."⁷⁴

Other factors which contributed to indigenous well-being also threatened the traditional patterns of indigenous society. Perhaps the most important of these was railroad construction. By February 8 1905, some one thousand Malawians were working between Chiromo and Port Herald.⁷⁵ As construction progressed, the railroad's undercapitalization undoubtedly ensured that more and more jobs were available for both men and women.⁷⁶

Unfortunately, Malawian historiography is even more silent about rail laborers than it is about mine workers.⁷⁷ Mandala claims that "the undercapitalized railway companies...were primarily responsible for the unpopularity of wage labor and for intensifying the role of the state in labor recruitment."⁷⁸ What little evidence still exists in the rail Limbe archives indicates that rail workers had unpleasant jobs.⁷⁹ In 1905, rail officials warned their supervisors to avoid abusing workers since "cases of this kind are most discreditable to those concerned, and it is requested that in future more humanity should be shown."⁸⁰ And even though Zomba insisted that the company hire assistants because of "accidents...resulting in serious injury," the company resisted complying for several years.⁸¹

Nevertheless, company officials managed to obtain enough workers to complete the job in four years even though their coercive powers were clearly limited. The circular which warned about avoiding brutality pointed out that "it should be remembered that, apart from the question common of decency, the continuance of such cases will be certain to bring us into conflict with the administration, with the probable result that new and irksome regulations will be drawn up which will make railway construction almost impossible."⁸² Therefore, it is likely that the company depended on the kind of reciprocity which characterized relations between employers and employees

elsewhere in the colony.⁸³

Some evidence certainly suggests that the company provided opportunity as well as oppression for certain Malawians. The enormous imports of the British Central Africa Company which caused the Crown Agents such anxiety had to be going somewhere, and it is likely that the labor intensive railroad was pouring them into indigenous communities.⁸⁴ Moreover, wages were not the only way in which Malawians could obtain money from rail construction. The company's European and Indian employees also introduced money into the economy by consuming local produce and occasionally even women.⁸⁵ This influx of capital potentially threatened traditional society by providing marginalized Africans with a means of superseding their ascribed positions and changing traditional patterns of marriage and labor division. Such transformations, whatever their particulars, undoubtedly contributed to a growing anarchy with which the state would eventually have to contend.

Unfortunately, until we learn more about the social history of colonial Malawi, the impact of both mining and rail work will remain unclear. But it is not unfair to assume that they stimulated alienation and accumulation which threatened to destroy indigenous society and thus undermine the country's political stability.⁸⁶ Zomba recognized that indigenous prosperity was not an unmixed blessing. For example, Sharpe openly worried that too much

labor emigration would mean that "women, children, and old men are unable to carry out the necessary work of clearing, planting and house building."⁸⁷ But the state was unable to stop social transformations created by the indigenous community's material ambition, and Sharpe never acted upon his concerns.

Ironically, Zomba used African prosperity to downplay the severity of the economic crisis facing the country's expatriate community. For instance, Sharpe accompanied some pessimistic reports with a note claiming "planters are inclined to exaggerate such [economic] losses, especially when they are taking advances."⁸⁸ The governor's cynicism irritated the settlers, and evidence suggests that their relations with the state deteriorated as the economy declined. In March 1906, Sharpe informed Whitehall that "you have gathered long before now that this paper, the Central African Times, is our 'opposition'-the proprietor and editor is a man named R.S. Hynde who practically runs the so called 'Chamber of Commerce and Agriculture'...[and] represents the decidedly democratic element in British Central Africa."⁸⁹ A few months later, an administration spokesperson emphasized the sarcasm of this comment by claiming that "there is no reason to suppose that the Blantyre Chamber of Commerce expresses the opinion of the majority of the responsible inhabitants in the country. It is an association which is practically run by Mr. Hynde, who has always shown himself antagonistic to the

administration."⁹⁰

Zomba's refusal to cope with the European recession was devastating because it allowed transnational associations to establish preeminence in the country as planters tried to cultivate new crops. These firms achieved this dominance because neither the country's indigenous nor its expatriate community had either the capital or the acumen to establish an effective articulation with the metropole. Relying on multinationals to maintain articulation, however, ensured that at least some of the profits made in commodity production went into metropolitan, not local coffers and thus hindered primitive accumulation even more.⁹¹

The best example of multinational encroachment into the Malawian economy was the appearance of the Imperial Tobacco Company.⁹² The Buchanan brothers had early grown tobacco, but after their death production dropped off in the colony. However, after coffee cultivation collapsed, planters sought new crops, and interest rekindled. By 1904 Blantyre & East Africa (headed by Hynde) sent its "first samples of stripped dark fired tobacco" to London.⁹³ Three years later, the British Central Africa Company sent a number of samples to the Imperial Tobacco Company in Bristol.⁹⁴

The arrival of Imperial Tobacco was momentous. The company had been formed at the turn of the century by a consortium of independent tobacco manufacturers in the

United Kingdom anxious to keep the American Tobacco Company from seizing control of the British market.⁹⁵ As part of its effort to beat the Americans, Imperial decided to establish its own leaf buying operations overseas and began searching for untapped markets.

Malawi's tobacco therefore picqued Imperial's interest, and in late 1906 or early 1907, it sent A.W. Boyd to Malawi to investigate local conditions.⁹⁶ Boyd recognized that the depression presented a big opportunity for Imperial. Boyd informed his supervisors that "there is every reason to believe that if the Imperial Tobacco Company established a factory at or near Blantyre, and paid cash on delivery for the tobacco, the production would rapidly increase...this is an opportune time for a buyer to commence business as there is a clear field."⁹⁷

One of the reasons Imperial had such an opportunity was that local capitalists did not have the resources to pay enough for tobacco or advance planters money for their crops.⁹⁸ A. Metcalfe, the manager of the British Africa Company, claimed that "the local planters are extremely dissatisfied with the present market for purchasing their tobacco, the only purchasers being Messrs. Blantyre and East Africa Ltd., and they do not intend to plant again this year unless other buyers are in the market."⁹⁹ Boyd seconded this opinion by pointing out that Blantyre & East Africa "has bought and handled most of the tobacco grown in the colony, but the prices and terms have been so

unsatisfactory that the planters are dissatisfied, and contemplate reducing the[ir] acreage. The terms of the purchase were payment six months after the date of last delivery."¹⁰⁰ Thus, the local economy's lack of capital, to which state policies contributed enormously, ensured that only multinationals with abundant capital and safe metropolitan markets could establish articulation with new commodities.

Imperial's directors in Bristol eagerly received Boyd's report, and soon dispatched him and Ernest Howard to Malawi. There, the Imperial agents, both Virginians with considerable expertise in tobacco cultivation, began helping local planters grow and cure their crops. The Americans also set up a factory adjacent to the British Central Africa Company headquarters and future site of Malawi's main rail yards.

The establishment of this factory was a crucial watershed in Malawi's history because it effectively ended the recession which had wracked the settler community. The Limbe operation ended consignment payments, and planters could now earn a return on their produce right away.¹⁰¹ As a result, planters had more money to expand their operations and pay their bills.

One of the most interesting facets of tobacco's establishment in Nyasaland was the virtual absence of any official participation or involvement. The administration eventually tried to grab some of the credit for bringing

the company out, but other records do not support its assertions.¹⁰² In 1906, the Scientific Department reported that "no work has as yet been undertaken by the Department in connection with tobacco."¹⁰³ Two years later, an Agricultural Department report discussed the company's operations extensively without once mentioning official involvement.¹⁰⁴ Tobacco would prove to be a profitable crop, but its genesis started outside the administration's aegis.

The other important crop, of course, was cotton. And like tobacco, cotton enticed a large metropolitan firm, the British Cotton Growers Association, to Malawi. Formed at the turn of the century, this consortium of Midlands consumers strove to establish areas in which cotton could be produced without the periodic inflation in prices which had previously bedeviled the international market.¹⁰⁵ Therefore, it began seeking British territories in which to establish cotton production.

Malawi was a natural target for the company as its planters sought an alternative crop to coffee, and by 1904 the company was advancing money to various estates and companies.¹⁰⁶ The payments undoubtedly kept a large number of planters afloat through the worst of the recession. As cotton cultivation floundered in 1904, corporate officials became concerned and requested that Zomba's Scientific Department be reformed and an expert sent out in order to assist cotton cultivation.¹⁰⁷ As we have seen, Whitehall

had no intention of paying for such luxuries.

So in 1905, the company dispatched W. Simpson, a cotton expert, to work with the administration.¹⁰⁸ Simpson was extremely well qualified. He had been a professor of Agriculture at the Egyptian College of Agriculture at Ghiza before his posting to Nyasaland.¹⁰⁹ He was also energetic. Less than a year after his arrival in the protectorate, he was establishing experimental stations throughout the territory.¹¹⁰

Unfortunately, he was also an acute and outspoken observer. He admitted that "on my first arrival in the country the conditions of agriculture appeared hopeless" since "the country suffered badly from the evil effects of being a one crop country--at first coffee--and then a mad rush to cotton."¹¹¹ Many people may have shared this opinion, but few confronted Sharpe as forcefully with it. It soon became clear that relations between the commissioner and his adviser were becoming strained. In July 1906, Sharpe confidentially informed his superiors that he was willing to experiment with cotton under "a really competent and capable man...Mr. Simpson is not by any means the man I should suggest."¹¹² And after the Association's man officially reported that "everything appeared in hopeless and desperate condition," Sharpe exploded in righteous indignation.¹¹³

The commissioner immediately informed London that "I'm rather tired of this young man & I look on him as a waste

of money."¹¹⁴ Simpson was not daunted though; he continued to demand better facilities and to report conditions accurately.¹¹⁵ Sharpe finally got so exasperated that he informed London that "at the expiration of [his] term...I do not recommend his re-engagement."¹¹⁶ Ironically, when Simpson departed for Uganda three years later, Sharpe remarked that "Mr. Simpson I am in many respects sorry to lose: he has settled down during the last year or two."¹¹⁷

This interlude demonstrates some important points about both the administration and its relations with the British Cotton Growers Association. The most obvious is that dissent, especially when it cast doubts on previous policies, was not tolerated. Sharpe's harsh rebuttals of Simpson's assessment of the colony's economy, with their implied criticism of how the state had guided the country, show that administrators had to toe the commissioner's line. From this one can surmise that political imperatives created by the personal ambitions and insecurities of chief officers guided policy at least as much as social and economic conditions in the country.

Less obvious but equally important are the structural implications of this conclusion. The conquest state, with its emphasis on personal rather than bureaucratic functions, still held sway. In many respects, the conflict between Simpson and Sharpe was the first skirmish between the conquest state and its successor, and the governor demonstrated that reform, with its evaluation of hard

reality, was still in the future.

The emphasis on individual glory rather than institutional responsibility also created a confrontation between the state and metropolitan firms interested in the territory. After all, these companies were interested in economic activity, not climbing London's far flung bureaucratic ladder. But as capitalists sought reforms aimed at reforming the economy, their actions ran afoul of administrators who had a vested interest in protecting the status quo. The resulting conflict inevitably led the outsiders to lose faith in the state, seek succor from London itself, and demand enormous concessions from local administrators.

The saga of the British Cotton Growers Association certainly shows how this process worked. Once Simpson found Sharpe unreceptive to his ideas and plans, the Association's agent apparently complained to his superiors in Manchester who then went to Whitehall with their complaints.¹¹⁸ The Association continued to press on despite the administration's efforts to stop backstairs communications.¹¹⁹ Whitehall could not do much for the cotton consortium at the time, and Sharpe continually refused to facilitate cotton cultivation.¹²⁰ The Association's consequent frustration generated two developments which eventually hurt the colony. It caused the company to be more hesitant and thus hindered the emergence of peasant production. More importantly, it

created a mistrustful animus between the state and Manchester which eventually ensured that the Association looked out for its own interests before it assisted Malawian producers.¹²¹

The administration partially escaped the immediate consequences of this frustration because the expansion of tobacco production made the alienation of the British Cotton Growers Association appear insignificant. By early 1907, the Central African Times claimed that "there is a reasonably bright future before many planters this and during the coming year."¹²² And things did improve; by 1908, agricultural exports were up considerably.¹²³ The next year, the Director of Agriculture reported that "there is a case of a planter in the Protectorate who started with £500 capital a year ago..and he has £1000 in hand on one year's working."¹²⁴ Indeed, things improved so much that the schisms within the unofficial community began closing, and the Nyasaland Planters Association and the Nyasaland Chamber of Commerce and Agriculture unified in 1907.¹²⁵

The creation of a Legislative Council (hereafter LegCo) in 1908 also lent political status to the recovering planters.¹²⁶ This body gave the settlers a voice in state affairs by having three unofficial members deliberate on legislation. But the promise of LegCo was deceptive since its new members had no real power. They were outnumbered by official members who met in an Executive Council which produced legislation published before being introduced to

LegCo for what was apparently to be a rubber stamp.¹²⁷ Moreover, despite the recent formation of a united settler association, the unofficial community's continued fractionalization made it difficult for all settler interests to be represented, and consequently there was grumbling about the selection of its members.¹²⁸

Ironically, as conditions improved for the settlers, the indigenous community experienced hard times. By 1908, the administration reported that there was "a falling off in native trade" and that cotton production had fallen precipitously.¹²⁹ At least twice in 1909, Sharpe told London that he could not increase hut taxes because the indigenous population was suffering from dire poverty.¹³⁰ In large part, this penury occurred because Africans lost high paying jobs in the colony and elsewhere. The cessation of railway work and cuts in military spending reduced the wages and capital flowing into indigenous villages, and Sharpe himself admitted that the loss of rail employment cost Africans some £20,000 in 1909.¹³¹ The situation was further complicated when, in 1907, the Witswatersrand Native Labour Association decided to end recruiting.¹³²

The administration "greatly regret[ted]" this decision, especially since it suspected that locals would flock south anyway. And so they did. By early 1908, the administration reported that its subjects continued to the Rand.¹³³ What particularly disturbed Zomba was that the South Africans circumvented restrictions on Malawian

laborers by recruiting locals in Mozambique's border provinces and then claimed they were subjects of Portuguese East Africa.¹³⁴

This practice undoubtedly accentuated labor emigration's debilitating effects on the colony. Many of these recruits probably became machona and failed to remit their wages home, depriving the country of the fruits of their labor. Even more importantly, their ex-officio departure further fragmented families already under strain from structural changes and left destitute wives and children.¹³⁵

The administration recognised these problems, and in January 1908 Acting Governor Manning asked Whitehall to accept a new recruiting proposal put forward by Mr. Knipe, WNLA's representative.¹³⁶ Manning feared "the non-acceptance of those proposals and the loss of all control, as the Native of this protectorate has made up his mind to go to the Mines." Manning bolstered his case by claiming that he had "never had one case...[of] returned labourers where any complaints have been made; one and all have been enthusiastic as to their treatment, pay, and above all their food." Sharpe seconded this opinion in November, and a year later he argued that the administration should strike the deal because it would simply legitimize the modus vivendi.¹³⁷ Eventually Sharpe allowed some 3,000 Malawians to go to the Transvaal.¹³⁸ But the issue remained unclear legislatively, and Zomba was still pleading for

some sort of agreement years later.¹³⁹

The indigenous recession created serious problems for the administration. As Africans found their material ambitions thwarted, they became increasingly restive. In April 1907, a major disturbance rocked the Nheu district as Africans heeded the admonitions of Chanjiri, a local sorceress, and refused to pay their hut taxes.¹⁴⁰ Although Zomba successfully put down the rebellion, the state was very alarmed, especially since the "better educated and more civilised races, such as the Yaos" participated.¹⁴¹

The state had good reason to be concerned. Throughout this period, certain traditional social institutions were taking on an increasingly anti-colonial bent. Schoffeleers and Page have both commented on the increasingly anti-colonial attitudes of various spirit mediums.¹⁴² Schoffeleers and Mandala have discussed how nomi societies became axes around which peasants escaped from colonial coercion.¹⁴³ And integrative dances like malipenga assumed seditious overtones.¹⁴⁴

The underlying assumption in this historiography is that these developments were traditional reactions against an onerous colonial state and structure. For instance, Page claims that Chanjiri's message was an "enunciation of both local grievances and general dissatisfaction with colonial rule."¹⁴⁵ Of course, it is worth noting that other Malawians used tradition to integrate into and to adapt to colonial society, not as a way to protest it.¹⁴⁶

One can conclude from this discrepancy that the pressure of integrating into the emerging colonial economy had a different effect on how people manipulated their traditional culture. For those who achieved material success, there was little need to use tradition as a medium of protest or even rebellion. Those whose material ambitions were thwarted adopted atavistic protest ideologies which aimed to compensate spiritually for their failures.

Of course, without a better understanding of the local economic conditions affecting each individual group, it is hard to reach a definitive conclusion about the nature of protest in Malawi. But it certainly appears that it would be incorrect to assume that such activities were necessarily characteristic of an ethnic group's response to the colonial environment.¹⁴⁷ Instead, the class position and material success of individual clans and villages seems to have defined how they manipulated their traditions. Certainly, the rise of protest arising from indigenous culture came at a time when the African community was experiencing hardship.

Nor was the emergence of radicalized traditional societies the state's only concern. Shortly after Chanjiri's protest, Eliot Kamwana began espousing a seditious Christian prophecy aimed at toppling the colonial state.¹⁴⁸ While Kamwana's aims still remain obscure, he apparently sought to establish an African theocracy in

place of Zomba's administration. The Bandwe missionaries informed the administration about Kamwana's activities, and the state deported him before he could complete his plan. But the massive demonstrations following his second arrest in 1910 indicate that he had a large number of followers.¹⁴⁹

Like Chanjiri, it is hard to place Kamwana in a structural framework. Little information has emerged about the economic situation at Nkata Bay and its environs during this time. Nevertheless, it is almost certain that local inhabitants were feeling the effects of living in the "dead north". Indeed, van Velsen estimated that "60 to 75 percent of adult Tonga males" were migrant workers.¹⁵⁰ As job opportunities began diminishing and labor migration became more disruptive, it is easy to understand why seditious agitation would fall on receptive ears in this district. Thus, it is clear that anxiety created by people's inability to integrate successfully into the colonial economy produced the conditions necessary for the propagation of rebellious rhetoric and the staging of serious protests.

The emergence of these anti-colonial ideologies were not the only indication that Zomba was losing control of the colony. Other less spectacular phenomena also demonstrated that the indigenous community was losing its regard for imperial authority. After crowing about an "entire prohibition of whipping," the administration

admitted that it needed to reinstate flogging because it could not control indigenous crime.¹⁵¹ In 1908, Manning justified a new punishments ordinance to London by pointing out that the unofficial members of LegCo "were unanimously of opinion that there exists at the present date an urgent necessity for such legislation."¹⁵² By 1909, Sharpe introduced another ordinance designed to control the indigenous community.¹⁵³ The administration also tried to prohibit Indian traders from possessing firearms because it feared that they would sell them to seditious Africans such as Kawmana.¹⁵⁴ By the end of the year, Zomba frankly reported that "both the chiefs and the Residents find that under present conditions it is increasingly difficult to deal with crime, carry out taxation measures, and generally to keep a hold on the people."¹⁵⁵ And by 1910, Sharpe imposed a heavy fine "on the inhabitants of certain villages in the Blantyre District in the vicinity of which a series of road robberies with violence has recently occurred."¹⁵⁶

The state desperately tried to establish control by bolstering traditional authorities as well as through direct coercion. In 1907, the administration stressed that Africans had "accessibility to His Excellency" the Governor whenever they wanted. Zomba also emphasized that "extremely loyal" chiefs routinely came to the Statehouse for tea and presumably consultation.¹⁵⁷ But even Sharpe's officers could not keep up this pretense, and by 1909 acting

Governor Pearce admitted that "chiefs do not sufficiently realise their responsibility nor have the necessary prestige and power to enable them to enforce their decisions."¹⁵⁸

The dissolution of traditional society should have been no surprise. Not only had the conquest state undercut indigenous political power, but the emergence of a colonial economy had begun changing indigenous society. The increasing consumption of manufactured goods showed that Africans were entering the cash economy at a rapid rate. Moreover, the continual immigration of Lowwe into the country and the internal migrations showed that Africans were readily adapting to new environments, both physically and psychologically, in return for the benefits provided by the expanding agricultural sector.¹⁵⁹

There were signs that economic integration was paying handsomely for some Africans as well. Although most indigenes became the kind of wandering proletarians who worried the state so much, others began to develop as entrepreneurs. In 1910, officials reported that Africans had obtained some 1000 freehold acres of Crown Land.¹⁶⁰ And in September 1909, the Agricultural Department reported that an African sold "over £40 of cotton in his district."¹⁶¹

Even more important was the emergence of the Native Industrial Union in 1909. This Chiradzulu based association sought "the promotion and protection of [N]egroes Christian

work in the country, the collecting and recording of commercial information...[and] communication with the public authorities on subjects affecting the commercial and planting community."¹⁶² This agenda attracted so many Africans that by August 1909, the group's dues increased to five shillings per annum, and its board of directors decided to limit its enrollment to thirty members.¹⁶³

The formation of such an association further demonstrates that Zomba's hegemony was eroding, but government officials were still incapable of addressing their declining legitimacy with serious reforms. The state, however, was not entirely inactive as the decade closed. In October 1909, Sharpe reorganized the Secretariat and the Treasury Department.¹⁶⁴ More importantly, in March 1908, acting Governor Manning, after admitting that most "district roads are only tracks" and "that there are no real roads in this country," decided to replace the Supervisor of Roads even though that officer was "sober, quiet and very willing."¹⁶⁵

The most important reform was the establishment of the long awaited Agricultural Department. Although Sharpe characteristically worried about whether J. Stewart McCall, his new Superintendent of Agriculture, would "[be] capable of carrying out the duties which he will have to undertake here," the new director attacked his job with energy and ultimately was a durable asset.¹⁶⁶ The need for his assistance soon became apparent. McCall quickly discovered

that soil on some of the older estates was "thoroughly exhausted," and recommended that "the oldest...gardens be cut down and planted with leguminous plants such as beans for two years and then replanted with coffee, cotton or tobacco."¹⁶⁷ But the administration's advice was late, and until beans paid as well as cotton, coffee or tobacco, there was little hope of revitalizing the worn out soil.

Concern about fertility was especially vexing for McCall since he actively encouraged new European immigration.¹⁶⁸ In June 1909, he reported that "there is a good opening for men with a little capital...and any man who is careful and intelligent, with a capital of from £500 to £1,000 can cultivate from 100 to 200 acres." He strengthened this assertion by noting that "the small planter is the man who benefits the country most, as the money always comes back to the country."¹⁶⁹ The state agreed; in March 1909, Sharpe claimed he wanted to "make it as simple as possible for genuine settlers to obtain land," and pointed out that "the kind of settler required in Nyasaland is the man who has a capital of £2,000 to £3,000, who has some knowledge of tropical agriculture, and who acquaints himself by personal experience with the country before he thinks of committing himself."¹⁷⁰ And in October, a majority of the colony's Executive Council decided that leasehold territory should eventually be made freehold as long as planters worked it.¹⁷¹

Zomba's renewed faith in estate production was at best

disingenuous. Land shortages remained a chronic problem, and in October 1909 Sharpe himself admitted that there should be no further alienation in "the vicinity of Blantyre and other business centres in the Shire Highlands."¹⁷² Restricting alienation meant that new immigrants would have to buy land from large corporations who would undoubtedly love an opportunity to dump exhausted soil on unsuspecting neophytes.¹⁷³ Nor was land the planters' only problem; alienated labor was also scarce despite the indigenous community's economic troubles.¹⁷⁴ Indeed, even as dedicated a champion of settlement as McCall admitted that "the difficulty of obtaining labor is being felt by planters."¹⁷⁵

Of course, state policies themselves contributed to this problem. Zomba was not only seeking ways in which it could send workers south, but it was also encouraging indigenous cotton cultivation as much as possible. Indeed, by 1910 the District Resident's Handbook, a guide for all district administrators, urged officers that "every encouragement should be given natives to cultivate cotton as extensively as possible."¹⁷⁶

While simultaneously advocating peasant and estate production may have seemed contradictory, it in fact served the state's political imperatives. Planters were needed to develop the tobacco industry, especially since Boyd felt Africans were not up to the task.¹⁷⁷ But the wages paid by these settlers were frankly inadequate for an ambitious

indigenous community which had enjoyed more remunerative wages on the railroad and in the southern mines. So the state sought ways in which it could satisfy African ambitions without destroying the economy.

Any apparent contradiction between peasant and estate production meant little to Zomba. Indeed, advocating such policies concurrently demonstrates that little had changed in the administration. Some reforms may have occurred, but Malawi's state was still a confused institution. Policies were haphazard and idiosyncratic rather than rational and comprehensive. As a result, the country continued to drift. Economic expansion remained precarious with most hope coming from multinational firms rather than local capitalists. Indigenous anxieties were being translated into increasingly radical ideologies. And environmental troubles were looming on the horizon. More reforms were needed immediately, but the dithering of Sharpe and his officers may have closed the window of opportunity forever.

ENDNOTES

1. Indeed, John McCracken states that "the origins of colonial expertise in Malawi may be conveniently dated from...4 May 1905." See John McCracken "Experts and Expertise in Colonial Malawi," African Affairs, 81 (January, 1982), 102. It is worth noting that the word colonial here does not necessarily refer to the state since McCracken gets his date from the arrival of S. Simpson, an employee of the British Cotton Growers Association, not of Zomba.
2. The most spectacular incidents being Chanjiri's uprising in Ncheu and Kamwana's second arrest. See Melvin Page, "Malawians in the Great War and After," 15-16; Melvin Page, "Mediums and the Message: Prophetism and Spirit-Mediumship in Central Africa," History Department

Seminar, Chancellor College, November 12 1985, 6; and Chirwa, "Masokwa Elliot Kenan Kamwana Chirwa....," 14.

3. Megan Vaughan, "Food Production and Family Labour in Southern Malawi: the Shire Highlands and Upper Shire Valley in the Early Colonial Period," Journal of African History, 23, 3 (1982); Megan Vaughan, "Which Family? Problems in the Reconstruction of the History of the Family as an Economic and Cultural Unit," Journal of African History, 24, 2 (1983); and Kings M. Phiri, "Some Changes in the Matrilineal Family System among the Chewa of Malawi since the Nineteenth Century," Journal of African History, 24, 2 (1983). J.A.K. Kandawire attempts such a study, especially in his analysis of chitaganya over time, but his emphasis on the inevitable emergence of contemporary Malawi's one party political system as a result of the country's colonial political economy erodes some of his works utility. Moreover, Kandawire insists that the state was allied with the country's expatriate capitalists, a hypothesis obviously contradictory to this thesis. See Kandawire, Thangata.
4. The best descriptions of religious radicalism are in Shepperson & Price, Independent African; and Karen Fields, Revival and Rebellion.
5. Religious links with African Americans were the primary way in which Malawians developed overseas ties. The most interesting example of these Malawians abroad is Frederick Njilima, whose father eventually became a wealthy businessman and follower of Chilembwe. Through the auspices of an African-American missionary, Njilima left Malawi in 1907 for Natchez College High School in Mississippi, then attended Kentucky State University and Lincoln Institute, and finally served in a British battalion in France during the First World War before returning to Malawi in 1919. He eventually became secretary of the Southern Province Native Association in the mid-1920s. For more, see Page, "Malawians in the Great War....," 110-11.
6. Report on Trade and General Conditions, 1903-04, C.O. 525/1.
7. Sharpe to Foreign Office, March 29 1904, C.O. 525/1. Characteristically, the governor failed to mention that much of this agitation may have been the result of the problems occurring in Mozambique during the turn of the century. For more on this topic, see above, p. 94, f.n. 71; and Leroy Vail and Landeg White, Capitalism and Colonialism in Mozambique (Minneapolis, 1980), 131-137.

8. In 1903-04, coffee exports had dropped from £25,179 the previous year to £17,868, Report..., C.O. 525/1.
9. In 1905 tobacco was said to be "full of promise" which was still unfulfilled, Wallis to Colonial Office, August 25 1905, C.O. 525/5.
10. British Cotton Growers Association to Colonial Office, October 27 1904, C.O. 525/6.
11. Tony Woods, "The Myth of the Capitalist Class," 366.
12. Central African Times, November 12 1904.
13. Sharpe to Foreign Office, February 8 1904, C.O. 525/1.
14. This individual was Mr. McClounie, the head of the Scientific Department, Pearce to Colonial Office, January 6 1906, C.O. 525/12; Patrick Manson to Colonial Office, June 1 1906, C.O. 525/15.
15. This was the bizarre case of R.R. Racey, Memo to Pearce, December 18 1904, enclosed in Sharpe to Colonial Office, January 24 1905, C.O. 525/7.
16. These cases involved J. Nichol and Dr. H. Fox respectively, Sharpe to Colonial Office, June 21 1904, C.O. 525/2; Sharpe to Colonial Office, April 21 1906, C.O. 525/12.
17. This involved Mr. Scott, Pearce to Colonial Office, August 15 1906, C.O. 525/13; Sharpe to Colonial Office, February 8 1907, C.O. 525/17.
18. Sharpe to Colonial Office, February 11 1907, C.O. 525/17.
19. Sharpe to Colonial Office, July 15 1904, C.O. 525/2.
20. Sharpe to Colonial Office, July 4 1904, C.O. 525/2.
21. Sharpe to Colonial Office, March 3 1905, C.O. 525/7.
22. Colonial Office to Sharpe, February 7 1907, C.O. 525/7.
23. Petition, enclosed in Sharpe to Colonial Office, June 5 1909, C.O. 525/29. Ironically, Sharpe himself was married at the time and had his wife, Rosamond, with him in Malawi. But the saga of his life, in which Rosamond had deserted him in Fiji and not gone to Malawi with him until 1903, may indicate that his own marital situation led him to conclude that Malawi's officers were better off without their spouses. See

Boeder, Sir Alfred..., 10 and 77.

24. Report by Assistant Deputy Commissioner Wallis, September 17 1904, enclosed in Sharpe to Colonial Office, October 28 1904, C.O. 525/2; Pearce to Sharpe, August 4 1906, enclosed in Sharpe to Colonial Office, October 17 1906, C.O. 525/14.
25. Treasury to Harris (Colonial Office), February 2 1906, C.O. 525/10; Colonial Office to Zomba, August 4 1905, C.O. 525/8.
26. Pearce to Colonial Office, September 2 1904, C.O. 525/2.
27. Sharpe to Colonial Office, August 16 1904, C.O. 525/2; Sharpe to Colonial Office, November 26 1904, C.O. 525/3.
28. Wallis to Colonial Office, June 1 1905, C.O. 525/8.
29. Sharpe to Colonial Office, November 28 1904, C.O. 525/3.
30. Sharpe to Colonial Office, December 6 1904, C.O. 525/3.
31. Nyasaland Planters Association to Sharpe, November 20 1904, enclosed in Sharpe to Colonial Office, November 28 1904, C.O. 525/3.
32. British Cotton Growers Association to Colonial Office, September 2, 1904, C.O. 525/6.
33. Sharpe to Colonial Office, March 31 1909, C.O. 525/28.
34. Which contrasts with McCracken's assertion. Of course, as I pointed out, McCracken incorrectly assumes S. Simpson, the cotton expert sent to Malawi in 1905, worked for the administration instead of the British Cotton Growers Association. See McCracken, "Experts...", 10.
35. British Cotton Growers Association to Colonial Office, September 13 1904, C.O. 525/6.
36. M.N.A. A 1/3/1, Sharpe to McClounie, January 11 1905. As early as 1900, Zomba had been complaining about the Department Head's work, see M.N.A. A 2/1/1, McClounie to Manning, November 10 1900.
37. Colonial Office to Zomba, November 9 1905, C.O. 525/9.
38. British Cotton Growers Association to Colonial Office,

November 20 1905, C.O. 525/11.

