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Juhani Koponen

From dead end to new lease of life for development in South-Eastern Tanganyika

In this chapter I examine the changing ideas and practices of development in Tanganyika, especially its remote South-Eastern corners, from the late 1930s to the 1950s.¹ The chapter shows the variety of meanings of development in colonial discourse and practice and spells out their implications for the history of the idea of development more broadly. The focus is on three development endeavours, very different in themselves : (1) the Groundnut Scheme, (2) the promotion and expansion of cashew nut as a cash crop, and (3) the post-war colonial development plans, across the country and in the South-East . . .By exploring and comparing these three different approaches to development under colonialism,I argue that colonial development reached its limits and met a dead end in the hands of rising African nationalism, although the very same nationalism subsequently gave a new lease of life to development more generally. .

Meanings of development and their colonial history

To set the scene for the discussion, two points must be made at the outset. The first concerns the meaning of development. A notion notorious for the multiplicity of its meanings, ‘development’ is used differently in differing languages and in the same languages in different periods. In our case in particular, the etymology and connotations of Swahili *maendeleo* and English ‘development’, and the latter’s European equivalents such as *Entwicklung* and *développement*, are rather different. *Maendeleo* means basically progress while ‘development’ has a much more activist ring: it also means *doing* things for something, often for progress but sometimes against it.² Similarly there are important differences in the way ‘development’ was perceived and how it actually worked in the colonial period compared to that in our postcolonial time.

¹I wish to thank the editors of this book for their constructive comments for revising the chapter for publication.

² Or rather against the consequences of ‘progress’. This important point is made, with considerable overgeneralization, by Michael Cowen and Robert Shenton, *Doctrines of Development*, Routledge, London, 1996, pp. 6 ff., 12 ff.

This argument eschews the quest for a ‘correct’ meaning of development in terms of its contents, something that I think is a chimera anyway. Instead, it takes its cue from Wittgenstein and traces the multifarious ways in which the word development is actually used in practice.³ By doing so, a benchmark can be established: in the combination of its different uses, development can be seen to have a core meaning, which turns out to have remained remarkably stable from the early colonial times till today. What can be called the modern notion of development has both empirical and normative reference points. It is used in three basic senses, referring to (1) normative goals, (2) an actual social process, and (3) intentional activity. That is, development denotes an intentional intervention, the process (or processes) triggered or affected by that intervention, and the goal of the intervention which also serves as its ideological justification. As I see it, the power of the notion of development derives from the fact that it embraces these very different uses under the same term and binds them together: it promises that the intentional development intervention will lead to a process which can be taken as development in the normative sense. It is the same notion of development which is now guiding our development efforts that laid the basis for colonial exploitation. As such exploitation obviously also could produce development in the normative sense, it was soon elevated to the goal of the very exploitation and brought in to justify it. Yet in spite of these crucial functions, under colonialism development remained one notion among many: only after independence it acquired its present status of a foundational concept, shaping an entire discourse and the practices drawing on it.

The second point, following from the first, is that at the start of our inspection, the 1930s, development, understood in the sense sketched above, was by no means a new feature in British colonial ideology and practice. The claims that development entered colonialism only in its late stage notwithstanding,⁴ it is obvious that it had been around much longer, basically from the onset of colonialism.⁵ In Africa at least, development must be regarded as an unacknowledged condition of colonialism. In retrospect, colonialism has been judged as a system of exploitation, geared primarily to benefit the colonizers, and to me rightly so. But

³ Cf. Ludwig Wittgenstein *Philosophical Investigations*. Blackwell, Oxford 1953/1995, p. 43: “The meaning of a word is its use in the language.”

⁴ Recently notably Frederick Cooper, who takes development as a product of the need to counteract the contraction of economy during the Great Depression. Frederick Cooper, *Africa Since 1940*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2002, esp. ch. 5

⁵ This has been my argument for quite a time and the rest of this paragraph is based on my previous work. For the Tanganyika case, see *Development for Exploitation. German Colonial policies in Mainland Tanzania, 1884-1914*. Helsinki/Hamburg, LIT Verlag, 1994.

the point is that only development made colonial exploitation possible: rather than opposites they form a dialectical unity. In places like Tanganyika there was not much to be exploited before the exploitable resources were developed. European colonialism saw it as its mission to make the whole world exploitable, and development provided it both with the means and the justification to do so. This was perfectly clear to the historical agents concerned, but has been obscured in our post-war development discourse with its conflation of development with welfare and all other good things. As long as colonialism continued, there was no way to give up ‘development for exploitation’, but it alone was not enough to tackle the political challenges it faced when it matured.

In the British colonial ideology, an ingenious attempt to make sense of and accommodate the competing policy demands to which development was offered as an answer was made in the guise of the idea of dual mandate. Colonies could be seen as “undeveloped estates” as Joseph Chamberlain did in his famous speech back in 1895. But the London Treasury was always afraid that starting to develop the faraway possessions would require expenditure which would doom the colonies to become a drain on the imperial finances. There also was always an influential bunch of colonial officials on the ground who were afraid that development would upset the forces which kept the African societies stable and wanted to preserve and consolidate rather than undermine them. Under the conflicting pressures, dual mandate provided what came nearest to an official doctrine. As articulated by Lord Lugard in 1922, the colonial power was seen as put in a trusteeship position into two directions: towards the Africans and towards the “rest of mankind”, i.e. Europeans. It said that colonialism had to work for the African advancement while at the same time developing the material resources of Africa so that everyone could enjoy them.⁶ This idea, expressed in slightly different formulations, also guided British colonialism in Tanganyika from the start to the end.

The shift in the meanings of development took place within the dual mandate. In earlier colonialism, it was the development of resources part that dominated policy. The basic claim underlying this, originating from the time of colonization, was that the local people had been incapable of developing the resources of their countries. Thus the colonialists took, on behalf of mankind, not only the right but the duty to take over and start ‘development’. This was a

⁶ Lord Lugard, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa*. Frank Cass, London, 1955 (1922), pp. 619, 606. In the original formulation, it said that the task of the colonial power was to act as “a trustee, on the one hand, for the advancement for subject races, and on the other, for the development of its material resources for the benefit of mankind.”

pervasive lamentation in late precolonial and early colonial literature, not only in Britain but elsewhere, and provided a major pillar for the justification of the colonial conquest.⁷ The other half of dual mandate, the idea of colonialism working for the advancement of the African was gaining strength as colonialism progressed, but it too had also been there right from the beginning. First it was a demand of humanitarians but soon taken over by more far-sighted colonialists. As shown above, it became an increasingly political demand – first from outside and then from inside the colony. ‘The advancement of the African’ became a major prop in legitimising colonialism. The British made the point by adding the term ‘welfare’ to development in the Colonial Development and Welfare Acts of 1940 and 1945.

