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*Small-scale Growers' Struggle against Marginalization  
in the Cotton Value Chain: An Experience from the  
Western Cotton Growing Area, Tanzania, 1920s–1950s*

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**Abstract:**

This article analyses the marginalization of the native small-scale cotton growers during British colonial rule in the Western Cotton Growing Area (WCGA), Tanzania, and their struggle against it. Marginalization was practiced mainly by Indian cotton traders for three decades to maximize profit at the expense of natives who farmed the crop. The Indian traders who were licensed by the colonial authority to buy and export marginalized the growers through underpaying and cheating on them. From the 1930s local chiefs and their subjects (growers) began to protest against

this situation, but were ignored by the colonial authority. At the end of the 1940s, growers formed groups which took initiatives that led to minimized marginalization with limited support from some colonial officials. Minimized marginalization did not imply control of the cotton value chain. With the support of native traders, local growers fought on until co-operatives were formed, which allowed them to gain the upper hand over the Indian merchants in the cotton value chain.

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**Key words:**

Tanzania, small-scale growers, struggle, marginalization, cotton value chain, co-operatives

**Resum:**

Aquest article analitza la marginació dels petits productors de cotó locals durant el domini colonial britànic a l'Àrea de Cultiu de Cotó Occidental (WCGA) de Tanzània, i la seva lluita contra aquesta situació. La marginació va ser practicada durant tres dècades principalment pels comerciants de cotó procedents de l'Índia, amb l'objectiu de maximitzar els guanys a costa dels nadius que conreaven les terres. Els comerciants indis que tenien la llicència de les autoritats colonials per comprar i exportar el cotó van marginalitzar els productors locals pagant-los malament i enganyant-los. A partir de la dècada de 1930, els caps locals i els seus

súbdits (agricultors) van començar a protestar contra aquesta situació, però van ser ignorats per les autoritats colonials. A finals de la dècada de 1940, els productors van formar grups que van prendre iniciatives per minimitzar la marginació. Aquests grups comptaven amb el suport limitat d'alguns funcionaris colonials. Aquesta reducció de la marginació no implicava el control de la cadena de valor del cotó. Amb el suport dels comerciants nadius, els petits productors van continuar lluitant fins que es van formar les cooperatives, la qual cosa els va permetre guanyar terreny sobre els comerciants indis en la cadena de valor del cotó.

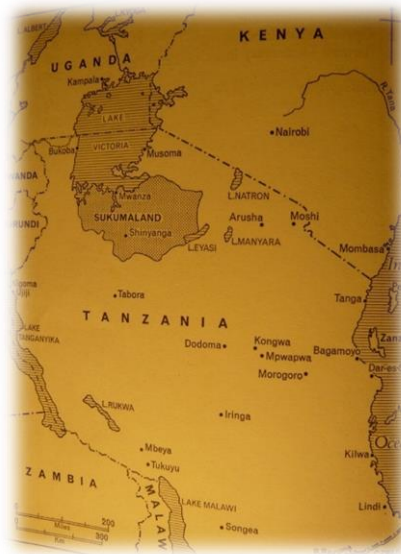
**Paraules clau:**

Tanzània, petits productors, resistència, marginalització, cadena de valor del cotó, cooperatives

## Introduction

This article analyses the conflict between the small-scale growers and merchants in the Western Cotton Growing Area (WCGA), formerly referred to as Lake Province or Sukumaland from 1920s to late 1950s. The area covered all districts in Geita, Mwanza, Shinyanga and Simiyu regions that are located in the Southern part of Lake Victoria. The paper is based on the analysis of primary archival materials obtained from Tanzania National Archive (TNA) in Dar es Salaam, in areas such as cotton farming, marketing supervisory policies and reports by the Empire Cotton Growing Corporation (ECGC), the British Cotton Growing Association (BCGA) and the Department of Agriculture. Annual reports, reviews, meeting minutes and correspondences from the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Co-operatives/Registrar of Co-operative societies, provincial and district level, as well as Native Authorities are also taken into account. Other documents used include the marketing board's annual reports, reviews, meeting minutes and correspondences. These documents highlight measures to incentivize small-scale growers to farm cotton. The documents provided evidence regarding the cotton merchants' exceptional position backed by the colonial authority. These merchants enjoyed a monopoly to purchase cotton from growers, process and export the produce, all of which formed the base for exploitation of local growers.

### Figure 1: The Western Cotton Growing Area (WCGA), Tanzania



Source: G. Andrew Maguire, *Towards Uhuru in Tanzania: The Politics of Participation*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969).

Cotton production was a priority to the British colonial authority when it took over Tanzania from Germans after First World War mainly for export to various markets such as Britain and India. It was therefore thought that cotton production within the empire would mitigate the problem. The colonial authority engaged growers to produce the crop in various parts of the country of which Western Cotton Growing Area (WCGA) proved most promising.

The 1920s was a time when cotton imports from the United States of America to Britain was hurting British textile mills.<sup>2</sup>The development of the WCGA was considered a priority, as recommended in the ECGC's report. The BCGA and ECGC were charged with the task of developing the industry in the WCGA that ranged from farming practices, research, and cotton quality.<sup>3</sup> Native authorities were charged with enforcing the cultivation of the crop. While being financially capable and lack of expertise in cotton processing and marketing among the natives, from the 1920s Indian traders entered the stage, and managed to have a dominant position in cotton purchase from growers, engaged in ginning and export of ginned cotton.<sup>4</sup>

Several authors have discussed the exploitation of small-scale growers by middlemen in several African countries like Tanzania.<sup>5</sup> These authors have brought to light numerous problems in the industry. However, most research presents a rather scant evidence of the methods and techniques employed by merchants in exploiting small-scale growers. In an attempt to fill the

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<sup>2</sup> TNA 215/655 Vol. I, *East Africa Railways and Harbours Magazine* 2, no. 9 (June 1956), 305.

<sup>3</sup> TNA 215/655 Vol. I, *Report to the Board of Trade of the Empire Cotton Growing Committee Presented to the Parliament by Command of His Majesty in 1920* (London: His Majesty Stationary Office, 1920), 33.

<sup>4</sup> DA to CS, Ref. No. 6/5389, July 24<sup>th</sup> 1935, TNA 23218.

<sup>5</sup> Robert Ikwera and Ronald Twongyirwe, "Facilitating social enterprise development through collective marketing: insights from Bukonzo Joint Co-operative Union, Western Uganda," *Journal of Fair-Trade* 1, no. 1 (February 2019): 13-26; B. C. Nindi, "A Historical Study of the Cooperative Movement in Tanzania," *Transafrican Journal of History* 6/7 (1977-78): 64-78; F. Onyiloa and A. Adong, "Agricultural Cooperative Marketing and Credit Policy Reform in Uganda: An Opportunity for Poverty Reduction," *African Journal of Food, Agriculture, Nutrition, and Development* 19, no. 1 (2019): 14156-14170, DOI: 10.18697/ajfand.84.BLFB1008; G. P. Mpangala, "The Impact of Colonial Trading Capital or the Transformation of Peasant Agriculture in Tanganyika, 1885-1961," PhD Thesis, Leipzig, Karl Marx University, 1987; Göran Hydén, *Beyond Ujamaa in Tanzania: Underdevelopment and an Uncaptured Peasantry* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1980); Andrew Coulson, *Tanzania: A Political Economy*, 2nd edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Dharam P. Ghai and Yash P. Ghai, "Asians in East Africa: Problems and Prospects," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 3, no. 1 (May 1965): 35-51; John Iliffe, *A Modern History of Tanganyika* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

gap, this paper will analyse these interactions in Tanzania's WCGA. It will do so by using underexploited primary sources.

First attempts to challenge marginalization were spontaneous and characterized by complaints from local chiefs. The chiefs' failure to curb malpractice led to the emergence of a more successful approach by grassroots groups that concentrated on weighing growers' cotton deliveries at buying centres that minimized cheating by Indian traders. Later, organized groups such as embryonic associations and co-operatives benefited from the strong foundation built by the grassroots movement.

Several studies have examined the rise and intervention in the late 1940s and early 1950s of the grassroots groups, the *mabebete* and *avapimi va magafu* and such organizations as the Mwanza African Traders Co-operative Society (MATCS) and Lake Growers associations. Academic literature also shows that grassroots organizations aimed to stop marginalization but there is no clarity over why marginalization persisted despite their interventions.

Importantly, there is a knowledge gap associated with disparity over the application of the Co-operative Ordinance 1932 in the WCGA that provided for promotion of co-operatives in the mentioned localities, which could be viewed as a factor that contributed to the marginalization of growers for three decades from the 1920s to 1950s that this paper has attempted to fill. Against this backdrop, the paper aims to examine how small-scale cotton growers defied marginalization from the 1920s to the 1950s. It will also show the obstacles they had to overcome in their struggle against the merchants and colonial officials. Specifically, the paper will attempt to:

1. Show how small-scale growers were placed at the lowest perk of cotton value chain;
2. Identify methods used to marginalise the growers in the cotton industry by the merchants;
3. Examine the small-scale growers' and other stakeholders' responses against marginalization;
4. Analyse the colonial authority's obstructions over growers and other stakeholders' responses against marginalization; and
5. Assess the growers' victory against the marginalization.

## **Roles and responsibilities in the cotton value chain**

Due to years of experience in developing the cotton industry in Uganda, the ECGC was charged with the development of the industry in the WCGA. Here the ECGC replicated Uganda cotton policies and legislation.<sup>6</sup> According to its obligation, the ECGC trained agricultural extension staff that were employed across the WCGA. The ECGC deployed its ten cotton experts to develop the industry aimed at strengthening the local Department of Agriculture.<sup>7</sup> The District Commissioners were involved in the supervision of the industry alongside the chiefs and village headmen.<sup>8</sup> Throughout their lifetime growers were supposed to produce cotton to keep themselves and their families safe from legal risks of failing to pay taxes.