39. Memo by Simpson, September 3 1906, enclosed in Sharpe to Colonial Office, October 16 1906, C.O. 525/14.
40. Sharpe to Colonial Office, November 8, 1904, C.O. 525/3.
41. This was 36 pounds of unginned cotton which produced twelve pounds of ginned cotton. Sharpe to Colonial Office, October 14 1904, C.O. 525/3.
42. Sharpe to Colonial Office, August 16 1904, C.O. 525/2. This also reflected the views of the British Cotton Growers Association, British Cotton Growers Association to Colonial Office, June 11 1904, C.O. 525/6.
43. Milner to Commissioner, Zomba, September 30, 1904, C.O. 525/2.
44. This prosperity was mentioned in the annual report, Annual Report, 1904-05, C.O. 525/5. However, the system did cut off labor for planters, as is evident when H. Stark claimed that "we hear of cotton lands already planted having to be abandoned for want of labour," Stark to Earl Percy, March 8 1904, C.O. 525/5.
45. Commissioner, Zomba to Milner, October 15 1904, C.O. 525/2.
46. Sharpe to Colonial Office, October 14 1904, C.O. 525/3.
47. Myambo, "The Shire Highlands...", 51.
48. Wallis to Colonial Office, July 24 1905, C.O. 525/8.
49. British Cotton Growers Association to Colonial Office, December 7 1904, C.O. 525/6.
50. Crown Agents to Colonial Office, March 5 1904, C.O. 525/4.
51. Crown Agents to Colonial Office, June 24 1904, C.O. 525/4.
52. Crown Agents to Colonial Office, January 31 1905, C.O. 525/10.
53. Crown Agents to Colonial Office, April 9 1906, C.O. 525/15.

54. Sharpe to Colonial Office, April 28 1905, C.O. 525/17.
55. British Cotton Growers Association to Colonial Office, May 22 1906, C.O. 525/16.
56. Kidney to Sharpe, July 6 1906, enclosed in Sharpe to Colonial Office, July 10 1906, C.O. 525/13.
57. Annual Report, 1906-07, C.O. 525/18.
58. British Cotton Growers Association to Colonial Office, March 15 1906, C.O. 525/16.
59. Annual Report, 1904-05, C.O. 525/8. Of course, the historiography warns that such statements were often fallacious. For instance both Vaughan and Page argue that colonial officials incorrectly made the same assertions at different times. See Vaughan, The Story..., 105; Page, "Malawians in the Great War...", 231. In both cases, the authors are discussing periods in which there was dramatic inflation in the colony, which might explain the activity during this period in the villages without necessarily indicating that Africans actually experienced an increased material standard of living. Nevertheless, I believe that the problems in all cases were that the money circulating was unevenly distributed and that while many were poor, a few actually got rich. Until further study is done the Malawian economy, this question will remain moot.
60. Annual Report, 1905-06, C.O. 525/13.
61. Annual Report, 1904-05, C.O. 525/8.
62. F.E. Sanderson, "Nyasaland Migrant Labour...,"; and Boeder, "Malawians Abroad...".
63. Neither Boeder nor Sanderson address the issue of the impact of labor migration in the early years, although it is hard to fault them considering the state of the country's historiography when they wrote their theses and the research difficulties Boeder in particular faced. Boeder briefly addressed this issue in his article, see f.n. 151 below.
64. The best two studies on this subject are Margaret Read, "Migrant Labour In Africa and its Effects on Tribal Life," International Labour Review, XLV, 6 (June, 1942); and J. van Velsen, "Labour Migration as a Positive Factor in the Continuity of Tonga Tribal Society," Economic Development and Cultural Change, 8, 3 (1960). It is worth stressing that although both

these articles provide valuable information about the impact of labor emigration, their primary purpose is to refute the official line adopted after the submission of the Travers Lacey Report in 1935 (Report of the Commission to Enquire into Emigrant Labour, Government Printer, Zomba , 1935). The administration stressed that labor emigration actually impoverished the country as it progressed, an assertion with which both Read and van Velsen strongly disagreed even though they noted the effects noted below.

65. Van Velsen, "Labour Migration...", 278. Ironically, one of van Velsen's strongest conclusions is that this subject needed more work including the collection of life histories and qualitative surveys, see van Velsen, "Labour Migration...", 267-268.
66. Read, "Migrant Labour in Africa...", 625. Read's study was far more comprehensive than van Velsen's and resulted from the Travers Lacey Commission's conclusion that these topic required more research.
67. Read, "Migrant Labour in Africa...", 628.
68. Read, "Migrant Labour in Africa...", 628.
69. Van Velsen, "Labour Migration...", 272.
70. Although perhaps not the idiom by which village life was interpreted and structured. In other words, while people seemed to follow traditional patterns because they identified institutions with traditional names, in fact structural changes had transformed the function of traditional structures. For more on the concept of idiom and structure, see Steven Feierman, Peasant Intellectuals: Anthropology and History in Tanzania (Madison, 1990), 9-13. It should also be stressed that the Malawian social history which does exist stresses that traditional institutions were a conservative factor which were used to preserve pre-colonial identity in the chagning colonial environment. See, for instance, Matthew Schoffeleers discussion of the M'bona Cults in Matthew Schoffeleers, "The History and Political Role of the M'Bona Cult among the Mang'anja," in T.O. Ranger, ed., The Historical Study of African Religion (Berkeley, 1972), 87-89. See also the discussion of traditional dances and dance societies below.
71. "Recruiting and Native Welfare in Nyasaland," International Review of Labour, XIII, 6 (June, 1936), 856. This article was a brief summary of the Travers Lacey Report to which both Read and van Velsen were

reacting.

72. For instance, Kandawire points out that pressure increased to make sure that headmen collected taxes, putting more economic pressures on abandoned wives and families. See Kandawire, Thangata..., 102.
73. For instance, Shepperson points out that many returning labor migrants returned from the south with alien ideologies which threatened traditional society and colonial stability. See George Shepperson, "External Factors in African Nationalism, with Particular Reference to British Central Africa," in Historians in Tropical Africa (Salisbury, 1962).
74. "Migrant Labour in Africa...", 630-631.
75. Malawi Railway Archives, Shire Highlands Railway File 9, Deputy Commissioner to Manager, S.H.R., February 8 1905.
76. Interestingly enough, Mandala points out that the company hired both sexes for rail work, Mandala, Work and Control..., 109. Undercapitalization, of course, created more jobs because the company had to depend on manual laborers rather than on machinery which it could not afford to buy.
77. Despite several articles on the impact of the railroad's development. See Cynthia Crosbey, "Railway Development in Malawi: The early years, 1895-1915," in Roderick J. Macdonald, From Nyasaland to Malawi; Leroy Vail, "Railway Development and Colonial Underdevelopment: The Nyasaland Case," in Robin Palmer and Neil Parsons, eds., The Roots of Rural Poverty in Central and Southern Africa (Berkeley, 1977); and Leroy Vail, "The Making of an Imperial Slum: Nyasaland and its Railways, 1895-1935," Journal of African History, 16, 1 (1975).
78. Mandala, Work and Control..., 110.
79. The railway archives are in poor shape, and most files are today uncatalogued and unsupervised.
80. M.R.A., Shire Highlands Railway, File 3, Circular Memorandum, May 8 1905.
81. M.R.A., Shire Highlands Railway, File 9, Deputy Commissioner to Manager, S.H.R., February 8 1905; File 6, Deputy Governor Pearce to Agent, S.H.R., November 24 1908. It is worth pointing out that mine labor was no less brutal than rail work, as Charles van Onselen

has made abundantly clear in his seminal study of Zimbabwean mine labor. See Charles van Onselen, Chibaro: African Mine Labour in Southern Rhodesia (London, 1976).

82. M.R.A., Shire Highlands Railway, File 3, Circular Memorandum, May 8 1905.
83. Woods, "Planters...".
84. Relations between the Crown Agents and the railroad were always strained, as I learned when I visited the Crown Agents' current headquarters in the fall of 1985 and found that the archivists still bitterly remembered the Nyasaland railroad.
85. In 1913, the company cashiered checker Mohamad Hyat for trying to seduce the wife of a telegraph operator named Esau. Hyat's defense was that "the women referred to are prostitutes...5/- is the price of these women. We can buy these women for 5/-. I bought one already. We can keep a woman as a wife if we pay 5/- to her parents. I got one at Mlanje Road for 5/- when I was Station Master at that Station. She is still there. I left her there...Everyone has women in this country. We cannot touch any woman who has a husband." M.R.A., Shire Highlands Railways, File 1, Minutes of Officers' Meeting held at Limbe, August 22 1913.
86. In the manner that Sara Berry has eloquently described in Nigeria. See Sara Berry, Fathers Work for Their Sons: Accumulation, Mobility, and Class Formation in an Extended Yoruba Community (Berkeley, 1985). Of course, it is worth noting two things at this point. The first is that work on neighboring estates undoubtedly created a strong influence which is virtually impossible to discern from the existing historiography. The second is that evidence cited in chapter seven indicates that despite labor emigration, traditional society was still strong in central Malawi. However, in this context, it is essential to remember that idiom and structure need to be more clearly defined before we can conclude too much from the apparent survival of "traditional" society despite the loss of migrant laborers.
87. Quoted in Boeder, Sir Alfred..., 80.
88. Sharpe to Colonial Office, July 10 1906, C.O. 525/13.
89. Sharpe to Harris, March 26 1906, C.O. 525/16.

90. Pearce to Colonial Office, August 16, 1906, C.O. 525/13.
91. As the state eventually realized, M.N.A. A 2/1/3, Department of Agriculture Monthly Report, June 1909. Ironically, the desire to keep profits home may have been the reason behind the state's decision to encourage renewed European emigration later in the decade.
92. The tobacco industry remains one of Malawi's great untold stories. Only a few people have written on it. W.H.J. Rangeley's work, although a little dated, remains outstanding because of his unprecedented access to major actors in the drama. For more on tobacco, see W. Twiston Davies, Fifty Years of Progress (Bristol, 1958 [?]); W.H.J. Rangeley, "A Brief History of the Tobacco Industry in Nyasaland, Part I," The Nyasaland Journal, X, I (January, 1957); Rangeley, "A Brief History of the Tobacco Industry in Nyasaland, Part II," The Nyasaland Journal, X, II (July, 1957); Rangeley, "A Brief History of the Tobacco Industry in Nyasaland, Additional Notes," The Nyasaland Journal, XII, 2 (July 1959).
93. Rangeley, "A Brief History...Part I," 70. It is worth noting that a later corporate history of the Blantyre & East Africa Company claims that they first sent a consignment of tobacco to Liverpool in 1903, see "History of Blantyre & East Africa Company," C.O. 525/208/44332/3; M.N.A. 12405 19 3 7^F 1568 (1949), 3. I am deeply indebted to Robin Palmer for sending me a copy of this and the British Central Africa Company's corporate histories.
94. Mr. E.H.M. Gunn to Mr. H.W. Gunn, February 16 1906, quoted in Rangeley, "A Brief History...Additional Notes," 24. It is also worth noting that later histories of the British Central Africa Company never mention this shipment or correspondence, "History of the British Central Africa Company," C.O. 525/208/4332/3; M.N.A. 12258 19 3 6^R 1567 (1948).
95. Davies, Fifty..., 9-10.
96. The dates remain unclear, see Davies, Fifty..., 15 and Rangeley, "A Brief History...Part I," 25. McCall claims Boyd came in 1906 and was a thoroughly experienced tobacco grower," M.N.A. A 5/2/1, McCall to Governor, December [?] 1909.
97. Society of Malawi Library, Rangeley Papers, R 1/3/6, Boyd's Report to the Imperial Tobacco Company's Head

Office, December 12 1907.

98. The reason being that tobacco, like so many commodities during this period, was sold in auctions in the United Kingdom, and local buyers could not pay planters until they knew what they would receive for the leaf. Rangeley accurately points out that few could afford this wait because they were in debt and interest rates on loans apparently ranged from 7% to 15%. See Rangeley, "A Brief History...Part I," 75; and Sharpe to Harris, July 2 1906, C.O. 525/13. For more on pre-war marketing in the United Kingdom, see "The Marketing of Nyasaland Tobacco in London," The Tropical Agriculturist, XLV, 2 (August, 1915).

99. S.O.M., Rangeley Papers, R 1/3/6, A. Metcalfe, Manager of British Central Africa Company to Secretary, Imperial Tobacco Company, October 15 1907.

100. S.O.M., Rangeley Papers, R 1/3/6, Boyd's Report, December 12 1907. Several things are worth noting about the correspondence in Rangeley's files from 1907. First, in 1958, the Federation administration restricted him from publishing in his "Additional Notes..." the sections quoted here because they might have an "effect on the efficiency of the B. and E. A. Company and [because] the Company might be expected to take exception." Second, the quote from Metcalfe in particular highlights the way in which the British Central Africa Company sought new sources of capital for the country, a campaign which included the publication of a handbook designed to entice settlers to Malawi. See Sir Harry Johnston, Handbook to British Central Africa (London, 1905). Ironically, these events indicate that corporations were then doing what historians often claim the state was undertaking, thus continuing a tradition of confusion about the difference between capitalists and the government and showing that the country desperately needs the development of the kind of business historiography which A.G. Hopkins argued for almost fifteen years ago. See A.G. Hopkins, "Imperial Business in Africa. Part II: Interpretations," Journal of African History, 17, 2 (1976). Ironically, probably the best recent history of the British Central Africa Company is an unpublished paper by an amateur historian, Gordon A. Davies, which was to be the introduction to the Society of Malawi's reprint of Johnston's Handbook.... Unfortunately, the Society heavily edited this paper and the publication's introduction is much weaker, see Gordon A. Davies, "Introduction to the New Edition," n.d.

101. Which one agriculturist said was "exactly what the tobacco industry needed," M.N.A. A 5/2/1, Simpson's Notes on Nyasaland [n.d.]. This report was probably written sometime in mid-1908.
102. Report on Agriculture by Simpson, enclosed in Sharpe to Colonial Office, October 14 1908, C.O. 525/24.
103. M.N.A. A 5/1/1, Annual Report of the Scientific Department, 1908.
104. M.N.A. A 5/1/1, Annual Report, 1906; Annual Report 1908. It is interesting to note that the government actually did conduct a number of tobacco experiments under the discredited McClounie, but by this time no one either remembered or cared. See, for example, M.N.A. A 2/1/1, Preliminary Report by McClounie, January 11 1901; McClounie to Manning, March 30 1901; and McClounie to Sharpe, September 24 1901.
105. This Association has received considerably more attention than the Imperial Company and is the subject of a dissertation currently being done by Jenny Dawe at the University of Edinburgh.
106. British Cotton Growers Association to Colonial Office, October 27 1904; British Cotton Growers Association to Colonial Office, December 7 1904, C.O. 525/6.
107. British Cotton Growers Association to Colonial Office, September 13 1904; British Cotton Growers Association to Colonial Office, October 27 1904, C.O. 525/6.
108. Sharpe to Colonial Office, May 8 1905, C.O. 525/8.
109. Robert Wallace to Ewing, December 1 1905, C.O. 525/11.
110. Pearce to Colonial Office, February 7 1906, C.O. 525/12.
111. M.N.A. A 5/2/1, Simpson's Notes on Nyasaland [n.d.].
112. Sharpe to Harris, July 2 1906, C.O. 525/13. Part of the problem here was undoubtedly a clash of unpleasant personalities. McCracken points out that Simpson was a person as disliked in Uganda (see below) as he was by Sharpe. See McCracken, "Experts...", 103.
113. Report on Agriculture by Simpson, enclosed in Sharpe to Harris, July 14 1906, C.O. 525/13.
114. Sharpe to Harris, July 14 1906, C.O. 525/13.

115. For instance, in September 1906, he complained about inadequate travelling votes and the planters' need for help, Memo by Simpson, September 3 1906, enclosed in Sharpe to Colonial Office, October 16 1906, C.O. 525/14.
116. Sharpe to Colonial Office, October 16 1906, C.O. 525/14.
117. Sharpe to Harris, October 10 1908, C.O. 525/24. Considering Simpson's consequent positing to Uganda and his impeccable credentials (McCracken notes he was a "prize-winning graduate of Edinburgh University" who gained extensive experience in cotton cultivation in Egypt before coming to Malawi, McCracken, "Experts...", 103), one must wonder whether his ability eventually compensated for his personality, even with as testy a person as Sharpe.
118. British Cotton Growers Association to Colonial office, May 9 1906, C.O. 525/16.
119. Sharpe to Colonial Office, March 21 1910, C.O. 525/32.
120. British Cotton Growers Association to Colonial Office, May 9 1906, C.O. 525/16; M.N.A. A 2/1/3, Report on Agency of the British Cotton Growers Association, [n.d]. the latter was probably written sometime in 1909.
121. The ability of the Association to do more was demonstrated in Manning to Colonial office, December 30 1907, C.O. 525/19. As to their decision to pursue their own interests, one need only remember that in 1910, they received a £10,000 grant in aid before they would continue operations. And see chapter 7 for how they later obtained a buying monopoly.
122. Central African Times, March 30 1907.
123. Blue Book, 1907-08, enclosed in Sharpe to Harris, July 10 1908, C.O. 525/24. This report showed commodity exports rose some £18,357 to a total of £68,604.
124. M.N.A. A 2/1/3, Agricultural Department Report for June 1909.
125. Central African Times, November 9 1907.
126. This body was first proposed by Sharpe in 1907, Sharpe to Colonial Office, February 28 1907, C.O. 525/17. It first met on May 7 1908. See C.O. 626/6 for the file of its minutes. The best secondary work on it is P.V.

Turner, "The Nyasaland Legislative Council 1907-1931,"
(Malawi) Journal of Social Science, 4 (1974).

127. Minutes of the Executive Council, July 6 1909, C.O. 626/2.
128. For instance, see Central African Times, April 18 1908, April 25 1908, May 9 1908, and May 23 1908.
129. Blue Book, 1907-08, enclosed in Sharpe to Harris, July 10 1908, C.O. 525/24; Sharpe to Colonial Office, June 7 1908, C.O. 525/23.
130. Sharpe to Colonial Office, May 8 1909, C.O. 525/28; Sharpe to Colonial Office, October 28 1909, C.O. 525/29. This correspondence pointed out that hut tax receipts actually went down in 1907-08.
131. Annual report, 1906-07, C.O. 525/18; Pearce to Colonial Office, October 9 1907, C.O. 525/19.
132. Sharpe to Colonial Office, October 28, 1909, C.O. 525/29.
133. Primarily because Whitehall stopped Rand miners from using Malawians underground due to high mortality rates, Manning to Colonial Office, January 17 1908, C.O. 525/23.
134. Manning to Colonial Office, January 17 1908, C.O. 525/23.
135. Sharpe to Colonial Office, June 7 1908, C.O. 525/23.
136. As Boeder tangentially points out, Boeder, "The Effects...", 40.
137. Manning to Colonial Office, January 17 1908, C.O. 525/23. Kipe sought to use Malawians underground in return for beginning to recruit locally again.
138. Sharpe to Colonial Office, November 27 1908, C.O. 525/25; Sharpe to Colonial Office, June 7 1909, C.O. 525/29.
139. Sharpe to Colonial Office, March 31 1909, C.O. 525/28.
140. Manning to Colonial Office, March 11 1911, C.O. 525/36.
141. Page mentioned this incident on two occasions: Page, "Mediums...", 6; Page, "Malawians in the Great War...", 15-16.

142. Pearce to Colonial Office, August 31 1907, C.O. 525/18.
143. Page "Mediums...","; J.M. Schoffeleers, "The History and Political Role of the M'Bona Cult...".
144. Schoffeleers, "The Socialization...","; Mandala, Work and Control.
145. Like much of Malawi's social history, dances like malipenga are understudied. For an introduction to them, see T.O. Ranger, Dance and Society (London, 1975), 115-122.
146. Page, "Mediums...", 6.
147. As Sydney Linyama demonstrated for Likoma Island. See Sydney Waluza Crispen Linyama, "Perceptions of Identity: The Case of Likoma Island, 1855-1955," History Department Seminar, Chancellor College, February 25 1986.
148. Schoffeleers' and Page's emphasis on the intellectual origins of phenomena make them focus on ethnic rather than class identification. The problem with that approach is that we fail to differentiate the impact of colonialism on different groups within an ethnic group. The best example of how this problem can skew the country's history can be found in the differences between the saga of the Lomwe represented by Robert Boeder and the Nkanda Lomwe described by Alfred Ntonga. Boeder, following an established historiographical tradition, sees the Lomwe as oppressed and marginalized while Ntonga points out that Nkhanda's people integrated quite readily into Mlanje's colonial environment. See Robert Boeder, Silent Majority (Pretoria, 1984); Alfred Verryson Ntonga, "The Lomwe of Chief Nkanda: Their Intrusion into and Adaptation to the Malawian Environment," History Department Seminar, Chancellor College, April 22 1985.
149. Kamwana's influence has long been noted, especially as it related to the Chilembwe Rebellion, see Shepperson and Price, Independent African, 150-156; and Page, "Malawians in the Great War...", 16-18; and Jane and Ian Linden, "John Chilembwe and the New Jerusalem," Journal of African History, 12, 4 (1971), 635. One of the best summaries of Kamwana's life is "Chirwa, "Masokwa...". The state was aware of the danger Kamwana presented, and in 1909 began preparations to deport because it feared he would "instil seditious or troublesome doctrines into the natives of Nyasaland,"

- Sharpe to Colonial Office, May 15 1909, C.O. 525/28.
150. Chirwa, "Masokwa...", 14.
 151. J. van Velsen, "Migration as a Positive Factor...", 277, cited in Boeder, "The Effects...", 40.
 152. Annual Report 1907-08; Pearce to Colonial Office, July 2 1907, C.O. 525/18.
 153. Manning to Colonial Office, May 26 1908, C.O. 525/23.
 154. Sharpe to Colonial Office, March 13 1909, C.O. 525/28.
 155. Sharpe to Colonial Office, March 31 1909, C.O. 525/28.
 156. Pearce to Colonial Office, October 30 1909, C.O. 525/29.
 157. Sharpe to Colonial Office, January 29 1910, C.O. 525/32.
 158. Annual Report, 1906-07, C.O. 525/18.
 159. Pearce to Colonial Office, October 30, 1909, C.O. 525/29.
 160. Numerous oral informants mention that their families migrated south to work in the colonial economy. For instance, see Interview, Ketulo Master, Litonton village, T.A. Chikowi, Zomba, July 9 1985.
 161. Legislative Council Minutes, May 24-26 1910, C.O. 626/6.
 162. M.N.A. A 2/1/3, Department of Agriculture Monthly Report, September 1909.
 163. M.N.A. S 10/1/8/3, Rough Rules and Regulations of the Native Industrial Union, August 14 1909.
 164. M.N.A. S 10/1/8/3, Minutes of the Native Industrial Union Meeting, August 14 1909.
 165. Sharpe to Colonial Office, October 16 1909, C.O. 525/29.
 166. Manning to Colonial Office, January 31 1908; Binnie to Manning, enclosed in Manning to Colonial Office, March 12 1908, C.O. 525/23.
 167. Sharpe to Colonial Office, October 10 1908, C.O. 525/24. McCall's enormous enthusiasm and energy are

evident in his initial reports. For instance, see M.N.A. 5/1/1, Department of Agriculture Annual report, 1908. McCall was also valuable because he restored amiable relations with the British Cotton Growers Association. See M.N.A., A 1/2/1, J. Arthur Hutton to J. Stewart McCall, September 8 1909.

168. M.N.A. A 5/2/1, Report on Chipande Estate, by McCall [n.d.]. This report was probably written sometime in 1910.
169. Which is actually the basis for McCracken's assertion that the state favored estate cultivation after Simpson's departure , McCracken, "Experts...", 104. Ironically, one of McCall's earliest accomplishments was to develop ways in which African cultivation could satisfy the needs of the British Cotton Growers Association, M.N.A., A 2/1/3, Report on Nyasaland Cotton, April 24 1909. For more on African cotton cultivation, see P.T. Terry "The Rise of the African Cotton Industry in Nyasaland, 1902 to 1908," The Nyasaland Journal XV, 1 (1962).
170. M.N.A., A 2/1/3, Department of Agriculture Monthly Report, June 1909.
171. Sharpe to Colonial Office, March 6 1909, C.O. 525/28.
172. Executive Council Minutes, October 18 1909, C.O. 626/2.
173. Sharpe to Colonial Office, October 18 1909, C.O. 525/29.
174. By 1909, Sharpe reported that several companies had extensive freehold estates in Malawi. Those companies and their acreage are as follows:

Blantyre & East Africa	167,000 acres
British Central Africa Company	372,138 acres
Bruce Trust	159,890 acres
Shire Highlands Railroad Company	243,634 in reserve
British South Africa Company	2,767,900 acres

The British South Africa Company's holding were in the northern part of the country, but the rest were concentrated in the Shire Highlands. Sharpe to Colonial Office, March 6 1909, C.O. 525/28.
175. Although the low wages might have stemmed the flow of labor to estates.
176. M.N.A. A 2/3/1, Department of Agriculture Quarterly Report, September 30 1910.

177. M.N.A. A 5/2/1, Extracts from the Resident's Handbook,
January 8 1910.

Chapter 5 Reform and Rebellion, 1911-1916

The new decade was a pivotal period for Malawi's colonial administration. Colonial society, despite a severe buffeting from the territory's unstable economy, finally began to mature. As it did, the state slowly began to reform to meet the problems generated from the emergence of new social structures. But the administration found transition difficult, and little actual reform occurred before the First World War intervened. Zomba was unable, therefore, to establish a new political order before the simmering tensions in Malawi's society exploded in rebellion.

Ironically, much of the state's paralysis stemmed from what has been traditionally perceived as the colony's economic maturation.¹ But such claims about Malawi's economic evolution are misleading. Productive activities did not actually "mature" so much as they finally integrated into the expanding world economy. In essence, the colony benefitted from the final articulation between metropolitan interests and local producers rather than from a real entrenchment of productive activities. Indeed, the schisms and fractionalization of productive forces evident in the colony's early years not only continued but also widened, making the emergence of a dominant mode of production difficult and hindering the evolution of a civil society amenable to Zomba's ambitions.

The most obvious example of these divisions can be seen among the planters. Although estate owners fared comparatively well during this era, the old split between large estate owners and smaller agriculturists not only continued but also grew worse as new settlers moved into the region to start farming. Although virtually no research has been done on these European immigrants, it is fair to surmise that many of them started estates dependent on wage, not tenant labor.²

That dependence on wage earners was difficult because large estate owners relied more heavily on tenant services than ever before.³ The absorption of wage earners by these landlords reduced the food producing capacity, and the recruitment of workers became more difficult. The net effect was that the large estates prospered more than their smaller neighbors dependent on alienated labor.

Nor was tenant production itself uniform. Although most commentators emphasize the use of thangata during this period, it is also clear that sharecropping was emerging as a major mode of production.⁴ The emergence of sharecropping was crucial because it provided a means by which large estate owners could rely upon their tenants without the onerous coercion typically needed for thangata. Thus, large estate owners were finding a way in which they could produce goods without using free labor or antagonizing the indigenous population.

The appearance of tenant farming coincided with an

expansion of peasant production. After 1910, the cotton industry largely depended on peasant production as planters embraced first tobacco and then tea. The rise of indigenous production naturally worked against primitive accumulation by providing the local community with the means to survive and even prosper without selling their labor time. It thus threatened the capitalist sector by restricting the development of a free labor force.

The establishment of peasant production was not the only way in which the indigenous population adapted to the colonial economy; Africans also began to pursue more extensive agriculture on their own estates.⁵ But African estate owners, while initially successful, labored under enormous handicaps which frequently thwarted their ambitions. Land, labor and capital were all scarce, and African planters suffered even more from these deficiencies than small European planters.⁶

The resentment generated by these limitations was just one part of a broad disillusionment which matured in Malawi during this era. European capitalists, although they suffered fewer restrictions than their indigenous counterparts, solidified their anti-administration feelings as multinationals squeezed them during the economic downturn immediately before the war. Moreover, peasant producers and thangata workers became even more resentful as prices fluctuated and large estate owners placed more demands on their tenants. Although many of these grievances

remained unarticulated, their presence created a potentially dissident population which posed a serious threat to Zomba.

The administration was aware of these problems and tried to implement some reforms which could extend its authority, especially among rural Africans. But the emergence of a malleable civil society depended on a rationalization of the colonial economy which the state could not accomplish. The fractionalization of the economy, with its numerous productive systems, meant that there were too many class positions for the state to integrate into a new ideological framework. Moreover, as the fractions fought against each other, the resulting friction strained Zomba's tenuous authority even further by generating new resentments.

The administration might ultimately have solved these problems if it had had enough time. But the reform state had only four years to order its house before the First World War erupted. This conflagration had an enormous impact on Malawian society, and its outbreak gave frustrated indigenes an opportunity to rebel. Their ability to take advantage of that chance during the Chilembwe Rebellion showed how much the state had failed in Malawi and how much Malawi needed real reform. In essence, the reform state had emerged too late, and its tardiness produced a political crisis which the state could no longer ignore.

Nothing symbolized the sunset of Malawi's conquest state more than the departure of the territory's governor, Sir Alfred Sharpe. Long anxious to leave the country, the governor finally announced in 1909 that after his next leave, he would refuse another posting to Malawi.⁷ The Colonial Office offered telling testimony about its opinion of his ability by quietly accepting his resignation in March 1910. The conquest state's last great administrator was now gone, and with him went the final impediment to the erection of a new state.

Sharpe's exit was a mixed blessing. It would be three long years until the colonial office found a permanent replacement; in the interim, the territory had three different governors appointed a total of four times. To make matters worse, three of these appointments were as "acting" proconsuls, leaving officeholders with little security with which to inaugurate reforms. In this kind of uncertain environment, replacing the conquest state with a new political system was extremely difficult.⁸

Administrative uncertainty did not completely paralyze the state. Even as officials played musical chairs with the governor's throne, new laws sought to expand the government's authority in rural areas. In July 1910, acting governor Wallis proposed a new Regulation of Villages Ordinance "with a view to facilitating the better administrative control of native affairs."⁹ In particular, the new bill aimed to eliminate "two evils [which] have

arisen": the inability to collect hut taxes and to detect crime. The law aimed to alleviate these problems by making Africans live in clearly defined villages, thereby stopping the dispersal of the indigenous population. Later that year, the administration tried to strengthen this ordinance even more by making Africans who lived outside the new villages to pay higher hut taxes, thus forcing "the increasing class which is inclined to break away from ordinary village life...pay for the privilege."¹⁰

Passing laws to regiment rural society did little good because of Zomba's lack of authority. Therefore, the administration decided that it needed to strengthen its authority and in 1912 passed a new District Administration Native Ordinance. The Deputy Governor made it clear that the DANO was a means of strengthening the 1910 laws by stressing that it was an "amplification" of the earlier laws.¹¹ Local officials supported the central administration's assertions by proclaiming that "the breaking down of tribal organization and the powers of chiefs" had become so pronounced that they had to abandon their previous policy of benign neglect to stop "the tendency of natives to free themselves from control and discipline."¹² The Chiradzulu Resident supported this dire view by asserting that "there are but few proper villages in the district, houses being scattered in two and three all about the place."¹³ Several months later, the same resident stated that he needed "chiefs and headmen

responsible for seeing that their people pay their taxes."¹⁴

By the immediate pre-war period, traditional rulers with any influence were few and far between. The continuous waves of emigrants confused ethnic identification, and few real traditional authorities were left on the ground. For instance, in Chiradzulu the district resident bemoaned the fact that "the power of headmen is not recognized to any great extent."¹⁵ Although contemporary headmen whom I interviewed insisted that their ancestors were all chiefs before colonialism, it is clear that many of their ancestors obtained their positions because of participation in the colonial hierarchy rather than through traditional authority.¹⁶ The state tried to find legitimate authorities. In 1912, the administration, aiming to facilitate the implementation of the new DANO, published a list of all "the traditional authorities" in the country.¹⁷ But the register was apparently incomplete and inaccurate since officials were still searching for Africans to assume positions of authority for decades after its publication.¹⁸

Ironically, one reason for the erosion of traditional authority was the state's attitude towards chiefs. In return for collecting taxes and reporting miscreants, the administration paid traditional authorities very little. In the first year of the new DANO, Zomba gave a total of some 400 to the various headmen in the territory.¹⁹ Years later,

an official remembered that the headmen "were given very nice chairs, robes and chains and a miserable pittance out of all keeping with the duties imposed upon them."²⁰ Under these circumstances, it is little wonder that the administration had a hard time implementing the ordinance. Few headmen could be expected to collaborate for such small return, and even if they did, their subjects could hardly respect individuals whose service had such little value.