In these acts, His Majesty’s Government gave up what was then called ‘good government’ according to which the colonies had to aim at balanced budgets to be financially self-sufficient and endorsed the necessity to transfer resources on a grant basis to the colonies. Again, the recognition of the need for imperial assistance was not new. The early colonial railways had mostly been built by loans guaranteed by the imperial government. Even some grant assistance had been given under the first Colonial Development Act of 1929, although in trifling sums and with the view of getting orders from the colonies to stimulate the flagging British economy and relieve the rising unemployment back home.⁸ What was new was that development was now elevated to official policy by attempting to systematize the scattered efforts and backing them up by more substantial resources. Although funding in practice was considered and granted on a project basis, the projects had to be collated into more comprehensive plans before they could be applied for. The first Colonial Development and Welfare Act promised five million pounds annually for such plans. In the next Act in 1945, the sum was raised to 12 million. Although it never totally materialised, the latter sum seemed to come very close to the modern international aid target, 0.7 per cent of the donor GDP.⁹

‘Welfare’ was added to development in the title of the Acts to make development politically more attractive and get rid of the view that it was about exploitation of resources only. As put by Sir Henry Moore, assistant colonial secretary, “if it is just going to be mainly ‘development’ on the old lines, it will look merely as if we are going to exploit the Colonies

⁷ For British attitudes, see H. Alan C. Cairns, *Prelude to Imperialism: British Reactions to Central African Society, 1840-1890*. Routledge and Kegan Paul, London 1965, 78, 234-235; and for German arguments, cf. Koponen, *Development for Exploitation*, pp. 176-177.

⁸ George C. Abbott, ‘Re-examination of the 1929 Colonial Development Act’, *The Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., 24 (1971), pp. 68-81

⁹ See Morgan, *Official History*, I, pp, 199-200.

in order to get money to pay for the war!” Including welfare, another official remarked, was” to add to [Britain’s] moral prestige” and “make a big thing out of it” politically.¹⁰

Looking now our three cases within this framework I try to provide more detailed empirical knowledge and a fuller understanding of the historical processes involved although here I only can sketch the broad outlines. These endeavours not only were different but they also are unevenly known in the historical literature. The Groundnut Scheme, of course, is popularly presented as a paradigm case of an uninformed and short-sighted colonial productive push but its place in the colonial development framework has been frequently misunderstood and its broader ramifications to the actual development of the area have not received much attention. The spread and promotion of cashew is virtually a virgin topic in Tanzanian historiography and has to be constructed from archival and other primary source materials. The existence of the post-war colonial development plans has been known in historical literature and some local plans have been discussed in more detail in specific works.¹¹ It is barely known that such a plan was attempted in the South as well, and how it was related to the planning exercise more generally and to some of the better-known local plans. In particular, I try to trace to what extent these interventions were conceptualised in terms of development, and what other notions, such as advancement or improvement, were used by the colonialists and what we know about the conceptualisations among the local people (which is not much).

The Groundnut Scheme: development operation located in a colony

The Groundnut Scheme must be a leading candidate for the prize of the best publicized development failure in Africa. As ‘everybody’ knows, it was a gigantic effort to launch mechanized cultivation of groundnuts in three widely separated areas in Tanganyika, one of them Nachingwea in the South. The eponymous township grew up from a few scattered huts to a settlement of 600 European inhabitants in 1951 to cater for it. A railway was built from there to Mtwara at the coast where a new deepwater port was established for the expected massive outflow of groundnuts. The modern town was carved out of the bush and a sisal

¹⁰ Correspondence between the Colonial Office and Treasury in November 1939 to February 1940, NA, CO 859/19/7475, as quoted in Havinden and Meredith, *Colonial Development*, p. 203.

¹¹The most successful of the schemes was probably that of Sukumaland. It was discussed e.g. by D.W. Malcom, *Sukumaland*, London, 1953, G.A: Maguire, *Towards ‘Uhuru’ in Tanzania*, Cambridge, 1969 and John C. de Wilde et al, *Experiences with Agricultural Development in Tropical Africa*, vol. II, pp. 415-450. Contemporary information on The Uluguru Scheme can be found in Roland Young and Henry Fosbrooke, *Land and Politics among the Luguru of Tanganyika*. London, 1960, while the Usambara scheme is discussed with more historical distance by Steven Feierman, *Peasant intellectuals*. Wisconsin, 1990, chs 6 and 7 .

plantation— “one of the few towns in Africa planned before any building was commenced.”¹². Within a few years, the expectations of mass production of groundnuts proved entirely unrealistic. The project was scrapped up and the colonial government was left to wonder what to do with the underutilized infrastructure. Everybody agreed and continues to agree that the scheme was an utter failure – but a failure of what? Of ‘socialism’, as claimed by the British conservatives in the subsequent election campaign? Or that of large-scale agriculture in Africa, or even of a more general “capitalist high modernism of the utopian kind” as suggested by later researchers?¹³ Or perhaps simply that of planned development?

The Groundnut Scheme has a pride of place in any account of British post-war colonial development and is often taken emblematic of its fallacies and fantasies.¹⁴ It plainly was a development scheme, and understood and habitually referred to as such, but its colonial credentials are feeble. It did not grow up from any inherent needs and interests of the colonial state and administration let alone those of local people and societies but it was conceived and planted from outside and always remained an outgrowth foisted on the colonial body. It was not even run by the Colonial Office and the Government of Tanganyika but by the Ministry of Food and the Overseas Food Corporation (OFC), a public entity established for this purpose. I would suggest that rather than being a part of generic ‘colonial development’ the Groundnut Scheme should be considered a single and very exceptional development operation physically located in a colony (which, legally speaking, was not even a colony but a United Nations Trust Territory).

A mixture of business planning, Labour development thinking and political expediency, the Scheme was undertaken in the atmosphere of general post-war euphoria. Initiated by Frank Samuel, the head of the United Africa Company, a subsidiary of Unilever, it was sold to the Labour administration in London and the lukewarm colonial administration in Dar es Salaam and Lindi. The company aimed at opening up fresh sources of raw materials for its vegetable oils and fats the demand of which seemed limitless in the post-war global shortage. The

¹² Ralph Jätzold, ‘Die Nachwirkungen des fehlgeschlagenen Erdnuss-Projekts in Ostafrika’, *Erdkunde*, 19 (1965), pp. 229-230; J.F.R. Hill and J.P. Moffett (eds), *Tanganyika. A Review of Its Resources and Their Development*, Government of Tanganyika, 1955, p. 820

¹³ The first suggestion is by Jan Hogendorn and K.M. Scott, ‘Very Large-Scale Agricultural Projects: the Lessons of the East African Groundnut Scheme’, R.I. Rotberg (ed.), *Imperialism, Colonialism and Hunger: East and Central Africa*. Lexington Books, Lexington, 167-198. The latter is by James Scott, *Seeing Like a State*. Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1998, p. 229

¹⁴ E.g. Matteo Rizzo, ‘What Was Left of the Groundnut Scheme? Development Disaster and Labour Market in Southern Tanganyika 1946-1952’, *Journal of Agrarian Change*, 6 (2006), p. 207

imperial Government wanted to do away with rationing of food at home and gain dollar revenues in order to ease its balance of payments predicament¹⁵ After the victories on the battlefield, it did not seem much of a task to clear a few hundred thousands hectares of bush in remote Tanganyika and grow groundnuts there. Britain had capital, Tanganyika had land, and machines would do the work. ‘The African interest’ was definitely subdued but the project was at pains to point out of not having forgotten it. It was meant to give the Africans an “ocular demonstration” of the superiority of mechanised agriculture. In the words of John Wakefield, the former Director of Agriculture of Tanganyika and the key planner of the scheme, it would contribute to the “provision of an economic foundation for social advance” by clearing tsetse bush and controlling sleeping sickness, establishing water sources and improving communications. Later, after an undefined but obviously very long period, the project could be handed over to the local, i.e. colonial, government, and, ultimately, to the African communities themselves.¹⁶

It was a magnificent scheme indeed. The plan was to clear for groundnut cultivation 107 units of 12,000 hectares each, i.e. some 1,300,000 hectares, two thirds of which in Tanganyika in three different places (to avert the possibility of simultaneous drought): in Kongwa and Urambo along the central railway, and in Nachingwea. Each of the units was meant to be an independent community of its own with modern houses, welfare centres, schools and hospitals. The cultivation areas would be self-contained with roads, ditching systems, and anti-erosion earthworks. Work was to be undertaken by machines, especially by bulldozers whose war-time exploits were fresh in mind. But thousands of labourers were still needed, first for clearing and construction, and later for cultivation itself.

