



Dissertation By
JOSHIA O. OSAMBA

Department of History,
Moi University, Eldoret,
Kenya.

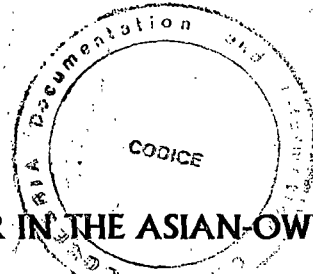
**Colonial African labour in the asian-owned
sugar plantations in Kisumu district-Kenya
1901-1963 : the role of colonial capitalism in
underdevelopment**

October, 1996.



05 JUN 1997

13.01.01
OSA
9.9.72



**COLONIAL AFRICAN LABOUR IN THE ASIAN-OWNED SUGAR
PLANTATIONS IN KISUMU DISTRICT-KENYA, 1901-1963: THE ROLE OF
COLONIAL CAPITALISM IN UNDERDEVELOPMENT**

BY

JOSHIA O. OSAMBA.

A Thesis Submitted in Partial fulfilment of the Requirements of the Degree of
Master of
Philosophy in History,

Department of History,
Moi University, Eldoret, Kenya.

October, 1996.

DECLARATION BY THE CANDIDATE

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other University. No part of this thesis may be reproduced without the prior permission of the author and/or Moi University.

Osamba
.....
JOSHIA O. OSAMBA
SSC/PG 3/91

15th OCTOBER, 1996.
DATE

DECLARATION BY SUPERVISOR

This thesis has been submitted with my approval as University Supervisor.

Milcah A. Achola
.....
PROF. MILCAH A. ACHOLA
Department of History
University of Nairobi.

16th October 1996
DATE

ABSTRACT

The colonial government in Kenya favoured the establishment of white settler plantations in the country, though a small number of Asian farmers were granted land in Kisumu District from 1902. These Asians cultivated sugar cane and other crops.

The African labourers in the sugar plantations were exploited by the Asian farmers. This was manifested in low wages, poor working conditions and arduous tasks. Although the Asian farmers paid their labourers low wages compared to other employers, a significant number of Africans preferred to work for them for reasons of proximity to African reserves, short contracts and the daily payment practice adopted by Asian employers. Later Africans began to work for longer contracts in the sugar plantations because they realised that wage labour was more reliable means of earning an income than peasant agriculture. At the same time due to competition for labour by other employers, the Asian farmers engaged labourers on longer contracts.

African labourers never accepted their poor working conditions on the Asian plantations as a fait accompli. Rather from the outset they made concerted attempts

to ameliorate their working conditions through various methods such as desertion, evasion of harsh employers, strikes and the formation of trade unions. Wage employment undermined the African peasant economy because many able bodied African males entered into the wage labour market. Thus agricultural production was left mainly in the hands of women and children. Consequently there was decline in food production in the reserves from 1940 onwards. The colonial state facilitated the development of capitalist mode of production in Kisumu District. This role of the Colonial State was evident in the political coercion which marked the emergence of both commodity production and the system of migrant labour in the District.

On the whole the study asserts that the colonial state's policies on land, labour, taxation and public expenditure among others intensified the underdevelopment of Kisumu District.

The methodology of the study is based on archival research, oral interviews and analysis of existing works on socio-economic history in general and labour in particular.

DEDICATION

To my wife Mary Akinyi and uncle, the late Michael O. Agengo.

CODESRIA-LIBRARY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES	viii
LIST OF MAPS	x
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	xi
ABBREVIATIONS	xiii
GLOSSARY OF TERMS	xvi

CHAPTER 1

1.0 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Introduction and Background	1
1.2 Area of Study	5
1.3 Statement of the problem	6
1.4 Literature review	7
1.5 Research hypotheses	17
1.6 Objectives of the study	18
1.7 Theoretical Framework	18
1.8 Justification for the study	22
1.9 Research methodology	23
1.10 Research limitations	26
Endnotes	28

CHAPTER 2

2.0 COLONIAL LABOUR POLICIES AND THE EMERGENCE OF ASIAN SUGAR PLANTATION ECONOMY IN KISUMU DISTRICT 1901-18	
2.1 Introduction	33
2.2 The establishment of Asian agricultural settlements	33
2.3 Colonial labour policies and Labour Supply in the Asian sugar plantations	44
2.4 Summary	53
Endnotes	54

CHAPTER 3

3.0 LABOUR AND ASIAN AGRICULTURE IN THE INTERWAR PERIOD	59
3.1 Introduction	59
3.2 African labour and the Economic depression	59
3.3 African labour in the immediate post depression era	72
3.4 Initial African response to the Asian plantation economy	74
3.5 Summary	79
Endnotes	81

CHAPTER 4

4.0 THE MIGRANT LABOUR SYSTEM,	
1940-55	86
4.1 Introduction.....	86
4.2 Expansion of the Asian Sugar Plantations	86
4.3 Categories of labourers in the sugar plantations	95
4.4 Working conditions in the sugar plantations	102
4.5 Labour Protests in the Sugar Plantations	117
4.6 Background to trade union organisation in the sugar industry	119
4.7 Summary	126
Endnotes	128

CHAPTER 5

5.0 TRADE UNIONISM AND THE SUGAR PLANTATIONS,	
1953-63	133
5.1 Introduction	133
5.2 The impact of the Sugar Plantation Agriculture on Peasant Economy in Kisumu District.....	133
5.3 The Emergence of Trade Unions in the Asian Sugar Plantations	150
5.4 The Formation and Growth of the Kenya Union of Sugar Plantation Workers	158
5.5 The rise of the Industrial Relations Machinery in the Sugar Plantations	170

5.6 Summary	181
-------------------	-----

Endnotes	183
----------------	-----

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS	188
-------------------	-----

Endnotes	197
----------------	-----

REFERENCES

A PRIMARY SOURCES

(a) Archival Source	198
(b) Government Publications/Reports	199
(c) Newspapers	199
(d) Informants	199

B SECONDARY SOURCES

(a) Unpublished Works	201
(i) Thesis and dissertations	201
(ii) Conference, Seminar & Working Papers	202
(b) Published Works	
(i) Journal articles	202
(ii) Books	203

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1	Sample questionnaires.....	209
APPENDIX 2	Kenya Union of Sugar Plantation workers Constitution	218

<u>LIST OF TABLES</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Table 2.1: Asian Land Grantees and Acreage held at Kibos Indian Settlement, 1913	37
Table 2.2: Asian Land Grantees in Muhoroni Indian Settlement, 1912	40
Table 2.3: Jaggery Export from Asian Sugar Plantations, 1909-18	42
Table 3.1: Amount of Cane purchased by the Victoria Nyanza Sugar Company from the Asian Plantations, 1930-31	65
Table 3.2: Asian Plantations, 31 Sugar Production by the Victoria Nyanza Sugar Company (Miwani), 1930-33	68
Table 4.1:(a) Approximate Number of Asian Farmers and average acreage held in Kisumu District, 1954	91
Table 4.1:(b) Analysis by size of Asian agricultural holdings in Kibos-Muhoroni area in acres, 1956-57	94
Table 4.2: Labour Housing in the Miwani Estate, 1954	111
Table 4.3: Monthly wage rates at the Miwani Sugar Mills 1952 and 1955	116
Table 5.1 Asian Land holding and acreage in Cane in Kisumu District, 1953	134

Table 5.2 Cane Production by Asian Farmers

in Kisumu District, 1953 - 58 135

Table 5.3 The Miwani Sugar Mills production,

1953-60 135

Table 5.4 Asian tenant farmers on the Walji

Hirji estate (Kibos), 1957 136

Table 5.5 Comparison of estimated income of an African peasant from the yield

of one acre of maize or cotton and monthly wage rate in the sugar

plantations 140

Table 5.6 African Labourers on permanent employment in the Kibos Asian

Farms, 1954-57 142

Table 5.7 1948 Population Census for Kisumu District 145

LIST OF MAPS

- Fig. 1 The location of Kisumu District xvii:
- Fig. 2 Kisumu District Locational boundaries, 1967 xviii
- Fig. 3 The location of the Asian Sugar Plantations xix

CODESRIA-LIBRARY

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study is the result of support from a number of institutions and persons who directly or indirectly assisted me.

First and foremost, I would like to thank Moi University for having awarded me a scholarship which enabled me to pursue the M.Phil degree in history. I also express my gratitude to my employer, Egerton University for having granted me a two year study leave to pursue the course. Thanks to CODESRIA for providing a small grant to finalise the writing of the thesis.

Secondly I am grateful to my supervisor, Prof. Milcah A. Achola whose scholarship, patience and cooperation were the key ingredients in making this thesis a reality.

I would like to express my appreciation to the staff of the Department of History of Moi University and more so to Mrs Anne Nangulu-Ayuku and Mr Mwangi Kagwanja for the time they took in reading draft Chapters of my thesis, offering valuable comments and suggestions. I also thank Dr. David Moore-Sierrey of Maseno University College for his comments on my ideas and the interest he took in following my progress.

Thanks are also due to the librarians and staff of the Kenya National Archives, Moi University, University of Nairobi and the Kenya National Library Services (Nakuru) who readily traced and made available documents for my inspection.

In addition, I would like to acknowledge the large number of informants who provided the information I required for the work. Furthermore, I also express my

gratitude to Messrs Henry Chvasu and Amolo Okumu, my colleagues with whom I had stimulating discussions during the study.

I thank my parents, Dismas Osamba and Wilkister Osamba, my brothers, Tom, Jack, Julius, Alfred, Mike and Fred as well as all the relatives for their moral and material support. Special thanks to my wife Mary Akinyi whose devotion, encouragement and patience throughout the study were invaluable sources of strength and support. I also thank her for taking good care of our children, Eddy, Austin, Frank and Patrick during my long absence of study. Finally and not least of all, I am indebted to Francis S. Inganga and Hezron Ochieng, for typing the work and S. A. Ojode for drawing the maps used in the thesis. Many other people have contributed to this study whom I can not thank individually, but nonetheless I am deeply grateful to them all.

Any errors in the work are naturally my own responsibility.

ABBREVIATIONS

ACIE	Association of Commercial and Industrial Employers.
AGR.	Agriculture
AR	Annual Report
AWF	African Workers Federation
CK	Central Kavirondo
CKDAR.....	Central Kavirondo District Annual Report
CN	Central Nyanza
CNDAR.....	Central Nyanza District Annual Report
COTU	Central Organization of Trade Unions
DC	District Commissioner
EAS	The East African Standard
FKE	Federation of Kenya Employers
lbs.	Pounds
ICFTU	International Confederation of Free Trade Unions
IFPAAW.....	International Federation of Plantation, Agricultural and Allied Workers
ILO	International Labour Organization
JBC	Joint Branch Committee
JCC	Joint Consultative Council
JIC	Joint Industrial Council

SJC	Standing Joint Council
KDAQR	Kisumu District Annual and Quarterly Report
KDAR	Kisumu District Annual Report
KDCR	Kisumu District Commissioner's Report
KFL	Kenya Federation of Labour
KFRTU.....	Kenya Federation of Registered Trade Unions
K-LDAR.....	Kisumu-Londiani District Annual Report
KPA.....	Kibos Planters Association
KTWA	Kavirondo Tax Payers Welfare Association
KSEU	Kenya Sugar Employers Union
KSM	Kisumu
KNA	Kenya National Archives
KUSPW	Kenya Union of Sugar Plantation Workers
Lab	Labour Department Files, Kenya
NA	National Archives
LIR	Labour Inspection Report
LR	Land Registration
LTUK	Labour Trade Union of Kenya
NAD	Native Affairs Department
NIFA	Nyanza Indian Farmers Association
NIFCS	Nyanza Indian Co-operative Society
NITD	Native Industrial Training Depot

MRP	Monthly Press Review
OI	Oral Interview
OUP.....	Oxford University Press
PC	Provincial Commissioner
PWIF	Plantation Workers International Federation
QR	Quarterly Report
RS	Rupees
TUC	Trade Union Congress
T & S	Trade and Supplies
WFTU	World Federation of Trade Unions.

CODESRIA-LIBRARY

GLOSSARY (all Dholuo words, unless indicated otherwise)

<u>Askari</u>	(Kiswahili), guard.
<u>Boma</u>	(Kiswahili), homestead.
<u>Bonyo,</u>	Famine of the locusts.
<u>Chiroco</u>	(Kiswahili). green grams.
<u>Dholuo,</u>	language spoken by the Luo of Kenya.
<u>Fundi</u>	(Kiswahili), artisan
<u>Harambee</u>	(Kiswahili), joint effort.
<u>Jembe</u>	(Kiswahili), hoe
<u>Jo ogirimiti,</u>	African labourers on 6 months contracts.
<u>Kanga,</u>	local name of the 1917-18 famine.
<u>Karai</u>	(Kiswahili). trough.
<u>Kavirondo,</u>	name used by the British to refer to the African societies living near Lake Victoria.
<u>Kipande</u>	(Kiswahili), Identification certificate.
<u>Malaya</u>	(Kiswahili), prostitute.
<u>Nyangori,</u>	local name of the 1907 drought / famine.
<u>Nyangweso,</u>	name of the 1928 famine.
<u>Nyapara</u>	(Kiswahili), supervisor.
<u>Onge noma,</u>	to perform an incomplete day's task.
<u>Onindo mauru,</u>	see <u>onge noma</u> .
<u>Otonglo,</u>	famine of ten cents (1942-43).
<u>Panga</u>	(Kiswahili). machet.
<u>Piny owacho,</u>	the will of the people movement.
<u>Posho</u>	(Kiswahili), maize floor.
<u>Ratego,</u>	good and experienced cane cutters.
<u>Wakora</u>	(Kiswahili), conmen.

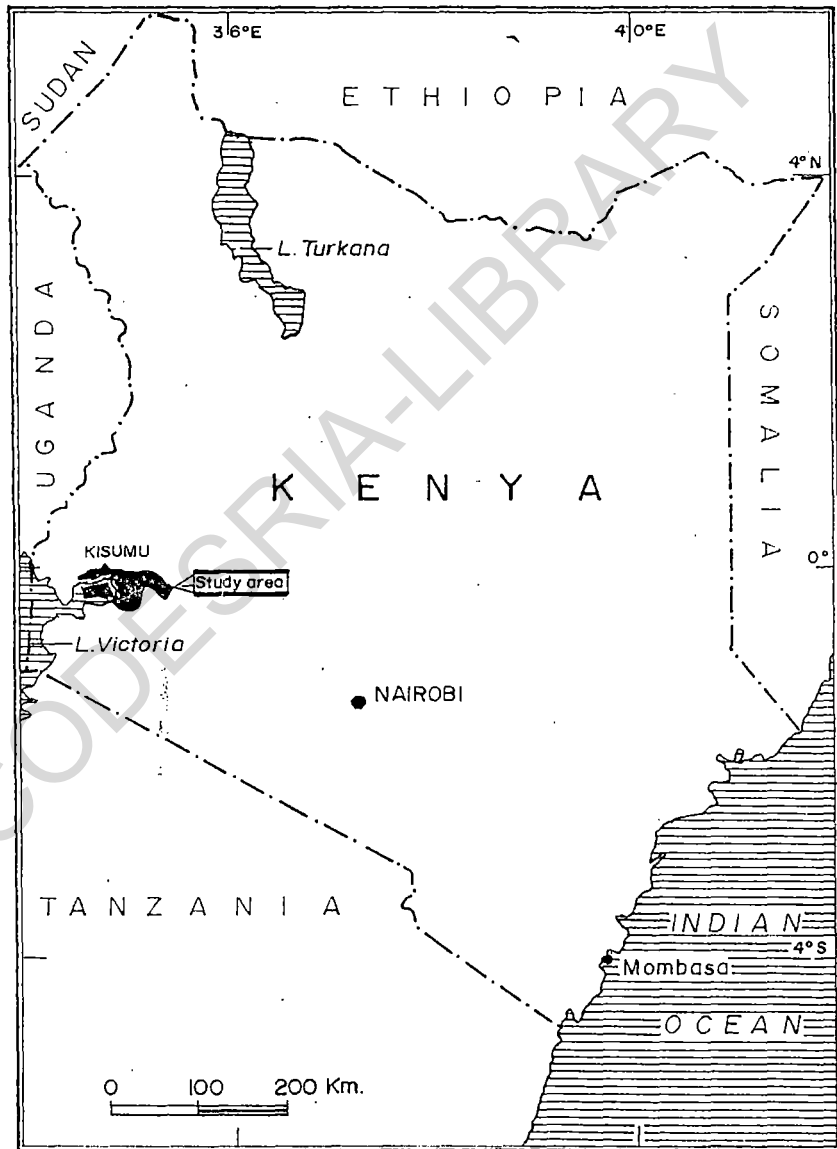


Fig. I: THE LOCATION OF KISUMU DISTRICT.

SOURCE: Republic of Kenya, Kisumu District Dev. Plan 1984- 88, NAIROBI, 1984.

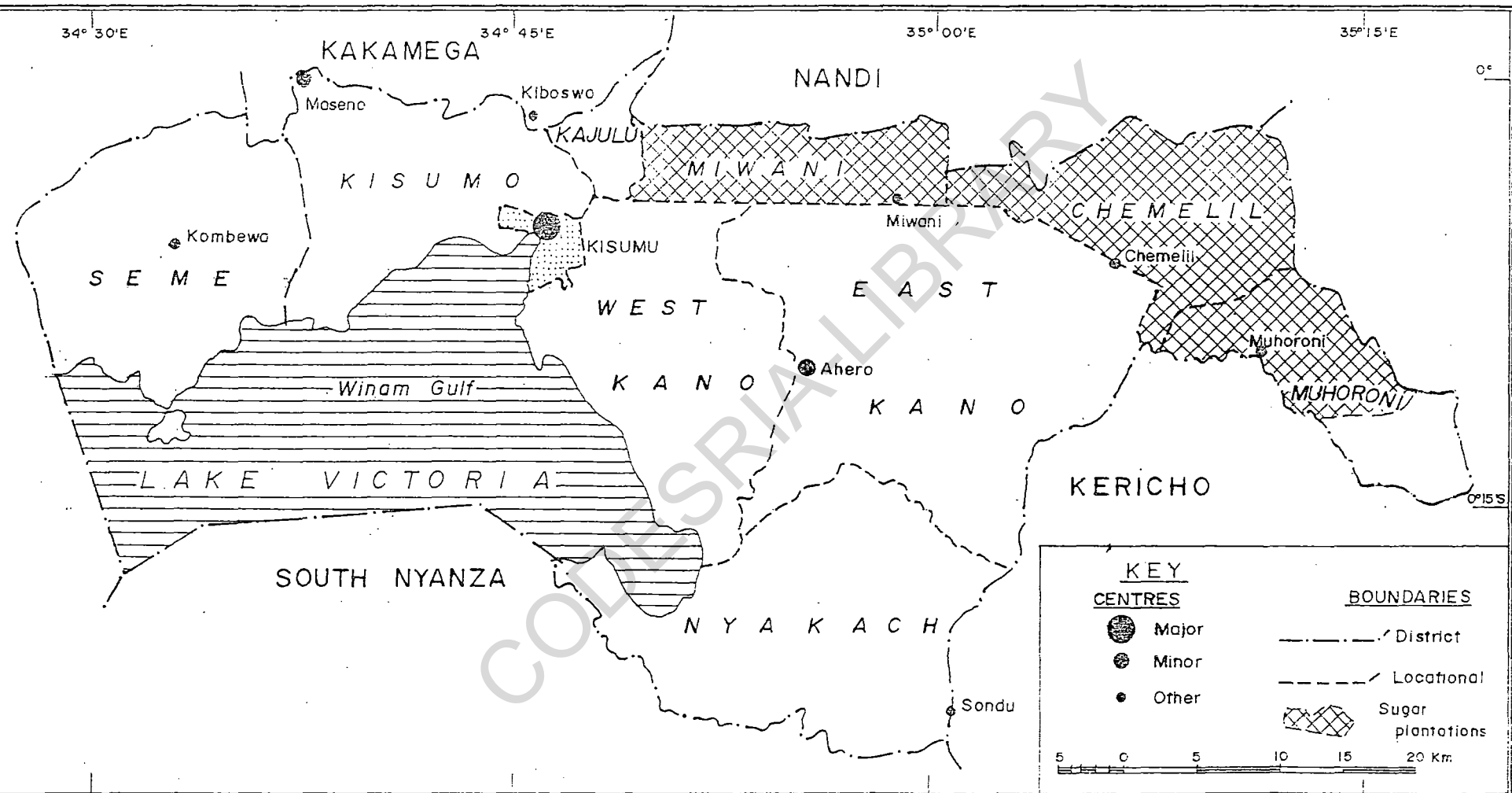


Fig. 2: KISUMU DISTRICT LOCATIONAL BOUNDARIES, 1967.

SOURCE: Republic of Kenya, Kisumu District Dev. Plan 1984-88, NAIROBI.

CHAPTER 1

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction and Background

Labour was a central variable in the colonial history of Kenya. From the outset of colonial rule, the issue of labour supply was a major bone of contention between the colonial state, the Imperial Government and the capitalist enterprises¹. The white settlers held the view that the colonial government in Kenya had the obligation to provide them with cheap and adequate African labour². This was a daunting task which the colonial government could not meet easily. Thus, the colonial government adopted coercive measures to compel the Africans to enter into the wage labour market. This was carried out by the use of forced labour, heavy taxation, land alienation and the prohibition of the Africans from cultivating key cash crops such as coffee and pyrethrum. These crops, might have enabled African peasants to meet their tax obligations without resorting to wage labour. Wage labour in Kenya, therefore, emerged within the political economy of colonialism which transformed some independent self reliant African producers into migrant labourers.

The colonial government favoured the establishment of plantation agriculture at the expense of peasant production in the country³. The colonial government had the misconception that the African peasants were incapable of achieving economic self sufficiency in agricultural production in Kenya for export⁴. After the completion of the Kenya-Uganda Railway which was intended to open up the interior of East Africa for trade, the colonial government invited white settlers to establish plantations in

Kenya to produce agricultural commodities for export. It was hoped that such commodities would make the railway pay for its construction and maintenance. This was because Kenya had no vast mineral deposits. A limited number of Asian settlers were given land in the Kibos-Muhoroni area where they established sugar plantations from 1903. Thus Asian sugar plantations were some of the earliest plantations to be established in Kisumu District.

The period under study is 1901 to 1963 because 1901 marked the completion of the Kenya-Uganda railway with its terminus in Kisumu town. Some of the earliest Asian settlers were ex-railway labourers. On the other hand, 1963 marked the formal end of colonial rule in Kenya. Some of the Asian sugar plantations were sold by their owners to the local people, while some others were bought by the first independence government and turned into settlement areas for landless peasants.

Structurally the thesis is divided into six chapters. The introductory chapter represents the baseline for the thesis as a whole and the theoretical framework applied in the study. Chapter 2 is an attempt to trace the origins and growth of the Asian sugar plantations in Kisumu District before 1918. This is intended to place the subject in a proper historical perspective. The third, fourth and fifth chapters are the most important since they are the core of the subject matter. Chapter three discusses African labour and the Asian agriculture during the interwar period. It is pointed out that the period was marked by two economic recessions which greatly affected the Asian farmers and the African labourers. Chapter four traces the genesis of a migrant labour system in the sugar plantations and its resultant effects. Chapter five details the

emergence and growth of trade unionism in the sugar industry. The final chapter is offered by way of summation of the main arguments of the thesis. It evaluates the impact of wage labour on the African reserves. It is finally suggested that Colonial Capitalism and therefore colonial land and labour policies contributed to the underdevelopment of Kisumu District.

The system of plantation agriculture with its incessant labour demands contributed to the emergence of a coercive labour control system in Kenya. Compulsory labour was widely used during the first three decades of colonial rule, and was institutionalized under the Northey Labour Circulars of 1919⁵. Local African chiefs and headmen recruited labour for both the government and private enterprises during this period⁶. African labourers were thus exploited by capitalist entrepreneurs in collaboration with the colonial government.

R.M.A van Zwanenberg⁷ and Stichter⁸ postulate that peripheral capitalism in Kenya gave rise to a semi-proletarianized or migrant labour system. The former (Van Zwanenberg) contends that the low wages paid to African labourers impeded the emergence of a proletarian class in Kenya. Thus through migrant labour the colonial system was able to exploit African labour. This is because of the late development of labour organization. African labourers, however, adopted several methods such as desertion, evasion of recruitment and also maintaining links with the rural sector as a form of protest against the colonial labour system. To counteract such African protests, the colonial government introduced a male registration system through the registration certificate, Kipande to regulate African labour⁹.

However, from the 1930s onwards an increasing number of African peasants started joining the wage labour voluntarily. This was because of factors such as population pressure in the reserves, the emergence of a small number of an African educated elite and the desire to acquire imported western goods such as radios, bicycles, clothes and others. Most of these labourers continued to be migrant.

Labourers were exploited by being paid low bachelor wages which meant that they had to subsidize their income from the family farm. The working conditions of these labourers were very poor. The plantation owners in their desire to accumulate more wealth attempted to extract surplus value from the African labour. Some of the Asian farmers were undercapitalised. Thus sugar plantation labourers were exploited by the Asian farmers who wanted to make profits or to make ends meet.

At this point it may be convenient to define some of the concepts used in this study. The term "Asian" is used to refer to all immigrants from the Indian sub-continent, that is, people from the present day countries of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. The term "labourer" denotes all wage earners regardless of the nature of their work or the duration of their stay in employment. The term "skilled labourer" is used to refer to an employee such as a mechanic or an accountant who has acquired some competence in his work, by the knowledge he has attained through training or experience¹⁰. On the other hand, "semi skilled" labourer refers to an employee who has gained some experience in his work though below the level of a skilled labourer¹¹. The term "unskilled labourer" refers to an untrained or an inexperienced employee who has no recognized competence in his work¹². The term "plantation" refers to: a large scale agricultural undertaking regularly employing hired labour (both

permanent and casual) and are concerned mainly with production for commercial use¹³.

"Surplus value" denotes the difference between production and exchange costs which the capitalist expropriates from the labourer¹⁴.

The term "development" is used in the study to denote:

a multi-dimensional process involving changes in structure, attitude and institutions as well as economic growth, the reduction of inequality and eradication of absolute poverty¹⁵.

On the other hand, the term "underdevelopment" refers to:

a condition of dependence-one in which the activities of a given society are subjected to the overriding control by an external power, over which it can exert little direct influence¹⁶.

1.2 Area of Study

The study is based on Kisumu District in the Nyanza Province of Kenya (see fig. 1). The District is divided into six administrative Divisions namely Muhoroni, Nyando, Maseno, Winam, Upper Nyakach and Lower Nyakach. It occupies a total land area of 2,660 sq. Km, which is 17% of the total land area of Nyanza Province¹⁷. Topologically the District has three zones, firstly, the Kano Plains which occupy much of the central part of the District, secondly the Upland areas of Maseno to the North West and thirdly Nyabondo Plateau to the South. The soils are mostly sandy and clayey. The District has an Inland Equatorial type of climate. The mean annual rainfall ranges from 1,000mm along the Winam Gulf to 1,500mm in the East and over 1,800mm in the North. The major cash crops are sugar cane, cotton, rice and coffee. Other crops include maize, sorghum, millet, beans, simsim and groundnuts.

From 1902 to 1924 the area was referred to as Kisumu District¹⁸. In 1924

under Proclamation number 54 Kisumu township and the Asian sugar plantations of Kibos-Miwani as well as the European settled area overlooking the Nyando Valley up to Londiani was separated and designated as Kisumu-Londiani Extra-Provincial District. The rest of Kisumu District was renamed Central Kavirondo. In 1948 the Kibos-Muhoroni area was incorporated into Central Kavirondo which was named Central Nyanza District. The District was later split in 1967 into Siaya and Kisumu Districts.

In 1936 Central Kavirondo had a population of 384,997¹⁹. According to the 1948 Population census the District had a total of 446,426 people. In 1962 the Population of the District was 629,874 people. By then the District had the following 12 locations South Ugenya, North Ugenya, Samia, Alego, Gem, Kajulu, Kisumu, Seme, Asembo, Sakwa, Yimbo, Uyoma, Nyakach, West Kano and East Kano. The District bordered the Nandi Escarpment and Nandi District to the North, Kericho District to the East, Lake Victoria to the West, North Nyanza District to the North West, and South Nyanza District to the South (see fig. 2).

At present the District is well served by both bitumen and all weather roads. The major urban centres apart from Kisumu town are, Maseno, Miwani, Kibos, Sondu, Ahero, Muhoroni, Kibigori and Pap Onditi (see fig. 2)

1.3 Statement of the problem

There is a lot of literature on the labour history in Kenya. However, the emergence of the sugar plantation labour has not been properly studied. These works have mainly dealt with labour on white settler farms and in the towns. Smaller groups

like the Asian settlers have been ignored with the argument that they were small scale during the colonial period. Most of these early studies are generalised works which have not focused on any specific category of African labour. There is need for historians to avoid making generalizations. This can only be achieved by studying at micro level and representing a systematic analysis of labour in a particular sector. As Illife notes:

The history of a labour movement must be based on history of work, and the most profound source of change within it is the changing character of work in which the men are engaged²⁰.

The social, economic and political processes as pertains to the sugar plantations' labour have not been documented. Not only is it important to focus attention on the Asian sugar plantations, but the period upon which the research centred represents an important epoch in the emergence and growth of the sugar plantations labour.

The study poses and answers the following questions, why did some African peasants opt for wage labour in the sugar plantations? What socio-economic and political processes and events generated labour migrancy during the colonial era? How did peasants react to the various government policies which were geared to ensure labour supply, and why? What were the effects of labour migrancy on the peasant economy?

1.4 Literature review

A considerable amount of work has been done on labour history in Kenya. Unfortunately, the existing literature is inadequate in their treatment of African labour

in the sugar plantations.

Lenin, V.I.²¹ in his studies on capitalist development in Russia in the early twentieth century has argued that within a capitalist system, the peasants are ultimately divorced from their means of production and turned into wage labourers. However, such a state of affairs was not reached in Kenya during colonial rule because the majority of Africans still retained access to land. This was due to the weaknesses of the peripheral capitalism. This form of capitalism required the continued existence of some form of a pre-capitalist economy to subsidize it. The employers favoured a migrant labour system in which the labourers were paid low wages calculated on the needs of a single labourer²². However, though thousands of Africans joined wage employment, they were not fully proletarianized as was the case in Russia.

On the other hand Bernstein²³, in his book, Underdevelopment and Development, has postulated that colonialism destroyed the indigenous economy which was characterized by kinship production and exchange. This process of destruction was achieved by the withdrawal of labour from the traditional forms of production and by monetization. In that connection, the indigenous economy was constrained, forcing the rural producers into either wage labour or commodity producers. However, his assertion that the whole reproductive cycle of the African economy was destroyed is erroneous. On the contrary, productive cycle of the African economy only became partially altered. As Hyden²⁴, has pointed out, the colonial state was unable to capture the peasants wholly because of its inherent weaknesses. Thus, to a large extent capitalism did not completely wipe out the pre-

capitalist mode of production. African labourers continued to be producers through their access to land and their use of family labour. This study supports the view that despite wage labour in the sugar plantations, the local peasants still continued with their traditional agriculture. In Kisumu District, the nascent agricultural capitalism never managed to dismantle the indigenous production, though it was altered to adapt itself to the interests of capitalism.

Berman and Lonsdale²⁵ have shown how the pre-capitalist and capitalist modes of production became articulated with each other. They pointed out that in the process of articulation the pre-capitalist modes were partly transformed and partly preserved to serve the needs of capitalism.

Consequently, domestic forms were undermined and had difficulty in reproducing themselves. Furthermore, Berman and Lonsdale have noted that the changes that occurred in the process of articulation depended on the nature and extent to which the penetration of capital occurred. Since the Asian sugar plantations were located in Kisumu District near Kisumu town, the nearby locations of Kajulu, Nyakach and Kano became involved in the new mode of production earlier than other areas in the Province. Thus a large number of people from these locations were in employment by the 1920s in the plantations. Consequently, there was decline in African agricultural production in those locations especially from the 1940s onward.

Samir Amin²⁶, discounts the notion that African workers are a "pampered class". He argues that on the contrary, the unskilled labourers in Africa are a most deprived lot compared to skilled workers. This indeed was the case with the sugar

plantation labourers as will be shown in this study. Furthermore, Amin has ably shown that solidarity among the African workers is weak because of poor trade unions and wide dispersal of workers. This study will examine the extent to which this argument is applicable to the sugar plantation labour.

One of the earliest works in Kenya that is relevant to this study is that by Fearn²⁷, who has discussed the impact of European settlers and Asians in the economic development of Nyanza Province in general. He has argued that Africans sought employment mainly to supplement farming incomes, obtain additional incomes for trade and to acquire new consumer goods. However, he does not analyze the extent to which the administrative coercive labour policies contributed to the growth of wage labour. In addition, he underplays the effect of land alienation for Asian settlement on the local people. For example, he speculates that since the alienated land was mainly suitable for sugar cane cultivation, it would not have been profitably used by the Africans. Fearn, however notes that, although initially the sugar plantations were small and mainly produced jaggery, they were already contributing some agricultural commodities to the export market by 1910. Fearn was an agricultural economist and his methodology might not be appropriate for a good analysis of labour dynamics in historical perspective. The study, moreover, concentrates on the commercial and trade activities of the Asians compared to their agricultural enterprises. Thus, this study by examining the African labour in the Asian plantations has attempted to bridge that gap.

Perhaps the studies that have closest affinity to this study are those by Tom

Mboya²⁸, Makhan Singh²⁹ and Lubembe³⁰. Tom Mboya, in his book, Freedom and After, has pointed out that, the colonial government in Kenya viewed African trade unions as subversive movements controlled by communists. He has convincingly argued that the trade unions were formed by genuine workers because of the many socio-economic and political problems that they encountered in their work places. Makhan Singh explores the protests through strikes by African labourers against poor working conditions and exploitation in colonial Kenya. In addition, he has shown the nexus between labour protests and the nationalist movement in Kenya. Lubembe, effectively traces the development of the Kenyan labour movement from the establishment of colonial rule to 1968. He argues that colonialism introduced the exploitation of labourers by institutionalizing of a low wage policy. He also contends that the African labourers formed trade unions in order to ameliorate their socio-economic and political conditions.

These three writers, being renowned trade unionists provide authoritative, resourceful and first-hand information on the labour movement. However, these studies have concentrated mainly on urban labour. Thus very little attention has been given to the agricultural labourers. In addition, these works tend to overemphasize the political role of the labour movement in colonial Kenya. Although none of these works discusses sugar plantation labour in detail, they are nonetheless useful to this study as they provided vital information on trade unionism which is an important variable on the Kenyan labour history.

Mangat³¹ and Mehta³² in their works on the Asians in East Africa and Kenya

respectively, have dwelt mainly on the social, commercial and political activities and aspirations of the Asians. They only give cursory mention of the Asian sugar plantations in Kisumu District. Moreover, Mangat dismisses Asian agriculture in Kenya as a failure. This study hopes to invalidate that assumption by showing that after the Second World War the Asian plantations expanded and employed thousands of African labourers. The two works, however, provided invaluable background reading on Asian immigration to Kenya.

Clayton and Savage³³, in their work have argued that the colonial government contributed greatly to the improvement of the status of African labourers in Kenya. Their study is an apologia for colonialism and fails to give credit to the struggle of the African labour movement to ameliorate their socio-economic conditions. Furthermore, the two writers dismiss African labour protests casually as political agitation. In addition, they only give a cursory mention of the Kenya Union of Sugar Plantation Workers (KUSPW), focusing mainly on political rivalry between Tom Mboya and Oginga Odinga for the control of the union. Thus the study does not analyze the issues such as working conditions and union activities. Nevertheless, the work offers an important insight into the nature of the colonial labour policies in Kenya.

Alice Amsden³⁴, in her work has argued that the industrial relations machinery in Kenya emerged due to the so-called management acumen of the Federation of Kenya Employers (FKE), which was dominated by international firms. She has observed that the post-independence government adopted the system of industrial relations because of its effectiveness in solving disputes. However, she erroneously

claims that the industrial relations machinery in Kenya managed to solve labour disputes. On the contrary, available evidence shows that labour protests and strikes increased after the formation of the FKE³⁵. That is a clear indication that the establishment of the industrial relations machinery per se was not a solution to the industrial problems in Kenya. Moreover, it is worth noting that FKE was not formed to protect the interests of the labourers, but rather to pre-empt any moves by the colonial government to make unilateral wage increases. The FKE wanted to ensure that it controlled the labour process to serve its own interests. This study has attempted to show the emergence of the employers union in the sugar industry in line with the FKE policy.

Sandbrook³⁶ has ably discussed the relationship between the labour movement and the first independence government in Kenya. He has observed that the colonial government measures against radical trade unions led to the emergence of economistic, "bread and butter" trade unions. Furthermore, he has argued that worker class consciousness was impeded by the petite-bourgeoisie and the labour aristocracy, who enjoyed more privileges than the other labourers. Thus workers could not speak with one voice or act in solidarity. Concomitant with that, he has posited that the labour movement in Kenya has been characterized by ethnic and clientelist politics. Although, the Kenya Union of Sugar Plantation Workers was one of the sample unions in his study, he concentrates on its relationship with the Kenya Federation of Labour (KFL) and the personality conflicts within the union. Thus he fails to delve into the salient socio-economic and political underpinnings of the union and its impact on the

members.

Another important and relevant work to this study is that of van Zwanenberg³⁷. His study, however, concentrates on the white settler plantations before the Second World War. He argues convincingly that white settler plantations became economically viable because of the support of the colonial government. Furthermore, he observes that the migratory nature of African labour before the 1940s inhibited the emergence of labour organization. His work, however, ignores the African labourers in the Asian sugar plantations. Consequently, he does not show whether the assistance provided to the white settlers by the colonial government was also extended to the Asian settlers. This study hopes to examine that fact. The most remarkable aspects of his study is the analysis of the exploitation of African labourers by the European settlers in collaboration with the colonial government. But whatever omissions are discerned in van Zwanenberg's analysis, his work provided an important departure point for this thesis.