But the new legislation's real importance was not its efficacy but rather that, by establishing a system of indigenous authority, it created a parallel society. Africans now had to exist in "traditional" societies for an indefinite future. Such a condition was a tacit admission that the state could not maintain its authority as economic conditions transformed indigenous society. Primitive accumulation and economic change had undermined traditional authority, but the state was unable to fill the consequent vacuum and establish a new social order. So it tried to reestablish a version of the old one, an action bound to interfere with the continuing process of accumulation.

Few could dispute that the state needed to take some action quickly. The transformation of indigenous society was already startling. Africans were readily taking up the few available opportunities. In 1912, the Chiradzulu Resident reported that more Africans were taking out store licenses and that "this means of earning a living seems to have become popular amongst the local population."²¹ A year

later, he added that "a great many natives are starting trading in a small way on their own."²²

Even more important was the emergence of African estate agriculture, especially in Chiradzulu.²³ In 1913, that district's resident claimed that the Mtaka brothers, Gordon and Hugh, sold "1400 lbs [of tobacco] to Mr. Hynde at 3d per lb. also 3 1/2 tons to the Imperial Tobacco Company realising on some 4 3/4 at 3d per lb."²⁴ He added that they also had "several trading concerns of their own in North Eastern Rhodesia." Nor were the Mtakas alone; the Resident also mentioned the activities of Duncan Njilima, John Chilembwe, John Grey Kufa, Augustine Mlanga, Sam Sonbani and Thomas Lulanja.²⁵

Having established profitable enterprises, the African planters now wanted to enjoy the same privileges as Europeans. In particular, black estate owners wanted to be able to sign their employees' labor tickets, a prerequisite formerly reserved for Europeans alone. In both 1912 and 1913, the Chiradzulu Resident allowed a few Africans to sign tickets and pleaded with the administration to abolish the labor rebate. Apparently, no one in Zomba objected to this unilateral action even though government policy on the question remained ambiguous.²⁶ On another occasion, the resident complained that one African was actually demanding thangata from his tenants.²⁷

Clearly the state had to do something. These people were just the vanguard of an emergent class which owed no

allegiance to traditional systems and little more to the colonial state. Their loyalty was predicated upon adequate returns from investments and European recognition of their own status. But the Africans' activities would inevitably erode the racial authority which propped up most of the colonial edifice, and it would be increasingly difficult to meet their demands and not frustrate their ambitions. Moreover, given the history of planter-state relations, it was almost inevitable that these people would become disaffected.

Nor were the Chiradzulu planters the only African groups who emerged during the country's economic transformation. A class of educated Africans was also shouldering its way onto the scene. The first sign of this group's emerging consciousness was the establishment of the North Nyasa Native Association in 1912.²⁸ This body, the first of Malawi's many native associations, represented educated Africans who wished to assist in the development of the territory. Like their kin to the south, they used this organization to further their ambitions as their desires were increasingly thwarted.²⁹

It would undoubtedly be a long time before there were enough African planters and clerks to overthrow the administration. But if these people could rally the thousands of less successful but equally alienated Africans to their side, there was a real threat to the state. The dramatic growth of separatist churches already indicated

that many Africans were seeking an ideology which would suit their desires.³⁰ If the state did not intercede and get a firmer grip on the situation, the socio-economic transformation would eventually produce rebellion and sedition on a grand scale.

By passing DANO, the state tried to ensure that these emergent classes would not make alliances with the majority of the population. The headmen would serve as the state's ears, eyes and strong right arm. Zomba was aware of its need to establish a neo-traditional hierarchy to compete with new class interests. When it introduced the DANO, the administration frankly admitted that "it was intended to build up an organization which would control and restrain the rising generation which were now largely without those restraints and controls under which their parents were born and lived."³¹

Ironically, the state's determination to establish its authority indirectly through neo-traditionalism was a tacit admission that the coercion of the conquest state was no longer workable. Manning himself noted that "the period when such [state] power was more in evidence in dealing with natives risings is now being forgotten and a younger generation is arising which has little recollection of these events."³² Unless Zomba embarked on a new wave of conquest, there was no chance of reminding Africans of the state's latent coercive powers unless a rebellion broke out. The creation of tribes was simply designed to

integrate emerging classes into a civil society which would allow the state to rule through hegemony rather than through a disruptive and debilitating coercion.

Manning further demonstrated his anxiety about indigenous control by changing language requirements for administrators. Before 1912, all officers received a bonus for speaking Swahili even though that language was not used in Malawi. Manning decided to replace Swahili with Chiyao, a language spoken by many Malawians, especially in the southern region of the country.³³ At the same time, the governor stressed the importance of some facility in Chinyanja as well. Gone were the days when interpreters would suffice; the new state wanted its officers to be able to speak directly to their subjects.

The state did not rely on these actions alone. At the same time that the DANO was being passed, the administration sought to exploit educated Africans by establishing a native civil service. Manning felt that its creation was of "an urgent nature" in order to prevent the emigration of mission-educated Africans to neighboring territories where their skills would assist competing economies.³⁴ But the new service also provided a way by which the state could directly coopt the potential leaders of the indigenous community and keep them under control. Few Africans would defy the state if their livelihood was threatened.

The government also assumed a more interventionist

economic posture. In June 1910, Zomba proposed a new licensing bill, a measure Sharpe had resisted for years. This legislation was designed to regularize the rather helter-skelter economic activity in the territory. It also strove to end the fraud which accompanied many business bankruptcies, especially in Indian concerns. In this way, creditors had a better chance of getting their debts paid, and capital could flow in more readily.³⁵

The state tried to influence indigenous economic activities in other ways as well. In September, it passed a new cotton ordinance which Zomba hoped would reduce some of the chaos in the marketplace. In particular, it aimed to control the distribution of seed to Africans and regulate markets.³⁶ From now on, only the state could distribute cotton seed to Africans on crown land. Cotton purchasers also had to obtain a license before they could buy their product, and even then they had to make reports to local officials about how much they consumed. These rules sought to prevent "some unscrupulous person" from taking advantage of African growers.³⁷ Zomba obviously hoped that putting restraints on chicanery in the markets would limit any discontent which might emerge as Africans entered the market.³⁸

The administration was not content with regulatory legislation alone; it also entered into an agreement with the BCGA which strove to increase African production. The heart of this agreement involved a grant of 10,000 per

annum in return for the association's establishment of ginneries and provision of free seed to the administration. And the association lived up to its end of the bargain. McCall reported that the association put in twelve ginneries around Port Herald alone by the beginning of 1911.³⁹

But like many of its actions, the administration's new policy was not an unqualified success. Residents in some districts found that the locals wanted more seed than they were supposed to provide, thus fueling rather than relieving the anxiety of the indigenous population. Moreover, planters who had previously provided seed resisted the new injunction and distributed it anyway.⁴⁰

This type of resistance made the law ineffective, but the state was determined to make it work. Consequently it passed another ordinance in 1912 which sought to end the "system of promiscuous sale without check" by establishing markets in which district and agricultural department personnel actually auctioned off goods and checked weights.⁴¹ Zomba also ordered its district officers to make sure that all cotton was sold at an officially determined minimum price and that all transactions were paid in cash. Moreover, officials were supposed to make sure that Africans received a premium for better grade cotton. The state expected to be compensated by the implementation of a small licensing fee and new market levies.

Like its predecessor, this program was not an

overwhelming success. Marketers found it difficult to live with the new cash rules. In May 1912, an assistant agriculturist complained that "IOUs are not being allowed, and when the buyers run out of cash the market has to stop."⁴² And since many markets were located where there were "no banks, trading stores or other means of procuring cash," buyers often found that they "had to go to considerable expense to bring surplus back."⁴³ Such setbacks inevitably caused great "disappointment" to the African producer and thus increased, rather than reduced, indigenous anxiety.⁴⁴

Price fixing also caused problems. The administration explained that price fixing aimed to stop the "tendency to overestimate the local value of native grown cotton [which] has been recognized as a danger to be avoided in view of the adverse effects which a compulsory reduction in prices would have on the native mind and consequently on the native industry."⁴⁵ But actually setting reasonable minimum prices was a difficult task. Cotton consumers, most notably the BCGA, and the administration fought several skirmishes over the question of a fair minimum price.⁴⁶

District officials were not enthusiastic as the ordinance was extended to their districts. The resident at Ncheu was "afraid the Native grower and the trader will both be discouraged from taking further interest in the industry" if the new markets were established.⁴⁷ He later added that "the system of market which you propose to

introduce will injure the industry as far as this District is concerned."⁴⁸

Pessimism was not the only problem facing the administration; it also experienced difficulties policing the markets. In at least one district, a government capitao "has been taking food from natives and not paying for it, [&] beating natives."⁴⁹ Such behavior could hardly encourage the local inhabitants to take up the industry.

But control was more important than production at this time. Despite, or perhaps because of, a dramatic increase in indigenous wealth, Manning was faced with an increasingly chaotic situation in the districts.⁵⁰ African leaders were openly disputing succession to various chieftaincies and refusing to follow the instructions of district officers.⁵¹ More ominously, the practice of stealing cotton from European estates for sale in African markets had now become "rather common."⁵² Moreover, Manning had decided to raise hut taxes to 4/- and 8/-, a move sure to incur the wrath of the indigenous population.⁵³ He also decided to end the cotton rebate even though taxes increased.

The state's emphasis on control was a result of its sanguine feeling that more and more Africans were seeking their fortunes in the fields. McCall noted that "increasing numbers of natives...are now turning their attention to cotton growing."⁵⁴ As time went on, this initial optimism would fade, but for now the state was concerned about

controlling what looked like a promising future. Here again, the theme of restraint played itself out. The state was clearly aiming to make sure that economic developments went smoothly in a fashion which would not upset the political order. More ominously, one can also begin to see the hand of a dual economy aimed at keeping Europeans segregated economically as well as socially and politically.

Administrative changes reflected this new emphasis on control. After he assumed the helm, Governor Manning decided to reorganize the administration's secretariat. Claiming that "the organization of the upper or executive branch of the Secretariat has hitherto been rendered difficult by the existence of anomalous titles among the purely clerical staff," he redesigned the entire organization.⁵⁵ The most important reform established the position of chief secretary which he was determined "should be regarded as being open to all promising officers irrespective of the...service to which they belong." In particular, he felt that the best district officers should be chosen. Such a move was dramatic. Bringing the most able residents into Zomba ensured that district affairs would receive more informed and careful consideration than ever before. For the first time, the simple district officer would have an ally in the capital.

More importantly, Zomba would now be able to learn more about how to get things done on the ground. For years,

the administration had depended on two hierarchies: one in Zomba and one in the districts. As a result, legislation passed by the central branch was either impractical or unrealistic. Now people who allegedly knew something about everyday life were to walk the capital's corridors of power. And once again, the theme of authority crept into the state's deliberations.

Even as the state sought to gain greater control of its indigenous population, its ability to influence the territory's European population declined drastically. As usual, the most serious complaint was about labor. In particular, the unofficial community was incensed about government encouragement of African commodity production and control of the markets for those goods. As early as December 1910, McCall's reports included signs of increasing stress between the planters and the Agriculture Department.⁵⁶ By March 1911, the administration reported that the "considerable curtailment of proposed planting operations is in my opinion due solely to the shortage of labour."⁵⁷

Part of the labor problem resulted from the fragmentation of the planter class itself. As the economy recovered from depression and economic activity increased, the schism between large and small planters became increasingly serious. In July 1911, the administration reported that there was a serious shortage of land because several large corporations retained extensive holdings in

order to control the tenants upon whom they relied for labor.⁵⁸ The local press was even more hostile, complaining that "the practice of the large land owners of appropriating all the labour on their Estates for their own ends, has for many years been generally looked upon as both unfair and unjust."⁵⁹ But encouraging African cultivation only exacerbated the problem and further antagonized the planters.

The state was notably unsympathetic to unofficial complaints about labor. After years of seeing workers drift away to more lucrative jobs in South Africa and Zimbabwe, the administration had apparently decided that indigenous cultivation was the best way of stemming continued labor emigration. McCall pointed out that commodity production should stop Africans in Mlanje "from wanting to seek work outside the Protectorate."⁶⁰ He also pointed out that northern inhabitants would also learn that there were "means of earning money without leaving their homes."⁶¹ Even more remarkable was McCall's observation that "our large native population must eventually be the largest producer of most of our crops."⁶²

Nor were the government's activities confined to cotton; the state also aimed at encouraging indigenous production of the protectorate's newest promising crop, tobacco. McCall reported that "the sun cured tobacco industry was being taken up by natives with most promising results."⁶³ Although the leading tobacco companies were

cautious about indigenous production, at least "one native in Zomba district produced a ton of sun-cured tobacco which was purchased at prices slightly higher than the average obtained for European grown tobacco."⁶⁴ Manning, who complained that labor emigration has been "no doubt to the great benefit of Southern Rhodesia, but scarcely so to Nyasaland," decided to offer a tax rebate for African tobacco producers.⁶⁵ The state had clearly decided that the planters were unable to provide the country with enterprises which could keep the African population at home. In a sense, one can discern that the state had run out of patience with the unofficial community and had left that group to its own devices in order to solve its labor problems.

Labor was not the only problem pressing the planters. The virtual absence of any decent roads also hurt them. Even Manning complained in 1911 that "the benefits which that line [railroad] is capable of conferring on the agricultural community are largely neutralized by the absence of any system of roads."⁶⁶ McCall also complained that the "imperfect transit in Nyasaland is hampering the progress of the cotton industry,"⁶⁷ but the state, consumed with its own agenda, did little to solve the problem.

Not only was the Public Works Department virtually useless, but many administrators resisted the most logical solution to the problem, the development of motor transport. Sharpe had already stopped one motor transport

scheme from developing in the country in 1910.⁶⁸ Two years later, McCall informed some investors that "with regard to the question of motor transport, I do not think, having regard to the possibility of railway extension, that such a scheme would be practical."⁶⁹ Like the labor issue, the state appeared to be indifferent to the settlers' transportation problems.

This kind of indifference was bound to increase the already strong animus between state and colonists. The planters were not immediately vociferous because of the territory's growing prosperity. For instance, exports had gone up over 50% since 1910.⁷⁰ As tobacco established itself as a commercial crop, the unofficial community benefited from new markets in the United Kingdom and cash advances offered by the Standard Bank of South Africa.

The settlers continued to suffer from the crippling problem of disunity. Planters' Associations sprang up in several districts, and the refusal of some to cooperate with Chamber of Commerce wage schedules showed that they were determined to pursue independent courses.⁷¹ Moreover, the very need to form local organizations indicates that many in the unofficial community felt that they lacked a political organization which would look after their interests. As long as prosperity diverted the settlers' attention, their disarray was scarcely important. But once an issue raised the planters' consciousness of their betrayal by the state, the disunity of the expatriate

community came to haunt them.

One issue which could unify the settlers was land, and by 1912 the administration finally began sorting out the protectorate's land policies. As with other policies from this period, the state acted against planter interests. Late in 1911, Zomba proposed a land tax of 1/2d per acre on all private land.⁷² Since most of this kind of territory was in European hands, this bill put an increased burden on expatriate planters. At the same time, the governor began limiting new settlers by refusing to grant freehold tenure, instead deciding on long leases. Manning conceded that "European settlement...is a necessity to [Malawi's] commercial development and to its present prosperity."⁷³ But he also recognized that Africans needed land too, and he consequently sought to limit expatriate holdings.

Land was a thorny problem though, and in April 1913 Acting Governor Pearce suggested that the state establish four kinds of areas: Native Reserves, Crown Land Reserves, European allotments and miscellaneous territory.⁷⁴ The governor proposed that the Native Reserves be established on any land on which Africans were presently residing. The reserves would not be in remote areas but rather in areas not already alienated. After providing some additional territory for indigenous expansion, the governor proposed that the remaining unalienated land be made Crown Lands Reserve. This territory might be leased, but not sold to Europeans since Malawi was not "a really colonizable

country" and most planters were after quick profits.⁷⁵ The European allotments would consist of the already alienated land, and the miscellaneous would consist of rural and urban areas for markets and other uses.

It is worth mentioning that Pearce's plan depended on the retention of tenants on estates. The acting governor was convinced that the 1904 law, despite its virtual non implementation, would provide for the absorption of numerous Africans and thus reduce the need for future reserves. He was certain that such an idea was workable because it was in the interest of European planters "to treat their native tenants fairly and liberally."⁷⁶ Of course, if the Europeans did not do so, his plan had serious problems, and Africans would suffer as population increases drove them onto estates and into the hands of hard-hearted planters. But the state, at least for now, refused to consider such a proposal.

Pearce also pointed out that land policies needed greater definition because of changes in the state itself. When the administrators were old hands who knew local conditions, rigid policies were not essential. But as new officers appeared, the state needed to establish guidelines which anyone could follow.⁷⁷ In other words, the ad hoc practices of the conquest state, dependent upon the personality and knowledge of individual administrators, should now give way to the bureaucratic regimen of the reform state.

This need became obvious when Pearce was replaced by a governor entirely new to the country, Sir George Smith. His tenure lasted through some of the most important events in the country's colonial history, and he instituted some of the most sweeping reforms until the days of federation. Yet, virtually no information about him exists in secondary sources.⁷⁸

The one thing we do know is that Smith found an extraordinary memorandum on his desk when he reached Zomba.⁷⁹ Left by Pearce, this document was to be the new governor's introduction to the country. It noted that the European population was "only a small portion of our population-infinitesimal as compared with the native population-the rightful owners of the soil." Pearce also added that the Chamber of Commerce "really in no way expresses or represents public opinion." He also complained about the newspaper, noting that its editor was "a clever but extremely hostile person." Most of the rest of the memo dealt with DANO and its importance.

The remarkable characteristics of this memorandum are obvious. There was no discussion of economic affairs. ITC and BCGA receive no mention, and the cavalier dismissal of the European community shows that the state, or at least the governor, felt that Zomba was virtually autonomous in its decisions. Ironically, the lengthy discussion of DANO further indicates that the only pressures Pearce had felt came from the indigenous rather than the expatriate

community.

Moreover, the memo's glib assumptions about the economy were deceiving because the prosperity of the decades first three years was now being replaced by hardship. It would be easy to infer that since exports finally exceeded imports in 1913 Malawi had a solid economy at this time.⁸⁰ But like much else in the country's history, such a perception is at least partially deceiving. The evidence clearly demonstrates that a series of problems were still plaguing the economy.

The most important of these were droughts in the southern region. As a result, commodity production, especially on cotton estates around Chiromo, decreased.⁸¹ Moreover, officials reported that "food is increasingly difficult...to buy," making it harder for planters to obtain the labor they needed.⁸² The Secretary of Agriculture pointed out this problem by commenting that European cotton production was down at least partially because of a "scarcity of food for native labor."⁸³

African commodity production naturally exacerbated this problem. The increasing tendency of Africans to grow only enough to feed themselves and then plant cash crops like cotton or tobacco sharply reduced foodstuff production. This trend began to change as food prices soared in 1913, but the increased costs put European planters at a distinct disadvantage since their production costs rose with the price of bread for their workers.⁸⁴

The settlers also faced serious problems from outside during this period. Large multinationals which had pumped so much capital into the economy finally began to exert their influence in the country as the planters struggled to maintain their production. Imperial Tobacco's actions were especially dangerous. European tobacco production had not been so seriously affected by the colony's problems as had cotton. But Imperial had been steadily squeezing growers by offering less than market prices for their produce. As early as 1911, ITC's low prices had forced a number of local planters to ship their own tobacco to foreign markets.⁸⁵ At first, this circumvention of the huge company had worked well, and McCall's staff noted that only I.M. Conforzi had failed to get his crop to England in good shape.

But as more planters found themselves in economic trouble, their quality control deteriorated. E.W. Davey, a government agriculturist, complained that the "so called economy of many planters" in bailing and shipping was hurting prices for Malawian tobaccos in foreign markets.⁸⁶ Davey pointed out that "many planters...expect to make great profits by putting up the cheapest possible factory, by buying the cheapest press on the market, and by utilising that hessian [burlap] for packing which costs least per yard." The agriculturist also contrasted these practices with the ITC, "whose method of packing leaves nothing to be desired." The upshot of all this that

tobacco farmers hurt themselves and strengthened Imperial's position as the settlers' false economies cut their own profits and lowered the price for their products at home.

The BCGA also began to act against the expatriates' interests in this period. The company continued to make generous advances to planters and businesses through 1912, but by 1913 it was clear that it wanted a change in the modus vivendi.⁸⁷ The company's decision was easily explicable; planters had often taken advances and then failed to produce the agreed amount of cotton, leaving the Association with enormous losses. As a result, the company's officers bluntly stated that continued problems with European agriculture made it clear "that one might rather have to rely on natives for any considerable increase in the production of cotton."⁸⁸

The company began to complain about the way in which indigenous cotton was marketed. Its liason with Malawi complained that it was "a mistake to fix the price" so high. He then added that "I feel a great deal of anxiety about Nyasaland, and I am afraid we are going to drop a good deal of money there."⁸⁹ A few months later, he came to the real point:

I want you to clearly understand that you must not set us in competition with Keymer & Company. If you are going to do this we can be best guarded by our being able to have the control over it, and there is no doubt that the man who owns the ginnery has the greatest control, and it is not quite fair to put us in competition with people who have not got to provide

the seed free of charge, as we have to do, and have not got to incur other expenses which ordinary commercial firms are free from.⁹⁰

The days of BCGA's largesse were clearly over. From now on, the company wanted exclusive control of the indigenous crop in return for its assistance.

Such control would naturally be hard on the unofficial community. Several firms made most of their money by buying African cotton, so giving a monopoly to BCGA would simply bankrupt them. Moreover, planters like Hynde supplemented their own production by obtaining commodities from neighboring crown land.⁹¹ Under the BCGA's proposal, they would not be able to do so. If the company withdrew, the cotton market would surely be far more volatile, less stable and probably smaller. Ultimately, the association settled for a continued grant in aid of £10,000 per annum, but even this stipend showed that the state was vulnerable to the cartel's pressure.

Nor were agricultural companies Zomba's only cross to bear; the railroad also caused the state considerable problems. That company had finally opened for business, and despite Cynthia Crosby's assurances, it was clearly a rickety operation at best.⁹² It had the advantage, however, of having legal claim to land the government could ill afford to alienate. Using this claim as a weapon, the railroad obtained a favorable set of government guarantees for construction to the coast in 1913. Manning claimed that this contract was "universally welcomed by the European

community," but it is hard to believe that an expatriate population whose "capital is not plentiful" could be happy about the kind of financial guarantees involved.⁹³

There were limits to the state's ability to disregard settler sensibilities, as the progress on land policy after Smith's ascension amply demonstrates. Pearce's ambitions in regard to land had come to naught, and the new governor still faced the question of what to do. Krisnamurthy claims that Smith favored the planters, but the evidence suggests that his advocacy was more a result of unofficial pressures than personal preference.⁹⁴

After an extensive study, Smith initially concluded that there was probably more than enough land for the country's African population.⁹⁵ He also worried that restrictions on European settlement would stifle the economy. But the new head of government did not immediately act upon these beliefs. Instead, he recommended that a land commission be appointed to study the problem in detail. Only after it reported would legislation appear. Such caution suggests uncertainty, not unrestrained support.

Smith's next actions also indicate that he was no mere tool of the planters. As he studied the land issue, he concluded that good relations between tenants and landlords were essential for any future settlement. But unlike Pearce, Smith was not entirely convinced that the 1904 ordinance was effective or that the situation was satisfactory. Indeed, five months after he sent his

preliminary land propositions to London, he telegraphed a request that the Colonial Office grant him permission to require "compulsory written contracts between employers and natives settled on their estates."⁹⁶ He stressed that all the district officers supported this move, and his correspondence suggests that he had learned about the poor state of labor relations at the annual meeting of officials in the capital.⁹⁷

The proposed legislation hit the unofficial community like a thunderclap. None of the growers supported it at all. Small planters feared that the bill would give "large landowners power to monopolize the labor" on their estates and seemed "to consider neither the interests of the natives nor those of the planters but only those of the large landowners."⁹⁸ The large landowners, on the other hand, felt that the bill would effectively abolish thangata "with the result that the owner of the land on which the natives were settled got no return."⁹⁹ Facing such overwhelming hostility, Smith rather hastily withdrew the bill, leaving the question open and his reputation as a champion of the planters up in the air.¹⁰⁰

Smith's precipitous retreat may have also reflected the problems planters were facing by 1914. Their inability to unite on important issues or to resolve their labor difficulties had left many settlers in dire straits by 1914. In January, two planters complained bitterly that tobacco farmers faced imminent ruin if the administration

did not do something to help their plight.¹⁰¹ Big firms also suffered. In July, Blantyre & East Africa, one of the country's three biggest concerns, voluntarily reduced its capital because of losses sustained in the preceding few years.¹⁰²

In these circumstances, changing time honored labor relations was too radical for many of the planters. Indeed, simply suggesting legislation of this nature increased the suspicions of an expatriate community already disgruntled by a lack of government support. It seemed to reinforce the growing view that settlers' concerns were of little importance to the government and helped widen the already broad chasm between the state and European society.

The beginning of the First World War temporarily eased the antagonism between state and settlers. The unofficial community rallied around the flag and supported the government in its first military sorties against the Germans. They even volunteered to fight the Hun and suffered casualties in the war's first battles.¹⁰³

There was some discontent about speculative activities with supplies, but by and large, the war's beginning did not greatly disturb the territory's fragile equilibrium.¹⁰⁴

But eventually the war was tremendously destabilizing, and the state's control over its subjects eroded as it became clear that the conflict was going to drag on for a long time.¹⁰⁵ In particular, new demands on the indigenous community, especially for military carriers, ignited

emotions within the African community. The best example of this resentment was the broadside which John Chilembwe published in the Nyasaland Times.¹⁰⁶ The letter complained that Africans had suffered too long in support of a state which did little enough for them and urged that Africa be given back to its own people. In many respects, this missive was little different from material which Joseph Booth had disseminated in the late 1890s.¹⁰⁷ Indeed, Chilembwe's relationship with Booth and other breakaway church members clearly influenced his attack.

But Booth and his compatriots faced a far different situation in the late 1890s than Chilembwe did in 1915. Whereas the earlier propagandists had confronted a conquest state still fresh from campaigns in the field, Chilembwe faced a bureaucratic administration uncertain of its own aims and distracted by the military threat from the north. More importantly, in the 1890s independent church ministers had been preaching to people whose class position and ideological identity was at best confused. Chilembwe, on the other hand, was dealing with a situation in which people's status and position in the colonial society had become much clearer.

The administration had hoped to overcome these problems with its native administration legislation. But its failure gave Chilembwe and his fellow agriculturists an opportunity to rally their brethren as they grew increasingly restive about the barriers they faced in their

attempts to gain greater economic wealth. Credit ordinances, labor rebate restrictions and marketing rules all constricted these aspirant African capitalists. The resentments created by these actions had been further inflamed as growing racial tension forced men like Chilembwe to adopt subservient attitudes towards Europeans, no matter what their station. For instance, every African was expected to tip his hat to a European he passed whether the white man acknowledged him or not, an onerous burden to people who had adopted European customs and succeeded in the colonial economy.¹⁰⁸

Nor were Africans whose achievements were thwarted by colonial bigotry the state's only problem here. Chiradzulu also contained a number of poorer Africans who were equally dissatisfied. These people inhabited the A.L. Bruce estates and suffered from the constant abuse of power and privilege by Bruce's supervisors.¹⁰⁹ Nor was Bruce the only culprit. Other estate owners were pushing tenants off the land so that they could extend their cultivated acreage, further exacerbating tensions between black and white.¹¹⁰

Therefore, when Chilembwe wrote his letter, the state was naturally concerned. The district resident, alerted by Chilembwe's reputation, had already assured his superiors that the preacher "is being watched,...but nothing was noticed to cause suspicion there."¹¹¹ A month later, the same resident reported that the police checked on Chilembwe again "but everything seems to be quiet."¹¹² Apparently

content with these reports, Zomba let the matter drop and concentrated on more pressing business.

Their decision to do so is nothing short of incredible. It is hard to imagine any wartime government allowing seditious material to be published without any action against the author. One might assume that it indicated the administration was so blindly confident of its authority that it was not worried about Chilembwe and his followers, but it is more likely that the state was simply so weak that it was unable to act unless it had a clear provocation.¹¹³ In other words, unless Chilembwe was prepared to do more than issue broadsides, the state was unwilling to risk a confrontation.

How much political debility affected the course of events in Chiradzulu is difficult to discern. But it clearly demonstrated why the state wanted to establish controls like traditional authorities. As events showed, the district officers were unable to keep up on the undercurrents in their districts. The state needed better information in order to maintain its legitimacy.

That became clear because Chilembwe and a number of followers finally revolted against colonial authority on January 23 1915. The Chilembwe rebellion is a well known tale in African history. It was the subject for one of the first, and in many respects still one of the finest, books in African studies.¹¹⁴ It also was the subject of George Mwase's interesting memoir which provided what one

commentator has called the "protohistoriography" of colonial Africa.¹¹⁵ Moreover, Chilembwe has become an important part of contemporary Malawi's political identity and is the subject of a biography in the "Malawians to Remember" series.¹¹⁶

This historiographical density makes a detailed narrative of the rebellion superfluous. In summary, Chilembwe and a number of followers attacked the manager of the A.L. Bruce estate on January 23. Simultaneously, an abortive attempt was made to seize the Mandala depot in Blantyre and the district boma in Ncheu. Only the main attack on the Bruce estate succeeded, and after killing two whites, Chilembwe took up defensive positions and awaited the arrival of government troops. The fate of the rebellion was sealed as neighboring Africans, particularly the chiefs, refused to take sides.

Despite the literature's clear presentation of what happened in Chiradzulu during these fateful days, why it happened remains unclear.¹¹⁷ Shepperson and Price argue that this rebellion was the step towards the establishment of nationalism in Malawi. For them, Chilembwe represented the new African who would no longer accept colonial rule and indeed sought to "strike a blow and die." They buttress this argument by claiming that the chiefs represented an old and subjugated Malawi which did not want to see the new nationalism supplant it. Phiri followed the same line of reasoning in his book, and this viewpoint has been

practically writ in stone in contemporary Malawi.

Questions remain about its verity though. Rotberg's use of H.E. Peters' letters shows that Chilembwe was a man deeply mired in debt and suffering from an impending sense of failure.¹¹⁸ For such a person to go off the deep end and martyr himself in a vain messianic rebellion may have been explicable in other, albeit more mundane, terms. After all, there are few better ways to avoid debt than through gaining immortality as a messianic savior.

Nor should it be particularly surprising that large numbers of recent Lomwe immigrants participated in the abortive rebellion. Many of them had found life on the estates upon which they settled hard. Moreover, many Lomwe were on the lowest rung in the colony's emerging socio-economic hierarchy.¹¹⁹ Indeed, the district administrators for the area frankly admitted that "the fact that some hundreds of this tribe were implicated need occasion no surprise."¹²⁰

What was surprising, though, was the participation of the district's numerous African planters. Prosperous farmers like Duncan Njilima and John Grey actively followed Chilembwe despite their considerable success in colonial society. The government even conceded that "it is surprising that several well-educated and prosperous Natives were found among his [Chilembwe's] followers."¹²¹ The reason for their involvement becomes even more obscure when one considers that virtually no other group (other

than the Lomwe of course) provided active assistance to the rebels, in essence leaving one with the question of why the territory's most successful African subjects would rebel when most others would not.

The usual explanation for this apparent anomaly is that the rebels represented the new Africa which colonialism was forging. Other Africans, especially chiefs, are viewed as collaborators whose interests lay with the continuation of colonial rule, not its abolishment.¹²² But considering the confused state of traditional authority and the virtual disintegration of indigenous society, such a hypothesis does not seem tenable. After all, the state itself had found that the "old" order had already disappeared when it tried to establish indirect rule; those who chose not to revolt could hardly have been clinging to something which did not exist.

A far more plausible explanation is possible though. Rather than divide the indigenous community into traditional and modern spheres, it would be more useful to divide the Africans into sanctioned and non-sanctioned communities. For several years the colonial administration had not understood how to deal with the African planters. There had been uncertainty about whether to allow them to sign labor certificates and disquietude about how to deal with their wearing European clothes. Moreover, the state had struggled to find a middle ground which would help the tenants, many of whom were Lomwe, without disturbing the

estates. The administration's inability to deal with these groups allowed many Africans to drift into an uncertain modus vivendi which frequently thwarted their true ambitions and increased their unrest.