The BCGA assigned a cotton quality and marketing responsibility in the WCGA.<sup>9</sup> In an attempt to ensure the quality of exported lint is met, the BCGA acquired ginneries in Mwanza, Kwimba and Biharamulo districts formerly owned by a German firm, Hansing & Co.<sup>10</sup> However, for about a decade the business was a disaster due to competition over cotton supply from Indian merchants. By 1932 the BCGA decided to abandon the business by selling its ginneries<sup>11</sup> located in Mwanza and Kwimba districts.<sup>12</sup> Two ginneries which were in Biharamulo were donated to the Native Authority.<sup>13</sup>

The BCGA closure of ginning business in the WCGA created a vacuum that the colonial government had to fill. The Kwimba district, by then a key cotton producer, was one of the most affected areas.<sup>14</sup> The BCGA's decision posed a serious threat to the industry due to the lack of a reliable market for cotton. It was evident that growers would have no place to market

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<sup>6</sup> TNA 215/655 Vol. I, *Empire Cotton Growing Committee's Report*, 33.

<sup>7</sup> N. R. Fuggles-Couchman, *Agriculture Change in Tanganyika: 1945 – 1960* (Stanford: Food Research Institute, Stanford University, 1964), 17.

<sup>8</sup> Imperial Institute, *Bulletin of the Imperial Institute, A Quarterly Record of Progress in Tropical Agriculture and Industries and the Commercial Utilisation of the Natural Resources of the Dominions, Colonies and India* (London: Hazell, Watson and Viney, Ltd., 1922), XX: 176.

<sup>9</sup> TNA 21032, Proposal to Purchase Ginneries of the BCGA in Mwanza, Kwimba and Biharamulo districts from Colonial Office, London, to CS Despatch No. 828, November 19<sup>th</sup> 1934.

<sup>10</sup> TNA 21032, Proposal to Purchase Ginneries of the BCGA in Mwanza, Kwimba and Biharamulo districts; W. H. Himbury (General Manager, British Cotton Growing Association), Empire Cotton Supplies, Meeting at Institute, Manchester, October 31<sup>st</sup> 1922, in *The Journal Of The Textile Institute*, (Vol. XIII, 1922), 194

<sup>11</sup> TNA 21032 CS to BCGA, Mwanza, July 25<sup>th</sup> 1932; Colonial Office to CS 26<sup>th</sup> October 1934 (signed by W.C. Bottomley).

<sup>12</sup> TNA 21032, BCGA to Colonial Office, London, to CS 29<sup>th</sup> October 1934.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*; BCGA to Colonial Office, London, to CS October 29<sup>th</sup> 1934 (signed by W.H. Himbury).

<sup>14</sup> TNA, S/10047, Cotton Advisory Board papers [1929-31]

the produce, which is why they were discouraged from keeping on farming the crop.<sup>15</sup> Thus, the Agricultural Department had to intervene by inviting merchants to handle cotton in the WCGA. Such invitation was provided under the Government Notice No. 277 that invited investment by ginners to apply for a license to invest ginneries in the WCGA in such locations as Uzinza (Buchosa) and Musoma.<sup>16</sup>

Understandably, the Government Notice No. 277 was issued with the expectation that ginneries would be installed in the mentioned locations to start operating by July 1935 at the beginning of the cotton harvest.<sup>17</sup> Given the short notice, the Director of Agriculture announced that those willing to transfer their ginneries from any location would be granted a ginning license by the government.<sup>18</sup> The merchants who flocked to the WCGA saw great business opportunity. Most of the merchants who applied qualified for a license to carry out the business. They had at their disposal a capital of about 10,000 to 20,000 shillings<sup>19</sup> to erect a ginnery, purchase cotton, and well-established marketing networks to market the produce. However, the Lake Province Ginners Association, with many merchant members who had ginneries in the WCGA, opposed the government's Notice.<sup>20</sup> They argued that having additional ginneries during the time in the WCGA was unnecessary given the volume of cotton production.

They also presented to the Agricultural Department an alternative suggestion, according to which they should be granted a monopoly over ten-mile radius to warrant processing over 4,000 bales annually so that they could operate with a profit.<sup>21</sup> Since the colonial authority was desperate to receive private investment, it accepted conditions set out by merchants. One of the merchants who invested in the WCGA was Ladha Meghji who erected ginneries in Luguru zone<sup>22</sup> also in Uzinza in 1938 and Mugango in 1936.<sup>23</sup> The Mugango ginnery was meant to serve cotton produced in Busegwe, Ikizu, Ushahi and Bukwaya. The British East Africa Corporation, an agent of the BCGA in East Africa, erected a ginnery in 1933 at Usogore in

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<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> TNA 23218, The Government Notice No. 277, March 16<sup>th</sup> 1935.

<sup>17</sup> TNA 23218, The Government Notice No. 277, March 16<sup>th</sup> 1935.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> TNA 22813, Extracts from Tanganyika Memorandum on Cotton Marketing presented by the Chief Secretary to the Legislative Council, 1934

<sup>20</sup> TNA 23218, the Lake province Ginners Association to Provincial Commissioner, Lake Province, March 28<sup>th</sup> 1935.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> Ladha Meghji to DA, March 15<sup>th</sup> 1935, TNA 215/772.

<sup>23</sup> A. Willis on behalf of Ladha Meghji to DA, January 9<sup>th</sup> 1935, TNA 215/772.

Shinyanga district, but in 1940, it transferred ownership to Ladha Meghji.<sup>24</sup> Baghwaji Sundweji and Company, which already had five ginneries, also erected a ginnery in Uzinza that became the biggest ginner in the WCGA.<sup>25</sup> Likewise, Catholic missionaries such as the White Fathers engaged in cotton buying and ginning, particularly in Ukerewe Island. All these actors had control and entrenched monopoly over purchasing, processing, and exporting cotton.

The Agricultural Department accepted the recommendation, as it seemed to stimulate the cotton industry in the WCGA. However, its implementation led to continuous cheating of local growers and facilitated a monopolistic business environment in which Indian merchants controlled the cotton post-harvest value chain in the WCGA.<sup>26</sup> The monopoly was provided under a series of cotton marketing legislations and regulations that included restrictions over movement or transfer of seed from one zone to the other. All of this opened the door for the exploitation of local growers, a practice that continued for three decades.

### **Marginalization techniques and responses against cheating**

Whereas the local small-scale growers lacked such resources and ability to influence policies, but qualified to produce cotton for the merchants who could buy, process, and export it to foreign markets. The Indian merchants had the economic power. Marketing regulation (cotton rules) provided them with additional power, exercised through the monopoly over cotton buying in the WCGA. In the 1930s the colonial authority created zones that provided merchants with a monopoly over cotton buying and ginning in a specific area (zone). Such policy entrenched the marginalization of growers. These measures were important to control cotton quality. Such interventions led to the monopolization of cotton markets by a handful of merchants, who used them to their advantage. This was an opportunity for the merchants to take advantage of growers. The merchants were not willing to pay the price determined by the government, which they saw as unprofitable. They employed manipulative tricks such as underpaying growers based on the lower cotton grade prices false weight for cotton delivered

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<sup>24</sup> Chairman (E.H.M Legget) British East Africa Corporation to DA, November 14<sup>th</sup> 1933.

<sup>25</sup> Baghwaji Sundweji and Company to DO Mwanza District, March 13<sup>th</sup> 1935, TNA 215/772.

<sup>26</sup> S. M. L. Seimu, "The Growth and Development of Coffee and Cotton Marketing Co-operatives in Tanzania, c 1932-1982," PhD Thesis, University of Central Lancashire, 2015.



and incorrect payments for quality grading.<sup>27</sup> Thus, growers were exploited and their labour was largely marginalized at the expense of buyers' profit maximization.

Although growers had no capital to qualify them to enter cotton marketing or ginning value chain, the colonial authority tried to protect growers against unfair weighing and advocated that they should be paid in cash to enable them to pay taxes.<sup>28</sup> However, cheating and barter trade were omnipresent, as growers were paid consumer goods like mirrors, beads, and piece of *kaniki* (dyed black cloth) instead of cash in exchange for cotton loads.<sup>29</sup>

Cotton growers and local chiefs were not pleased with such exploitation and began to take action against it. In 1933 some chiefs in the WCGA protested the practices of the colonial authority. In their petition, they unanimously condemned cheating.<sup>30</sup> The chiefs of Kwimba, Igokelo, Mgerema, G. Massanja III, Ndalaha and Masanja K. M. claimed that:

it is apparent that under the present system of marketing the clerks and village Headmen were responsible for the conduct of the markets are inclined to favour the purchaser that is traders. They often give bribe so that the merchant they declare the weight of products as less than it is. This sort of greedy haste brings trouble to the district in that the profits of the land flow into coffers of grasping tradesmen.<sup>31</sup>

Cheating practices took various dimensions.<sup>32</sup> For example, cotton buyers were buying cotton from farms contrary to stipulated Cotton Rules that required the business to be conducted in the central markets. Under such practice growers were poorly paid, most received 50 cents to one shilling per bag of 100 kilograms.<sup>33</sup> Chiefs from Kwimba district, especially Igobeko, Mgemera, G. Masanja III, Ndalaha and Masanja K.M., raised the concern that this would affect the growers' income and would also mean a loss of Native Authorities revenue.<sup>34</sup> Therefore they demanded immediate action from the colonial authority to stop the practice.

This demand was not the only way to protest exploitation. Some thought that the organization of co-operatives would be the most suitable way to deal with the problem. Such an idea could

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<sup>27</sup> Coulson, *Tanzania: A Political Economy*; **Hydén**, *Beyond Ujamaa in Tanzania*.