Cooper³⁸, has noted that the colonial government in Kenya did not aim at creating a working class responsible to market forces but rather, a state controlled labour force. He points out that the colonial government did not support the Arab-Swahili Planters through the provision of cheap labour as was the case with the white settlers. Cooper subscribes to the notion that African labour in the subsistence sector was underemployed and would only have been fully utilized in the so-called dynamic commercial agricultural sector. Thus he down-plays the negative impact of wage labour system on the African economy, a fact which this study explores.

Kitching³⁹, has argued that in pre-colonial Kenya labour was under-utilized especially by men in both quantitative and qualitative terms. Thus the introduction of commodity production and wage labour because of the colonial administration led to the re-distribution and the intensification of labour power. According to Kitching such measures boosted agricultural development. Kitching's argument has several weaknesses. His claims are generalised. For example, his contention that the qualitative and quantitative use of labour time led to expansion of commodity production in colonial Kenya is erroneous. Available evidence shows that before the 1950s commodity production failed in many areas including Nyanza Province. Furthermore, Kitching uses the western concept of time which had no relevance in the African setting. African time was governed by seasons and not by the clock as was the case in Europe where work starts in the morning and ends in the evening. Moreover, in Africa time was not viewed as mechanical. Rather the seasons determined what activities would be carried out at a particular time.

In addition, Kitching fails to underline the fact that Europe and Africa were at different levels technologically, thus his attempts to compare the two could not be objective. In Africa the production process relied on human muscle and energy unlike Europe where machines were already in use. Furthermore, production in Africa was mainly for self sufficiency of the household rather than for profit. Thus there was no need for mass production of goods as was the case in Europe. For example, in traditional Luo society there was a clear division of labour based on sex and age. The males did much of the arduous tasks such as clearing forests before cultivation,

hunting, fishing and defending the society among other duties. Moreover, the elders used much of the resting periods to conduct their courts and to deliberate on issues affecting the society. Thus, to a large extent, the Luo males were occupied throughout the year. Consequently, it is erroneous for Kitching to claim that African males were parasitic and dependent on the female product of labour.

Stichter⁴⁰ has postulated that the dependent capitalist system in Kenya stimulated the emergence of a migrant labour system. She has observed that taxation per se did not force out Africans into wage labour. Although she has pointed out that administrative coercion was used to compel Africans to join wage employment for the settlers and the colonial government, she does not indicate whether the same assistance was extended to Asian settlers. Her study does not even give a cursory mention of these sugar plantations. This study of labour with somewhat different background therefore augments the findings of Stichter's study.

Another authoritative work on the labour history of Kenya is that of Zeleza⁴¹. He has traced the genesis of the penetration of capital and the creation of a working class in Kenya during the colonial period. The writer claims that the migratory nature of African labour has been exaggerated. Furthermore, he has argued that the capitalist mode of production was not inimical to the pre-capitalist mode. He cites the squatters on settler farms whom he claims prospered by combining both modes of production. However, he fails to explain why the settlers later turned against the squatters forcing them to vacate their land and become wage labourers. The settler-squatter conflict was an indication that the two modes could not co-exist amicably in close proximity, as

Zezeza wants us to believe. One sector had to become predominant in the articulation of the two modes. Furthermore, he seems to accept the notion that the absence of large scale strikes in the agricultural sector was a manifestation of lack of labour consciousness, a claim that this study disproves.

The foregoing works illustrate the historiographical gaps in the study of the Asian owned sugar plantation labour. This is inspite of the abundance of documentary material pertaining to the colonial period in Kenya. The dynamics of Labour in the sugar plantations have been largely ignored by scholars on the labour question and this obscures our full understanding of colonial labour history in Kenya. This oversight may have been the result of overemphasis on migratory labour and the relationship between the colonial state, white settlers and African labour. This study attempts to remedy this oversight through a case study of labour dynamics in the Asian sugar plantations within Kisumu District.

1.5 Research hypotheses

The study proceeded from the following premises:

That the incorporation of Kenya into the World capitalist system was closely related to the exploitation of African labour,

That the setting up of a political administration in Kisumu, the creation of trading centres, the introduction of new cash crops and road network brought new felt needs and opportunities which in turn activated the local people to respond to these new challenges in the form of commodity production or migrant wage labour,

That the sugar plantations through the introduction of a wage labour system,

undermined the local peasant economy, and that a spirit of labour consciousness, trade unionism and political consciousness sprung up among the mostly unskilled and illiterate African labourers in the Asian sugar plantations in Kisumu District.

1.6 Objectives of the study

In order to obtain a clear picture of the origin and development of certain aspects of African labour in the Asian sugar plantations the study will have the following basic aims: To study the origin, scope and organization of African labour in the sugar plantations,

To analyze categories of labour and the working conditions of the sugar plantation labourers,

To discuss the emergence and growth of trade unionism, industrial relations machinery and political consciousness among the sugar plantation labourers, and

To study the impact of wage labour in the sugar plantation on the local peasant economy.

1.7 Theoretical Framework

Studies on socio-economic history of the Third World have mainly adopted perspectives derived from modernization and dependency approaches. The modernization⁴² perspective emerged in the 1950s and was propounded by colonial historians, apologetics and administrators. The proponents of this approach argued that colonialism was beneficial to the Third World countries. They pointed out that through colonialism the Third World societies made progress by being transformed

into modernized entities. The perspective attributes underdevelopment in the Third World to the persistence of traditional modes of production. Thus the theory stresses that development can only occur in the Third World if western technology and capital are transferred there to bolster agricultural production and industrialization⁴³. Furthermore, the perspective posits that the underdeveloped countries have to follow the same historical path that the developed countries followed in order to achieve socio-economic development. It points out that capitalism frequently spread development throughout the backward hinterland⁴⁴.

Consequently, the modernization approach ignores exploitation of the Third World while emphasizing social harmony in the production process. Moreover, on the question of labour the perspective holds that the interest of the state, capital and labour were not antagonistic but rather compatible⁴⁵. The modernization approach has some inherent weaknesses. As Bernstein⁴⁶, has correctly pointed out, the perspective is ahistorical and its assumptions can not be scientifically validated. Moreover, no two countries can follow the same path of development. The theory's claims of universal validity for western models of development are wrong⁴⁷. This is because time is not one dimensional⁴⁸. Furthermore, the perspective disregards international relations and claims that the development of a country's economy is solely internally determined⁴⁹. As Blomstrom observes, the perspective ignores the process of development in its various historical and concrete manifestations⁵⁰. Thus it fails to take note of the international contradictions of the whole historical process by viewing development as a unilineal transition from one type of society to another.

The dependency or underdevelopment perspective was spearheaded by Latin American scholars such as Dos Santos, Baran, Cardoso and Gunder Frank among others in the 1960s⁵¹. It was a reaction to the modernization approach which had attributed the Third World's underdevelopment to internal causes. The proponents of the dependency perspective have argued that the underdevelopment of the Third World was due to the historical evolution of a highly unequal international capitalist system of poor and rich countries. They point out that the relationship between the developed and underdeveloped countries is one of inequality, characterised by exploitation and economic control of the metropole. Thus, contact with the metropole does not culminate in the diffusion of advanced technology, but rather leads to intensification of underdevelopment in the peripheries.

Furthermore, the perspective postulates that the articulation process between the peripheral and the central economies was characterized by the destruction of the traditional societies and economies through market forces under industrialization. Within this relationship, the value of goods from the periphery remained low compared to those of the metropole. The result was the creation of a surplus of goods which the metropole appropriated through the process of unequal exchange⁵². Moreover, the international capitalist system brought a global polarization, where the peripheries became marginalized and remained in perpetual poverty, with the centre developing at their expense.

The underdevelopment approach was popularized in Africa by Walter Rodney and Samir Amin⁵³. They point out that colonialism contributed to the exploitation of

both natural and human resources of the Third World. As Karl Marx argued:

The only thing that interests us is the secret discovered in the new world by political economy of the old world...that the capitalist mode of production and accumulation have for their fundamental condition... the exploitation of the labourer⁵⁴.

Samir Amin notes that wage levels in the periphery were lower compared to wage levels in the metropole⁵⁵. This meant that the labourers in the peripheries subsidised those in the metropole. Palmer, has emphasized that the capitalist system not only increased economic distortion and subordination of the Africans but also impoverished them⁵⁶. This was achieved through the extraction of wealth from the indigenous modes so as to transform the Africans into cheap migrant labourers.

Like the modernization theory, the underdevelopment approach has some inherent weaknesses. It tends to overemphasize the exchange mechanism and ignores the mode of production. Furthermore, it assumes that capitalism destroyed the whole fabric of the traditional society. Yet, available evidence shows that although the linkage between the pre-capitalist mode and the capitalist mode of production were characterized by distortion and strains some socio-economic elements of the traditional set up were maintained. In addition, the approach ignores the internal socio-economic causes of underdevelopment. For example, it downplays the importance of the class struggles and contradictions in the society. Thus it stresses the idea of exploitation by countries rather than by classes. According to Colin Leys, the underdevelopment perspective only expounds the effects of colonialism and imperialism, rather than tracing the entire historical process⁵⁷. Furthermore, the approach has a bias towards economics, hence very little attention is given to social classes, the state, politics and

ideology.

This study, despite the stated loopholes uses a modified version of the underdevelopment approach to analyze labour exploitation and point out that the underdevelopment of Kisumu District may be understood in the light of the described circumstances and not from the so-called primitive forms of production. This study uses the underdevelopment approach since it is a useful and valuable analytical tool in the study of socio-economic history of the Third World. This is because it takes cognizance of the fact that imperialism and colonialism led to the emergence of dependent capitalism in the Third World. This form of capitalism was different from that which had developed in Europe⁵⁸. Furthermore, the approach is "primarily a historical model with no claim to universal validity"⁵⁹. Thus it can be used to "analyze a broader range of phenomena"⁶⁰.

1.8 Justification for the study

Most studies of labour history in Kenya have concentrated on the African labour in urban settings and in European plantations⁶¹. Little is known on the colonial African labour in the Asian sugar plantations in Kenya. The Asian sugar plantation labour has not been a subject of any historical research. A study of the sugar plantation labour during the colonial period was therefore long overdue. Thus it became a challenge to undertake this study and fill the yawning gaps in labour historiography of Nyanza. Previous works have ignored the dynamics of labour in the Asian sugar plantations and this has obscured a full understanding of labour issues in colonial Kenya. This may have been due to the overemphasis of migrant labour⁶², and

on the relationship between the colonial state, capital and labour⁶³.

This study makes a contribution to our understanding of labour dynamics in the sugar plantations in colonial Kenya. Furthermore, it hopes to provide additional knowledge on Kenyan labour history. Also, the findings of the study may be useful to Kenya's policy planners by showing the nature, scope and trends in the sugar plantation labour. This may enable them(planners) to offer solutions to some of the problems affecting the labourers.

1.9 Research methodology

In order to obtain as much relevant data as possible, both primary and secondary sources were used. The primary data were collected through oral interviews and from archival documents. Field research was conducted between November, 1992 and March, 1993.

First the archival materials obtained from the Kenya National Archives(KNA) in Nairobi were examined. The archival documents studied included monthly, quarterly and annual reports from Nyanza Province, as well as from Central Nyanza, Central Kavirondo and Kisumu-Londiani Districts. These reports were on administration, labour, agriculture, intelligence, statistics and land. Also examined were records from the Ministries of Agriculture, Education, Finance, Commerce and Industry and from Departments of Labour, and Native Affairs. Records from the office of the Attorney General were also studied. Data from archival sources was cross checked with and supplemented by data from oral interviews.

From mid December, 1992 to February, 1993 oral interviews were held with

informants from 4 divisions of Kisumu District.

The divisions visited were Nyakach, Nyando, Muhoroni, and Winam. These particular areas of the district were specifically chosen because they were located near the sugar plantations thus they provided representative sample of the area where the majority of the sugar plantation labourers came from. Consequently, what is presented here is representative of the whole sugar plantation labour. The informants were chosen from ex-sugar plantation labourers still alive. Current sugar plantation labourers who joined wage labour before 1963 were also interviewed. Other informants included present and former national and branch officials of the Kenya Union of Sugar plantation Workers. Besides, old and resourceful local people who had witnessed the emergence of the colonial labour system were interviewed. In addition, present and former Asians owners of the sugar plantations who are still alive were interviewed.

A total of sixty five (65) informants were interviewed. The assistance of the local chiefs and local subchiefs was necessary for identifying and tracing individual informants. The various sugar plantations and sugar factories in the District were visited from where some of the present labourers provided direction to the homes of some of the former labourers in the plantations. Both individual and group interviews were used during the fieldwork. However, individual interviews were accorded preference. It was only on three occasions out of 65 informants that group interviews were conducted. The group interviews were coincidental rather than pre-arranged. One case involved a married couple who were interviewed together. On the other two instances the researcher fortunately came across groups of informants in the houses

of two respondents he was scheduled to meet. In all the three cases the informants had no objection to group interview. Individual interviews were preferred because it can help in the establishment of close personal contact between the interviewer and the respondent. Thus through it detailed information about intimate and personal aspects of the individual could be obtained. On the other hand, group interview is mainly suitable for gathering of routine information. Consequently, it was not very appropriate for this research which required some detailed personal data. At the same time, in group interviews there is the danger of the discussion being dominated by one or two informants. For example, young people out of respect might not be willing to challenge their elders hence, what the seniors say might be accepted as a fact however erroneous it may be. As a result it was better to collect information from individual informants then cross check the data for authentication. However, the major advantage of group interview is that it economises time and money.

The oral interviews were in English, Kiswahili or Dholuo as was appropriate to the informants. All the information obtained was stored in note form. Open-ended questionnaires were used so as not to restrict the informant in the discussion. However, where the informant delved into irrelevancies he/she was guided back to the right track. The interviews covered a wide range of topics but related to the nature, structure and organization of the Asian sugar plantations during the colonial period. Emphasis was on the origin and growth of the Asian agricultural enterprises in Kisumu district, the African labourers, working conditions, trade unionism and the impact of labour migration on the peasants' economy.

Secondly, secondary sources were consulted to supplement the primary sources. These included both published and unpublished works on labour and on socio-economic history of Kenya in general. They comprised books, articles in journals, seminar or conference papers, government annual reports, Newspapers and theses. Such works were obtained from the university of Nairobi library, Kenyatta University library, Moi University library and the Kenya National Library Services (Nakuru branch). These secondary sources were particularly useful for corroboration, comparison and theoretical interpretation of the primary information.

Information from the collection of primary data was cross checked with the secondary data, then both were classified into several categories in relation to the objectives of the study. The various variables are used for analysis of underdevelopment in Kisumu district. The data was then interpreted in the light of the hypotheses and the theoretical framework. This made possible generalizations and the drawing of conclusions.

1.10 Research limitations

An expansive area had been chosen for the study. Thus in order to carry out an effective work consideration was given to the fact that time and money were limited and optimum use of both had to be applied. Informants who lived nearby were often deliberately selected. However, distant informants known to have valuable information were visited.

Despite the poor roads and lack of a reliable public transport system especially

in the Kibos-Muhoroni area during the rainy season, an attempt was made to visit most of the sugar plantations. Nearly all the visits were made on foot.

The field work coincided with the electioneering campaign for the multi-party general elections of 1992. As a result of this, many informants were suspicious of the intention of the interviews. It required tact and diplomacy to convince them of the nature of the study. However, some remained adamant and hostile. In addition, some informants especially the Asians were unwilling to provide some vital information such as their annual income, profit margins and how they had acquired their plantations. But the information withheld was corroborated by interviews with willing informants and archival sources.

CODESRIA-LIBRARY

End notes

1. G. Bennet: Kenya: A Political History in the Colonial Period, London:Oxford University Press(OUP),1978,25.
2. E. Huxley,The Settlers of Kenya, Connecticut: Greenwood, 1975,47.
3. H. W. O. Okoth-Ogendo, Tenants of the Crown, Nairobi: African Centre of Technology, 1991,15.
4. Bennet, Kenya, 7.
5. R.M. A. van Zwanenberg, Colonial Capitalism and Labour in Kenya, 1919-39, Nairobi: East African Publishing House; 1975,104-33.
6. Bennet, Kenya,44.
7. van Zwanenberg, Colonial Capitalism, passim.
8. Sharon Stichter, Migrant Labour in Kenya: Capitalism and African Response 1895-1975, Essex: Longman,1982,25.
9. van Zwanenberg, Colonial Capitalism.
10. J.C. A. Obiero, "The Western Kenya Sugar Industry, with specific reference to Nyanza and Western Province", M.A Thesis, University of Nairobi,1980,11.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. A.E.O. Taha, Employment Problems in Kenya with Particular Reference to seasonal Labour Recruitment, Addis Ababa: Jaspa, 1975,iii.
14. Karl Marx, Capital, A Critique of Political Economy,Moscow: Progress Publisher, 1956,39.
15. M.P. Todaro, Economics for a developing World, London: Longman,1977,96.
16. E. A. Brett, Colonialism and Underdevelopment in East Africa, London: Heinemann, 1973,18.

17. J. O. Otieno, and J. E.O. Odada (eds), Socio-economic Profiles, Kisumu District, Nairobi, GOK and UNICEF, June 1990,121.
18. H. S. Ominde, Land and Population Movement in Kenya, Nairobi: Heinemann, 1968,2-6.
19. KNA Nyanza Province Annual Report, 1936
20. J. Illife, " The creation of Group Consciousness Among the Dockworkers of Dar-es-salaam,"in R. Sandbrook and R. Cohen (eds), The development of an African working class studies in class formation and Action, London; Longman, 1975,49-56.
21. V. I. Lenin, The Development of Capitalism in Russia, Moscow: Progress Publishers,1956.
22. G. Orde-Browne, Report on Labour Conditions in East Africa, London: His Majesty's Stationeries,1946.
23. A. Bernstein, Underdevelopment and Development: The Third World Today, New York: Penguin Books,1976.
24. G. Hyden, Beyond Ujamaa in Tanzania:Underdevelopment and Uncaptured Peasantry, London: Heinemann,1980.
25. B. Berman, and Lonsdale, J. "Crisis of Accumulation Coercion and the Colonial State: The Development of the Labour Control System in Kenya, 1919-1929", Canadian Journal of African Studies, Vol.14 no.1(1980),55-81.
26. S. Amin, Accumulation on the World Scale, New York: Monthly Review Press (MRP), 1974.
27. H. Fearn, An African Economy: A study of the Economic Development of Nyanza Province of Kenya, 1903-53, London: OUP, 1961.
- 28.T.J. Mboya, Freedom and After, Nairobi: Heinemann reprint,1986.
29. Makhan Singh, History of Kenya's Trade Union Movement to 1952, Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1969.
30. C. Lubembe, The Inside of Labour Movement in Kenya, Nairobi: Equatorial Publishers,1968.

31. J. S. Mangat, A History of Asians in East Africa, 1886-1945, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969.
32. P. B. Mehta, "A history of Asians in Kenya, 1900-1970", Ph.D Thesis, Howard University, 1976.
33. A. Clayton, and D.C. Savage, Government and Labour in Kenya, 1895-1963, London: Frankcass, 1974.
34. A. Amsden, International firms and Labour in Kenya 1945-1970, London: Frankcass, 1972.
35. T. P. Zeleza, "Dependent Capitalism and the making of Kenyan working class during the Colonial period", Ph.D Thesis, Dalhousie University, 1982,
36. R. Sandbrook, Proletarians and African capitalism: The Kenyan case, 1960-1972, Cambridge: University Press, 1975.
37. van Zwanenberg, Colonial Capitalism.
38. Cooper, Plantation Labour.
39. G. Kitching, Class and Economic Change in Kenya: The Making of an African Petite-bourgeoisie, 1905-1970, London: Yale University Press, 1980.
40. Stichter, Migrant Labour.
41. T. P. Zeleza, "Dependent Capitalism".
42. H. Munoz (ed), From Dependency to Development: Strategies to Overcome Underdevelopment and Inequality, Boulder: Westview Press, 1981.
43. Todaro, Economics for a Developing World, 88.
44. T. P. Zeleza, Labour, Unionization and Women's Participation in Kenya, 1963-1987, Nairobi: Friedrich Ebert Foundation, 1987, 3.
- 45 Ibid.
46. Bernstein, Underdevelopment, 58.
47. Munoz, From Dependency to Development, 33.

48. Bernstein, Underdevelopment, 59.
49. M. Blomstrom, and B. Hettne, Development Theory in Transition: The Dependency Debate and Beyond: Third World Responses, London: Zed Books Ltd, 1984, 72.
50. Ibid., 48.
51. See the following works; A. G. Frank, Latin America Underdevelopment or Revolution, New York: Monthly Review Press(MRP), 1970; Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America, New York: MRP, 1967, Development and Underdevelopment in Latin America, New York: MRP, 1968; S. Amin, Unequal Development New York, MRP, 1976; Accumulation on the World Scale New York: MRP, 1974; P. Baran, The Political Economy of Growth, New York, MRP, 1957; F.H. Cardoso, and E. Faletto, Dependency and Development in Latin America, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978; F.H. Cardoso, "Dependency and Underdevelopment in Latin America", New Left Review No. 74, 1972, T. Dos Santos, "The structure of Dependency", American Economic Review Vol. 60 No. 21 May 1970; Munoz (ed) From Dependency to Development; and Hettne, Development Theory.
52. Todaro, Economics for a developing World, 76-7.
53. Blomstrom, Development Theory, W. Rodney, How Europe Underdeveloped Africa, Nairobi: Heinemann, 1989 and S.Amin, Unequal Development.
54. A. G. Frank, Dependent Accumulation and Underdevelopment in Latin America, London: Macmillan, 1978, 3, cited from K. Marx, Capital, New York International Publishers, 1967, 774.
55. Blomstrom, Development Theory, 76-7.
56. R. Palmer, and N. Parsons, (eds) The Roots of Rural Poverty in Central and Southern Africa, London: Heinemann, 1983, 5.
57. C. Leys, "Underdevelopment and Dependency: Critical Notes", Journal of Contemporary Asia, Vol.7 No.1 1977, 73, cited in Blomstrom, Development Theory, 90.
58. Palmer and Parsons, Rural Poverty, 4.
59. Munoz, From Dependency to Development, 28.
60. Ibid., 33.

61. van Zwanenberg, Colonial Capitalism, and The Agricultural history of Kenya to 1939, Nairobi; East African Literature Bureau, 1975, Zeleza, "Dependent Capitalism", and K. Janmohamed, "A history of Mombasa, 1895-1939", Ph.D Thesis, Northwestern University, 1977.

62. Ibid. Colonial Capitalism.

63. Stichter, Migrant Labour.

CODESRIA-LIBRARY

CHAPTER 2

2.0 COLONIAL LABOUR POLICIES AND THE EMERGENCE OF THE ASIAN SUGAR PLANTATION ECONOMY , 1901-18

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter we trace the origins and growth of the Asian sugar plantations in Kisumu District in the period 1901-18. These processes are examined in the light of the colonial land and labour policies on agricultural settlements in the country.

2.2 The establishment of Asian Agricultural Settlements in Kisumu District

The colonial government in Kenya was in favour of the establishment of plantation agriculture at the expense of peasant agriculture. However, initially the colonial government officials were not agreed on whether the plantation agriculture should be in the hands of Asians, Jews or European settlers¹.

In 1901 the Kenya - Uganda railway line reached its terminus on Lake Victoria, at Kisumu. The railway line was intended to open up the interior of the then British East African Protectorate. It became incumbent on the colonial government officials to identify the means of making the railway pay for its construction and maintenance and also to help make the colonial government financially solvent. Since the then British East African Protectorate was deficient in mineral wealth, agriculture was seen as a possible alternative of producing commodities for export². Initially some of the early officials of the Imperial British East African Company, such as John Ainsworth, Harry Johnson and George Mackenzie supported the idea of Asian settlement in the country³. In 1901 the then Commissioner of the Protectorate, Sir Charles Eliot, stated

that, it was his hope that Asian agriculturalists would settle in the country⁴. By 1902 there were 30 European settlers in the Protectorate. They were opposed to the granting of agricultural land to Asians. Thus, because of pressure from this small but vocal settler community, Charles Eliot's attitude to Asian settlement changed. He became the architect of white settlement in the country. To attract them to the country he offered European settlers generous terms such as large grants of land free or for nominal purchase fees or very low rents⁵. Consequently, in 1902 he recommended that Asian settlements should be confined to the lowlands. In August, the same year the then acting Commissioner of the Protectorate, Fredrick Jackson, issued a circular offering Asians land along the railway line, albeit outside the Highlands⁶.

Thus the government only allowed limited Asian agricultural settlements in lowland areas of the country which were considered climatically unsuitable for white settlement⁷. In April 1903, Charles Eliot declared Kibos, 10 Kilometres outside Kisumu town an Asian Settlement Area⁸. It is worth noting that following the completion of the Kenya - Uganda railway line, out of the 32,000 indentured Asian labourers, 6,724 opted to remain in East Africa after the expiry of their contracts⁹. Some of these ex-labourers were willing to settle in the country if the government offered them financial assistance and free passage to enable their families to join them¹⁰. The Indian office had also recommended that instead of recruiting settlers from India, these ex-labourers could be considered for land grants.

Dharam Ghai has argued that the present Asian population in East Africa can not be regarded as the descendants of the Asian indentured labourers¹¹. His argument

is not accurately applicable to the Asian sugar cane planters in Kisumu District. Available evidence shows that the first thirty pioneer Asian settlers in the District were ex-labourers who had been granted land by the Government in the Kibos-Miwani area in 1903. Furthermore, some of the senior Asian railway officials acquired land in the area while still in employment or after retirement¹². Asian settlers were also offered land grants along the Kenya - Uganda railway line between Kibos and East of Muhoroni¹³. A big percentage of the pioneer Asian settlers were Punjabis, especially Sikhs who were traditionally an agricultural community¹⁴. According to Mehta, there were famines in Punjab province in the early 1900s which stimulated Indian immigration to East Africa¹⁵. The Asian settlers started occupying their land allotments in the Kibos-Muhoroni area in 1903. The area was then sparsely populated by Jokano and Jokajulu because it was a buffer zone between the Luo and the Nandi. However, some Luo families were evicted to give way for the establishment of the Asian plantations. For example, in Kibigori area, five African bomas(homesteads) of 23 huts were destroyed¹⁶. In addition, the Luo who were then occupying land North of the Railway line, West of Kibigori were evicted from their land. The colonial government paid the affected Luo families 810 rupees in total as compensation. Furthermore, 37 African homesteads in Kibos Area, as well as 60 villages in the Miwani Area were demolished to create room for the Asian plantations¹⁷. Between 1902-12 about 12,000 acres of African land in the Kibos-Muhoroni area had been alienated for the Asian settlements. Initially, land holdings ranged from 50-100 acres.

The majority of the Asian land grantees were Sikhs and a big percentage were

related to each other. This is evident from the names. Also some of the grantees were allotted several plots in the Area (see Table 2.1). About 60% of the plots were on freehold while the rest were on leaseholds of 99 years. Some of the plots were owned by two or more partners or by a company. A number of these farmers operated business or other enterprises in Kisumu town and other towns in Kenya. As a result they practised a form of absentee farming. The pioneer Asian settlers cultivated maize, chiroco (green grams), cotton, rice, chilies and sugar cane¹⁸, which later became the main commercial crop from their settlements. Cultivation of sugar cane in the area started in the period between 1903 and 1905. The crop was first cultivated by Umar Din in Muhoroni¹⁹. When the pioneer Asian settlers at Kibos realised that the crop was suitable for the area they took to it in great earnest from 1906.

The European settlers from the outset made a concerted effort to prevent the alienation of agricultural land in the White Highlands for Asians. In 1906 the white settler controlled Land Board recommended that, since only a small area of the country was suitable for white settlement, the colonial government should reserve it for exclusive settlement by whites²⁰. Some officials of the Imperial government abetted the white settlers' demands to restrict acquisition of land by Asians in the country. For example, in 1906 Lord Elgin, then British Secretary of State for the colonies declared that land in the Kenya Highlands should not be granted to Asians²¹. This statement was popularly referred to as the "Elgin Pledge" and was used by the white settlers and some colonial government officials to deny Asians land in the White highlands.

The White settlers were opposed to Asian settlement in the White Highlands because of racial prejudice and fear of Asian competition. Mc Gregor Ross observes that the white settlers did not want the Asians to profit from land speculation which was in the offing in Kenya²². Furthermore, he points out that the pioneer Asian traders in the country were on the aggregate far much wealthier compared to the pioneer European settlers.

Table 2.1 Asian land Grantees and Acreage held at Kibos Indian Settlement, 1913

<u>Plot</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>acreage</u>
1	Kharka Ram & Labu Ram	100.00
2	Vali Hasham & Co	50.00
3	Chowdi Ram Jowaya	25.00
4	Mokanje	50.00
5	George Mathews	103.00
6	Jagat Singh and Surean Singh	95.00
7	Gujar Ram Malawa Ram Prabdiel & Co.	85.20
8	Harriram Prabdiel & Co	100.00
9	Veharibhai C. Patel	100.00
10	Pala Singh	30.84
11	Jagat Singh & Surean Singh	88.20
12	A.A Visram	50.00
12	A. Jan Mohamed Guga	50.00
13	Malawa Ram Prabdiel	24.50
14	Gulam Moyud Din	50.00
15	Mohamed Din All Jawaya	25.00
16	Gujai Ram	50.00
17		
18	Abdul Majid & Ghetu	100.00
19	Dewa Singh & Sodagar	76.00
22	Kharka Ram & Labu Ram	7.00
23	Kaloo Ram	14.40
24	Bhai Dan Devi	77.00

26	Kalooram	12.00
27	Kalooram	36.40
39	Jamna Das Karams	54.40
40	Gurma Singh & Buta Singh	50,00
41	Gobid Ram & Kaloo Ram	50.00
42	Jagat Singh & Surean Singh	44.00
43	Inder Singh Munshi Ram	50.00
44	Ladha Ram	50.00
45	Sandhu Singh	50.00
46	Malawa Ram Probdial	50.00
47	Jagat Singh & Surean Singh	<u>14.60</u>
TOTAL		1,700acres

Source: KNA Nyanza Province AR 1913.

Thus, Asians could have outbidden whites in free purchase of land. The colonial government, therefore, put obstacles on the ownership of land by the Asians. For example, while a European settler could be granted tens of thousands of acres, allotments to Asians were usually limited to 100 acres per grant²³. Furthermore, whilst Asians were prohibited from acquiring land in the White Highlands, European settlers acquired land in the Miwani-Kibigori- Chemelil area, situated in the lowlands.

From a modest beginning, the Asian agricultural settlements expanded as more Asians acquired land in the Kibos-Muhoroni area²⁴. By 1908 about 1,000 acres was already under cultivation. The largest Asian plantation in Kisumu District was owned by a London based Asian company, Messrs Imhazalhi and Sons, which had acquired the Estate in 1910 under the name Kisumu Rubber Estate Limited²⁵. The company had obtained a total of 4,500 acres in Kibos under a generous 96 years' lease.

According to the terms of the lease, the company was to spend £ 1,652 in development in the first 5 years. Besides it was to put into cultivation 165.2 acres during the first year, 330.4 acres in the second year and 495.6 acres in the third year²⁶. Thereafter, not less than 495.4 acres was always to be under cultivation of rubber or any other cash crop. The annual rent was 495 rupees. During the first 10 years the company experimented with the cultivation of rubber, but without much success. Thereafter, the Estate was put under Messrs Walji Hirji and sons, of Nairobi who were the company's local agents²⁷.

In 1912 Asian farmers acquired 21 farms of 50 acres each near Muhoroni township at a government auction in Kisumu town(see Table 2.2). Thus by 1913 there were 70 Asian settlers in the Kibos-Muhoroni area²⁸. Cane farming was developed by the Asian farmers through trial and error. This was because the farmers relied mainly on experience from India and were not conversant with the new environment. They experimented with the indigenous sugar cane variety locally known as Yuba (Uba) and other varieties which were imported from South Africa, India and Mauritius. Such experiments helped the farmers to identify the cane varieties that could be cultivated on a commercial scale in the area. For example, varieties code - named CO were introduced in Kenya from Coimbatore, a renowned sugar research station in India. The CO varieties included CO 221, CO 290, CO 312, CO331, CO 419 and CO 421.

In 1911 the Government established a small sugar experimental farm at Kibos. By 1913 the experimental farm had started issuing sugar cane seeds including the CO

varieties to the farmers²⁹. The office of the Nyanza Provincial Director of Agriculture also conducted research on sugar cane mostly on Asian farms and at the "crop museum" in Kisumu town. Plant diseases such as ratoon stunting, mosaic and smut hindered the cane growing experiments.

Table 2.2 Asian Land Grantees in Muhoroni Indian settlement, August, 1912

<u>Farm no.</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Acreage</u>
2	Falen Chand	50.00 acres
3	Allidina Visram	51.6 "
4	Hasham Jamal & Co	48.1 "
5	Hussein Abdul Rasul	51.3 "
7	Rasid Khamis	55.00 "
8	Mohammed Bux	50.00 "
9	Alibhai Kassim	50.00 "
10	Mohammed Majid	52.2 "
11	Mohammed Kassim	51.2 "
14	Sheik Noor Din	50.0 "
15	K.M, Bhoghoita Bros	50.0 "
16	Moladad Dolatakla	48.7 "
17	Aua Dan	51.3 "
18	Sultani Raki	50.0 "
19	Abdul Wahid	51.3 "
20	Gulam Mohamed	50.0 "
21	Jalad Din	<u>52.1</u> "
	TOTAL	1000 acres

Source: KNA Nyanza Province AR 1913

SOURCE: KNA Nyanza Province AR 1913

However, plant breeding and cross breeding programmes by individual Asian farmers and at the Government experimental farm contributed to increase in yields from the sugar cane crops. Before 1923 all the sugar cane produced was used to manufacture jaggery, (unrefined sugar)³⁰. This was because there was no white sugar refinery in the area yet. The farmers used oxen operated crushers to produce jaggery, which was mainly eaten by the local Gujerati. Some was exported (see Table 2.3). However, the total acreage under cultivation was small. For example by 1916 the area under cultivated cane in Kibos was 621 acres only³¹.

The earliest problem that these farmers encountered was lack of knowledge of local agriculture and farming technology³². Thus they experimented with sugar cane, maize, chiroco and rice among other crops in an attempt to identify crops that could be cultivated on a large scale and at a profit. Furthermore, the vagaries of weather affected farming in the area. "For example", some parts of the Kibos-Miwani area was prone to droughts and flooding which often destroyed the crops. In the years 1907 and 1917-18, there were severe droughts, locally known as Nyangori and Kanga respectively in the area³³. Furthermore, during the rainy season, the few roads in the area were impassable. This made it impossible for the farmers to transport produce to the nearby railway stations for marketing. During this early period farm produce was ferried by bullock carts, because motor vehicles were not yet common in the District.

The Asian farmers blamed the colonial government for the poor infrastructure in the area. They complained that the colonial government had not built any access roads beyond a ten kilometre radius from the railway line. Consequently, some of the farmers were marooned in Kisumu town and could not visit their farms for up to three months, during the rainy season³⁴. This was more so with the part time Asian farmers who at the same time engaged in trade and other businesses in Kisumu town. In 1920 the Asian farmers formed the Kibos Planters Association and the Nyanza Indian Farmers Association.

**Table 2.3 Jaggery Export from Asian Sugar Plantations in Kisumu District
in Tons, 1909-18**

1909	1910	1911	1912	1913	1914	1915	1916	1917	1918
25	46	21	66	19	29	17	109	116	217

Source: Fearn, An African Economy, 79.

The two Associations aimed at promoting the agricultural and economic interests of the Asian farmers. Membership of the former was restricted to the farmers in the Kibos area while the latter had members from all parts of Nyanza where Asian farmers had settled. The two Associations were controlled by Asian traders and professionals who only engaged in farming on part time basis³⁵. This was because about 90% of those who were full time farmers were semi - literate. These businessmen and professionals had some of the best managed farms because they had some other reliable sources of income to tide them over unproductive years and to help subsidise their farming. Examples of such part time farmers included Dhanwat Singh who was an advocate in Kisumu, Usher Singh, a saw mills owner at Elburgon, and S.S Satbachan, an ex-inspector of police. Others were Dr. Kishen Singh, a medical practitioner in Kisumu, F.L. Mayor, a former senior employee of the Kenya-Uganda Railways, Renmal Mandan, a shopkeeper at Muhoroni, Bhanji Walji, the proprietor of Songhor Stores. In addition there were Hakam Singh, owner of colonial saw mills in

Nairobi, V.H Jobanputra of the Nyanza printing Works and Shamji Harji and Brothers owning hardware and construction businesses in Kisumu town among other farmers. In comparison to the part time farmers, the Asians who depended entirely on farming found it difficult to make their agricultural enterprises economically viable.

The 1915 Crown Lands Ordinance sealed the fate of Asian land ownership in the White Highlands. Under the Ordinance, the Governor of the then British East Africa Protectorate was empowered to veto any land transaction involving people from non-white racial backgrounds³⁶. The aim of the Ordinance was to forestall any possible sale of European owned land in the Highlands to Asians. The European wanted to keep off other races from the Highlands. Such legal restrictions against land ownership by Asians in the most fertile areas of the country meant that Asian involvement in agricultural undertakings were constrained.

Some European settlers had also been granted land in the Miwani-Muhoroni area. Their number increased after the First World War when more European settlers acquired land in the area under the Ex-Soldiers Settlement Scheme³⁷. These European settlers included:

James Maxwell, the British East African Corporation, Eric Mayers, P.R. Ryall, J.B. Anderson, P.W. Savage, W. Maxwell, Andrew and Partners, T.R.L Nestor, and R-O, Ney.

Thus Swainson's argument that Asians were granted land in an area where there were no European settlers is erroneous³⁸. Before the Second World War the largest sugar

plantations and sugar mills in the area were owned by European settlers. These European settlers cultivated both sugar cane and sisal.

In sum, by the end of the First world War the Asian sugar plantations were still in infancy. The acreage under cultivation was small compared to later years. Thus the farmers were still striving to put their agricultural undertakings on a firm footing.

2.3 Colonial Labour Policies and labour supply in the Asian Sugar Plantations

Wage labour in Kenya, to a large extent was a colonial creation. The colonial government introduced labour policies which aimed at facilitating a supply of cheap African labour especially for the European settlers. Following the imposition of colonial rule in Kenya a massive supply of African labour was required by both the government and the settlers to lay the foundation of the colonial economy. However, undercapitalised as the Colonial State and the settlers were during the period before First World War, they could not provide attractive wages and working conditions that could induce and retain labour. As a result, the number of Africans entering into wage labour was inadequate and could not meet the continuous demand by both the public and private employers.