The chiefs and other potential leaders, on the other hand, recognized their political potential in the emerging colonial society. They had much to gain as the administration tried to restore its authority and hegemony in the countryside, and they were clearly aware of it.¹²³ As a result, their real problems with colonialism were subordinated to the equally real possibilities opened by the establishment of a more organized state. Consequently they did not actively support Chilembwe because they had more to gain from the state's reforms than from their brethren's rebellions.

It was clear that despite these incentives the general population's loyalty was very weak. The administrators complained that "the behavior of the population on the Sunday...was not suggestive of active loyalty to the government, even if it did not amount to practical coalition with Chilembwe."¹²⁴ The clear message here was that the state needed to become more involved in order to inculcate greater loyalty to the crown. Others have shown how the state's draconian reaction to the revolt, reminiscent of the actions of the conquest state, reestablished governmental authority. But as the evolution of the conquest state demonstrated, the pace of reform

would have to be accelerated, and the state would have to broaden its control of the indigenous population if that authority were to last. Thus, despite his apparent failure, John Chilembwe in a very real sense overthrew the government and established a new political order in Malawi.

ENDNOTES

1. Vail, "The State...", 52. It is worth pointing out that Vail represents the view of most commentators by claiming that there were "three quite distinct sectors" in this economy: an enclave planting system based on thangata; peasant production; and migrant labor.
2. Many of Malawi's prominent planters established themselves in the territory at this time, most notably I.M. Conforzi and the Barron brothers.
3. Especially as estates like A.L. Bruce recovered after Nunan's legitimization of the system. See White, Magomero, 111-120.
4. The literature typically discusses the emergence of tenant farming in the context of the central region, see for instance, John McCracken, "Planters, Peasants and the Colonial State: the Impact of the Native Tobacco Board in the Central Province of Malawi," Journal of Southern African Studies, 9, 2 (April 1983); McCracken, "Share-Cropping in Malawi: the Visiting Tenant System in the Central Province, c. 1920-1968," in Malawi: An Alternative Pattern of Development (Edinburgh, 1985). Some sources do point out that tenant farming was emerging during this era, though. For instance, Agnes Lonje states that "the bulk of the tobacco exported between 1881 and 1930 was grown by African tenants on private estates, Agnes Makonda Lonje, "African Responses to Cash-Crop Production in Zomba District," History Seminar, Chancellor College, March 12 1980, 7. For a more detailed summary of the emergence of tenant farming, see Tony Woods, "Malawi's Missing Peasantry: Planters and Peasants in the Central Province, 1929-1940," 1990 African Studies Association, Baltimore, October 27-30 1990.
5. Unfortunately, little information exists about these planters. It is worth mentioning that African

integration into the commodity market involves a considerable debate in Malawian historiography involving the origins of African production. One school argues that production began with colonialism while the most dominant today argues that African adaptation to the world economy evolved from the pre-colonial period. Probably the best summary of this debate is in Martin Chanock, "Notes for an Agricultural History of Malawi," Rural Africana, 20, I (Spring, 1973). Until more can be determined about the nature of African commodity producers, much of this debate remains moot.

6. Violet Jhala, "The Shire Highlands: The Establishment and Maintenance of Yao Dominance under Changing Socio-Economic Circumstances, 1861-1915," History Seminar, Chancellor College, February 27 1980, 6-7.
7. Sharpe to C.O., July 17 1909, C.O. 525/29.
8. Nyaysaland Protectorate; Civil List (Zomba, 1923). The following officers assumed the governorship on the dates following their names during this period: Major Pearce (acting) April 1910; H.R. Wallis (acting) July 1910; W.H. Manning February 1911; Major Pearce (acting) December 1912; and George Smith September 1913.
9. Wallis to C.O., July 9 1910, C.O. 525/32.
10. Wallis to C.O., September 24 1910, C.O. 525/33.
11. Minutes of the Legislative Council, November 5-8 1912, C.O. 626/6.
12. M.N.A. S 1/937/29, "Tribal History and Native Administration in Regard to the Upper Shire District," by Mr. J. O'Brien, [?] 1929.
13. M.N.A. NSB 7/3/1, "Monthly Report--Chiradzulu," March 1911.
14. M.N.A. NSB 7/3/1, "Monthly Report--Chiradzulu," August 1911.
15. M.N.A. NSB 7/3/1, "Annual Report--Chiradzulu," 1911.
16. As I have pointed out in two different settings, see "Planters...," and "Capitaos and Chiefs: Oral Tradition and Colonial Society in Malawi," The International Journal of African Historical Studies, 23, 2 (1990).
17. Record of Principal Chiefs and Headmen in Nyasaland

(Zomba, 1911). As far as I know, the only extant copy of this work is located in the Society of Malawi Library in Limbe, Malawi.

18. For instance, the state was still trying to appoint chiefs and headmen in Zomba district in the mid-1920s! See M.N.A., NZ 1/2/1, "Chiefs and Headmen, Appointments, Zomba District."
19. Treasury to C.O. February 15 1913, C.O. 525/52.
20. M.N.A. S 1/937/29, "Tribal History...."
21. M.N.A. NSB 7/3/1, "Monthly Report--Chiradzulu," April 1912.
22. M.N.A. NSB 7/3/1, "Monthly Report--Chiradzulu," March 1913.
23. Agnes Lonje points out that there were twenty four African estate owners in Zomba between 1881 and 1930, most of whom apparently took up major production around 1910, Lonje, "African Responses...", 13-14. Unfortunately, there is literally nothing about African estate production in districts other than Zomba and Chiradzulu.
24. M.N.A. NSB 7/3/1, "Native Landowners and Lessees in Chiradzulu Subdistrict," [n.d.].
25. One of the most frustrating lacunas in Malawian historiography is the virtual silence about the origins of these planters. In Zomba, Lonje only identified what six of the twenty four estate owners did before they began farming. Some undoubtedly made money from the ivory trade, but certainly not all. One feature worth mentioning is that the Mtakas apparently made considerable money smuggling chikasu in from Mozambique. But much work remains to be done on this subject before we can fully understand their role in Malawian history.
26. M.N.A. NSB 7/3/1, "Native...", and "Monthly Report--Chiradzulu," August 1912.
27. M.N.A. NSB 7/3/1, Irvine to Resident, Blantyre, June 9 1913.
28. Native Associations still remain underresearched, but one fine study is J. van Velsen, "Some Early Pressure Groups in Malawi," in E. Stokes and R. Brown, The Zambesian Past (Manchester 1966), 376-411. Chanock also discusses their impact in the the 1920s. See

Martin Chanock, "The New Men Revisted: An Essay on the Development of Political Consciousness in Colonial Malawi," in Roderick J. Macdonald, ed., From Nyasaland to Malawi.

29. Especially since at least one commentator has argued that "education did not remain a means to [sic] accumulating wealth for long because by 1910, the positions in government were saturated with Africans who had [a] mission education." See Kamia Makuwila, "African Entrepreneurship Around Blantyre District from the 1890s to the 1950s," History Seminar, Chancellor College, April 21 1982.
30. The most recent study of separatism during this period is Karen E. Fields, Revival.....
31. Minutes of the Legislative Council, November 5-8 1912, C.O. 626/6.
32. Manning to C.O., February 17 1912, C.O. 525/41.
33. Manning to C.O., January 13 1912, C.O. 525/41.
34. Manning to C.O., August 31 1912, C.O. 525/43.
35. Pearce to C.O., June 10 1910, C.O. 525/30.
36. Wallis to C.O., September 10 1910, C.O. 525/33.
37. M.N.A. A 2/1/4, Davey to J. Oswald, Chiole Mission, Ncheu, September 19 1910.
38. M.N.A. A 2/2/1, McCall to B.C.G.A. December 3, 1910.
39. "Report on Operations of the British Cotton Growers Association," by J. McCall, enclosed in Manning to C.O., C.O. 525/36.
40. M.N.A. A 1/1/2, Ryall to McCall, November 29 1910.
41. Pearce to C.O., July 5 1913, C.O. 525/48.
42. M.N.A. A 1/1/3, Gamlen (1st Assistant Agriculturist) to Director of Agriculture, May 25 1912.
43. M.N.A. A 1/1/4, African Lakes Company to Director of Agriculture, November 7 1913.
44. M.N.A. A 1/1/4, Perceival to Director of Agriculture, November 18 1913.
45. M.N.A. A 1/1/4, Chief Secretary to Perceival, January 3

1913.

46. M.N.A. A 1/1/3, Wheeler (Government Secretary) to Director of Agriculture, December 17 1912; British Cotton Growers Association to Governor, December 3 1912.
47. M.N.A. A 1/1/4, Resident, Ncheu to Director of Agriculture, March 22 1913.
48. M.N.A. A 1/1/4, A. Kidney (African Lakes Company) to Director of Agriculture, April 4 1913.
49. M.N.A. A 1/1/4, Resident, Neno to Director of Agriculture, June 24 1913.
50. Manning to C.O., December 16 1911, C.O. 525/38.
51. Manning to C.O., November 4 1911, C.O. 525/38.
52. M.N.A. A 2/1/6, McCall to R. Tyson Hodgson, Corby Hall, Norton-on-Tess, England, December 21 1912. One of the problems here undoubtedly involved tenant and peasant producers who were interested in selling their produce to touters who sought produce in the countryside.
53. Manning to C.O., October 7 1911, C.O. 525/38.
54. M.N.A. A 2/1/7, McCall to Deputy Governor, September 26 1912.
55. Manning to C.O., September 23 1911, C.O. 525/38.
56. M.N.A. A 2/1/4, McCall to Imperial Tobacco Company, October 1910.
57. Manning to C.O., March 23 1911, C.O. 525/36.
58. Manning to C.O., July 29 1911, C.O. 525/37.
59. Nyasaland Times, July 6 1911.
60. M.N.A. A 1/3/1, "Mlanje District Report," November 1910.
61. M.N.A. A 1/3/1, "North Nyasa Report," November 1910.
62. M.N.A. A 2/1/6, M.P. 3080 "Observations Regarding Native Agricultural Development," [n.d.]. This document apparently was written during the late spring or early summer of 1912, less than a few months after Manning had pointed out that "European settlement...is a necessity to its commercial development and to its

- permanent prosperity," Manning to C.O., March 16 1912, C.O. 525/ 41.
63. Memo by McCall, August 15 1911, enclosed in Manning to C.O., September 16 1911, C.O. 525/38.
 64. M.N.A. A 1/1/2, Imperial Tobacco Company to Director of Agriculture, June 17 1911; A 1/1/3, William Edward to Director of Agriculture, February 29 1912; A 2/1/5, "Memorandum Pointing Out Reasons for Appointment of Tobacco Expert to Staff of the Department of Agriculture," August 15 1911.
 65. Legco Extraordinary Session, July 24 1911, C.O. 626/6.
 66. Manning to C.O., June 17 1911, C.O. 525/37.
 67. M.N.A. A 2/1/5, McCall to British Cotton Growers Association, June 15 1911.
 68. Sharpe to C.O., February 5 1910, C.O. 525/32.
 69. M.N.A. A 2/1/7, McCall to R. Tyson, December 21 1912.
 70. Crosby, "Railway Development....," 141.
 71. Tony Woods, "The Myth....," 367.
 72. Gardner to C.O., February 28 1912, C.O. 525/46.
 73. Manning to C.O., March 16 1912, C.O. 525/41.
 74. Pearce to C.O., April 19 1913, C.O. 525/48.
 75. Ibid.
 76. Ibid.
 77. Ibid.
 78. For instance, he is not listed in Cynthia Crosby's historical dictionary. See Crosby, Historical Dictionary of Malawi (Metuchen, 1980).
 79. M.N.A., GOA 5/3/1, "Note on Nyasaland," by Acting Governor Major Pearce, August 1913.
 80. Crosby, "Railway Development....," 141.
 81. M.N.A. A 1/1/4, Duncan Lipanje, Cotton Capitao Chiromo to Director of Agriculture, March 1 1913.
 82. M.N.A. A 1/1/3, Quarterly Report, June 30 1912.

83. M.N.A. A 2/1/8, McCall to British Cotton Growers Association, March 26 1913.
84. M.N.A. NSB 7/3/1, "Annual Report--Chiradzulu," 1912/1913; "Monthly Report...", July 1913; "Monthly Report...", September 1913.
85. M.N.A. A 2/1/5, "Report on Tobacco," [n.d.].
86. M.N.A. A 1/1/4, "Baling of Tobacco, Seed Selection, etc (C.O. Despatch no. 336 of 14 October, 1913)," by E.W. Davey.
87. The generous advances had been noted over the years of course. For instance see M.N.A. A 1/1/3, British Cotton Growers Association "Report on British Cotton Growers Association Port Herald for Year 1911," February 6 1912.
88. M.N.A. A 1/1/4, Hutton to Director of Agriculture, May 6 1913.
89. M.N.A. A 1/2/1, Hutton to McCall, March 4 1913.
90. M.N.A. A 1/2/1, Hutton to McCall May 6 1913.
91. M.N.A. A 2/1/4, McCall to Imperial Tobacco Company, October 10 1910.
92. C.A. Crosby, "Railway Development...", 141.
93. Manning to C.O., July 27 1912, C.O. 525/42, quoted in Crosby, "Railway...", 138.
94. Krishnamurthy, "Economic Policy...", 390.
95. Smith to C.O., December 6 1913, C.O. 525/51.
96. Smith to C.O., January 17 1914, C.O. 525/55.
97. Smith to C.O., January 17 1914, C.O. 525/55.
98. "Letter from a 'Small Planter'," Nyasaland Times, May 14 1914.
99. The comments quoted were made by A.L. Bruce, a large estate owner, see Legco, 13th Session, March 10-12 1914, C.O. 626/6.
100. Smith to C.O., April 26 1914, C.O. 525/56.
101. Letters from H.H. Kemper and "Interested," Nyasaland

Times, January 15 1914.

102. Register General's Office, Blantyre, Coy 4, Blantyre and East Africa, "Memorandum and Articles of Association."
103. For instance, Geoff Thorneycroft lost a leg at Karonga, interview, Robin Thorneycroft, Chimpeni Estate, Zomba, July 22 1985.
104. Nyasaland Times, August 13 1914.
105. Page, "Malawians...", 35.
106. "The Voice of African Natives in the Present War," by John Chilembwe Nyaysaland Times, November 26 1914, quoted in Shepperson & Price, Independent African, 234-236.
107. M.N.A. J 2/9/2, Joseph Booth file. For more on Booth, see Shepperson & Price, Independent African, 18-121.
108. A pattern which continued throughout the 1920s, as Robert Rotberg's discussion of the solar topee incident in 1929. See Rotberg, The Rise of Nationalism in Central Africa: The Making of Malawi and Zambia, 1873-1964 (Cambridge, 1965), 120-121.
109. Woods, "Planters...", 213.
110. For instance, see M.N.A. NSB 7/3/2, Millthorp to Moggridge, October 7 1914.
111. M.N.A. NSB 7/3/2, "Monthly Report--Chiradzulu," October 1914.
112. M.N.A. NSB 7/3/2, "Monthly Report--Chiradzulu," November 1914.
113. Indeed, the weakness of the administration was demonstrated by the numerous officials who were resident there between 1911 and 1914. Moreover, when Mr. Irvine replaced Mr. Moggridge, it is worth noting that officers listed in official roles were different from people who actually sent in the reports, indicating just how chaotic the country's administration really was. See M.N.A. H.M. AD 1/2/3/1; NSB 7/3/1 and NSB 7/3/2.
114. Shepperson and Price, Independent African.
115. Robert Rotberg, ed., Strike a Blow and Die: A Narrative of Race Relations in Colonial Africa by

- George Simeon Mwase (Cambridge, 1970); G. Shepperson, "The Place of John Chilembwe in Malawi Historiography," in Pachai, ed., The Early...., 406.
116. D.D. Phiri, Malawians to Remember: John Chilembwe (Lilongwe,, 1976).
 117. White points out that "the rising itself can be viewed from different angles-as nationalism versus colonialism, as Christianity versus Islam, as a petit bourgeois struggle with feudalism, as a peasant uprising against oppression...as a personal feud between Chilembwe and W.J. Livingstone." White, Magomero, 127.
 118. Robert Rotberg, "Psychological Stress and the Question of Identity: Chilembwe's Revolt Reconsidered," in Robert Rotberg and Ali Mazrui, eds., Protest and Power in Black Africa (New York, 1970). See also M.N.A. S 10/1/8/3, Chilembwe to Peters, March 9 1914; Chilembwe to Peters, March 26 1914.
 119. Boeder, Silent Majority. Of course, one must heed the cautionary warning I gave in the last chapter about the Lomwe.
 120. M.N.A. NSB 7/3/2, "Annual Report, Chiradzulu, 1914-1915."
 121. Ibid.
 122. Interview, Stephen Saidi Kapile, Machirika village, T.A. Chikowi, Zomba, July 1 1985.
 123. Landeg White, "'Tribes' and the Aftermath of the Chilembwe Rising," African Affairs 83, 333 (October 1984), 511-512.
 124. M.N.A. NSB 7/3/2, "Annual Report, Chiradzulu, 1914-1915."

Chapter 6 War and Reform, 1915-1922

The Chilembwe Rebellion was a watershed in Malawian history. In its aftermath, the state turned against expatriates more and more as it strove to build a colonial society in which its authority would reign supreme.¹ But Johnston's legacy to the country was a difficult one to live down, and the reforms needed to reestablish unquestioned control were difficult to implement. As a result, reform continued to move slowly. Whereas previous attempts at revising the territory's political economy had been unsure and incomplete, there was now a clear goal. Malawi would increasingly become a colony for Africans and not a white man's paradise.

In many respects, this decision was forced on the state as a result of the war.² The conflict caused enormous hardships for many Africans and further eroded the state's authority. Zomba dragooned thousands of indigenes to serve as carriers for the military. Simultaneously, African participation undermined the myth of white supremacy as Africans fought and killed whites. As these troops returned home, the dislocations of the war caused disease and famine throughout the country. In this setting, it was clear that the state had to do more to mollify the indigenous population than it had before.

But Zomba found that changing the country's political economy was a difficult task. The state continued to find

it difficult to organize its own administration, especially as the military drained the territory of European manpower. After the Armistice, the post war inflation stimulated enormous discontent among the country's civil servants, further reducing the government's ability to administer the transformation efficiently.

Economic problems also inhibited the state's ability to change the country too much. The war drastically diminished the territory's exports, and even large corporations lost thousands of pounds.³ The post-war depression further undermined the country's prosperity, and by the early 1920s the economy was in dire straits. Thus, Zomba found it difficult to find the revenue needed for necessary reforms.

The post-war recession further alienated the state's subjects, both European and African. The expatriate community, resentful of Zomba's policy shift, found the administration's continued refusal to assist the beleaguered estate economy unacceptable, and by the early 1920s planters' associations threatened open rebellion. Africans, equally upset about the poor economy, took more direct measures and engaged in criminal activities which necessitated the establishment of a police department.

The activities of the country's large companies further complicated the situation. Some, most notably the British Central Africa Company, tried to offset their losses by selling land to ex-servicemen. The resulting

influx of expatriates made it more difficult for the state to thwart settler ambitions in favor of peasant production.

Even more ominous were the activities of both the British Cotton Growers Association and Imperial Tobacco. The cotton consumers finally grew weary of the country's unstable markets and forced the state to give it major concessions in return for continuing business. Imperial, also tired of the country's erratic status quo, sought to protect its investments by expanding tenant production. The result of these activities was an expansion of non-capitalist production designed to serve metropolitan interests rather than local primitive accumulation.

The net effect of these problems was chaos, and by 1923 the local situation was desperate. The administration's new determination to "Africanize" Malawi failed because the country's structural deficiencies, many of which were the result of maladministration, were too severe for an underfinanced state to resolve. Ironically, the post-Chilembwe state failed not because of a lack of direction, but because of an inability to enforce its will.

Smith approached the immediate aftermath of the Chilembwe crisis with his usual caution. The governor admitted that he would "not attempt, until the investigations are finally concluded, to deal with this rising in its general bearing on the Government of the Protectorate."⁴ After indicating that he would not pass any

legislation until he fully understood what had gone wrong, Smith established a commission of inquiry.

Zomba did not have the luxury of reviewing the evidence before acting, though. Even as the dust settled in Chiradzulu, Hector Duff pointed out that administrators could no longer "pooh-pooh indigenous complaints."⁵ As government investigators discovered that "one of the causes of native disaffection has been the unsatisfactory position of natives on estates owned or occupied by Europeans," the state directed its administrators to prevent the abuse of tenants by estate owners.⁶

Time honored relations on numerous estates consequently changed. No longer would district officers turn a blind eye towards serious abuses. For instance, the Chiradzulu Resident claimed that he was closely supervising tenant agreements because "Mr. Sabbatini's tenants cause me some uneasiness, and complaints from one side or the other are unduly numerous."⁷

The rebellion unsettled other social relations as well, especially the already strained links between the state and the unofficial community. The revolt had elicited enormous criticism from the expatriate population and destroyed the rapprochement created by the beginning of the First World War. The Nyasaland Times not only savaged the Commission of Enquiry, but it also took advantage of the opportunity to pour calumny on what it clearly felt was inefficient administration. For instance, in April the

paper's editor proclaimed that "the European community have been shamefully neglected in the past six years and more of the Agricultural Department's history...everything seems to have been directed to the Native Cotton Industry to the exclusion of other interests."⁸

This kind of fulmination pointed out that the expatriates were as upset about the government's neglect of their economic interests as by its apparent inability to govern the African community. New grievances appeared, too, especially about the government's refusal to become involved with the railway. The war had forced freight prices up precipitously, and many planters found it difficult to raise the money to ship their crops overseas.⁹ Indeed, Imperial Tobacco simply stopped buying tobacco for a while because of uncertainty about freight charges, instead buying its leaf in American markets to which Central European consumers had no access.¹⁰ The net result was that many expatriates found themselves in an increasingly vulnerable economic position yet again because of the state's failure to regulate transportation.

The administration was sensitive to the enmity with the settlers. By the summer of 1915, Governor Smith pleaded that he could "only appeal to the better thinking whites in Nyasaland to consider the effect, both on the natives and on the situation...of a recriminatory polemic at public meetings or in the public press."¹¹ Unofficial leaders grudgingly conceded this point, and even the

newspaper admitted that "planters will have to face the situation in the best way they can...it is part of the sacrifices we are called upon to make in this herculean struggle."¹² The expatriates made it equally clear that they eventually expected some reward for their sacrifices.

The conflict ensured that any concessions would be far off. The insatiable demands for military carriers placed an ever increasing burden on the administration. The indigenous community had already heard "unfavourable rumours...of the experience of carriers in the fighting around Karonga" by the beginning of 1916.¹³ As the war progressed, conditions deteriorated for the tenga-tenga force, and fewer and fewer Africans were willing to participate in the campaigns.¹⁴ But the redoubtable district officers still had to obtain more carriers as the campaign ground on, and their recruitment tactics soon caused dissension which consumed much administrative energy.¹⁵

Ironically, this demand provided the means by which the state could implement indirect rule. Oral informants still remember that the state rewarded those who had obtained workers for either public works projects or tenga-tenga with chieftaincies.¹⁶ Indeed, the state's reliance on chiefs for recruitment provided an enormous opportunity to those who wished to seize it.¹⁷ Certainly many authorities were willing to do so. In 1916, the district officer in Chiradzulu was astonished to find that his local chiefs

provided him with more than enough carriers after he had complained that he could not possibly take any more manpower away from his district.¹⁸

While the emergence of these cadres remains underresearched, their appearance raises interesting questions about the evolution of indigenous society. Not the least intriguing question is who the new chiefs recruited and how they did so. Since Page has persuasively demonstrated that the indigenous population feared tenga-tenga work as the war wore on, it is unlikely that the new paramounts enticed the recruits. Instead, it would appear that they took an opportunity to rid communities of malcontents and dissidents who might challenge either their authority or the legitimacy of their administrative patrons.¹⁹

Purging rural areas of these individuals would forestall any seditious activity at a time when the administration was finding local control even more difficult. Military campaigns absorbed Europeans as well as Africans, and the administration felt the pinch. Although it found officers to administer districts, it eventually became apparent that the available candidates were often problematic. For instance, in 1918 one district resident complained that "I take this opportunity of again bringing before your notice officially the fact that the state of my health is not good...[and] I cannot welcome at this stage taking over the responsibilities of an important

subdistrict."²⁰ But the state had no choice, and the officer in question took over the subdistrict. Nevertheless, even Zomba ultimately had to dispatch investigators to examine irregularities caused by what could charitably be called poor administration.²¹ In these conditions, it was essential to establish order in the districts in any manner possible.²²

The war's impact on the indigenous community made it imperative for Zomba to control the countryside. As the military's labor demands outstripped supply, administrators undertook Draconian measures reminiscent of the slave raids.²³ These measures caused some increase in activity among independent churches and a revival of traditionalism designed to organize Africans against the colonial state.²⁴ The appearance of such phenomena had, of course, partially catalysed Zomba's decision to establish indirect rule before the war, and there is little doubt that the state welcomed a chance to promote collaborators as the war stimulated new militantism, both religious and traditional.

Recruitment was not the only disruptive result of the war. Page points out that "much of what troubled the askari and the tenga tenga, as they were away at war, was shared by those at home."²⁵ Food consumption skyrocketed as the army struggled to feed itself, and famine stalked the country because "of food requisitions, labor limitations, and agricultural implement shortages."²⁶ Disease also swept

through the colony as the war disrupted indigenous society.²⁷ The net effect was that many Africans found themselves impoverished by the war's end.

The war had other, more subtle effects. Many workers, especially in transport industries, received fairly substantial bonuses.²⁸ And the bounty continued throughout the struggle. By the spring of 1918, the Blantyre Resident concluded that "at the present time...there is a large floating population employed on military service in various parts of the Protectorate earning high wages."²⁹ The relative prosperity of these workers created resentment among returning soldiers, and a district officer noted with dismay that their African police "have not unnaturally expressed surprise that after long and distinguished military careers they should now be receiving less than half the emolument enjoyed by raw Anguru" volunteering for government work.³⁰

Other facts suggest that there was at least some prosperity in the African community. In 1918, the Chiradzulu Resident reported that "there are now 21 stores on Crown land alone...[and] inspite of difficulties of importing material they appear to keep up their stocks."³¹ Court records also indicate that economic activity in the rural areas was picking up. For instance, in 1916, an individual lent an African 27/19/0 "to build a store and trade."³² For people who legally could not borrow or lend more than one pound, such transactions were extraordinary.

Indeed, despite the hardships endured by many Africans, there is no question that the war provided many indigenous inhabitants with great opportunities.³³

This prosperity was a two edged sword for the state. It undoubtedly thwarted some dissent by tying people more closely to the colonial economy. But it also created unrest by fragmenting traditional society even more. Individuals now lived in a context other than their village, and many probably had improved their situation by taking advantage of opportunities presented by the war. As these new men gained greater wealth, their affluence probably caused resentment among Africans who had formerly dominated them in traditional society, thus accentuating the problems caused by the difference between local and military wages.³⁴

The state was keenly aware of the trouble brewing in the villages, and it obtained a reform program after the Commission of Inquiry released its final report in 1916. The commissioners argued that better district administration, closer supervision of the indigenous community and the abolition of hut tax rebates were all needed. But the most important conclusion was that the previous optimism about planter-tenant relations was misplaced. The commissioners specifically recommended "the abolition of work in lieu of rent, except at the option of the tenant."³⁵

This gave Smith all the impetus he needed for a revival of the postponed native tenants ordinance. As the

ink dried on the report, Smith proposed "for consideration of members of the executive council a rough draft of a bill" about estate tenants. In essence, it stated that tenants would now have the option of paying an annual rent fixed by the state and could not be compelled to perform thangata labor. In order to ensure that tenants would not suffer if they chose this new option, the bill also included a clause prohibiting the eviction of tenants unless they had a new home.³⁶ Smith hoped that the new ordinance would "abolish[es] the principle of service in lieu of rent and [ensures that] the native's position is cleared up. By payment of a given sum by way of rent he enjoys rights of residence which are defined and the employment of his labour becomes a matter of contract."³⁷

The final passage of this bill was a devastating blow to the planting community.³⁸ Military requirements had already cut into the country's slim labor supplies, and planters had encouraged some Africans to seek refuge on their estates.³⁹ Changing tenant relations threatened to reduce available manpower even more.⁴⁰ Therefore, the new law redrew the battle lines between official and unofficial communities. After a meeting between a deputation of planters and the Director of Agriculture, the local newspaper complained that the Director "seemed to be holding the whip behind his back all the time...Planters resented this tone and rightly so."⁴¹ By July, the same paper argued that the situation was "eminently

unsatisfactory as regards the co-operation between the Government, Military and the Public."⁴²

This animus did not deter the government's willingness to sacrifice planter interests for the benefit of the indigenous community. The administration continued, for example, to emancipate African tenants on estates despite the settlers' protests. On January 11 1918, Smith reminded his district officers that the new law "disposes once and for all of any doubts which may have previously existed of a right of landlords to exact from natives resident on their estates any service in lieu of rent."⁴³ Six months later, the governor exhorted his men "to prevent such evasions of the law and report fully should such occur." He also reminded them that "the policy of the Government is that every native should be free to offer his labour where he pleases."⁴⁴

Zomba further threatened the estates' labor supplies by encouraging (at least tacitly) indigenous commodity production. By late 1917, the Director of Agriculture reported that "never in the history of native cotton growing has competition been so keen...the whole crop for this year is guaranteed for purchase."⁴⁵ Indeed, the situation was so good that the Director of Agriculture reported that one African obtained over £100 for his crop.⁴⁶ These developments naturally pulled even more workers from the beleaguered estates, and demonstrated that Zomba's solicitude about indigenous affairs overrode any

expatriate concerns.

But like so many apparent successes, this situation had a very dark side. Increasing cotton cultivation reduced food production to dangerously low levels and exacerbated the country's chronic wartime famine. The agricultural department had defended its encouragement of cotton cultivation by stressing that famine was unlikely because the prices maize fetched would stimulate local food production.⁴⁷ But as more Africans continued to plant cotton, the national food supply diminished until several regions had virtually no available foodstuffs.⁴⁸ Indeed, the situation deteriorated so much that even the British Cotton Growers association conceded that food cultivation should be substituted for cotton production because of the danger of famine.⁴⁹

Ironically, beer brewing further compounded the food question.⁵⁰ As early as 1915, the administration had recognized that beer drinking was becoming a problem and had passed rules to regulate it.⁵¹ However, beer brewers made such enormous profits that the fines imposed on violators were scarcely a deterrent.⁵² As a result, the state found that it constantly struggled to keep grain from being converted into liquor.

Increasing indigenous cotton production complicated an already serious food crisis and threatened to undermine the complacency which prosperity engendered in the indigenous community. So even as the state fostered African

interests, its policies eroded gains made in establishing legitimacy and threatened further complications as a new legacy of bitterness gradually grew.

The revival of the indigenous cotton industry also created a critical rift between the state and the BCGA. After it had decided not to sacrifice its product for food production, the Manchester cartel stimulated production and bailed out numerous planters by "advancing considerable sums" for both future crops and goods in transit.⁵³ As the war continued, however, the situation changed. The Association lost its imperial grant-in-aid in 1916 just as the market began to improve.⁵⁴ The consequent increase in prices should have made up for this loss, but the keen competition the Association faced cut into its profits.

The company complained that the state should do something to help them in return for all their previous assistance. Corporate officers rather darkly pointed out that without "some slight assistance from the government," their bankers might start squeezing them.⁵⁵ The Association liaison also pointed out that "when the business is in a very difficult position and there is a possibility of some loss, everybody will stand on one side and leave the Cotton Growing Association to 'nurse the baby' and then come in as they have done recently when they think there is a chance of a profit. This is all very unfair."⁵⁶ Lest anyone mistake the real message in these letters, the Association added that "it would be a good thing if cotton growing was

made a sort of government monopoly and the buying placed in the hands of somebody like the Association."⁵⁷

The state was having none of it though. The local expatriate community was already unsettled enough by the new tenant ordinance; the administration had no intention of giving them even more ammunition in their crusade against the state. McCall summed up the entire situation quite neatly by pointing out that there was "no necessity whatever for the suggested assistance which is of far more importance to the B.C.G.A. than [for] the Agricultural interests of Nyasaland."⁵⁸ In short, the state decided not to accommodate the association's interests in order to restore its battered relations with the unofficial community. But in doing so, it earned a powerful new enemy.