<sup>28</sup> Raymond Leslie Buell, *The Native Problem in Africa* (New York: Macmillan and Company Limited, 1928), I: 475.

<sup>29</sup> Tanganyika Co-operative Department, 1948.

<sup>30</sup> TNA 23218, Chiefs to Provincial Commissioner, Lake province, December 16<sup>th</sup> 1933.

<sup>31</sup> TNA, 23218, Chiefs to the Provincial Commissioner, December 16<sup>th</sup> 1933.

<sup>32</sup> Seimu, "Growth and Development of Coffee and Cotton Marketing Co-operatives."

<sup>33</sup> TNA, 23218, Chiefs to the Provincial Commissioner, December 16<sup>th</sup> 1933.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

not become a reality at that point. However, as Dubell suggests, there were successful examples in other areas of Tanzania, e. g. the Kilimanjaro Native Co-operative Union (KNCU) that was bankrolled by colonial officials in the country.<sup>35</sup>

This paper argues that there was no such attempt in the WCGA, where during the time of crisis Chief Mgemela of Bakwimba in Kwimba District presented a formal request to the District Commissioner (DC) in order to establish on behalf of his subjects a co-operative society in his administrative area which was within the Western Cotton Growing Area WCGA.<sup>36</sup> His request was presented in May 1932 during the economic recession with decreasing cotton prices, which seriously affected growers' income. For him, co-operatives offered a solution to the problem of cheating, and would improve his subjects' income.<sup>37</sup> Chief Mgemela's proposal was unlikely to succeed for several reasons. The co-operative legislation was yet to be approved by the Colonial Office. Importantly, the existing literature has not provided the colonial authority's response to Chief Mgemela's proposal. For example, Iliffe admits that the reasons for the rejection of Chief Mgemela's proposals are not clear.<sup>38</sup> This study has established that the DC managed to convince Chief Mgemela that a co-operative society was not necessary as the Native Treasury had effectively been playing the same role;<sup>39</sup> an argument that Chief Mgemela accepted either because he was ignorant on matters relating to co-operatives; or because he had not enough levers to dispute the argument successfully.

The police department was also involved in preventing criminal practices such as cheating of local cotton growers in the WCGA. For example, the police informed the Department of Agriculture in the North West Circle about the collusion of Indian cotton buyers for the 1935 season.<sup>40</sup> The Indian cotton buyers' plan was to pay rates below government-determined prices upon growers' delivery of cotton for sale not only in Uganda but also in the WCGA. It is important to note that, the Indian cotton buyers to the WCGA were based in Uganda where they were recruited to work in either Uganda and in the WCGA. The second group was

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<sup>35</sup> F. Dubell, *Handbook on Co-operative Education* (Arusha: Tanzania Litho Limited, 1970), 7.

<sup>36</sup> TNA 20999, Extracts from meeting between P.M. Huggis, District Officer, Kwimba and Chief Mgemela, May 20<sup>th</sup> 1932.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Iliffe, *A Modern History of Tanganyika*, 295.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> TNA 22813, Tanganyika Police (Mwanza) Lake province to Department of Agriculture (North West Circle – WCGA), January, 30<sup>th</sup> 1935 then forwarded to Director of Agriculture, Ref. No.D.6/34/158, February 15<sup>th</sup> 1935.

comprised of individuals in hundreds who travelled from Uganda to the WCGA in Tanzania, where they applied for a job upon arrival. Both groups were termed as sharing a “vicious circle” and the same idea to 'twist' the unsophisticated natives.<sup>41</sup>

The colonial authority, Department of Agriculture in particular, intervened upon receiving details from the Police Department by having the registration of all cotton buyers in place that was provided under the 1935 Cotton Rules. The Rules proved for protection to growers from abuses by cotton buyers.<sup>42</sup> However, cheating continued due to a limited number of staff to enforce them. Among the introduced measures there were registration and licensing of the buyers, punishment of the offenders, and the centralization of cotton markets that were placed under the Native Authorities<sup>43</sup> to facilitate supervision, checking weight and quality control.

The Department of Agriculture recruited ginnery inspectors who were deployed to ensure cheating was minimized. But curbing malpractices by government officials was insufficient due to the shortage of staff.<sup>44</sup> Moreover, the existing regulations were inadequate to curb the practices.<sup>45</sup> It must be noted that most growers were illiterate. Thus, they could not read scales and price provided in the cotton price reckoner per weight. They could not differentiate cotton grades and could not count money paid to them. In some instances, growers were intimidated if they questioned cotton traders' tricks.<sup>46</sup> It is obvious intimidation of growers was meant to silence them from raising further alarm over malpractices.

Cheating on growers persisted after the outbreak of World War II. The war circumstances placed cotton trade and export under emergency controls to ensure it was not diverted to Britain's enemies. The Emergency Power Defense Acts of 1939 and 1940 were promulgated to provide for controlled cotton purchase. In 1949 the Uganda Cotton Exporters Group, which changed its name to the Lake Province Exporters Group, signed a three-year contract with the British Raw Cotton Commission for purchase of the entire cotton produced in Tanzania. It was

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<sup>41</sup> TNA 22813, Tanganyika Police (Mwanza) Lake province to Department of Agriculture (North West Circle – WCGA), January, 30<sup>th</sup> 1935 then forwarded to Director of Agriculture, Ref. No.D.6/34/158, February 15<sup>th</sup> 1935.

<sup>42</sup> TNA 23218, Chiefs to the Provincial Commissioner, December 16, 1933.

<sup>43</sup> TNA 23218, Memorandum on the establishment of Permanent export cotton market.

<sup>44</sup> TNA 22813, Director of Agriculture to Chief Secretary, Ref. No. 1312, February 2<sup>nd</sup> 1935.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> TNA 215/1423/A, Popat Ranji to Lake Province PC June 20<sup>th</sup> 1947 and August 19<sup>th</sup> 1947 and Dec 22<sup>nd</sup> 1947 to Bishop of Mwanza. TNA 215/1423/C, Uzinza Farmers Association to Ibanza (Council of Chiefs), October 2<sup>nd</sup> 1950.

through this arrangement that the Indian traders entrenched their monopoly and control of the Lake Province cotton industry. Researchers such as Yoshida,<sup>47</sup> and Leubuscher<sup>48</sup> examined crop marketing under The Emergency Power Defense Acts of 1939 and 1940 in the WCGA and Uganda did not explain why the Ugandan government was involved. As it seems, the relationship dates back from 1920s when the ECGC's office was closely involved in development of the WCGA cotton industry due to geographical proximity and the fact that most of merchants were based in Uganda.<sup>49</sup>

After World War II, the colonial Department of Agriculture in Tanzania demarcated cotton buying locations into zones (see Table 1). Under the zone scheme, prohibitions were imposed on the movement of cotton seed from one constituted zone to another. This was done primarily to maintain cotton quality and avoid mixing varieties. Thus, cotton produced in a given zone had to be ginned within the zone, which meant that growers were restricted from having options to market their produce.

**Table 1: Companies allocated cotton-buying zones, 1948 to 1951**

<b>Zone</b>	<b>Company</b>	<b>Ginnery</b>
Musoma	Messrs Musoma Industries Ltd	Mgango Ginnery
Pambani	Messrs Pambani Ltd	Pambani Ginnery
Nyambiti	Messrs Kwimba Ginnery Ltd	Kwimba Ginnery Ltd
Nassa	Messrs Sikh Ginners	Nassa Ginnery and Messrs Sikh Ginners Ltd (Mwamagili)
Ukerewe	White Fathers and Messrs Ladha Meghji & Sons Ltd	Murutunguru Ginnery
Bukumbi	Messrs Baghwaji Sundeji and Co Ltd	Mwabagoli Ginnery
Shinyanga	Messrs Baghwaji Sundeji and Co Ltd	Uzogole ginnery
Luguru	Messrs Baghwaji Sundeji and Co Ltd	Luguru ginnery
Malampaka	Messrs Baghwaji Sundeji and Co Ltd	
Buchosa	Buchosa Cotton Co Ltd	Buchosa ginnery (Nyakalilo)
Buchosa	Messrs Nakasero Commercial Corporation Ltd	Buchosa ginnery

<sup>47</sup> Masao Yoshida, *Agricultural Marketing Intervention in East Africa* (Tokyo: Institute of Developing Economies, 1984).

<sup>48</sup> Charlotte Leubuscher, "Marketing Scheme for Native-Grown Produce in African Territories," *Journal of the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures* XII, no. 2, (April 1939): 163-188; Charlotte Leubuscher, *Bulk Buying from the Colonies: A Study of the Bulk Purchase of Colonial Commodities by the United Kingdom Government* (London: Oxford University Press, 1956).

<sup>49</sup> TNA 215/655 Vol. I, *Report to the Board of Trade of the Empire Cotton Growing Committee Presented to the Parliament by Command of His Majesty in 1920* (London: His Majesty Stationary Office), 33.

Small-scale Growers' Struggle against Marginalization in the Cotton Value Chain: An Experience from the Western Cotton Growing Area, Tanzania, 1920s–1950s

Mwanza	Messrs Nakasero Commercial Corporation Ltd	Mwanza ginnery
Ihale	Messrs Mwanza Cotton Trading Co Ltd	Ihale ginnery

Source: Reports of the Regional Assistant Director of Agriculture, Lake Province, 1947-1949.

The scheme was also meant to enforce the Cotton Rules and control the cotton trade. It was also meant to protect farmers against abuse, as it minimized the number of traders, mostly middlemen so that farmers could accrue profit for their produce. In instituting the zoning scheme, selected cotton merchants were granted a monopoly over the cotton industry in the WCGA. In many instances, growers had to carry their cotton load a long distance to the buying post.<sup>50</sup> The growers viewed this as inconvenient. They criticized it because it eliminated free competition, making it more costly to travel and market their produce.<sup>51</sup> Under the scheme, the merchants entrenched their exploitation of the industry through a monopoly granted to them and paved the way for further cheating of growers.