The poor response by Africans to wage labour was partly because of self sufficiency of their traditional economies. Thus many of them did not see the need to seek wage employment. In other words, during this period the Africans had very few wants which their economies could not meet. Moreover, the Asian merchandise and cash economy had not yet taken deep root in Kisumu District before the 1920s³⁹.

The Asian settlers also required African labour to work in their agricultural enterprises. Just as was the case with the European settlers, the labour problem of Asian settlers was three fold. They wanted to obtain enough labourers, retain them in employment and ensure that they worked productively⁴⁰. The Asian farmers relied to a large extent on casual labourers from the nearby African locations of Kano and Kajulu. At the outset, because of lack of mechanization, the work of clearing the forests and establishing the farms had to be done manually. This necessitated the employment of African labour. Before the 1940s those Africans willing to engage in wage labour preferred to work near their homes because of social and economic obligations⁴¹. This enabled them to attend to their own farms and livestock more closely.

The Employment of Servants Ordinance of 1910 defined short term or casual labourer as adult labour engaged on daily or monthly basis, 30 day tickets or 90 day contracts⁴². Casual labour was advantageous to the labourers in several ways. First, it made it possible to combine wage labour with peasant agricultural work. Secondly, it enabled the labourers to remain within their home area so that they were able to fulfil their cultural and other societal obligations more easily. And lastly, it was a source of income for labourers who had no other means of earning a livelihood but who did not want to be tied to a particular employer. The major disadvantage of the casual labour system to the employer was that it was characterized by low daily turnout since the labourers were not under full control of the employer. This made it necessary for the employer to engage double the number of labourers required⁴³.

Men, women, as well as juveniles were engaged as daily paid casuals in the Asian sugar plantations. Women and juveniles from the nearby locations were mainly engaged in planting cane and weeding while men were deployed in weeding, cane cutting and loading cane onto trolleys and trucks as well as in the jaggery manufacturing plants. The daily paid casual labourers mainly came from the nearby locations of Kajulu, Kano and to some extent Nyakach. A few Nandi were also employed as casuals.

The colonial government had introduced the policy of land alienation, and the creation of small African Reserves in Kenya. This, it was hoped would help force Africans to seek wage labour in the plantations and towns. Indeed, these African Reserves were supposed to act as labour reservoirs to serve the needs of the settlers and the colonial government. As one European farmer bluntly put it:

...from the farmer's point of view, the ideal reserve is a recruiting ground for labour, a place from which the able bodied go out to work, returning occasionally to rest and beget the next generation of labourers⁴⁴.

Taxation was one of the direct mechanism adopted by the colonial government to induce the Africans to enter wage labour. It was first introduced in Nyanza in 1900 in the form of a hut tax of 1 rupee per hut annually. It was officially gazetted in 1901⁴⁵. Initially taxation could be paid in kind and its aim was to raise revenue to meet the cost of administration. However, taxation was later seen as a good inducement for Africans' joining wage labour. The system imposed an economic burden on the Africans, some of whom sought wage labour to obtain cash for the tax.

In 1903 the hut tax was increased to 3 rupees per hut per annum⁴⁶. The tax was to be paid by all adult married males. Failure to meet tax obligations could result in heavy punishment in the form of burning down of the defaulter's hut and granaries or imprisonment⁴⁷. Such a punishment was meted out by the local African Chiefs and headmen on behalf of the colonial government. In spite of this, it is worth noting that prior to the First World War taxation mainly compelled the poorer section of the Africans to enter into wage labour. This was because some Africans could obtain cash through the sale of surplus agricultural produce or trade⁴⁸.

In 1906 the colonial government introduced a 30 day ticket system of work⁴⁹. According to this system, at the end of each day the ticket was marked to indicate whether the labourer had performed his daily task or not. Payment was only made at the completion of 30 working days, and was based on the record on the work ticket. The system was very unpopular with African labourers because it was prone to misuse and abuse by the employer. For example, some employers, deliberately failed to mark the ticket even when the labourer had performed his task. Sometimes the employer claimed that the work had not been satisfactorily carried out, and refused to mark the ticket. Furthermore, some employers tended to dismiss their labourers before the completion of the 30 days. Thus such labourers ended up losing the wages for the days they had already worked. The ticket system was in use in some of the Asian sugar plantations by 1910⁵⁰.

Before 1908 the colonial government allowed the local chiefs, and headmen to recruit labour for both public and private enterprises. A chief's efficiency and

effectiveness was often judged from the number of labourers he recruited. Some chiefs therefore, became overzealous and predatory in their work. Such chiefs were ready to use all means at their disposal including force to coerce out labourers⁵¹. In 1908 this policy was discontinued by order of the Colonial Secretary and replaced with that of "encouragement". According to the policy of "encouragement" the local administrators were only to advise the private labour recruiters on where to obtain labour. Chiefs and headmen were not to take any part in direct labour recruitment. However, this policy was not always adhered to because the local chiefs and headmen did not see any difference between the two policies⁵². This means that, whenever the local chiefs and headmen received labour recruiters in their stations they thought it was their duty to ensure that they obtained labour for the recruiters.

In 1912 the colonial government appointed a Labour Commission to investigate and report on the issue of labour demands and supply. African witnesses who appeared before this Commission complained that chiefs and headmen had put pressure on them to enter the wage labour⁵³. It was also claimed that some of the chiefs were corrupt and exempted from labour conscription people who bribed them.

According to oral information the first colonial Chief of Kajulu, Se Oriri Kamidigo had good relations with the pioneer Asian settlers in Kibos. Thus he encouraged his people to seek wage labour in the Asian plantations. Chief Owiti Kitoto(1905-12) of Kano is also reported to have assisted both the European and Asian settlers in the District to obtain labour. Following the ban on official labour

recruitment in 1908, there emerged professional labour recruiters, both European and Asian in Nyanza Province⁵⁴. The Masters and Servants Ordinance No.4 of 1910 defined a Labour Agent as, anybody who by himself or through an agent or messenger recruited labourers for other employers⁵⁵. It, however, did not apply to anybody who recruited labour for his own personal use. At the same time it did not apply to a messenger or a servant who procured labourers for his master's personal use.

Professional labour Agents worked on commission for any employer while a private recruiter was paid salary or fees based on the number of labourers he obtained for the employer. A professional labour recruiter had to obtain a licence valid for twelve months from the District Commissioner. In the same year the colonial government introduced a new tax, the poll tax of 3 rupees per year for every adult male aged 16 years and above⁵⁶. The tax was first applied to the then labour supplying areas, such as Nyanza Province, with the aim of stimulating labour supply.

As Governor Belfield categorically stated in 1913:

We consider that taxation is the only possible method of compelling the natives to leave his reserve for the purpose of seeking work ... only in this way can the cost of living be increased for the native⁵⁷.

The Kisumu District Annual Reports of 1908-18 show that local people sought wage employment in the Asian sugar plantations during the tax collection periods, in the months of September to March than during the other months⁵⁸. That shows a correlation between taxation and wage labour. In 1912 there were approximately 700 labourers in the Kibos-Muhoroni farms on 30-day monthly contracts, at the wage

rates of 3-4 rupees per ticket without posho⁵⁹. According to oral information such wage rates were low because in some cases a labourer was expected to earn enough money to pay tax for as many as three relatives. In addition, the labourer often purchased commodities such as salt, paraffin, clothes, blankets, seeds, farming tools as well as some food stuff. Certainly the wage rates of three to four rupees was not enough to meet all their needs. In that year, labour shortage was experienced in the District due to over recruitment of labourers for the Magadi railway then under construction⁶⁰. Therefore, the Kisumu District Commissioner asked chief Owiti Kitoto of Kano to supply labourers for the European and Asian settlers in the District⁶¹.

The Africans preferred to engage in employment during the off peak agricultural season such as December-February and June-August⁶². African labour could be engaged through Labour Agency or personally by the employer. However, before the outbreak of the First World War most Africans were unwilling to engage for more than three months.

Clayton has noted that the unskilled labour wages were not at par with the cost of living thus the wages were low in comparison to the prices of consumer goods and taxation⁶³. Asian farmers tended to engage labourers at a rate lower than other employers. For example, in 1910, the wage rates in the Asian farms were 3-5 rupees per ticket while in 1916 the rates were 4-6 rupees per ticket⁶⁴. The European settlers on the other hand were offering wage rates of 6-7 rupees in 1910 and 8-10 rupees in 1916.

Before the 1920s the Asian farmers did not rely on private labour recruitment.

This was because their labour demands were limited since only 620 acres was under sugar cane by 1916. Thus they depended on daily paid casual labourers from the nearby African locations. Furthermore, in the period 1917-22 professional labour recruiters were not allowed to operate in Nyakach and Kano locations⁶⁵. But they operated in the other locations in Kisumu District and were permitted to recruit labour for employers outside the District. The two locations were set aside by the government to provide labourers solely for the plantations within Kisumu District. This decision was beneficial to the Asian farmers because it saved them from stiff competition for labour with employers from outside the District. Thus Africans in the two locations who wanted to engage in wage labour tended to go to the sugar plantations in the Kibos-Muhoroni area. Sharon Stichter has shown that by 1915 about 30% of the Luo people around Kisumu had entered the wage labour market⁶⁶. This was because of the cooperation of the local African chiefs, as well as the proximity of the area to the work places in the plantations and in Kisumu town.

However, it should be noted that before 1914 most of the African labourers were only willing to engage as daily paid casuals or on 30 day contracts but not on longer contracts. This was because, they tended to join the wage labour only to obtain cash to meet specific needs such as the purchase of the newly introduced English hoes (jembes), and consumer goods or to pay tax. For example, between 1913-14, about 30,000 jembes, in addition to a large number of clothes, were bought by the Africans in the District⁶⁷.

According to oral information Asian sugar cane farmers periodically faced

labour shortage especially before the First World War. John Ainsworth, the Provincial Commissioner for Nyanza(1906-18) pointed out that, the labour shortage in the Plantations was a result of poor working conditions⁶⁸ such as poor rations, cruelty, poor housing and long hours of work, which were evident in the Asian plantations. Thus Ainsworth was of the opinion that the labour shortage problem could be solved if the employers offered higher wages and better conditions.

During the First World War of 1914-18, the supply of labour to the Asian plantations improved greatly⁶⁹. This was the result of the 1915-19 recruitment for the carrier corps which was unpopular with the Africans, who wanted to avoid it through wage labour. Thus to a great extent the supply of labour exceeded demand. The Africans were willing to engage on longer contracts than before. As Stichter points out, prior to the outbreak of the War Africans tended to work on contracts of three months while in 1918 the labourers were willing to engage in contracts of 6-8 months⁷⁰. Africans who were engaged in wage labour were exempted from military conscription in the reserves. Because of the fear for recruitment into the carrier corps many Luo men preferred to enter wage labour hence the long labour contracts.

In 1917-18 there was a serious drought in the District which caused a famine locally known as Kanga⁷¹. The famine greatly affected Kano and Nyakach locations. Annual reports of that period show that the people of the two locations were forced to look for food from the neighbouring Districts of Kericho, Nandi and North Kavirondo. Some of them sought wage employment in the Asian plantations to obtain cash to buy food. For example, the 1918 and 1919 Kisumu District Annual reports

show that approximately 200-300 families from the Ramogi clan in Nyakach location migrated to the Muhoroni area either as squatters or wage labourers⁷².

On the whole, during the 1901-18 period wage labour in the Asian sugar plantations did not adversely affect production in the African economy. This was because the plantations employed only a small number of labourers, ranging from 600 to 800 annually. Furthermore, the majority of these labourers only engaged on short term contracts and were able to continue with their traditional roles in the society, such as clearing forests in readiness for cultivation, tending livestock, fishing and other tasks.

2.4 Summary

In this Chapter we have focused on the factors that facilitated the emergence of Asian Sugar Plantations in Kisumu District to 1918. It has been pointed out that these factors included colonial land policies which led to the alienation of African land in the Kibos-Muhoroni area for Asian settlement.

The colonial government adopted land policies which to some extent did not favour Asian agricultural enterprises. Such inimical policies included the prohibition of ownership of land by Asians in the White Highlands. However, Asians were ultimately allowed to own land in the lowlands. Although the Asian Sugar Plantations were still in their nascent stage, by 1918 they had begun to produce jaggery, some of which was exported to England. They were also producing maize, green grams, rice and cotton.

The colonial government established and maintained authoritarian labour policies characterized by forced labour, land alienation and taxation. Thus these various colonial labour policies gradually induced Africans to join wage labour in the Asian Sugar Plantations and elsewhere. Although the colonial labour policies were mainly aimed at assisting the European settlers, coincidentally the Asian Settlers to some extent benefitted too. The local people from Kano and Kajulu locations tended to work in the nearby Asian Sugar Plantations because of economic and social reasons and also because the locations were set aside for labour within Kisumu District. Nearly all the labourers were at first engaged on daily paid basis or on 30 day verbal contracts. This made it possible for them to oscillate between wage labour and the peasant economy. However, the number of labourers during the 1901-18 period was small and this means that by 1918 the African rural economic sector was hardly affected by African participation in wage labour.

Endnotes

1. H. W. O. Okoth-Ogendo, Tenants of the Crown, Nairobi: African Centre of Technology, 1991, van Zwanenberg and A. King, An Economic History of Kenya and Uganda, 1800-1970, London; MacMillan, 1975.
2. M.P.K. Sorrenson, Origins of European Settlement in Kenya, London: Oxford University Press, 1968, 66-67, Mangat, A History of Asians, 64-68.
3. Sorrenson, European Settlement, 66-67.
4. Mangat, A History of Asians, 65.
5. Bennet, Kenya, 10-12, van Zwanenberg, Economic History, 37-38, Sorrenson, European Settlement, 66-70.

6. Sorrenson, European Settlement , 37, Mangat, A History of Asians , 65-66.
7. Mangat, A History of Asians , 65-66.
8. Sorrenson, European Settlement , 37.
9. M. F. Hill, Permanent way, story of Kenya - Uganda Railway and Harbours, Nairobi: East African Railway and Harbours, 1949 , 254.
10. Oral interview (Ol.), Rehmat Khan, Jagat Singh. See also Sorrenson, European Settlement ,36.
11. Y. Ghai, and D. Ghai, The Asian Minority in East Africa and Central Africa up to 1971, London: Oxford University Press, 1972, 6.
12. Ol. Jagir Singh, Jagat Singh, Chanan Singh, Rehmat Khan, Chief Oyare, Ongany, Miriam Onyuro. See also KNA DC/KSM 1/3/122 Agricultural Bank Loans 1930-40.
13. V.C.R. Ford, The Trade of Lake Victoria, Nairobi: East African Literature Bureau(EALB), 1955 .
14. Ol. Jagat Singh and Rehmat Khan
15. Mehta, "Asians in Kenya", 42-43.
16. KNA PC/NZA 3/3/22, Indian settlements, 8th may 1913.
17. R. Carter, Report of the Kenya Land Commission, London: His majesty's stationery office, 1934 , 295, P. Anyang-Nyongo, "The development of a Middle Peasantry in Nyanza", A Review of African Political Economy, (Hereafter, RAPE) no.20 (January-April, 1981),110.
18. Hill, Kenya - Uganda Railways , 255.
19. KNA DC/KSM 1/3/122, Kisumu District Commissioner's Report (KDCR), 27th, Jan.1947, appendix A.
20. W. M. Mc Gregor Ross, Kenya From Within, A short Political History, London: Allen and Unwin, 1927,304.
21. N. Swainson, The Development of Corporate Capitalism in Kenya, 1918-1977, London: Heinemann, 1980,53-54.

22. Ross, Kenya From Within, ,309.
23. Ibid. 314-15.
24. KNA Kisumu District Annual and Quarterly Report (KDAQR), 1908.
25. KNA Nyanza Province Anual Report (NPAR), 1913-14, KNA AGR 6/4308,Ministry of Agriculture (MOR), Miwani Farms, 7th, May 1910.
26. KNA AGR 6/4308,MOR, 6th, May 1910.
27. Ibid.
28. KNA KDAQR 1913.
29. KNA PC/NZA 3/3/22 Sugar Production,1913.
30. OI Jagat Singh, Chanan Singh and Rehmat Khan.
31. KNA KDAQR 1916.
32. OI. Jagat Singh, Rehmat Khan, Jagir Singh, see also KNA DC/KSM/KSM1/3/122, KDCR, 27th,Jan 1947.
33. KNA KDAQR 1910-19 see also W.R. Ochieng, " Colonial Famines in Luoland, Kenya, 1905-1945," in G. Were (ed) Trans African journal of History, Vol. 17, 1988 , 21-32.
34. KNA DC/KSM 1/3/122, Sugarcane Production, 3rd,March, 1948, DC Central Nyanza, 6-10th,October, 1947, Nyanza Indian Farmers Association memorandum, 1947.
35. KNA DC/KSM 1/3/118 Muhoroni Indian Farms, 1952.
36. Sorrenson, European Settlement , 171-75.
37. KNA DC/CN1/51 KDAQR, 1909-18.
38. Swainson, Corporate Capitalism , 124
39. KNA KDAQR 1905-10.
40. OI. Jagat Singh, Jagir Singh, Rehmat Khan.

41. OI.J. Ongany, R. Akinyi, R. Menya, and J. Ouma.
42. KNA DC/KSM1/17/16 Casual Labour recruitment rules, 1st June 1961 and 1st August 1946.
43. OI. Jagir Singh and Harjit Singh
44. V. Harlow, and E.M. Chilver, (eds), History of East Africa, Vol. II, Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1965, 246.
45. Clayton, Government and Labour ,28.
46. Mc Gregor Ross, Kenya From Within , 145, see also Stichter, Migrant Labour ,17.
47. See van Zwanenberg, Colonial Capitalism , 94-100
48. Stichter , Migrant Labour ,34.
49. Clayton, Government and Labour ,34.
50. OI. Jagat Singh, Jagir Singh.
51. KNA KDAQR 1914.
52. Stichter, Migrant Labour,38.
53. Mc Gregor Ross, Kenya From Within, 93.
54. KNA NPAR 1903-18.
55. KNA PC/Nza 3/20/2/1, Master and Servants Ordinance Circular No.12 of 11th, Feb 1926.
56. Stichter, Migrant Labour, 42.
57. Clayton, Government and Labour, 41, cited from the East African Standard Nairobi, 8th, Feb. 1913.
58. KNA KDAQR 1908-18.
59. Ibid. 30th, Sep. 1912 and 30th, June 1912.

60. Ibid. 31st, March, 1912.
61. Ibid. 31st, March, 1912.
62. Ibid. 30th, June, 1910, 24.
63. Clayton, Government and Labour, 148, see also Harlow a n d
Chilver History of East Africa Vol.II, 238.
64. KNA KDAQR 1910, 1916.
65. KNA, PC/Nza 3/20/4/4 Inquiry on free flow of labour from Nyanza, see also
KDAQR, 1917-22.
66. Stichter, Migrant Labour, 47.
67. KNA KDAQR 1913-14.
68. The Leader, Nairobi, 14th, Oct. 1916.
69. OI. Jagir Singh, Rehmat Khan.
70. Stichter, Migrant Labour, 27 see also KNA KDAQR 1915-19.
71. Ochieng, "Colonial Famines", 27 see also KNA KDAQR 1917-19.
72. KNA KDAQR 1918-19.

CHAPTER 3

3.0 LABOUR AND ASIAN AGRICULTURE IN THE INTERWAR PERIOD

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter we discuss labour and Asian agriculture during the interwar period. The economic depressions of 1920-21 and 1930-35 and their consequences on the African labourers and the Asian farmers will be examined. In addition, we will consider the period after the economic depression and its effects on labour in the Asian sugar plantations. Furthermore, in the chapter, the impact of the Asian sugar plantation agriculture on the African economy will be highlighted.

3.2 African Labour and the Economic Depression

The 1919-35 period witnessed two economic depressions of 1921-22 and 1930-35, which adversely affected the Asian sugar cane farmers as well as the African labourers in Kisumu District.

At the end of the First World War the colonial government introduced the Ex-Soldiers Settlement Scheme which aimed at doubling the number of European settlers in Kenya¹. Under this scheme about 15 European settlers were granted land in the Kibigori-Chemelil area. This area was located within the lowlands where some Asians had already settled².

By 1919 the Asian farmers in the Kibos-Muhoroni area had put 8,000 acres under cultivation, and employed about 1,000 African labourers³. The European

settlers in Miwani, Kibigori, Chemelil and Koru planted either sisal or sugar cane, though some planted both⁴.

The expansion of plantation agriculture especially among the white settlers in the country stimulated demand for more African labour. The European settlers had been impressed with the efficacy of the colonial government's labour recruitment for the war effort. Thus they called for its continuation. In 1919, the Governor, Edward Northey issued the famous 1919 labour Circular in which the local administration was to "encourage" labour through lawful means⁵. The Circular resulted in the resurgence of the recruitment of forced labour. "Encouragement" was a euphemism to cover a policy which authorised the colonial government officials to be in the forefront of labour recruiting. The circular also recommended that women and juveniles be encouraged to seek wage labour in the nearby plantations. In the same year, the colonial administration restated that Kano location was set aside, to provide labourers for the farms within Kisumu District⁶.

The following year, the colonial government introduced compulsory paid communal labour for 60 days, in the African reserves⁷. This was to be carried out by Africans who had not been in wage labour for at least three months of the preceding twelve months. Such communal work included construction and maintenance of roads and make-shift bridges among other work. The chiefs and headmen were very harsh supervisors of the people during the communal work. Thus some peasants opted to join wage labour rather than perform such compulsory labour.

The Kipande system was another mechanism which the colonial government used to organize and regulate the wage labour system in Kenya. It was introduced

under the Native Registration Ordinance of 1915 and was implemented in 1920, though officially promulgated under the Native Registration Ordinance of 1921⁸. Under the Ordinance each and every adult African male above the age of 16 years was to obtain an identification certificate. The Kipande contained the personal particulars of the bearer such as name, ethnic origin, district, location, clan and village. In the case of an employee, the employer also recorded type of work performed, duration of employment, wage scale and general comments on the individual. The germane aim of the registration system was to track down labour deserters who broke their labour contracts. Deserters could be punished under the Masters and Servants Ordinance of 1910⁹. Desertion which had been a very serious problem especially in European settler plantations now came to be regarded as a criminal offence. Prior to the introduction of the Kipande system some labour deserters could not be traced. This was because such labourers tended to use pseudonyms or to migrate from their home areas¹⁰. A labour deserter if caught could be sentenced to pay a fine of 100 shillings or serve a 2 months' jail term¹¹. This was very severe punishment because the 100 shillings fine was equivalent to about six months wages for an unskilled labourer.

Desertion was mainly of two types. First, labourers tended to quit plantations where wages were comparatively low and working conditions poor, for other plantations which ostensibly provided higher wages and better working conditions. For example, the local people knew the so-called "bad" employers, who were very strict on their employee insisting that they had to perform a full days work¹². The "good"

farmers were those who tended to be less strict on the labourers, lessening the daily task and offering other incentives such as better food rations than those provided by other Asian farmers. The other form of desertion was the return of the labourer to the reserve to continue with the peasant economy. This was especially so during the peak labour demand seasons when such work as ploughing, planting and harvesting of crops was done.

Thus the purpose of the Kipande system was to enforce labour contracts. The system also institutionalised low wages for the African labourers. This was because it hindered the labourer from bargaining for wages above the rate of his previous job. In addition, it curtailed the free movement of the Africans. For example, failure to produce the Kipande when demanded by a policeman or any other authorized government official could result in court action leading to a fine of 300 shillings, with or without one month's jail term¹³. On the whole, during the inter-war period the desertion rate was low in the Asian sugar plantations because approximately 80% of their labourers were daily paid labourers or those on 30 day verbal contracts¹⁴.

Moreover, forced labour was not used in the Asian sugar plantations. Very few Asian farmers obtained labourers from the professional labour recruiters¹⁵ except during periods of serious labour shortage resulting from good harvests in the nearby African locations of Kano and Kajulu. However, it is worth noting that the local people on monthly contracts tended to complete more 30 day ticket contracts than those enlisted on 6 months contracts by the professional labour recruiters and agents. In other words, the Africans preferred to enter wage labour under their own terms

and not those of labour agents.

Following the introduction of the kipande system, the colonial government called on the employers not to engage, on written contracts, any African males of registration age who had not acquired the Kipande¹⁷. This made it compulsory for any would be labourer to acquire the kipande.

In 1921 an economic depression hit Kenya. This led to a fall in prices for agricultural produce and high prices for manufactured goods. In an attempt to offset the effects of the economic depression the agricultural employers reduced minimum African wages by one third¹⁸. The wage cut led to a serious labour shortage in the plantations in Kisumu District. As one correspondent reported:

For the first time, Fort Ternan, Koru, Lumbwa, and Muhoroni are hard hit for labour. This is not due to the railway work, as that is unpopular but to the reduction of wages. The Kavirondo has really never come out since the reduction and with a record crop is not likely to¹⁹.

In 1921 the hut and poll taxes were raised to 16 shillings in total per person per annum²⁰. In the same year, some local Luo and Luyia elites such as Jonathan Okwiri, Benjamin Owuor and Simeon Nyende among other people formed the Young Kavirondo Association²¹. The Association was also known as Piny owacho (translated as the will of the people movement). It was launched at a meeting held at Lundha, North Gem on 23rd, December 1921, and was attended by approximately 1,000 local people, both Luo and Luyia. The movement made demands such as the abolition of forced labour camps in Nyanza Province and the Kipande system. It also

registered its opposition to the increase of the hut and poll tax, and the lowering of the African wages. Thus the movement aimed at ameliorating the working conditions of the African labourers. The Governor, Edward Northey met the officials of the Piny Owacho movement and consented to some of their demands. For example, he announced the abolition of the labour camps and reduction of taxation from 16 shillings to 12 shillings. However, he declined to abolish the Kipande system, pointing out that the Kipande had been introduced for identification purposes and was aimed at benefitting the Africans²².

The Piny Owacho movement also protested to the colonial government against the system of forced labour in the reserves²³. It pointed out that the Chiefs and headmen were compelling people to enter the wage labour as well as forcing juveniles, women and old men to perform arduous compulsory communal labour. Due to the outcry over the misuse of compulsory labour, the then British Colonial Secretary of State, Winston Churchill, sent a dispatch to the colonial government, stating that forced labour should only be used in government undertakings and other essential services²⁴. Although the Northey Labour Circular of 1919 was rescinded and amended it still contained some elements of compulsion. It stated:

When unemployed young men are found in the Reserve, enquiries should be made as to whether they have paid their poll tax... No actual force can be employed to compel a man to go out to work, he can however, be made to pay his tax²⁵.

Up to 1922 all the sugar cane produced by the Asian farmers was used to

manufacture jaggery. In 1923, a white settler owned company, the Victoria Nyanza Sugar Company established a white sugar mill at Miwani in Kisumu District²⁶. It crushed cane from its own plantations and also purchased cane from the nearby Asian plantations. The company contracted about 75% of the local Asian farmers to supply the mill with sugar cane. Sugar cane was taken to the mill by the company's trolleys from as far as Kibos. All this gave impetus to the Asian farmers to increase cane production and about half the cultivated land in the Kibos-Miwani area was put under cane. Henceforth, only about 20% of the Asian sugar cane farmers particularly those whose farms were located far away from the trolley line in Kibos and those in remote farms in Chemelil and Kibigori continued to rely on the manufacture of jaggery. Cane production in the Asian farms thus increased tremendously from 5,299 tons in 1925 to 49,042 tons in 1931 (see table 3.1).

Table 3.1 Amount of sugar cane purchased by the Victoria Nyanza Sugar Company from the Asian Planters, 1925-31 (selected Years)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Amount</u>
1925	5,299
1929	39,546
1930	35,494
1931	49,042

During the 1920s-30s the activities of Asian absentee landlords and land speculators became more pronounced. They purchased land from both European and Asian farmers in the Kibos-Chemelil area, which they leased to Asian tenant farmers²⁷. Examples of these Asian land speculators included Maganlal Patel, a renowned money lender in Kisumu and N.J. Desai, an advocate's clerk and insurance broker in Kisumu town. The two men owned large farms in Kibos, Kibigori and Chemelil.

By 1928 there were 48 Asian farmers in the Kibos-Miwani area each with approximately 200 acres under cane²⁸. In 1930, the 4,500 acre, Walji Hirji and Sons Estate was leased to Asian tenants at the annual rent of 50 cents per acre²⁹. The tenants invested on cane cultivation since the farms were located only 5 kilometres from the Victoria Nyanza Sugar Mills at Miwani. Out of the estimated 48 Asian farmers in the area in 1928 about 60-70% were absentee landlords, especially in the Kibigori-Chemelil area³⁰. However, hardly any of them were Sikhs. They were described as the "shopkeeper type of Asians". It can be argued that apart from the Sikhs who were genuine farmers, the other Asians were mainly interested in land speculation and marketing of agricultural produce. For example, in 1947, the District officer of Kisumu made the following comments on Asian farmers:

In Kenya there are no Indian cultivators in the true sense of the words, but the farmers are owners of land and directors of labour. many of them too come from classes having no inherited connection with the land and so lacking the love for the land so necessary for a good husbandman³¹.

By 1930, there were 56 Asian farmers in Kibos-Miwani area, occupying 15,400 acres of land, of which 9,120 acres was under sugar cane³². At the same time there were some European owned sugar plantations, two of which owned sugar mills. The Muhoroni Sugar Company crushed only cane from its own plantations³³, while the Victoria Nyanza Sugar Company purchased cane from the Asian farmers as well.

The boom induced by the establishment of the Victoria Nyanza Sugar company was short-lived. In 1930, the new Managing Director of the company, B.Y. Abel unilaterally abrogated the contracts for the supply of cane to the company by the Asian planters³⁴. This decision caused great financial loss to the farmers whose mature cane was destroyed. Thus there developed a period of distrust between the two parties which led to a fall in cane and sugar production (see Table 3.2). The decline in sugar production was also due to the drought and locust infestation of 1930 - 32.

In 1930 the colonial government auctioned farms No. 1595 and 1997 at Kibos³⁵. The two farms had been divided into 13 plots of approximately 160 acres each. The Nyanza Indian Farmers Association bought two of the plots at 23,700 shillings and 21,700 shillings respectively for its members³⁶. The price per acre was thus £ 7.80 and £ 6.11 respectively, though the reserve price had been set at £ 2 per acre. Undoubtedly, Asians were willing to pay high prices for land. This shows that demand for land by the Asians in the District was high.

Table 3.2 Sugar production by the Victoria Nyanza Sugar

Company(Miwani), 1930-33

Year	Amount in tons
1930	7,450
1931	3,500
1932	2,500
1933	2,836

Source: KNA DC Kisumu-Londiani AR 1930-33

The 1930-35 economic depression adversely affected the Asian cane farmers. Due to the depression as well as Abel's policies, the Victoria Nyanza sugar company was not willing to purchase cane from the Asian farmers claiming that sugar prices were low³⁷. Thus in 1931 the company contracted only 9 Asian farmers to supply cane to the factory at two thirds of the 1930 price. The prices of maize also fell from 12 shillings to less than 4 shillings in 1930³⁸. The recession created economic difficulties for the farmers. For example, because of bankruptcy, 5 Asian farms were auctioned in Chemelil and Kibos for £ 3,581³⁹. The farmers asked the government to waive the payment of rates for their farms. The Nyanza Indian Farmers Association which had bought plots at Kibos appealed to the government to defer payment of arrears for the farms for the next two years. In 1931, a total of 15 out of

approximately 56 Asian farmers in the Kibos-Miwani area were not able to pay their 1931 land lease revenue, ranging from 2,900 shillings to 6,400 shillings⁴⁰. During the 1930-35 period, about 50-60% of both sugar cane and maize crops were destroyed by droughts and locust infestation of 1930-32⁴¹. For example, in 1930, about 700 acres was under maize while in 1931 no maize was cultivated. About 50% of the full time Asian farmers opened up shops on their farms to make ends meet.

In 1931, the colonial government launched the Land and Agricultural Bank, which aimed at assisting the farmers to continue with their agricultural enterprises⁴². However, the Bank provided loans mostly to the European settlers. Nearly all the Asian farmers who sought financial assistance from the bank were unsuccessful⁴³. Even during the period of economic depression of 1920-21 and 1931-35 the government did not provide incentives to the Asian sugar cane planters. For example, the government did not offer subsidies for sugar cane as was the case with other agricultural commodities such as sisal, pyrethrum, coffee, barley, and wheat which were cultivated mostly by white settlers. The producers of these commodities were also offered good prices and other incentives such as guaranteed minimum returns against crop failure.

The Asian planters complained that although the government fixed consumer prices for sugar it did not do the same for the producer price of sugar cane as was the case with white settler grown crops. Subsequently, the price of sugar cane was determined by the sugar millers themselves who tended to fix low prices. For example, prior to 1947 the cane prices offered to farmers was decided by the

Victoria Nyanza Sugar Company, a role later taken up by the Miwani Sugar Mills. The Asian settlers were also not happy with the ban on jaggery export in the 1940s despite request by the Ministry of Supplies in Britain and other manufacturers such as Mackintoshes Toffee Limited for jaggery.

In 1936, the colonial government under the Farmers Assistance Ordinance, formed the Farmers Conciliation Board⁴⁴. The aim of this Board was to assist farmers who had financial difficulties so that they could continue with their agricultural activities. Under this scheme a farmer was given a breathing space of 5 years by his creditors from paying his debts. The Board provided the farmer with an advance to enable him improve his existing farming activities. The farm, however, was put under a temporary supervisor appointed by the Agricultural Board. Each application for the assistance had to be approved by the local agricultural committee first before it was forwarded to the Agricultural Board. Although nearly all the Asian farmers applied for financial assistance under this scheme less than 10% were successful⁴⁵. Needless to say some of the unsuccessful farmers borrowed money from private money lenders such as Maganlal V. Patel whilst others who became bankrupt sold off their farms to the Asian land speculators. Thus as Table 3.2 shows, between 1930 and 1933 there was a fall in sugar production.

During the period 1919-35 the number of African labourers in the Asian Plantations fluctuated between 1,000 and 3,000 annually⁴⁶. The Asian farmers started to experience severe labour shortage especially during the periods of peak labour demand in the African reserves. The expansion of European sisal and sugar

cane plantations in the Miwani, Kibigori, Chemelil, Muhoroni and Koru areas also deprived the Asian farmers of some of their potential labourers from Kano location.

During the war and immediately afterwards the world prices for sisal was very high hence the expansion of Chemelil and Koru sisal estates⁴⁷. The sisal estates and the European owned sugar plantations such as the Victoria Nyanza and Muhoroni sugar companies offered higher wages than the Asian farmers. For example, in 1935 the two European sugar companies offered wage rates of 13/50 shillings per ticket while the Asian farmers offered 6-8 shillings per ticket⁴⁸. The gold mining industry which had mushroomed in Seme and Sakwa also attracted labourers because of the good wages offered compared to the Asian farmers. For example, in 1935 the mines were offering wage rates of 12 shillings per ticket while the Asian farmers were paying 6-8 shillings per ticket⁴⁹. It is worth noting that the European owned sugar and sisal plantations employed about 70-75% of their labour force on 6 month contracts. Thus they were provided with accommodation in the companies/plantations' labour camps. They were also supplied with food rations.

To counteract the labour shortage due to competition by other employers, Asian farmers also started to engage some labourers on 6 month contracts⁵⁰. Such labourers were provided with accommodation and food rations. However, their numbers were small, estimated at 15-25% of the total labour force. During the economic depression of 1921-22 and 1930-35 the Asian farmers laid off about 50% of their labourers⁵¹. They also reduced labour wages from 7 shillings per ticket to 5 shillings per ticket. The annual reports of 1930-35 show that the Africans had

difficulty in meeting their tax obligations. Thus some Africans were moving from farm to farm looking for work and were ready to accept any wage offered. Thus during the 1930-35 economic depression the labour supply exceeded demand. As Stichter has observed, taxation became a heavy burden on the Africans during periods of economic depression such as 1921-22 and 1930-35 when both wages and prices of African produce fell while taxes did not⁵².

3.3 African Labour in the Immediate Post Depression Era

From 1936 the Asian farmers in Kisumu District began to recover from the devastating effects of the 1930-35 economic recession, droughts and the locust invasion. The immediate post depression period was marked by an economic boom as the prices of agricultural commodities stabilised.

Thus Africans entered into wage labour because of the prospects of increased income.

Meanwhile the droughts and famines of 1928, and 1931-34 locally known as Nyangweso and Bonyo (locusts) respectively had adversely affected African agricultural production⁵³. Furthermore, with population increase the mode of farming was changed. Shifting cultivation was given up as the people were now forced to adjust to two related problems, land shortage and soil exhaustion. Migrant labour therefore proved to be the best outlet of earning an income. Migrant labour system refers to an arrangement where the labourer-peasant periodically moved to and fro between the peasant economy and wage labour. A man moving to a sugar plantation would stay for a period of 3-6 months leaving the farming activities to his

wife. In addition, the spread of Asian merchandise stimulated new wants among the Africans. Consequently, they sought wage employment to acquire cash for material possessions such as clothes, bicycles, blankets, household goods and other such things⁵⁴. Thus labour migrancy was the Africans' special mechanism of balancing and coping with the demands of both agriculture and wage labour.

In 1936 the Asian farmers in the District formed the Nyanza Farmers Cooperative Society⁵⁵. The society sold members' agricultural produce and also supplied them with farming implements. Initially it had a capital of 200,000 shillings divided into ordinary shares of 20 shillings each. All members were expected to sell produce through the society. The society was granted monopoly of selling jaggery in the country and for export in 1937. It charged 25% of the value of commodity per *frasila* (36 lbs) as commission for agricultural produce sold through it. Before the formation of the society the price of jaggery was low, at 65 cents per *frasila*⁵⁶. But after its establishment the local price of jaggery rose to 3 shillings per *frasila*. This was because the society controlled the market. It exported about 1,000 tons of jaggery annually to Great Britain, India and Uganda.