There was no lack of innovative ideas. When the old second-hand tractors that had been ordered first proved to be scrap, it was decided to beat the swords into ploughshares. 580 Sherman surplus tanks were ordered from the British Army and the Vickers Armstrong company turned them into *Shervick* tractors. The areas to be cleared were nearly uninhabited

¹⁵ The best contemporary witness account of the early phases of the scheme is that of Alan Wood, who was the head of information of the scheme in its early phases, *The Groundnut Affair*. The Bodley Head, London, 1950. Other useful overviews, based on archival sources, include D.J. Morgan, *The Official History of Colonial Development*, II, Macmillan, London, 1980, pp. 285-319 and Michael Havinden and David Meredith, *Colonial Development*, Routledge, London 1993, pp. 276-283. Where not otherwise indicated, much of the subsequent discussion draws on these.

¹⁶ The first quotation is from ‘A Plan for Mechanised Production of Groundnuts in East and Central Africa (Cmd 7030 of 1947), as quoted in Havinden and Meredith, *Colonial Development*, p. 277; and the latter is from ‘The Summary of the Wakefield Report’, reprinted in Wood, *Groundnut Affair*, p. 255

but his was only considered an advantage . Relatively few people needed to be chased from their land – 400 households was the estimate for Lindi -, local food production would not be interfered, and the scheme could have a flying start. It was widely seen as a brave but not unrealistic endeavour, especially if it was undertaken with “the same determination ... as was needed, and found, for the major operations of war.”¹⁷ For *The Economist*, not exactly a fan of planned development, the scheme represented “the sort of economic planning that is needed to change the face of the colonial empire.” The magazine lauded not only its wide vision but its “hard-headed practical thinking and costing”.¹⁸

The rise and fall of the scheme took barely four years. Implementation started in early 1947. Problems started at the same time. While the ‘Groundnutters’ came and filled the few existing hotels, trains and planes, machines were delayed and soon turned out to be unusable. Many of the original tractors, gathered from surplus dumps all over the world, broke down before they reached the fields. At the end of the year, three quarters were out of order. Work had to be undertaken manually and only a fraction of the designed area was actually cleared. Workers were hard to obtain. The second year of the scheme was a repetition of the first, the story of a crisis succeeding another. The ‘Shervicks’ did not do any better than the original tractors; rather the contrary: the Sherman had been designed for fast breakthroughs on European roads, not for the dust and mud of Africa. Another supposedly epoch-making mechanical device, the Blaw Knox root cutter turned out as inefficient: a prototype that had not been properly tested. Groundnut yields remained low. In 1949, it was clear that the scheme was foundering. It cost one million pound per month, the Treasury declined to put more funds in and elections approached at home. The *coup de grâce* came in 1949 which was a drought year both in Kongwa and Urambo and the yields were largely destroyed. In Nachingwea, weather was not a problem but only a small area had been planted. In the next year, it was decided to wind up the scheme. It was abandoned as hastily as it was stitched together.

In terms of what is nowadays called development effectiveness – the attainment of the expected results - the scheme was nothing short of a disaster. It spent almost £36 million of the British taxpayers’ money instead of the budgeted 24 million - roughly equivalent to all

¹⁷ In addition to Wood, see correspondence in TNA, 16/15/104. The quotation is from ‘A Plan for Mechanised Production’, in John Iliffe, *A Modern History of Tanganyika*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1979, pp. 440-441

¹⁸ *The Economist*, 5. March 1947, as quoted in Cyril Ehrlich, ‘The Poor Country: the Tanganyika Economy from 1945 to Independence,’ D.A. Low and Alison Smith (eds), *History of East Africa*, III. Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1976, p. 310

expenditure of the Tanganyika government from 1946 to 1950. Some 20,000 ha were cleared instead of 1,300,000. It produced much less groundnuts for export than the African peasants had produced before the war – indeed, less than had been imported to Tanganyika as seed.¹⁹ In addition to the cleared land, it left behind heaps of rusting machines, an underused railway – to be later demolished –, an idle harbour, and a deep suspicion towards grand plans. Most ironically, even if it had been a success it may have been futile. At the time when land clearing was starting in Tanganyika, one hundred tons of groundnuts were found rotting in Northern Nigeria waiting in vain to be transported out.²⁰

This is not to say that the Groundnut Scheme had no wider, largely unintended impacts or nobody benefited from it. Wherever ample amounts of extra money are pumped in, somebody is bound to benefit. Many British contractors obviously made good business but also a number of local people got their share. This happened mainly through labour market participation. At its height, the scheme employed more than 23,000 African labourers in 1949 in the Southern Province only. Because the colonial administration was reluctant to use extra-economic measures of compulsion in the recruitment of local labour for the scheme, and a considerable amount of labourers migrated out from the South anyway, the Groundnut Scheme had to attract labourers by paying better than its competitors. The great majority of the workers must have been unskilled but scattered evidence suggests that the numbers of skilled, and better remunerated, employees was also significant. Although it is not clear how the workers used their incomes, the influx of money obviously stimulated the local economy at least for a while. This can be seen in the rising trend not only of wages but of prices as well. Some more influential and better positioned men even could accumulate some starting capital and diversify into trade, transport and farming. To the most enthusiastic African employees these appeared “days of great prosperity.”²¹

In retrospect it is not difficult to locate the faults of the Groundnut Scheme. Haste, poor planning and overreliance on the power of agricultural mechanisation have been commonly singled out. Rather than planned development it resembled a military operation. But it has been less appreciated how the modernist development philosophy behind the scheme dovetailed with the persistence of some major colonial myths on the means of and obstacles to

¹⁹ For statistics, see Hill and Moffett, *Tanganyika*, p. 389

²⁰ S. Anwarul Haque Haqqi, *The Colonial Policy of the Labour Government (1945-51)*. Muslim University, Aligarh, 1960, p. 187

²¹ Quoted in Rizzo, *What was left*, p. 212

development. The drive towards a mechanisation of production as the new element was accompanied by two deep-seated beliefs: that the railway is the key to opening up virgin lands and that the presence of tsetse fly keeps the people away from fertile land in Africa. The production areas were explicitly chosen along or nearby the existing railways (Urambo and Kongwa) or where it was feasible to build a new one (Nachingwea), not only to get the expected products out but to get the needed machines in. And what was deliberately sought after were uninhabited land which would be turned cultivable by clearing the bush and chasing tsetse away. Lonely dissenting voices arguing that where large tracts had remained uninhabited and uncultivated the root cause was rather a lack of surface water than the presence of tsetse went unheeded.²²

Many development lessons have been drawn from the fate of the scheme. Perhaps the safest is that it is not only the shortage of capital and the lack of human will which prevent human societies from turning the deserts into agricultural paradises.²³ Technology works in a physical and social environment and an endeavour like the Groundnut Scheme would have required an entirely different, more controllable environment. Even the small-scale experimental farms, into which after the closing down of the scheme the cleared areas were divided to explore the conditions for mechanised agriculture failed to produce noteworthy results.²⁴ An obvious conclusion was that the sun and the soil and the mud of Africa forced the harassed Europeans with their technologies to follow the same rhythm that the local people had been forced to follow and by demanding so chased them away. The most poetic commentators thought that at the demise of the scheme they almost heard a voice in the background, a “low mocking voice as old as the centuries, the voice of Africa.”²⁵

The cashew expansion: market-led development?