Tragically, thwarting the BCGA's ambitions did little to heal the growing rift between planter and administrator. In many respects, the government's officers simply appeared incapable of pursuing policies without seriously offending their expatriate subjects. For instance, in October 1918, the food committee requisitioned some 20 tons of maize from a Chiradzulu planter.⁵⁹ When the planter, who was rather "hot tempered," rather naturally objected to this seizure, the district officer sent in a police force which confiscated the maize and then insisted that the settler shell it. The upshot was that the state received an enormous quantity of unshelled maize and alienated a settler who would eventually play an important role in the

colonial economy.

The end of the war did not relieve things very much. The flu epidemic swept through Malawi in late 1918 and disrupted food production yet again.⁶⁰ Even more ominously, the returning soldiers introduced more instability into the political arena. One district resident complained that returning soldiers showed a tendency "to interfere with and sometimes assault the police when they go into the villages on duty."⁶¹

To some extent, this problem was a reflection of the military's war-time disdain for civil authority.⁶² For example, at the end of hostilities, an army column marched from a flu infected area into "an uninfected one...in which food is very scarce."⁶³ Although the district officer tried to stop this movement, military commanders disregarded his warnings and left the road "strewn with dead and dying." But one administrator glumly predicted that despite the havoc wreaked the "military so-called will again get off scot free."⁶⁴ And so they did, revealing the impotence and ineffectiveness of administration officers before an already skeptical indigenous population.

Blaming the war alone for the erosion of political authority is misleading. The new disregard for authority was just one sign of how external influences were accelerating the transformation of indigenous society. In many respects, it complemented the problem created by the return of Africans from the mines to the south. Like the

military personnel, these workers often exhibited disrespect for colonial authority and white rule in general.⁶⁵ Colonists complained that returning workers were "cheeky, idle [and] more independent."⁶⁶ As these people returned home, their attitudes caught on with members of the indigenous community who had prospered during the war and created even more instability as more and more Africans asked the same questions as Chilembwe had.⁶⁷

The state tried to stem this trend not just by establishing traditional authorities but also by reforming racial relations as a chaste system. It outlawed cohabitation and actively worked to expel children produced by interracial relationships.⁶⁸ In 1917, the Secretary of Native Affairs asked a Catholic mission outside of Beira if it would accept some "half-caste" children. The official did not conceal that "it is desired that these children should lose all touch with Nyasaland and this government would be very much obliged if you would, as far as possible, keep them out of touch with any Nyasaland natives and when their education is completed endeavour to obtain work for them in South Africa."⁶⁹

The state also sought to exert coercive power, and in 1919 it decided to establish an "independent" police force.⁷⁰ Traditionally, police work had "been left almost entirely to the district residents."⁷¹ Even before the war, these officers had recognized the inadequacy of a

decentralized system run by district officers and urged the formation of an independent constabulary administered from Zomba. So as it became increasingly clear that the indigenous community was no longer "more docile and less sophisticated" than before, the state acted.⁷²

Coercion was not Zomba's only aim though, and the administration simultaneously encouraged officers to collect material on indigenous languages and culture. For example, the acting chief secretary informed Meredith Sanderson, an early ethnographer and medical officer, that "the government will be glad to receive copies of any future work you may carry out on similar subjects."⁷³ In an era when the state was hard pressed to fulfill its obligations, encouraging officers to do anthropological research was telling.

Events were conspiring against government policy though. Hamstrung by London's postwar penury, the administration had to abolish the Native Affairs Department in order to save funds.⁷⁴ As it became apparent that such action contradicted the establishment of greater control over the indigenous community, the administration sought to reestablish this department.⁷⁵ But London remained obdurate and coolly responded that the formation of new departments was impossible because of the difficulty it "anticipate[d]" in obtaining Treasury approval.⁷⁶ Nor was this the only instance of poverty constraining the state; the Exchequer also refused to allocate votes for the new police

department.⁷⁷

Unrest by civil servants complicated the state's financial problems. In June 1919 the newly formed Nyasaland Civil Servants' Association complained bitterly about working conditions in the territory.⁷⁸ The governor conceded that much of the "growing discontent" among civil servants was entirely justified. But the state could do little without more money, and the new association continued to complain even after officials gained a small pay increase.

In this setting, the administration needed to raise revenue quickly, and it began to pass new tax legislation.⁷⁹ When it reformed the hut tax in 1920, the administration abolished the labor rebate and imposed a flat rate. The Chilembwe commission had already suggested such an option and much evidence suggests that such a policy might have been very popular.⁸⁰ But that sentiment had been based on the presumption that the rate would go from 4/- to 5/- per annum. The government's need for money led it to increase the tax to 6/- per annum.⁸¹ The outcry was immediate, especially from Africans living in the more remote regions of the country where little industry existed. But Zomba's own imperatives made it stay its course.

Zomba's pursuit of its own agenda further upset the settlers. The country's traditional labor shortages worsened as post-war inflation drove wages to levels which

planters were unwilling to pay.⁸² In 1919, the Mlanje Resident reported that "the planters are extremely short of labour."⁸³ A year later, the same officer claimed that "the position with regard to labour is becoming increasingly more difficult."⁸⁴

In these conditions, taking away labor certificates was tantamount to betrayal since Africans lost an important material incentive to work. In essence, the revision in tenant laws and the flat hut tax combined to make settlers depend on enticements rather than implicit coercion to maintain production. As the material expectations of the indigenous community vis-a-vis wages rose, the cost of obtaining labor rose to precipitously high levels.⁸⁵

The planters became even more upset as Zomba began shifting more of the tax burden directly onto the planting community. The most onerous new levy was an increase of export duties, especially on tobacco.⁸⁶ In 1919 the state collected £2,336 in export duties; in 1920 that figure rose to £47,796.⁸⁷ The administration tried to justify these heavy tolls by claiming that they would encourage the sale of commodities to experienced shippers who would pack it well, but the planters were hardly mollified.⁸⁸

The state also instituted an income tax.⁸⁹ To be sure, the income tax was hardly an excessive burden. But its implementation just as the state was increasing other duties on the unofficial community was politically insensitive. Indeed, relations between planters and the

state continued to deteriorate throughout this period. As early as January 1919, the Nyasaland Times reported that planters felt unwanted in what they considered their own territory.⁹⁰ By 1920 one planter complained that

Recent legislative efforts of Zomba are reminiscent of the doings of the King of Portugal in the sixteenth century to control the affairs of East Africa through decrees sent to the Viceroy of Goa. Both are about as much in touch with local affairs, and both cases may be expected as fruitful of results. 91

Zomba's quest for revenue had clearly widened the already broad schism between the official and unofficial communities.

Land issues also caused considerable stress between planters and the state. When the war ended, the Shire Highlands could no longer accommodate the burgeoning African population and an expanding capitalist class. As a result, the state began to restrict land alienation in the southern region of the country.

Such restrictions were serious since the war had removed many people from their homes, and numerous Europeans began seeking their fortune in Malawi.⁹² These people naturally wanted to establish their businesses in areas where there was adequate transportation and industry. In Malawi, they sought land in the southern regions of the country. But the state's actions effectively prevented them from obtaining inexpensive estates there.⁹³

Of course, the state could not restrict people from buying or leasing land from other individuals and

corporations, and real estate transactions soared in the immediate post-war period.⁹⁴ But planting concerns were not charitable institutions, and they extorted high prices from the would-be settlers. By doing so, of course, they drained away much of the capital which the new farmers needed to start operations. Moreover, much of the land sold was already exhausted by years of use.⁹⁵ So the government's land policies placed many new settlers in a tenuous economic position even as they began operations.⁹⁶

The decision to rely on private land sales also affected tenants. Newly established estates often were small parcels of large estates, but before the new owners would take possession, the tenants had to be removed.⁹⁷ As a result, many Africans were evicted from their homes. For instance, during the summer of 1920, the British Central Africa Company removed some 3000 tenants from land it planned to sell shortly.⁹⁸ Things did not improve over time either. The Blantyre Resident complained in 1921 that "the importance...of arranging for security of tenure for native tenants is beyond measure."⁹⁹ A year later, the resident in Cholo pointed out that the "constant friction between some of the European Estate owners and their tenants...is the natural result of the rapid opening up by settlers of small estates formerly comprised in estates of large area."¹⁰⁰

The state clearly had a crisis on its hands, and in its best tradition, it decided to deal with it by appointing a land commission. The administration, however,

did not wait for that body's final conclusions before it tried to ameliorate the problem in other ways such as by trying to irrigate arid areas. The governor asked various residents to comment on whether irrigation could open up more territory.¹⁰¹ But this was a quixotic effort, and the residents in Mlanje and Blantyre, the most populous districts, frankly admitted that irrigation in remote areas would not increase the amount of arable land.¹⁰²

The state also urged planters to clean up the "slovenly contracts of the past" and make agreements which would give Africans some security.¹⁰³ However, the wildly fluctuating state of wages made both Europeans and Africans leery of negotiating new pacts. For instance, Mlanje tobacco planters at one point obtained such enormous profits that they were willing to pay virtually any wage for workers. Tea planters, on the other hand, could not afford to keep up because their market was so depressed.¹⁰⁴ Therefore, tea estate owners were unwilling to negotiate new agreements since their tenants would naturally balk at earning wages lower than they could obtain nearby. Tobacco planters, on the other hand, could scarcely be expected to negotiate new pacts which would inevitably increase their labor costs.

Another problem with establishing tenant agreements involved the type of labor needed for processing estate crops. In several instances, planters lost valuable crops because the capitaos in charge of processing the produce,

especially tobacco, were negligent or incompetent.¹⁰⁵ Since skilled laborers worked for the highest bidder, many frequently left estates, leaving many planters with a shortage of skilled labor.¹⁰⁶ Filling up their estates with unskilled proletarians did little to alleviate this problem, and many planters refused tenants for fear that they would not be able to entice the workers they desperately needed.

The only real solution to the problem of overpopulation was to increase the amount of crown land available for the indigenous population. And just as the crisis reached its worst moments, a new economic development offered the state a way to obtain land in the southern region at a minimal cost as C.A. Barron's began operating in the country's Central Province. Barron's actions had momentous consequences because they changed many of the country's economic patterns and stimulated the growth of Lilongwe.

Ironically, Barron's move north was actually an admission that economic contradictions made profitable enterprise virtually impossible in the southern region.¹⁰⁷ As the situation deteriorated in the Shire Highlands, he asked for 5000 acres around Lilongwe. Smith, recognizing that this request had enormous potential to alleviate the problems of the "very congested" southern area, informed London that he was "anxious to do all in my power to develop the resources of those parts of the Protectorate

which as yet remain untouched."¹⁰⁸

But encouraging economic activity in the central region did more than open up new regions; it also allowed Smith to begin reducing land pressure by trading land in the central region for land in the southern region. By 1922, other planters, most notably Tom Partridge, showed their eagerness to share in the new bonanza by seeking to exchange land in the south for land in the center.¹⁰⁹ So the move north allowed the state to begin obtaining land it desperately needed in the south. But it would be a long time before the administration could actually implement this policy to the fullest.

The inadequacies of earlier administrations hampered this process considerably. For example, the Lands Officer warned the administration that Partridge's request was a problem because of discrepancies in some of his original deeds.¹¹⁰ In another case, the Lands Office found that an estate sold as 835 acres and registered as 114 actually occupied 721 acres.¹¹¹ Such inexactitude naturally slowed down the exchange of land and made life even more difficult for the state.

Personnel problems also hindered the state's ability to deal with land transfers adequately. The Land Office was clearly understaffed and gazetted boundary descriptions often suffered as a consequence.¹¹² More ominously, there was a serious dispute over policy between the Lands Officer and the Director of Agriculture.¹¹³ The former felt that

Nyasaland was destined to be a white man's country while the latter asserted that land should be reserved for Africans.

This kind of dissension was not confined to the land question either. The Director of Agriculture and the Governor also quarrelled about the effects of a tax on tobacco in 1920. The Agriculture Department insisted that such a tax was ill conceived because of drought conditions.¹¹⁴ But the Governor was determined to balance the books and insisted that the tax be implemented.

These quarrels did not keep the administration from pursuing its new found emphasis on African commodity production. In 1919, the Director of Agriculture began organizing a system to improve indigenous production.¹¹⁵ Although progress was slow, he still managed to begin considerable work, most notably by offering agricultural advice, at various outstations. Such emphasis on peasant production naturally did little to endear the administration to the unofficial community, especially since the Director of Agriculture freely admitted that "the younger planters...should be given more assistance than is possible at present."¹¹⁶

This kind of disregard for expatriate interests emphasized that the tide had turned against making Malawi a white man's paradise. Planters now had to struggle against a state determined to assist an indigenous population which had shown startling militancy. The whole

tenor of policy, despite the confusion in the administration, was aimed at least to address many of the problems which had sown the seeds of the Chilembwe Rebellion. The settlers were now only a cash cow which would pay for a transformation intended to eliminate them from the scene.

The need to meet indigenous ambitions at the expense of the planters became increasingly clear as indigenous society recovered from the war. Fresh occupations emerged as Africans invested money in new ventures.¹¹⁷ And those classes prospered even more as the war created unprecedented possibilities for indigenous entrepreneurs.¹¹⁸ As these elites appeared, they became increasingly articulate and organized, presenting a serious threat to the state.

African suffering also caused the state concern, especially as the post-war economic slump generated new resentment. Indigenous cotton producers became increasingly suspicious as prices tumbled after the war.¹¹⁹ Famine and disease antagonized less successful Africans, and the increase in crime and traditional dance groups showed that local communities were not fatalistically accepting the status quo.¹²⁰

Unfortunately, the recession dampened the state's new found determination to make Malawi an African colony. In 1921, international commodity prices began falling, markets began closing and the price of cotton fell over fifty

percent from the previous year.¹²¹ More ominously, by the autumn of 1921 the Director of Blantyre & East Africa reported that there were no tobacco "sales at a payable price."¹²² As "many planters had exhausted their credit at the banks," at least one expatriate claimed that the beleaguered planting community immediately needed £100,000, and the local newspaper warned that the economy was "daily becoming worse."¹²³

The inevitable outcome of this recession was not long in coming. By 1922, a businessman with twenty five years experience in the country complained that "I have never known the financial condition to be so bad as it is now."¹²⁴ The manager of the National Bank frankly stated that "I am doubtful how far a loan to planters would be of real assistance to the community."¹²⁵ Nevertheless, the state refused to concede that the economy would collapse before they had recreated colonial society, and government officials continued to insist that "apart from the result of the present famine among natives, I do not think it can be said that the financial condition is worse than it was before the war."¹²⁶

The local community could not depend on platitudes though, and as it became clear that little government assistance was forthcoming, the expatriates grew restive. Heated petitions emerged from several meetings of local Planters Associations. In at least one case the assembly actually approved a threat of rebellion before saner heads

prevailed.¹²⁷ Clearly, the state's legitimacy, at least as far as the expatriate community was concerned, virtually evaporated.

The state's determination to thwart indigenous unrest further complicated the situation as Zomba tried to maintain indigenous cotton production by giving the BCGA a monopoly in African cotton markets.¹²⁸ The Association had long coveted such an agreement, and now that the colony needed capital desperately, it did not hesitate to insist on obtaining it. Even though Zomba had conceded that "once an industry is prosperous, a monopoly should not be given but free markets opened," the administration capitulated in order to encourage indigenous cotton production.¹²⁹ This cotton concession was a damning admission that capitalism had failed in Malawi, showing that primitive accumulation must follow a new path.

This admission made transnational capital increasingly important. Without the enormous resources of foreign companies, Malawi's economy would simply collapse. But as more transnational capital moved into the country, local control of production and the state's ability to exert much influence on economic activity decreased. In essence, multinationals like ITC and BCGA increasingly became the tail that wagged the dog. Even successful local planters, like Conforzi, depended upon metropolitan partners. This development was clearly hostile to the state's position, though, since it gave economic leverage to groups who had

access to Zomba's London masters and drained profits away from the country.

More ominously, new economic crises loomed on the horizon, but other problems distracted the administration from the coming Armageddon. The state was still trying to establish its own authority and find a way to solve its own administrative crises. Economic policy, particularly as it pertained to structural questions, was at best chimeric. By the end of 1922, the state's aims had changed considerably, especially over racial issues, and a new society was slowly emerging. But its grip on the territory's political economy remained as tenuous as ever.

ENDNOTES

1. Tony Woods, "Political Autonomy and Administrative Policy in Nyasaland, 1915-1921," History Seminar, Chancellor College, March 11 1985.
2. Page's dissertation demonstrates how the war transformed Malawian society and forced a stronger administrative awareness of indigenous problems, see Page, "Malawians...".
3. The most notable example being Imperial Tobacco, which years later reported that it experimented with tenant grown tobacco because of its losses during the war, S.O.M., Rangeley Papers, R 4/1/6, "A Brief History of the Land Acquisitions of the Imperial Tobacco Company."
4. M.N.A. GOA 2/4/15, Smith to C.O., July 19 1915.
5. M.N.A. GOA 2/4/14, Hector Duff to Sir George Smith, January 16 1915.
6. M.N.A. S 1/172^I/19, A.M.D. Turnbull to Chief Secretary, February 16, 1915.
7. M.N.A. NSB 7/3/2, Monthly Report, Chiradzulu, June 1915.

8. Nyasaland Times, April 1915.
9. M.R.A., Stratton (NCAC) to Acting Chief Secretary, November 10 1914; Nyasaland Times, July 22 1915.
10. M.R.A., Acting Chief Manager to Director of Agriculture, July 15 1915.
11. M.N.A. GOA 2/4/14, Smith to Chief Judge, Blantyre, June 1915.
12. Nyasaland Times, October 26 1916.
13. M.N.A. NSB 7/3/2, Wade to Chief Secretary, January 26 1916.
14. Page, "Malawians," 42.
15. Administration officers eventually adopted tactics reminiscent of press gangs. See Page, "Malawians," 68-72.
16. Interview, Dunken Mtengule, Gelemu village, T.A. Chikowi, Zomba, July 19 1985; interview, Stephen Saidi Kapile, Machirika village, July 11 1985.
17. Interview, Whiskey Harry Milonde, Milonde village, July 2 1985; interview, Maliro, Panje village, July 4 1985. It is worth pointing out that at least some chiefs suffered from popular indignation. Page points out that "in at least one case a headman's house was burned in protest," Page, "Malawians," 55.
18. M.N.A. NSB 7/3/2, Wade to Chief Secretary, January 28 1916.
19. Once again, this hypothesis needs more work before it can be substantiated. Page hints that in some villages marginal members were sacrificed to the military. Indeed, Page points out that "protesters were forced, by the very chiefs and headmen they opposed, to leave their villages, often finding themselves sent to war precisely because of their protests," Page, "Malawians," 55.
20. M.N.A. NSB 7/3/3, Monthly Report, Chiradzulu, May 1918.
21. M.N.A. NSB 7/3/3, Wallace Ross to Wade, August 1 1918.
22. Especially as the continued unpopularity of recruitment eroded the influence of the new paramounts, making it imperative to remove those individuals who might lead such dissension, Page, "Malawians," 72.

23. Page, "Malawians," 73-77.
24. Page, "Malawians," 76-78.
25. Page, "Malawians," 156.
26. Page, "Malawians," 170-173, 178.
27. Page, "Malawians," 183-190.
28. M.R.A., General Manager's Circular, September 24, 1917.
29. M.N.A. S 1/1332/19, Resident, Blantyre to Chief Secretary, May 13 1915.
30. M.N.A. NSB 7/3/3, Monthly Report, Chiradzulu, May 1917. A year later, the same resident claimed that in his district "wages are high." M.N.A. NSB 7/3/3, Monthly Report, July 1918.
31. M.N.A. NSB 7/3/3, Annual Report, Chiradzulu, 1917-18.
32. M.N.A. BA 1/2/2, Blantyre Court Record, Paulo vs. Tom, November 17 1917.
33. Once again bringing up the issue of differentiation within the indigenous community.
34. Giving, for instance, lower status individuals and groups like the Lowwe unprecedented chances to prosper. In this context, it is worth noting that the Chiradzulu Resident cited in note 30 specifically mentioned that the discharged troops resented "Anguru" workers earning high wages.
35. M.N.A. GOA 2/4/15, "Report of the Commission," Supplement to the Nyasaland Gazette, January 31 1916.
36. M.N.A. S 1/172^I/19, Memorandum by Smith, April 9 1916.
37. M.N.A. S 1/172^{II}/19, Smith to C.O., December 31 1917.
38. Especially because both settlers and administration officials had protested its passage, see M.N.A. S 1/172^I/19, Memorandum by Attorney General, [n.d.]; and Nyasaland Times, November 30 1916; cutting enclosed in M.N.A. S 1/172^I/19.
39. Page, "Malawians," 67.
40. M.N.A. S 1/172^I/19, Hynde to Governor Smith, January 25 1917.

41. Nyasaland Times, May 31 1917.
42. Nyasaland Times, July 5 1917.
43. M.N.A. S 1/172^{II}/19, Governor's Circular, No. 1, 1918, January 11 1918.
44. M.N.A. S 1/172^{II}/19, Governor's Circular, No. 6, 1918, August 18 1918.
45. M.N.A. A 1/2/1, "Notes on Cotton," by Director of Agriculture, October 27 1917.
46. M.N.A. A 3/2/67, Memorandum by McCall, December 27 1917.
47. M.N.A. A 3/2/67, Memorandum on the Agricultural Development of Nyasaland by McCall, March 9 1917.
48. M.N.A. NSB 7/3/4, Monthly Report, Chiradzulu, November 1919; Monthly Report, Chiradzulu, December 1919; Annual Report, 1919-1920; S 1/1040/19, Monthly Report Mlanje, December 1919; S 1/334/19, Director of Agriculture to Director of Public Works, February 28 1919.
49. M.N.A. A 1/2/1, Hutton to C.O. May 14 1917. The prescience of these sentiments were demonstrated during the next season when district officers had to buy foodstuffs in order to feed their subjects, see for example M.N.A. NSB 7/3/3, Monthly Report, Chiradzulu, January 1918.
50. M.N.A. NSB 7/3/3, Monthly Report, Chiradzulu, December 1917. This issue once again demonstrates the question of differentiation since it apparently does not make sense for Malawians to brew beer while they are starving, unless of course some are making money brewing and do not really care about the others starving. In essence, if the African community was a monolithic entity as so much of the literature suggests, beer brewing would be illogical. Its presence suggests that it was not as unified as later commentators would wish to make it.
51. M.N.A. S 1/1332/19, Chief Secretary to Resident, Blantyre, August 16, 1915.
52. M.N.A. NSB 7/3/3, Monthly Report, Chiradzulu, July 1916.
53. M.N.A. S 1/83/19, Eleventh Annual Report, British Cotton Growers Association, December 31 1915.

54. M.N.A. S 1/83/19 Hutton to Governor Smith, February 22 1916.
55. M.N.A. A 1/2/1, Hutton to C.O., May 14 1917.
56. M.N.A. A 1/2/1, Hutton to Governor Smith, May 14 1917.
57. M.N.A. A 1/2/1, Hutton to McCall, May 14 1917.
58. M.N.A. A 1/2/1, "Notes on Cotton," by the Director of Agriculture, October 27 1917.
59. M.N.A. NSB 7/3/3, Wade to Ross, October 24 1918. The planter in question was Mr. Sabbatini, who become very important during the 1920s.
60. M.N.A. NSB 7/3/3, Monthly Report, Chiradzulu, January 1919.
61. M.N.A. NSB 7/3/3, Annual Report, Chiradzulu, 1918-1919.
62. One of the interesting questions which remain unresolved by this thesis is the demarcation between military and civil authorities during the war. For instance, it is interesting to wonder how many of the abuses Page discusses were actually a consequence of askaris' overenthusiasm rather than administrators' desires. In this context, it is worth remembering that the administration had experienced problems with military units on other occasions. See for instance Sean Morrow, "'War Came From the Boma': Military and Police Disturbances in Blantyre, 1902" History Seminar, Chancellor College, April 29 1986.
63. M.N.A. S 2/5/19, F.J. Storrs (Resident, Karonga) to Acting Governor Hector Duff, January 1 1919.
64. M.N.A. S 2/5/19, Storrs to Resident, Chiromo, January 11 1919.
65. Page, "Malawians," 237.
66. M.N.A. COM 6/2/1, Chilembwe Commission Inquiry, Oral Evidence of J.J. Ferriera, D.R.C.M. Mkonia, June 21 1915.
67. M.N.A. S 1/937/29, Tribal History..., by O'Brien.
68. Until the war, cohabitation was fairly frequent, although colonial administrators refused to marry Africans and Europeans. For instance, R.H. Hynde, the Nyasaland Times' fiery editor, was never mentioned in his family because of his cohabitation with an African

mistress, Interview, A.F. Stark, Lauderdale Estate, Mlanje, February 28 1986. Nor was he an exception, Myambo mentions numerous planters who had illegitimate offspring with indigenous women. See Myambo, "The Shire...", 73. Zomba was never happy about these relationships and beginning in 1909 issued edicts condemning it. See M.N.A. S 2/62/19. The rise of prostitution during the war may have given impetus to the state's renewed efforts during this period, although the world's oldest profession remains as underresearched as other areas of Malawian historiography.

69. M.N.A. NS 1/35/3, Secretary of Native Affairs to Father Superior, Roman Catholic Mission, Beira September 3 1917.
70. M.N.A. S 1/152/19, Wm. Wheeler (Acting Chief Secretary) to Judge of the High Court, Blantyre, February 4 1919.
71. M.N.A. S 1/152/19, Minute by Smith June 18 1919. Until 1920, police had been assigned to district bomas and been directed by the harried and overworked residents. What the state sought now was a professional centralized force run by a trained inspector. For more on Malawi's colonial police, see John McCracken, "Coercion and Control in Nyasaland: Aspects of the History of a Colonial Police Force," Journal of African History, 27, 1 (1986). Ironically, McCracken's article demonstrates that even the professionalized police force which emerged committed abuses which undermined the government's legitimacy.
72. M.N.A. S 1/152/19, Minutes of Residents' Conference, Zomba, December 8 and 9 1913.
73. M.N.A. S 1/368/20, Acting Chief Secretary to Meredith Sanderson [n.d.]. This letter was in response to Sanderson to Chief Secretary, April 4 1920.
74. M.N.A. S 1/752/19, Acting Governor Duff to Milner, November 18 1918.
75. M.N.A. S 1/752/19, Interim Report of the Jackson Committee on Land Occupation, October 25 1920; Governor to C.O., February 21 1921.
76. M.N.A. S 1/752/19, London to Governor, April 22 1921.
77. Although the crime wave mentioned below ultimately allowed Zomba to convince Whitehall of the wisdom of establishing this force, and by 1922 it was in place, albeit in a weakened manner, McCracken, "Coercion

and Control....," 128-129.

78. M.N.A. S 1/1347/19, Secretary, Nyasaland Civil Servants Association to Acting Chief Secretary, June 19 1919; Smith to C.O., June 23 1919.
79. M.N.A. S 1/1365/19, Smith to C.O., August 18 1919.
80. M.N.A. S 1/1365/19, extract from "Report...". Although it was clear that it would hurt planters since it would remove an important incentive for Africans to work on estates. Zomba expressed its attitude when officers pointed out that "the principle underlaying the system of reduction for work done was the encouragement of industries in their infancy, and it was not then desired to continue the scheme after an industry was sufficiently well established," Rhodes House Library, Mss. Afr s. 938, "History of the Hut Tax."
81. M.N.A. S 1/1365/19, Resident, Ncheu to Chief Secretary, March 17 1920. Zomba used the inflation which was besetting the country as its excuse for making this increase even though it conceded that the new levy contributed to the upward price spiral.
82. Woods, "Malawi's Missing Peasantry," 3. For more on the post-war inflation, see Martin Chanock, "The political economy of independent agriculture in colonial Malawi: The Great War to the Great Depression," (Malawi Journal of Social Science, 1 (1972), 122; and Page, "Malawians," 224-226.
83. M.N.A. S 1/1040/19, Monthly Report, Mlanje, June 1919. Page argues that a contributing factor to the labor shortage was a feeling within the indigenous community that they did not want to serve Europeans anymore after the war, Page, "Malawians," 231.
84. M.N.A. S 1/1040/19, Annual Report, Mlanje 1919-20.
85. Indeed, the situation got so bad that the Nyasaland Times claimed that estate laborers had become "the knights of the Industrial world in Nyasaland," Nyasaland Times, August 27 1919.
86. M.N.A. A 3/2/278, Minute by Sir George Smith, February 26 1920.
87. M.N.A. COM 2/9, Bell Commission, "A Historical Note on the System of Taxation...".
88. M.N.A. S 1/104/21, Chief Secretary to Secretary,

N.C.A.C., November 11 1920; A 3/2/278, "Memorandum on the Tobacco Tax," by the Director of Agriculture, February 28 1920. Packing tobacco for shipment to the United Kingdom was a tricky business, and many planters lost money because their bales had been packed incorrectly. Indeed, the one advantage of selling to a big combine like Imperial, Conforzi or A.J. Storey was their expertise in preparing the tobacco for shipment home. One reason why Zomba would be interested in ensuring that consignments arrived in Britain in good shape was that poor shipments often dropped the price of local leaf for months afterwards.

89. M.N.A. COM 2/9, Bell Commission, "A Historical Note...".
90. Nyasaland Times, January 9 1919.
91. Nyasaland Times, February 19 1920,. Incredibly the paper's editor claimed that he had actually toned down this letter from L.S. Norman.
92. M.N.A. LAN 1/8/14, Lands Officer to Acting Chief Secretary, May 3 1920. Myambo describes the British Central Africa Company's transactions in detail, although he points out that the company did not recruit as many ex-officers as it wanted, obtaining only 40 rather than the 60 they desired, Myambo, "The Shire....," 67.
93. M.N.A. S 1/403/20, Smith to C.O., June 21 1920.
94. A detailed description of land transactions remains to be done in Malawi, but even a preliminary assessment of the records in the Land Office shows that the real estate business was booming after the war.
95. M.N.A. COM 7/2/2/1, Memorandum Prepared by the Agricultural Department.
96. Indeed, government policy was so harsh that at least one settler bitterly complained that "all you could get from Government was a D.B.S. passage," the D.B.S. referring to the hated Distressed British Subject, see J.E.R. Emtage, "Reminiscences," Society of Malawi Journal, 37 (1984), 18.
97. M.N.A. S 1/835/20, British Central Africa Company to Resident, Blantyre, July 27 1920, enclosed in Resident, Blantyre to Acting Chief Secretary, July 27 1920.
98. M.N.A. S 1/835/20, Resident, Blantyre to Chief

Secretary, August 23 1920.

99. M.N.A. S 1/835/20, Resident, Blantyre to Chief Secretary, March 13 1921.
100. M.N.A. NSE 5/1/1, Annual Report, Cholo 1922-23.
101. M.N.A. S 1/95/21, Chief Secretary to Residents, Fort Johnston, Ncheu, Neno, Blantyre and Mlanje, March 24 1921.
102. M.N.A. S 1/95/21, Resident, Mlanje to Chief Secretary, April 1 1921; Resident, Blantyre to Chief Secretary, April 9 1921.
103. M.N.A. S 1/1110/22, Annual Report, Southern Province, 1921-22.
104. M.N.A. S 1/1040/19, Monthly Report, Mlanje, July 1919.
105. M.N.A. BE 1/3/1, Cholo Sub-District Court Records, #70 Rex (J.C.R. Richardson) vs Wilson & Joseph, April 10 1922; #85 Rex (W.J. Pillans) vs Jalesi, May 15 1922.
106. M.N.A. S 1/509/20, Monthly Report, Mlanje, November 1920.
107. Especially since every time an enterprising planter marked off land which he wanted to buy or lease, competitors swooped in and bought or leased it instead. See S.O.M., Rangeley Papers, R 1/3/6, "Early Days in the Tobacco Industry of Nyasaland," by Marjorie Widdas.
108. M.N.A. S 1/1042/20, C.A. Barron (for Imperial Tobacco Company) to Chief Secretary, October 28 1920.
109. M.N.A. S 1/2103/21, Partridge to Lands Office, January 9 1920.
110. M.N.A. S 1/2103/21, Lands Officer to Chief Secretary, January 16 1922.
111. M.N.A. S 1/1025/21, Lands Officer to Chief Secretary, August 4 1921.
112. M.N.A. LAN 1/13/26B Acting Chief Secretary to Lands Officer, August 30 1920; Lands Officer to Acting Chief Secretary, September 17 1920.
113. M.N.A. LAN 1/8/14, Lands Officer to Acting Chief Secretary, May 3 1920.