The export of jaggery was proving profitable and the farmers expanded acreage under cane. They also installed engine driven crushers to produce high quality jaggery⁵⁷. Out of the estimated 80 Asian farmers in the District, 40-45 were producing jaggery. By the mid 1930s annual jaggery production was 3,000-4,000 tons from 1,000-2,000 tons in the 1920s⁵⁸.

The Asian farmers, especially those who had jaggery manufacturing plants,

employed between 15-150 labourers each on 6 month contracts⁵⁹. These Asian farmers employed labourers mostly on 6 month contracts because jaggery manufacture kept the labour force busy when the season was wrong for cultivating. Sending labour away during low seasons created the problem of slow and painful rebuilding of the labour force when required. However, their wages were lower compared to those of labour on European farms. For example, by 1938 Asians were offering 6-12 shillings per ticket while the European settlers were paying 9-15 shillings per ticket⁶⁰. In 1939 the sugar industry in Kisumu District employed 2,400 adults and 700 juveniles at the wage rates of 10 shillings and 5 shillings per ticket respectively. Thus African labourers were earning a total of £16500 per annum⁶¹.

In sum, in the 1930s a combination of both economic and social factors stimulated people to seek wage labour. The majority of labourers in the sugar plantations were people from the nearby locations of Kano, Kajulu and Nyakach. Labour contracts began to lengthen and migrancy made its appearance as the Africans' special mechanism for balancing and coping with the demands of both agriculture and wage labour.

3.4 Initial African response to ~~Asian~~ ~~Sugar~~ plantation Economy

During the 1919-39 period an increasing number of Africans entered into wage labour in the sugar plantations in Kisumu District. This was the result of a combination of social and economic factors.

The colonial government had attempted to continue with the cotton cultivation campaign in the District but met with very little success. This was because the crop

was labour intensive but yielding very poor cash returns. In 1920 the colonial government through the local administration distributed 1500 lbs of cotton seeds in Kano and Kajulu locations for planting⁶². However, the response was discouraging due to the low price offered. Thus in 1921 no cotton was planted by the Africans. In 1922 a total of six hundred acres of cotton was planted in Kano and Kajulu locations⁶³. The price offered for cotton was 25-30 cents per pound. Between 1923-31 cotton prices plummeted by about 66%, that is from 30 cents in 1923 to 11 cents in 1931. The fall in price discouraged the local people from cultivating the crop. Thus to a large extent by the 1930s the cotton experiment had failed in Kisumu District⁶⁴.

At the same time the prices for African produced maize also fell from 4-12 shillings per load in 1919 to between 75 cents to 2 shillings in 1920-21⁶⁵. Moreover, as the PC for Nyanza in 1911 noted, during periods of good harvests the Asian traders often could not buy all the produce that the Africans were willing to sell⁶⁶. Consequently, increased production often resulted in low producer price for the farmer. All these things tended to discourage farmers hence the propensity of people to seek wage labour.

The droughts and famines which hit Nyakach and Kano locations in the 1920s and 1930s forced an increasing number of people to seek wage labour in both the European and Asian plantations in the Miwani-Muhoroni area⁶⁷. The chiefs of Nyakach and Kano started complaining in 1920 that the outflow of African males to the plantations was detrimental to local agricultural production. By the 1920s due to

soil deterioration and declining crop yields, wage labour was seen by the African as a more reliable way to earn an income than agriculture⁶⁸.

In 1925 the colonial government issued a circular on the Dual Policy under which the Africans were to be encouraged to contribute to the country's development⁶⁹. This could be through wage labour or increased agricultural production in the reserves. This policy of parallel development in the reserves and in the settled areas was the brainchild of Governor Robert Coryndon (1922-25). However, the programme failed due to opposition by the settlers and lack of skilled agricultural manpower in African areas⁷⁰. The settler controlled newspaper, The East African Standard, claimed that the policy could lead to idleness of the Africans in the reserves because the government would not have power to compel them to go out and work against their wish⁷¹.

In 1925 the Labour Commissioner recommended that juveniles should not be employed outside their Districts but should only be engaged as casuals within their Districts⁷². This was an attempt to ensure that such juveniles did not become delinquents and stranded outside their districts and to ensure they were not engaged in arduous tasks. Both the Asian and European sugar plantations employed women and juvenile labourers as well⁷³. The Employment of Servants Ordinance of 1937 defined a juvenile as a person under the age of 16 years. Juveniles were not supposed to be employed in arduous tasks such as cane and sisal cutting, quarrying, fuel cutting, lifting and carrying of heavy loads. They were also not to be deployed in mining or in the factory. The Asian farmers employed women and juveniles mostly in planting

and weeding sugar cane.

In 1932 the colonial government appointed the Kenya Land Commission, under the chairmanship of Morris Carter. Among its terms of reference was to consider the land needs and grievances of the Africans and to define the boundaries of the White Highlands among other issues⁷⁴. During the Commission's hearing, Luo witnesses claimed that the establishment of the Asian farms in the Kibos-Miwani area had led to the destruction of Luo homesteads⁷⁵. The Kavirondo Taxpayers Welfare Association (KTWA) in their memorandum to the Commission demanded compensation for African land alienated in the Kibos-Miwani Area. The commission however rejected the Luo claims to the alienated land on the ground that the land North of the Kenya-Uganda railway line had been a buffer zone between the Luo and the Nandi, and was thus unoccupied. According to oral information this decision was very unfair to Jokajulu to whom the Kibos area belonged.

The Asian witnesses also petitioned the commission on the issue of land ownership in the White Highlands⁷⁶. They pointed out that the Asian farmers who had acquired land in the Muhoroni-Chemelil area before the extension of the Highlands boundary from Fort Ternan to Chemelil found it difficult to expand their holdings. This was because they had to obtain the approval of the Colonial Governor. Furthermore, these Asians acquired their land at comparatively high prices, although plenty of land was offered freely to European settlers. The colonial government was also ready to extend to European farmers essential services such as infrastructure, agricultural extension services and marketing facilities. Asian farmers were very bitter

with the government's restriction on Asian land ownership in the Highlands. They appealed to the colonial government to grant them more agricultural land, claiming that overcrowding in the Kibos-Miwani area was the cause for the poor farming methods and low production⁷⁷.

There were three Asian farms South of the railway line at Kibos, which encroached on the then "Kavirondo" reserve⁷⁸. The Kenya Land Commission of 1933 had not been notified about the existence of these farms. This was because the Asian grantees had abandoned them for many years and the local people had started to cultivate them, thinking that the plots had reverted to them. The three farms were, the 50 acre LR 654/31, the 50 acre LR 654/33 and the 10 acre LR 654/34.

In 1941 the plots were owned by Archibald A. Bond, Messrs Laburam-Patel and Chanda Singh respectively. They had acquired the plots either through inheritance or direct purchase. Bond had bought his plot in 1941 at £ 200. The colonial government wanted to purchase the three plots because they were located outside the Asian Settlement Area. It hoped to incorporate them into the African Land Unit. Bond was willing to accept the government's offer of £ 200. Patel was offered £ 60 for his plot but he was hesitant to accept it, instead he wanted to exchange the farm for another plot in Kisumu town or in Nairobi. However, the government could not guarantee acceptance of his request. On the other hand, Chanda Singh was willing to vacate his plot, provided he received a refund from the Local Native Council, of a total of 690 shillings which he had paid as rent for 26 years. The acquisition of the plots by the government was meant to compensate Jokajulu who had lost the land

lying between River Kibos and Ngeta to Asian settlers.

During the economic depression of 1930-35 the Africans in the District who had been laid off by their employers or those who did not join wage labour increased their agricultural production⁷⁹. For example, cotton production increased from 800 tons in 1935 to 2,719 in 1936, and the acreage under the crop expanded by 100%⁸⁰. This fact to some extent justifies the assertion that the failure of cotton cultivation was due to the absence of male labour as well as lack of qualified agricultural personnel among other causes⁸¹. However, during the post depression boom of 1936-39 an increasing number of local people sought wage employment in the nearby sugar plantations.

On the whole, the number of labourers in the Asian sugar plantations in the period 1919-39 was small. However, other non Asian employers also employed African labourers. Consequently, the aggregate total number of Africans from the District in wage employment was high, estimated at 60- 65% of the adult male population. The majority of the labour force in the sugar plantations were engaged on daily basis or on short term contracts.

3.5 Summary.

In the chapter we have discussed African labour and Asian agriculture in Kisumu District in the inter war period. It has been pointed out that the period was marked by two economic depressions of 1920-21 and 1930-35 which impoverished and caused great distress to both the labourers and the Asian farmers. The Asian farmers laid off some of their labourers and also reduced the wage rates because of

the economic recession. Some of the farmers became bankrupt and sold off their farms to Asian land speculators. We have noted that during this period and especially in the mid 1920s and 1930s the Asian farmers often experienced labour shortages. This was the result of competition from European settlers' owned sugar and sisal plantations as well as the gold mines in the District which offered higher wages than the Asian settlers. Against this background, the Asian planters started to increase the number of their employees engaged on 6 month contracts and whom they required to reside on the plantations. However, the number of such labourers was small compared to those engaged as daily paid casuals. The Asian farmers were not willing to increase wage rates to be at par with the sisal and mining industry. It is therefore evident that labour migration involved a large element of exploitation. This had started to become evident in the Asian sugar plantations during the inter war period. The low wages given to the Africans were an expedient measure to minimise cost. Needless to say, this was a form of exploitation of labourers for the benefit of the employers.

It has been pointed out that both social and economic forces induced the local people to seek wage employment in the sugar plantations. Asian merchandise and the money economy stimulated new wants among the peasants. The price of African grown cash crops such as cotton was low. Thus the local people had realised that wage labour was a more reliable means of obtaining an income compared to agriculture. However, the withdrawal of people from the peasant economy had started to bring far - reaching repercussions on the District.

Endtnotes

1. Van Zwanenberg, Colonial Capitalism, 3 Bennet, Kenya , 43-44.
2. M. Carter, Report of the Kenya Land Commission, London: His Majesty's Stationery office, 1934, 292-487.
3. KNA KDAQR 1919, 28.
4. Ibid. 1919-39, and KNA DC/KSM 1/2/122, KDCR, 4th, Nov. 1947.
5. Mc Gregor Ross, Kenya From Within, 103-5.
6. KNA KDAQR 1919.
7. KNA PC/NZA 3/20/4/2 Compulsory Labour circular 17th, March 1925, see also Okoth Ogendo, Tenants of the Crown ,81.
8. van Zwanenberg, Colonial Capitalism, 183-209 and Mc Gregor Ross, Kenya From Within ,188.
9. Stichter , Migrant Labour ,39.
10. KNA CKDAR 1921.
11. Leys, Kenya, London: Frankcass, 1973, 13.
12. Ol. M. Onyuro ,J. Ongany, S. Mugoya.
13. van Zwanenberg, Colonial Capitalism ,184.
14. Ol. Rehmat Khan, M. Onyuro ,R. Akinyi.
15. Ibid.
16. KNA Kisumu-Londiani District AR 1926.
17. Mc Gregor Ross, Kenya From Within ,188.
18. Ibid. 234, van Zwanenberg, Colonial Capitalism,43-47.

19. Mc Gregor Ross, Kenya From Within, cited, 234.
20. Stichter, Migrant Labour ,35.
21. KNA CKDAR 1921-22.
22. Mc Gregor Ross, Kenya From Within, 19.
23. KNA PC/NZA 2/20/13 circular on assisted labour recruitment, 12th,Dec.1941, and KNA CKDAR 1920-22.
24. Clayton, Government and Labour, 136.
25. E.A. Brett, Colonialism and Underdevelopment in East Africa, London: Heinemann, 1973, 188.
26. KNA KDAR 1923.
27. KNA DC/KSM 1/3/118-22 Muhoroni Indian Farms 1947-59.
28. Harlow and Chilver (eds) East Africa ,214.
29. KNA AGR 6/4308 Miwani Farms 1956-58.
30. OI. Rehmat Khan, KNA DC/KSM 1/3/122. Agricultural Production on Indian Farms 1952.
31. Ibid.
32. Fearn, An African Economy, 105.
33. KNA NPAR, 1925-39.
34. KNA PC/NZA 3/3/122,Memorandum from NIFA, 28th oct. 1950.
35. Ibid. 28th,Oct 1950.
36. KNA PC/NZA 2/2/10,Kibos Indian Farms,4th July,1935.
37. KNA K-LAR. 1930.

38. Fearn, An African Economy.
39. KNA NPAR, 1935.
40. KNA, PC/NZA 2/2/35, Crown Lands Rent Stand Premier, 1932-43.
41. KNA, K-LAR 1930.
42. van Zwanenberg, Colonial Capitalism.
43. KNA, DC/KSM 1/3/125 Farmers Conciliation Board, 29th June 1936.
44. KNA, DC/KSM 1/3/123, Land and Agricultural Bank Loan recipients 1932-35.
45. KNA DC/KSM 1/3/123, Application for Land Rehabilitation Fund, 16th Feb. 1952.
46. KNA KDAR 1919-29 and K-LAR. 1930-35.
47. KNA NPAR 1927 and 1929.
48. Ibid. 1935 and K-LAR. 1930-35.
49. KNA DC/KSM 1/1/14, LIR, 1936.
50. OI. Rehmat Khan, Jagir Singh, Jagat Singh.
51. KNA K-LAR, 1930-35.
52. Stichter, Migrant Labour 70.
53. Ochieng, "Colonial Famines," 81.
54. Stichter, Migrant Labour, 83.
55. KNA DC/KSM 1/3/118 Nyanza Indian Farmers Co-operative Society (NIFC'S), 1931 -see also K-LDAR, 1936.
56. KNA PC/NZA/ 1/3/122, NIFA General meeting 6th April 1940.

57. KNA DC/KSM 1/3/122, Agricultural Production in Indian Farms, 20th, Jan. 1952
58. KNA AGR 6/4599 NIFC'S, Chairman's report, 29th, Dec. 1939.
59. KNA DC/KSM 1/17/95, LIR, 1948-55.
60. KNA DC/KSM 1/17/95 Labour inspection report
61. KNA NPAR, 1939, 41.
62. KNA KDAQ, 1920.
63. Kitching, Class and Economic Change.
64. Ibid.
65. KNA PC/NZA 1/15/4, NPAR 1920-21.
66. Ibid. 1911-12.
67. Ibid. 1920-21.
68. Anyang-Nyong "Middle Peasantry", Ochieng "Colonial Famines", and Stichter Migrant Labour.
69. KNA PC/NZA 3/20/4/2, The Dual Policy of Development, Circular No. 25 from NAD 29th, Oct. 1925.
70. Lonsdale J.M "A Political History of Nyanza 1883-1945", Ph.D Thesis, Trinity College, Cambridge, 1964.
71. Ibid. The Labour Question, 1925-27.
72. KNA PC/NZA 3/20/17/1, Employment of Juveniles 1925-28.
73. KNA Lab 9/2132, LIR, Miwani 1932-49.
74. KNA DC/KSM 1/18/98, Kenya Land Commission Report, Terms of References, 1933.

75. Carter, Land Commission , Anyang-Nyongo "Middle Peasantry" .
76. Swainson, Corporate Capitalism .
77. KNA DC/KSM 1/3/122, Agricultural Production on Indian Farms, 1947-59.
78. KNA PC/NZA 2/4/139, Native Land Lease to non- natives 18th Nov. 1942.
79. KNA CKDAR, 1930-35.
80. Kitching, Class and Economic Change, table iv:7
81. Ibid. see also Fearn, An African Economy, 68-78.

CODESRIA-LIBRARY

CHAPTER 4

4.0 THE MIGRANT LABOUR SYSTEM, 1940 - 55

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter we trace the expansion of the Asian sugar plantation economy in Kisumu District during the Second World War to 1955. This expansion is analyzed in relation to the African labour in these plantations.

We also highlight the origin, scope and the organization of the African labour force in the sugar plantations. The Miwani Sugar Mills is used as a case study to focus attention onto the categories of labour, the working conditions and the employer-employee relations in the sugar plantations. This is because the Miwani Sugar Mills owned the largest sugar plantations in the area and employed about 60% of the total labour force in the sugar industry. In an attempt to analyze African reactions to wage labour conditions in the Asian sugar plantations, we trace the nascent labour protests and strikes in these plantations and the impact of these protests and strikes.

4.2 Expansion of the Asian Sugar Plantations

During the Second World War and in the 1950s, Asian family concerns expanded into the manufacturing sector. This was mostly in the sugar, sisal and cotton industries¹. This expansion was attributed mainly to the general competitiveness of the family based Asian enterprises, their business acumen and economic resilience. They manage to extend their operations with the steady accumulation of capital and the

acquisition of new professional and technical skills. For example, a total of 5 white settler farms in the Kibigori - Chemelil area were purchased by Asian farmers during the War². Also in 1942 an Asian company bought the European settler owned 4,800 acre Muhoroni Sugar Company plantation. All these purchases had to be approved by the Governor since the farms were located within the White Highlands.

However, in the course of the war cane production plummeted. A large number of African males in Kisumu District had been recruited into the military for the war purpose. Thus there was labour shortage which affected production in both the Victoria Nyanza Sugar Company estates and in the Asian owned plantations³. Furthermore in 1942-43 there was a serious drought which led to famine referred to locally as Otonglo (ten cents)⁴ in Kisumu District. The drought adversely affected sugar cane production. During the war, the Asian farmers had increased the acreage under maize. This was because of the good prices and other incentives such as grants for breaking new land offered by the colonial government to boost production for the war effort⁵.

In the course of the war, the colonial government enacted the 1940 Defence Regulations under which Provincial Commissioners were empowered to enlist labour quotas for the military and essential undertakings such as agriculture⁶. The sugar plantations fell under essential agricultural industries. Thus they obtained conscripted labour to boost production for the war effort. For example, the number of conscript labourers in the sugar industry in 1943, 1944 and 1945 was 1,220, 1,060 and 1,052 respectively⁷. Many conscripts who were rejected as unfit for military service were also sent to the nearby European and Asian plantations. Through such labour

conscription, the colonial government to some extent ensured the continuation of production in the heavy agricultural industries such as sugar. The Provincial Commissioners of Kenya in their meeting of 1944 agreed that due to the absence of male labour because of military conscription, women should be encouraged to seek wage labour in the nearby Asian and European plantations⁸. Undoubtedly, this meant that women would be overburdened with additional tasks apart from their domestic chores. Nonetheless, the response of the women was favourable. For example, in 1945, the total number of sugar plantation labourers in Kisumu District comprised 2,480 men, 585 women and 1,135 juveniles⁹.

During the Second World War the government realised the need to closely monitor agricultural production in the White Highlands to ensure maximum production for the war effort¹⁰. A Board of Agriculture (Schedule Area) was created to organise increased production of crops. At the same time, the Increased Production of Crops Ordinance of 1942 was introduced. Under this Ordinance the government provided financial assistance to farmers in the form of free grants for the breaking of new land and guaranteed minimum prices for their crops. The Board established agricultural committees and sub committees whose duty was the collection and collation of farm statistics. The system of agricultural sub committee was institutionalised under the 1955 Agricultural Ordinance.

In 1946 the Asian farmers in Kisumu District formed three production subcommittees¹¹. First, there was the Kibos production sub-committee with over 40 members. Second was the Miwani-Kibigori production Sub-committee with 16

members and lastly the Chemelil-Muhoroni production sub-committee with 10 members. Apart from collecting and collating farm statistics the committees also reviewed farming activities of the previous season and made up plans for the next season. The officials of the production sub-committees were elected by the members. These officials in liaison with the Department of Agriculture could recommend farmers for loans and other assistance to boost farming. These committees were headed by educated, rich, and influential part time Asian farmers. This was because the Asians who were solely farmers were illiterate or semi-literate. Almost all the Asians with the necessary qualifications for membership of the production committees were principally tradesmen or professionals who only participated in farming on part time basis.

There was mutual mistrust between the part time farmers and the full time Asian farmers. For example, the fulltime farmers claimed that they were getting a raw deal on the provision of credit and other facilities which required the approval of the officials. In 1952 the officials of Kibos production sub-committee were Jagir Singh, chairman, Bachitar Singh, secretary, Miliwant Singh, member, and M.C. Keshap, member. All of whom were part time farmers.

In 1947 an Asian entrepreneur, Devji bhai Hindocha who was the proprietor of the Kakira Sugar Works in Uganda purchased the then white settler owned Victoria Nyanza Sugar Company¹². He renamed the company, the Miwani Sugar Mills. He immediately embarked on the expansion of the sugar mills and its plantations. The company had three plantation Estates under cane namely Miwani of 9300 acres, Chemelil of 4252 acres and Kibigori of 543 acres¹³. Each Estate was under an Asian

overseer and supervisor. The company introduced a light railway network system which transported sugar cane from the plantations to the factory.

Prior to the purchase, the Victoria Nyanza Company had frustrated the Asian farmers by its refusal to purchase all their cane, unilaterally abrogating contracts with the farmers and paying them low prices for the cane delivered. And yet, there is evidence that the company accumulated huge profits which were expatriated abroad¹⁴. The new Asian owners of the Miwani Sugar Mills, with the support of the colonial government, encouraged the Asian farmers to increase cane production to meet the increasing demands of the mills.

According to oral information, in response to the encouragement, the farmers purchased new agricultural machinery and also obtained loans mainly from private Asian money lenders in Kenya to produce high quality cane. Thus production of both cane and sugar continued to increase after 1947. For example, the Miwani Sugar Mills production increased from 6,322 tons in the 1947/48 season to 10,430 tons in 1951/52¹⁵. By 1947 there were a total of 83 individual Asian farmers in the district owning a total of 22,071 acres(see Table 4.1 (a)).

In 1947, the newly opened Asian owned Miwani sugar mills embarked on serious cane variety trials. The company obtained cane seeds from Sat Badian Singh and Bharmant Singh's farms located at Miwani. The following year the company offered the Government a plot adjacent to Ngeta river about 3 kilometres from the Miwani sugar mills for sugar research. The department of agriculture approved a capital expenditure of £3480 and a recurrent expenditure of £1361 for the project.

The aim of the sugar research station was to help identify disease resistant varieties adaptable to the environment and high yielding.

In 1948 the government appointed an Asian, Gill Singh who had knowledge in sugar cane cultivation as an assistant agricultural officer in charge of the Asian farms. He instructed the Asian farmers on good farming methods and on how to improve their farming activities. He also conducted research on cane varieties. Prior to his appointment, the then District Officer for Kisumu town, E.M. Magor had toured the Asian farms and noted in his report that the farming methods were poor. For example, planting on most of the farms was across slopes and not on contour. This tended to cause soil erosion. Meanwhile he observed that most farmers tended to ratoon their cane six to eight times instead of maximum three times as was the case in India. This contributed to poor cane yields.

**Table 4.1 (a) Approximate number of Asian farmers and acreage held in
Kisumu District, 1947**

<u>Area</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>No. of farmers</u>
Kibos	11,321	51
Miwani	1,920	11
Kibigori	3,990	8
Chemelil	4,335	7
Muhoroni	<u>505</u>	<u>4</u>
Total	22,071	83

Source: KNA DC/KSM 1/3/122 Agricultural Production on Indian Farms, 1947.

In 1953 about 56% of the total acreage held by the Asians had been put under cane. Sugar cane continued to be the dominant crop in the area. However, about half the land holdings in Muhoroni, Kibigori and kibos had not been put under cane. This was because of the long distance from the Miwani Sugar Mills among other factors. Furthermore, the land in the Muhoroni and Kibigori areas was less fertile thus much of it was used as grazing ground by the Asian farmers. The Asian settlers' farms were small compared to those of their European counterparts. For example, by 1957 more than 50% of the Asian land holdings were under 200 acres whereas only about 3% were over 2000 acres¹⁶ (see Table 4.1b).

The Asian informants pointed out that the white settlers used their access to state power to impose technical and financial control against Asian agriculture in Kenya. As a result, resources were given to the Asian settlers more selectively. It is also reported that the colonial government did not whole heartedly support Asian agricultural undertaking as was the case with their white counterparts. They complained that the colonial government provided nearly all the agricultural extension services, infrastructural developments and credit facilities to the white settler plantations.

Under the 1930 Agricultural Advance Ordinance, a local land board was set up in Nyanza. It comprised of the Provincial Commissioner, the District Commissioner of Kisumu-Londiani District, the Kisumu branch managers of the National Bank of

India and the Standard Bank of South Africa. The board also included 2 European settlers, Thomas Allen and Eric Mayers, then proprietors of Muhoroni and the Victoria Nyanza sugar companies respectively. The board mainly recommended white settlers for credit facilities at the expense of the Asian farmers. Needless to say, the Asian farmers mostly borrowed money from private money lenders who charged higher interest rates of more than 6% charged by the Land and Agricultural Bank.

Before 1945 very few Asian merchants had moved into the Industrial and manufacturing ventures in Kenya. This was due to financial constraints and lack of credit facilities from the European controlled Banks. However in the mid 1940's the Asian banks of India and Baroda were established . They became the major sources of credit to the Asian entrepreneurs. It is evident that in the late 1940's and thereafter many Asian firms expanded into larger units by the take over of smaller companies. The Miwani and Muhoroni Sugar companies are classic examples. In the 1960's the Mehta group took over and revived the Muhoroni sugar company. The related Hindocha and Madhvani families had interest in sugar Industry and other industries in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. The Mathvani family acquired the Ramisi sugar mills situated near Mombasa from the former European owners in the 1960's.

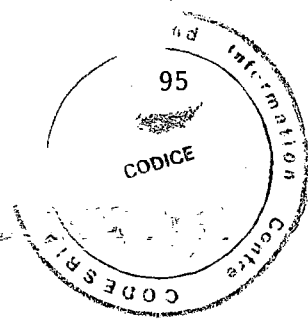
These Asian families combined agricultural enterprises and manufacturing concerns. From profit generated by the sugar millsthesefamilies diversified into other industrial undertakings such as textile manufacture, steel rolling mills among others .Thus by the 1960's these Asian families had achieved the status of corporate capitalists. They had business interests in East Africa, India, Canada, Australia and Britain.

↑ Britain.

Table 4.1(b) Analysis by Size of Asian agricultural holdings in Kibos-Muhoroni area in acres, 1956-57

Average	Years	
	1956	1957
Under 200	34	42
200-499	20	20
500-999	8	8
1,000-1,499	3	3
1,500-1,999	1	1
2,000-4,999	2	2
5,000-49,999	1	1
50,000 and over	-	-
TOTAL	73	77

Source: Extracted from the East African High Commission, Kenya Agricultural Census, 1957 Summary of Results, Nairobi, July, 1958
Table 4.



4.3 Categories of Labourers in the Sugar Plantations

By 1940 the labourers in the Asian sugar plantations consisted of both casual and long term contract labourers. As with all agricultural undertakings the demand for labour in the sugar plantations fluctuated seasonally. The peak labour period commenced in March to November during the planting, weeding and harvesting season¹⁷. However, the Miwani Sugar Mills which owned the largest sugar plantations in Kisumu District required African labourers throughout the year, both in the farms and in the sugar mills. Furthermore, the good climatic conditions in the area made it possible for harvesting and crushing of cane to be distributed throughout the year.

A large number of unskilled labourers were required during the peak demand periods. About 90% of the labourers in the sugar plantations were unskilled and virtually illiterate¹⁸. Tasks such as planting, weeding and cutting sugar cane did not require high skills but physical fitness and experience of the labourer. The Asian farmers, prior to the 1950s favoured migrant labour because it was cheap. Thus during periods of low production and economic depression, the labourers could be dispensed of, without creating any major social upheavals¹⁹. The system therefore saved the employers from such social costs of labour as accommodation, diet and

medical attention.

The Miwani Sugar Mills transported casual labourers daily from Awasi, Ahero, Nyakach and Kolwa especially for cane cutting and weeding. Furthermore, the Miwani Sugar Mills employed a large number of contract labourers and other migrant labourers particularly from Uganda and the Belgian Congo especially after 1947. These comprised skilled, semi skilled and unskilled labourers.

In 1947 Hindocha came to Miwani with about 300-400 of his former workers at the Kakira Sugar Works in Uganda²⁰. These workers formed the bulk of the pioneer semi skilled and skilled African labour force in the Miwani Sugar Mills. For example, the Teso and Lugbara were mainly askaris(guards) while the Acholi were fundis(artisans), drivers and factory supervisors. However, this does not mean that there were no skilled or semi-skilled local labourers. The missionary sponsored schools as well as the colonial government who managed primary schools in Kenya emphasized technical and vocational education for Africans in their curriculum²¹. Thus they produced trained artisans such as carpenters, masons, plumbers and clerks. In addition, after the Second World War thousands of ex-servicemen obtained some technical training at the Native Industrial Training Depot (NITD) in Nairobi. Asian artisans in the townships such as Kisumu, Kericho and Kibos also provided rudimentary training to African artisans in their workshops. Thus by the mid 1940s the number of African artisans such as drivers, mechanics, masons and carpenters had increased to thousands. There were 3 classes of African artisans in Kenya²². Categories of African artisans were as follows:

Class I which referred to an African who was fully trained and qualified at the NITD, Class II which denoted an African having three years training at a mission or government training school, and Class III which referred to untested Africans who claimed to be artisans.

Some of these artisans obtained wage employment in the Asian sugar plantations. For example, the Miwani Sugar mills and some of the other Asian farmers had acquired ex-military lorries which were used to transport sugar cane. Thus there was high demand for drivers for the lorries and locomotives which were used to transport sugar cane. In 1948 about 80 African drivers were employed in the Asian sugar plantations²³.

Some Asian employers such as the Miwani Sugar Mills preferred migrant labourers from outside Kenya because they were on long contracts of 3 years²⁴. Such workers were accompanied by their families thus ensuring labour stability. They provided accommodation and food rations for such labourers and their families. From the 1950s the labour force in the Asian plantations became more stabilized than hitherto²⁵. This was due to a variety of socio-economic factors. For example, local people still sought wage employment to obtain cash to meet specific needs such as tax, school fees, dowry and consumer goods. More than 50% of the informants asserted that they joined wage employment due to poverty and desire to acquire material possessions. Furthermore, as a result of the post war economic boom, people entered wage labour because of the prospect of increased income. For example, wage labour was seen as a quicker and more reliable means of earning an income compared to

agricultural production in the reserves which was prone to the vagaries of weather²⁶.

In this situation, contrary to the previous practise whereby Africans did not engage in long contracts but only worked to obtain cash for a specific target, from the 1950s Africans were willing to engage in longer contracts of 6 months or more. Information derived from informants indicated that contract labourers in the sugar plantations came mainly from Nyakach, Yimbo, Gem, South Nyanza, Uganda and the then Tanganyika. They were employed on six month contracts which were renewable on expiry with the mutual agreement of the two parties. They were referred to as Joogirimiti(people of contract). Such labourers were accommodated in the labour camps and this resulted in labour stability compared to the daily paid casual labourers whose daily turnout was low. Some of the labourers recruited their relatives and friends for wage labour in the sugar plantations.

Labour recruitment for the Miwani Sugar Mills was carried out by African clerks and headmen. In Kisii township in South Nyanza District the African recruiters were under the supervision of an Asian clerk²⁷. Messrs Gethin and Dawson acted as the forwarding Agent from Kisii. By 1952 about 62% of the adult males in Kisumu were already in wage employment²⁸. Thus the labour force in Kisumu District was depleted. Recruiters and employers turned to South Nyanza to recruit labour. For example, the Miwani Sugar Mills established a labour recruiting centre at Migori, manned by an Asian clerk. This resulted in the recruitment of Kuria labourers, some of whom were informed that their tasks would be to keep crown birds (owang) off the sugar cane²⁹. When they reached Miwani, however, they were deployed to harvest sugar cane. The

majority of these labourers deserted though some of those who remained later gained experience and became good cane cutters (ratego) and cane loaders.

In the 1950s individual Asian planters who hitherto relied heavily on casual labourers increased the number of their contract labour force³⁰. They employed labourers on monthly contracts and also required them to reside in the labour estates within the plantations. This was an attempt to ensure a stable labour force and to increase their productivity. The Asian farmers employed a small number of contract labourers ranging from 15 to 300 depending on the sizes of their Estates. The number also depended on whether there was jaggery manufacturing mills in the Estate or not. The Mills operated 24 hours thus the labourers worked in three shifts hence the need for a large labour force. For example, in 1950, a total of 63 out of the 100 Asian farmers in the District were involved in the manufacture of jaggery³¹.

Contract labourers were entitled to repatriation home by the employers on completion of their contracts. In the Miwani Sugar Mills this was done either by providing the labourers with train tickets or travel warrants to their homes. Sometimes the company lorries were used to transport them to their locations. Labourers who renewed their contracts were referred to in jest by other labourers as malaya³² (prostitute or lovers of work). This was because many labourers still believed that farming in the reserves was their primary activity and that wage labour was for the achievement of certain targets. Lazy and weak labourers could take up to two months to complete a 30 day contract ticket³³. Thus those who signed for 6 tickets could be compelled to work for 8 to 9 calendar months. By the mid 1950s about 75% of the

labourers in the Miwani sugar mills were Luo, 15% were Kuria, Abagusii, Kamba, Kikuyu, Nandi and Luyia while about 10% were Ugandans, Rwandese and Sudanese³⁴.

The Asian sugar plantations employed a significant number of both women and juvenile labour both as casual labourers and on ticket contracts. The juveniles on ticket contract were provided with accommodation and posho by the employers. Such juveniles shared housing with adult labourers. They were paid half the adult wage rates. Their food rations consisted of the following:

1 lb Posho (maize flour) per day,

4 Ozs of beans per day,

½ lb of sugar per week,

6 Ozs of edible oil per week,

4 Ozs of salt per week, and

90 cts per ticket in lieu of meat³⁵.

According to the Employment of Juveniles Rules of 1950 any firm which employed more than fifty juveniles was required to appoint a special supervisor in charge of the juveniles. Employers were also supposed not to engage juvenile labour in hard and dangerous tasks. In 1951 the Labour inspector recommended that the Miwani sugar Mills should not be allowed to employ juveniles because of the poor working conditions. The Labour inspector pointed out that the Miwani labour camps, were characterised by congestion of occupants, poor food rations and hard tasks. However, the company promised to improve the working conditions.

According to the 1952 Employment of Juveniles (Hours of work and Welfare) Rules, juveniles were supposed to work for 6 hours a day. As per the Employment of Servants Ordinance of 1937, juveniles were not to be employed in hard tasks such as cane and sisal cutting, fuel cutting and carrying heavy loads or in industrial undertakings such as mining or in the factory. Such rules however were flouted by the Asian farmers who overtasked and underfed them³⁶. For example, in 1953 Bhanji Walji was found by the Labour Inspector to have employed juveniles in his jaggery manufacturing plant at Chemelil contrary to the Employment of Servants Ordinance of 1937.

There were two types of juvenile labourers. On the one hand were those recruited with or without parental consent by private labour agents. On the other hand were those who joined employment voluntarily with the consent of adult relatives. The latter category was prevalent in the sugar plantations³⁷. According to labour regulations, juveniles could only be employed with the consent of their parents. However, This rule was circumvented by labour recruiters and employers. As the 1955 Labour Commissioner's Annual report stated:

The illegal employment of children continued to be a problem, particularly difficult to combat when, as is often the case, the employer, the child and its parents are all in league to defeat the purpose of the law³⁸.

The Orde-Browne Report of 1945 on labour conditions in East Africa had argued that most of the tasks performed by juveniles in the agricultural sector were

not arduous³⁹. The report pointed out that since the juveniles were entitled to some wage, housing and food rations, employment was beneficial to them.

Although initially most of the women labourers in the sugar plantations worked as daily paid casuals, by the 1950s the number of women on 6 month contracts had increased. This was probably due to the employers preference for contract labourers. For example, in 1957, the Miwani sugar Estate employed 973 women on contract⁴⁰. Out of this figure, 878 stayed in the labour camps.

According to oral information squatter labour was not common in the Asian sugar plantations. For example, between 1954-57 the number of squatters in the Asian farms especially in the Chemelil-Muhoroni area ranged between 200-300. These squatters were mostly Luo and Nandi. They were given limited grazing or farming rights in return for their labour.

4.4 Working conditions in the sugar plantations, 1940-55

The colonial government had created Department of Labour whose main duty related to the enforcement of the various labour Ordinances in Kenya. The Labour Inspectorate was one of the sections of the Department. The labour inspectors mainly dealt with enforcement of the Employment Act.

During the Second World War the Labour Commissioner had argued in his report of 1943 that the working conditions in the sugar plantations fell short of the minimum requirement for the provision of conscripted labour⁴¹. He thus recommended that such plantations should not be provided with conscripted labour unless they improved the working conditions. Despite this, the Provincial

Commissioner of Nyanza provided conscripted labour to some of the farmers in the Miwani-Chemelil area. According to the conscripted labour regulations, such labourers had to be accommodated near the place of work or transported to work. Furthermore, they were to be supplied with food rations and a basic wage rate of 14 shillings per ticket.

In 1943 the colonial government introduced the task system of work in agriculture⁴². This was a system in which each labourer had to perform a given amount of work per day. The colonial government claimed that underemployment was rampant in the agricultural industry due to the indolence of labourers and apathy by employers in enforcing diligence for fear of becoming unpopular with labourers. It was hoped that the task system would lead to increased production. The system of written ticket contracts and work organised as daily tasks operated as follows:

Each man is set a daily task, when he has completed it he may go, even if it has only taken two hours to complete it. Each completed task is recorded on a ticket with which he is issued at the commencement of the contract. This ticket states his daily [task], rate of pay, and the contract is either for a month or forty two days. The monthly contract has twenty six working days and forty two day contract has thirty working days. Each worker is paid at the expiry of his contract⁴³.

Elkan notes that task work differs from piece work and other similar types of payment by the fact that it rewards extra effort not by extra earning but by extra leisure. He asserts that:

Under piece work, earnings are determined by output, under task work both earnings and output are stipulated in advance and the reward for harder work is a shorter working day. This is an advantage where the

desire for extra leisure soon overtakes the desire for extra income. It offers men a reward which does not affect the supply of their labour like the ticket system, it may therefore do something to reduce absence from work turnover⁴⁴.

Although Elkan's study was based in Uganda his findings are applicable to the sugar plantation labour in Kisumu District. For example, in the 1950s less than 10% of the labourers at the Miwani Sugar Mills were willing to perform more than the basic daily task, even for overtime payment⁴⁵.