An intriguing contrast to the capital-intensive development drive of the Groundnut Scheme is provided by the spread of cashew nuts and their emergence as a major cash crop in the Tanzanian South. Cashew, a tree indigenous to northern Brazil, had been present in northern

²² For one such warning, see the letter from an unidentifiable provincial official to the Chief Secretary, 15 February 1947, TNA, Acc 16/15/104/252

²³ As Herbert S. Frankel put it ‘The Kongwa Experiment: Lessons of the East African Groundnut Scheme’, in *ibid* (ed.), *The Economic Impact of Underdeveloped Societies*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 1953, 141-153

²⁴ For these, see e.g. Jätzold, *Nachwirkungen*, and Morgan, *Official History*, IV, pp. 54-91

²⁵ Wood, *Groundnut Affair*, p. 182

Mozambique and along the Tanganyika and Kenyan coast probably for centuries but its commercial expansion for the production and export of its nuts²⁶ in southern Tanzania started in a small way only in the 1930s and boomed in the 1950s and 1960s. The bulk of the production came from African peasants, and eventually cashew came to be by far the most important source of cash for the majority of the people. The causes and mechanisms of this spectacular expansion still call for further research and I can present only a first overview compiled from scattered archival and secondary sources.²⁷ For our analysis of development discourse, the respective roles of the market forces on one hand and the extra-economic measures of ‘encouragement’ and ‘push’ by the colonial state on the other merit attention. Although the officials were ready to intervene in African cashew cultivation since the 1930s and did so, the intervention was rather unsystematic and always overshadowed by the fear that the production might surpass the demand. It never did: the basic momentum for the cashew expansion was generated by the play of the market forces, fuelled by the demand of raw nuts from India. Cashew expansion in East Africa provides an early example of South-South trade.

Cashew is a tree crop the cultivation of which is easy to enter into as it demands few, if any, specialized production inputs. When, where and how the first cashew tree appeared on Tanganyikan soil will never be known but it must have been centuries ago. It is usually assumed that it had been brought to Mozambique by the Portuguese seafarers and colonialists, became naturalized there and spread to Tanganyika. In Northern Mozambique, some responsibility for its introduction is credited to Arab slavers.²⁸ At first the trees appear to have been used to keep the soil erosion in check along the coast and perhaps also as a food reserve. Local people gradually found other uses. In addition to processing and eating the ‘nut’ kernels they also made more or less potent alcoholic drinks from the apples by fermentation (*ulaka*) or distillation (*zarambo*). When the cashew first appears in our colonial sources in the 1930s one of the concerns of the officials was that its possible encouragement among the African cultivators might lead to an increase of drunkenness. In Mozambique the colonial government was reported to have for this reason once tried to ban cashew cultivation, an attempt which

²⁶ Botanically, in fact, the kernel inside the shell of the nut, attached to a fleshy stalk called cashew apple.

²⁷ The most important archival sources are from the Tanzania National Archives (TNA), Cashew Nut Industry, complemented with the National Archives at Kew (referred to below as NA, formerly known as the Public Record Office).

²⁸ Information on the history of cashew in Northern Mozambique below is taken from the report of the British official who was sent from Tanganyika to study it, District Agricultural Officer, Lindi (Allnut), Report of the Cashew Nut Industry in Portuguese East Africa, 8 January 1935, TNA, Cashew Nut Industry

naturally was unenforceable. Such concerns faded soon when cashew gained increasing commercial value because of the growing demand from India.²⁹

India was and has since been the pivot of international cashew trade. It was the first country to build up a processing industry for export.³⁰ The introduction of simple technologies raised the productivity in the 1920s and 1930s. When the Indian domestic production of raw nuts fell short of meeting the requirements of the country's cashew industry, East Africa was an obvious place to turn for imports. Not only was it conveniently located along the old maritime routes across the Arabian Sea but the harvest times there were complementary to India's own. Although the East African nuts were considered of lower quality, the processors were often willing to bid a decent price to keep their factories going. In the early 1930s, some 9,000-10,000 tons of raw cashew were annually imported to India from East Africa, the bulk of this coming from the Portuguese colony where the first recorded exports are from 1921.

The interest of the Tanganyika administration in the potentialities of cashew was first raised in the early 1930s in the wake of the nationwide grow-more-crops campaign. In 1934, it was estimated that there were some 30,000 cashew trees in the country with an annual production of some 600 tons. These trees grew predominantly on the coast: some 20,000 on the island of Mafia, 8,000 in the Southern Province and 1,000 in Dar es Salaam. The harvest was consumed on the domestic market; nothing was known to go abroad. For officials in the Southern Province it appeared a good idea "to develop the production of this commodity both as a cash crop and as a potential auxillary [sic] food reserve."³¹ They had in mind the coastal people, who were dependent for their cash income on copra from coconut the price of which was steadily declining. Cashew's prospects were much brighter. Taking his data from Mozambique, an official estimated that to earn the cash needed to pay his tax, a man had to work 100 days on a sisal estate while it was possible to get the same amount of money with two to three weeks work of a man and his wife in cashew cultivation. However, he was hesitant to rely entirely on market forces. It was "necessary to upset the present static production by definite Government intervention and stimulus before normal trade demand can

²⁹ Most of this and what follows is taken from discussions between the Provincial Commissioners in Lindi (Williams and Kitching) and the Senior Agricultural Officer in Lindi (Latham) between November 1933 and October 1934, TNA, Cashew Nut Industry

³⁰ The sketch of the history of cashew in India is collated from bits and pieces in R.C. Mandal, *Cashew*, Agrobios, Jodhpur, 2007, and documentation in TNA, Cashew Nut Industry, and NA, CO 852/1176/2

³¹ Acting Provincial Commissioner, Lindi (Williams) to Chief Secretary, 23 November 1933, TNA, Cashew Nut Industry

be relied upon to further stimulate production.” In practice, what could be done was to issue seedlings to cultivators free of charge; to plan a moderate number of trees at all Court Houses and other centres, and, to conduct “direct propaganda.”³² Force was not specifically mentioned but everybody knew that in different guises it belonged to the policy arsenal of the colonial state.

What actually happened is patchily known but definitely the production of cashew nuts started to grow and soon led to exports. The first exports were recorded in 1939 when 928 tons of raw nuts were shipped to India. The war years brought a backlash but planting was intensified because of high prices, and when the new trees started to bear fruit after the war the growth of production accelerated during the 1950s. In 1950 the Provincial Commissioner rejoiced that in cashew the Southern Province had its first perennial crop of any value and told his District Commissioners to “press forward” with its planting “as vigorously as possible”³³ The exports reached 11,700 tons in 1952 and 40,700 tons in 1961. By then cashew had risen to the fourth important export crop of Tanganyika and the country was producing one-fourth of the world’s raw cashew nuts. The bulk of it came from the South-East.³⁴

The detailed mechanisms of this spectacular expansion remain speculative. Government intervention did play a part but the role of the state hardly was as decisive as most officials wanted to believe. The intensity and nature of ‘encouragement’ varied from district to district and slackened in the early 1950s. The main growth did not take place on the coast as originally envisaged by the colonial administration but inland. It appears to have started on the Western Makonde plateau and then spread northwards into present Lindi and Coast regions and westwards into Masasi and Tunduru. In 1961, roughly half of the Southern production came from the Makonde plateau and a quarter from Masasi.³⁵ To this day, the highest concentration of cashew trees remains on the Makonde plateau. Elders interviewed by researchers commonly maintain that the first trees were grown from seed materials brought from Mozambique, either by migrants from there or by Tanzanian villagers themselves.³⁶