The cheating of growers by cotton buyers increased during and post-war years. Such practices escalated throughout the 1940s. Some whistleblowers like Popat Ranji brought out further revelations about the extent of cheating. According to him, the extent of deprivation and robbery of farmers amounted to over 25%, pocketed by buyers through manipulation of weighing scales parcel, so that the weight could be reduced by a few pounds.<sup>52</sup> The percentage estimates described by Popat Ranji have a value amounting to over 1,500,000 shillings. In this regard, only 75% of the payment was handed to growers.<sup>53</sup> Ranji's report also mentioned Ladha Meghji and Sons Ltd as one of the merchant companies involved.<sup>54</sup> The colonial government efforts to control the malpractice were unsuccessful because buyers bribed government officers.<sup>55</sup>

In a separate incidence, concerns were also raised by the Uzinza Farmers Association under the leadership of Masanje Shija Mabenga and Luka Chimani who submitted their complaints

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<sup>50</sup> TNA 215/1423C, Geita District Commissioner to the Administrative Office, Sukumaland Ibanza prepared on July 6<sup>th</sup> 1952.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> TNA, 215/1423C, Province Popat Ranji to Provincial Commissioner, June 20<sup>th</sup> 1947 and August 19<sup>th</sup> 1947 Popat Ranji to Bishop of Mwanza Dec 22<sup>nd</sup> 1947 Co-operative Buying and Ginning in the Lake province.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

to the Sukuma Federation Council of Sukuma Chiefs (*Ibanza*).<sup>56</sup> They argued that cotton-buying clerks in the Buchosa ginnery cheated local farmers.<sup>57</sup> They also aired their concern to the Geita District Commissioner and provincial agricultural officers in the WCGA and asked them to end the zoned cotton marketing scheme, which would have meant the end of cotton buyers' monopoly.<sup>58</sup> Their proposal was acted upon by the colonial authority, which recruited 100 inspectors in 1950 to enforce the Cotton Ordinance No. 4 of 1949.<sup>59</sup> Under the Ordinance, weighing scales were compulsorily inspected by senior agricultural assistants and authorized officers at cotton markets and ginneries. However, most of the appointed officials did not tackle cheating, as buyers bribed them.<sup>60</sup>

The allocations of buying zones to buyers explained in the previous section were by and large controlled by companies owned by Asian traders. The buying clerks were employed in all buying centres allocated to ginneries and middlemen, who were deployed all over the WCGA. Cotton buyers were required to make sure that all cotton produced by farmers was purchased. They were also supposed to buy the cotton at fixed prices, and then ensure proper bagging, storage, and transport to the ginnery. The terms of the contract between cotton merchants and buying clerks were as follows: <sup>61</sup>

- a. No salary and commission paid;
- b. All expenses are to be met by the employee;
- c. All cotton buying expenses and bagging costs are to be met by the employee;
- d. As to the weight of cotton, the employee has to accept the weight of cotton as will be imparted by the ginnery weight; and
- e. For every 100 lb purchased only 6 per cent is given to an employee in cash.

Furthermore, Indian clerks kept two different weighing scales: the government-recommended scales which were not regularly used, and a second one regularly used to cheat on weight.<sup>62</sup> Under such circumstances, the clerks had to employ a wide range of tricks to survive and make

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<sup>56</sup> TNA 215/1423/A, Uzinza Farmers Association to Ibanza (Council of Chiefs), October 2<sup>nd</sup> 1950.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> TNA 215/1423/C, Lake Province Department of Agriculture to the District's Department of Agriculture, Ref. No. 205/1/1828, June 14<sup>th</sup> 1950.

<sup>60</sup> TNA 215/1423/A, Farmers Association to Sukumaland Ibanza (Council of Chiefs) of October 2<sup>nd</sup> 1950.

<sup>61</sup> TNA 215/1423C, Popat Ranji to Provincial Commissioner, June 20<sup>th</sup> 1947 and August 19<sup>th</sup> 1947; TNA 215/1423C, Popat Ranji to Bishop of Mwanza Dec 22<sup>nd</sup> 1947.

<sup>62</sup> TNA 215/1423C, Popat Ranji to Provincial Commissioner, June 20<sup>th</sup> 1947 and August 19<sup>th</sup> 1947; TNA 215/1423C, Popat Ranji to Bishop of Mwanza Dec 22<sup>nd</sup> 1947.

a profit every cotton-buying season. In some instances, farmers received less-than-official prices, experienced false weighing, and incorrect payments contrary to cotton grade quality.

Perpetuation of cheating was translated by growers as a lack of response from the colonial authority. Therefore, they crafted interventions against cheating that were organized by informal groups that comprised youth. These groups were locally known as *mabebete* among the Wasukuma ethnic group also the *avapimi va mangafu* in Nansio, *Ukerewe* among the Wakerewe people from Ukerewe Islands. They operated in every cotton buying markets in the WCGA.<sup>63</sup>

In some districts, colonial officials did not favour *avapimi va magafu* groups. For example, the Ukerewe district commissioner strongly opposed them. He viewed them not as a solution, but rather as troublemakers and nuisance to buyers due to their disruptive behaviour at cotton buying businesses premises across the district.<sup>64</sup> Some of these groups in Ukerewe demanded to operate within ginnery premises, largely to learn about ginning and baling at the Tanganyika Cotton Company and Ukerewe Cotton Company facilities.<sup>65</sup> The Ukerewe district commissioner viewed them as incapable semi-illiterates who frequently made weighing errors.<sup>66</sup>

He disregarded their motivation to stop cheating and marginalization arguing that “although cultivators suffer exploitation by traders, financial loss incurred by growers was exaggerated”.<sup>67</sup> On the other hand, Ukerewe district commissioner appeared hypocritical arguing that the *avapimi va magafu* “provide employment and revenue” and if are restricted the colonial officials would be judged of being in the same league (collusion) with the cotton buyers.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> O. Gottfried, and M. B. Lag, “Problems of Social and Economic Change in Sukumaland, Tanganyika,” *Anthropological Quarterly* 35, no. 2 (April 1962): 86-101.

<sup>64</sup> TNA 215/1423/C, Ukerewe DC to the Lake Provincial Commissioner, Ref. No. 5/129, May 22<sup>nd</sup> 1952.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> TNA 215/1423/C, Extracts of the meeting between TNA Ukerewe DC and Ukerewe Farmers Society delegation held on May 23<sup>rd</sup> 1952.

<sup>67</sup> TNA 215/1423/C District Commissioner, Mwanza to PC, Lake Province, September 3<sup>rd</sup> 1948; TNA 215/1423/C Geita's District Commissioner to Sukumaland (Ibanza) Administrative Officer in charge, July 6<sup>th</sup> 1952.

<sup>68</sup> TNA 215/1423/C, DC, Mwanza to PC, Lake Province, September 3<sup>rd</sup> 1948.

Coulson reiterates that cheating and payment based on short weight was widespread<sup>69</sup>. However, Ruthenberg refutes these claims by arguing that, cheating of growers by Indian traders was non-existent and mere campaigns to tarnish their reputation.<sup>70</sup> At the same time, Ghai maintains that claims about cheating practices are baseless and points out that criticism of such practices is often couched in racial terms.<sup>71</sup> Ruthenberg's findings and conclusions are based on a small sample out of hundreds in the WCGA. He cites evidence from Ukerewe where it was reported that "50 per cent of scales from 9 buying posts used by *avapimi va magafu* were defective".<sup>72</sup> The evidence suggests that the practice was widespread. Minutes records gathered from archival files indicates some evidence. One such evidence was a meeting held between the Assistant DA and ginners in Mwanza town. It shows that cheating was widespread due to the monopoly granted to buyers in local zones.<sup>73</sup> Any control of the practice was difficult because government officers were bribed by buyers.<sup>74</sup>

In other districts, such as Geita, the officers who attempted to enforce the law were transferred. Those who replaced them were not interested in defending the growers. People who helped growers to read the scales found themselves in trouble, being flogged and locked away.<sup>75</sup> Meanwhile, the officials were seen on several occasions having tea or beer with cotton buyers.<sup>76</sup> This generated an impression that the government officials appointed to check cheating are in the same racket.<sup>77</sup>

The Lake Province Department of Agriculture's failure to address the abuses led to growers' initiatives, which were supposed to end abusive practices. The Mwanza District Commissioner, with the help of the Department of Agriculture, introduced a course reading weighing scales.<sup>78</sup> The target group was comprised of school teachers and schoolboys. The course was conducted during the holidays. The trained school teachers and pupils taught similar classes to growers in

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<sup>69</sup> Coulson, *Tanzania: A Political Economy*, 290

<sup>70</sup> Hans Ruthenberg, *Agricultural Development in Tanganyika* (Berlin: Springer-Verlag, 1964), 57.

<sup>71</sup> Dharam Ghai, *Asia: Portrait of a Minority: Asians in East Africa* (Bombay: Oxford University Press, 1965), 104.

<sup>72</sup> TNA 215/1423/C, District Commissioner, Mwanza to PC, Lake Province, September 3<sup>rd</sup> 1948.

<sup>73</sup> TNA 215/1423/C, Minutes records of a meeting held between the Assistant DA and ginners, (1949).

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>75</sup> TNA 215/1423/A, Uzinza Farmers Association to Sukumaland Ibanza (Council of Chiefs) of October 2<sup>nd</sup> 1950.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> TNA 215/1423/C, Lake Province Department of Agriculture to the District's Department of Agriculture, June 14<sup>th</sup> 1950 with reference No. 205/1/1828

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*



their respective villages. The initiative was supposed to reduce cheating, but it faced challenges because officials responsible to enforce the Cotton Rule oftentimes were not doing their job.