114. M.N.A. A 3/2/278, Memorandum on Tobacco Tax by Director of Agriculture, February 28 1920; Memo by Smith (in Response to British Central Africa Company to C.O., March 26 1920) [n.d.].
115. M.N.A. A 3/2/57, Agriculturist to Acting Director of Agriculture, February 2 1919.
116. M.N.A. A 3/2/276, Director of Agriculture to Chief Secretary, April 26 1924.
117. One of the more interesting occupations was that of the khonde tailor which court records in Blantyre and Chiradzulu indicate was a booming trade by the early 1920s. Beer brewing and chikasu manufacturing also appeared to be growing professions in the war's aftermath. Once again, we await more work on these occupations being done by the country's historians.
118. Like the lake-side fishers who sold their produce to soldiers in 1914-1915 and expanded their operations during the war's latter stages. See John McCracken, "Fishing and the Colonial Economy: the Case of Malawi," Journal of African History, 28, 3 (1987), 420.
119. Chanock points out that many Africans felt cheated by fluctuating cotton prices after the war, Chanock, "The political economy," 116. For more on price changes, see note 121 below.
120. Crime was a serious problem after the war, and one of the reasons for the establishment of the police force. Years later, a former police official pointed out that "by the end of 1920, the country was in the grip of a wave of crime , particularly theft and burglary." He added that after the Chilembwe Rebellion, Zomba realized that district officers had too many police responsibilities and tried to ease their burden by establishing a police force.
121. Falling from 26.32 in 1919-20 to 12.93 in 1920-21, M.N.A. A 3/2/80, Cotton Prices, 1915/16-1925/26.
122. M.N.A. A 3/2/258, Tait Bowie (for Blantyre & East Africa) to Director of Agriculture, November 21 1921.
123. M.N.A. A 3/2/35, Summary of Views Expressed/ Planters Meeting at Blantyre, April 21 1921; Nyasaland Times, February 28 1921.
124. M.N.A. COM 1/1, 1922 Finance Commission, Oral Evidence of David McCash, Stores Superintendent of the African

Lakes Company.

125. M.N.A. COM 1/1, 1922 Finance Commission, Oral Evidence of H.S. MacKintosh, Manager of the National Bank.
126. M.N.A. COM 1/1, 1922 Finance Commission, Oral Evidence of E.F. Colville, Commissioner of the Southern Province. Of course, it is worth remembering that the pre-war period was an era of hardship, so Colville may not have been prevaricating, but he was certainly misleading the commissioners.
127. In October 1921, the newly formed Cholo Planters Association noted that they were "prepared to refuse to pay income tax on their 1920 incomes." Shortly thereafter, the Chamber of Commerce noted that "we have no confidence" in the Legislative Council, M.N.A. NY 3/2/3, Minutes of the Nyasaland Chamber of Agriculture and Commerce, October 18 1921 and October 27 1921. The Cholo position was just a forewarning of the militancy that district's planters would show throughout the 1920s.
128. M.N.A. S 1/1702/21, Governor to C.O., May 15 1922; C.O. to Governor, November 15 1922.
129. M.N.A. S 1/1702/21, Director of Agriculture to Chief Secretary, March 8 1923; Extract from Conference, October 7 1925.

Chapter Seven
Zomba's Last Chance;
State and Capital in the 1920s, 1922-1929

The 1920s presented Zomba with a golden opportunity. British colonialism reached an apogee as the Empire's subjects developed closer ties with the home isles. Better links in turn led to a greater metropolitan awareness of the colonies' needs and ambitions.¹ These developments gave colonial administrations like Malawi's a chance to stimulate primitive accumulation which would not occur again until after the Great Depression and the Second World War.

Zomba faced a number of daunting obstacles before it could take advantage of this climate though. The post-war recession left a lingering legacy which weakened the economy. Moreover, the state's inability to fulfill its own imperatives continued to distract the administration from economic policy.

The administration continued to thwart primitive accumulation in a number of important ways. Its agreement with the British Cotton Growers Association kept many Malawians impoverished and hindered the expansion of capitalism. The state also failed to direct the expansion of tobacco production in a positive way, further hurting the economy.

For a brief period, it appeared that the country's resilient producers would overcome the administration's policies. Tobacco boomed in the mid-1920s and created

enormous new opportunities for both expatriate and indigenous subjects. The Depression's effects arrived early, though, and tobacco's promise failed when that commodity's prices tumbled in 1927.

The collapse of the tobacco market ended all hope for an economic miracle. The state belatedly tried to help the estate sectors and retain the decade's meager gains. However, its efforts were typically disjointed and failed to stop the collapse.

The state also failed to resolve its own problems. Although reform sought to expand Zomba's tenuous authority, its grip on the indigenous population continued to slip throughout the 1920s. Not only did primitive accumulation form new classes, but many Africans found increasingly articulate ways to voice grievances made more acute by material frustration.

Thus, the 1920s, despite their enormous promise, ultimately became just another lost decade for Malawi. The structural flaws generated by maladministration had crippled the economy and hindered primitive accumulation. The net effect was that the country became an impoverished imperial slum.

Zomba's primary responsibility was to resolve the internal problems still bedeviling the administration. For instance, in 1923, the Nyasaland Civil Servants Association, stung by a lack of support among its brethren,

adopted a new militancy.² Nor were they alone; in May a "Humble Petition from Native Civil Servants" complained bitterly about the need for better working conditions.³ The state was aware that many of these petitions merited consideration, but its slender resources kept it from acting upon them.⁴

The result was continued inefficiency. Tom Partridge, one of the country's leading planters, eventually complained that "we are not getting as good men as we ought to get-there is not inducement. We lose our young men simply because the salaries are higher elsewhere."⁵ Ironically, Partridge suggested that Zomba could save the revenue needed for higher salaries "by utilising the African native to a greater extent that [sic] we do at present."⁶ The administration, however, had no intention of hiring more Africans and low salaries eroded the state's ability to implement reforms.

Zomba was not completely insensitive to its officers' complaints though, and it tried to ameliorate some of the complaints by establishing provincial administration. This reform sought "closer inspection and control of District Residents and [their] better coordination, more particularly in native affairs."⁷ In theory, the administration would achieve these goals by appointing provincial commissioners who could supervise their district residents more closely than the colony's secretariat could.⁸

But like so many of Zomba's plans, this one had numerous problems. The first was determining the provincial boundaries. By 1925, it was apparent that the Southern Province was simply too large and diverse for one provincial commissioner, and a new province was established in Zomba itself. Moreover, while the system facilitated the closer supervision of district officers, it did little to relieve their work load.⁹

More importantly, the provincial system did not prevent Zomba from passing laws which worked against efficient district administration. For instance, in 1928, the Cholo Resident complained about the Chief Veterinarian's decision to ban meat imports from Mozambique.¹⁰ Such an action threatened to reduce the district's already slender food reserves and antagonize the district's restless population.¹¹ Thus, while provincial reform looked promising, it became increasingly unclear whether the system would actually benefit the country.

The after shocks of the post-war depression also complicated the administration's tasks, especially in the Southern Province. By the end of 1923, the Shire Highlands Railway stopped accepting checks from planters without a letter of reference from the bank from which their funds were being drawn.¹² Since many settlers had to pay for the shipment of their produce to metropolitan markets, this prohibition effectively ensured that many could not sell their crops. The General Manager of the railway defended

this action by pointing out that "I might mention that the public in general owe us many hundreds of pounds which we cannot recover, all due to returned cheques."¹³ And smaller concerns were not the only people affected; by 1924, the British Central Africa Company, beset by losses incurred after the war, finally gave up and declared itself bankrupt.¹⁴

The economic crisis forced many concerns to seek capital by selling land. For instance, the British Central Africa Company virtually mortgaged all its property in late 1922, and it sold the rest to prospective Cholo planters throughout 1923.¹⁵ These sales soon increased the number of indigenous evictions since many of these estates were smaller than the older holdings.¹⁶ New owners began throwing large numbers of Africans off land in order to increase their cultivable holdings.¹⁷ The state recognized that these evictions were a "serious matter," but it could not refute the British Central Africa Company's assertions that the forced removals were legal since few inhabitants had lived on company land when Sharrer originally "bought" it.¹⁸

The evictions worried Zomba because they made local administration more difficult. As more people wandered around the country searching for shelter, it became harder to establish villages in which the District Administration Natives Ordinances could be implemented.¹⁹ Without these villages, the state could not appoint the headmen needed to

run the system.²⁰ The Southern Province Commissioner bitterly complained that the "continuous ebb and flow of natives... increases greatly to the difficulties of such questions as...the control of villages."²¹

One way in which the state hoped to relieve rural upheaval was the cotton scheme. Throughout this period, the administration tried to encourage prolonged tenure by advising Africans to plant cotton. J.K.F. Coutanche, the Cholo Resident, noted that the "government was desirous of encouraging the growing of cotton by natives to the fullest possible extent...in Cholo District."²² A short time later, he added that "during [my] visit to the plain [I] took every opportunity of emphasizing that government was very anxious to encourage cotton growing."²³

The state encouraged this practice because it believed its agreement with the British Cotton Growers Association had solved potential problems with cotton markets. Several years later, the Director of Agriculture pointed out that if a peasant producer "does not sell [his crop] at a price which suits him he is extremely disgruntled and thinks the government has not played the game by him."²⁴ Since the cotton monopoly fixed prices, Zomba assumed that Cotton Growers' concession would eliminate this kind of indigenous discontent.

Zomba also sought to increase revenue while quashing discontent. The state stood to profit from cotton cultivation because it received fifty percent of any

profits the Cotton Growers Association made. So the more cotton grown, the greater the potential revenue. Indeed, by 1924, the agreement earned the administration £5576/4/7.²⁵

Unfortunately, the cotton scheme had devastating effects on the country. The Cotton Growers Association kept prices "at low and relatively stable levels" throughout the 1920s.²⁶ As a result, African cotton producers could not accumulate much capital, and many lived a precarious existence.²⁷ The administration indirectly admitted to the cotton scheme's failure when E.J. Wortley, the director of Agriculture, confessed that "we are very puzzled with what the natives do with their money."²⁸ Moreover, the Association could not continue to offer low prices, and by the late 1920s rural unrest was emerging in cotton producing areas.²⁹

The state was not entirely unsuccessful in its attempts to win over its subjects' hearts. Throughout 1923, Zomba pushed for the establishment of rural dispensaries in Crown Lands.³⁰ District officers "endeavoured at every meeting of headmen to point out that the establishment of these dispensaries...is solely for the benefit of the native population."³¹ The Chief Secretary also reminded the provincial commissioners that "the Governor attaches much importance to this innovation, and trusts that all possible steps will be taken to make them as useful to and popular with the native community as their necessarily limited equipment permits."³²

There is little question that the state achieved its goal with these primitive health centers. The Provincial Commissioner of the Southern Province reported that "the dispensaries have been universally successful and it is a matter for congratulation that Government is able to point to a very tangible proof of its interest in the welfare of the people."³³ At least one resident reinforced this point by pointing out that "institution of rural dispensaries...has a marked effect on the native mind."³⁴

The state recognized that it needed to do more than provide basic health care for the indigenous population. It also needed to control their minds as well. Therefore, Zomba began censoring indigenous mail in order to "prevent the circulation of seditious pamphlets and papers."³⁵ Although the secretariat struggled to find legal bases for this action, the practice was established and implemented throughout the twenties.³⁶ Nor did the state stop with mail; it also insisted that films be carefully screened.³⁷

Zomba's desire to win over its subjects' hearts and minds became imperative as Native Associations emerged and matured, giving Africans a vehicle through which they could articulate their discontent. By 1923, associations existed in Southern Nyasaland, Mombera, West Nyasa the Central Province and North Nyasa.³⁸

These groups were not content with passively accepting the status quo. The charter of the Southern Nyasaland Native Association pointedly mentioned that it sought not

only "to assist the government in every way, especially by keeping it informed of Native public opinion" but also "to assist the Native by representing him in all political matters, [and] by keeping him informed of and explaining the objects of legislation-both new and already in force."³⁹ The Zomba Committee of the Northern Province Native Association later strengthened these sentiments by claiming that "we want to be given the chance which some Colonies and Protectorates have got...We want to be given facilities for development near our own homes, given markets with good prices for [our] crops."⁴⁰

The administration accepted these groups with remarkable grace. After the formation of the Southern Province Native Association, the Chief Secretary informed its members that "His Excellency [the Governor] welcomes the institution of such bodies...as he has no doubt of the value of organisations designed to assist the Government in giving information as to the opinions and needs of the Native community."⁴¹ The state clearly wanted to make sure that it kept abreast of indigenous feeling and remained aware of African grievances. For example, in 1926, the Chief Secretary notified the Provincial Commissioner of the Central Province that while Native Associations "should be accorded definite recognition," they also "should invariably furnish the resident with a copy of the minutes of meetings, and it is preferable that they should acquaint him beforehand of an intended meeting so that when

expedient he may be able to attend."⁴² In short, the state wanted to keep a tight rein on these new associations.⁴³

Zomba also wanted to do more than merely watch the emerging African associations; it also wanted to preempt them if possible. To this end, the state attempted to strengthen the District Native Administration. By doing so, the administration frankly admitted the role the Native Associations played in the state's determination to revive a flagging indirect rule:

Let us attempt to understand the motives which prompt the formation of Native Associations which are to be found in various parts of the country. A certain few, so called educated natives, find that they have no recognised authority through which they can make recommendations to the Government and so they organised themselves with this end in view. I think they are good and excellent safety valves for grievances which if fostered without outlet might lead to seditious thought...however, they are a counter attraction for the Native Administration Authorities, whereas if that authority were properly constituted, they could be made to co-operate with it for the mutual benefit of Government and the masses. At the present time they do not represent public opinion but only the opinion of what they consider a superior few.⁴⁴

What went unsaid, of course, was that the state feared that these "certain few...educated" Africans would increase their sway over their brethren unless Zomba established an alternative social structure through the invention of neo-traditional societies.

Coopting the new Native Associations was not the only reason for revising the District Administration Natives Ordinance. By 1924, it had become obvious that traditional authority was failing. As his career in Zomba wound down,

Governor Smith complained that "chiefs and headmen have no longer...the power and influence they previously wielded."⁴⁵ Several months later, his successor added that indigenous authorities must be strengthened so that the state could implement a "system of native government through the natives themselves."⁴⁶

The reasons for this absence of traditional authority remained unchanged. The wanton understaffing of the various districts still left too much work for African chiefs to do while the state's chronic poverty kept them from receiving enough money. One provincial commissioner sardonically commented that "the list of duties to be performed appears to be somewhat elaborate taking into consideration the purely nominal subsidy which they receive from Government."⁴⁷ Many headmen consequently shirked their responsibilities. For example, the Provincial Commissioner for the Southern Province complained that "headmen appear lethargic and either unwilling or unable to exercise any beneficial control over their people."⁴⁸

Zomba's continuing inability to establish "traditional" authority led to the passage of a new District Administration Natives Ordinance in 1924.⁴⁹ Like much of Zomba's legislation, the differences between this law and its predecessor in 1912 are confusing and unclear.⁵⁰ At least one source claims that the ordinance was the same as Standing Order 118 of the 1914 Resident's Handbook.⁵¹ Nevertheless, the new ordinance apparently

aimed to increase the judicial power of indigenous authorities, include more educated into traditional councils, gain greater control of internal population movements and provide greater penalties for neglect of duties.⁵²

The administration's typical shortsightedness torpedoed the legislation before it even had a chance to be implemented fully. Residents complained that it was hard to establish traditional authorities if the government could not furnish more funding for the program. The Resident at Fort Manning complained about not having enough money for chiefs' presents and noted that this state of affairs "is bad for prestige."⁵³ His Provincial Commissioner supported his assertions by reminding the Chief Secretary that "many of the headmen get less than a census clerk and bricklayer...[and] village headmen are in a worse position as a large number who should get something for good work now get nothing."⁵⁴ But Zomba, hamstrung by a lack of finances, refused to increase fiscal support for the establishment of indigenous authority.⁵⁵ In this context, it is hardly surprising that many chiefs were not diligent about fulfilling their responsibilities. Nor did the situation improve over time. Indeed, by the early thirties, the country's high court reported an increase in fines for neglect of duties.⁵⁶

Zomba was not inactive as its dreams of establishing indigenous authority turned into a nightmare. The

administration tried to incorporate the growing class of educated Africans into the traditional structure by expanding the role and membership of district councils. These bodies consisted of Africans responsible for meeting with district officers and working out any possible grievances. The state hoped that the inclusion of educated Africans would not only make indirect rule "work better" but also "enable the more progressive ideas of the educated to be carried out."⁵⁷

The councils were not very successful though.⁵⁸ In 1927, the Central Province Commissioner bitterly complained that "I have met all the councils and not one of them seems to me to be the slightest use."⁵⁹ Zomba again stressed "that in the constitution of such councils the claims of a certain proportion of natives, other than the headmen, who have shown an intelligent desire to participate in public affairs should be duly recognised."⁶⁰ But little changed, and in 1928, the Cholo Resident complained that "I am particularly struck by the absence here of any proper organization in Native Affairs such as is given by the District Administration Natives Ordinance."⁶¹

Part of the problem apparently stemmed from the advisory nature of the district councils. The Provincial Commissioner of Zomba Province admitted that residents still issued orders to their districts' councils, thereby destroying the prestige of that body and thwarting their desires.⁶² Thus, despite new plans, effective district

administration was still a long way off.

Part of Zomba's problem was the refusal of the settlers to cooperate with the establishment of indirect rule.⁶³ The administration had early recognized that the extensive land alienation in the country, especially the southern regions, made it imperative that planters cooperate in the appointment of chiefs and headmen. Provincial commissioners tried to convince the settlers that they should work with the administration, pointing out that it was "not the intention of the Government to force obnoxious headmen upon them or interfere in anyway with the normal working of their estate."⁶⁴ But the settlers, already unhappy about the government's highhandedness, refused to participate in the creation of traditional authority on their estates. In January 1924, the Chamber of Commerce and Agriculture, the unofficial body most sympathetic to the state, registered strong disapproval of the proposed bill.⁶⁵ Nor was this opinion an aberration. As early as 1922, several local Planters Associations had made it known that they would not accept any revision of the District Administration (Native) Ordinance.⁶⁶

The unofficial community's distaste for the administration stimulated much of this resistance. By 1924, the animosity between state and settlers had reached unprecedented levels, in large part because of Zomba's decisions. Settlers were upset about the cotton monopoly, especially since government advisers claimed that "it does

not appear that cotton will do well if grown on large acreages...[as] the whites were doing."⁶⁷ Settlers were also upset about the rural dispensaries established in 1923 and claimed that Africans were "getting more advantages every year."⁶⁸ So when they got an opportunity to block administrative efforts, the planters were undoubtedly more than happy to take it.

The settlers had rare opportunity to tweak the state because of continued capitalist fractionalization.⁶⁹ Expatriate divisions were nothing new of course; they had hobbled settlers on at least two previous occasions. But by 1923, unprecedented divisions were appearing within the unofficial community. In February 1923, the Mlanje Planters Association vehemently complained about the Nyasaland Chamber of Commerce and Agriculture's apparent disregard of their interests.⁷⁰ By mid-summer, the Chamber's "lack of consideration" caused the South Nyasa Planters Association to withdraw from the organization.⁷¹ Other groups soon followed; in February 1925 the Cholo Planters Association left, and in January 1926 the Mwanza Planters Association quit.⁷²

The dissolution of the Chamber was no surprise. As early as 1923, the territory's newspaper pointed out that the small planter's "only hope is in intelligent co-operation, for in these days of combines and great aggregations of capital it is only by co-operation that people will be able to get even an approximate share of the

wealth they produce."⁷³ By 1926, even the administration recognized that the small planter "has no one to protect his interests."⁷⁴ Leaders of the Chamber admitted that "the District members were not always able to attend the Committee meetings and were not conversant with the subjects" being discussed.⁷⁵ As a result, the disaffected associations formed a Convention of Associates in October 1925 and asked the "Government to accord recognition to & consult the new body on all matters pertaining to the welfare of agriculture generally."⁷⁶

The formation of such an organization was disastrous, and experienced settlers called for unity. For example, R.H. Hynde lamented the fragmentation of the settler community and argued that "there is one ground for pessimism as regards the Europeans of this country, and that is their total lack of co-operation, which is probably inherent in the nature of the people who come to a country such as this."⁷⁷

Zomba made the situation even worse by encouraging greater disunity within the expatriate community. After the Planters Association complained about not being included in government deliberations, the Chief Secretary told its officers "that in the opinion of the Government, it would be advantageous if one body representing planting interests could be recognized or, failing that, if a standing joint committee of your Association and the Chamber could be set up which could authoritatively present to Government the

views not only of both these bodies but of all planting Associations in the Protectorate."⁷⁸ But unifying the organizations was an onerous task complicated by the machinations of Hynde and his newspaper.⁷⁹ By November 1926, Timcke, the leader of the renegade planters, complained that "'I am not very enthusiastic re the 'one body' stunt, it is just a wheeze of Government to play off the Chamber against the NPA."⁸⁰ Ultimately, the dissension among the Europeans would reap a devastating harvest both for the settlers and for Malawi.

But it did not appear to be too serious a problem at the time because of the tremendous economic recovery occurring in the country. New schemes, like the Sabbatini-Tennett plan for building a synthetic ammonia plant, emerged and planters finally began to earn some profits.⁸¹ At the heart of this prosperity was the emergence of tobacco. This crop, first undertaken seriously after the war, had finally arrived by the mid 1920s.⁸² By 1927, Limbe not only had "the largest [tobacco] factory...outside America," but Malawian planters actually exported at least fourteen million pounds of tobacco.⁸³

The expansion of tobacco cultivation also strengthened the articulation between Great Britain and Malawi's economy. Many settlers found that their best prospects lay in working in partnership with metropolitan brokers. I.M. Conforzi and J. Tennett went into partnership with Clagett, Brachi & Co., a tobacco brokerage in London, while A.J.

Storey established a London office in Mitre Square.⁸⁴ These offices not only gave Malawi's producers greater access to metropolitan markets, but it also gave them unprecedented access to the British public.⁸⁵ This closer articulation was very positive, of course, since it reinforced the country's position in metropolitan markets and thus strengthened commodity production.

Tobacco cultivation also created problems by strengthening multinationals' position in the territory. By far the most important character in the expansion of tobacco cultivation was the Imperial Tobacco Company. It was this corporation which was largely responsible for the extensive cultivation of the green leaf in Malawi. And its company officers grew rich as they speculated in land during the 1920s, adding to the country's wealth by skimming funds away from the company and expanding the territory's capitalist class.⁸⁶

The company's biggest contribution to Malawi was the enormous extension of indigenous cultivation which it sponsored. Having Africans grow tobacco was not an entirely new idea of course. Imperial tobacco had bought leaf from African planters before the war, and continued to do so afterwards. In 1920, the company bought some £1383/15/6 worth of tobacco from twenty four Africans, including a spectacular £394/18/5 from Hugh Mataka.⁸⁷ By 1923, the Provincial Commissioner for the Southern Province reported that the Blantyre & East Africa tobacco factory in Blantyre

"deals entirely with native grown produce."⁸⁸ This production palled in comparison with the scheme which Imperial Tobacco officers now undertook in the country's Central Province.

This undertaking, commonly known as the Barron scheme, actually started in the early 1920s when A.F. Barron obtained huge sections of land in the Central Province. By the 1922-23 season Barron's success with fire-cured tobacco led him "to try the experiment of laying out plots, supplying seedlings from his nurseries, and inviting Africans from nearby African Trust Land to come and grow a crop on his estate."⁸⁹ The initial experiment was very successful and by the end of 1924, some five hundred and fifty-three African tenants had begun growing tobacco on Barron's estates.⁹⁰

Such a development was especially welcome in the Central Province.⁹¹ The recession had accelerated the rate of labor emigration in the early 1920s, and authorities openly worried that the migrants would never return home, thus depriving the country of tax-payers.⁹² Even though an economic slump in Rhodesia slowed labor migration in 1923, the state was clearly concerned about the constant drainage of subjects. Moreover, there was real concern about the impression made on the underemployed indigenous community by "the Watch Tower folk."⁹³ So when E.W. Howard, Imperial Tobacco's man in Malawi, told Zomba that he was sure the scheme "will do a lot towards starting the boys in this

district producing economic crops," the administration responded enthusiastically.⁹⁴

Zomba, worried that unrestrained activity would create problems, decided to control the industry to make sure that the situation did not get out of hand. So on June 9 1924, the Chief Secretary informed various important settlers and administrators that some type of control of the new industry was vital.⁹⁵ The Central Province Commissioner seconded this opinion, stressing that control of prices through some sort of market board would ensure that after a drop in price "the native would at once conclude that the Government did not wish them to be in a position of earning money...and emigration would increase. Past experience has proved, in cotton, that if there is any set back it is extraordinarily difficult to get the natives to again take an interest in such undertaking."⁹⁶ By December, the same official requested that a system like the British Cotton Growers Association monopoly also be established for tobacco.⁹⁷

Such a concession had obvious appeal to the administration. In return for the guaranteed market, it could negotiate controls on indigenous production which it could not otherwise establish. The Central Province Commissioner had already demonstrated this potential by suggesting that cultivation be limited to one acre even though at least one agricultural expert claimed that "a field of five acres, which is the average in tobacco on

each farm in the United States, is a useful unit to manage correctly."⁹⁸ Barron definitely wanted to establish an arrangement similar to the British Cotton Growers Association.⁹⁹ After all, in addition to the costs of the nurseries, he also was ready to engage three European advisors and forty capitaos as long as he knew that he would not lose his crops to "itinerant purchasers."¹⁰⁰

In the end though, the state, prodded by its superiors in Whitehall, could not justify conceding this kind of arrangement to any large firm.¹⁰¹ One of the biggest factors which inhibited the state was the mass influx of European tobacco buyers into the Central Province after Barron started his scheme.¹⁰² Even Zomba's considerable autonomy would be stretched to the breaking point by granting Barron a concession which thwarted the ambitions of powerful individuals like Conforzi and Storey.¹⁰³

But the need for some sort of reform was pressing. In 1924, the Nyasaland Times reported that "what is wanted is...to teach the native how to cultivate tobacco properly and how to manure it so as to sustain the quality and yield."¹⁰⁴ In 1925, the Central Province's Commissioner insisted that the industry "must be controlled otherwise the natives will lose their heads and ruin it by the production of large quantities of inferior tobacco which they will find difficult in selling."¹⁰⁵ He later backed up this observation by noting that African methods of cultivation contributed to soil exhaustion and the

introduction of new leaf diseases.¹⁰⁶

Nor was quality control the state's only concern. Zomba was also worried about the discontent which might emerge from African participation in the new tobacco markets. Kirby Green, the Central Province Commissioner anxiously informed Imperial Tobacco's mandarins that "unless something is done to check this senseless competition prices will go up so high that next season there will be a drop and the native will at once suspect that the drop is to defraud him and he will stop growing as was the case with the cotton where the slump occurred."¹⁰⁷ Kirby Green's concerns in this regard seemed well founded. Less than a month after the commissioner's warning, Imperial Tobacco's Malawian chief informed him that the company was "very much worried over the senseless competition which is taking place at the present time, and unless something is done the industry will go to pieces. The present price that is being paid to the natives is entirely too high, and the trade will not stand for it long."¹⁰⁸

The simultaneous expansion of indigenous tobacco cultivation in the southern provinces increased Zomba's concern even more. In 1926, the Southern Province's Annual Report noted that African cultivators produced some 762 tons of tobacco.¹⁰⁹ By 1927, that production increased to 1272 tons.¹¹⁰ Indeed, tobacco farming became so popular in districts like Cholo that hundreds of Africans took up that

activity even as reductions in food production boosted prices and threatened famine.¹¹¹

This kind of indigenous participation was not surprising of course. Malawi's Africans were always looking for ways to accumulate more capital.¹¹² Court records throughout this period are filled with information about the indigenous population's capitalist ambitions.¹¹³ So as new opportunities opened up in tobacco, Malawians were bound to respond enthusiastically, especially since the Agriculture Department reported that they could earn up to 50/- per month.¹¹⁴ Of course, that kind of response made the state even more anxious to control the expanding industry. The lessons of the Chilembwe rebellion had not been forgotten, and the state was determined to oversee primitive accumulation as much as possible.

The result of all these anxieties was the establishment of a Native Tobacco Board which regulated African tobacco markets. The members of the board initially were the Director of Agriculture, the Treasurer and the Provincial Commissioner for Zomba.¹¹⁵ A 10/- licensing fee for buyers and a 2/6 tax on every 100 pounds of tobacco bought supported its operations. In return for these levies, the board supervised African production and supposedly ensured that indigenous planters received fair prices for their produce in honest markets.¹¹⁶

This type of arrangement was superficially satisfactory. The state retained ultimate authority while

making sure that indigenous production proceeded apace and everyone earned a fair return. The Native Tobacco Boards' autonomy also ensured that no expatriate capitalists were excluded from the bonanza unfolding in the Central and Southern Provinces.

But with an almost tragic inevitability, the establishment of the Tobacco Board planted the seeds for future problems. One of the most serious difficulties involved the provision of capitaos. Zomba's slender exchequer left it with inadequate resources to pay for agricultural assistance. The governor admitted that "the agricultural staff was not really large enough...[because of] the present system whereby any fresh [government] expenditure had to show a probable 200% return before Treasury sanction could be received."¹¹⁷ The Director of Agriculture reinforced the inadequacy of the agricultural staff as late as 1928 by pointing out that each tobacco officer supervised "perhaps 5,000 tobacco growers."¹¹⁸

The state's solution was to subcontract agricultural positions to various large planters. This decision made sense in some respects; the planters had already developed cadres of agricultural advisors who had proved their utility and shown that they were indispensable to the expansion of the industry. For instance, in 1925 the Provincial Commissioner for the Central Province claimed that the withdrawal of Mr. Barron's advisors from Masula region had ensured such a poor crop that there had been "no

sale or very low prices, the very thing one was hoping would be avoided, as it will set back the industry very greatly."¹¹⁹

But relying on selected expatriates was bound to lead to abuses and unhappiness. Soon after the establishment of the Native Tobacco Board, Kirby Green complained that "I am not at all satisfied with the way in which Mr. Conforzi is carrying out supervision."¹²⁰ The Dedza Resident supported his boss by claiming that "I have myself observed small nurseries in all the villages I have passed through [in Conforzi's region], [but] these appear to have been planted on the initiative of the natives themselves."¹²¹

Abuses were not the only problem with subcontracting capitaos. Many planters were very unhappy that they were excluded from supervision by government fiat. For instance, J.J. McCarthy, an ambitious planter in Dedza, found that A.J. Storey and I.M. Conforzi now supervised the region he had developed.¹²² McCarthy found this situation onerous and complained that the subcontracting system effectively provided certain planters with subsidies.¹²³ A year later, still upset, he argued that he who bought the tobacco should supervise its cultivation.¹²⁴ Nor was McCarthy alone. Tait Bowie, another prominent planter, bitterly commented that "owners of large private estates, who at enormous expense founded this industry, have received neither compensation nor protection...[and] who are now being taxed for the privilege of developing a native

industry would have a just right to claim that their supervision expenses be paid also."¹²⁵

Subcontracting was not the expatriates' only complaint. Settlers were also upset that the government was encouraging African production yet again after continuing to ignore the planters. W. Tait Bowie complained that he thought "we are encouraging [indigenous cultivation] a little too quickly."¹²⁶ And a representative of the Mlanje Planters Association groused that, despite the assistance to indigenous planters, "the services provided by the Nyasaland Government by way of technical enquiry and research for tea or tobacco are still more or less of a modest beginning."¹²⁷

Planters were also upset that indigenous tobacco production was "seriously affecting the supply of labour available for European estates."¹²⁸ A member of the Cholo Planters Association complained that "nearly 90 per cent of our labour comes from Portuguese territory."¹²⁹ He left little doubt that tobacco production was the culprit when he added that "the previous year we had Angoni down from up-country, but they are now engaged on growing tobacco. If it were not for Portuguese labour most of us would have to close down." The situation did not improve over time either; in 1938 a southern planter griped that "up to 1928, we never had any Portuguese labour; we had natives from the northern province. It was only after they started native tobacco growing that they were not really encouraged to

come down...Nowadays it is unfashionable with them to work in the south."¹³⁰

Food also became a problem as more Africans devoted their energies toward tobacco cultivation rather than to the growth of foodstuffs.¹³¹ The consequent inflation in food prices further hindered the recruitment of labor for the estates.¹³² Thus, Zomba's decision to encourage indigenous cultivation undermined estate production and restricted the accumulation of capital during the boom years. But the devastating fractionalization of the capitalist class, which manifested itself in the struggle between the Nyasaland Planters Association and the Nyasaland Chamber of Commerce and Agriculture, precluded the settlers from acting in concert against the legislation and its implementation.