³² The latter proposals were made by Latham and endorsed by Kitching, from February to October, 1934, see note 20 above

³³ Provincial Commissioner, Lindi, to all District Commissioners, 29 November 1950, TNA, Acc 16/44/3

³⁴ Statistics in Herbert C. Kriesel et al., *Agricultural Marketing in Tanzania*, n.a., p. 133

³⁵ Production figures in *Regional Commissioner’s Annual Report, Southern Region*, n.a. but probably 1961, TNA

³⁶ Clive P. Topper et al., ‘The Historical and Institutional Background of the Tanzanian Cashew Industry’, *Proceedings of the International Cashew and Coconut Conference*, Dar es Salaam 17-21 February 1997, BioHybrids International, Reading, p. 79; E.S.S. Adamu, ‘Small-holder cashew Farmers in Mtwara Region’, *The Journal of the Geographical Association of Tanzania*, No. 5, 1969, p. 76

Most had a few dozen trees and managed their fields with their own household labour. Yet there also emerged some large-scale cultivators with several hundred trees who regularly used hired labour. As with so many other early large-scale cash crop growers in Tanzania, these were men who had accumulated some starting capital in the colonial service or elsewhere – perhaps in the Groundnut Scheme - and disproportionately many were Christians, a small minority among the Makonde. They used to hire labourers not only among the local population but also migrants from Mozambique.³⁷

Although India belonged to the same colonial empire as Tanganyika, the colonial officials of Tanganyika were unhappy that ‘their’ cashew nuts were taken raw to India and that the trade was dominated by Indian companies. That the nuts should have been processed domestically was a common concern already at that time. The issue, however, was not the price paid to the producer but the prospect that if the processed kernels could have been exported directly to the United States it would have diverted eagerly sought dollars from India to Tanganyika. Here, again, Portuguese East Africa showed the way: in small quantities manually processed kernels were exported to the U.S. in the early 1930s. At the same time, a small plant was established near Mombasa by a British-Indian company, although it exported to the U.K. The owners of that plant approached the Tanganyika government to establish a factory in the Southern Province but the attempt was foiled by the refusal of the government to grant it a ‘preferential licence’, meaning virtually a monopoly to buy nuts. After the war, Governor Twining attempted to induce the Colonial Development Corporation, the newly created public company which was to promote the supply of colonial foodstuffs, raw materials and other commodities, to establish a processing facility in Mtwara. The representatives of the company politely listened to the proposal but no action followed. Instead, a small processing plant was established in Dar es Salaam in 1948 by a British citizen without any governmental support. It processed some 200 to 300 tons of raw nuts per year. Later, another small private plant was set up in Mtwara. As far as can be seen from the scattered references in documents, the plants worked erratically, the main problems being the very small profit margins by which they were forced to operate as the Indian buyers set the general price level, and the low skill levels of the labour force made it difficult to compete with the well-established Indian processors.³⁸

³⁷ Gus Liebenow, *Colonial Rule and Political Development in Tanzania, The Case of Makonde*. The East African Publishing House, Nairobi, 1971, p, 329, n. 15

³⁸ See discussions in TNA, Cashew Nut Industry, and NA, CO 852/1176/2

The Africans clearly appreciated the spread of cashew and the cash income it brought and in the politically charged atmosphere of rising nationalism in the 1950s cashew became politicized. It was always a crop dominated by African peasants and the colonial administration wanted to keep it as such. But there were half a dozen large-scale European and Asian farmers in Lindi and Mikindani, and cashew was also an important crop in the 'production farms' left over by the Groundnut Scheme in Nachingwea. When the non-African cultivators started to organize themselves in the early 1950s and set out to form an association, the Africans grew concerned about the fate of their land. A rare glimpse of African understanding can be gained from a letter that an articulate African OFC welfare officer in Nachingwea sent to his colonial superiors. Southern people had long been poor, he wrote. They had no cattle, no coffee trees, no wheat - things that other Provinces had. Finally, God has given them cashew, "this sprout for uplifting ourselves (*kujiinuka*)". The coming generations would have a better life on the strength of it. Now the planned Association threatened to overtake their land and reduce them back to boys and servants of the Asians and Europeans. The writer invoked the civilizing mission of the colonial power. English rule had the reputation "to uplift people, to civilize them, to liberate them, but if this Association will be allowed we cannot stand up (*inuka*)."

Noteworthy was that the discourse employed was more that of civilization and modernity than of development: *maendeleo* was not yet part of the local vocabulary. Still the writer advocated a forceful intervention. Instead of allowing the association, he said, the colonial administration should promote the cashew cultivation by Africans even by force: by adding cashew to cassava among those crops the cultivation of which was made obligatory by local regulations. – "this is the way to elevate us to become people of the world," i.e. modern people. But force was now regarded as futile by the colonial government which again had grown more concerned with the possible overproduction of cashew and concluded that nobody – neither Africans nor Europeans - needed any 'encouragement' any longer.³⁹

Development plans: development as colonial policy

Both the Groundnut Scheme and the expansion of cashew cultivation represent major manifestations of development although in quite different ways: the former can be seen as a

³⁹ *Huko ndio kuinuka tuwe watu kama watu Duniani*, G.C. Kasembe to Provincial Commissioner, Lindi, 5 February 1953, TNA, Cashew Nut Industry; Hill and Moffett, *Tanganyika*, p. 452;

climax of its interventionist thrust while the latter resulted more spontaneously from a fortuitous coincidence of international and internal market forces of demand and supply, brought together by the people's own agency and some support by the colonial state. As should be clear from the above, also the contemporaries associated them with development but also used other designations to discuss them: advancement, progress, even civilization. The dual mandate had been there from the outset of British rule,⁴⁰ but starting from the late 1930s, development was gaining a more specific meaning in British colonialism in general and in Tanganyika too. This was 'colonial development' understood as colonial policy: something intentionally undertaken by the state and distinguished by three features. It consisted of schemes or projects explicitly undertaken to improve the economic and social conditions of the country and its inhabitants, i.e. their welfare; these went beyond the normal 'maintenance' tasks of the administration (although it was admitted that the line between the two was always blurred); and they were something for which it was possible to seek and gain some extra resources from outside, meaning the metropolitan country. This was very similar to the modern project approach, and soon even conjured up as modern caricature: in the public imagination 'development' was seen as "grandiose projects embarked upon with the highest hopes and financed from the bottomless purse, with eventual disillusionment and a heavy loss to the taxpayer."⁴¹

Colonial Development and Welfare Acts: old and new

The development project approach made its breakthrough in the Colonial Development and Welfare Acts of 1940 and 1945. In them, His Majesty's Government gave up the old orthodoxy of 'good government' according to which the colonies had to aim at balanced budgets to be financially self-sufficient and endorsed the necessity to transfer resources on a grant basis to the colonies. To be sure, the recognition of the need for imperial assistance was not new. The early colonial railways had mostly been built by loans guaranteed by the imperial government. Even some grant assistance had been given under the first Colonial Development Act of 1929, although in trifling sums and with the view of getting orders from

⁴⁰*The Royal Commission of 1925*, p. 22: "We are the trustees not only for the development and advance in civilization of the African, but we ... also ... have a duty to humanity to develop the vast economic resources of a great continent";