### **Responses against colonial officials' obstructions**

The reaction against colonial officials' obstructions occurred on four fronts. Faced with the colonial authority's failure to stop cheating, local growers decided to act. They formed groups called *avapimi va magafu* (that is, cotton weighers in Kikerewe language) in Ukerewe district and *mabebete* in other parts of the WCGA to join forces and curb rampant cheating of growers by cotton buyers.<sup>79</sup> These groups were stationed at buying posts. All groups bought weighing scales that were used to weigh cotton loads delivered by growers at buying posts, and to determine the amount to be paid based on the government price reckoner that showed cotton weight and pricing grade which guided them. These groups of volunteers helped growers to read scales all over Sukumaland and the Ukerewe Island. Moreover, these groups also checked the quality of cotton delivered by farmers and helped them to grade it. They also helped illiterate growers to count the money paid by the cotton buyers.<sup>80</sup>

Some of the colonial officials in the WCGA were disgruntled by the appearance of the *mabebete* and *avapimi va magafu* that were "troublesome" by some colonial officials.<sup>81</sup> But they were not declared illegal, which was an indication that they had some limited approval. In 1949, the Native Authority in the Geita District, specifically in Buchosa and Nassa, promulgated some regulations and by-laws to create a basis for the operations of the volunteer groups.<sup>82</sup>

According to these regulations and by-laws, they were not allowed to operate within 400 yards of cotton buying posts and ginneries that were operated by merchants.<sup>83</sup> However, some researchers like Gorst show that the *mabebete* and *avapimi va magafu* were licenced throughout

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<sup>79</sup> TNA 215/1423C, Co-operative Buying and Ginning in the Lake Province; Gottfried and Lag, "Problems of Social and Economic Change," 86-101.

<sup>80</sup> Seimu, "Growth and Development of Coffee and Cotton Marketing Co-operatives."

<sup>81</sup> TNA 215/1423C, Geita's District Commissioner to Sukumaland (Ibanza) Administrative Officer in charge, July 6<sup>th</sup> 1952.

<sup>82</sup> *Tanganyika Annual Co-operative Development Report on the Co-operative Development* (Dar es Salaam: Government Printer, 1949).

<sup>83</sup> TNA, 215/1423C, Report on the Co-operative Development to the Administrative Office Sukumaland Ibanza prepared on July 6<sup>th</sup> 1952.

the WCGA under the Cotton Ordinance No. 4 of 1949.<sup>84</sup> As it seems, Gorst misinterpreted the Ordinance which was enacted by LEGCO, whereas Rules were set up by the provincial and districts administration in collaboration with the Native Administration. The Native Authorities in Buchosa and Nassa provided legislation in 1949 to regulate the use of weighing scales.<sup>85</sup> Of course, these groups were accommodated by the provincial colonial officials to hedge the political risk of their activities.<sup>86</sup>

Generally, the colonial authority appeared supportive when it enacted the Cotton Ordinance No. 4 of 1949, which also included some guidelines that required cotton buyers to have a weight scale facing the seller so that s/he can be able to read the weight of his/her load.<sup>87</sup> The groups had support from the Department of Agriculture staff, which made regular visits at buying posts and ginneries primarily to inspect scales. However, the visits experienced some drawbacks because the department was very poorly staffed and thus could not reach all buying posts and ginneries in the WCGA. This shortage was resolved by recruiting some inspectors.

Legalizing *mabebete* and *avapimi va magafu* also enforcement of the Cotton Ordinance No. 4 of 1949 was regarded by cotton buying clerks and traders as a threat to their interests. They complained to the colonial authority, claiming that *mabebete* members were crippling their functions.<sup>88</sup> Despite the challenge imposed by these groups to cotton buyers and their success in minimizing marginalization of growers' monopoly over cotton buying, processing and export remained in the hands of Indian merchants. This was not a sustainable solution that made other groups pursue the struggle and take it to the next stage. The fight was carried out by native traders in the WCGA who created a system of buying the crop from growers, which will be discussed in the next section.

### **The emergence of co-operatives**

Demand for the formation of co-operatives in the WCGA was bottom-up. This was a unique feature as compared to other parts of the country, such as Kilimanjaro, Ruvuma, Southern

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<sup>84</sup> Sheila Gorst, *Co-operative Organisation in Tropical Countries: A Study of Co-Operative Development in Non-Self-Governing Territories under the United Kingdom Administration* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1959), 172.

<sup>85</sup> TNA, 215/1423C, Memorandum for Natural Resource Committee: Co-operative Cotton Buying in the Lake Province

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> TNA, 215/1423C, Geita District Commissioner to the Administrative Office Sukumaland Ibanza July 6<sup>th</sup> 1952.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

highlands and Kagera regions, where it happened at the behest of the colonial authority.<sup>89</sup> This demand was a response to the colonial authority's obstruction of the growers' attempt to have a higher stake in the cotton value chain.

The history of agricultural marketing co-operatives in Tanzania dates back to 1932 when the Co-operative Societies Ordinance was passed. Several small-scale growers' co-operatives were registered in the country and in Uganda, where they made a good job in curbing the exploitation of growers.<sup>90</sup> It is worth noting that the efforts of colonial officials to address the exploitation of cotton growers in the WCGA were unsuccessful. Attempts by the *avapimi va magafu* and *mabebete* had some limitations, as outlined earlier. Thus, numerous and diversified interest groups emerged primarily to protect the interest of growers drawing on the experience from other parts of Tanzania and Uganda.

The colonial authority roadmap towards accommodation of co-operatives started during the Lake Province Council in 1951,<sup>91</sup> to evaluate the cotton industry and to review the implementation of the 1950 Governor's memorandum on the farming expansion in order to produce at least 40,000 bales.<sup>92</sup> It emerged during the meeting that cotton production was 39,000 bales which was disappointingly below the previous year.<sup>93</sup> This prompted the colonial authority to impose compulsory measures under the Ordinance No. 57 of 1951 that compelled each household to cultivate a minimum of one cotton acre. It was also recommended to promote co-operatives that were considered as an instrument to motivate growers to increase production. The idea was that the creation of their own organizations would allow growers to bypass merchants and to have a bigger profit stake in the cotton value chain.<sup>94</sup>

The unofficial African members of the Lake Province Council who attended the meeting seized this opportunity to exert pressure on the government to promote co-operatives in all districts

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<sup>89</sup> Seimu, "Growth and Development of Coffee and Cotton Marketing Co-operatives."

<sup>90</sup> Nuwangira Naboth Mwejune, "Problems of Co-operative movement in Uganda: A Case study of Banyankore Kweterana Co-operative Union Limited," Masters Dissertation, University of Dar es Salaam, 1993; Cyril Ehrlich, "The Marketing of Cotton in Uganda, 1900-1950," PhD Thesis, University of London, 1958.

<sup>91</sup> TNA 21032, Annual Report of the Lake Province Council on Agricultural and Natural Resources Committee 1951.

<sup>92</sup> TNA 28259/21, Provincial Commissioner, Lake Province to Lake Province Member of Local Government, Confidential, Ref. No 29121/41, December 10<sup>th</sup> 1951.

<sup>93</sup> International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, *The Economic Development of Tanganyika* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1961), 12, 13 and 202.

<sup>94</sup> Annual Report of the Lake Province Council on Agricultural and Natural Resources Committee, 1951, TNA 21032.

of the WCGA.<sup>95</sup> The Geita District responded positively.<sup>96</sup> However, the Provincial Commissioner was reluctant arguing that it was not possible as the Province had no expertise to guide this kind of societies.<sup>97</sup> A year later, colonial officials in the Geita District demanded the deployment experts as the growers' desire to form co-operatives and control the marketing of their crop was evident.<sup>98</sup>

Regardless of the administrative and procedural difficulties detailed above, the societies kept on growing in the Geita District. The evidence from the Geita District shows that in 1952<sup>99</sup> there were emerging embryonic growers' associations mainly in Buchosa and Karumo Chiefdoms, such as *Wakulima wa Kiafrika*, the Wafikiri African Union Association of Sengerema, *Wakulima Stadi*, the Sukuma Union and the Zinza Union, as well as the Mwanza African Traders Co-operative Society (MATCS) which had 200 members.<sup>100</sup>

The embryonic organizations in the Geita District were brought under a secondary society called the Mweli Co-operative Union which had 1,700 members.<sup>101</sup> It was formed in July 1952 for all societies in Buchosa and Karumo Chiefdoms<sup>102</sup> to pursue their aspirations for registration and start cotton marketing and ginning. However, the Co-operative Department of the colonial government had no plans to support the development of co-operatives in Geita. Despite the lack of support from the Co-operative Department determination among growers and officials in Geita was high, which made the Union vibrant and active in the Geita District.

The native growers' association under Mweli Co-operative Union in the Geita District joined others in pursuing the registration and voiced some demands to the district authority government, which they thought could end the exploitation of growers and allow newly formed organization to have a stake in cotton marketing blocked by the merchants' monopoly until then. The demands raised were:

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<sup>95</sup> TNA 215/1423/C, PC, Lake Province to Commissioner of Co-operative Development, November 16<sup>th</sup> 1951.

<sup>96</sup> TNA 215/1423/C, District Officer, Geita District to Chairman Lake Province Council, November 10<sup>th</sup> 1951, TNA 215/1423/C.

<sup>97</sup> TNA 215/1423/C, PC, Lake Province to Commissioner of Co-operative Development, November 16<sup>th</sup> 1951.

<sup>98</sup> TNA 215/1423/C, District Officer (signed by Edward Hawlence), Geita District to PC, Lake Province, Ref. No. 1/19/1, February 23<sup>rd</sup> 1952.