Despite the fact that Asian farmers paid low wages compared to other employers, some Africans preferred to work for them. According to oral information this was because Asian employers extended credit facilities to them in the form of goods or cash. The Asian employers expected their labourers to keep on borrowing money or goods so that at the end of the month the labourers' wage earnings were negligible. Thus the credit facilities were inducement for the labourers to stay longer in employment.

However, according to most of the informants, Asian farmers were worse employers compared to the white settlers. They overworked their labourers, often withheld their wages, ill-treated and despised labourers, paid lower wages than their white counterparts and were prone to use verbal and physical abuse. It is asserted, for example, that some African labourers were beaten to death by the pioneer Asian farmers such as Jagat Singh and Surean Singh in Kibos area⁴⁶.

The wages paid by the Asian farmers in 1941 ranged from 6 - 10 shillings per ticket while the Victoria Nyanza Sugar Company offered wage rates of 9 - 15 shillings

per ticket⁴⁷. According to oral information such wage rates were very low and the labourers found it difficult to make ends meet. They hoped to be able to pay tax and purchase some consumer goods for themselves and their families. For example, in 1946 the poll tax rate was 14 shillings and the Local Native council tax rate was 2 shillings per annum. This means that a labourer who had to pay tax for three relatives would have to work for at least five months to accumulate just enough money for tax and nothing else. It should be noted that the labourer also had to buy some food stuff to supplement the food rations which in most cases were inadequate and of poor quality.

The sisal plantations and mines also offered higher wages compared to the sugar cane farmers. Some of the gold mines were in Seme locations in Kisumu District. They were owned and managed mainly by Europeans. In the 1940s the mines offered 12 shillings per ticket⁴⁸. The sisal plantations were located in Kibigori, Chemelil, Muhoroni and Koru. They were owned by both Europeans and Asians.

In 1947 the District Commissioner of Kisumu noted that the sugar plantation wages were low compared to the labourers' monthly expenditure. He estimated that a married labourer in Kisumu town with 2 children spent 53.38 shillings per month while a single labourer spent 36 shillings per month on food, accommodation, clothing, medical and other expenses⁴⁹. Furthermore, the District Commissioner estimated that the minimum cost of living for a single person outside Kisumu town was 30 shillings per month. According to the informants, these were conservative figures and did not reflect the real situation. By 1950, the wage rates for unskilled

labourers in the Asian sugar plantations ranged between 18 - 25 shillings per month⁵⁰. The low bachelor wages paid to the contract labourers in the Asian plantations meant that the labourers were subsidized by production from the family farm.

In the Miwani Sugar Mills, on engagement a contract labourer was provided with a blanket, a karai (trough) eating bowl, a plate and a sleeping mat⁵¹. All these things became the property of the employee on completion of a 6 month contract. The employee was also provided with a working tool (panga or jembe) which had to be returned to the company on completion of the contract. From 1947 such labourers were accommodated in the labour camps and provided with food rations consisting of maize flour, beans, sugar, salt and cooking fat⁵². However, according to oral information, the food rations were inadequate and of poor quality. This view is supported by the labour inspection report of 1952 which stated that the posho was weevil infested and unfit for human consumption⁵³. Information derived from informants indicated that some welfare facilities such as a small dispensary, primary school and sports facilities were provided by the Miwani Sugar Mills to attract and retain labourers. However, the 6 bed dispensary did not have enough medicine and was poorly managed. In 1952 the labour inspector described the dispensary as under "an old lazy Indian doctor".

The company allowed married labourers to stay with their families although the labourer was still paid bachelor wage rates. However, the wives of the labourers could also seek employment in the company's plantations if they wished. It is estimated that 50-60% of them did so.

According to the Master and Servants Ordinance of 1910, employers were expected to provide accommodation and food rations to their servants who did not return home at the end of each day. In 1919 an amendment to this Ordinance authorised labour inspectors and medical officers to visit places of work and check on sanitary arrangements, food, housing and to ensure that the standards conformed to the minimal Health and Labour requirements. In 1932 the Native Affairs Department (NAD) had permitted the Victoria Nyanza Sugar Company and the Asian Planters nearby to continue using traditional huts for housing purposes for the labourers provided they were well maintained and in good sanitary conditions⁵⁴. During the 1930s the labour camps resembled African villages and were known by the headman's name. Occupants included men, women and children. There were no latrines or means of waste disposal. The labour inspector in his 1932 report advised these employers to improve the labour working conditions. However, the Victoria Nyanza company and the Asian planters did not heed the labour inspector's advice. Thus in 1933 the company and three other Asian farmers were fined 100 shillings each for failing to comply with the order of the labour inspector to keep their labour camps clean and in sanitary conditions.

The 1936 labour inspector's report was critical of the permission which had been granted to the labourers to construct their own houses in the plantations. It noted that the houses were haphazardly arranged, over crowded and a health hazard. He therefore recommended that the sugar estates be inspected regularly because of their unsatisfactory records. The housing situation in the sugar plantations deteriorated

in the 1950s as a result of the expansion of the labour force without a corresponding increase in the labour camps.

Thus in 1956 the Labour Commissioner in his report described the housing as very poor and sanitation as below average. The waste disposal system comprised pit and bucket type latrines. The clayey type of soil and the swampy nature of the area made the digging up of good communal pit latrines very difficult. In addition, African labourers were not used to the idea of latrines and tended to misuse them. For example, in 1953 a meeting of the Miwani works Council noted that the latrines were in a very poor state, filthy and smelly. The labourers were advised to use the toilets responsibly. It was recommended that disciplinary action be taken against those people who did not use the latrine properly. This recommendation was not easy to implement, however, since it was difficult to catch the offenders.

Daily work in the Miwani sugar plantations commenced between 6.30 - 7.00 a.m.⁵⁶. The average work load in the plantation took up 5-6 hours daily because of the heavy nature of the tasks such as cane cutting and weeding. The hot weather conditions ranging from 17° to 25°C also added to the burden. On the other hand, the factory and non-task labourers worked on eight hours daily shifts (8.00 am - 4.00 pm, 4.00 pm - midnight, and midnight - 8.00 am) which alternated weekly. For plantation labourers no work was performed on Sunday except for emergency work. Such emergency work consisted of loading cane or transporting already harvested cane to the factory to make the sugar mills continue operating or to forestall possible loss of already harvested cane. This was because the factory required enough cane to

operate 24 hours daily.

In 1952 daily tasks in the Miwani sugar plantations were as follows, three men were expected to cut enough cane to fill 2 trucks of 2.5 - 3 tonnes per day, weeding labourers were supposed to remove weeds left by a mechanical weeder in an area of 4 - 6 feet by 120 feet per task. Planting was mainly done by mechanical means except in swampy areas where a labourer's task was to plant seeds in an area of 2,000 sq feet⁵⁷. Two juveniles were expected to perform weeding tasks equivalent to an adult labourer. On the other hand, clerical staff worked during the normal office hours commencing at 8.00 am to 4.30 pm.

Cane cutting was considered a very arduous and dangerous task. It was therefore unpopular and thus suffered perennial labour shortage. According to oral information, during the colonial period, cane was not burnt before cutting as is the practise today. Not only did this make cane cutting difficult, it also made the task a risky exercise because of the presence of snakes and other wild animals in the cane bush.

However, cane cutting depended on the labourer's physical strength. Experienced cane cutters completed their daily tasks earlier and could even manage a double task. Failure to complete a day's task meant that the work ticket was not marked. However, if the labourer was on contract, he was still entitled to the daily food ration (posho). The labourers referred to such a predicament locally as onindo mauru or onge noma (food only, but no pay). Information derived from informants indicated that the daily tasks were very heavy and unfair. Moreover, the supervisors

(nyapara) tended to victimise vocal labourers whom they often forced to repeat the same task under the pretext that the task was not satisfactorily carried out.

In 1952 there were four labour camps in the Miwani Estate⁵⁸. The first was, the Factory camp which consisted of 394 huts. Thirteen of these huts were murram-mud brick rondavels (round huts). Secondly, there was the so called Section 2 camp with 143 rondavels. Thirdly, there was Section 3 camp with 127 rondavels and lastly there was the ox-camp with 32 rondavels. Each labour camp was under an African headman known locally as nyapara who was responsible to the company's welfare officer. On the other hand, Chemelil Estate had 4 camps for labourers namely B1, B3, L1 and C7.

There was shortage of housing in the sugar plantations so that as many as 3 labourers often shared one hut (see Table 4.2). Married women and juveniles lived with their husbands or relatives. However, the unmarried women and juveniles who had no relatives shared accommodation with the other labourers. There were no separate estates either for the married people or women. There was congestion in almost all the labour estates. The most congested labour camp in Miwani was the Factory camp. According to oral information, the congestion in the labour camps often led to the outbreak of epidemics such as typhoid fever, dysentery and plague. For example, in 1947 and 1952 there was a serious outbreak of plague in section 2 and section 3 labour camps which claimed the lives of 5 and 7 labourers respectively. The health and labour inspector ordered the demolition of some of the huts in the camps to contain the situation.

Up to the late 1950s housing in the sugar plantation were very poor. The houses were mainly dilapidated temporary structures of wood and grass thatch built in the 1930s and 1940s, which provided inadequate shelter against cold and wind at night⁵⁹. In some Asian plantations, the labourers themselves were responsible for the construction and maintenance of these huts. The policy of the Labour Department was that employers should not be compelled to construct permanent housing for labourers during the first five years of their operation⁶⁰. Yet, 50 years or more after their establishment, nearly all the Asian farmers had not constructed permanent labour estate by the 1950s.

When the Labour Department exerted pressure on the farmers to improve the housing conditions, some of them retorted that the African huts in the reserves were no better than the ones they provided⁶¹. Information derived from informants indicated that the sizes of the rondavels ranged from, 16 to 18 feet in diameter. These houses were not partitioned yet each served as a kitchen, sitting room and bedroom for several labourers and in some cases their families.

Table 4.2 Labour Housing in Miwani Estate, 1954

OCCUPANTS

<u>Camp</u>	<u>Total No.of rooms</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>Juvenile</u>	<u>Child</u>
Section 1	117	185	54	95	85
Section 2	112	109	33	79	38
Section 3	112	196	32	110	6
Ox-camp	32	21	5	7	9
Factory:	401	845	228	156	120

SOURCE: KNA Lab9/256 LIR 13th May, 1954.

Thus by late 1940s and early 1950s the labour camps in the Asian plantations consisted of rondavels of mud and wattle or corrugated iron walls with thatched roofs. The walls were about 4 feet high and some of the houses had neither windows nor door shutters. Maintenance was negligible so that these rondavels were in poor conditions, leaking, and also, mice and vermin infested⁶².

It is reported that in the labour camps, the labourers led a social life which was reminiscent of that in the African villages. For example, beer was brewed and dances organized by the various ethnic groups in turn, weekly. The relationship amongst the labourers was harmonious.

Chewing of sugar cane from the Miwani sugar Mills plantations was forbidden⁶³. Askaris were deployed to guard sugar cane. Any labourer who was caught chewing cane was publicly humiliated by being frogmarched to the labour camps with the cane tied to a string around his neck. Thereafter he was handed over to the police at the nearby Miwani Police Station. Such a labourer could be imprisoned for as many as two months.

According to oral information, almost all the senior management posts in the Miwani Sugar Mills were the exclusive preserve of Asians and Europeans. Even the senior clerks and supervisors were Asians. They had great contempt for African labourers. Nearly all the company's records were written in Gujerat. According to the

informants the Asian supervisors and clerks were corrupt. They tended to cheat the illiterate African labourers of part of their wages. In addition, they fraudulently pocketed wages of deceased labourers. These Asian officials were very hostile to any labourer who attempted to make any complaints. African labourers therefore feared them very much because of the excessive powers of employing and sacking bestowed on them by the company's management.

Furthermore, Asian artisans and clerks were given higher salaries and wages compared to African labourers who had better or the same qualifications. For example, Africans were paid less than half the salary scales of Asians engaged in similar tasks. Any attempt by an African employee to complain about his professional qualifications was anathema to the Asian employers. This could lead to instant dismissal. In addition, the Asian farmers tended to be very suspicious of tidy labourers. The Asian planters appointed supervisors among the labourers. Both Asian farmers and their African supervisors did not like educated African labourers in their farms. The supervisors feared educated African labourers as competition for themselves. On the other hand such labourers because they were conscious of their rights were regarded with apprehensions as prospective trouble makers who might have undue influence on other labourers.

The Miwani Sugar Mills offered higher wages in comparison to those of other Asian sugar cane farmers. For example, in 1955 the Miwani wages for unskilled labourers was 25 shillings to 40 shillings per month while the other Asian farmers offered 18 - 20 shillings per month. Thus the labourers in the Miwani Sugar mills

referred in jest to those in the other Asian farms as "B" labourers⁶⁴. Table 4.3 shows a comparison of the Miwani wage rates in 1952 and 1955. The labourers who were working on 30 day tickets received wage increases between 1952 and 1955 while casual labourers' wage rates remained stationary. Skilled labourers had higher wage rates compared to the unskilled ones. The skilled and semi-skilled labourers in the Asian sugar plantations such as clerks and artisans were paid higher wages compared to the unskilled ones. They could be paid as much as 3 to 4 times the minimum wage of unskilled labourers. For example, in 1952 unskilled labourers at the Miwani sugar factory were earning 20 - 30 shillings per ticket while skilled labourers were getting 60 - 125 shillings per ticket.

According to the informants, life was very hard especially for the unskilled labourers because of the low wages. Thus they barely managed to make ends meet with the meagre wage. Against this background, they could not send cash to relatives at home on a regular basis. However, in comparison to people who did not join wage labour, the labourers had higher and more reliable income than African peasants in the reserves. This was due to the fact that some areas of the District such as Kajulu, Nyakach, and Kano which provided the bulk of the sugar plantation labour force had unfavourable climatic conditions and were prone to droughts and famines. As such, Africans from these locations in wage employment had an alternative source of earning an income through wage labour. Such labourers therefore, were in a better financial position since wages were not dictated by the vagaries of weather as was the case with peasant agriculture. Thus the families of wage labourers especially those

of the skilled and semi skilled ones were better off socially and economically compared to the peasants in the reserves. This was evident in their living standards which in most cases was above that of the peasants. For example, they lived in better houses, wore better clothes and possessed other western goods. Some of these labourers managed to educate their children and/or relatives while others invested in trade and other profitable ventures. All these boosted their socio-economic status.

In sum, the working conditions in the Asian sugar plantations in Kisumu District were poor and characterised by low wages, poor housing, inadequate food rations and heavy tasks. Throughout the colonial period very little improvements were made on the labour working conditions.

Table 4.3 Monthly labour wage rates at Miwani Sugar Estate, 1952 and 1955

category	1952	1955
Cane cutters	30/= per ticket	40/= per ticket
"	25/=	"
Factory labourers	25-40/= "	30-60/= "
Artisan & drivers	60-125/= "	75-150/= "
Headmen	40-90/= "	50-120/= "
Clerks	50-200/= "	75-225/= "
Juveniles	10-15/= "	12-20/= "
Casual labourers	3/= per day	3/= per day
Juvenile casual labourers	shs 1.50 "	shs 1.50 "

Source: KNA Lab 9/256 LIR, 29th, July 1952, and 16th, Feb. 1955.

4.5 Labour Protests in the Sugar Plantations, 1940-55

In attempts to improve their working conditions African labourers in the Asian sugar plantations adopted several strategies. These included refusal to work, sabotage, poor workmanship, complaining to the Labour Department and small scale strikes⁶⁵. Desertion was one of the earliest strategies used by African labourers to show their discontent with conditions of wage labour. This method continued in the sugar plantations especially in the Miwani Sugar Mills up to as late as mid 1950s⁶⁶.

The major cause for labour desertion included low wages, poor rations, poor working conditions and ill-treatment. In the early 1950s the desertion rate was so high in the Miwani Sugar Estate that askaris were deployed to be on the lookout for potential deserters. Some askaris were stationed at the nearby Miwani railway station to ensure that no deserter boarded the trains. However, such measures did not curtail desertion. The majority of the labour deserters were Kisii, Kuria and Luo from South Nyanza who had been fraudulently engaged by private labour recruiters. For example, in 1950 out of 1412 recruits, 28% did not complete the six months' contract, while in 1951, 499 (50%) of the recruits absconded⁶⁷. The causes for such desertion, according to the police and the District Labour Inspector were two fold. On the one hand, the contracts provided these labourers with opportunity for free transport paid for by the Labour agent to or near Kisumu town, where they could get better terms of employment. Secondly, other Asian farmers nearby decoyed or influenced some of these labourers to join their employment by promising them better working conditions.

The preponderance of migrant labour in the sugar plantations made it difficult for the labourers to organize effectively and collectively bargain for better working conditions⁶⁸. In this situation, the collective protests in the sugar Estates in the 1940s and early 1950s were spontaneous with no articulate leadership or long term objectives.

Such protests and strikes were mostly "wild cat" strikes involving a small number of labourers. For example, in July 1942, about 50 labourers in an Asian plantation near Miwani went on a three day strike in demand for increased wage⁶⁹. This strike was a breach of the Defence Regulations which outlawed any strike in an essential undertaking during the war period. However, the Asian employer rejected the labourers' demands and they returned to work under the old wage rates. In 1947 there were two strikes at the Miwani Sugar Estate caused by the new administrative policies introduced by the new Asian owners to prevent the pilfering of sugar by the labourers⁷⁰. Furthermore, in 1950 there was another strike in the Miwani Sugar Mills involving 570 labourers, who demanded better wages and working conditions⁷¹. The demands were rejected and the labourers resumed work under the old rates. In 1952, casual labourers of the Miwani Sugar Mills boycotted work demanding wage increase from 3 shillings to 5 shillings per day⁷². The company lorries that had been sent to collect the labourers only managed to pick very few labourers. However, after about a week the boycott fizzled out and the labourers returned to work at the old wage rate.

The most widespread strike in the Asian sugar plantations occurred on 7 - 8th

December, 1959⁷³. This was a two day strike which paralysed the Miwani Sugar Mills and the nearby Asian estates. The strike was intended to show solidarity with the Kenya railway workers. The labourers had expected a general strike in the country. However, the issue which could have led to the general strike had been settled by the Railway Workers Union and the Railway management on 28th November, 1959. The fact that the sugar plantation workers went on strike was an indication of class and labour consciousness among them. According to oral information the 1950s and the 1960s witnessed many strikes in the sugar plantations and especially at the Miwani Sugar Mills. It is estimated that strikes were occurring at the rate of at least one every two months. The causes of these strikes mainly related to the poor working conditions.

These examples show that the early strikes organized by the labourers in the sugar plantations could not paralyse plantations' work. This was because of the presence of a large reserve of unemployed Africans who acted as strike breakers. Thus strikers were very often summarily dismissed. However, as Van Onselem points out, the unarticulated, spontaneous protests by labourers should not be dismissed since they were a nascent form of labour consciousness⁷⁴.

4.6 Background to Trade Union Organization in the Sugar Industry

Wage labour in Kenya to a large extent was a colonial creation. Labour was required by both the public and the private sectors. The system of wage labour uprooted a significant number of Africans from their traditional milieu into new environments in towns and plantations, away from their homes. This resulted in the

concentration of a large number of people from different backgrounds at the work places. As a result, the labourers realised that they needed some form of labour organization to protect their interests and articulate their collective grievances hence, the formation of nascent labour organizations⁷⁵.

The colonial government, prior to the 1940s was hostile to the formation of African trade unions. Both the government and the settlers argued that African trade unionism should be discouraged especially in the agricultural industry which was described as the mainstay of the country's economy⁷⁶.

A trade union is a body or an organization formed by workers to protect their interests in their relationship with the employers. Sidney and Beatrice Webb define a trade union as " a continuous association of wage earners for the purpose of maintaining or improving the conditions of their employment"⁷⁷. The Kenya Trade Unions Act of 1937(chapter 233) defines a trade union as:

an association or combination of more than six persons(other than a staff Association, employees Association not deemed to be a trade union) whose principal aims are the regulation of the relations between employees and employers or between employees and employees or between employer and employer⁷⁸.

Trade unions are formed as attempts by workers to organize themselves in order to ameliorate their conditions so as to contain the contradiction between capital and labour.

As early as the 1930s the Labour government in Britain had pointed out that

the trade unions were the appropriate method of protecting colonial workers from abuses and exploitation by employers. However, once the Labour government fell from power the policy of encouraging trade unions was shelved until the 1940s. It was the general feeling from the 1940s in the British political circles that regardless of the existing labour situation in any of her colonies, trade unions should be encouraged. Thus in 1940 under the Colonial Development and Welfare Act, grants or funds could only be provided to a colony on condition that there was a freely functioning trade union movement⁷⁹.

Workers' organizations emerged earlier in the urban areas than in the agricultural sector in Kenya because of the concentration of workers in close proximity and good communication networks in the urban settings. Furthermore, a big percentage of the workers in the urban areas were literate or semi-literate. Such workers were easier to organize for collective labour action. On the other hand, the prevalence of casual and unorganised labour in the agricultural sector inhibited the early emergence of worker organizations which could effectively bargain for better terms of service⁸⁰.

The migrant labour system which characterized the plantations was an obstacle to the emergence of collective worker consciousness, and organization. As Cohen and Sandbrook point out, before the 1950s, African resistance was not highly developed in terms of scale and organization. Thus labour protests were unorganized and spontaneous⁸¹. Moreover, the labourers in the plantations were under close surveillance by the employers and supervisors. This tended to hold back any labour

action by the labourers.

All the early trade unions in Kenya were formed on racial lines. The first trade union in Kenya which claimed to be multi-racial was the Labour Trade Union of Kenya (LTUK) which was formed by Makhan Singh in 1935⁸². However, the majority of its members were Asians. The union opened a small office in Miwani in 1937 which catered mainly for the Asian workers. Before 1937 there was no legislation on the formation of trade unions. Indeed, the colonial government discouraged the formation of African trade unions. The colonial government officials argued that the nascent trade unions were political associations formed by agitators.

Thus in an attempt to control such labour organizations, the colonial government enacted the 1937 Trade Unions Ordinance. The Ordinance made it mandatory for any organization purporting to be a trade union to apply for registration or cease operation. The white settlers' controlled press in Kenya such as The East African Standard backed the government clampdown on the nascent African trade unions. The paper referred to African trade unionists as irresponsible agitators who should be controlled. The employers also thwarted attempts by workers to organize themselves. They used various obstacles such as, ordering the arrest of the union leaders or victimizing them by sacking.

Due to pressure from the British government and the British Trade Union Congress (TUC), the colonial government restructured the Labour Department in Kenya in 1945⁸³. Thus the post of a trade union officer was created. One of the officer's duty was to offer guidance on the formation of trade unions so that they

followed the right track acceptable to the colonial government. In other words, the trade unions were to concentrate on labour matters and not engage in political activities.

It is worth noting that in 1945 the Orde-Browne Report on labour conditions in East Africa had stated that the prevailing conditions in East Africa, characterized by unstable and illiterate labour were not conducive to proper trade unionism. The Report thus called for the appointment of trade union advisors to guide the leaders of the nascent trade unions, thereby putting them on the right track on trade union practice. Against this background, in April 1947, James Patrick came to Kenya to take up the post of trade Union Labour Officer. In the 1940s the TUC seconded some of its former officials to the British Labour Party government. These trade unionists were appointed as Labour Officers and were despatched to the British colonies. They were expected to nurture the growth of "responsible" trade unions in the colonies. One of these trade unionists was Scottish born, James Patrick who was sent to Kenya. His duties were to advise the colonial government, the employers and workers on issues pertaining to trade unionism.

In September 1947, F.W. Carpenter then acting Labour Commissioner stated that Africans would only be allowed to form trade unions after they had grasped the tenets, purposes and organization of trade unions. At the same time he stressed that only industry based trade unions would be accepted by the government⁸⁴. Patrick, asserted that he would not sanction the formation of trade unions by uneducated workers who still lacked good qualities of leadership and organization.

Furthermore, he claimed that the mushrooming of trade unions could provide opportunity for agitators to create political unrest in the country. The settlers were also opposed to the formation of trade unions especially in the agricultural sector arguing that it was premature and would only lead to agitating. However, Patrick assured them that because of mass illiteracy the agricultural workers would be the last to engage in trade unionism.

The colonial government through the trade union Labour Officer wanted to foster the development of the so-called "responsible" trade unions which would concentrate on labour issues and not political activities. In 1947 the African Workers Federation (AWF) was formed in Mombasa under the leadership of Chege Kibachia. The union organized the 1947 Mombasa general strike. Kibachia wanted to establish AWF branches in other parts of Kenya. However the colonial government arrested him and he was deported and restricted to Baringo District⁸⁵.

During the 1940s the colonial government in Kenya was hesitant to register trade unions for fear that they were political organizations masquerading as trade unions. As the Labour Commissioner pointed out in his 1948 annual report:

Considerable difficulty has arisen over the misconception in the mind of the African of the true purpose of a trade union, partly due to a growing political consciousness. On this part action has therefore had to be taken to guide certain African associations chiefly formed from political motives, but calling themselves trade unions, into a more formal channel of Trade union practice⁸⁶.

As late as 1951 the colonial government believed that Africans were not ready for trade unionism. This was shown in the Labour Commissioner's annual report which

stated:

It has been found advisable to exercise a great deal of more supervision over the existing trade unions and nascent organizations of employees... owing to the almost complete lack of understanding of the primary purposes of trade union by the vast majority of African workers in East Africa, and their susceptibility to the influence of educated persons, who may have ambition of a political nature⁸⁷.

Thus the 1952 Trade Unions Ordinance was enacted with the aim of controlling the trade unions more stringently than hitherto. It provided for strict control of union funds by the Registrar of Trade Unions. It also stated that a union could be deregistered if it engaged in activities not within its constitution. The legislation further stipulated that all union officials except the General Secretary had to be employees of the industries represented by the union. This was because the General Secretary was supposed to be literate in English or Kiswahili so that he would be able to maintain union records and other correspondences. As Clayton points out, the measure led to the emergence of trade union leaders from the clerical rather than the labouring ranks⁸⁸. This was because the clerks usually had better education and tended to stay longer in employment compared to the manual labourers.

In 1954 the International Conference of Free Trade Unions (IFTU) sent J.M. Bury as its representative in Nairobi. He worked together with Tom Mboya, then Secretary General of the Kenya Federation of Registered Trade Unions (KFRTU) to orientate African trade unionists on the practices and organization of trade unions.

Tom Mboya, through the influence of Bury and the support of the Kenya Labour Department, favoured the formation of industrial rather than craft unions⁸⁹. A craft union is a union which draws its membership from professional workers in different areas. An industrial union refers to a workers' organization that recruits members from specific and related work places. On the other hand, a general trade union refers to a worker organization that recruits members doing different jobs in different firms. The emphasis on the formation of industry based trade unions was an attempt to forestall the emergence of general trade unions (omnibus unions) and small, shaky and fragmented unions. Thus industry based unions would be assured of large membership which in turn would make them financially and administratively stable. By 1955 there were 9 registered trade unions in the country which were members of the Kenya Federation of Registered Trade Unions⁹⁰. All these unions were urban based. No agricultural union had emerged by then.

4.7 Summary

In this chapter we have highlighted the expansion of the Asian sugar plantation economy in Kisumu District from 1940 to 1955. During this period more Asian entrepreneurs invested in the sugar industry. Thus production of both cane and sugar in the Miwani Sugar Mills and in the other Asian farms increased tremendously. This also necessitated the employment of a large African labour force in the sugar plantations.

Before the 1950s the local people preferred to work in the plantations as daily

paid casuals. This was because of economic and social reasons. However, in the 1950s the number of contract labourers who resided in the plantations had increased.

Labour exploitation was rampant in the Asian sugar plantations. This was manifested in the form of low wages and poor working conditions. However, the labourers never accepted their poor working conditions. They attempted to organize themselves in order to negotiate or force the amelioration of their working conditions. They organized protests and small scale strikes. Most of these strikes, however, were spontaneous and poorly organized. They failed to achieve their objectives. However, they marked the emergence of labour consciousness which later became entrenched into a strong labour movement in the sugar plantations.

The employers and the colonial government were strongly opposed to the emergence of trade unionism in the agricultural sector. There were various other factors which inhibited the early emergence of trade unionism in the agricultural sector. By 1955 almost all the registered trade unions in Kenya were urban based.

Endnotes

1. N.Swainson, The Development of Corporate Capitalism i n
Kenya 1918-1977, London: Heinemann, 1980, 125.
2. KNA DC/KSM 1/3/122, Kibos Planters Association, (KPA), 28th Feb, 1952.
3. KNA Lab 9/2132 Labour Inspection Report (LIR), 8th Dec. 1943.
4. KNA DC/KSM 1/3/22 KDAQR, 1943-45.
5. KNA DC/KSM 1/3/122, Memorandum by Nyanza Indian Farmers Association (NIFA), 1947.
6. KNA DC/KSM 1/17/22 Regulations Regarding African Labour for Essential Work, 6th Jan 1945.
7. KNA Lab 5/19 Labour Census, 1944.
8. KNA DC/KSM 1/17/98, Recruitment of Women Labour, 12th Dec. 1944.
9. KNA Lab 5/19, Labour Census, 1945.
10. R.S.Odingo, The Kenya Highlands Land Use and Agricultural Development, Nairobi, EAPH, 1971, xxiv.
11. KNA DC/KSM 1/3/122, Agricultural Production on Indian Farms, 1952.
12. KNA KDAQR, 1947.
13. KNA Lab 9/256 LIR, Mlwani, 29th July, 1952.
14. Ibid., 24th August 1932.
15. KNA Lab 9/256 Labour for Sugar Industry, 1951.
16. The East African High Commission, Kenya Agricultural Census, 1957, Table 4.
17. KNA Lab /1804 Employment Service Organisation, 158 see also KDAR, 1922-40 and Lab 9/256 Labour for Sugar Industry 25th Jan 1952. 11-11-1947.
18. OI, Jagat Singh, Chanan Singh, M. Otieno, O. Agwambo, S. Kwebiha, W.

Ogweng and J. Ongundha.

19. Ol. J. Ongundha, E. Kamire, J. Ongany.

20. Ol. W. Ogweng, Chief Oyare, S. Kwebiha.

21. K. King, "Education and Social Change the Impact of Technical Training in Colonial Kenya", in B. A. Ogot (ed), Hadith 6, Nairobi: EALB, 1976.

22. KNA DC/KSM 1/17/34 Skilled Labour, 1931-37.

23. Ol. Jagir Singh, Chanan Singh, W. Ogweng.

24. Ibid.

25. Ibid.

26. Ol. R. Akinyi, O. Obiero.

27. KNA Lab 9/2132, LIR, 21 st August, 1956

28. KNA CNDAR, 1951.

29. Ol. M. Onyuro, W. Ogweng, C. Rioba.

30. KNA Central Nyanza District Annual Report (CNDAR), 1951.

31. KNA T & S 2/1/9, Jaggery Production, 31st July, 1950.

32. Ol. W. Ogweng, M. Otieno.

33. Ol. W. Ogweng, J. Ongundha, M. Otieno.

34. KNA Lab 9/256, LIR, Miwani, 1948.

35. Ibid. 29th Nov. 1952, 5.

36. Ol. R. Akinyi, R. Onganyo, M. Ogweng.

37. KNA DC/KSM 1/17/22, Juvenile Labour, 13th Feb. 1943.

38. Clayton, Government and Labour, cited from
Commissioner Annual Report, 1955.

Labour

39. Ibid. 22nd Jan, 1945.
40. KNA Lab 9/2132; LIR, Miwani, 12th Dec.1957.
41. Ibid. 18th Dec 1943.
42. KNA DC/KSM 1/17/16, The task System of Work, 1943.
43. W. Elkan, Migrants and Proletarians, London: Oxford University Press, 1960 , 113-14.
44. Ibid .
45. KNA Lab9/256 LIR Miwani, 17th Dec.1957.
46. Ol. R. Akinyi, J. Ongany and O. Menya.
47. KNA DC/KSM 1/7/95 LIR Miwani, 4th July,1941.
48. KNA DC/KSM 1/1/14 LIR Miwani, 1930-37.
49. KNA DC/KSM 1/17/54 Labour Wages, 22nd, May 1947.
50. KNA Lab 9/2132, LIR Miwani, 15th April 1950.
51. Ibid.
52. Ibid. 17th Dec 1957.
53. KNA Lab 9/256 LIR, 29th, July, 1952.
54. KNA Lab 9/2132 LIR, 23rd October, 1933.
55. Ibid. 7th Nov.1933.
56. Ol. J. Ongundha, M. Otieno, M. Onyuro.
57. Ol. M. Ogweng, S. Kwebiha, M. Otieno.
58. Ibid., 29th July, 1952.
59. Ol. O. Agwambo, W. Ogweng, J. Ouma, J. Owiti.

60. KNA Lab 9/2132 LIR Miwani, 16th June 1932.
61. Ibid. Native Housing in Miwani, 1932-56.
62. Ol. J. Ongany, J. Owiti.
63. Ol. M. Otieno ,W. Ogweng.
64. Ol. M. Otieno .
65. Ol. W. Ogweng,M. Otieno , M. Onyuro .
66. Ibid.
67. KNA Lab 9/256 LIR Miwani, 12th July,1952.
68. Ol. W. Ogweng,J. Ongundha,E. Kamire,O. Agwambo.
69. KNA Lab 9/1895 LIR Miwani, 22nd July,1942.
70. KNA KDAR 1947.
71. Ibid. see also KNA KDAR,1950.
72. KNA Lab 9/2132 LIR Miwani 24th Nov.1952.
73. Ibid. 7th Dec.1957.
74. C. Van Oselem, Chibaro, African Mine Labour in Southern Rhodesia 1900-1933, London; Pluto Press, 1976, 227.
75. Lubembe, Labour Movement, 52-55.
76. Makhan Singh, Trade Union Movement , 50-160, Clayton and Savage, Government and Labour ,277-411 and Lubembe Labour Movement , 138-177.
77. R. Sandbrook, Proletarian and African Capitalism: The Kenyan Case, 1960-1972, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975, 144.
78. Kenya Government, Laws of Kenya, Vol vii revised edition., Nairobi: Government Printer, 1984 ,6.
79. M. Mc William, "The Managed Economy: Agricultural Change, Development and

Finance in Kenya" in D.A. Low and A. Smith (eds), History of East Africa, Vol III, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976 . 279

80. G.I. Shivji, Law, State and Working Class in Tanzania, London: James Currey, 1986 ,42.

81. R. Sandbrook, and P. Cohen, The Development of an African Working Class: Studies in Class Formation, London: Longman, 1975 ,196.

82. Makhan Singh, Trade Union Movement ,49-51.

83. Ibid. , 143.

84. Ibid. ,159 .

85. S. Stichter, "The Formation of a Working Class in Kenya" in Sandbrook (ed), African Working Class, 24 and Makhan Singh, Trade Union Movement, 157.

86. Cited in, Clayton and Savage, Government and Labour, 324.

87. Ibid. 371.

88. Ibid. 372.

89. Ibid. 382.

90. D. Goldsworthy, Tom Mboya, the Man Kenya wanted to forget Heinemann, 1991, 3.

CHAPTER 5

5.0 TRADE UNIONISM AND THE SUGAR PLANTATIONS, 1953-63

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter we trace the emergence and growth of trade unionism in the Asian sugar plantations in Kisumu District from 1953 to 1963. Furthermore, we analyze the colonial government's policies towards trade unionism. We also discuss the Asian employers' attitude to a labour movement.

Some of the achievements and limitations of the Kenya Union of Sugar Plantation Workers (KUSPW) will be highlighted. In addition, the emergence and the functions of the Industrial Relations Machinery in the sugar Industry will be examined. The Miwani Sugar Mills will be used as a case study to show how the works councils operated as a form of industrial relations machinery. In the study, the negotiation machinery between the Kenya Union of Sugar Plantation Workers and the Kenya Sugar Employers Union will be analyzed.

5.2 The impact of the Sugar Plantation Agriculture on the Peasant Economy in Kisumu District

The Asian sugar plantation agriculture had both negative and positive effects on the African economy. During the 1953-63 period production of both sugar and jaggery increased tremendously (See Tables 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3). Some of the Asian

farmers expanded their cane acreage through purchases or leases from the Asian landlords such as the Walji Hirji Estate (See Table 5.4). As the Asian plantations expanded there was a corresponding increase in the number of African labourers in these plantations.

Table 5.1 Asian landholdings and acreage undercane in Kisumu District, 1953

Area	Acreage under cane	Total acreage
1. Miwani Sugar Mills		
Main Estate	7,000 acres	9,000 acres
2. Miwani Sugar Mills		
Chemelil Estate	3,500 "	5,000 "
3. Kibos Asian Farms	6,000 "	12,000 "
4. Miwani Asian Farms	2,000 "	3,000 "
5. Kibigori	700 "	5,000 "
6. Muhoroni	300 "	1,500 "
TOTAL	19,500	35,500 acres

Source: KNA DC/KSM 1/3/118, Agricultural Production, Kisumu, 4th may, 1953

Table 5.2 Cane production by Asian Farmers in Kisumu District, 1953-58

Year	Production (in tons)
1953	129,602
1954	102,726
1955	119,957
1956	170,967
1957	221,967
1958	234,952

Source: KNA CNDAR 1953-58.

Table 5.3 The Miwani Sugar Mills Production, 1953 - 1960

Year	Production(in tons)
1953	10,587
1954	8,554
1955	12,005
1956	16,465
1957	16,706
1958	21,693
1959	19,015
1960	21,582

SOURCE: The East African High Commission, An Examination of the Trend and Prospects of Sugar Production and Consumption in East Africa, 1950 - 70, 5.