⁴¹ Discussions between colonial officials and members of the Royal Commission of East Africa in Dar es Salaam in June 1953, NA, EAF 53/2, Part B, as quoted in Morgan, *Official History*, IV, p.66. As the outcome of the discussions, the successor of the Overseas Food Corporation was named Tanganyika Agricultural Corporation, dropping 'development' from the title.

the colonies to stimulate the flagging British economy and relieve the rising unemployment back home.⁴² What was new was that development was now elevated to official policy by attempting to systematize the scattered efforts and backing them up by more substantial resources. Although funding in practice was considered and granted on a project basis, the projects had to be collated into more comprehensive plans before they could be applied for. The first Colonial Development and Welfare Act promised five million pounds annually for such plans. In the next Act in 1945, the sum was raised to 12 million. Although it never totally materialised, the latter sum seemed to come very close to the modern international aid target, 0.7 per cent of the donor GDP.⁴³

‘Welfare’ was added to development in the title of the Acts to make development politically more attractive and get rid of the view that it was about exploitation of resources only. As put by Sir Henry Moore, assistant colonial secretary, “if it is just going to be mainly ‘development’ on the old lines, it will look merely as if we are going to exploit the Colonies in order to get money to pay for the war!” Including welfare, another official remarked, was “to add to [Britain’s] moral prestige” and “make a big thing out of it” politically.⁴⁴ Although development had served such politically justificatory purpose before, the British decision-makers now felt an increasing need to assure their developmental credentials both outside and inside the colonies. Parts of the empire were plagued by strikes and other ‘disturbances’ and Tanganyika’s international status as a mandated territory was uncertain, with the Germans vying their former colonies and accusing the present masters of their neglect. The Colonial Office had for quite some time demanded more funds for colonial development but the Treasury remained unconvinced. Only after the outbreak of the war the tug-of-war was finally resolved in favour of the Colonial Office. Development backed by imperial grant assistance was made an Imperial policy.⁴⁵

Once launched, the new policy gained a momentum of its own. As the war progressed, colonial resources – men, money and raw materials – were needed ever more urgently. Britain grew more indebted to the United States and after the war colonial products could be sold for dollars. The war also acted as a catalyst for intensifying nationalist aspirations among the

⁴² George C. Abbott, ‘Re-examination of the 1929 Colonial Development Act’, *The Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., 24 (1971), pp. 68-81

⁴³ See Morgan, *Official History*, I, pp. 199-200.

⁴⁴ Correspondence between the Colonial Office and Treasury in November 1939 to February 1940, NA, CO 859/19/7475, as quoted in Havinden and Meredith, *Colonial Development*, p. 203.

⁴⁵ For the history of the Acts, see e.g. Morgan, *Official History*, I, esp. p. xvii and chs 2-8.

Africans who were taken to the frontlines in countries such as Burma and Malaysia which were more advanced in their efforts at self-government. The German criticisms of lackadaisical colonial development were replaced by American ones echoing the aspirations of the colonized peoples. The new United Nations was much keener to lend its ear to the demands of the colonized than the League of Nations ever had been

In Britain, the voters returned the Labour Party back to power in 1945. An active state and extensive planning had been the order of the day during the war and Labour was ready to go along and take colonial development as a policy of its own. Although the Conservatives in their 1951 election campaign made a big noise of the groundnut folly and some leftish Labour politicians and writers showed considerable sympathy for the nationalist aspirations much earlier than any Conservatives, in colonial development the basic policy lines of the parties converged. After their electoral victory the Conservatives carried on with colonial development and even intensified it. Both parties saw it as a means to continue developing exploitable resources but also increasingly, with its newly introduced political embellishments, as a surrogate for having to seriously start to talk about self-government. In the very long run, it was seen as even more: as a means to make sure that “when the African Territories attain self-government they do so as a part of the Western world.”⁴⁶

Development plans in Tanganyika

The lofty principles of development as welfare reached colonial practice through many mediating mechanisms and the colonial exigencies sometimes shaped them beyond recognition. ‘Planning’ is a case in point. Its introduction ostensibly was a big change in colonial administrative practice and a number of documents called plans proliferated both at national and provincial levels. Yet it was readily acknowledged that what these documents amounted to was really not a plan but “an outline sketch of the developments proposed ... in effect [consisting] of a series of objectives with an approximation of their costs.”⁴⁷ In Tanganyika, it took almost a decade to start implementing them and they kept being revised.

The first steps were taken before the war. At the end of 1938, the Central Development Committee was set up to investigate “how the development of the Territory can be

⁴⁶ Creech Jones, memorandum, 9 June 1948, NA, CAB21/1690, as quoted in Havinden and Meredith, *Colonial Development*, pp. 231-232

⁴⁷A *Ten-Year Development and Welfare Plan for Tanganyika Territory*, Dar es Salaam, 1946, p. 2.

encouraged by the enterprise of the Non-natives and the natives”. Its report, which concluded that “Tanganyika is capable of great development,” was revised to Outlines of Post-war development in 1944 and both were replaced by a Ten-Year Development Plan in 1946, and an Education Plan closely connected to it. This drew on the Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1945 and was to be implemented from 1947 to 1955. It, too, was soon rendered outdated by the unprecedented economic activity and rising prices. A new plan was drafted in 1955 and revised in 1957.⁴⁸ In addition, a number of local agricultural development plans, with emphasis on soil conservation, were launched.

The flaws of the first ‘development plans’ of Tanganyika were not lost on the contemporaries. It was quickly pointed out by a perceptive critic that they were based on shaky or non-existent data and “‘the Pilgrim Fathers Complex’, an attitude of boundless optimism founded on faith, courage and lack of knowledge.”⁴⁹ Julius Nyerere, a new African member of the Legislative Council in 1957, dismissed them as plans.⁵⁰ Governor Twining admitted that in practice the plan “contained a number of schemes, which for long had been apparent as being necessary, but which could only be put forward in a modest way because of the limited sums available”⁵¹ The contrast between the centralising ambitions - the Central Development Committee in 1938 famously set out “to make Tanganyika a country”⁵² – and the inevitably scattered and isolated efforts actually taken on the ground was striking indeed. Their impact was sniffed at. The most important economic expansion in East Africa had taken place regardless of the plans and in no way as consequence of them, the Royal East Africa Commission declared in 1953⁵³.

But the Colonial Development and Welfare funds, accessed through the plans, were never meant to do more than to “prime the pump;”⁵⁴ Further financing was to be sought from imperially guaranteed loans raised by colonial governments on the London capital market, by local agricultural surplus funds and revenue, and private investment, in the case of Tanganyika mainly from the two first-mentioned. As pump primer, they can in fact claim some success. In post-war Tanganyika, considerably larger sums were used for development

⁴⁸ An overview in Hill and Moffett *Tanganyika*, pp. 841-845

⁴⁹ C. Gillman, ‘Planned Development’, *Tanganyika Standard* 30.4. 1944, extract in NA, CO691/190

⁵⁰ *Tanganyika Standard*, probably 1957, extract in NA, CO 822/1575

⁵¹ Sir Edward Twining, ‘The Situation in Tanganyika’, *African Affairs*, 50 (1951), p. 304

⁵² *Report of the Central Development Committee*, Dar es Salaam, n.a. but 1940, para. 7

⁵³ *East Africa Royal Commission* 1955, p. 94;

⁵⁴ E.g. Andrew Cohen, *British Policy in Changing Africa*. Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1959, pp. 31-32

purposes than the totals of development plans indicate. While the expenditure of the last plans was about three times more than that of the first, the total expenditure of the colonial administration increased fivefold from 1947 to 1959.⁵⁵