<sup>99</sup> TNA 215/1423/C, Geita's DC to Sukumaland (Ibanza) Administrative Officer In-charge on July 6<sup>th</sup> 1952.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>101</sup> TNA 215/1423/C, Geita's District Commissioner to Sukumaland (Ibanza) Administrative Officer In-charge, Ref. No. 30/1/39, July 6<sup>th</sup> 1952.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*

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- a) Scrapping of the zoning system because it created a monopoly and undermined free marketing competition, which was of no use in the post-World War II era
- b) Stamping out of cheating in cotton marketing
- c) Revoking cotton rule that required *mabebete* to be stationed 400 yards from buying post as it stimulated cheating.<sup>103</sup>

It must be noted that these societies were formed with strong support of district officials, especially the District Office Commissioner Mr. Halwenge, who stated that “the delay to register it [co-operatives] was a politically motivated agenda and unnecessary punishment to Wasukuma, who were not troublesome, in favour of the non-native in the cotton industry”.<sup>104</sup> For him, there were enough resources and experiences available to make the provincial administration register co-operatives without taking too high a risk.<sup>105</sup> On the other hand, it is possible to interpret the efforts shown by Hawleng as a delaying tactic to absorb the growers' frustrations.

In other WCGA locations such as Mwanza, Ukerewe and Kwimba districts embryonic societies were formed mostly under the umbrella of the Mwanza based Mwanza African Traders Co-operative Society (MATCS), which was founded in 1946, with the registration number 61, to facilitate wholesale purchase of rationed consumer goods on behalf of native shop owners among traders and local chiefs in the Lake Province. The establishment of numerous societies in Mwanza, Ukerewe and Kwimba districts which had by-laws and elected leadership alarmed the provincial authority<sup>106</sup> because none of these was formed with the support from the colonial authority.

Of these, the Ukerewe Farmers Society was the most active. However, its efforts were undermined by the Ukerewe District Commissioner. Upon its formation, the Ukerewe Farmers Society was committed to seize the entire cotton marketing value chain by having its members buy the crop and be involved in the processing of the produce. Surely, the Society had no capital. Instead, a takeover of the cotton business from existing merchants was considered a viable option. To achieve this goal, they demanded the Mwanza Cotton Company and the

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> TNA 215/1423/C, District Officer, Geita District to Chairman Lake Province Council, November 10<sup>th</sup> 1951.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> TNA 215/1423/C, Provincial Commissioner, Lake Province to the District Commissioners Lake Province, (Confidential), Ref. No. 1423/C/56, July 19<sup>th</sup> 1952.

Ukerewe Cotton Company to invest in cotton buying and ginning in the district.<sup>107</sup> Through such partnership, which was accepted by both the Mwanza Cotton Company and the Ukerewe Cotton Company, the Ukerewe Farmers Society aimed to gain experiences for its staff and members that could be useful to operate their venture in the future.<sup>108</sup>

Of course, the Mwanza Cotton Company and the Ukerewe Cotton Company could not reject the idea as they dreaded disruptions of businesses by the Ukerewe Farmers Society. However, the approval sought by the two companies to accommodate the Ukerewe Farmers Society was rejected by the Commissioner of Co-operative Development.<sup>109</sup> Shortly after that the Ukerewe District Commissioner, R.K.M. Battye, banned the Growers Co-operative Society Ltd<sup>110</sup> from engaging in cotton marketing as per Notice No. 5/119, published on May 16<sup>th</sup> 1952, since it was not a registered organization.

The District Commissioner was categorically against co-operatives. He viewed them as “unreliable and not capable to undertake cotton marketing”.<sup>111</sup> He ruled out the scheme in Ukerewe because it “would be calamitous”<sup>112</sup> and thought they would be “exploited by a few for private gain”.<sup>113</sup> Therefore, he indicated his preference for Indian traders to handle cotton marketing and processing, given their decades of experience that “guaranteed the government revenue with no much financial loss”.<sup>114</sup> He was also against promoting the embryonic organization, the Ukerewe Farmers Society to a fully-fledged co-operative organization because there was “no spirit of co-operation among the people”.<sup>115</sup>

These difficulties prompted the MATCS leadership to form a new organization, the Lake Province Growers Association (LPGA), primarily aimed at handling cotton crop produced by small-scale growers in the WCGA. The LPGA was set up in 1952. Mustafa Shija Mabenga

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<sup>107</sup> TNA 215/1423/C, Extracts of the meeting between Ukerewe District Commissioner and Ukerewe Farmers Society, May 23<sup>rd</sup> 1952.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Provincial Commissioner, Lake Province to Tanganyika Cotton Company Ltd, June 18<sup>th</sup> 1952, TNA 215/1423/C.

<sup>110</sup> Ukerewe Growers Co-operative Society Ltd was a branch of the MATCS under the chairmanship of Mr Eupharazi Mahunde.

<sup>111</sup> TNA 215/1423/C Ukerewe District Commissioner to Provincial Commissioner, Lake Province, September 3<sup>rd</sup> 1948.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> TNA 1423/C, Mwanza to Provincial Commissioner, Lake Province, September 3<sup>rd</sup> 1948.

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became its president and Paul Bomani its secretary. The LPGA was also rejected by the colonial authority because it lacked experience and had no cotton handling license. However, the LPGA received support from other stakeholders, such as chief David Kidaha Makwaiya of Usiha, one of the members of the Legislative Council (LEGCO) who openly demanded the registration of co-operatives.

The rejection of their program prompted the MATCS secretary Paul Bomani, Stefano Sanja and Ndaki Italiacha to travel to Uganda to visit cotton marketing co-operative societies and learn how to mobilize growers to join co-operatives. On their return, they visited all chiefdoms<sup>116</sup> in the WCGA, where they met growers and local chiefs to whom they successfully laid out a platform for spontaneous co-operative growth.

**Figure 2: Some Chiefdoms in the WCGA**



G. Andrew Maguire, *Towards Uhuru in Tanzania: The Politics of Participation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969).

<sup>116</sup> Such Chiefdoms were Nassa, Ukerewe, Massaza I and II, Magu, Dutwa, Ntuzu, Itilima, Karumo, Kanadi, Nunghu, Sima, Ndagalu, Usmao, Bukoli, Uduhe, Nera, Kome, Buchosa, Ushashi, Buyombe, Mwanza, Bujashi, Bukumbi, Bugeneji, Ikizu, Usiha, Sukuma, LPGA to PC, Lake Province, November 19<sup>th</sup> 1953.

The LPGA had approval from local chiefs and of their subjects. Such support demonstrated the chiefs' and growers' readiness to end the exploitation by Indian traders.<sup>117</sup> This was also a significant proof of the unity between commoners, traders, and chiefs in order to achieve control of the cotton value chain. At the same time, the provincial commissioner was getting worried as he realized that he was losing support from prominent chiefs.<sup>118</sup> Africans who were unofficial representatives of the Lake Province Council seized this opportunity to demand the promotion of co-operatives.<sup>119</sup>

Such convergence of interests created a strong momentum for creating a common agenda to pressurize the colonial authority to accommodate cotton marketing co-operatives in the WCGA. It was at an advanced stage in Buchosa and Geita, where co-operative societies were formed much earlier than anywhere else in the WCGA, with the support of district officials. Therefore, the LPGA successfully exploited its growing popularity in other districts and chiefdoms to convince growers in Buchosa and Geita to join them.

As a result, the LPGA gained additional influence in Geita, which brought its embryonic co-operatives under one umbrella with a common front and a shared agenda. Its indisputable position was further strengthened by incorporating informal groups, the *mabebete* and *avapimi va magaafu*, which were brought under its command. At this juncture, the LPGA covered a wide range of stakeholders in the WCGA. It was galvanising all groups that wanted to end cheating of growers by traders. The LPGA conducted itself so well that the colonial authority was willing to start a discussion on that matter.

The demands put forward by growers, traders, chiefs, and embryonic associations were included in the British Colonial Office post-war Marketing Policy for Colonial Primary Products.<sup>120</sup> The policy stressed that growers be organized either in producers' associations or under some form of government statutory marketing organization so that they could market their products in an orderly manner and obtain the best possible price. Such policy was pivotal

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<sup>117</sup> G. Andrew Maguire, *Towards Uhuru in Tanzania: The Politics of Participation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 91.

<sup>118</sup> TNA 215/1423/C, Provincial Commissioner, Lake Province to Commissioner to Commissioner of Co-operative Development, November 16<sup>th</sup> 1951.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>120</sup> TNA, 37192, The Colonial Office Confidential Memorandum on General Price and Marketing Policy for Colonial Primary Products, February 1947.



for the amendment of marketing legislation in Tanzania and the integration of co-operatives. The registrar of the Co-operative Department was charged with the responsibility to develop a policy draught that suited the Tanzanian context specifically, the African Agricultural (Control and Marketing) Ordinance of 1949. This legislation provided a forum for exerting pressure on existing Marketing Boards to promote co-operatives. Moreover, the legislation allowed the formation of the Lint and Seed Marketing Board (LSMB) in 1952.

The African Agricultural (Control and Marketing) Ordinance of 1949 was crucial for the growth of the co-operative movement. The central object of the legislation was to foster government-sponsored co-operation. However, the Co-operative Department failed to press for the promotion of co-operatives in the WCGA. Thus, the registrar disregarded the government officials' efforts to promote co-operatives in the WCGA.<sup>121</sup> He openly snubbed producers' aspirations to form co-operatives by pointing out that "I do not see clearly what is envisaged."<sup>122</sup> Also, the registrar distanced himself from seeing the success of any attempt to form co-operatives as he argued that "I do not have faith with cotton marketing organization in Tanganyika."<sup>123</sup> Such a negative perception by the registrar was communicated to provincial officers, who did not pass it down to the growers and their leaders. On the whole, the registrar was reluctant to pursue his responsibilities, one of them being the promotion of co-operatives.