Table 5.4 Asian Tenant Farmers on the Walji Hirji Estate (Kibos), 1957

Name	Total acreage	Under cane (acres)
1. Kala Singh & Kishen Singh	495	400
2. Hukam Singh & Bros.	134	70
3. Santa Singh	234	135
4. Jarnail Singh		
5. Isher Singh & Bakhtawar Singh	105	50
6. Mangal Singh & Pala Singh	50 1/2	36
7. Isher Singh	52	35
8. Bakhtawar Singh	52	36
9. Parduman Singh & Hira Singh	193	106
10. Sham Singh		
11. Hardial Singh	308 }	15
Chima	52 }	45
12. Dasonda Singh	160	80
13. Jagat Singh		
14. Jiwan Singh	52	40
15. Mangal Singh		
16. Atma Singh & Amar Singh	52	40
	213	80
17. Lal Singh	213	60
18. L.D. Mohindra	213	17
19. Santa Singh & Jarnail Singh	325	160
	300	50
20. Mukand Singh	352	125
21. Jhanda Singh	820	600
	130	100
	265	200

Asian owned sugar plantations offered employment opportunities to approximately 5,000-8,000 Africans annually, mostly from Kisumu District by 1960¹. The majority of the labourers in the sugar plantations were males, especially the young energetic ones. The absence of these people from the African economy had some adverse effects². However, some scholars such as Kitching and Hay have postulated that in the traditional setting, men did not contribute in regular agricultural work and that therefore they were no loss to the African agricultural economy³. Regular day to day work was done by the women and children with men only coming occasionally to clear virgin land or to break the ground at the beginning of the agricultural season or supervise the work of women and children.

Although this argument has some merit it is worth noting that in the 1950s most men engaged in longer contracts than hitherto. Thus, women were overburdened because they became involved in other activities which traditionally were the domain of men. Available evidence gives credence to this. For example, tending livestock was traditionally the role of males. This changed and women increasingly took up that role. By the 1950s about 80-90% of the labourers in the Asian sugar plantations were on six month contracts and not on daily paid basis as was the practise before. For example, in 1957 out of 3,622 labourers in the Miwani Estate only 218 were residing in the reserves while the number of daily paid casuals was 580⁴.

The absence of male labour meant that the women found it difficult to maintain

agricultural production. Between 1946 and 1952 there was a continued decline in agricultural production of maize, eleusine and sorghum in central Nyanza District. For example, in 1946 the District had produced 4,690 tons of maize while in 1951 the volume was 3,385 tons. During the same period the District had produced 272 tons of sorghum in 1946 while in 1951 the volume was a paltry 107 tons⁵. By 1952 the District had become dependent on maize from Kericho and other neighbouring Districts. This was attributed to the absence of male labour in the District. Moreover, in some areas of the District there was serious shortage of males in the 1950s to clear virgin land for cultivation⁶. This in turn led to overuse of the same land resulting to soil impoverishment and decline in agricultural yields. Thus the tendency of more males to seek wage labour to earn income rather than to engage in arduous agricultural tasks, with limited returns.

The labourers in the sugar plantations were earning low wages compared to labourers in the urban areas⁷. This was because it was argued that the cost of living in the towns was higher than that in the rural areas. For example, the sugar plantation labourers were offered accommodation by the employers. Thus they did not pay house rent as was the case with most urban employees. The rural labourers were also given food rations, though of poor quality. In addition, the rural labourers could obtain water and firewood freely while employees in towns had to buy such articles. However, it should be pointed out that all capitalists are profit oriented thus the wages they paid their employees were low. This was due to the fact that they wanted to maximize profits while minimizing costs. The Asian farmers were no exception to this

rule. According to oral information, in the 1950s Asian farmers were making profits from jaggery manufacture yet labour wages remained static or rose slowly.

Despite the low wages and arduous tasks Africans still sought wage employment in the Asian sugar plantations. The major reason was that Kano, Nyakach and Kajulu locations, which provided the bulk (about 70%) of the sugar plantations' labour had poor climatic conditions and were therefore prone to droughts and famines. Thus, it was easier to earn a higher income through wage labour than through agriculture. For example, in 1953, a man could earn an income of 238/50 shillings per annum from one acre of maize and 147 shillings from one acre of cotton⁸. On the other hand, such a man could obtain 20-40 shillings per month as unskilled labourer in the sugar plantations. Thus it was possible for an African to obtain more income from a 6 month contract as unskilled labourer compared to what he could earn from the cultivation of one acre of cotton or maize (see Table 5.5). In addition, the labourer was provided with posho as well as accommodation.

As a result, more people entered into wage labour, which they began to view as a more reliable means of earning an income compared to agricultural production, which was prone to the vagaries of weather, anyway. But they maintained both when they could. They needed both, so they reorganised the family to meet new needs.

Table 5.5 Comparison of estimated income of African farmer from the yield of one acre of maize or cotton and monthly wage rates in the sugar plantations 1943-53.

Year	Maize(Shs)	Cotton(Shs)	Wage rates(Shs)
1943	60.00	45.00	13-14/=
1944	65.00	40.00	14/=
1945	65.00	40.00	15/=
1946	67/50	51.00	15-16/=
1947	87/50	57.00	16-19/=
1948	113/75	63.00	16-20/=
1949	115/50	87.00	18-20/=
1950	122/50	90.00	18-20/=
1951	136/50	132.00	22-25/=
1952	228/50	147.00	20-40/=
1953	283/50	147.00	20-40/=

Source Extracted from Fearn, *An African Economy*, 197.

KNA Lab 9/2132, LIR, 1943-46.

As Hay points out, the Africans viewed agriculture mainly as a means of subsistence while wage employment was seen as the avenue to increase income and accumulate wealth⁹. Moreover, prices offered for African agricultural produce such as cotton was low and not worth the labour input if this labour was going to consist largely of women.

Furthermore, the Asian sugar cane plantations also employed women and juvenile (see Table 5.6). Thus in the 1950s, while the agricultural production in the African areas in the District was declining that of the Asians was showing a marked increase. For example, the Asian farmers produced 131,871 tons, 170,967 tons and 221,494 tons of cane in 1955, 1956 and 1957 respectively¹⁰. In 1954 Africans in the District earned 3,177,462 shillings from maize and cotton while Asian farmers earned 5,298,071 shillings from maize, sugar cane and jaggery¹¹. In 1956 Africans earned 453,954 shillings from export crops while Asian planters earned 842,054 shillings. These excluded income by the Miwani Sugar Mills from the sale of white sugar.

From the above information it can be inferred that the Asian enclave was developing at the expense of the peasant sector. Consequently, there was underdevelopment in the African reserve because of labour migration. Due to the profitability of cane and jaggery, demand by Asians for land in the Kibos-Muhoroni area increased. Henceforth, undeveloped land began to sell at between £ 12-15 per acre or more at Kibos. This was described as very high price for land in the lowlands¹². For example, in 1959 Santa Singh and Company bought 820 acres from Walji Hirji

Estate at £ 31 per acre¹³.

Table 5.6 African labourers on permanent employment in the Kibos Asian farms, 1954-57

<u>Year</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Juvenile</u>	<u>Total</u>
1954	3,000	300	700	4,000
1955	3,100	300	800	4,200
1956	3,700	700	1,200	5,600
1957	2,100	400	500	3,000

Source: East African High Commission, Kenya Agricultural Census, 1957, 79.

The sugar plantation economy boosted local trade because there was more money in circulation as the result of the post Second World War economic boom. Contract labourers in the plantations tended to supplement the posho supplied by their employers, by buying additional foodstuff from the local producers and traders. The foodstuffs which were in high demand were ghee, fish, chicken and fruits. The labourers also purchased articles such as pots, calabashes, baskets and other objects of traditional manufacture from the local people. These demands invigorated production and trade within the sugar cane producing zone. Information derived from informants indicated that women were in the forefront in this trade especially that of agricultural produce. They made profits, some of which they invested in the expansion of agricultural production or in the education of their children. It was mainly the local

people near Miwani who profited much from sale of produce to the labourers since the Miwani Sugar factory employed as many as 3,000 labourers by the 1950s.¹⁴

The Asian sugar industry introduced a new foodstuff namely sugar in the diet of the Africans. In Kenya under the Sugar Ordinance of 1935 sugar was a restricted commodity whose supply was controlled by the colonial government. Consumption in Kenya was also artificially restricted by transport and distribution difficulties. There is little doubt that as the purchasing power of the Africans increased and with improved distribution network in the late 1950s consumption increased¹⁵.

The effects of land alienation for Asian settlement became more pronounced on the local people in the 1950s. This was the result of population increase. However, Fearn claims that the creation of these Asian settlements were beneficial to Kisumu District because the alienated area of Kibos-Miwani was mostly suitable for cane cultivation¹⁶. Thus the Africans would not have gained much from it anyway. Fearn's argument is a conjecture and it fails to show us that the Africans would not have cultivated sugar cane if they had been encouraged by the colonial Government or put the land into some other economical use. Moreover, it should be noted that the Asian settlements were located in the most fertile land adjacent to the Nandi Escarpment, with better climatic conditions and soils compared to the area south of the then Kenya-Uganda Railway line. On the other, hand the loss of these fertile lands meant that the original inhabitants of the area such as Jokajulu and Jokano were restricted to the drier and infertile land¹⁷.

By the late 1940s Kajulu location had the highest population density in Kisumu

District (see Table 5.7). This resulted into small land holdings giving low and poor crop yields. Indeed, the hostile climatic conditions of Kajulu location and the overcrowding within forced a large number of Jokajulu to seek wage labour in Kisumu town and in the nearby Asian plantations. There was also perennial food shortage in the location forcing people to migrate to the nearby Nyangori location and South Nyanza District ¹⁸.

Therefore, it can be correctly pointed out that land alienation for Asian settlement adversely affected the Luo, especially Jokajulu. This was because they lost an important and fertile area which could have served as an expansion ground for the increased population in the 1950s and thereafter. Thus, the objective of colonial land alienation policies to force out Africans into wage labour was realised to some extent especially among Jokajulu.

Before the 1960s sugar cane was regarded by the Africans as an Asian crop¹⁹. Thus the local people did not take to its cultivation in great earnest until the post independence period when two new sugar factories were established at Muhoroni and Chemelil. But that as it may, a small number of Africans started to experiment with cane cultivation in the early 1950s²⁰. Eli Onyuro was one of the first Africans to embark on cane cultivation in 1951. He planted cane on an approximately 3-4 acre farm situated about 4 kilometres from Miwani Sugar Mills. At the same time, 10 other Africans near Miwani began to cultivate cane. In addition, 10 African farmers at Chemelil formed the Chemelil Cooperative Society which cultivated cane jointly on Harambee basis on an approximately 25 acre block of land.

In the 1950s the colonial government embarked on a policy of encouraging the people of East Kano to take up cane cultivation to boost sugar production. The African farmers were offered subsidy on cane cultivated and provided with cheap seedlings. In 1951 the government provided these Africans with 150 tons of cane seedlings. However, the experiment had only a partial success because of adverse weather conditions in 1951-52²¹. In 1953, Eli Onyuro sold 53 tons of cane worth 2,500 shillings to the Miwani Sugar factory. He also sold 15 tons of cane seedlings worth 450 shillings to the Department of Agriculture.

Table 5.7 1948 Population Census: Kisumu District

Location	Population	Area in Sq. Mile	Density per sq. miles
Kajulu	7,970	14	569
East Kano	36,601	155	236
West Kano	36,783	112	328
Nyakach	36,793	143	257
Kisumu	34,860	84	415
Seme	38,829	108	313

Source: H. Fearn, An African Economy: A study of the Economic

Development of Nyanza Province 1903- 53, OUP. London, 1961, 237.

Another cane farmer, Nashon Okelo sold over 16 tons while Esau Filippo sold over 6 tons to Miwani Sugar factory. In 1953, the total African farmers' income from sugar cane was 8,993 shillings²². This amount was a lot of money during the 1950s and was enough to purchase 3 second hand tractors. Onyuro after making profits from his first cane harvest influenced his brothers and other relatives to take to cane cultivation.

In 1953, the colonial government set up the Swynnerton Commission whose objective was to identify means of improving agricultural production by the Africans²³. In Kisumu District the Swynnerton Plan emphasized sugar cane production by the African farmers. It noted that in the 1950s Kenya produced only 13,000 tons of sugar while annual consumption was 47,000 tons. The plan envisaged the development of cane cultivation by the Africans on 148,000 acres in Nyanza Province of which 5,000 acres in Kisumu District was to be planted in the next 5 years. The cane produced by African farmers in the District was to be sold to the Miwani Sugar factory while that of South and North Nyanza was to be converted into jaggery. The colonial government provided £ 3,100 in the next 5 years as a grant for the transportation and provision of cane seedlings and £ 59,200 as a loan for the establishment of jaggery factories in North and South Nyanza.

In 1954, the Chemelil Cooperative Society sold 130 tons of cane worth 5,163 shillings to the Miwani Sugar factory²⁴. The following year the Miwani Sugar factory

purchased a total of 283 tons of cane from the African farmers in East Kano location. Out of this, Chemelil Cooperative Society production was 170 tons while another 80 tons came from Eli Onyuro's farm near Miwani. The number of African cane farmers increased in 1957 when 47 cane farmers of Chemelil-Nyangoro area formed a cooperative society to cultivate cane on one block of 51 acres. In 1959 the Miwani Sugar factory purchased 700 tons of cane from African cultivators. By 1960 the area under cane by African farmers was 300 acres. In 1963 the total acreage under African grown cane in East Kano location was 700 acres²⁵. Thus the Swynnerton Plan of putting about 5,000 acres of land in Kisumu District under African cultivated sugar cane had failed by 1960.

Despite initial setbacks the pioneer African cane farmers made some profit from their undertakings. For example, Eli Onyuro invested heavily in cane cultivation. He extended his cane acreage to 12 acres by leasing more land from the neighbours. He also bought more land. By 1960 he was one of the richest farmers in the location²⁶. He managed to educate his children, three of whom went for higher education in the United States of America. Furthermore, he constructed a brick family house, a shop and rental houses at Kaeli, a market centre near Miwani railway station which was named after him. In addition, in the early 1960s he bought a lorry and tractor which he used to transport cane and plough his farms as well as other peoples' farms at a fee. The other pioneer African cane farmers also managed to improve their standards of living although they could not match Onyuro's success. As one informant remarked:

Indeed, Onyuro was a successful farmer who distinguished himself with the high standard of life he led compared to the neighbours and the magnificent house he lived in. It was difficult to believe that in the 1930-40s he and his wife, Miriam had worked as casual labourers on Asian sugar plantations²⁷.

Thus it can be stated that the sugar plantation economy created social differentiation among the local people. A small number of the local people had become prosperous through sugar cane cultivation. As African cane production increased albeit slowly, there was competition for labour with the Asian plantations. The African sugar cane farmers also employed some African labourers, mostly casuals during peak labour demand periods, such as planting, weeding and harvesting. Furthermore, because of prosperity from cane cultivation, some African families which hitherto relied on wage labour on Asian farms for income became economically well off. Thus they no longer engaged in wage labour. In addition, cane production boosted the socio-economic status of the African families, who were able to meet school fees for their children and invest in other economic enterprises such as trade. The Onyuro family is a classic example.

The Asian sugar plantation economy contributed to socio-economic differentiation within the local community. This came about through increased earnings from wage employment, the cultivation of sugar cane or trade. Such income raised the peoples' purchasing power of various manufactured goods. This was evident in the mushrooming of Asian shops in Kibos, Miwani, Kibigori and Muhoroni within

the sugar producing zone. The income from wage employment was used by enterprising labourers to increase agricultural production, trade, purchase of land, or to meet the school fees for relatives. This was particularly so in the 1950s and 1960s. There are some examples of this development.

Sasia Oyare of East Kano became prosperous through wage labour in Asian sugar plantations²⁸. He worked in Miwani for ten years before he started to organize the local casual labourers into weeding and sugar cane cutting groups in the 1940s. He realized that these labourers would be in a position to bargain for better wage rates as a group than as individuals. The Asian farmers who required a large number of casual labourers would approach Oyare. If the wage rates offered by the farmer was acceptable then Oyare deployed the labourers under his control. He was paid by the Asian farmers a lump sum amount which he then paid the labourers each according to his/her input. However, he retained a larger portion of the money by virtue of being the leader. Through such labour contracts Oyare accumulated money which he invested in the education of his children, payment of dowry for his three wives and the improvement of his farms among other things.

Another skilled labourer of the Miwani Sugar factory who became prosperous through wage employment was Opiyo Agwambo. He joined the factory in 1955 as a clerk at the wage rate of 85 shillings per month²⁹. He invested his income to purchase land in East Kano. He also invested in agriculture back at home and in the education of his children. Opande Ondiala was also one of the skilled labourers at the Miwani Sugar factory, which he joined in 1957 as a store keeper³⁰. His wage rate

then was 70 shillings per month. He invested his earnings to purchase land in East Kano location. At first he leased land on which he cultivated food crops such as millet, maize, beans and vegetables which he sold to the labourers at Miwani. In 1961 he bought a plot at Kaeli market where in partnership with his brother, Stephen Ondiala he constructed business premise where he conducted petty trade.

It would thus appear that only a small number of African labourers in the sugar plantations managed to significantly improve their socio-economic status. For the majority of the labourers, especially the unskilled, life was hard and they were only struggling to make ends meet with their meagre wages. For example, they could not send cash to relatives at home on a regular basis. However, in comparison to people who did not join wage labour, the labourers had higher and more reliable income. Thus some of them were able to pay school fees for their children and relatives so as to improve the socio-economic status of the family.

5.3 The Emergence of Trade Unionism in the Asian Sugar Plantations

The largest percentage of the labour force in colonial Kenya was employed in the agricultural sector. Yet, until the late 1950s no trade union for the agricultural labourers had emerged. This was the result of many factors such as the unstable nature of the labour force and the high rate of illiteracy among the labourers. They also tended to oscillate between wage labour and the peasant economy. Lastly, there was strong employer opposition towards the formation of unions. For example, the Nyanza Indian Farmers Association, the Kibos Farmers Association and the

Agricultural Production Sub-committees of the Kibos, Miwani, Kibigori and Chemelil-Muhoroni areas were opposed to the emergence of agricultural trade unions among their labour force³¹.

In October 1952 the Colonial Government declared a state of Emergency in Kenya in an attempt to put down the Mau Mau uprising. Under the emergency regulations, movements of the Africans especially the Kikuyu, the Embu and the Meru, who were regarded by the Government as Mau Mau supporters were restricted³². Thus attempts by Africans to organize unions were constrained. The colonial government also arrested some officials of the urban based trade unions and the umbrella labour movement, the Kenya Federation of Registered Trade Unions, later renamed the Kenya Federation of Labour (KFL). These trade unionists were thought to be sympathetic to the Mau Mau struggle³³. The colonial government favoured the establishment of the so-called "responsible" trade unions which did not engage in political activities. The Kenyan trade unionists, however, believed that there was no dichotomy between trade unionism and politics. During the period of the Emergency, when all African political activities were outlawed it was the urban based Trade Union Movement which was in the forefront in articulating African grievances both locally and internationally³⁴.

In 1953 the colonial Government appointed a committee under the chairmanship of F.W. Carpenter, then Labour Commissioner to examine the wage structures of the African labourers³⁵. Other members of the committee were: E. J. Petrie, Treasurer, J.H. Symonds, Lt. Col. C.V. Merrit, Harry Thuku, Solomon

Adagala, Chanan Singh, S. Duckett, J. L. Claridge, F. T. Holden, and J. G. Njoroge. The committee, it was hoped, would make recommendations that would increase African labour productivity and stability. The setting up of the committee was one of the measures undertaken by the Government then to reform the colonial structure which had been disturbed by the Mau Mau uprising.

The Carpenter committee issued its Report in 1954. It pointed out that labour stability would only be achieved if labourers were offered minimum family wage rates, which could enable them support families in the place of work³⁶. This would bring to an end the tendency of the labourers to move to and fro between wage employment and the peasant economy. The report had calculated that £10 a month was an adequate wage. It therefore recommended that the minimum family wage rate of £10 should be implemented by 1958. This amount was two and a half times the bachelor wage rates. However, such minimum family wage rates were not meant to be extended to labourers in the agricultural sector.

The committee had noted that such wage fixing in the agricultural sector was impracticable because of the diversity in type and hours of work and the provision of housing and rations. Thus the report called for the setting up of the Rural Wages Committee to deal with the issue of wages in the Agricultural sector. Furthermore, the committee advised the colonial government to look into the possibilities of the formation of trade unions in the agricultural sector³⁷. The Colonial government promised to study the recommendations with the view to implementing them. However, both suggestions were strongly opposed by the white settlers. By the 1950s

many employers still believed that "the African" was a "target" worker and that therefore higher wages would encourage "him" to desert work earlier. Thus by 1955 wages in the plantations were still not regulated by the government³⁸.

In 1955, the ICFTU Agricultural Research Officer in Kenya, Hannington Gaya, was commissioned by his organization to make a report on the working conditions, wages, housing and social services of the agricultural labourers in Kenya³⁹. Gaya visited Nakuru, Kericho and Miwani among other places in July 1955 consulting labourers and employers while conducting the research on the working conditions of the plantation labourers. In his subsequent report to the Kenya Federation of Labour (KFL), Gaya pointed out that the plantation employers were very hostile to the idea of trade unionism. Thus access for trade unionists to such plantations could not be guaranteed.

The report thus confirmed the view held by employers that in paternalistic relations, which were supposedly a characteristic of the plantation sector, independent trade unions were regarded by employers as inimical since they interfered with business harmony⁴⁰. In 1955 the colonial Government declared its commitment to the creation of the so-called "responsible" African trade unions⁴¹.

Tom Mboya emerged in the 1950s as the most influential trade unionist in Kenya. His rise followed the government clampdown on militant trade unionists such as Makhan Singh, Bildad Kaggia and Chege Kibachia. In 1951 Aggrey Minya of the Transport Workers Union decided to co-operate with the Labour Department. This was aimed at sidelining the militant trade unionists. The government accepted the

formation of an umbrella trade union movement, the Kenya Federation of Registered Trade Unions (KFRTU) under the leadership of Minya in 1952. It excluded the militant Labour Trade Union led by Makhan Singh. Tom Mboya first joined the Trade Union Movement in 1951 when he was elected the vice chairman of the African Local Government Workers Association. In October 1953, he became the General Secretary of the KFRTU, whose name was changed in 1955 to the Kenya Federation of Labour (KFL).

The following were the objectives of the KFL:

To generally improve the economic and social conditions of all workers in all parts of Kenya and to render them assistance,

To affiliate with and assist other organizations with similar objects,

To assist in the complete organization of workers eligible for membership in Trade Union Movement,

To settle disputes between members of such organization and their employer, between such organizations and other bodies and within the organizations themselves.⁴²

The KFL was affiliated to the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU). The ICFTU could assist the KFL in three ways⁴³. First, it provided an international forum through which the Federation could air the grievances of the Kenyan workers. Secondly, through it there was prospect of access to American money and patronage and lastly, there was the possibility of gaining political support from an international organisation which was opposed to colonialism.

In 1956, Tom Mboya, then Secretary General of the KFL caused an uproar

within the Colonial Government circles when he talked on a wide range of political issues on Kenya while in London. He spoke against colour bar, the White Highlands Order and the Lyttelton Constitution of 1954. He also demanded the lifting of the State of Emergency, the release of political detainees, the sanctioning of nation-wide political movements and African representation in the Legislative Council. The colonial government's reaction was fast in coming. It warned the KFL to concentrate on trade union affairs and leave out politics⁴⁴.

The then Kenya's Registrar of Trade Unions, R.H. Munro wrote to the acting Secretary General of KFL, Arthur Ochwada asking him to give a written undertaking that the Federation would not engage in political activities. It called on the KFL to confine its activities to labour matters such as labour legislation, trade disputes, wages, housing, hours of work and related matters arising directly from conditions of labour and from employer-employee relations. However, the KFL insisted that there was no dichotomy between politics and trade unionism since any political question affected the members. It stated that "every political issue affects the economic or social conditions of the worker and is the legitimate concern of the Federation"⁴⁵. Ochwada challenged the government to "give us a clear line of demarcation between political matters, industrial and economic matters"⁴⁶. High tension continued for six weeks between the Colonial Government and the KFL as a banning threat hung over the KFL. Sir Vincent Tewson of the British Trade Union Congress came to Kenya to intervene in the dispute⁴⁷. He managed to convince the colonial government not to carry out its threat to ban the KFL. It was feared in British Labour circles that such a

ban might lead to the ostracizing of Kenya's colonial government by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the ICFTU.

By and large, during the 1950s, the trade unions came under the control of moderate African unionists such as Tom Mboya, Aggrey Minya and Arthur Ochwada who were not ready to confront the government as was the case with the militant unionists of the pre-Emergency period⁴⁸. During the 1950s there was an upsurge of trade union activities in the country despite the government's displeasure. There were two major factors which inhibited the government from clamping down on trade union activities. On the one hand, were external factors in the form of the British Trade Union Congress and the ICFTU and on the other hand there was the nationalist movement in the country.

Besides, in the mid 1950s some private employers in Kenya especially the foreign firms such as the British Tobacco Company had recognized the need of setting up some form of collective bargaining system in the country⁴⁹. This culminated in the formation of the Association of Commercial and Industrial Employers (ACIE), which in 1959 became the Federation of Kenya Employers (FKE). The organization aimed at inculcating cooperation and good relations with African trade unions for the benefit of each industry. In May 1955, the representatives of the KFL attended an ICFTU Conference in Brussels and called for the urgent need to improve the working conditions of the agricultural workers in Kenya⁵⁰.

From 1957 the ICFTU and the Plantation Workers International Federation (PWIF) took an active interest in the formation of agricultural unions in Kenya⁵¹. They

embarked on programmes to assist the KFL achieve the objective of unionizing the agricultural workers. The ICFTU offered the KFL a grant of £ 1,500. According to the ICFTU the formation of a trade union had to be a decision of the rank and file of the labouring lot rather than that of the leadership. However, Mboya held the view that in Kenya the development of a trade union could only be from top to bottom. He argued that since the majority of the workers were illiterate and not yet conversant with the practise and organization of trade unions, it was the duty of the few enlightened ones to lead the less articulate labouring groups⁵².

The Director of organization of the PWIF, Tom Bavin came to Kenya in 1957 and met the representatives of the ACIE with whom he discussed the modalities of forming agricultural unions⁵³. They agreed that separate unions should be formed for each agricultural sector starting with the coffee industry. In order to win over the ACIE, Bavin had used propaganda, warning the ACIE that communist influence was infiltrating African trade unions. He argued that if the PWIF was not allowed to organize the agricultural workers, the communist dominated WFTU might seize an opportunity to gain a foot-hold in the agricultural sector. He then proposed ^{to} the ACIE that his Federation would help [^] the KFL to organize a single union for all agricultural workers in Kenya.

In 1958, David Burret a representative of the PWIF who had organized the sisal workers in Tanganyika came to Kenya to help in the establishment of an agricultural union⁵⁴. The ACIE, however, was strongly opposed to the formation of a single union for agricultural workers for fear of a possible large scale strike action organized by such

a union. Thus the ACIE insisted that it would only recognize separate unions for each of the agricultural sectors namely mixed farming, coffee, tea, sisal and sugar. In 1958, the KFL accepted the ACIE demands while hoping to circumvent them in the future⁵⁵. As such, the Tea Plantation workers union, the Coffee Plantation workers union and the Sisal Plantation workers union were formed in 1959. This was followed with the formation of the Kenya Union of Sugar Plantation Workers (KUSPW) in 1960.

The KFL the PWIF and the ICFTU played an important role in the emergence of trade unionism in the agricultural sector. As early as 1955 the KFL had recommended the establishment of such unions. In 1957 the KFL had assigned its then organising secretary, John Baptista Abuoga to organise the agricultural workers. This task was in 1958 given to Jesse Gachago then newly elected organising secretary of the KFL. These KFL officials were assisted by representatives of the PWIF and the ICFTU in drafting a model constitution which was later adopted by all the agricultural unions in Kenya. Furthermore, the PWIF and the ICFTU provided the technical know-how and finances to support the agricultural unions.

5.4 The Formation and Growth of the Kenya Union of Sugar Plantation Workers (KUSPW)

The Kenya Union of Sugar Plantation Workers (KUSPW) representing the manual, skilled and semi-skilled workers in the sugar industry was founded and registered in 1960⁵⁶. The first national officials of the union were: James Sia Angonga, Chairman,

Aila Ogema, Vice chairman,
Jacob Ongundha, General Secretary,
Orinda Omolo, Assistant General Secretary,
William Otieno, Treasurer,
Ogola Gumbo, Assistant treasurer, and
Onyango Okech, Trustee.

All the first national officials were members of the Luo ethnic group. This was because the Luo formed the bulk of the labour force in the sugar plantations and they were in the forefront in the creation of the union. However, in the subsequent union elections held in 1961 about half the new national officials were non Luo. These included the following:

Dominico Gothaita, vice chairman, Kikuyu,
Zablon Kadenge, Assistant General Secretary, Luyia,
George Wanjara, Treasurer, Gusii,
and Zakaria Malezi, Auditor, Luyia,

The rest of the Officials were Luo. These were:

John Orwa, Chairman,
Oliech Ongundha, General Secretary,
Albert Onyango, Assistant treasurer, and
Onyango Okech, Trustee.

Prior to the formation of the union the labourers in the Asian sugar plantations in Kisumu District had no organization to articulate their grievances. However, the

Nyanza Region KFL representatives Opar Mboya and Oliech Ongundha often presented the problems of sugar cane labourers to the senior Labour Officer, Nyanza and to the KFL Headquarters in Nairobi⁵⁷. The KFL Nyanza Region office had been established in 1959 by Oliech Ongundha and Opar Mboya. According to oral information, Oliech Ongundha and his colleagues such as Daniel Chinja, Yogo Ondiala, James Sia and William Otieno were supported by Tom Mboya in their attempts to organize the sugar plantation workers.

Ongundha was born near Kibigori township in 1936. After completing his intermediate primary school education at Nyakoko Government school near Kisumu town in 1952 he went to Nairobi to seek wage employment. He trained as a typist and took up a job with Gailey and Roberts company. Later in 1954 he was employed as a clerk by the East African Marketing Company in Nairobi. He joined the Kenya Commercial Food and Allied Workers Union and was appointed one of the shopstewards at his place of work. In 1958 he was elected the national Treasurer of the union. Ongundha was a close political ally of the then Secretary General of KFL, Tom Mboya. In 1959 Ongundha was sent by the KFL to Kisumu town to establish the KFL Nyanza Regional office. In 1960 Ongundha recruited 30 members from the Asian Sugar Plantations secretly before forwarding the list to the Registrar of Trade Unions as bona fide members of the proposed Kenya Union of Sugar Plantations Workers⁵⁸.

The objectives of the union were as follows: To regulate and improve relations between employees and employers and determine conditions of conduct of any trade

or other business within the scope of the union and provision of benefits to members,

To organise all employees in the sugar Industry, To assist all its members through a collective bargaining system to obtain fair remuneration for their labour and to establish and maintain satisfactory conditions of employment in the sugar industry,

To negotiate and promote the settlement of disputes arising between employees and employers by conciliations and arbitration, provide facilities to members to obtain further training in their trades both theoretically and practically and to assist them in carrying out their duties efficiently, and

To collect and circulate among its members statistical and other information on all matters affecting the industry in which they were employed⁵⁹.

After the registration of the union, the union officials most of whom were working in the sugar plantations in Kisumu District embarked on recruitment of more members. They first organized the workers of the Miwani Sugar mills where a branch office was established in 1960⁶⁰. Miwani became the first target of the union recruiters because it employed a large number of labourers who could be reached easily. Thereafter, the union turned to the labourers in the other Asian sugar plantations in Kisumu District. By the end of 1960 the union had a total membership of 2,125 from among the Asian sugar plantations' labourers⁶¹. About 50% of the Asian artisans at Miwani also joined the KUSPW within the first year of its existence. The union membership fee was 5 shillings whilst the monthly subscription was 2 shillings. Membership was voluntary.

Initially workers did not show a lot of enthusiasm to join the union. The largely

illiterate labourers were apparently suspicious regarding the real intentions of the union. For example, some labourers believed that the trade union officials were only interested in collecting money from them before disappearing to the urban areas. Their fear was exacerbated by some of the employers' propaganda against the union. These employers referred to the trade unionists as conmen(wakora)⁶². Thus it required patience and endurance on the part of the union officials to win the loyalty of the workers. Recruitment of members to the union was thus slow and laborious. By the end of 1960 the union membership of 2,125 was just under 18% of a potential membership of 12,000⁶³. According to oral information there were two main reasons for this lethargy. On the one hand the membership fee was a deterrent since the wages were low. On the other hand, the few union collectors could not visit all the members after pay day to receive members' contributions.

The first KUSPW officials faced a lot of difficulties in their attempts to organize the union and put it on a strong footing. Some of the Asian cane growers in Kisumu District were not willing to recognize the union which they regarded as an organization interfering with the smooth running of their plantations. Most of the Asian sugar estates were self contained and self sufficient communities and the fact that the employees were housed in private property made it easier for the employers to regulate passage of outsiders to the plantations. Thus, before negotiation of access agreements were signed between the union and the sugar employers the union organisers found it difficult to approach the workers, even outside working hours. Asian farmers declared the KUSPW officials trespassers whenever they entered their

premises to recruit members or to collect union dues. For example, in 1961 the Secretary General, Ongundha was accused by the Miwani Sugar Mills of trespass when he entered its premises to meet union officials⁶⁴. He was prosecuted and jailed for two years. The sentence, however, was quashed by the High Court on appeal. Furthermore, some Asian Planters tried to dissuade their employees from joining the union through the "carrot and stick" policy.

They made promises of promotion as well as threats of dismissal as the case dictated.

The Union had financial difficulties during the first years of its existence. For example, it lacked funds to cover the union administrative and other expenses. The lack of funds was due to the negligible membership and apathy by the members who often did not pay the 2 shillings monthly subscription. Due to the union's precarious financial position, the KFL came to its assistance. The KFL provided the union with office equipment and a vehicle for use at its headquarters in Kisumu. As was the case with the other nascent trade unions, the KUSPW membership fluctuated seasonally because of the continued tendency of the labourers to move back to their homes during planting and harvesting periods. Such unstable labour militated against the emergence of a regular dues paying membership⁶⁵.

The problems of the union were compounded by the lack of skilled, competent and literate leaders especially in the Kibos and Chemelil branches and estates. The skilled and literate labourers feared that they would be victimized by the employers if they took up union leadership. Information derived from informants showed that most of the skilled and literate labourers were comfortable enough compared to the

unskilled labourers not to see the need to fight for the others. However, the labourers became more enthusiastic about the union after 1961 because in that year it won a wage increment for the labourers through collective bargaining with the Kenya Sugar Employers Union (KSEU) in 1962⁶⁶.

The KSEU was formed in April 1960 for the purpose of promoting the interests of the sugar industry in general and negotiating employment conditions with the employees' union in particular. It was composed of both European and Asian sugar cane planters mostly in Nyanza Province. The following were the first national officials of the union:

E.R. Dawson, chairman,

A. J. Kotak, Vice-chairman, and

R. O. Doenhoff, Executive officer.

The committee members were:

C.T.O. Turton, Jagir Singh, S. B. Marcantonatos, Maganbhai Patel, Bhanji Valji, V. Dandeker, R. R. Patel, Durbalash Devji, Indu Kumar Manilal, Balbir Singh, C. J. Kotak, and Chagalal Dhanji Natwani⁶⁷.

In the 1960s the sugar plantation labourers became more politically conscious as the dawn of independence approached. This was due to the activities of Tom Mboya and Oginga Odinga both of whom organized political rallies in Miwani⁶⁸. The KUSPW national officials such as Oliech Ongundha also became actively involved in political activities such as addressing political rallies in the area. Later he was elected councillor for Miwani location. Indeed, such political activities in the area caused

apprehension among some of the Asian farmers, who became ready to cooperate with the KUSPW officials. Thus the membership of the union rose from 2,125 in 1961 to 4,500 in 1964⁶⁹. In addition, its total annual income increased from 11,695 shillings in 1961/62 to 84,048 shillings in 1963/64⁷⁰.

Despite initial difficulties, the union to a large extent achieved its objectives. For example, it managed to improve the socio-economic conditions of its members through collective bargaining. This led to improved working conditions and higher wages for the labourers than hitherto. Thus in 1963 the minimum wages for unskilled labourers was pegged at 85 shillings per month⁷¹. This was 35 shillings more than the 1960 wage rate. In addition, the wage was to be paid at the end of each calendar month and not after the completion of a 30 day ticket as was the practise before.

Information derived from informants indicated that in 1961 the union threatened to call a strike at the Miwani sugar Mills unless the housing conditions were improved. The company was therefore forced to embark on the construction of permanent housing estates for the employees at Dunga and New Landies, to replace the dilapidated grass thatched houses. The company also agreed to ensure that the rondavels in the other estates were repaired regularly. Furthermore, the constant mistreatment and beating of employees by Asian clerks and supervisors abated because of the fear of union action.

By 1963 the union had 5 branches at Miwani, Kibos, Muhoroni, Chemelil and Ramisi at the Coast⁷². Each branch had its own officials elected by members annually. The following were the first officials of the 5 branches. The Miwani branch

Joseph Mwalo, Treasurer,

Nicholas Ochele, Assistant treasurer, and

6 committee members namely, Auton odhiambo, James Ogweng, John Owiti, Ndolo Oyienya, Mingayi Peter, and Shadrack Kingwa.

The Chemelil branch comprised :

Eli Rao, Chairman,

Ayubu Chacha, Vice-chairman,

Washington Omidi, Secretary,

James Ochieng, Assistant secretary,

Elisha Onditi, Treasurer,

Obabo Onyango, Assistant treasurer and

6 committee members namely Lieta Onyango, Okeyo Oindo, Obudo Ochola, Daniel Ojjo, Raphael Obonyo and Martin Owaga. Lastly, The Ramisi branch had the following officials:

Elisha Khabekhu, Chairman,

Stephen Omamba, Secretary,

Charles Onditi, Vice-chairman,

Hamisi Kafugo, Treasurer,

Nyamanga Achola, Assistant treasurer and

5 committee members.

District branches dealt mainly with local problems affecting the members but referred broader issues to the national office in Kisumu town. A member belonged to

a particular branch. Members could participate in all deliberations of the branch, and bring up any issue pertaining to terms and conditions of employment or union affairs for discussion. The general control of the union rested on the Central Council in the period between each annual conference. It was responsible for the direction of the committee and officers to whom the daily management of the union was committed. The central council consisted of all the national officials and representatives from each branch which ranged from 1 to 3 depending on the size of the branch. The council was expected to meet once every 2 months though it could be summoned to a special meeting to discuss any urgent business. It had the power to suspend or dismiss any official for negligence of duty, dishonesty, incompetency or for any other cause.