What interests us most here is the interpretation of development the plans betrayed. It had the element of bringing in extra resources but this was always subordinate to the dominant policy line of the day. The Central Development Committee advocated mainly measures that would have facilitated white settlement but after the war an unabashedly pro-settler line was no longer politically possible. All the plans, starting from the 1938 one, talked about the need of defining development broadly and promoting in addition to ‘economic’ also ‘social’ development. A key aim was to get the Africans – long understood as male – to work beyond the minimum of fulfilling their tax obligations. “An understanding by the African of the need for more wealth that he can at present see use for, which is undoubtedly essential for his welfare, is necessary to give him an incentive to produce more.” The people “must ... increase the efficiency and output of their labour.”⁵⁶

The low standard of productivity of the African peasant was “at the root of the economic problem” in Africa, argued Colonial Secretary Arthur Creech Jones, a Labour colonial expert. The question was what to do to it, and whether compulsion should and could be resorted to. Creech Jones did not rule out compulsive measures, as it was mandatory to ensure that proper methods of cultivation were adopted and the soil was conserved although he wondered whether they might be effective. Anyway the local native administrations should be “induced” to secure efficient agricultural practices. Among Tanganyika officials some noted that compulsion was already there in the form of Native Authorities orders and rules. The District Commissioner of Mikindani interpreted that “the Trustee power is *in loco parentis*, it should be able to enforce a policy of development against the wishes of wazee [elders] if satisfied as to the urgency of its need.”⁵⁷

Looking at the actual projects undertaken and expenditure spent on them, it is evident that at the territorial level a dominant understanding of development in these plans was that of building up physical assets that the colonial state felt a need of. Creech Jones urged the

⁵⁵ Ehrlich 1976, p. 323

⁵⁶ *Central Development Committee*, para. 25; *Ten-Year Plan*, p. 12

⁵⁷ Discussion in TNA, Acc 16/44/1, esp. Creech Jones to Governor Battershill, 2 February 1947, and comments by the District Commissioners of Masasi, 14 May 1947, and of Mikindani, 13 May 1947.

primacy of economic development, as "advance in other directions is largely consequential."⁵⁸ 'Economic' schemes were contrasted to 'social' ones which did not "immediately show a productive return."⁵⁹ Yet in practice in Tanganyika, most of development expenditure was allocated to equally slowly return-carrying infrastructural projects. The major part went to communications, especially to the construction of roads, which every plan had given as a priority. The Orwellian doublespeak common to modern development interventions had its first antecedents here. What was ostensibly earmarked for social services was in fact used to related capital works. 'Township development' meant basically the water supply in Dar es Salaam while the funds for 'public building and works' were spent to provide housing for government officers.⁶⁰ Although later a greater part of the funds was used for health and education, especially in the late 1950s, these were regarded as separate issues: investment in human capital as a basic prerequisite for economic growth was not part of this development thinking.

Local development schemes interfered with people's basic ways of life and production more directly, in the spirit of Creech-Jones' vision. Their predominant concern was with soil erosion. Tanganyika was an agricultural country but over most of the country the soil was poor and rainfall badly distributed. The attitude that "the ravages of the tsetse fly are the greatest menace to the development of Tropical Africa" reigned unchallenged: two thirds of Tanganyika was seen as "closed to cultivation" owing to the presence of the fly. The result was overcultivation of the remaining areas with consequent soil deterioration and diminishing returns, aggravated by occasional drives for intensified production during depression and war. Thus "the main objective of any development plan must be a rebuilding of the soil and of conditions which make stable agriculture possible."⁶¹

The local schemes were funded mainly from sources inside Tanganyika, either from the central government agricultural surpluses or the native authorities concerned, and to some extent from Colonial Development and Welfare funds. The first, and by far the most important, of them was started in 1947 in Sukumaland. It was followed by smaller schemes in Mbulu in 1948 and later in Uluguru, Usambara and Pare as well as in Bukoba, Maasailand and North Mara. In the mid-1950s they covered one-sixth of the land area with some two

⁵⁸ As quoted in Haqqi, *Labour Government*, p.164

⁵⁹ Tanganyika, *Annual Report* for 1950, as quoted in Ehrlich 1976, p. 322

⁶⁰ Hill and Moffett, *Tanganyika*, pp. 841-847

⁶¹ *Ten-Year Plan*, p. 14. The quotation of the tsetse menace is from *Report of The East Africa Commission*, London 1925, p. 70

million people, which is more than a quarter of the population of Tanganyika (see Table 1). The intention was to extend a scheme to every district of the country.⁶²

Table 1: Local development schemes in Tanganyika, 1955

District	Area covered (square mile)	Population affected
1. Sukumaland	20 000	1 115 000
2. Uluguru	500	50 000
3. Usambara	8 500	220 000
4. Bukoba	6 000	300 000
5. Maasailand	23 000	57 000
6. Mbulu	6 000	150 000
7. North-Mara	1 500	110 000
8. Pare	3 000	85 000
Total	68 500	2 087 000

Source: Hill and Moffett, *Tanganyika*, p. 514

The schemes were implemented and administered in different ways but they were predicated on the same basic logic. As the root causes for land degradation were identified as too high densities of human and cattle population and deficient methods of cultivation, mostly by Africans, the plans aimed at (a) reducing the population pressure by opening up new areas for settlement and urging people to move into them, (b) reducing the numbers of cattle by demanding the cattle-owning people to sell off more cattle than before, and (c) improving cultivation methods and introducing new ones. Many of the efforts may have been sound in a narrow technical sense, but all entailed social and cultural changes which the large majority of the peasants felt were threatening their ways of life and were unwilling to go along voluntarily. This meant that to enforce the plans the colonial state had to employ its repressive machinery. Local authorities were ordered to introduce by-laws on agriculture. Those who did not obey them were punished. In the words of a colonial official turned postcolonial researcher, “for many years before the war and for some years after 1945, the agricultural staff tended to be

⁶² Hill and Moffett, *Tanganyika*, pp. 513-514

policemen rather than advisers, largely responsible for the enforcement of the multitude of agricultural rules and for bringing offenders to court.”⁶³ The resistance towards the schemes grew and at the same time contributed to and gained extra force from the spreading nationalist agitation. Finally they had to be given up.

Colonial development in the South-East

The new breed of colonial development entered South-Eastern Tanganyika rather late, only after the collapse of the Groundnut Scheme and when the expansion of cashew was already in full swing. Historically, the region had suffered from the erratic development efforts even more than many other parts of Tanganyika. The grafting of enforced German developmental measures on an ailing commercial economy had contributed to the eruption of the great Maji Maji rebellion in 1905-07 whose suppression destroyed what little was left from the earlier prosperity.⁶⁴ Under British rule, the developmental impact of the alien administration made itself gradually felt in the area as an increasing number of technical staff were added to the administrative officials. Yet the direction of development efforts was seen to depend largely on the personal idiosyncrasies of the rapidly changing local officials. Often well-intentioned, they were paternalistic and constrained by ignorance. Liebenow, with a pardonable degree of exaggeration, speaks of administrative behaviour referred to by Africans as *wazimu wa mzungu* or 'white man's madness'.⁶⁵

This was the "disease" which seemed to compel each new district commissioner to make his own special imprint upon a district during his brief tenure in the area. The special "madness" of one man might be road construction, while that of his successor might be soil conservation. These in turn would be followed by a district commissioner with a penchant for getting the people to breed hybrid chickens, perhaps, or dig latrines, or dig wells. [After] the arrival of a new European... all energies could be directed to pleasing his idiosyncrasy and ignoring the pet projects of his predecessors. The elaborate network of paths and roads established... could be surrendered to the jungle; the latrines could become chicken houses; and the hybrid chicken could revert to their primitive type.⁶⁶