Ironically, the Tobacco Board also threatened the indigenous community's ability to accumulate capital. In large part, the threat to Africans' prosperity resulted from Zomba's anxiety about the emergence of African capitalists in the Central Province. In 1927, the administration expressed reservations about the "abuses [which] often arise when the more ambitious natives engage others for the cultivation of economic crops."¹³³ That concern became more acute as the Tobacco Board's Mlanje Representative noted that "at least two of the larger native tobacco growers [here] have, this year, transferred their activities to the Lilongwe district, thinking that

conditions there may be more congenial than here."¹³⁴

Zomba's response to these concerns was the restriction of production. The state decided to control the amount of tobacco which Africans could grow on crown land to ensure that no one would earn too much from commodity production and actually begin capitalist rather than peasant production.¹³⁵ These limitations ultimately drove many Africans on to estates as sharecroppers and further antagonized an already restless indigenous community.¹³⁶ Nevertheless, they inhibited the emergence of new social formations which had the potential to threaten the state.

Even restricted indigenous production created problems for Zomba. In particular, concerns about the impact on families of large scale land alienation emerged as Barron and others established themselves in the "dead north."¹³⁷ As more Africans took up cultivation, traditional social structure broke down around Lilongwe, and the type of social confusion which had already occurred in the south developed in the country's Central Province.¹³⁸ Zomba's solutions to certain problems could not prevent others from emerging.

Just as the government began implementing its programs, the bottom dropped out of the metropolitan tobacco markets.¹³⁹ This price collapse ended tobacco's boom years and inaugurated another recession. Arthur Westrop, a planter whose memoirs chronicle the rise of tea in Malawi, claimed that as "prices [fell] below the cost of

production," Timcke, the leader of the rebellious Planters Association, "abandoned tobacco growing and for the time being lived on rents from Indian stores built on another division of the main road."¹⁴⁰

Other planters were not as fortunate. Brokers in London could not sell tobacco shipped home on consignment and sent bills for storage to the settlers whose very existence depended on the sale of the warehoused goods.¹⁴¹ The Nyasaland Times described the country's precarious economic situation when it made the following comments about a supplement to The Times:

One advertisement shows an apparently prosperous planter in the midst of an ideal field of tobacco. Would it not have more truthfully portrayed the present deplorable state of affairs if it had depicted blocks of warehouses at home crammed with unsold bales of tobacco, bulking sheds stuffed with unsaleable piles, storekeepers writing 'sorry, none' on planters' requisitions for necessary goods, and at the same time calling to their assistants for Mr. so and so's account (to be handed to the messenger) upon which the most conspicuous indictment (written in red ink) is 'this account is long overdue; cheque will oblige'? Or perhaps a series of pictures of the interior of a bank with an obsequious planter at the counter, a look of pitiful entreaty on his face, his pockets and hands full of documents, and the manager looking very sympathetic, but determined, and vigorously shaking his head?¹⁴²

Nor was the recession limited to the expatriate community. The paper also complained that the drop in prices had placed the African industry "in danger."¹⁴³ The Great Depression had arrived in Malawi with a vengeance, and it would be a long time before the country recovered economically.

The collapse of tobacco prices ironically strengthened the Imperial Tobacco Company's position. Eric Emtage noted that "for people who were selling to Imperial, it was easy" even during the slump's worst period.¹⁴⁴ But he made it clear that the company took advantage of the situation, pointing out that "when the bad times came, Imperial stopped buying from them. Well, they kept us going--the little people. But those fellows who had their London connections, they wouldn't buy from them. And some of them went broke. Sabbatini for instance."

Contemporary records bear out his testimony. At the first meeting of the newly established Convention of Associates, a delegate claimed that Imperial had "75% of the business, that another 5 or 6 manufacturers control 15% and the remaining 10% is divided amongst about 200 manufacturers...One does not have to be an alarmist to foresee the time when the Trust will control 100% of the Home market."¹⁴⁵ At the same meeting, the minority report of the Tobacco Industry Committee asserted that "it is not good for the industry that 75% of the home trade should be controlled by one organisation, and it must be apparent to everyone that in order to retrieve the situation heroic measures will have to come about, otherwise the position will get worse and Empire Tobacco growers will merely exist at the direction of a huge monopoly."¹⁴⁶

Imperial's decision to take advantage of the recession was bad news for the country. Cotton had already been taken

over by a metropolitan trust; now another crop was threatened. While those developments would undoubtedly help cultivation because the trusts could afford to provide assistance, it also meant that primitive accumulation would not occur locally. Instead, dependency on Britain would increase, and the local economy would be made more precarious. Moreover, the establishment of another cartel would effectively diminish the government's ability to rule since it would be even more susceptible to business pressure from England.

Zomba tried to avoid the monopolization of tobacco by passing an ordinance aimed at regularizing the position of tenants on southern estates.¹⁴⁷ The legislation stated that "no maximum annual rent...shall be less than the cash equivalent of two months' average pay or greater than the cash equivalent of three months average pay of agricultural workers of the district."¹⁴⁸ In theory tenants were protected from wholesale eviction if they chose to pay cash rather than work for estate owners, but for all practical purposes the new law reinstated thangata. The Provincial Commissioner of the Southern Province admitted as much by claiming that the law would "help the landlord to get more work out of his tenants...because they will have to work three months in the wet season or six months in the dry season to get remission of their rent."¹⁴⁹

These provisions would naturally help the settlers since it would help solve their pressing labor problems.

However, its late passage ensured that it would at best allow the hardiest planters to hang on rather than expand estate cultivation. Part of the delay resulted from the state's usual disorganization. Zomba had struggled with the bill for some three years because "trouble was being experienced by the Residents in furnishing detailed descriptions of the land which they were of opinion should be set aside for the use of natives, and the Lands Officer had advised that a description of the boundaries would be a matter of some difficulty as so many private estates scattered throughout these lands had not been surveyed."¹⁵⁰ Even after it unraveled these mysteries, the administration could not figure out what maximum rents should be on estates.¹⁵¹

One suspects that Zomba also delayed the introduction of the tenants legislation because the administration was still unsympathetic to the settlers' labor problems. The Cholo Planters Association bluntly informed the Hilton Young Commission that "the Government will not believe there is a labour shortage."¹⁵² Governor Bowring substantiated this assertion when he insisted that "the labour problem for European planters was not generally acute in Nyasaland."¹⁵³

Even administrators who realized that the planters did have problems were generally callous. For instance, Commissioner Kirby Green pointed out that planters needed to provide "better housing and food" before they could

recruit workers.¹⁵⁴ In large part, the state's indifference probably stemmed from its continuing belief that the country's future lay with the indigenous, not the expatriate, population. Kirby Green conceded as much when he admitted that "the development of the country really depends on the native more than the white population."

The problem with Zomba's adoption of this philosophy was that the government's way of directing indigenous economic activity actually impoverished the country. Peasant production schemes inevitably strengthened multi-nationals who produced enclave economies, not primitive accumulation. Moreover, the state's supervision also limited indigenous accumulation and thus thwarted significant African "development." So destroying European estates not only stopped one means of primitive accumulation, but it also ensured that no avenue towards this goal was possible.

Perhaps a dim recognition of this problem caused Zomba to overturn years of tradition and finally offer real assistance to the planting community. Although the government still proclaimed a number of people Distressed British Subjects, Zomba finally heeded the desperate pleas of the planting community.¹⁵⁵ In June 1928, Zomba asked London for some £20,000 in aid since "it would be of benefit to the country to retain these individuals in the Protectorate by tiding them over their present difficulties."¹⁵⁶ By August, the administration had gained

approval for £8000 which could be given as advances and informed the planters that these funds were available.¹⁵⁷

Even here Zomba could not entirely abandon its wanton callousness. In 1929, the administration noted that although twenty six planters had applied for £8685, it had only approved nineteen applicants and advanced them £4855.¹⁵⁸ The program's enormous success demonstrated its potential. By December 1929, the Auditor reported that only £946/7/10 was still owed from the £4855 advanced and that virtually all of that money was "likely to be fully paid during December."¹⁵⁹

Zomba's actions were too little too late. The administration might save a few planters, but it could not rescue the sinking planters. The greatest tragedy in all this was that Zomba had failed to fulfill its own ambitions despite the roadblocks it had placed before ambitious capitalists. The state's authority was at best chimerical. Its structure was still ill defined and inadequate, and it was still riven by the lack of a comprehensive program and its administrators' frustrations.

In essence, Zomba had let its last chance slip through its fingers during the 1920s. But the origins of that failure lay in the years of misrule and ineptness which had preceded the golden decade. The inadequacies of the past were too much for the state to overcome, and the opportunity to redress the situation never really came again before the years of federation ended the country's

colonial experience. Like the decades before it, the twenties were a loss for both state and society.

ENDNOTES

1. Perhaps the two best examples of these growing metropolitan ties with East Africa involved the creation of the Joint East Africa Board in 1923 and the British Empire Exhibition held at Wembley in the summer and fall of 1924. A number of publications also indicate that economic ties with the metropole were growing stronger, notably F.S. Jolson's East Africa. This journal openly declared in its first issue that "service is our watchword, service to East Africa, service to British trade, service to our readers, and our advertisers," East Africa, 1 (September 25 1924).
2. M.N.A. NY 2/1/1, Minutes of the Nyasaland Civil Servants Association, February 14 1923 and February 22 1923. At the first meeting Meredith Sanderson claimed that allowances were "grossly unjust" while at the later one Mr. Wortley, eventually a Director of Agriculture and Chairman of the Native Tobacco Board, claimed that recent government actions towards the lowly administrators were "nothing less than an outrage."
3. M.N.A. NC 1/3/2, Humble Petition from Native Civil Servants, Blantyre May 10 1923 enclosed in A. Kalinga to Provincial Commissioner Central Province, September 12 1923.
4. Foreign and Commonwealth Office Library, Evidence of the Hilton Young Commission, Volume II, Interview with H.E. Sir Charles Bowring, March 19 1928.
5. F.C.O.L., Evidence of the Hilton Young Commission, Interview with T.M. Partridge, March 22 1928.
6. African employees would undoubtedly be cheaper since African civil servants earned less than their European cohorts. However, Zomba apparently was leery of giving too much prestige to its indigenous subjects, preferring to confine indigenous activity to the system of traditional authority and not the European state.
7. M.N.A. HM AD 1/2/1/1, "Notes for the Guidance of Provincial Administrators," quoted in The Provincial and District Administration 1891-1963--Historical Notes, Part I, Introduction.

8. The administration also hoped that this system would be helped by the appointment of its best residents to the new positions. To this end, it appointed two of its best officers to commissionerships in 1922 with the appointment of E.F. Colville in the Central Province and E. Costley White in the Southern Province. For more on these officers, see M.N.A. HM AD 1/2/3/1, Provincial and District Administration--Nominal Rolls, Part III.
9. For instance, in 1927 the Provincial Commissioner of the Southern Province complained that understaffing made administration virtually impossible for residents in Chiradzulu, Port Herald and Chikwawa, M.N.A. NS 3/1/1, Annual Report, Southern Province, 1927.
10. M.N.A. NSE 5/2/1, Quarterly Report, Cholo District, September 30 1928.
11. This was an especially pressing problem because many planters apparently depended on the marketing of these kinds of imported foodstuffs for their workers. Since these resources were already slender, restricting them more was bound to have catastrophic results. However, consequent reports indicate that the cattle were still coming although everyone returning from Mozambique had been visiting relatives and not buying cattle.
12. M.R.A. Minutes of the Mlanje Planters Association, December 18 1922.
13. M.R.A. General Manager to Reginald Sharpe, January 4 1924.
14. Imperial Tobacco Company Archives, Deeds and Records, Box 488, Deed # 6980, British Central Africa Company to Imperial Tobacco Company, June 30 1927; Deed # 6982, British Central Africa Company to Imperial Tobacco Company, July 16 1927; Box 501, Deed # 6773, British Central Africa Company to C.A. Barron, March 4 1927. These land transfers all point out that at extraordinary meetings held on January 15 and January 30 1924, "it was resolved that the old company would be wound up voluntarily and that the said Harry Folliott be appointed liquidator." It is interesting to note this episode is missing in the Registrar-General's files although the administration's history included it. See Registrar General, File COY 4 and History of the British Central Africa Company, C.O. 525/208/44332/3.
15. M.N.A. S 1/1748/23, Memo by Provincial Commissioner Southern Province, June 16 1923; the company

- apparently had a debt of some 69455/10/10. See Registrar General, File COY 4, Annual Report, 1922. The number of planters was mentioned in S 1/1748/23, Annual Report, Southern Province, 1922-23.
16. Estate size was crucial since smaller estates could not sustain the same number of tenants as the older and larger holdings.
 17. M.N.A. NSE 5/1/1, Annual Report, Cholo, 1922-23.
 18. M.N.A. S 1/1748/23, memo by Rankine, July 3 1923; Lonrho (Malawi) Company Files, Sharrer to Folliott, July 8 1925. The British Central Africa Company's opinion was seconded by other settlers as well, for instance see M.N.A. S 1/1330/25, Memorandum [on] Private Estates in Nyasaland, submitted by Hynde et al., May 28 1925.
 19. Villages were crucial to indirect rule as the 1910 village ordinance indicated. The state was still struggling to define exactly what a "village" was as late as 1928, see F.C.O.L., Evidence of the Hilton Young Commission, Memorandum on Native Administration by the Provincial Commissioner of Zomba Province, n.d..
 20. M.N.A. S 1/1607/23, Provincial Commissioner Southern Province to Chief Secretary, May 14 1923.
 21. M.N.A. NS 3/1/1, Annual Report, Southern Province, 1923-24.
 22. M.N.A. NSE 5/3/1, Minutes of District Council, Cholo, June 3 1923.
 23. M.N.A. NSE 5/3/1, Monthly Report, Cholo, July 1923.
 24. F.C.O.L., Evidence of the Hilton Young Commission, Evidence of Mr. E.J. Wortley, March 20 1928. Chanock also points out that the state had this attitude towards price fluctuations. See Chanock, "The Political Economy....," 118.
 25. M.N.A. S 1/1702/21, Annual Returns, 1924. It is worth noting that these returns show that the company then made no profit in 1925 and 1926 and made profits in '27 and '28.
 26. Mandala, Work and Control..., 163.
 27. Cotton producers certainly earned less than their compatriots. For instance, in 1928, cotton cultivators

earned between 20/- and 25/- a year while tobacco growers could expect to earn approximately 50/- a year. F.C.O.L., Evidence of the Hilton Young Commission, Evidence of H.C. Ducker, March 22 1928; and Evidence of Mr. E.J. Wortley, March 20 1928.

28. F.C.O.L., Evidence of the Hilton Young Commission, Evidence of Mr. E.J. Wortley, March 20 1928. In this case, it appears that government claims of prosperity were unfounded and that instead of hoarding their money, the indigenous community simply did not have very much. Chanock mentions that this type of confusion was not usual at this time. See Chanock, "The political economy...", 127.
29. Mandala, Work and Control..., 165.
30. Since a program would undoubtedly be very welcome because of the devastating effects of disease on large sections of the indigenous population at the end of the First World War. For more on this subject, see Page, "Malawians...", 216-220.
31. M.N.A. M 2/19/1, Report, Fort Manning District, November 7 1923.
32. M.N.A. M 2/19/1, Chief Secretary to Provincial Commissioners, Decemebr 16 1923.
33. M.N.A. M 2/19/1, Provincial Commissioner Southern Province to Chief Secretary, December 3 1923.
34. M.N.A. M 2/19/1, Report for Year Ending October 31 1923, Rural Dispensaries, Kota-Kota District.
35. M.N.A. S 1/755/23, Provincial Commissioner Southern Province to Chief Secretary, February 23 1923.
36. M.N.A. S 1/755/23, Resident, Zomba to Chief Secretary, February 20 1923; Chief Secretary to Provincial Commissioner Southern Province, April 10 1923; Chief Commissioner Police to Chief Secretary, May 17 1926.
37. M.N.A. S 2/7/27, Meeting of a Select Committee of the Native Affairs Department, Nairobi, August 22 1928.
38. The Native Association files are scattered through the archives, but most are located in the following files, M.N.A. S 1/1481/19, North Nyasa Native Association (formed 1919); S 1/2065/19, West Nyasa Native Association (formed 1919); S 1/210/20, S 1/2859/23, S 1/1365/24, Mombera Native Association (formed 1920); S 1/3263/23, Southern Province Native Association

(formed 1923); NC 1/3/2, Central Province Native Association (formed 1923); NS 1/3/12, Zomba Native Association (formed 1923); NS 1/3/4 Blantyre Native Association (formed 1928); and S 1/1598/29, Chiradzulu Native Association (formed 1929).

39. M.N.A. S 1/3263/23, Frederick Greshan, Secretary, Southern Province Native Association, to Chief Secretary, December 24 1923.
40. F.C.O.L., Evidence of the Hilton-Young Commission, "Note for Sir Hilton Young's Commission," from the Northern Province Native Association (Zomba Committee), n.d..
41. M.N.A. S 1/3263/23, Chief Secretary to Southern Province Native Association, January 4 1924.
42. M.N.A. NC 1/3/2, Chief Secretary to Provincial Commissioner Central Province, November 13 1926.
43. Which also included spying on them. See M.N.A. S 1/3263/23, Assistant Superintendent, CID to Chief Commissioner of Police, May 15 1924.
44. M.N.A. S 1/937/29, "Tribal History," by Mr. J O'brien.
45. M.N.A. NC 1/19/1, Minute by Smith, January 19 1922.
46. M.N.A. NC 1/19/1, Minute by Governor, March 30 1923.
47. M.N.A. NC 1/19/1, Provincial Commissioner Central Province to Chief Secretary, August 13 1923.
48. M.N.A. NS 3/1/1, Annual Report, Southern Province, 1926-27.
49. M.N.A. S 1/1607/23, District Administration (Native) Ordinance, Proclamation 7 of 1924 enclosed in Rankin to Colonial Office, September 19 1923.
50. For instance, see M.N.A. S 1/1607/23, Chief Secretary to Provincial Commissioner Southern Province, April 28 1924; Provincial Commissioner Southern Province to Chief Secretary, May 16 1924; Provincial Commissioner Southern Province to Chief Secretary, October 2 1924.
51. M.N.A. NZ 1/2/1, Resident, Zomba to Provincial Commissioner of the Zomba Province, December 27, 1928.
52. M.N.A. S 1/1607/23, Provincial Commissioner Southern Province to Chief Secretary, May 14 1923; Rankin to Colonial Office, September 19 1923; Provincial

Commissioner Southern Province to Chief Secretary, October 2 1924; Provincial Commissioner Central Province to Chief Secretary, December 31 1924; Provincial Commissioner Central Province to Chief Secretary, January 20 1925. It is worth noting that Lord Hailey later stated that the ordinance actually accomplished far less and only "gave the headmen the new power of calling out compulsory labour for public works, and...constituted a series of village, section, and district councils, consisting of nominated headmen and others." Lord Hailey, An African Survey London, 1938), 463. However, since the councils had existed before, it appears that Hailey was as confused about the legislation as everyone else.

53. M.N.A. NC 1/5/9, Resident, Fort Manning to Provincial Commissioner Central Province, February 2 1924.
54. M.N.A. NC 1/5/9, Provincial Commissioner Central Province to Chief Secretary, July 23 1924. In the Southern Province, for instance, principal headmen received 10/- a quarter, or a little more than 3/- a month, clearly a low wage in the 1920s, NZ 1/2/1, Southern Province Commissioner to Resident, Fort Johnston, March 6 1930.
55. For instance, see M.N.A. NC 1/5/9, Chief Secretary to Provincial Commissioner Central Province, June 17 1927.
56. M.N.A. S 1/1607/23, Extract from the Acting Judge of High Court, Blantyre to Chief Secretary, September 2 1932.
57. F.C.O.L., Evidence of the Hilton Young Commission, Evidence of J.C. Abraham, March 21 1928.
58. Although there were some exceptions. For instance, the Provincial Commissioner of Zomba Province informed his residents that "in Blantyre the addition of a native minister and two members of the Native Association to the council has, I understand, added considerably to the value of the Council." M.N.A., NZ 1/2/1, Provincial Commissioner of Zomba Province to Residents Zomba, Liwonde and Fort Johnston, October 21 1926. However, it would appear that this potential was limited to areas of enormous economic activity since the Liwonde Resident complained that "this district is singularly lacking in resident educated natives because the most intelligent have to seek work outside as there is no scope for them within the boundaries of this District." NZ 1/2/1, Resident Liwonde to Provincial Commissioner Zomba Province, December 15

1926.

59. M.N.A. S 1/1510/27, Provincial Commissioner Central Province to Chief Secretary, May 14 1927.
60. M.N.A. S 1/1510/27, Chief Secretary to Provincial Commissioners, March 22 1927.
61. M.N.A., NSE 5/2/1, Quarterly Report, Cholo, September 30 1928.
62. F.C.O.L., Evidence of the Hilton Young Commission, Memorandum on Native Administration by the Provincial Commissioner of the Zomba Province, n.d..
63. F.C.O.L., Evidence of the Hilton Young Commission, Evidence of J.C. Abraham, March 23 1928.
64. M.N.A. S 1/1607/23, Provincial Commissioner Southern Province to Chief Secretary, May 16 1924.
65. M.N.A. NY 3/2/4, Minutes of the Nyasaland Chamber of Agriculture and Commerce, January 29 1924.
66. M.N.A. NY 3/2/3, Minutes of the Nyasaland Chamber of Agriculture and Commerce, November 28 1922. At this meeting, the South Nyasa Planters Association, Zomba Planters Association and the Mikalongwe Planters Association all expressed opposition to any legislative reform.
67. F.C.O.L., Evidence of the Hilton Young Commission, Evidence of H.C. Ducker, March 22 1928. Ducker was actually the local representative of the Empire Cotton Growing Association, which did the advising for the British Cotton Growers Association. His comments indicated that the country's cotton barons had effectively written off estate cultivation of their product, a decision bound to antagonize settlers, especially since it had been made in favor of indigenous cultivation.
68. F.C.O.L., Evidence of the Hilton Young Commission, Oral Evidence of the Cholo Planters Association, March 25 1928. These types of issues were especially annoying to settlers since they never felt they received adequate medical or educational services from the state.
69. This perspective contradicts the country's historiography. See for instance Robin Palmer, "White Farmers in Malawi: Before and After the Depression," African Affairs, 84 (1985).

70. M.N.A. NY 3/2/4, Minutes of the Nyasaland Chamber of Agriculture and Commerce, February 23 1923.
71. M.N.A. NY 3/2/4, Minutes of the Nyasaland Chamber of Agriculture and Commerce, July 31 1923.
72. M.N.A. NY 3/2/5, Minutes of the Nyasaland Chamber of Agriculture and Commerce, February 24 1925, January 26 1926.
73. Nyasaland Times, January 2 1923.
74. M.N.A. NS 3/1/1, Annual Report, Southern Province, 1926.
75. M.N.A. NY 3/2/5, Minutes of the Nyasaland Chamber of Agriculture and Commerce, October 1924.
76. M.N.A. NY 5/1/1, L.S. Norman, Secretary Nyasaland Planters Association, to Chief Secretary, October 6 1925.
77. Nyasaland Times, January 1 1926.
78. M.N.A. NY 5/1/1, Cholo Planters Association to Chief Secretary [n.d.], Chief Secretary to Nyasaland Planters Association, June 28 1926.
79. For the troubles involved with unity, see M.N.A. NY 5/1/1, Timcke to Withers, August 22 1926; Nyasaland Planters Association to Chief Secretary, November 26 1926 [draft-- never sent]; Timcke to Withers, November 11 1926; N.Y. 5/1/2, Precis of Negotiations between the Nyasaland Planters Association and the Nyasaland Chamber of Agriculture and Commerce. In the November 11 letter, Timcke grouched that "the Chamber report..made me swear." One of the ironies involved with these negotiations was the divisive role played by R.H. Hynde, the Nyasaland Times' editor, see M.N.A. NY 5/1/1, Nyasaland Planters Association to Chief secretary, August 17 1926; Chief Secretary to Nyasaland Planters Association, August 4 1926; Timcke to Withers, October 15 1926; Memo [n.d.], author unknown. In the last document, an anonymous writer claimed that a newspaper reporter admitted that his articles about the Nyasaland Planters Association were biased and defended that by pointing out that "of course you must realise that having my job to hold down; Mr. Hynde, you know, is very much against the N.P.A. and actually I was writing under his instructions." Hynde's position was apparently due to the editor's intense animosity towards Timcke. For instance, note his scorn toward the planter in his

report of Timcke's speech to the Cholo Planters Association in Nyasaland Times, August 3 1926.

80. M.N.A. NY 5/1/1, Timcke to Withers, November 9 1926.
81. M.N.A. S 1/1119/25, Sabbatini to Chief Secretary, June 24 1925.
82. East Africa, "Nyasaland Progress in 1924," from Nswadzi (written January 5 1925), February 12 1925; "Tobacco Growing in Nyasaland and the Rhodesias," by A.V. Maunder, November 4 1926. Maunder was the head of Clagett & Brachi while Nswadzi was F.S. Jolson's principal informant in Malawi. Unfortunately, I have never uncovered his identity.
83. M.N.A. S 1/1264 A/29, "History and Development of the Tobacco Industry in Nyasaland," by Capt. Hornby. Other sources say the figure was even higher. For instance see F.C.O.L., Evidence of the Hilton Young Commission, Oral evidence of H.F.M. Pellatt, British Central Africa Company representative, March 27 1928. Pellatt claims the figure was over fifteen million.
84. I found this information in advertisements in F.S. Jolson, ed., Eastern Africa Today (London, 1928).
85. The access to the markets was crucial, of course, because of the nature of the commodity markets there and because many settlers felt that local companies, most notably Imperial Tobacco, never offered them fair prices, interview, Robin Thorneycraft, Chimpeni Estate, Zomba, July 22 1985. The growing ties were also exemplified by the great Wembley show in 1924, where Nyasaland had its own exhibition, see East Africa, 4, October 16 1924.
86. For instance, in I.T.C., Box 501, it is clear that C.A. Barron, eventually Imperial's General Manager in Malawi, bought a 376 acre estate from the British Central Africa Company for 444 and then sold it in a depressed real estate market to Imperial for 672/16/2 a year and a half later. See Deed # 6773, British Central Africa Company to C.A. Barron, March 4 1927; Deed # 7469, C.A. Barron to Imperial Tobacco Company, August 13 1928.
87. M.N.A. S 1/835/21, Howard to Chief Secretary, July 21 1921.
88. M.N.A. NS 3/1/1, Annual Report, Southern Province, 1923-24.

89. Rangeley, "A Brief History...Part I," 80; see also M.N.A. S 1/2461/23, Provincial Commissioner Central Province to Chief Secretary, March 19 1923.
90. M.N.A. NCL 4/1/1, Annual Report, Lilongwe, 1924.
91. The state was especially enthusiastic, as Chapter 6 demonstrated. In 1928, even the Provincial Commissioner of the Southern Province conceded that "it is the Central and Northern Provinces where there is going to be development in the future," F.C.O.L., Evidence of the Hilton Young Commission, Evidence of Kirby Green, Provincial Commissioner of the Southern Province, March 26 1928.
92. M.N.A. NC 1/8/1, Resident, Ncheu to Chief Secretary, July 19 1922. M.N.A. NC 1/8/1, Provincial Commissioner to Chief Secretary, July 25 1922.
93. M.N.A. S 1/1264 A/29, Minute by Governor, October 12 1924.
94. M.N.A. S 1/2461/23, Howard to Treasurer, October 24 1923; Treasurer to Provincial Commissioner Central Province, October 30 1923.
95. M.N.A. S 1/1879/24, Rankine, Chief Secretary, to Provincial Commissioner Southern Province, Provincial Commissioner Central Province, Messrs. Howard, Barron, Partridge, Hynde, Hetherwick, W.F. James, Thorneycroft, Director of Agriculture, Secretary Nyasaland Chamber of Agriculture and Commerce, June 4 1924.
96. M.N.A. S 1/1879/24, Provincial Commissioner Central Province to Chief Secretary, June 23 1924.
97. M.N.A. S 1/1879/24, Provincial Commissioner Central Province to Chief Secretary, December 3 1924.
98. M.N.A. S 1/1879/24, Provincial Central Province to Chief Secretary, December 3 1924; S 1/1264 A/29, "A History...", by Capt. Hornby.
99. M.N.A. S 1/2461/23, Barron to Chief Secretary, March 19 1924.
100. M.N.A. S 1/2461/23, Director of Agriculture to Chief Secretary, May 22 1924.
101. M.N.A. S 1/2461/23, Barron to Chief Secretary, March 19 1924. The margin notes on this letter claim that this action "would raise an outcry."

102. S.O.M., Rangeley Papers, R 1/3/6, Conforzi to Rangeley, June 13 1956; M.N.A. S 1/2461/23, A.J. Storey to Kirby Green, Provincial Commissioner Central Province, January 9 1924. Both these letters indicate that Conforzi and Storey moved north shortly after Barron began his scheme.
103. Although Zomba did agree to talk Barron up in discussions with headmen. M.N.A. S 1/2461/23, Minute by Governor, October 12 1924.
104. Nyasaland Times, August 12 1924.
105. M.N.A. NC 1/2/9, Kirby Green to Howard, April 20 1925.
106. M.N.A. S 1/1879/24, Provincial Commissioner Central Province to Chief Secretary, December 31 1925.
107. M.N.A. NC 1/2/9, Kirby Green to Howard, May 25 1926; the need for reform is also noted in A 3/2/251, Director of Agriculture to Treasurer, October 2 1926.
108. M.N.A. NC 1/2/9, Howard to Kirby Green, June 8 1926. Ultimately, Howard's pessimism was justified since by 1928 missionaries in the Central Province complained that "formerly practically all the people were paid a good price for [tobacco], and this year I do not think one in ten was satisfied" with the prices, F.C.O.L., Evidence of the Hilton Young Commission, Evidence of Fathers Theriault and Parodis, March 22 1928.
109. M.N.A. NS 3/1/1, Annual Report, Southern Province, 1925-26.
110. M.N.A. NS 3/1/1, Annual Report, Southern Province, 1926-27.
111. M.N.A. NSE 5/3/4, Monthly Reports, Cholo, September, October, and November 1926.
112. See for instance, see F.C.O.L., Evidence of the Hilton Young Commission, "Note for Sir Hilton Young's Commission," from the Northern Province Native Association (Zomba Committee), n.d..
113. For instance, see the numerous cases in M.N.A. BE 1/2/1, District Court Record, Cholo, Native Civil Cases 1921-26. The commonest activity recorded in these involved purchases of sewing machines for use by khonde tailors.
114. F.C.O.L., Evidence of the Hilton Young Commission, Evidence of A.F. Barron and E. Howard, March 26 1928.

