Agrarian problems and development: On the exploration of small peasant

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AGRICULTURE constitutes the most important branch of production in many African countries dominated by imperialism. It provides for the overwhelming portion of their populations and is the main source of surplus which sustains the bureaucratic-military state structures; the insatiable consumption and every-expanding accumulation of ruling classes and imperialism. Yet it is agriculture which is the most backward sector in these economies. It is characterised by extremely low productivity; stagnancy and riotous poverty. Two interconnected questions therefore immediately pose themselves: one, how is it that the small peasant (who is the embodiment of agriculture in these countries) with his low productivity and therefore minimal surplus labour at the same time be the major source of surplus, and two, what accounts for his continued existence and lack of transformation? It is the aim of this paper to attempt to answer these questions.

In sections I and II we briefly examine the empiri-

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cal evidence in the case of Tanzania to show low productivity of and extraction of surplus from the peasantry before attempting to answer in section III the questions posed above.

I

SMALL peasant production in Tanzania is characterised by extremely low level of productive forces. The low level of productive forces may be resolved into two aspects: lack of *social* organisation of the labour process and use of primitive techniques and technology.

The character of small peasant production is highly individual based on the household. The household forms both the unit of consumption as well as the supplier of labour. Almost the only division of labour that exists between the producers within the household is sexual. Thus, for example, on the banana-coffee farms in Bukoba, most activities connected with coffee are done by men while those connected with gardening of sweet potatoes, groundnuts, sorghum, etc., is done by women. On the other hand, the land-preparation and planting of banana is the activity of men while weeding and harvesting is the responsibility of women[1]. The labour process itself, however, is not sub-divided into its detailed elements. It is true that detailed division of labour is a characteristic of industry and rarely applies to agriculture not until agriculture itself is industrialised. But it is possible within agriculture to have specialisation of tasks which in fact had begun to take place as handicrafts separated out from agriculture. This too was destroyed by the invasion of colonialism,[2] thus reducing the peasant to a 'pure agriculturist'.

Imperialist domination, while destroying the original division of labour, integrated the patriarchal peasant in the new international division of labour. Under this he became the producer of export crops according to the needs of capital. Here horizontally — i.e., among and between the peasant households — there is no division of labour: rather the division of labour is vertical, chaining the peasant to the world market. Socialisation of production based on detailed division of labour is absent in peasant agriculture, lack of which constitutes the first important basis of extremely low productivity of labour in small agricultural production.

The second most important basis of low productivity is that the technology used in small agriculture production is still very primitive — hoe, axe, knife etc., and there is, a very limited use of artificial chemical fertilisers. Machines and manufactured fertilisers occupy a negligible place in the means of production of a peasant. Land, used more or less as given by nature, constitutes the peasant's main means of production. Very simple, few man-made tools—hoe, knife, etc. interpose between the peasant's personal activity and his subject of labour. The peasant's production process is simple and elementary in which there is very little 'participation' of the products of human labour.

Let us illustrate this with a few examples. A number of farm surveys done in the '60s in Tanzania show that the annual expenditure on the means of production hardly exceeds 4·6 per cent, of gross returns, less than Shs. 100 in value.[3] Although these are average figures, it is clear from other data that even the relatively richer households do not spend much on means of production. One survey of what the researcher called "most successful" coffee-banana farms of sample, in Bukoba, for example, showed that the expenditure on means of production was only 1.27 per cent or Shs. 49. The highest spending was only Shs. 127.[4] A more comprehensive survey of 219 households in Sukumaland done in 1968-69 drives home the same point. For the sample as a whole, the amount spent on machinery was only 0.5 per cent of the total gross returns or Shs. 1705; that spent on fertilisers (including insecticides and expenses on seeds) was 0.2 per cent of the total owned oxen-ploughs. The total number of ploughs was 49 and oxen 176. Some 54 per cent of the households cultivated exclusively by hoe and the remaining 27 per cent *hired tractor* or oxen-plough services.[6] In the same sample only 5 households used fertilisers and only 3 used insecticides.[7]

AT national level the data once again bear out the paucity of the use of machinery and fertilisers in agriculture. Around 1972, it was estimated that Tanzania had less than, 2,000 tractors in working order thus giving an average of 2,230 hectares of cultivated land per tractor. In that year the value of imports of agriculture machinery amounted to only 9 million shillings. The average fertiliser consumption in 1973 over the whole cultivated area was 13.7 kg./hec. while in 1972 the entire supply of pesticides amounted to Shs. 24.4 million.[8] These figures, low as they are, are in fact misleading. Since the use of machinery, fertilisers insecticides, etc., is concentrated in the few large-scale plantations, it is clear that their use in small peasant sector is below that suggested by these average figures.