Again, the LPGA became a credible organization with significant energy to pressurize the colonial authority. However, the LPGA encountered a challenge during its struggle, which was the hesitancy of many colonial officials to register co-operatives in the WCGA. The Association had fruitless meetings with the Mwanza District Commissioner. The same applied to the Lake Province Commissioner who informed them that nothing could be done, since the province had no co-operative officer to facilitate the formation and registration of co-operatives.<sup>124</sup> The dialogue that was conducted with Lint and Seed Marketing Board (LSMB) proved futile on the same grounds.<sup>125</sup> Hence, the LPGA demanded to have a dialogue with the

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<sup>121</sup> TNA, 215/12423C, Provincial Commissioner to the members of Tanganyika Agricultural and Natural Resource Committee on 'Cotton Ginnery in the Lake Province' with Ref. No. 772/463, January 14<sup>th</sup> 1952; TNA, 215/12423C, Report and Memorandum of the Agricultural and Natural Resource Committee (November 1951).

<sup>122</sup> TNA, 215/12423C, Registrar of Co-operative Societies to the Provincial Commissioner, Lake Province with Reference Co-op.1058/3/191, February 18<sup>th</sup> 1952

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>124</sup> TNA 215/1423/C, Provincial Commissioner, Lake Province to Commissioner of Co-operative Development, Ref. No. 1423/C/27, May 1<sup>st</sup> 1952.

<sup>125</sup> TNA 215/1423/C, Extracts from Second LSMB meeting held on May 19<sup>th</sup> 1952.

Commissioner for Co-operative Development (Registrar of Co-operative Societies), which was granted after the Provincial Commissioner reported that the demand for co-operatives in the WCGA was “undoubtedly growing to handle cotton”.<sup>126</sup>

Moreover, the Provincial Commissioner cautioned that “my chief fear is that, if the posting of a co-operative officer is too long delayed the producers may attempt to form societies on their own and without guidance with probably disastrous results”.<sup>127</sup> Nevertheless, the Registrar was not supportive when he met LPGA delegation, arguing that his Department has no staff available to facilitate the formation and registration of co-operatives. Interestingly, the Commissioner asked the delegates to recommend individuals from WCGA with some secondary school education for co-operative course training and promised them to fund his/her studies.

The responses from the Registrar disappointed the LPGA delegation that relentlessly determined to pursue the matter for immediate formation and registration of co-operatives. The LPGA representative to the LSMB, Paul Bomani, threatened to lead a boycott by withholding cotton during the 1953 season.<sup>128</sup> All in all, no evidence suggests that growers were actually about to withhold cotton. But, the threat was taken seriously by the Commissioner of Co-operative Development who was present in the LSMB meeting. He unexpectedly promised Paul Bomani to send officers, a promise which was met by the deployment of Garvin B.J. Green on 16<sup>th</sup> October 1952 in Mwanza. Eight more co-operative officers were deployed in 1953 to assist him.<sup>129</sup> Moreover, six assistant co-operative inspectors were deployed.<sup>130</sup> The following registration of co-operative societies marked the beginning of the end of decades of marginalization of local growers, which can be seen as a significant victory of the natives.

### **The growers' victory against the marginalization**

From the 1953/54 season, co-operatives proved their worth by managing 13.5 per cent of the total crop.<sup>131</sup> This involved 38 co-operative societies producing 5,722,936 lbs. (roughly 2,598.8

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<sup>126</sup> TNA 215/1423/C, Provincial Commissioner, Lake Province to Commissioner to Commissioner for Co-operative Development, Ref. No. 1423/C/27, May 1<sup>st</sup> 1952.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

<sup>128</sup> TNA 215/1423/C, Extracts from Second Lint and Seed Marketing Board's meeting held on May 19<sup>th</sup> 1952.

<sup>129</sup> *Muungano wa Vyama vya Ushirika* (Dar es Salaam: CUT Press, 1977), 12.

<sup>130</sup> Maguire, *Towards Uhuru in Tanzania*, 98.

<sup>131</sup> *The Co-operative Union of Tanganyika Annual and Balance Sheet* (1963/64), 17-18.

tons or 2595880.104 kilograms) of cotton (see Table 2).<sup>132</sup> The registration of co-operative societies from 1953 was a significant step in tackling the Asian traders' monopoly on the cotton market. The success of the co-operatives in handling cotton in their first season was likely to have been attributed to years of cheating by traders and the advocacy role played by the *mabebete* and *avapimi va magafu*. Year after year, the co-operatives gained ground by capturing a greater share in the cotton market.

At the same time, traders and ginnerers were losing the most lucrative portions of the cotton value chain. In this process, traders were forced to abandon buying posts because they became uneconomic.<sup>133</sup> To fill the gap left by traders, the Department of Agriculture managed to persuade co-operatives to step in, which reinforced their position in marketing.<sup>134</sup>

**Table 2: Number of societies, cotton purchased and membership (1953 -1959)**

Year	No of societies	% of cotton collect	Societies' members	Non co-operative famers
1953/54	38	13.5	15,334	144,276
1954/55	65	32.5	33,935	149,845
1955/56	113	45.2	53,282	165,568
1956/57	198	60.1	86,627	158,373
1957/58	235	70.1	92,400	175,600
1958/59	275	85.4	Not available	248,546
1960	360	100	Not available	Not available

Source: The Co-operative Union of Tanganyika Annual and Balance Sheet 1963/64 Report, p.17

Table 2 indicates a decline in volume and percentage of cotton purchased by ginnerers and a shifting monopoly that was taken over by co-operative societies. The growers opted to market their produce through co-operatives. A decision by the Department of Agriculture to give precedence to co-operatives indicated confidence in their ability to conduct business. This

<sup>132</sup> TNA 215/1423/C Lint and Seed Marketing Board's end of the year Report, June 30<sup>th</sup> 1954.

<sup>133</sup> TNA, 29121, Cotton Cultivation: Orders under Section (8) of Native Authority from District Commissioner, Mwanza District to Native Authority Bulima, Ref. No. A.3/4/500, October 1957.

<sup>134</sup> TNA 29121, The Department of Agriculture to District Commissioners for Mwanza, Maswa, Kwimba, Geita, Shinyanga, Musoma, Ukerewe and Biharamulo, Ref. No. NOC/COT/BP, April, 23<sup>rd</sup> 1957.

development was concluded in 1959 when the Victoria Federation of Co-operative Unions was appointed as the LSMB agent in the WCGA. This was a significant step for the integration of cotton growers to improve their position in the cotton value chain.

This seemed like a retaliation for years of perpetual cheating by the traders. In 1957, the Report on Co-operative Development<sup>135</sup> indicated that societies in Maswa District that were affiliated to the Lukubanija Growers Co-operative Union, which was operating in Luguru zone and Isangijo in Malampaka Zone, had a total of 33 affiliated primary societies. The co-operative societies in Luguru handled 75 per cent of cotton produce in the zone; whereas Lukubanija affiliated societies handled 63 per cent of 10,000 bales produced in the zone. In some zones, the trend was attributed to the availability of co-operatives, which appeared to be credible buyers. Subsequently, the ginneries decided to abandon buying posts located outside ginneries because it was uneconomic.<sup>136</sup> As a whole, by 1960 the co-operatives in the WCGA secured a monopoly, a remarkable achievement for the newly formed societies, which were able to oust the traders who had been in business for decades.

A summary for some societies and the volume of marketed cotton from both members and non-members is shown in Table 2 above. Moreover, it shows an annual increase in the number of co-operative societies before and after independence in the WCGA (Mara, Mwanza, and Shinyanga). They also proved formidable in confronting the competition from the ginneries. The capacity for co-operative societies to gain ground in marketing cotton received an impetus through government support, as well as financial and logistical support from the LSMB.<sup>137</sup> The sum of £32,500 was made available to registered co-operative societies in 1953, repayable over 5-10 years with an interest rate of 4 per cent, for the purchase of equipment such as cash boxes, safes, and tarpaulins.<sup>138</sup> A total of £3,900 was allocated to purchase trucks for the transportation of cotton.<sup>139</sup> In 1954 the LSMB provided a loan to 65 societies to erect cotton stores as well as

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<sup>135</sup> TNA 215/1423/C, Maswa District Report on Co-operative Development for 1957.

<sup>136</sup> TNA 29121, Cotton Cultivation: Orders under Section (8) of Native Authority from DC Mwanza to Native Authority Bulima, Ref. No. A.3/4/500, October 1957.

<sup>137</sup> TNA 215/1423C, Commissioner of Co-operative Development to Lint and Seed Marketing Board, Ref. No. Co-op. B/9/24 and Co-Op. B/9/26, April 11<sup>th</sup> and April 24<sup>th</sup> 1953.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*; Tanganyika Annual Report on Co-operative Development (1954), 11; TNA 215/1423/A, Lint and Seed Marketing Board Annual Report, June 30<sup>th</sup> 1954.

<sup>139</sup> TNA 215/1423C, Ag Regional Assistant Director of Agriculture, Lake Province to Secretary Lint and Seed Marketing Board Ref. No. 247/35, June 1<sup>st</sup> 1953.

to purchase capital equipment.<sup>140</sup> Further, in 1957 the LSMB made a loan amounting to 540,000 shillings to two societies in the Maswa District.<sup>141</sup> The support provided by the LSMB and Co-operative Department was, by and large, to enable them to market cotton efficiently.

The increased number of primary co-operative societies created a need for a secondary co-operative society (Union) for each zone, which would look after the needs of primary societies in areas such as the marketing of their crop. This measure was aimed at the reinforcement of primary societies' capacity. It was also meant to ensure that primary societies were not susceptible to the ginners' influence and competition because they had limited experience in managing and organizing the growing cotton marketing. The decision to form secondary societies was a significant departure for primary societies' reliance on assistance from government institutions, the LSMB and the Co-operative Development Department. In an attempt to move away from depending on government support, and the cotton traders' and ginners' intimidations, the process of forming Unions was coordinated by the LPGA that incentivised the creation of a cotton marketing structure in each cotton production zone. Such reforms went hand in hand with recruiting personnel to manage the cotton marketing process.