115. M.N.A. S 1/1879/24, Governor to Colonial Office, February 20 1926. Unofficial members were later added, but like LegCo, the Board always had an official majority. This is a crucial point since the modern literature on this body suggests that the Board was from its inception an instrument of the big planters, see for instance McCracken "Planters, Peasants and the Colonial State...", and McCracken, "Share-Cropping...".
116. Of course, the question of a "fair" price must be qualified by the lessons learned from the establishment of fixed prices in cotton markets.
117. F.C.O.L., Evidence of the Hilton Young Commission, Notes of [an] Interview with H.E. Sir Charles Bowring, March 19 1928.
118. F.C.O.L., Evidence of the Hilton Young Commission, Evidence of Mr. E.J. Wortley, March 20 1928.
119. M.N.A. S 1/2461/23, Provincial Commissioner Central Province to Chief Secretary, September 5 1925.
120. M.N.A. NC 1/2/9, Provincial Commissioner Central Province to Native Tobacco Board, October 22 1926; the first supervisory positions went to Barron and Wallace in Lilongwe, and Conforzi and Storey in Dedza, see A 3/2/158, Minutes of the Native Tobacco Board, July 5 1926.
121. M.N.A. NC 1/2/9, Resident, Dedza to Provincial Commissioner Central Province, December 23 1926; it is worth noting that Conforzi's subsidized supervisor apparently spent all his time in Lilongwe building Conforzi's factory, not supervising cultivation. See A 6/1/44, W.P. Tyler to Native Tobacco Board, October 22 1926.
122. M.N.A. A 3/2/158, Minutes of the Native Tobacco Board, July 5 1926; for more on McCarthy's ambition, see S 1/6/24, McCarthy to Resident, Dedza, December 11 1923, enclosed in Resident, Dedza to Chief Secretary, December 27 1923; NC 1/2/9, J.J. McCarthy to Native Tobacco Board, June 29 1926.
123. M.N.A. NC 1/2/9, McCarthy to Resident, Dedza, August 25 1926.
124. M.N.A. NC 1/2/9, McCarthy to Resident, Dedza, July 15 1927.
125. M.N.A. A 6/1/35, Tait Bowie to Wortley, June 15 1926.

126. F.C.O.L., Evidence of the Hilton Young Commission, Evidence of W. Tait Bowie, March 22 1928.
127. F.C.O.L., Evidence of the Hilton Young Commission, Evidence of the Mlanje Planters Association, March 25 1928.
128. East Africa, "Tobacco Growing in Nyasaland...", by Maunder, November 4 1926; for problems in Dedza, see L 3/25/1, Resident, Dedza to Attorney General, March 27 1926.
129. F.C.O.L., Evidence of the Hilton Young Commission, Evidence of the Cholo Planters Association, March 25 1928.
130. F.C.O.L., Evidence of the Rhodesia-Nyasaland Royal Commission, Evidence of Mary Sharpe, June 27 1938.
131. There was little surprise in this decision since the Director of Agriculture reported that an African grower could make 20 for cultivating tobacco on a plot of land which could at most produce 4 worth of foodstuffs, although famine drove prices up. See F.C.O.L., Evidence of the Hilton Young Commission, Evidence of MR. E.J. Wortley, March 20 1928.
132. M.N.A. A 3/2/146, R.M. Antill, Native Tobacco Board--Mlanje, to Director of Agriculture, July 28 1927. As early as 1926, the Provincial Commissioner of Zomba Province reported that "various planters are purchasing maize on and around their Estates but there seems very little probability of their being able to obtain their full requirements," NZ 2/2/1, Quarterly Report, Zomba Province, June 30 1926. The lack of food apparently set off an enormous inflation and contrary to Wortley's assertions, the price of maize began approaching the price of tobacco, especially as the latter fell after 1927. For instance, I.C. Sanderson, the manager of the A.L. Bruce Estates, claimed that his tenants were earning between 30/- and 40/- for growing maize and that these producers "do extremely well--so many so well that they said they did not want to grow tobacco," F.C.O.L., Evidence of the Hilton Young Commission, Evidence of I.C. Sanderson, March 22 1928.
133. M.N.A. A 3/2/146, Memo C.R. 1139/1927. Unfortunately, this memo is incomplete and the absence of the last page[s?] make a fuller citation impossible.
134. M.N.A. A 6/1/45, Native Tobacco Board, Mlanje to Native Tobacco Board, Report # 3, December 3 1927. The

assumption being that the more congenial atmosphere meant that they could hire workers and expand production, which of course is what peasant production was supposed to curtail.

135. For an example of this kind of restriction, see M.N.A. S 1/1879/24, Wortley [Chairman, Native Tobacco Board] to Chief Secretary, November 7 1928.
136. Creating the kind of symbiosis which occurred on southern estates earlier, see Woods, "Capitaos and Chiefs...". For more on the growing African restlessness, see Woods, "Malawi's Missing Peasantry...".
137. F.C.O.L., Evidence of the Hilton Young Commission, Evidence of the Federated Missions, March 22 1928. In particular, Mr. Young of the Free Church of Scotland worried the enormous ramifications" of the alienation by "large companies for large plantations." It is also interesting to note that concern about indigenous social structure was expressed by the country's traditional "representatives" of the African community and not official sources whose concerns apparently did not include these issues.
138. F.C.O.L., Evidence of the Hilton Young Commission, Evidence of the Federated Missions, March 22 1928. This point became clear as Mr. Young and Mr. Bowman of the Church of Scotland discussed the differences between the northern and southern portions of the country. Young claimed that traditional society still lingered around Lilongwe while Bowman pointed out that it had collapsed around Blantyre because of socio-economic changes.
139. F.C.O.L., Evidence of the Hilton Young Commission, Oral evidence of Mr. E.J. Wortley, March 20 1928.
140. Arthur Westrop, Green Gold (Bulawayo, 1975), 39.
141. Interview, Eric Emtage, Newlands Rest Home, Limbe, June 15 1985. Emtage said that "one man I know said [to his broker] 'throw it in the Thames'."
142. Nyasaland Times, April 27 1928.
143. Nyasaland Times, October 19 1928.
144. Interview, Eric Emtage, Newlands Rest Home, Limbe, June 15 1985.
145. M.N.A. NY 5/1/3, Minutes of the Nyasaland Convention

of Associations, Timcke's comments, July 9 1928.

146. M.N.A. NY 5/1/3, Minutes of the Nyasaland Convention of Associations, Tobacco Industry Committee, Minority Report, July 9 1928.
147. East Africa, July 5 1928.
148. Myambo, "The Shire Highlands....," 72.
149. F.C.O.L., Evidence of the Hilton Young Commission, Evidence of Mr. Kirby Green, March 26 1928. Kirby Green conceded that some tenants would have to "shift on to Crown Land," but felt that this problem would not be severe.
150. M.N.A. L 3/35/6, Minute, Attorney General to Chief Secretary, January 1 1927.
151. M.N.A. S 1/1330/25, Provincial Commissioner Southern Province to Chief Secretary, February 6 1928; Minute # 29 by Provincial Commissioner Zomba Province, February 18 1928. Most of the problem here stemmed from the state's inability to figure out what average wages were.
152. F.C.O.L., Evidence of the Hilton Young Commission, Evidence of the Cholo Planters Association, March 25 1928.
153. F.C.O.L., Evidence of the Hilton Young Commission, "Notes of Interview with H.E. Sir Charles Bowring," March 19 1928.
154. F.C.O.L., Evidence of the Hilton Young Commissioner, Evidence of Mr. Kirby Green, March 26 1928.
155. For instance, see M.N.A. NS 1/35/3, Provincial Commissioner Southern Province to Chief Secretary, November 1 1928. Being a DBS was of course the greatest fear of many expatriates as well as the only thing they felt an indifferent state provided, See Emtage, "Reminiscences....," 18. And indeed during the early 20s, that was all the planters received. The Treasurer openly admitted that after the state failed to provide assistance, "a large number of growers (mostly leaseholders) left the country, many being assisted to do so by Government." See M.N.A. S 1/575^T/28, Nyasaland Planters Association to Chief Secretary, April 20 1928; Memo by Treasurer, May 14 1928.
156. M.N.A. S 1/575^T/28, Zomba to Colonial Office, June 7

1928.

157. M.N.A. S 1/175^T/28, Colonial Office to Zomba, July 27 1927; Colonial Office to Zomba, August 7 1927; Zomba to Colonial Office, August 21 1927; Colonial Office to Zomba, August 27 1927; Chief Secretary to Nyasaland Planters Association, August 31 1927.
158. M.N.A. S 1/575^T/28, Davidson Houston (Acting Governor) to Colonial Office, July 16 1929.
159. Although one planter who received a 250 advance was in liquidation and the Auditor only expected that the state would obtain 10% of the advance back (which would presumably pay for a DBS). M.N.A. Auditor to Treasurer, December 7 1929.

Chapter Eight: The Praxis of Colonialism

The saga of Malawi's colonial state does much to demystify the enigma of colonialism. This tale quickly dispels notions that the Zomba cooperated with capital to exploit systematically the colony's indigenous populations. Malawi's colonial administration could scarcely solve its own problems, let alone scheme with economic classes intent on a program of domination. Moreover, the pursuit of a civil society, which the shaky state could control, forced colonial administrators to attempt the establishment of a social order inimical to capitalist ambition and primitive accumulation.

In essence, the administration of colonial Malawi created a dialectic between the territory's civil society and socio-economic structures.¹ This contradiction lay at the heart of the colonial experience, and recognizing it allows us to investigate economic rather than ideological dialectics.² This line of inquiry soon shows that the roots of Africa's contemporary poverty lay in the inability of colonial society, both European and indigenous, to fashion a workable synthesis from the contradiction between political imperatives and economic ambitions.

This failure largely occurred because neither Malawi's political nor economic spheres matured adequately. Colonial administrators never learned how to match their paltry resources with their employees' needs and demands.

Consequently, administration never evolved towards the desired end of creating a society in which the state could rule through hegemony rather than coercion. Ultimately, Zomba desperately tried to create a synthesis by integrating traditional authorities into the political sphere.

The reconstruction of "tribal Malawi," however, involved more than the mere appointment of headmen and chiefs. It also required the reinvention of traditional societies, whose ideology was typically incompatible with the socio-economic consciousness required for the continuation of primitive accumulation.³ In essence, the atavistic desires of the colonial regime thwarted the kind of hegemonic transformation which changed Europe's feudal kingdoms into nation states.⁴

Ironically, the state failed to recreate traditional societies from which it could establish political cadres willing to impose Zomba's will. Instead, it had to depend on the accommodations which indigenous inhabitants had already made with Malawi's exporters to create a political structure for "traditional" society.⁵ Relying on authorities drawn from these situations contradicted the very spirit of indirect rule because it forced Africans to participate in the new economic order before they could assume positions in the neo-traditional one. The state never adequately resolved this problem, and the administration found it almost impossible to "staff" the

neo-traditional tribes, let alone create them.

The failure of neo-traditionalism prevented Zomba from developing an economic order in which Africans could acquire the capital needed for primitive accumulation.⁶ The state had to fight peasantization as long as it could not control of the emerging peasant societies, only allowing peasantization when it was sure that this process would not create a kulak class.⁷ Thwarting indigenous ambitions, however, led to the emergence of political dissent which taxed the feeble state beyond its resources and even unmasked its limited powers of coercion.⁸

Zomba's inability to maintain consistently high levels of coercion fatally undermined the territory's capitalist community. Without recourse to coercion, capitalists had to rely on cooption, a tricky business at best. Some estate owners tried to replace the state's police role with their own para-military cadres, but the resulting repression caused rebellions which forced the state to dismantle the planters' repressive structure. The most notable example of this phenomenon occurred during the Chilembwe Rebellion. The uprising of the discontented masses on the Bruce estates led Zomba dismantle traditional patterns of estate cultivation just as planters experienced an economic crisis.

This betrayal was just one part of the state's inability to alienate labor for capitalist activity. Paradoxically, the administration had made labor alienation

imperative because the state's massive alienation of land in the 1890s ensured that production would occur on estates, not on peasant plots.⁹ But in 1899, 1912, 1919 and 1927, estate cultivation foundered as labor problems prevented planters from extracting enough surplus value from their work force to accumulate capital and maintain production during global fluctuations in commodity markets.¹⁰

The state was not completely useless in this process. The tax policies encouraged labor, but the state's administrative ineptitude made the levies only partially effective. Moreover, tax policy produced fewer workers as African entrepreneurs found ways to earn money other than through manual labor.¹¹ Moreover, the administration's continual restriction of land available for indigenous habitation stimulated alienation as much as phenomena such as enclosure did in Europe.¹² Indeed, the growth of the tea industry in southern Malawi stemmed largely from the land pressure which forced many Lomwe immigrants to work on large estates.¹³

Land pressure, however, often forced Malawians to seek their fortunes working in the region's flourishing mining economies.¹⁴ Indeed, the reliance on land pressure could not resolve the labor shortages which emerged in the 1920s, as commodity production required more skilled labor.¹⁵ The planters could not afford to pay trained personnel as much as the mines did, and capitalists suffered because their product was badly processed.

The failure of primitive accumulation left Malawi at the mercy of predatory metropolitan corporations. Both the tobacco and cotton industries became dominated by large British concerns.¹⁶ These organizations, representing European producers of goods, could afford to pay higher wages and weather economic storms better because they could rely on metropolitan financing and depend on capitalist production in the metropole.¹⁷ Thus, in an indirect way the colonial state established structural dependency by paving the way for the emergence of enclave economies.

There were exceptions to the multinationals' dominance, of course. Planters who could develop metropolitan ties of their own often succeeded even as their colleagues failed. One need only consider the tale of Ignacio Conforzi and his ties to Clagett & Brachi to see the value of creating a direct articulation between colony and metropole. Moreover, cooperation also gave producers, especially of tea, a fighting chance, especially with tea, even though the fractionalization of the capitalist class often made communal effort impossible.

The state's inability to rationalize class positions made cooperation difficult though, and here lay perhaps the state's greatest failure in the colonial era. Zomba originally adopted a liberal attitude which was well suited for industrial Britain but disastrous for colonial Malawi's nascent capitalist economy. Even after it abandoned its rather laissez faire attitude, it could not

decide what type of production, and hence which class fraction, was politically desirable. As a result, the state at least tacitly encouraged a division of classes which tore apart the economy and prevented cooperative efforts which may have saved the economy.

The only people who appeared capable of resolving the uncertainty about what type of production would predominate were the multinationals' compradores. In both southern and central Malawi, the British Cotton Growers Association and Imperial Tobacco effectively limited planters to a subordinate position as they stimulated peasant production.¹⁸ In both cases, the multinationals also struggled against the state in order to achieve their goals and ultimately depended on their rights as property owners and economic powers to win this conflict.

The dominance of the multinationals showed that hegemony could be developed in the context of articulation into the metropolitan economy, most notably through tenant production. Nor was that hegemony limited to the multinational enclaves. Throughout Malawi, Africans found niches in the emerging economy which satisfied some of their material ambitions.

Understanding how that occurred is a crucial element in furthering our understanding of the praxis of colonialism, and Malawian historiography is particularly encouraging in this regard. Elias Mandala, Landeg White and Megan Vaughan have made major strides towards understanding

how local populations responded to the colonial economy both structurally and economically.¹⁹ White has drawn a sensitive portrait of how people accommodated themselves to a changing economy. Mandala has emphasized the subtle and often overlooked relationship between economy and environment. And Vaughan has shown us how Africans responded to crises which beset the economy.

These studies demonstrate that the evolution of peasant production worked against primitive accumulation as effectively as state policy did. Prices typically failed to provide indigenous producers with enough capital to expand their activities, especially after the initial emergence of the crop grown. The indigenous community consequently remained relatively impoverished, and the hegemony established was at best a short term solution.

Recent studies also show some of the problems associated with working on the local level. Mandala often insinuates that the state worked for capitalist interests in their struggle to proletarianize and regiment the Lower Shire peasants.²⁰ Vaughan leaves us in considerable confusion about the evolution of the country both before and after the famine. And finally, White's study often overlooks the fact that Magomero was part of a larger polity and economy.

These deficiencies are crucial of course. If colonialism accomplished nothing else, it defined the boundaries for Africa's contemporary economic and political

frontiers. By emphasizing local studies, historians can easily generate discrete studies in a structural and temporal vacuum. That historiographical tendency is accentuated when we fail to construct syntheses which use a theoretical perspective to explain the historical evolution of a colony which inevitably became a nation.²¹

The second crucial dialectic which this thesis generates is, therefore, how local situations interacted with the broader evolution of a region. I have suggested that by examining the colonial state and its influence on colonial society, we can provide a framework in which more specialized analyses can be integrated.²² By structuring our arguments in this way, we can understand the praxis of colonialism within a synthesis of the specific and the general.

One problem with this approach is the pressing question of London's intentions. Malawi might well have become an imperial slum because Whitehall wanted its more profitable neighbors to rely on its labor and sought a place in which it could subsidize metropolitan industries. Certainly Sir Harry Johnston, the colony's founder, felt that the country was best viewed as a source of labor for the Rand in the Boer War's aftermath. Leroy Vail's work on Malawi's railroads further suggests that London was more than content to subsidize English iron-workers at the colony's expense.²³

In a similar vein, one can also question whether

primitive accumulation was ever practical in a colony as disparate as Malawi. After all, colonialism created a political entity which bore little relation to pre-colonial boundaries, either political or cultural. Transforming social relations in such a polyglot society was bound to be difficult and controversial. Nevertheless, failing to do so undermined the viability of the territory, a goal always in Zomba's mind.

Moreover, despite the diversity of Malawi's population, the administration still could have pursued a number of policies which would have encouraged primitive accumulation more than Zomba did. Whether or not that goal was in the official mind of local administrators is exactly the question which historians need to answer by examining policy. For by eschewing primitive accumulation, administrators created dependency and underdevelopment by default. Deciding to ignore the fundamental socio-economic transitions necessary for capitalization was a vital oversight, whether it was by intention or accident.

This perspective is not without peril. As Robert Collins and Bruce Berman have demonstrated, colonial action depended as much on individual initiative as on policy.²⁴ One need only recall incidents like the Cholo cattle herds to recognize that the same held true in Malawi.²⁵ Nevertheless, the state did influence events and guide activity, even if it did so broadly and often negatively. By understanding how and why it acted, we can determine how

Africa integrated into the expanding world economy.

A vexing problem with this approach is its Eurocentricism. Aside from emphasizing European participation in the colonial world, this thesis relies on concepts derived from European history. Primitive accumulation, material dialectics and political autonomy are all part of an intellectual tradition created to explain the Western world and its historical evolution. As such, the appropriateness of applying these ideas to African contexts is suspect. That suspicion has grown even stronger as scholars begin to grapple with concepts such as African gnosis in order to define Africa's intellectual world as well as its material one.²⁶ Indeed, one need only think of Marx's grossly inaccurate portrait of Africa to be reminded of the dangers of using his philosophy in this context.²⁷

There are compelling reasons for pursuing historical materialism, though. Marxism's recent emancipation from the heavy hand of Soviet orthodoxy has generated enormous theoretical vitality. It is ironic that even as Marxism apparently fails in much of the old world, Marxist theory gains greater flexibility. The utility of that revision for Africanists has already been amply demonstrated in several studies.²⁸

Perhaps even more important is the fact that colonialism firmly integrated Africa into a world economy dominated by Western economies.²⁹ The rise of this world

economy ensured that Africa's economic systems would have to compete with Europe's capitalist economies. As the example of Malawi shows, the failure of primitive accumulation left Africa at the mercy of capitalized metropolitan concerns.³⁰ Therefore, examining primitive accumulation allows us to understand the ways in which capitalism failed in Africa, releasing us again from the polemical position that capitalism's success was responsible for Africa's poverty.³¹

We should also remember that Africanists embraced Afrocentric studies because the West's racist attitudes denied that there was an African past before Europeans ventured into the "dark continent."³² As African studies bloomed in the 1950s and 1960s, scholars needed to assert that Africans' cultural and historical traditions were as strong and vital as those of other peoples. Historians consequently sought to avoid Eurocentric paradigms in order to buttress the validity of Afrocentricism.

In this context, it is hard to perceive why using Marxist theory as an analytical base contributes to racist stereotypes which deny Africans either a history or a culture. Marxist theory seeks to understand the material transformation of society, especially in terms of the rise and nature of capitalism. It does not seek to place cultural elements or historical traditions in a European mold; instead, it seeks to explain how those traditions interacted with material conditions to create the socio-

economic structures characteristic of various modes of production. In essence, Marxists are interested in how the unique traditions of various African peoples contributed to the creation of new societies as environmental and external forces transformed the material world in which those people lived.

In this study, the colonial state was a principal participant in such a transformation. Imperialism in Malawi was the means by which that country, for better or worse, was tied into the metropolitan and sub-metropolitan economies of the capitalist world system.³³ One of the ironies of this study is that it demonstrates the crucial nature of African participation in this process. Effective articulation in Malawi clearly depended as much on the ambition and nature of indigenous society as on the machinations of expatriate administrators.

Indeed, if nothing else, this study escapes the nagging notion that underdevelopment studies undervalue Africa's social vitality as much as more overtly racist theorists do. The perception that Africans knuckled under to an expanding European economy indicates that Africans were inert objects who were incapable of responding adequately to a changing world. Recognizing that the political institutions generated by Europe's headlong aggrandizement actually inhibited Africans' ability to respond shows that Africa's failure in the world economy was not the result of cultural deficiencies but rather a

consequence of having indigenous initiatives thwarted for the sake of expedient political imperatives.

Ultimately, the praxis of colonialism lies in understanding the interaction between indigenous society and expatriate interests. One must analyze critically what the new elements were in colonial Africa as well as what indigenous structures and practices were. The colonial state was obviously the most significant of these elements because it redefined Africa in a way which still persists. As we demystify it, we begin to understand the context in which change occurred in colonial Africa's indigenous societies and really dig out the roots of rural poverty.

ENDNOTES

1. In a sense, this schism replicates the dual economy of the 1950s, but with an important difference. In this case, dualism is not a product of primitive Africans working with sophisticated Europeans, but rather a result of a conflict between progressive elements, both European and African, and state sponsored collaborators. In a sense, one wonders whether dual economy as it was created was a continuation of the creation of traditional societies. In other words, having created political organizations for African "tribes," did colonial administrations then begin to search for economic organizations which would be imposed on "traditional" to replace other economic systems which worked against the state. For more on the dual economy, see W.J. Barber, The Economy of British Central Africa: A Case Study of Economic Development in a Dualistic Society (Stanford, 1961).
2. Thomas Gladwin and Ahmad Saidin, Slaves of the White Myth: The Psychology of Neocolonialism (Atlantic Highlands, 1980).
3. Much work on this topic has followed the publication of Ranger's Invention of Tradition. See T.O. Ranger and Eric Hobsbaum, eds., The Invention of Tradition (Cambridge, 1983). For the best example of this topic

in Malawian historiography, see Leroy Vail and Landeg White, "Tribalism in the Political History of Malawi," in Leroy Vail, ed., The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa (Berkeley, 1989).

4. This is a process which turned Robert Wiebe's islands into a continent and Eugen Weber's peasants into Frenchmen, see Robert Wiebe, The Search for Order (New York, 1967); and Eugen Weber, Peasants into Frenchmen (Stanford, 1976). For an analysis of this process with a theoretical framework more compatible with this thesis, see Philip Corrigan & Derek Sayer, The Great Arch: English State Formation as Cultural Revolution (Oxford, 1985).
5. Woods, "Chiefs and Capitaos...".
6. Accumulating capital being a prerequisite for the acquisition of free labor. It is worth noting that there is a distinct difference between this accumulation and the process of primitive accumulation. Sara Berry has suggested as much by pointing out that "the structure of opportunities and the conditions of access to the means of production which developed in western Nigeria during and after colonial rule have affected not only the allocation of surplus but also the organization of productive activity," Berry, Fathers Work for Their Sons, 10. Laird Jones is currently working on a thesis at Michigan State University which draws out these distinctions quite well.
7. Mostly because it would be harder to find collaborators unless peasantization occurred within a context of traditional authority as occurred in Uganda. For more on this phenomenon, see Edward I. Steinhart, Conflict and Collaboration (Princeton, 1977).
8. The assumption being that frustration would eventually cause the indigenous population to overcome the fear generated by the conquest state and force a bureaucratic colonial administration to use coercive elements it no longer controlled.
9. If for no other reason than there was not room for both planters and peasants to succeed, as the history of the southern region shows.
10. Surplus value being defined as Marx uses it. See Marx, Capital, 675-682.
11. Through activities like tailoring, beer brewing and fish selling. Unfortunately, aside from fish

producers, we know little about these groups activities. See McCracken, "Fishing and the Colonial Economy."

12. Marx, Capital, 885-889.
13. Although tea producers cooperated better too, see Robin Palmer, "Working Conditions and Worker Responses on Nyasaland Tea Estates, 1930-1953," Journal of African History, 27, 1 (1986).
14. Mandala, Work and Control, 266-267.
15. Which is one of the reasons bright tobacco failed and dark leaf replaced it.
16. Not only the British Cotton Growers Association and Imperial Tobacco, but the predators who seized control of the British Central Africa Company in the 1920s.
17. In other words, their primary profits came not from Malawi, where the failure of capitalism did not allow companies to maximize profits, but in the metropole where the dominance of capitalism did. The accumulation in Britain naturally was the reason they could survive disaster in Malawi, a luxury local producers did not enjoy.
18. Both by ensuring that planters served them and did not interfere with their articulation with peasant planters.
19. Mandala, Work and Control; Vaughan, The Story...; and White, Magomero.
20. For instance, Mandala, Work and Control, 131-132.
21. A process which dominates the theme of the country's standard history, Pachai, Malawi.....
22. Chanock suggested as much when he claimed that historians need to "reintegrate the divorced categories of politics and economics and to present a coherent picture of economic change which fully takes into account the political context in which it takes place." See Martin Chanock, "Notes for an Agricultural History of Malawi," Rural Africana, 20 (1973), 28.
23. Leroy Vail, "The Making of an Imperial Slum..."; and Vail, "Railway Development and Colonial Underdevelopment...".
24. Berman, Control and Crisis; Robert Collins, Shadows in

the Grass (New Haven, 1983).

25. See chapter 7 for a description of how local officials could "interpret" orders to their advantage.
26. V.Y. Mudimbe, The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy, and the Order of Knowledge (Bloomington, 1988). The importance of this subject was demonstrated when this book won the 1989 Herskovits Award.
27. See for instance, Karl Marx, "On Imperialism in India," in Robert C. Tucker, ed., The Marx-Engels Reader (New York, 1972).
28. The most notable being Berman, Crisis and Control and Kitching, Class and Economic Change. This potential is not limited to the colonial period either. For an interesting and provocative application of Marxism to pre-colonial Africa, see F. Roy Willis, A State in the Making (Bloomington, 1981). The latter is especially interesting in light of the "increasing anxiety about and disenchantment with 'modes of production' analysis," Gavin Kitching, "Suggestions for a Fresh Start on an Exhausted Debate," Canadian Journal of African Studies, 19, 1 (1985), 116. This entire volume of the Canadian Journal of African Studies is devoted to articles in which proponents of the French neo-Marxist Anthropology school "recanted" their theoretical errors. Although it is beyond the scope of this thesis to thoroughly discuss this mass defection, I would suggest that it should not lead one to assume that Marxism is bankrupt as an analytical tool. Indeed, both Kitching and J. Kimble demonstrate that "modes of production" are useful as an analytical tool, not as a typology. See Kitching, "Suggestions...", and J. Kimble "A Case for the Defence," Canadian Journal of African Studies, 19, 1 (1985). A second point worth mentioning is that Marxists, as Kitching suggests, are interested in one mode of production, capitalism, and not generating innumerable permutations of non-capitalist formations. Indeed, as Willis shows, we can define indigenous society in Marxist terms without a "typology." Finally, once one enters the colonial era, as I suggest below, capitalism is the central feature of Africa's new economic order, and it cannot be ignored.
29. J. Forbes Munro, Africa and the International Economy (London, 1976).
30. Or at least their interests like the World Bank or the International Monetary Fund. For a tragic description of this control, see Robert Klitgaard, Tropical

Gangsters: One Man's Experience with Development and Decadence in Deepest Africa (New York, 1990).

31. For example, Rodney, How Europe Underdeveloped Africa.
32. The best example of this kind of racism in Central Africa involves the continual denial of the "Africanism" of Great Zimbabwe. For a summary of this debate, see P.S. Garlake, "Prehistory and Ideology in Zimbabwe," in J.D.Y. Peel and T.O. Ranger, eds., Past and Present in Zimbabwe (Manchester, 1983).
33. As Ronald Robinson suggested colonialism did. See Ronald Robinson, "Non-European Foundations of European Imperialism: Sketch for a Theory of Collaboration," in R. Owen and B. Sutcliffe, eds., Studies in the Theory of Imperialism (London, 1972).

LIST OF REFERENCES

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Malawi National Archives, Zomba

The bulk of this thesis was researched at the Malawi National Archives during 1984-1985 and the winter of 1986. During that period, I examined sources from both official records and historical manuscripts. Since the files cited are too numerous for inclusion here, I have listed the series classifications used for this project:

Historical Manuscripts:

PO, Wordsworth and Francis Poole Correspondence;
AL, Edward Alston Diaries;
AD, "Provincial and District Administration," by Len McDonald.

Official Records:

A, Agricultural Department Files;
B, District Court Records;
COM, Commissions of Inquiry Files;
GOA, Governor's Confidential Files;
L, Legal Department Files;
LAN, Land Department Files;
J, Justice Department Files;
M, Medical Department Files;
N, District and Provincial Administration Files;
NY, Association Records;
S, Secretariat Files.

Malawi Railway Archives, Limbe

Unfortunately, the Malawi Railways Archives were badly disorganized after they had been moved in the late 1970s or early 1980s. Whenever possible, I have tried to give as full a citation as possible. For this thesis, most of the material came from files labelled "Shire Highland Railway".

Society of Malawi Library, Limbe

I used materials from the following two collections in this library:

Photographic Collection;
R, Rangeley Papers.

Lonrho Company, Limbe

Miscellaneous Files.

Imperial Tobacco Company Archives, Limbe

Various land deeds organized by box numbers.

Malawi Registrar General's Office, Blantyre

COY 4, Annual Reports, British Central Africa Company.

Malawi Department of Lands, Valuation and Water,

Lilongwe

Lands Register: Various Land Deeds.

Great BritainPublic Records Office, London

Like the Malawi Archives, the files I consulted are too numerous to list specifically. The following list includes the series from which I cited material for this project:

F.O. 2, Foreign Office, Africa Correspondence;
F.O. 84, Foreign Office, Slave Trade Correspondence;
F.O. 403, Foreign Office, General Correspondence;
F.O. 881, Foreign Office, Confidential Print;
C.O. 525, Colonial office, Nyasaland Correspondence;
C.O. 626, Colonial Office, Sessional Papers.

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ORAL EVIDENCE

From its inception, this project was designed to be primarily archival. Nevertheless, I conducted two different series of interviews during my stay in Malawi. The first was a series of twenty four interviews with indigenous inhabitants. Fortunately, I was able to coordinate these interviews with the Zomba History Project being supervised by Dr. Kings Phiri, and, with the assistance of my invaluable research assistant, Gaudy Maluza, I maximized the effectiveness of these interviews. Nevertheless, my oral data was not comprehensive. The second set of oral data consists of five interviews conducted with various European inhabitants of Malawi in 1985 and 1986. Like the indigenous fieldwork, these interviews were never designed to be exhaustive and aimed to provide background information for the project. Transcripts of the indigenous interviews are deposited at the History Department, Chancellor College, University of Malawi. Those informants mentioned in the text, the site of the interview and its date are listed below:

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Andrew and Michael Likambale, Likambale Village, T.A. Chikowi, Zomba District, July 4 1985.

Maliro, Panje Village, T.A. Chikowi, Zomba District,

July 4 1985.

Ketulo Master, Litonton Village, T.A. Chikowi, Zomba District, July 9 1985.

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Dunken Mtengule, Gelemu Village, T.A. Chikowi, Zomba District, July 19 1985.

Edward Sapato, Yavi Village, T.A. Chikowi, Zomba, July 11 1985.

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