As for irrigation the situation is even worse. Of the total cultivated area, only 2 per cent is estimated to be under traditional method of irrigation while some 21,000 ha. (or 0.5 per cent) under modern method of irrigation. Of these 21,000 ha. some 14,000 ha. is accounted for by sugarcane plantations,[9] thus leaving negligible area, if any, in the small holder economy under modern methods of irrigation.

The overall effect of the non-socialised character of production: virtual absence of modern technology and methods of crop husbandry is that the productivity in small peasant production is very low. This point is fairly well known and a characteristic of small production elsewhere as well. In the general historical movement, small production represents an archaic form kept alive by most backward social

forces. We will return to this point in Section III. Suffice it to conclude that low peasant productivity means that there is very small surplus products. In other words the *rate of surplus labour*[10] is extremely low. The truth is that the peasants have to exert super-human effort even to maintain necessary consumption, to keep body and soul together.

II

IN spite of the rate of surplus labour being low we know that small peasant is a big source of surplus for the various exploiters. There is overwhelming empirical evidence to show that the peasant does not get an equivalent of his labour. One of the important reflections of this is the difference between what the peasant is paid — the producer price — and what the 'middlemen' — whether private merchants, state agencies or cooperatives— obtain on the world market, i.e., the export price. The following table for some African countries illustrates the point.

Table I

PRODUCER PRICES AS PROPORTION OF EXPORT PRICES FOR SOME AFRICAN COUNTRIES (PERCENTAGES)

	1964/65	*1965/66*	*1966/67*	*1967/68*	*1968/69*	*1969/70*
Cameroon						
Cotton	21	20	22			
Cocoa	73	60	69			
Ground-nuts	73	65	58			
CAR						
Cotton	19	19	19	19		
Chad						
Cotton	49	43	68			
Coffee			63	64	63	67
Vanilla			38	24	26	27
Paper			81	81	74	39
Malawi						
All			87	85	44	58
Mauritius						
Sugar			73	91	75	87
Niger						
Cotton	25	21	20	21		
Ground-nuts	48	46	43	45		
Togo						
Cotton	23	24	24	23		
Coffee	62	62	63	63		
Cocoa	63	68	67	71		
Ground-nuts	70	71	90	61		

Source: IMF Surveys as reproduced in G.M. Hamid & M.L. Gaou, *Survey of African Economic and Social Development* (mimeo) (IDEP April, 1977), Table 43.

Table II shows the proportion of producer to export prices for some selected crops in the case of Tanzania and Table III gives the share of surplus accruing to state and state controlled agencies.

Table II

PRODUCER PAYMENTS AND EXPORT REALISATION FOR SELECTED CROPS

Year	*Crop*	*Average Export Realisation (Shs/kg.)*	*Average Export Tax (Shs.)*	*Average Producer Payment (Shs.)*	*Producer Payment as percentage of Export Relations*
1974-75	Coffee Mild	7.85	1.37	4.49	60%
	Hard	6.79	1.37	4.50	66%
1976-77	Cotton(Lint)	12.00	1.20	5.80	48%
1975-76	Cashew-Nuts(raw)	1.77	0.18	1.05	59%
1975-76	Tea (made)	8.16	0.15	3.73	46%
1975-76	Tobacco (wet) Flue	14.09	1.59	7.00	50%
	Fire	5.95	0.67	3.00	50%

Source: Ministry of Agriculture, *Price Policy Recommendations for the 1977-78 Agricultural Price Review*, Vol. I, (Dar es Salaam, July 1976) p. 187.