The highest policy making body of the union was the Executive Committee, comprising all the national officials and six other representatives elected from among the members of the Central Council. The national officials were Chairman, Vice-Chairman, General Secretary, Assistant General Secretary, Treasurer-General, Assistant Treasurer-General and two Trustees. The national officials were elected annually during a national conference of delegates from all the branches. The national executive committee implemented policy decisions made by the delegates. The business of the annual conference was to receive reports from its Central Committee, the past work of the union and planning future tasks, to consider all matters on the conference agenda and to elect the national officials and the Central Committee.

The union was affiliated to the Kenya Federation of Labour, later renamed the Central Organization of Trade Unions (COTU) and the Plantation Workers International Federation (PWIF) later renamed the International Federation of Plantation, Agricultural and Allied Workers (IFPAAW). Through these affiliations the union received funds to purchase office equipments, build union offices, organise seminars and courses for union officials as well as scholarships to the union officials⁷³. For example, in 1962 the incumbent Chairman and General Secretary of the union attended a three months' course at the ICFTU Labour College in Kampala.

CODESRIA-LIBRARY

5.5 The Rise of the Industrial Relations Machinery in the Sugar Plantations

E.W. Bakke summarises a satisfactory industrial relations in four major principles:

Industrial relations are primarily and basically a matter of relations between management and employees, its own employees.

The first objective of industrial relations, like that of every function of management, is the economic welfare of the particular company.

Industrial relations arrangement must leave unimpaired management's prerogatives and freedom essential to the meeting of management's responsibilities.

All parties to industrial relations should be businesslike and responsible.⁷⁴

In Kenya, the government under the Trade Unions and Trade Disputes Act of 1952 conferred legal protection to unions and also defined the rights and duties of both the employer and the employees⁷⁵. Through the Industrial relations machinery, negotiations are conducted between the representatives of the workers and employers. During the Colonial period, the plantation industry in Kenya was characterized by poor labour management relations due to "unenlightened management, weak or non-existent trade unions and the failure of protective labour laws to cover plantation workers"⁷⁶.

In 1949 the Labour Department's annual report stated that the Africans were not yet ready to engage in trade union activities⁷⁷. This was the result of factors such as illiteracy among the labourers and lack of skills on trade union practices. Thus it pointed out that emphasis should be placed on the formation of staff associations or whitley councils where both sides in the industry would learn the art of consultation. The following year E.M. Hyde-Clark, the Labour Commissioner argued that collective

bargaining was still impossible in Kenya. The Regulation of Wages and Conditions of Employment Bill of 1950 approved the formation of staff associations and Whitley Councils for government departments and industries respectively⁷⁸. These organizations were to consist of people employed only by one employer. Thus they were internal negotiating bodies for each firm. These councils had none of the rights of a trade union. For example, they could not call a strike or collect money from the employees.

The colonial Government as late as the 1950s favoured staff associations and Works Councils rather than trade unions. This was because it was easier for the government to manipulate and deal with the staff associations and Works Councils since these organizations had no effective negotiation machinery. They were restricted to individual firms or public bodies and had no full time paid officials. According to oral information, workers tended to ignore the Works Councils because they viewed them as under the control of the employer. As Elkan points out, "the works committee would exercise no sanction against the employer hence an aura of paternalism was always present."⁷⁹

In 1952 the Miwani Sugar Mills, which had the largest labour force in the Asian sugar plantations in Kisumu District formed a Works Council⁸⁰. The idea of forming the Works Council had been suggested to the company management by then Senior Labour Officer of Nyanza, E. Mason. He arranged for some of the senior management staff of the Miwani Sugar Mills to visit a Tea Estate in Kericho to orientate themselves with the operations of the Works Council. They were impressed and they decided to establish such a council whose first meeting was held on the 21st

of August 1952. On the management side the meeting was attended by the following:

L.D. Hindocha, a Director of the company,

J.G. Reyvadera, the General Manager,

V.K. Hindocha, the Welfare Officer, and

S.R. Ochieng, the Secretary of the works council.

The representatives of the employees were:

Eli Obala, Wairomia Mtende and Unapapati Chuma, representing the Factory Camp, Auko Ogendi of section 1,

Alois Yogo and Mwita Waigare of Section 2,

Gemaliel Ahenda and Mwashe Chacha of Section 3.

These representatives were appointed by the company management though in later years the employees elected them.

The constitution of the Miwani Works Council was approved by the Nyanza Provincial Labour Officer and was signed by the representatives of the company and the employees on the 7th of August, 1958. The stated aims of the Works Council were:

To provide a recognized means of consultation between the management and the employees,

To give employees a wider interest in and greater responsibility for the conditions under which they worked, and

To prevent friction and misunderstanding between the employer and the employees.

The Council dealt with matters and issues related to distribution of working hours, discussion and examination of disputes and any problem which might create discontent and dissatisfaction between the employees and the management. In addition, it tackled issues pertaining to holidays and leave arrangements, discipline and the general conduct of such matter between the management and the employees. It also, dealt with questions such as training of apprentices and learners, all matters affecting the physical welfare and lastly, entertainment and sports.

The Council consisted of 5 representatives of management and 10 representatives of the employees elected on the following basis:

One representative of each of the three production shifts in the factory,

Two representatives from each of the 3 sections or estates, and One representative of the loco-shed, tractor garage, motor garage and railway maintenance gang. An official of the Labour Department could attend the meeting of the council in an advisory capacity. Employees' representatives held office for one year and could seek re-election. Each member of the council could appoint a proxy approved by the group he represented to attend the council's meetings.

Meetings of the council were held monthly during normal working hours. However, a special meeting could be called within three days following a request from either side. The agenda of the meeting was to be submitted 6 days in advance except in case of a special meeting. The Chairman of the meeting was appointed by the management from the 5 management representatives. Each side appointed its secretary.

The recommended procedure of solving a dispute through the Works Council was as follows⁸¹. The aggrieved employee reported first to his supervisor. If no solution was found then the employee forwarded the matter to the section's representative who took it up with the management official of the section concerned. If there was a stalemate at that stage, then the section's representative reported to the employees' secretary of the council, who attempted to settle the matter by approaching the management. At that stage if no solution was forthcoming, then the secretary consulted with the other employees' representatives who decided whether or not to include the problem in the agenda of the next council meeting.

On the whole, issues which could cause discontent or create disputes affecting a group of employees had to be referred to the secretary of the appropriate side, who in consultation with other representatives of his side, decided whether to include them in the agenda. In addition, only matters of importance which could not be solved outside the employees' Council could be submitted for discussion by the Works Council. But in all cases where negotiation in the works council failed, the matter was reported to the Senior Labour Officer, Nyanza. Decisions were to be arrived at only by mutual agreement between both sides following negotiation, subject in all cases to the final approval of the General Manager. Quorum for the meetings of the Council was 3 members of the management side and 5 members of the employees' side.

However, the council could not discuss wages because they were, according to the employees, supposedly the prerogative of management. Furthermore, the General Manager had the power to veto any decision of the council. Thus the Works Council

could not act as a real negotiation machinery for the employees.

To a large extent, the industrial relations machinery was not well developed in Kenya until the late 1950s with the formation of the ACIE, later renamed the FKE in 1959. The ACIE spearheaded the use of voluntary collective bargaining and dispute settlement. This move was a deliberate attempt to forestall the colonial government's arbitrary awards to employees, which might be disadvantageous to the employers⁸². Thus, the ACIE members held the view that through collective bargaining, the employers would be in a better position to determine the rise in labour cost, profitability of an enterprise and other variables before making any wage adjustment. Furthermore, they pointed out that wage increase in the public sector tended to make the workers in the private sector expect a pay rise. Thus if wages were reviewed in annual collective bargaining then labour agitation would be minimized.

The process by which agreements between a trade union and an employer are negotiated, administered and enforced is referred to as "collective bargaining". This term indicates that the agreement is negotiated on behalf of a group of workers. The workers present a united front to their employer and the terms of the bargain apply uniformly to all members of the group. On the other hand, different employers may also come together for the purpose of negotiating an agreement with a union. From the unions' stand point, the object of collective bargaining is to forestall arbitrary action by the employers. This is achieved by requiring the employer to sign a contract fixing conditions of employment for a specific period. Collective bargaining therefore, is an employer regulating device, a method of guaranteeing certain rights and

immunities to the workers by limiting the employers freedom of action.

The ACIE appealed to its members to create Works Councils to facilitate voluntary collective negotiations. Thus in industries where trade unions were non-existent, the function of the works council was two fold. On the one hand, they operated as consultation committees and on the other, they acted as negotiating bodies. The ACIE emphasized that only "responsible" trade unions would be recognized by the employers. Such unions had to meet certain conditions. For example, paid up membership was not to be less than 40% of the employees involved. Furthermore, the union's scope was not to overlap with that of any other recognized union in the same industry. The unions had to be organized on industrial basis and lastly, they were not to operate the "closed shop" policy. In other words, it was not to claim that only members of the union would be employed in the industry concerned. In addition, the Association called on its members to encourage the development of trade unions on industry wide basis. At the same time it recommended the formation of Joint Industrial Councils (JIC), in which employees were represented by their unions and the employers represented either individually or by their Employer Association.

The ACIE adopted a positive approach on the issue of collective bargaining. Thus in 1956 the ACIE and the KFL met under the chairmanship of the minister for Labour to thrash out their differences⁸³. They agreed that works councils would not be replaced by trade unions. Furthermore, the ACIE rescinded its previous stated position on union recognition. Thus a union would gain recognition once it was legally

set up regardless of its total membership. Tom Mboya had pointed out that it was impossible for a union to be representative until it obtained recognition by the employer. However, the differences between the KFL and the ACIE on the check-off system were not reconciled until the 1960s. The ACIE rejected the adoption of the check-off system in collecting union dues claiming that it would interfere with the employers accounting system as well as giving them some unnecessary extra work. Nonetheless, the reason for their rejection seems to have been the fear that the system would create financial stability for the unions thereby making them stronger and aggressive in their demands⁸⁴.

According to Tom Mboya, the check-off system was better compared to using union officials to collect union dues as was the practise in Britain, for three main reasons⁸⁵. First, the check-off system would make a union financially and organizationally strong, therefore attracting skilled leadership. Secondly, if a union had no regular or adequate funds, then its leaders could be vulnerable to bribery by the employers and other interested parties. And lastly, lack of adequate funds might make union leaders seek assistance from external sources with possible negative ramifications.

Both the ACIE and the KFL favoured the organization of trade unions on industry wide basis⁸⁶. The former argued that such unions would ensure that negotiators were conversant with the operations of the industry, including its difficulties and ability to pay. In addition, the employer would deal with a single union, thus wage rates negotiated would cover several categories of employees within one industry. Furthermore, they pointed out that industry wide unions would be

strong enough and responsible. Thereafter, the ACIE organized the employers of the private sector into 30 categories, each constituting an Employer Association. In 1959 the ACIE merged with the Coastal Employers Association to form the Federation of Kenya Employers (FKE). The Kenya Sugar Employers Union (KSEU) was formed in 1960⁸⁷ and it became a member of the FKE.

Following the earlier agreement between the KFL and the FKE on the formation of agricultural unions, the KSEU formally recognized the KUSPW in 1961 as the sole representative of all the employees in the sugar industry⁸⁸. Out of the 80 Asian sugar cane farmers in Kisumu District, 54 (68%) were members of the KSEU⁸⁹. This included the Miwani Sugar Mills which had a labour force of over 4,000. However, employers who were not members of the KSEU were not bound by any agreement the KSEU and the KUSPW entered into through collective negotiation.

In the 1961 recognition agreement between the KSEU and the KUSPW, three types of committees were created. These were, the Estate, Branch and the Standing Joint Council (SJC)⁹⁰. The SJC dealt with matters which the other two organs were unable to solve. It consisted of 6 members from each Party. An official from the District Labour office could attend its meetings on an advisory capacity. The chairman of the council was elected annually, alternating annually from employer to union nominees. Nonetheless, the chairman of the branch committee had to come from the employers' side. The Estate and Joint Branch Committee (JBC) handled grievances at the primary stage. The JBCs were established in areas where the KUSPW had a branch and where the local sugar planters were members of the KSEU.

The Joint Industrial Council (JIC) was the supreme body. It comprised 3 representatives of the employees elected by employees and one member representing the management, who in all cases was the chairman of the council. When the JIC reached a stalemate on any issue, then the matter was reported to the Labour Commissioner for conciliation. But if the Commissioner was unable to solve the dispute then the matter was forwarded to an independent arbitrator acceptable to both Parties. If no solution was reached at that stage, then the matter was reported to the Minister for Labour to settle under Section 5 of the Trade Disputes Ordinance⁹¹. During the period of arbitration a strike or lock-out was prohibited.

It is clear that this grievance settling procedure in the sugar industry was not effective as the arbitrator remarked in 1963:

Negotiation machinery existed but, throughout, it appeared that such a machinery was not treated seriously at its various stages and that more lip service was given to it than practical application⁹².

In 1961 the KFL and the FKE set up a National Joint Consultation Council (JCC) to promote consultation and cooperation between the employers and employees⁹³. The JCC could settle disputes and also determine the terms and conditions of service. In 1962 the representatives of the government, the labour movement and employers signed the Industrial Relations Charter. The objective of the charter was to ensure industrial peace in the country. According to the charter, employees could go on a legal strike only after following the laid down procedure, which was long and laborious. Under the charter a Joint Disputes Commission was

created to which all the parties could refer disputes if negotiations broke down. This Commission later became the Kenya Industrial Court in 1964.

By 1963 there was no legal instrument in Kenya which regulated wages in the sugar industry⁹⁴. Hence the voluntary negotiation machinery was always used since 1961 when the KSEU recognized the KUSPW. Both adopted a negotiation procedure. The agreement between the two Parties was signed with the aim of achieving the following objectives; regulate relations between the two parties, ensure quick and impartial settlement of real or imagined disputes and lastly, to set up joint committees on National, Branch and Estate level for discussion and settlement of any problem that could arise.

Following a stalemate in negotiations between the KUSPW and the KSEU in 1962, the Minister for Labour appointed a Board of Inquiry to look into the sugar industry's wages and conditions of service⁹⁵. The recommendations of the Board led to the signing of an agreement between the two Parties on 20th, December 1962. It improved the terms and conditions of service of the employees by increasing the wage rates for all categories of workers in the sugar industry. Moreover, in 1963 the KUSPW and the KSEU referred their dispute to an Arbitration Tribunal which published its award on 30th, November 1963. It established new rates of pay and conditions of service. For example, it introduced the check off system and discontinued the ticket system of work by introducing payment of wages at the end of the calendar month. Workers were granted 18 days paid annual leave. It also provided for 3 months unpaid maternity leave for women employees and a total of

30 days paid sick leave for all employees. However, the request by the union for 40 hours work-week was rejected by the Tribunal which instituted 46 hours week instead of the 45 hours week then in practise.

The two awards supplemented the already existing voluntary negotiation machinery in the sugar industry. Thus to a large extent, after 1961 employment conditions in the sugar industry were determined by collective bargaining.

5.6 Summary

We have traced the emergence and growth of trade unionism in the sugar plantations in Kisumu District. It has been pointed out that prior to the 1950s no trade union had emerged in the agricultural sector. Both the colonial government and the employers in the agricultural industry were opposed to the formation of such unions. This was because of the fear that the unions might create industrial unrest in the agricultural sector which was the mainstay of Kenya's economy. The Kenya Union of Sugar Plantation Workers was formed in 1960. The unstable and mostly illiterate nature of labour in the sugar plantations was a drawback to the early emergence of organized labour movement. The ICFTU and the PWIF played an important role in the unionization of the agricultural labourers in Kenya. Another noteworthy development in this period was that of the formation of the industrial relations machinery in the sugar industry. The Miwani Sugar Mills provide a good case study to show how the works' councils operated. The negotiation machinery between the

Kenya Union of Sugar Employers and the Kenya Union of Sugar Plantation Workers to some extent led to the improvement of the working conditions in the sugar plantations.

It can be argued that to some extent, wage employment undermined African agricultural production especially in Kano, Kajulu and Nyakach locations from where the majority of the labourers came. Furthermore, wage labour and cane cultivation led to the emergence of social differentiation within the local community. Lastly, land alienation for Asian settlement had adverse effects on the local people, especially Jokajulu. The population increase in Kajulu location in the 1950s led to overcrowding in the location which in turn created social and economic difficulties. Thus some people sought wage employment in the sugar plantations so as to be assured of a reliable income.

Endnotes

1. Ol. Chanan Singh, Jagat Singh, J.Ouma, see also KNA Lab 5/2132, LIR, Miwani, 1947-55.
2. Anyang -Nyonggo, "Middle Peasantry", 108-120.
3. Kitching, Economic Change, 39-55 and M.J.Hay, "Economic Change in Late 19th Century Kowe", in B.A.Ogot (ed), Economic and Social History of East Africa, Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau, 1976, 92-107.
4. KNA Lab 9/2132, LIR, 17th DececeMBER, 1957.
5. Kitching, Economic Change, 132.
6. Anyang-Nyonggo, "Middle Peasantry", 109.
7. See, Stichter, Migrant Labour, 120-121.
8. Fearn, An African Economy, 197.
9. J.Hay, "Economic Change in Luoland", Ph.D thesis, University of Winconsin, 1972, 226-32.
10. KNA AGR 6/4576, Sugar Statistics, 1950-61.
11. KNA KDAR 1955-1957.
12. KNA AGR 6/4576, Sugar cane production in Nyanza, 20th December, 1956.
13. KNA DC/KSM 1/3/118, The Walji Hirji Estate 8th November, 1959.
14. Ol.R. Akinyi, B. Ongoma, J. Ongany.
15. KNA MC/6/1147, Sugar Production, EAHC, 7.
16. Fearn, An African Economy, 95-106.
17. Ol. J. Ongany, R. Akinyi, R. Menya.
18. KNA CKDAR, 1936.

19. Chief Oyare, M'Onyuro, B. Ongoma.
20. OI. Chief Oyare, M. Onyuro, See also KNA KDAR 1951-55.
21. KNA CNDAR, 1952.
22. KNA DC/KSM 1/3/32, Sugar cane production ,6th March, 1954.
23. Swynnerton, Swynnerton Plan, 21, See also KNA AGR 6/4576, Sugar cane production , 20th, July 1953.
24. KNA DC/KSM 1/3/22, Sugar cane production 6th March, 1954.
25. KNA DC/1/3/32, African cane production , 6th June, 1961.
26. OI. M. Onyuro, Chief Oyare, O. Ondiala.
27. OI. Chief Oyare.
28. OI. Chief Oyare, M. Onyuro.
29. OI. O. Agwambo 18-1-93.
30. OI. Opande Ondiala and Yogo Ondiala.
31. OI. Chanan Singh, Jagat Singh, M. Onyuro , gwambo, see also KNA Lab 10/273, KFL Newsletter, No 17 August, 1955.
32. Mboya, Freedom and After, 18-20 and Stichter, Migrant Labour, 135.
33. Lubembe, Labour Movement, 87-89, Mboya, Freedom and After, 32-36, T. Zeleza, "The Colonial Labour System in Kenya" in W.R. Ochieng, and R.M. Maxon, (eds), An Economic History of Kenya, Nairobi: African Educational Publishers Ltd, 1992, 193.
34. Mboya, Freedom and After, 35, Goldsworthy, Tom Mboya, 25-35.
35. F.W. Carpenter, Committee on African Wages, Nairobi: Government Printer, 1954, 1-150, Kitching, Economic Change, 261-63. Swainson, Corporate Capitalism, 114.
36. Mboya, Freedom and After, 181.

37. KNA Lab 10/237 KFRTU AR, 1955, 22.
38. Ibid.
39. Ibid. KFL Newsletter, No 10, 8th, July 1955.
40. T. Hodgkin, Nationalism in Colonial Africa, New York: University Press, 1957, 123.
41. The East African Standard (EAS), Nairobi, 13th, March 1956, and Mboya, Freedom and After, 199.
42. The EAS, Nairobi: 25th May, 1956.
43. Goldsworthy, Tom Mboya, 22-23 and KNA Lab 10/237 KFL News Letter, 1955.
44. The Sunday Post, Nairobi: 18th March, 1956.
45. The EAS, Nairobi: 13th March, 1956.
46. The EAS, Nairobi: 20th Feb 1956.
47. Mboya, Freedom and After, 41, Goldsworthy, Tom Mboya.
48. Zeleza, "Colonial Labour", 193, Goldsworthy, Tom Mboya, 62-65.
49. Stichter, Migrant Labour, 135, Amsden, International Firms, 54.
50. Clayton, Government and Labour, 380
51. Ibid. 426 and Amsden, International Firms, 70.
52. Goldsworthy, Tom Mboya, 64-65.
53. Clayton, Government and Labour, 426. Amsden, International Firms, 70.
54. Clayton and Savage, Government and Labour, 427.
55. Amsden, International Firms, 71.
56. Office of the Attorney General, Kenya Registrar - General Annual Report, 1960-68, Nairobi, Government Printer, 377, Ol. J. Ongundha, E. Kamire, Wong

57. Ol. Chanan Singh, J.Ongundha, M.Juma, W.Ogweng.
58. Ol. J.Ongundha, E.Kamire, W.Ogweng.
59. Registrar General, the Register of Trade Unions, KUSPW constitution, 1.
60. Ol. J.Ongundha, Chief Oyare, M.Juma.
61. Ol. J.Ongundha, see also Lubembe, Labour Movement, 142 and Registrar General AR, 1961.
62. Ol. J.Ongundha, W.Ogweng, M.Otieno .
63. Ol. J.Ongundha, 15-1-93, KNA Lab 9/256, Kenya Sugar Employers Union, 1962, see also Lubembe, Labour Movement, 142.
64. Ol. J.Ongundha, J.Jakaita.
65. Mboya, Freedom and After, 189-90.
- 66 Ol. J.Ongundha.
67. Registrar General, the Register of Trade Unions, Vol.3, 26.
68. Ol. J.Ongundha, W.Ogweng, chief Oyare.
69. Registrar General AR. 1960-1968, 26.
70. Cited in Sandbrook, Proletarians and African Capitalism, 64.
71. Ol. J.Ongundha, O.Agwambo.
72. Registrar General, Register of Trade Unions, Vol.3, 26.
73. Ol. J.Ongundha, J.Owaga, M.Juma.
74. E.W.Bakke, Mutual Survival, New York: Harper & Row publishers, 1946, 2.
75. J.K. Gacoka, "Workers and the Trade Unions: The Kenyan case", LLB dissertation, University of Nairobi, 1981.45.
76. Taha, Employment Problems in Kenya, 81.

77. Makhan Singh, Trade Union Movement, 246.
78. Lubembe, Labour Movement, 160, and Makhan Singh
Trade Union Movement, 191-92.
79. Cited in Roger Scott, Trade Union Movement in Uganda, 43-44.
80. KNA Lab 10/156 Miwani Sugar Mills (MSM) Works Councils, 21st August, 1952.
81. Ibid. 7th August, 1958, Ol. O.Agwambo, W.Ogweng.
82. Alice Amsden, International Firms, 54.
83. KNA Lab 2/237, KFL AR, 1956.
84. Lubembe, Labour Movement, 170.
85. Mboya, Freedom and After, 191.
86. Alice Amsden, International Firms, 150, and Mboya, Freedom and After, 189.
87. Kenya Registrar General, AR 1960-68, 45.
88. African Research Office (ARO) of the ICFTU, Contract Survey No. 2: Wages and Conditions of Employment in the Sugar Industry, Kampala: ICFTU, 1964, 3.
89. Ol. Jagir Singh, Jagat Singh, Chanan Singh, see also The Registrar-General, AR 1960, 38.
90. ARO, Contract Survey No. 2, 4, Ol. J.Ongundha, E.Kamire, M.Juma.
91. Mboya, Freedom and After, 193, 262, Lubembe Labour Movement, 164.
92. ARO, Contract Survey No. 2, 14-15.
93. Lubembe, Labour Movement, 161.
94. Ol. J.Ongundha, Chanan Singh, Jagat Singh, Jagir Singh and ARO, Contract Survey No. 2, 2-3.
95. Ol. J. Ongundha, see also ARO, contract survey NO 2, 2-3.

CHAPTER 6

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

This study analyses African labour in the Asian owned Sugar plantations in Kisumu District. The basic premise of the study asserts that the incorporation of Kisumu District into the world economy progressively undermined the peasant society. Using the perspective of underdevelopment, the study demonstrates how colonial land and labour policies led to the underdevelopment of Kisumu District.

Chapter two validates the premise that colonial land and labour policies to some extent benefitted the Asian sugar plantations. This was due to the fact that the peasants from the locations of Kano, Nyakach and Kajulu worked in the sugar plantations because of their proximity. Furthermore, the colonial government alienated African land in the Kibos-Muhoroni area for Asian settlement. In addition, as expounded in the chapter the colonial government established and maintained authoritarian labour policies characterised by land alienation, taxation, forced labour and the Kipande System to stimulate labour supply. These labour policies were aimed at facilitating a supply of cheap African labour especially for European settlers. However, some of these measures coincidentally served the labour needs of the Asian settlers.

Chapter three gives credence to the assumption that the setting up of political administration in Kisumu District brought new felt needs and opportunities which in turn activated the local people to enter into wage labour. It analyses the problem of labour in the context of Asian agriculture in the inter war period. In addition the economic depression and its effects on the African labourers and Asian agriculture is examined. Further more, initial African response to Asian plantation economy is highlighted.

Chapter four supports the premise that Asian settlers just like their European counterparts exploited African labour. This was evident in the low wages, poor

working conditions and arduous tasks. It also shows how the sugar plantation economy undermined the African sector. On the other hand, chapter five validates the premise that labour consciousness and trade unionism sprung up among the mostly unskilled and illiterate sugar plantation labour. This was evident in the boycotts and strikes which characterised the sugar plantations during the colonial period.

In this study there is evidence to support the premise that colonial capitalism had numerous effects on the African peasants in Kisumu District. First, land alienation which was meant to provide land for Asian settlers and to force the local people into wage labour limited the land available to the Africans, especially Jokajulu and Jokano. Secondly, the introduction of taxation as a means of raising revenue for the state and coercing Africans into wage labour brought about monetisation of the local economy. This stimulated commodity production to some extent as individuals sought to escape proletarianisation by accumulating wealth. At the same time a large number of peasants became migrant labourers in the nearby settler plantations.

It can be argued that although wage rates were comparatively low in the Asian owned sugar plantations up to the 1960s, the majority of labourers from East Kano, North Nyakach and to some extent Kajulu locations sought wage labour on these same plantations. This was because of the poor climatic conditions which made the locations prone to droughts and famines. Furthermore, prices for African agricultural produce such as cotton were comparatively low. Thus by the late 1940s wage labour came to be seen as a more reliable means of earning a living than agricultural production which was prone to the vagaries of weather. As many as 75% of the sugar plantation labourers in the District came from Nyakach and Kano. The two locations had been set aside by the colonial government in 1919 to provide labour for the settler farms within Kisumu District. As a result, a tradition emerged among the people of the two locations to seek wage employment in the sugar plantations. The Asian sugar plantations also were popular with the people from the two locations because of their proximity.

The Africans preferred to work on the Asian sugar plantations despite low

wages because of social and economic factors. For example, before the post-economic depression boom of the 1930s the majority of the labourers were engaged as daily paid casuals or on one month verbal contracts. Thus they could easily combine wage labour and the peasant economy. However, this practice started to change in the 1940s when an increasing number of local people started enlisting as migrant labourers on six month contracts, renewable on expiry on mutual agreement. The wages paid to the labourers were mainly meant for subsistence and therefore were not adequate to be saved for other investments back at home such as trade. Consequently, the vicious cycle of low wage labour and low production in the African reserves continued. The Africans, therefore, faced a "double jeopardy", in that the labourer was paid low wages and at the same time the prices for African agricultural produce were also low.

Wage employment in the sugar plantations to some extent undermined the African agricultural production in Kisumu District. This was more so in East Kano, Nyakach and Kajulu locations where the bulk of the labourers came from. In the 1950s the Asian farmers as well as the Miwani Sugar mills increased the number of migrant labourers on long contracts of 6 months or more. These labourers were required to reside in the labour camps within the plantations. Thus it became more difficult for the labourers to participate effectively in wage labour and the peasant economy as had been the practice before. Furthermore, apart from male labour, women and juveniles were also employed in the sugar plantations. This meant that the people who could have worked on the family farms in the absence of the males were also drawn into wage labour. Needless to say, the African agricultural production plummeted while that in the Asian plantations increased. Thus by the 1950s Kisumu District had become dependent on maize supplies from Kericho and other neighbouring Districts.

In the 1950s about 30% of the labourers in the sugar plantations were accompanied by their families. This was more so with contract labourers. Undoubtedly, their contribution to agricultural development in their home areas was

minimal. Although it has been pointed out by some scholars that in the traditional society, males' role in agriculture was minimal compared to that of women and children, the absence of the males especially in the 1950s meant that there were very few people to clear up virgin lands for cultivation. Consequently, the already cleared land was overused and deteriorated with resultant low agricultural yields. The result was the propensity of more males to seek wage labour. In the 1940s and 50s a man or woman could earn more income through wage labour of six months contract than what he/she could earn from an acre of cotton or maize. Thus, the prospects of wage labour made men less enthusiastic about agricultural improvements in their locations.

Thus it can be said that a significant outcome of the food shortage and poor agricultural yields in the District was a deep increase in labour migration. Although from the perspective of agrarian crisis in the District, increased proletarianisation of the local people may have been a welcome development. But in the context of colonial capitalism this was not the case because the labourers were paid "bachelor" wages instead of "family" wages. It is therefore evident that labour migration involved a large element of exploitation. The withdrawal of such a large number of labour force had far-reaching repercussions on the reserve because it resulted in inadequate labour being available in the peasant sector.

Although the Asian farmers introduced the cultivation of sugar cane as a commercial crop in the District, the number of African farmers who had taken to its cultivation by 1963 was comparatively small. This was because sugar cane is a perennial crop which takes too long to mature compared to food crops. It would also have been difficult to obtain reliable and cheap means of transport to ferry the harvested cane to the sugar mills at Miwani especially for the peasants who lived far from Miwani. It can therefore be correctly argued that the major benefit of the Asian sugar industry to the local people apart from the introduction of a new foodstuff in the diet of the people, was the provision of approximately 4,000 - 8,000 job opportunities annually especially of unskilled nature such as weeding and cane cutting.

The Asian sugar cane farmers were capitalists whose main objectives were the maximization of profit. This could be achieved through the payment of low bachelor wages. Jaggery production in the Asian plantations expanded after 1936 and especially in the 1950s after the decontrol of jaggery prices, yet there were no significant corresponding increase in labour wages. This meant that as the Asian farmers were becoming more prosperous because of good prices for jaggery and sugar in the 1950s the African labourers were increasingly becoming poorer. This was because the wages were either static or only increased slowly compared to the prices of consumer goods.

It is clear that the Asian settlement Area of Kibos-Muhoroni acted as a perimetropole in that it attracted African labourers whose labour surplus was drained to serve the needs of the Asian capitalists. Thus while the Asian enclave was developing there was a corresponding stagnation of the nearby African locations which only served as a labour reservoir. It was deprived of its most energetic young men who sought wage labour in the Asian enclave at low wages. For example, in the 1950s an average of 65% of the District's able bodied males had joined wage labour. No doubt this enormous withdrawal of labour had considerable negative effects on the economy of the reserve.

The data as analyzed in this study partially supports the underdevelopment paradigm as adopted in the theoretical framework. It was through the establishment of colonial rule that Kisumu district was incorporated into the World Capitalist System.

A.G. Frank notes that:

...The essential internal contradiction of the Capitalist System as a whole, while permitting the relative development of some, thus produces and maintains the underdevelopment of others on the international, national, regional, sectorial and local lands¹.

In Kisumu District, capitalist farming was concentrated in few areas such as the Kibos-Muhoroni Settlement, leaving the rest in pre-capitalist state which could be exploited as low cost labour reservoir. Thus the Asian settlement area served as an

"export enclave" to which the African reserves provided cheap labour. The growth of such "export enclaves" contributed to the underdevelopment and impoverishment of the peasant sector. Such underdevelopment was achieved in two ways. On the one hand, directly through the extraction of surplus produced by the low paid African labour and on the other hand, indirectly from the sale of high priced manufactured goods sold to the Africans².

As pointed out in the study, the Asian farmers drew their labour from the nearby African reserves. These labourers were paid low bachelor wages. Consequently, the labourers' families had no choice but to stay in the family land because the wages were insufficient for the maintenance of families. Employers favoured a migrant African workforce rooted in the traditional social system and rural economy. Such labour was cheap because it saved the employers from meeting the long term social costs of labour.

The Asian farmers could not be fully committed to the interests of their labourers. They only aimed at making maximum profits at minimum costs to themselves. Thus the low wages offered to the labourers ensured that the Asian settlers maximized the appropriation of surplus through exploitation. We note that by the 1950s Asian Sugar plantations were making profits because of the good price for jaggery and white sugar. On the contrary, there was no real improvements in the labour wages and working conditions. There is evidence that profits were repatriated abroad by the Asian farmers while some was invested in non agricultural undertakings in Kisumu town. This fact supports the major law of capitalist system, the production of maximum surplus value through intensification of exploitation by expansion of production.

Although there was only a limited land alienation for Asian settlement in Kisumu District, its effect became pronounced in the 1950s. The alienated land especially in the Kibos-Miwani area was the most fertile. This alienation meant that the local people, especially Jokajulu were deprived of an area that could have served them as an expansion ground for increased African population. Thus, the population

increase in Kajulu as well as the hostile climatic conditions meant that the local people had no alternative but to seek wage labour in the nearby Asian plantations and in Kisumu town.

There were other factors which also played a role in the underdevelopment of the district as shown by the following examples. The taxation system was one of the government policies which contributed to this underdevelopment. Although the government often denied that African taxation was high and that it was intended to stimulate wage labour, available evidence shows that direct taxation provided the bulk of government revenue. The tax system in colonial Kenya was unjust due to the low level of wages in relation to the tax demands and because the Africans did not receive a fair proportion of country's expenditure in return for their tax. This is because African taxes were re-directed to develop the settler enclaves.

Thus the burden of direct and indirect taxes was placed on the Africans. For example, available evidence shows that between 75-85% of Kenya's revenue in the interwar period came from hut and poll tax and from indirect taxation on Africans. The taxation charged upon an individual's earnings was very high. Various District annual reports show that Kisumu District was being drained of cash through taxation. The policy of taxation increased the cost of living for Africans. It was generally believed in colonial circles that Africans were lazy and idle in the reserves, thus they could only be forced to be economically productive through the use of taxation.

Another cause of underdevelopment in the District was the government negative attitude to the economic development of African reserves. The District was regarded as one of the major labour supplying areas. In order to stimulate labour supply the government ensured that the material conditions of reproduction in the reserves were insufficient to meet the needs of simple reproduction, commodity purchases and tax payments. For example, the 1948 population report shows that in nine out of fifteen locations in the District many peasants did not have enough land to grow enough crops for subsistence, leave alone cash crop. Moreover, government support for African agriculturists was lukewarm due to settler pressure. Nearly all

agricultural research and extension services were directed towards the settler sector.

According to some scholars the Luo land tenure system was a hindrance to agricultural improvements. This was because land was communally owned by a clan thus individuals had no regular freehold land. Consequently, any enterprising individual who wished to undertake an agricultural programme which could deprive other clansmen the use of their land might be prevented from such a venture since the interests of the community superseded those of the individual. But all in all, the colonial state policies were basically meant to serve the needs of settler economy. As such the District was turned into a reservoir of cheap labour through tax demands and forcible labour recruitment as well as conscription into the army during the two World Wars.

The emergence and growth of trade unionism in the 1940s shows that labour consciousness had sprung up among this mostly unskilled and illiterate sugar plantation labourers. This was evident in the boycotts and strikes which characterized the sugar plantations. The sugar plantation labourers had started to agitate for the improvement of their working conditions. The local and migrant labourers had realized that they could only ameliorate their conditions through collective actions. However, as with other agricultural undertakings, labour consciousness in the sugar plantations emerged later compared to the urban workers. This was because of the unskilled and unstabilized nature of the labour force. Thus early labour protests in the sugar plantations took individualized forms such as desertion. Nonetheless, from the

1930s labourers tended to organize labour protests with the aim of obtaining some concessions from the employers. As the number of migrant labourers increased, the nascent labour organizations started to emerge especially in the Miwani Sugar Mills, which by the 1940s employed over 3,000 labourers. The majority of the early strikes were spontaneous and did not have any long term aims. They only had short term objectives such as wage increase and lessening of daily tasks among other grievances.

In the 1950s as the labourers became more stabilized, they became more labour conscious and militant. More strikes occurred in the 1950s than before. This

was because of the unfolding social, economic and political changes in the country. For example, the most widespread strike in the Miwani Sugar Mills and in the other nearby Asian plantations occurred in 1959. This was a two day strike which was intended to show solidarity with the railway workers. This was an indication of class and labour consciousness.

The Asian employers like their European counterparts were not in favour of the establishment of trade unions among the sugar workers. However, in 1960 the Kenya Union of Sugar Plantation Workers (KUSPW), representing all the cadres of employees in the sugar plantations emerged. And by 1963 the union had entrenched itself and had won the loyalty of the sugar workers. It had obtained some benefits from the employers through collective bargaining. Consequently, the Asian farmers found it necessary to form an employers' union to face the possible challenges of the KUSPW. Thus they formed the Kenya Sugar Employers Union (KSEU) which henceforth negotiated with the KUSPW on the terms and conditions of service of the sugar plantation workers. The emergence of KUSPW therefore to some extent led to the improvement of the working conditions.

This study therefore concludes that colonialism in its manifold forms intensified the underdevelopment in Kisumu District. For instance, colonial land policies undermined the local people's economy while extraction of surplus through taxation weakened the social basis of production. Thus commodity production and labour migration partially destroyed the domestic system of production. The Asian sugar plantation economy would not have developed without the government land and labour policies which favoured it to some extent.

Endnotes

1. Cited in Brett, Underdevelopment, 12.
2. A.Seidman, "The economics of eliminating rural poverty", in Palmer and Parson (eds), Rural Poverty, 412.