The Unions were charged to supervise the activities of affiliated societies. They became a link between societies and the ginners, which controlled the movement of crops from buying post to a ginnery. The Unions operated within cotton-producing zones, some of which were set up in the 1930s. In 1955, seven Unions were formed and registered. The names of most Unions called for unity and were perceived as intimidating or discouraging by Indian traders. In November 1954, the representatives of the LPGA and Mveli Union met to talk about the cotton industry. During the meeting, they discussed the formation of Unions in other localities, as well as the creation of an apex organization. They agreed on the transformation of the LPGA into the Victoria Federation of Co-operative Unions (VFCU) on May 15<sup>th</sup> 1955, which had seven affiliated co-operative unions all registered in 1955.<sup>142</sup>

Masanja Shija became the first president of the Federation and Paul Bomani became its general manager. In less than a decade, co-operative societies (primary and secondary societies as well

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<sup>140</sup> TNA 215/1423/A, Lint and Seed Marketing Board, Annual Report, June 30<sup>th</sup> 1954.

<sup>141</sup> TNA 215/1423/C, Maswa District Report on Co-operative Development for 1957.

<sup>142</sup> *Tanganyika Territory, Annual Reports on Co-operative Development* (Dar es Salaam: Government Printer, 1962/63).

as the apex organization) successfully managed to wrestle power from cotton traders and shift it to growers and the co-operative movement. The unions were given polemic names such as *Idetemya Bageni* that symbolized independence and autonomy against years of exploitation and marginalization by cotton traders of the producers, who became members of cotton marketing primary co-operative societies (see Table 3).

**Table 3: Secondary Societies (Unions) affiliated to the VFCU**

No	Union	Translation	Zone	Registered
1	Ikumbo	Broom	Manawa - Kwimba	1956
2	Iyungilo	Filter	Bukumbi – Mwanza	1960
3	Kimisha	Awakening	Nyambiti – Kwimba	
4	Chenge cha Balimi	torch/firebrand	Uzogole – Shinyanga	1956
5	Kipyena Bayanda	Exorcize children	Bukumbi - Geita	July 1956
6	Kiguna Bahabi	Sponsor of the poor	Nassa - Mwanza	1955
7	Nyamagana	One who give birth to hundreds	Ngasamo - Mwanza	
8	Kishamapanda	Road builder	Mhunze - Shinyanga	1960
9	Tupendane	love each other	Ushashi – Mara	
10	Mweli/Ng'weli farmers	Western Farmers	Geita - Mwanza	1954
11	Mugango	-	Mugango - Musoma	1955
12	Namuzuna	Supporter	Kibara - Ukerewe Mainland	1955
13	Buchililo	A place to Recuperate	Nyamililo - Geita	1954
14	Idetenya bageni	Terror to aliens	Kasamwa - Geita	1955
15	Isangijo	Meeting place	Malampaka – Maswa	1955
16	Kilagabageni	Farewell to strangers	Sola – Maswa	1960
17	Lukubanija	Mshirikishaji	Luguru - Maswa	1955
18	Engabo union <sup>143</sup> (Bukerebe)	-	Murutunguru - Ukerewe Island	1955/1961
19	Kilelamhina	One who cares the poor	Ihale-Mwanza	1956
20	Gwaging'olo bageni	Disappointment of strangers	Magu-Kwimba	1960

Source: *Annual reports on Co-operative Development* (Dar es Salaam: Government Printer, 1959-1961).

The functions of the secondary societies regarding affiliated primary societies included

- a) Distribution of cash
- b) Purchasing and issuing of bags

<sup>143</sup> Engabo Union was liquidated and Bukerebe was formed.

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- c) Organisation of transporting cotton from societies to the ginnery
- d) Checking the weighing of cotton at ginneries
- e) Overall supervision for the efficient running of primary
- f) Maintaining proper books of account.

Like all other secondary societies in the WCGA, these Unions imposed a two-cent levy per lb of cotton, one cent of which was passed to the VFCU.<sup>144</sup> The societies made patronage dividend payments to members of one or two cents per lb on the 1956 crop.<sup>145</sup> Significantly, the bottom-up approach does not suggest that the Victoria Federation of Co-operative Unions and its affiliated secondary and primary societies evaded the government's control, as they were part of the cotton marketing mechanism in which the LSMB had the upper hand, whereas the co-operatives were merely agents charged with cotton collecting from growers.

The Union created a need for an umbrella organization to look after the interest of affiliated primary and secondary societies, and to facilitate negotiations on behalf of the cotton growers with the Government and the ginneries, which were at that time dominated by Asian traders. As already mentioned, this culminated in the LPGA transforming into an apex organization which was renamed the VFCU.<sup>146</sup> This signified a smooth transfer of power to the locals. The first seven Unions were affiliated to the Federation, but the number increased as more unions were formed in various zones as shown in Table 4 above.<sup>147</sup> This was a significant blow to the Indian cotton traders as the LSMB ceased to use them as agents to handle cotton.<sup>148</sup>

By 1958, the VFCU had control over 85 per cent and in 1959 attained 100 per cent of the province's cotton trade. In this case, the Asian cotton merchants lost their last grip over the cotton trade demonstrating their rejection to producers who preferred to sell their cotton to co-operatives of which they were members. In 1959, the VFCU was granted an exclusive trade monopoly for cotton. Following VFCU appointment as LSMB's agent, the Indian cotton merchants' monopoly on the cotton market was finally broken.<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> TNA, 215/1423/C, Maswa District Report on Co-operative Development for 1957.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid.

<sup>146</sup> *Tanganyika Territory, Annual Reports on Co-operative Development* (Dar es Salaam: Government Printer, 1955), 5.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid, 9-11.

<sup>148</sup> Fuggles-Couchman, *Agriculture Change in Tanganyika*, 50.

<sup>149</sup> *Tanganyika Territory, Co-operative Development, Annual Reports on Co-operative Development* (Dar es Salaam: Government Printer, 1959).

When the co-operatives emerged, they did not own ginneries, and so had to rely on the Indian-owned facilities to gin their cotton, which was costly and showed the need for unions have their own ginneries. This was an important step to capture the whole industry and do away with exploitation by cotton merchants. The first ginnery was imported in 1956. Its cost was £88,000.<sup>150</sup> The amount was generated from a loan provided by the LSMB. The ginnery was installed at Kasamwa in the Geita District, where cotton production had risen from 1,000 in the late 1940s to 3,000 bales in 1952.<sup>151</sup> The increase in production was a result of population resettlement in the district following the implementation of the Sukuma Development Scheme. The Kasamwa ginnery started its operations in June 1956. Upon installation of the ginnery, the VFCU submitted a request to the LSMB to create a new zone for Kasamwa ginnery primarily to suffocate Indian-owned ginneries with the supply of cotton.<sup>152</sup>

The second ginnery was bought in 1958 and was installed at Ushashi. In 1961, Kasamwa and Ushashi ginned only 11% of the total cotton output processed in the entire WCGA, of which the Kasamwa ginnery processed 9,845 cotton bales, while 9,232 were processed at Ushashi.<sup>153</sup> Thus, by 1960 the VFCU was a powerful and important force in the WCGA and described as representing the voice of producers as no other organization could.<sup>154</sup> Moreover, by 1957 the Lukubanija Growers Co-operative Union and its affiliated primary societies in Luguru zone, Maswa District handled 75 per cent of cotton produce, while Isangijo in Malampaka Zone handled 63 per cent of 10,000 bales produced in the zone.<sup>155</sup>

## Conclusion

The promotion of cotton production among the small-scale native farmers from the 1920s onward in Tanzania was a response to the demand for the produce in Britain. Cotton production by natives was guided by policies that compelled growers to produce the crop without consulting them. The policies were meant to confine small-scale growers to cotton farming. Such policies were primarily exploitative and marginalized growers, by preventing them from

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<sup>150</sup> TNA, 25066, Co-operative Marketing in the Lake Province, extracts from the record of the meeting held on February 22<sup>nd</sup> 1954.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid.

<sup>152</sup> Co-operative Department, 1959; Horace Plunkett, *Yearbook of Agricultural Co-operation* (London: Blackwell, 1958).

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

<sup>155</sup> TNA, 215/1423/C, Maswa District Report on Co-operative Development for 1957.



access to the most profitable portions of the cotton value chain. Such a lucrative portion of the cotton value chain was handed over to Indian cotton merchants who through various policies had an exclusive monopoly in buying, processing (ginning) and export of the crop. The small-scale growers were excluded from cotton ginning and export, which was yet another example of marginalization.

These merchants utilized their status to undermine and exploit the growers. The exploitation frustrated growers who hardly reaped the profit from farming the crop as they could see cotton ginning and export value chain. The growers aired their concerns about exploitation, but the colonial authority ignored their demands for fair trading. This prompted the growers to look for a solution through grassroots associations. Such associations formed a formidable army against marginalization whose winds of change blew across the WCGA in the late 1940s and early 1950s.

The grassroots movement was supported by embryonic organizations and local chiefs, who managed to exert pressure that forced the colonial government to register cotton marketing co-operative societies. This marked a significant step in the control of the cotton value chain by growers in the WCGA. Such success was possible due to a combination of several factors. The growers brought together two elements: the produce (that is, cotton), and a new genuine non-exploitative structure to market their produce (that is, co-operatives). Having a strong sense of unity, they succeeded in overcoming decades of marginalization by both colonial authority and cotton merchants, such victory was achieved by having growers through co-operatives have from 1953 onward control of the entire cotton value chain.

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