Table III

SHARE OF THE SURPLUS ACCRUING TO THE STATE AND STATE AGENCIES

	Coffee 1969-70	%	*Cotton 1970-71*	%	*Tobacco 1969-70*	%
	Shs./ton		*Shs./ton*		*Shs./ton*	
Price paid to the Peasant	4,087	(61)	1,024	(66)	4,190	(64)
Appropriated by Cooperative	1,700	(25)	220	(14)	570	(9)
Appropriated by Parastatals	365	(5)	244	(16)	1,830	(28)
Appropriated by Government (Export Tax)	553	(8)	65	(4)	n.a.	
	6,705	(100)	1,553*	(100)	6,590**(100)	

*Combined lint and seed sales proceeds.
**Net of export tax.

Source: World Bank Report (1974), Vol. II, p. 28.

It is interesting to note that with increasing centralisation and control over the peasantry and the replacement of private merchants by the cooperatives and state agencies,[11] the proportion of the export prices going to the producer has been falling. In other words the peasant has been squeezed more and more with the creation of *monopoly* marketing organisation. The figures in Table IV and V dramatically illustrate this tendency. This tendency is further brought out with respect to cotton prices in the graph on page.[12]

Table IV

DISTRIBUTION OF THE PROCEEDS OF COFFEE IN THE WEST LAKE REGION (%)

	1955-1957 (44 million Shs.)	*1961-63 (25 million Shs.)*	*1967-69 (54 million Shs.)*
(1) Cost of Transport	8	17	38
(2) Duties & Taxes	5	7	14
(3) Cooperative Union & Society levy	8	11	36
(4) Growers' Income	81	65	36

Source: S. Boesen: "Less pay sons *et l* 'exportation du cofe', " in S. Amin; *L'agriculture Africaine et l capitalisme*, (Paris: IDEP, 1975), p. 136.

Table V

DISTRIBUTION OF THE AVERAGE PROCEEDS PER KILOGRAMME OF COFFEE IN KILDMANJARO, 1965-66 & 1973-74

	1965-1966		*1973-1974*	
	Shs.	%	*Shs.*	%
(1) Board deductions	0.42	7.7	0.34	4.6
(2) Taxes	0.80	14.8	2.08	28.2
(3) Cooperative: Union & Society deductions	0.37	6.9	0.42	5.7
(4) Paid to grower	3.83	70.7	4.54	61.5
Total	5.42	100.0	7.38	100.0

Source: Figures for 1965-66 from the *Report of the Presidential Special Committee of Enquiry into cooperative Movement and marketing Boards*, Appendix. Figures for 1973-74 from S. Ramji: *A Mathematical formulation of the Transportation of Arabica Coffee within Tanzania*, (University of Dar es Salaam: Thesis, November, 1976) Appendix 3, p. 95.

To be sure, the entire difference between the producer and export prices cannot be considered to be surplus since some value is added by transport and processing. Nevertheless, it is clear that a difference of around 50 per cent cannot be accounted for by value added by these factors and there is undoubtedly a large portion of surplus in it.

Besides the difference documented above which is appropriated by the internal bourgeoisies there is also a transfer of value at international level through non-equivalent exchange. While we know of this theoretically it is difficult to quantify the exploitation at the level of international exchange.

The conclusion we draw from this brief section is that the *degree of exploitation* of the peasantry is very high.

The result is that, in spite of the low rate of surplus labour the peasant is subjected to a high degree of exploitation. How is this possible? This is possible only because exploitation cuts into the *necessary consumption* of the peasant. The peasant yields to capital not only surplus labour but part of his necessary labour as well by reducing his requirements to sub-human level. It is through *super-human labour* and *sub-human existence* that the peasantry satisfies the rapacious demands of capital. The peasants wear rags; eat coarsest kind of food; forego education and medical care and put their whole family — men, women and children — to work to satisfy the insatiable greed of the capitalists.