CODESRIA-LIBRARY

REFERENCES

A PRIMARY SOURCES.

(a) Archival Documents

- 1 Nyanza Province Annual Reports 1905-59 (selected years).
- 2 Kisumu - Londiani District Annual Reports 1925-39 (selected years).
- 3 Central Nyanza District Annual Reports 1949-59 (selected years).
- 4 Central Kavirondo District Annual Reports 1921-47 (selected years).
- 5 Kisumu District Annual and Quarterly Reports 1910-21.
- 6 **Labour Department**
 - KNA Lab 1/804 Labour Department Circular.
 - KNA Lab 9/256 Labour for the Sugar Industry.
 - KNA Lab 9/1021 The Federation of Kenya Employers(FKE), 1956-63.
 - KNA Lab 9/1895 Labour Protests at Miwani.
 - KNA Lab 9/2132 The Miwani Sugar Mills, 1921-26.
 - KNA Lab 10/13 Trade Dispute, the KUSPW and KSEU, 1962.
 - KNA Lab 10/156 The Miwani Sugar Mills Works Council.
 - KNA Lab 10/237 The KFRTU Annual Reports.
- 7 Nyanza Province Labour Intelligence Reports, 1934-59 (selected years).
- 8 **Ministry of Agriculture:**
 - KNA AGR 6/4585 Sugar Expeirmental Station, Miwani 194760
 - KNA AGR 6/4592 The Indian and Arab Settlement Board 194658.
 - KNA AGR 1/1209 The Miwani Sugar cane Farms, 1940-63.
 - KNA AGR 1/525 Sugar cane, 1954-58.
 - KNA AGR 6/4579 Monthly Sugar Reports, 1945-53.
 - KNA AGRI 6/4592 Sugar Developement Policy, 1955-56.
 - KNA AGRI 6/4596 Sugar cane Cultivation, 1958-61.

9 Department of Agriculture - Nyanza

KNA DC/KSM 1/3/117, Kibos-Chemelil Farms, 1958.

KNA DC/KSM 1/3/122, Agricultural Production on Indian Farms, 1939-59.

KNA DC/KSM 1/3/124-25, Agricultural Bank, 1930-35.

(b) Government Publications/Reports.

Carpenter, F.W. Committee on African Wages, Nairobi: Government Printer, 1954.

Carter, R. Report of the Kenya Land Commission, London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1946.

Kenya Agricultural Census, 1957, Nairobi: EAHC, 1957.

Kisumu District Development Plan 1984-88.

Laws of Kenya, Nairobi: Government Printer, 1920-63.

Orde- Browne, G. Report on Labour Conditions in East Africa, London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1946.

Report on Africa Labour Censuses, 1946-48.

(c) News Papers

The East African Standard, 1905-63.

The Daily Nation, 1960-63.

The Leader, 1910-20.

The Weekly News, 1955-63.

The Sunday Post, 1960.

(d) Informants

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Place of interview</u>	<u>Date</u>
1	James Oriedo	Nyakach	12-12-92
2	Michael Juma	Miwani	15-12-92
3	Martin Akomo	Miwani	17-12-92
4	Henry Angira	Miwani	18-12-92
5	Christopher Odeny	Miwani	18-12-92

6	Ombewa Obiero	Nyakach	26-12-93
7	Opande Ondiala	Miwani	12-1-93
8	Miriam Onyuro	Miwani	12-1-93
9	Ernesti Omuse	Miwani	12-1-93
10	Maurice Juma	Miwani	13-1-93
11	James O. Onyango	Miwani	14-1-93
12	James Akendo	Miwani	14-1-93
13	Bile Singh	Miwani	14-1-93
14	Chief J. Oyare	Miwani	14-1-93
15	Jacob O. Ongundha	Kibigori	15-1-93
16	Jagat Singh	Miwani	15-1-93
17	Justus Omenda	Miwani	16-1-93
18	Walter Odino	Miwani	16-1-93
19	Alfayo Omolo	Miwani	16-1-93
20	Mordechai Otieno	Miwani	16-1-93
21	James Ongany	Kibos	17-1-93
22	Rasto O. Menya	Kibos	17-1-93
23	Joash Ouma	Kibos	17-1-93
24	Harjit Singh	Kibos	17-1-93
25	Opiyo Agwambo	Miwani	18-1-93
26	Cornelia Kebenei	Miwani	18-1-93
27	Rasto Akinyi	Kibos	19-1-93
28	Joseph Owiti	Kibos	19-1-93
29	Ast. Chief Otieno Owiti	Kibos	19-1-93
30	Wycliff Sikuku	Miwani	19-1-93
31	Laljit Singh	Kibos	20-1-93
32	Jagir Singh	Kibos	20-1-93
33	Chanan Singh	Kibos	20-1-93
34	Aloys Amolo	Miwani	20-1-93
35	Dalmas Okumu	Miwani	20-1-93
36	Sam Kwebiha	Miwani	20-1-93
37	Harjit Singh "Munialo"	Kibos	21-1-93
38	G.I.B. Ongoma	Kibos	21-1-93
39	Coun. James Onyango	Kibos	21-1-93
40	Samuel Mugoya	Kibos	21-1-93
41	Petro O. Ongoi	Kibos	22-1-93
42	John Hongo	Kibos	22-1-93
43	Justus Jakaita	Miwani	22-1-93
44	Rehmat Khan	Kisumu town	22-1-93
45	James arap Resi	Miwani	23-1-93
46	Thomas Otim	Miwani	23-1-93

47	Servine Okweny	Miwani	23-1-93
48	Henry Ochaya	Miwani	23-1-93
49	Wilson Ogweng	Miwani	24-1-93
50	Mrs Margaret Ogweng	Miwani	24-1-93
51	Clark Nyaoke	Miwani	24-1-93
52	Mwangi Kibati	Miwani	24-1-93
53	T.O. Ogada	Chemelil	25-1-93
54	Manase Nandi	Chemelil	25-1-93
55	George Okul	Chemelil	25-1-93
56	Alfred Nyambane	Muhoroni	28-1-93
57	Abisai Obura	Muhoroni	28-1-93
58	The District Labour Officer	Kisumu town	10-2-93
59	Evans Kamire	Chemelil	11-2-93
60	Aloice Nyawara	Muhoroni	11-2-93
61	Olero Ochare	Muhoroni	11-2-93
62	Jectone Obiero	Muhoroni	11-2-93
63	Joel H. Obengo	Muhoroni	11-2-93
64	James Owaga	Kisumu town	13-2-93
65	Chacha Rioba	Miwani	13-2-93

B SECONDARY SOURCES

(a) Unpublished works

(i) Theses and dissertations

Amolo, M.L., "Sierra Leone and British Colonial Labour Policy, 1930 - 1945", Ph.D thesis, Dalhousie University, 1977.

Evans, C.G., "The African Labour Movement in Kenya", M.A. Thesis, Columbia University, 1961.

Gacoka, J.K., "Workers and the Trade Unions: The Kenyan Case", LLB. Dissertation, University of Nairobi, 1981.

Hay, J., "Economic Change in Luoland", Ph.D Thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1972.

Janmohamed, K., "A History of Mombasa, 1895-1939", Ph.D Thesis, North-Western University, 1977.

Korir, K.M., "The Tea Plantation Economy in Kericho District and Related Phenomena to circa 1960", B.A. Dissertation, University of Nairobi, 1975.

Lonsdale, J.M., "A Political History of Nyanza, 1883-1945," Ph.D Thesis, Trinity College, Cambridge, June, 1964.

Mehta, B.P., "A History of Asians in Kenya 1900-1970", Ph.D Thesis, Howard University, 1976.

Obiero, J.C.A., "The Western Kenya Sugar Industry, with specific Reference to Nyanza and Western Provinces", M.A Thesis, University of Nairobi, 1980.

Odit-Mafuta, F.J., "The Ideological Under-pinnings of the Kenya Trade Union Movement up to 1972", MBA Thesis, University of Nairobi, 1974.

Ogal, M.A., "Labour in Kisumu, 1900-1939", B.A. Dissertation, University of Nairobi, 1978.

Stichter, S.B., "Labour and National Development in Colonial Kenya", Ph.D Thesis, Columbia University, 1972.

Zezeza, T.P., "Dependent Capitalism and the making of Kenyan working class during the Colonial Period", Ph.D. Thesis, Dalhousie University, 1982.

(ii) Conference, Seminar and Working Papers

African Research Office (ARO), Contract Survey No.2: Wages and Conditions of Employment in the Sugar Industry, Kampala: ICFTU, 1964.

Korir, K.M., "The Capital-Labour Contradiction on the Railway in Kenya During the Declines of Classical Colonialism - An Experiment in Dialectical Method", Historical Association of Kenya Conference, August, 1977.

Ndawula-Kajumba, "Socio-Economic Aspects of an African Plantation Case", Economic Research Bureau (Hereafter ERB), University of Dar-es-Salaam, January, 1977.

Osoro, J.M. "Unity and Diversity in Labour Recruitment and Welfare: The tea Estates versus Other Employers of Labour, 1925-1938", in Historical Association of Kenya Conference, August, 1977.

(b) Published works

(i) Journal articles

Achola, M.A., "Labour, Metropolitan Capital and the colonial State: A case study of the Labour Politics of the Sierra Leone Development Company, 1930 -38",

in Were, G., (ed), Trans African Journal of History, vol. 19, 1990, 80-98.

Allen, V.L., "The meaning of the working class in Africa", Journal of Modern African Studies, (Hereafter, JMAS), Vol. 10 No.2(1972), 169-189.

Anyang - Nyongo, P., "The development of a middle peasantry in Nyanza", A Review of African Political Economy, (Hereafter, ARAPE) No.20 (January - April, 1981), 108-120.

Berman, B., and Lonsdale, J., "Coping with the Contradictions: The Development of the Colonial State in Kenya, 1895-1914", Journal of African History(Hereafter, JAH) No.20(1979), 437-505.

--- "Crisis of Accumulation, coercion and the colonial state: The development of the labour control system in Kenya, 1919-1929", Canadian Journal of African Studies, Vol.14 No.1(1980), 55-81.

Kennedy, P., "Workers in Petty Production, Accra, Ghana: Towards Proletarianization", Labour, Capital and Society, Vol.16 No.1 (April, 1983), 64-93.

Ogot, B.A., "British Administration in the Central Nyanza District of Kenya, 1900-1960", JAH No.4 (1963), 249-274.

Palmer, R., "Working conditions and worker response on Nyasaland tea Estates, 1930-1953", JAH No.27(1986), 105-126.

Thomas, R.G., "Forced Labour in British West Africa. The Case of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast 1906-1927", JAH Vol XIV No.1 (1973), 79-103.

Van Onselem, C., "Worker Consciousness in Black Miners: Southern Rhodesia, 1900-1920", JAH. Vol.XIV. No.2(1973), 237-255.

(iii) Books

Ake, C., A Political Economy of Africa, Harlow: London, 1981.

Amin, S. Accumulation on a World Scale: A Critique of the Theory of Underdevelopment, New York: Monthly Review Press(MRP), 1974.

---- Unequal Development: An Essay on the Social Formation of Primitive Capitalism, New York: MRP, 1976.

--- Neocolonialism in West Africa, New York: MRP, 1976.

Amsden, A., International Firms and Labour in Kenya 1945-70, London: Frankcass, 1972.

Arrighi, G., and Saul, J.S.(eds) , Essays on the Political Economy of Africa, Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1974.

Bay Edna, G., Women Work in Africa, West view Press, Colorado, 1982.

Bennet, G., Kenya: A Political History in the Colonial Period, London: Oxford University Press, 1987.

Bernstein, A., Underdevelopment and Development: The Third World Today, New York; Penguin Books, 1976.

Brett, E.A., Colonialism and Underdevelopment in East Africa, New York: John-Wiley and sons, 1979.

Clayton, A. and Savage, D.C., Government and Labour in Kenya, 1895-1963, London: Frankcass, 1979.

Cohen, R. Gutkind, P.C.W. and Brazier, P.(eds), The Struggles of the Third World Workers; New York: MRP, 1979.

Cooper, F., From Slaves to Squatters: Plantation Labour and Agriculture in Zanzibar and Coastal Kenya, 1890-1925. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980.

Elster, J., Karl Marx: A Reader, Cambridge: University Press, 1986.

Fanon, F., The Wretched of the Earth, London: Penguin Books, 1967.

Fearn, N., An African Economy: A Study of the Economic Development of the Nyanza Province of Kenya, 1903-1953, London: Oxford University Press, 1961.

Ford, V.C.R., The Trade of Lake Victoria, Belfast: East Africa Literature Bureau, 1955.

Frank, A.G., Dependent Accumulation and Underdevelopment in Latin America, London: Macmillan, 1978.

Freund, B., Capital and Labour in the Nigeria Tin Mines, London: Longman, 1981.

Gertzel, C., The Politics of Independent Kenya, Nairobi: East Africa Publishing House, 1970.

Gutkind, P.C.W. and Waterman, P.W. (eds), African Social Studies: Radical Reader, London: Heinemann, 1977.

Harlow, V., Chilver, E.M. and Smith, A. (eds), History of East Africa, Vol.2, Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1965.

Hill, F.M., Permanent Way, Story of Kenya and Uganda Railway and Harbours, Nairobi: East African Railway and Harbours, 1949.

Himbara, D., Kenyan capitalists, The state and Development, Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 1994.

Hodgkin, T., Nationalism in Colonial Africa, New York: New York University Press, 1957.

Hopkins, A.G. An Economic History of West Africa, London: Longman, 1973

Howard, R., Colonialism and underdevelopment in Ghana, London: Groom Helm, 1978.

Huxley, E., The Settlers of Kenya, Connecticut : Greenwood, 1975 Edition.

Joetzold, R. and Schmidt, H. Farm Management handbook of Kenya: Natural conditions and Farm management information, Vol.2, Nairobi: Ministry of Agriculture, 1982.

Kitching, G., Class and Economic Change in Kenya: The Making of an African Petite - bourgeoisie, 1905-1970. London: Yale University Press, 1980.

Lee, J.M., Colonial Development and Good government: A study of ideas expressed by the British official classes in planning decolonization, 1939-1963, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967.

Leys, C., Underdevelopment in Kenya: The political Economy of Neo-colonialism 1946-1971, London: Heinemann, 1975.

Lubembe, C., The Inside of Labour Movement in Kenya, Nairobi: Equatorial Publishers, 1968.

Mangat, J.S., A History of Asians in East Africa, 1886-1945, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969.

Marx, K., Capital: A critique of Political Economy, Vol.2 Moscow: Progress Publisher, 1956.

Marx, K. and Engels, F. Selected Works, Vol.2. Moscow:Progress Publisher, 1975.

Mboya, T.J. Freedom and After, Nairobi: Heinemann, 1986.

Munoz, H.(ed), From Dependency to Development: Strategies to overcome underdevelopment and inequality, Boulder: Westview Press, 1981.

Myint, H., The Economics of the Developing Countries, 4th edition, London: Hutchinson University Publishers, 1973.

Ochieng, W.R., An outline History of Nyanza up to 1914, Nairobi: East African Literature Bureau, 1974.

Ochieng, W.R., and Maxon, R.M., An Economic History of Kenya, Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 1992.

O'Connor, A.M., An Economic Geography of East Africa, London: George Bell and sons, 1966.

Ogot, B.A (ed), Politics and Nationalism in Colonial Kenya: Hadith 4, Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1972.

Ogot, B.A. and Kieran, J.A. (eds), Zamani: A Survey of East African History, Nairobi: Longman, 1968.

Ojany, F.F. and Ogendo, R.B. Kenya: A study in Physical and Human Geography: Nairobi; Longman, 1973.

Okoth-Ogendo, H.W.O., Tenants of the Crown, Nairobi: African Centre of Technology, 1991.

Ominde, S.H., Land and Population Movement in Kenya, London: Heinemann, 1968.

Palmer, R. and Parsons, N. (eds) The Roots of Rural Poverty in Central and Southern Africa: Nairobi: Heinemann, 1983.

- Rodney, W., How Europe underdeveloped Africa: Nairobi: Heinemann, 1989.
- Sandbrook, R., Proletarians and African Capitalism: The Kenyan Case, 1960-1972. Cambridge; University Press, 1975.
- Sandbrook, R. and Cohen, R., The Development of an African working class: Studies in Class Formation, London: Longman, 1975.
- Sender, J. and Smith, S., The Development of Capitalism in Africa, London and New York: Methuen, 1986.
- Shenton, R.W., The development of Capitalism in Northern Nigeria, London: James Currey, 1986.
- Shivji, G.I., Class struggles in Tanzania, London: Heinemann, 1976.
- Law, State and the Working Class in Tanzania, London: James Currey, 1986.
- Singh, M., History of Kenya's Trade Union Movement to 1952, Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1969.
- Sorrenson, M.P.K., Origins of European Settlement in Kenya, London; Oxford University Press, 1968.
- Stichter, S., Migrant Labour in Kenya: Capitalism and African Response 1895-1975, Essex: Longman, 1982.
- Swainson, N., The Development of Corporate Capitalism in Kenya, 1918-1977, London: Heinemann, 1980.
- Swynnerton, R.J.M., A Plan to Intensify the Development of African Agriculture in Kenya, Nairobi: Government Printers, 1955.
- Thompson, E.P., The making of the English working class. London: Penguin Books, 1963.
- Todaro, M.P., Economics for a developing World, London: Longman, 1977.
- van Zwanenberg, R.M.A., Colonial Capitalism and Labour in Kenya, 1919-1939, Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1975.
- and King, A., An Economic History of Kenya and Uganda, 1800-1970, London: Oxford University Press, 1975.

Wolff, R.D., Britain and Kenya: The Economics of Capitalism, 1870-1930, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974.

Zelega, T.P., Imperialism and Labour: The International Relations of the Kenya Labour Movement. Kenyatta University, Pamphlet No.2 Kisumu: Anyange Press, 1987.

CODESRIA-LIBRARY

APPENDIX 1

(i) QUESTIONNAIRE FOR FORMER AFRICAN SUGAR PLANTATION WORKERS

1. (a) Name of respondent (Optional)
- (b) Age
- (c) Home Division
2. (a) When did you become employed ? -
- (b) Which exact plantation ? -
- (c) Who owned this plantation ? -
- (d) Did you want this job ? -
- (e) Give reasons for your answer ?-
3. (a) Do you know how many employees were there ? -
- (b) If so, how many ? -
- (c) Were there women workers ? -
- (d) If so, what were their duties ? -
- (e) Were there workers under 16 ? -
- (f) If so, what were their duties ? -
4. (a) Were you a "casual" or "permanent" employee ? -
- (b) Give reasons for your answers ? -
- (c) Were you provided with accommodation by the employer?
- (d) Give reasons for your answer -

- (e) Were there married workers in the plantation before 1963?
- (f) If so, were they allowed to stay with their families?
- (g) What was your daily work schedule?
- (h) Give reasons -
- (i) What was your weekly work schedule ? -
- (j) Give reasons -
- (k) What was your wage scale ? -
- (l) Were you paid daily or weekly ? -
- (m) Give reasons for your answer -
- (n) Were there recreational or social amenities for you, the workers ?
- (o) If so, which one(s) ? -
- (p) Give reasons for your answer -
5. (a) Were you allowed by the employer or the government to belong to a trade union before 1963 ? -
- (b) If so, did you belong to a trade union ? -
- (c) If yes, which one ? -
- (d) Give reasons for belonging to a trade union -
- (e) Were you allowed by the employer or government to participate in strike?
- (f) If so, did you ever participate in a strike ? -
- (g) When ? -
- (h) Give reasons -
- (i) What were the results ? -

- (j) Did you belong to any political association or party before 1963 ? -
 - (k) If so, which one ? -
 - (l) Give reasons for your answer ? -
- 6 (a) What benefits did you obtain from wage employment ? -

(ii) QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PRESENT SUGAR PLANTATION WORKERS

1. (a) Name of respondent:-
 - (b) Age:
 - (c) Home division:
2. (a) When were you employed ?
 - (b) Who is your employer ?
 - (c) Do you like your job ?
 - (d) Give reasons for your answer -
3. (a) Do you know how many employees are in your plantation ?-
 - (b) If so, how many ? -
 - (c) Are there women workers ? -
 - (d) If so, what are their duties ? -
 - (e) Are there workers under 16 ? -
 - (f) If so, what are their duties ? -
4. (a) Are you a "casual" or "permanent" employee?
 - (b) Give reasons for your answer ? -
 - (c) Are you given accommodation by the employer ? -

- (d) Give reasons for your answer ? -
 - (e) What is your wage scale ? -
 - (f) Are you entitled to any annual wage increment ? -
 - (g) If so, how much ? -
 - (h) Have you ever been promoted ? -
 - (i) If so, from what grade ? -
 - (j) Have you been given opportunity for any training to improve your skills ? -
 - (k) If so, when ? -
 - (l) Give reasons -
 - (m) Are there any social and recreational amenities for the workers ? -
 - (n) If so, which one(s) ? -
 - (o) Give reasons for your answer -
5. (a) Are you allowed by the employer or the government to belong to a trade union ? -
- (b) If so, which one(s) ? -
 - (c) Give reasons for belonging to a trade union ? -
 - (d) Are you allowed by the employer or government to participate in a strike ? -
 - (e) If so, have you participated in a strike ? -
 - (f) When ?
 - (g) Give reasons -
 - (h) What were the results ? -
6. (a) Have you obtained any benefit(s) from wage employment ? -
- (b) Give reasons for your answer -

(iii) QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE SUGAR PLANTATION/COMPANY OWNERS

1. (a) Name of respondent (Optional):-
 - (b) Name of Company/Plantation:-
 - (c) Official position:-
2. (a) When was your company/plantation established in Kisumu District ? -
 - (b) Who owned it ? -
 - (c) Where was it located ? -
 - (d) Give reasons for your answer -
3. (a) What kind of workers did the company employ ? -
 - (b) Give reasons for your answer -
 - (c) Did the company experience any shortage of workers before 1963 ? -
 - (d) Give reasons for your answer ? -
 - (e) Before 1963 what methods did the company use to attract and retain African workers ? -
 - (f) Give reasons for your answer ? -
4. (a) What was the wage scale for the workers ? -
 - (b) Give reasons ? -
 - (c) What was the daily work schedule of the workers? -
 - (d) Give reasons -
 - (e) What was the weekly work schedule of the workers?
 - (f) Give reasons -
 - (g) Did the company employ women workers by 1963 ? -

- (h) If so, what were their duties ? -
 - (i) Were they paid same wages as male workers ? -
 - (j) Give reason for your answer -
 - (k) Were there workers under 16 ? -
 - (l) If so, what were their duties ? -
 - (m) Did the company house the workers by 1963 ? -
 - (n) Give reasons for your answer -
 - (o) Did the company provide social or recreational amenities to the workers ? -
 - (p) If so, which ones?
 - (q) Give reasons for your answer -
 - (r) Which other benefits did the company provide ? -
 - (s) Give reasons -
 - (t) Did the company provide training opportunities for workers to improve their skills ? -
 - (u) Give reasons for your answer -
 - (v) Did the company make profits by 1963 ?
 - (w) Give reasons for your answer -
5. (a) Before 1963, was there a trade union for the sugar plantation workers ? -
- (b) If yes, did the company recognise it ? -
 - (c) Give reasons for your answer -
 - (d) Were there any strikes in your plantations before 1963 ? _
 - (e) Give reasons for your answer -
 - (f) Was your company affiliated to any Employers Association in Kenya ? -

(g) If so, which one(s) ? -

(h) Give reasons for your answer -

(i) What benefits did your company bring to Kisumu District by 1963 ? -

(iv) QUESTIONNAIRE FOR EX-OFFICIALS OF THE KENYA UNION OF SUGAR PLANTATION WORKERS (KUSPW) KISUMU BRANCH

1. (a) Name of respondent (Optional) -

(b) Age :-

(c) Position in the Union -

2. (a) When was the KUSPW formed ? -

(b) Give reasons for its formation -

(c) Before its formation was there any trade union for the sugar plantation workers ?

(d) If so, which one(s) ? -

(e) Give reasons -

(f) When did you join KUSPW ? -

(g) Give reasons for joining it -

(h) When were you chosen an official of the union ? -

(i) How were officials of the union chosen ? -

(j) Give reasons -

3. (a) Which categories of workers belonged to the union before 1963 ?

(b) Give reasons -

(b) If yes, which one(s) ?-

(c) Give reasons for your answer -

(d) Was the union affiliated to any political association or party in Kenya before
1963

(e) If so, which one(s) -

(f) Give reasons for your answer.

CODESRIA-LIBRARY

APPENDIX 2

**KENYA UNION OF SUGAR PLANTATION WORKERS
CONSTITUTION**

RULE NO. 1.

- (a) **Name:** The trade Union constituted by these rules shall be known as the Kenya Union of Sugar Plantation Workers hereinafter referred to as the Union.
- (b) **Office:** The Office of the Union shall be at Baby Shop factory Building, Ogada Street, P.O. Box 596, Kisumu which shall be the place of meeting for conducting the business of the Union.
- (c) Membership in the Union shall be open to all employees engaged in the sugar Industry irrespective of their trade and nature of employment.

RULE NO. 2 OBJECT: The objectives of the Union shall be:

- (a) To regulate and improve relation between the employees and employers and determine conditions of conduct of any trade or other business within the scope of the Union, and provision of benefits to members.
- (b) To organise all employees employed in the sugar industry to assist all its members through a collective bargaining system to obtain fair remuneration for their labour, to establish and maintain satisfactory conditions of employment of employees in sugar industry.

- (c) To negotiate and promote the settlement of dispute arising between employees and employers and between employees by conciliation or arbitration.
- (d) To establish and maintain funds by means of entrance fees, voluntary contribution, subscriptions, levies and by borrowing arranged by Central Council.
- (e) To provide facilities to members to obtain further training in their trades both theoretically and practically and to assist them in carrying out their duties efficiently.
- (f) To give legislative and other bodies facilities for conferring with and ascertaining the views of persons employed in the sugar industry as regards matters directly or indirectly, affecting the industry and employment.
- (g) To collect and circulate among its members statistical and other information on all matters affecting the industry in which they are employed, to print, publish, issue such papers, periodicals, books, circulars and other literacy undertakings as may seem conducive to any of these objects.

RULE No. 3: MEMBERSHIP FEES ETC

- (a) The Union shall be open to all workers in the sugar industry as provided in rule No.1 (c). Every eligible person shall be required to pay an entrance fee of 5 shillings on application for membership and thereafter being accepted, a monthly subscription of 1 shilling at the beginning of every month or in advance for a period of 12 months. Any applicant shall be named to have

been accepted into membership if this entrance fee is accepted by any collector authorised by the Union.

- (b) It shall be the duty of the General Council to plan a system of payment and collection of dues and to fix and regulate the date when all collection shall be handed over to the office of the Union for proper and safe keeping.
- (c) Any member who shall be two months or more in arrears with his monthly subscriptions and levies shall be notified of liability and warned that should the arrears accumulate to a total of four (4) months such member may be at the discretion of the branch Committee be excluded from membership of the Union. Notwithstanding the provision, no member shall be eligible for voting on any election of the Union if the arrears of his contribution to the Union exceeds three months. All members shall be equally entitled to benefits and services of the Union.
- (d) Honorary membership may be conferred on any person by the annual conference on the recommendation by branch of the union.
- (e) Honorary members shall not be entitled to vote on any matter neither shall they hold any office in the union nor be entitled to any benefits therefrom.
- (f) Under no circumstances shall entrance fees, monthly subscriptions, or any other contribution to the union refundable.

COMPONENT PARTS

1 THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The Annual Conference shall be held every year at a time and place determined by the General Council.

(i) Business of the Annual Conference:

To receive reports from its Central Committee, to receive the past work of the Union and planning future tasks, to consider all matters upon the conference agenda and to elect the officials and the Central Committee.

(ii) Nominations for the head Office officials, Central Council members and resolutions for discussions at the Annual Conference shall be sent to the General Secretary not later than four weeks prior to the date of the convening of the Annual Conference.

iii) The General Secretary shall compile the agenda for the Annual Conference and submit the same to all branches of the Union two weeks before the date of the Annual Conference.

2. CENTRAL COUNCIL:

(a) The general control of the union shall be vested on the central council in the period between each Annual Conference. It shall be responsible for the direction of the committee and officers to whom the daily management of the union shall be committed.

(b) The Central Council shall consist of all the officers of the Head Office and

representatives from each branch shall be determined by the Annual Conference, and shall vary according to the size of each branch but in any case the number of representatives from each branch shall not exceed three.

- (c) All nominees to membership of the Central Council shall be fully paid up members of the Union.

3 DUTIES OF THE CENTRAL COUNCIL

- (a) The Central Council shall carry out the duties appertaining to the execution of the objects listed in Rule No.2 of this constitution and for this purpose it shall/meet once every two months providing it can be summoned to a special meeting to discuss any urgent business within the periods between ordinary meetings.
- (b) It shall give instructions to the General Secretary and other officers for the conduct of the Union. It may suspend or dismiss any officer or members of staff for negligence of duty, dishonesty, incompetency, or failure to obey any of its decisions, or for any other cause of permanent absence of any officer, the Central Council shall elect a substitute to fill the vacancy.
- (c) It shall have power to elect a delegate or delegates from among its members to represent the interest of the Union upon the governing body of any society or federation or any other organization.
- (d) The decisions of the Central Council in all matters shall be binding, and shall be subject to review only by the Annual Conference. All such decisions shall

be recorded in writing when necessary.

- (e) For the purpose of carrying out its duties the Central Council with the authority from the trustees shall have power to utilize the funds and property of the Union, to enter into any transactions and to execute in the name of the Union deeds or documents necessary.
- (f) It shall have power and authority and may use any legal means whatsoever, to do or cause to be done, any of the things not specifically prohibited hereinafter or hereinbefore by these rules, to protect the interests of and defend the Union in all respects.

4 STANDING COMMITTEES

(a) Executive Committee

- (i) It shall be the Supreme Authority in the periods between the meetings of the Central Council.
- (ii) It shall be composed of all officers of the Head Office of the Union and six others elected from among members of the Central Council.
- iii) It shall meet once every month.

(b) Finance and General Purposes Committee

- (i) The treasurer of the Union shall be the Chairman, Assistant Secretary, the clerk to the committee and five others elected from among members of the Central Council.
- (ii) It shall meet at least once every month.

iii) It shall be responsible to the Executive Committee and the Central Council. It shall deal with the planning of methods of improving the Union's financial position and other social activities.

(c) **Education Committee**

(i) It shall be composed of the Vice Chairman as its chairman and Assistant Secretary as its clerk and six others elected from among members of the Central Council.

(ii) It shall meet at least once every month.

(iii) It shall deal with matters connected with education of workers in general, training, skills, trade union education, planning and shall advise the Central Council on such matters.

(d) **Disputes Committee**

(i) It shall be composed of the General Secretary and five members appointed from among members of the Central Council.

(ii) It shall deal with disputes between branches and between members or groups of members. It shall have power to do or cause to be done all that is necessary to bring about settlements and good understanding between parties in such a dispute.

5 **BRANCHES**

(a) The Union may establish branches throughout Kenya, where practicable, in those areas where sugar plantations exist and in those areas where there are sugar factories. Such branches shall recruit members amongst such persons as

are eligible for membership under rule (c).

- (b) Each branch shall consist of members from such section or sections of the industry as shall be determined by the Central Council. For the purposes of organization each branch shall be governed by a branch committee composed of as many members as shall be representative of all parts of the section of the industry for which each branch is constituted, provided that no such committee shall exceed.
- (c) Subject to the provisions of this rule, each branch shall make its own rules to provide for such matters as it deems fit, provided that such rules shall receive prior approval of the Central Council and shall not be effected and such branch shall not function without the prior permission in writing of the Registrar of Trade Unions.
- (d) **Branch Officers and Branch Committee**
Branch officers and branch members shall be elected at a branch annual general meeting of members. Notice of the branch annual general meeting shall be given to all branch members 21 days prior to the date of the meeting. Nominations for election of officers and committee members shall be carried out in the manner prescribed in the Branch Rules. Nominees must be paid up members of the branch.
- (e) The branch officers shall comprise Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer.

(f) Duties of the Branch Officers

The branch committee shall be responsible for conducting the business of its own particular branch and shall make provision for election or appointment of member to represent the branch.

RULE No. 5: OFFICE BEARERS

(a) Any paid up member of the union shall be eligible for election as an officer of the union. He shall remain in office for a period of one year, and shall be eligible for re-election at the end of this period, unless otherwise specified in these rules.

(b) Designation of Office Bearers

(i) Chairman:

He shall be under the control of and shall obey the orders of the Central Council and attend all meetings of the Central Council and preside over its deliberations and shall at all such meetings have free expression of opinion and vote. He shall carry out all other such duties as may be assigned to him from time to time by the Central Council. He shall preside over the annual conference and any other special conference.

(ii) Vice Chairman

He shall act for the chairman in the latter's absence and shall also carry out all

such other jobs as may be assigned to him by the Central Council.

iii) General Secretary

He shall remain in office for as long as his work and conduct are to the satisfaction of the Central Council and subject to confirmation by Annual Conference. He shall be responsible to the Central Council on the Progress of the Union and any other such report as shall require the attention of the Central Council. He shall prepare and present to the Annual Conference a written report on the activities of the Union. He shall prepare and send to all branches a periodical report containing items considered of National interest including copies of all agreements entered into on behalf of the members. He shall also prepare and submit the Annual Report to the Registrar.

(iv) Assistant General Secretary

He shall assist the General Secretary and shall carry out any other work as may be assigned to him by the Central Council and/or organization and social activities at the general direction of the General Secretary.

(v) Treasurer

He shall be responsible for accounting Union funds and shall keep and maintain account books and vouchers wherein all monies received or spent by the Union be recorded.

(vi) **Assistant Treasurer**

He shall assist the Treasurer and act for him in his absence.

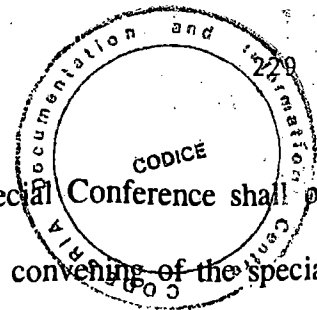
vii) **Trustees**

Three trustees shall be elected at the annual conference in whose names the properties of the Union shall be vested. A trustee may be removed from office by the Central Council if for any reason he is unable to fulfil the duties of his office. In the event of the removal of trustees from office the Central Council may, pending the election at the annual or Special Conference, fill the vacancy so created.

The General Secretary and Treasurer shall be persons sufficiently literate in English and/or Kiswahili.

(e) **Special Conference**

- (i) A special conference may be convened by the Central Council and shall be convened upon the request to the Central Council by any branch or upon a requisition to the Central Council signed by no less than 25 paid up members.
- (ii) The composition of a Special Conference shall be the same as that of an Annual Conference.
- iii) Notice of the convening of a Special Conference shall be forwarded by the General Secretary to all branches of the Union 21 days prior to the date of the Conference.



- (iv) The matter to be discussed and considered at the Special Conference shall be included in the notes forwarded to the branches of the convening of the special conference. Provided that notice of a matter to be placed in a Special Conference has been given in accordance with (iii) above a Special Conference shall have the same power in relation to that matter as an Annual conference would have.

RULE No.6: UNION FUNDS

- (a) The Annual Conference shall cause to be opened a bank account with a recognized bank in which all Union monies shall be kept.
- (b) Monies collected by the branches shall be the property of the Union and shall be banked with and withdrawn from such bank and spent at the direction of the Central Council with the approval of the trustee. The General Secretary, Treasurer, and one trustee shall be the signatories for this purpose.
- (c) **Using Union Funds**
- (i) The payment of salaries, allowance and expenses to officers of the trade union.
- (ii) The payment of expenses for the administration of the trade Union, including audit of the accounts of the funds of the Trade Union.
- (iii) The prosecution or defence of any legal proceeding to which the trade union or any member therefore is a party whom such prosecution or defence is undertaken for the purpose of securing or protecting any right of the trade union as such or any right arising out of the relations of any member with his employer or with a person whom the member employs.
- (iv) ~~The conduct of trade disputes on behalf of the trade union or any member thereof.~~
- (v) ~~The compensation of members for loss arising out of trade disputes.~~
- (vi) ~~Allowance to members or their dependants on account of death, old age, sickness, accidents or employment of such members.~~

RULE No.7:

- (a) The Central Council may, between each Annual or Special Conference, make any amendment or alteration to the rules or rescind any rule as it may deem necessary provided that such alteration, amendment or rescission of the rules has been authorised by a resolution passed at a general meeting of members and subject to such amendment, alteration or rescission being confined at an Annual or Special Conference.
- (b) All proposals for amendments shall be submitted to the General Secretary at least seven days before the date of the meeting of the central council in which the matter of such amendment or alteration is to be raised.
- (c) All amendments or alterations made to these rules or any rescission thereof shall be sent to the Registrar within seven days of the making or rescission thereof.

RULE No.8 QUORUM:

The quorum for all meetings of committee, Central Council, Branch Committee meeting, annual or special conferences and general meetings shall be one third of the required number of members.

RULE No.9 VOTING:

Voting at Annual or special conference, central council, Branch Committee meeting or any other meetings, whether or whole or section of the Union shall be
by secret ballot.

RULE No. 10:

- (a) The Central Council or any Branch Committee shall have power to authorise any member or members within its jurisdiction to cease work provided that the opinions of the workers concerned have been duly obtained at a meeting called for such purpose. Provided that the branch committee has advised the Central Council of its proposed intention to take strike action and the Central Council approves such action, the Central Council shall serve the employer or employers notice to that effect.
- (b) If the employer or employers shall accede to the workers' claim and an agreement reached to resume work, the workers shall be called upon to end the strike and resume work accordingly.
- (c) Any branch authorizing such strike, after its committee's special meeting deciding to do so, shall in all cases of application for increase in wage or improvement in their social and other working conditions, apply to the Central Council not later than 21 days before the date of giving notice to their employers. The Central Council shall have the right of deciding as to the making of the application or otherwise.

RULE No.11 DISSOLUTION OF THE UNION

The Union may be dissolved with the consent of five sixth of members in a General Meeting called for this purpose. Such meeting would also decide on how to dispose of the funds then available in the Union's treasury. The decisions in respect of dissolution of the Union and disposal of funds thereof be carried out by voting.