⁶³ N.R. Fuggles-Couchman, *Agricultural Change in Tanganyika*. Food Research Institute, Stanford, 1964, p. 75

⁶⁴ Juhani Koponen, 'Maji Maji and the Making of the South', *Tanzania Zamani*, forthcoming

⁶⁵ Liebenow, *Colonial Rule*, p. 143

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

The Southern Province Development Plan, which was launched in 1951, was meant to bring some method into this madness. The local Africans had already been pressed to produce surplus food by forcing them to plant a certain acreage, normally two, of cassava or other food crops. The plan was to intensify the production drive. Soil erosion was not seen as much of a concern as the peripheral province had earlier been spared unduly intensified production pushes. Underlying the plan was the need to make use of the resources left by the Groundnut Scheme. The colonial government had inherited the infrastructure investment, i.e. the port of Mtwara and the railway from there to Nachingwea and had to cover their operational losses. The railway obviously would become profitable only if the annual amount of the freight could be drastically raised to 100,000 tons, a far cry from some 26,500 tons produced in 1949. The government committed itself to “develop” the Southern Province so attain this target. The Southern Province Development Plan assumed that although some further land could be alienated for non-native cultivation, especially of sisal, most of the increase had to come from African production. Basically any existing crop, from cassava to cashew, would do; the latter was sometimes singled out but was not given any constant priority. The need for water supplies and even the possibility of agricultural mechanisation were fleetingly mentioned, but two fundamental problems were seen in communications and staff. Road improvement needed a heavy injection of capital. New administrative and agricultural staff were required, the present one were only able to do ‘care and maintenance’ and it was impossible to carry out a development plan with them. “(F)or the African, abstract principles, however lofty, are no substitute of direct personal contact, and ... success of a production drive eventually depends on adequate and competent field staff.”⁶⁷

Again, the existing sources are scarce and it is difficult to know what actually took place on the ground but it is evident that the production drive did not live up to expectations and eventually petered off. The natural and cultural environment obviously was too intractable even to that kind of approach. The agricultural staff were increased although at a slower pace and to a lesser extent than planned and a major part of the expenditure went to their personal emoluments. Their costs were transferred to the normal departmental budget and the provincial agricultural officer could note that in this respect the plan had achieved what it had been devised to: “to raise an inadequate establishment of the Agricultural Department in the Province to a normal one.”⁶⁸ Investment in roads was confounded by the need to protect the

⁶⁷ Southern Province Development Plan 1950-1960, NA, CO 691/208

⁶⁸ Provincial Agricultural Officer (Brett) to Director of Agriculture, Dar es Salaam, 20 November 1955, TNA, Acc 16/44/3

freight prospects of the railway from road competition. Road-building efforts were concentrated on building feeder roads for the railway, whereas the upgrading of the main Songea-Lindi road was neglected. In the late 1950s it was clear that the overall production targets would never be attained. The plan withered away. The railway tracks were scrapped in 1964. Among the wildly overoptimistic production targets only one had been badly underestimated: cashew tonnage, which had been foreseen at 10,000, was more than double it in 1961.

Conclusion: dead end and rebirth of development

Thus, development was put to many uses and meant different things in late colonial South-Eastern Tanganyika whereas some things that we might recognize as development did not qualify as such. The country as a whole had been caught in a drive of colonial development in which the old dominant colonial notion of development for exploitation of resources was accommodating another, that of development for the welfare of the people. This shift was shoring up the politically legitimizing function of development at the cost of its economically instrumentalist task. Yet its practical manifestations were much more mundane, ranging from building infrastructure for colonialists to interfering with the basics of local people's lives. They remained unfinished and often worked against the overall political purposes.

The South East had its idiosyncrasies. The Groundnut Scheme was not part of generic colonial development but a development endeavour located in a colony, a metropolitan initiative for metropolitan purposes. The spectacular expansion of cashew production was referred to as development only for the part of the involvement of the colonial state, as it was otherwise fuelled by market forces, mainly demand from India, and executed by the people's agency. The Southern development plan deviated from the local plans in other parts of country in that its interference with local life was more superficial, for example it did not entail any relocation of population (or cattle, practically non-existent in the South). In our terms they all represent development, understood as a combination of intervention, process and goal. But their different conceptualisations and the fact that development remained one notion among many and could be used interchangeably with them show that in colonial discourse development had not acquired a similar hegemonic status as it was to gain in the postcolonial discourse.

This leads to the following concluding suggestion: as the meanings of development ramified, the notion of development was reaching the limits of its usability in the colonial context. Development did not and could not upkeep a colonial discourse. This was for a simple reason: it could not undo the basic colonial premise of an unbridgeable difference between the colonizer and the colonized. It rather reinforced it. Governor Twining invoked the dual mandate again: “Tanganyika possesses many rich potentials, and these must be developed, first for the benefit of the local population, but also to make their contribution to the ever growing needs of the world.”⁶⁹

For the African nationalists, this could no longer do. For them, the main problem with colonialism was the ‘difference’ on which it was based: its denial of human equality and of the capacity of the Africans to govern themselves. There was no way for colonial development to undo that, in particular if its purpose was to make African resources to contribute to “growing needs of the world”. .

Yet the dead end of colonial development did not toll the death knell for development as a whole - on the contrary. The African nationalists seized development as a potent notion for another purpose: it gave them grounds to attack the colonial government. . In taking it over they rescued development from its colonial dead end and gave it a new lease of life in associating it with *maendeleo*, i.e. progress.⁷⁰ They turned the tables by accusing that development did not and could not happen under colonialism. The fate of the Groundnut Scheme was well known. Nyerere complained in the Legislative Council in 1957 that in spite of the elaborate colonial development set-up there was “no policy for economic development, there were no production targets for crops or minerals”. What achievements in production there were, such as the increase of the cotton crop in Sukumaland or the promise of cashew in the South, had been achieved haphazardly, and largely due to the work of the people and not because of any government plan. During independence, development was to provide them the main prop of their rule. On the eve of it, Nyerere promised to “transform” the country: in ten years Tanganyika would achieve most of the things the colonialists had failed to achieve during their rule⁷¹

⁶⁹ *African Affairs*, 50 (1951), p. 307

⁷⁰ This is where I part company with Cohen and Shenton, note 1 above. Whatever the merits of the suggestion of development as counterpoint to progress in Europe, such a function cannot be found in postcolonial, and, I believe, colonial development.

⁷¹ *Tanganyika Standard*, extract in NA, CO 822/1575; Julius Nyerere, *Freedom and Unity*, Oxford University Press, London, 1967, p.183

Now we of course know that it was not so simple. Despite all colonial and postcolonial development efforts, not only the South-East but almost the whole of Tanzania is impoverished, a few pockets of affluence notwithstanding. After colonialism, development became the loadstar of all policy but the postcolonial development interventions have not been able to overcome the forces that produce effects contrary to the proclaimed aims. Although the goals and motivations of postcolonial development differ from those of colonial development the means remain much the same. The ideology of colonial development is now duly condemned and transcended but many of its forms continue to be relied upon in differing guises. And although nobody any longer mentions the dual mandate, its basic thrust is intact and maintains the allure of development. Today's Tanzania, of course, is being developed primarily to the benefit and welfare of its inhabitants, but also outsiders who support it by means of development cooperation are meant to benefit.