It is, for example, a well-known fact that there is a direct relation between inadequate and coarse diet of the peasanty, on the one hand and the introduction and intensification of export crops, on the other. Professor Josua de Castro in his well-known work *The Geography of Hunger* has amply documented this relation. In the case of Tanzania various researches have shown that with the introduction of export-crops, the peasantry, has had to concentrate more and more on it at the expense of food crops. It has been noted in the case of Sumumaland that the proportion of land devoted to food crops has drastically fallen as a result of the introduction of cotton. This is shown below in the case of Kwimba and Shinyanga in Table VI.

Table VI

FOOD CROPS AND COTTON AREAS PER HOUSEHOLD IN SOME AREAS OF SUKUMALAND

Year		*Kwimba (eastern & N. eastern)*		*Shinyanga*	
		Ha.	%	*Ha.*	%
		— per household —			
1945	Cotton	0.32	10	0.16	7
	Food Crops	2.83	90	2.37	93
	Total Cultivation	3.15		2.53	
1969	Cotton	0.88	42	1.08	41
	Food Crops	1.22	58	1.55	59
	Total Cultivation	2.10			

Source: BRALUP: *Research Report No. 40*, p. 77 (University of Dar es Salaam)

Further the variety of foods — rice, millet, maize vegetables, etc. — that used to constitute the diets of the peasantry has been reduced to one or two *staple* foods. And this has inevitably been starchy foods like cassava which demand least labour. The high incidence of kwashiorkor (lack of protein) in the coffee/banana culture of kilimanjaro is again largely due to the exclusive banana diet of the Wachagga coffee growers.

The object poverty of the peasantry is then a concrete expression of the fact that its exploitation by capital cuts deeply into the peasant's necessary consumption. Lenin[13] and Kautsky[14] used this fact to explain the continued existence of a small peasantry in the 19th century Europe. "The existence of a small peasantry in every capitalist society is due not to the technical superiority of small production in agriculture, but to the fact that the small peasants

reduce the level of their requirements below that of wage workers and tax their energies far more than the latter do..." (Lenin). Whereas in the case of developed capitalism, this was a last-ditch resistance on the part of the peasantry, in the case of the social formation dominated by imperialism, it is the *basis* of the peasantry's exploitation by capital. Let us explain.

In the monopoly stage of capitalism, capital is no more satisfied with average profits; it strives for super-profits.[15] The falling rate of profit drives finance capital all over the world where there is higher rate[16] of profit and this is true especially in the colonies. Imperialist capital destroys the self-sufficiency of the colonial peasant, smashes his original division of labour based on the separation of handicrafts from agriculture and integrates him in the international market. The patriarchal peasant is thus tied to the chariot wheel of capital and becomes its "seri" while still retaining immediate ownership of his means of production and command over the labour process. In fact the latter is an essential condition of his super-exploitation. Capital is able to extract labour from the peasant without being responsible for his reproduction. The reproduction of the peasantry is its own responsibility. The two-fold division of the peasant's production that for consumption (food crops) and that destined for sale (cash crops) — is a reflection of the two-fold function of the peasant under imperialism: both to reproduce himself as well as to produce surplus for capital.

By allying with backward social forces and conserving pre-capitalist form of production like small peasant production, imperialist capital attempts to counteract some of the tendencies of capitalism (e.g., falling rate of profit) while continuing to extract surplus. But to the extent that hundred per cent, monopoly is not possible, the basic contradictions of capitalism continue to operate side by side with new contradictions introduced by its monopoly character.

One of these contradictions is: how to maintain control over the small, scattered peasantry and ensure its 'participation' in the new division of labour. Unlike the case of a factory worker where the very economic organisation forces him to produce surplus value for capital, the peasant has to be "kept" in the world division of labour by overt political force, by the state. No wonder therefore, that one of the prominent features of both the colonial and neo-colonial states has been its control over peasant production. The state control among other things is expressed through various legislations on regulating and controlling the method of growing; on the quality of products; on the use of sail, seeds and implements; on enforced cultivation, etc. Hence although in the immediate command of his labour process, the peasant is not an *independent* producer. Like a wage-worker, he is a producer of surplus for capital, yet unlike him his labour process is neither capitalistically organised nor does he sell his labour power. This is what enables capital not only to extract surplus labour but also part of the peasant's necessary labour without being responsible for his reproduction.

Subjected to despotic control by the state and super-exploitation by capital, the peasantry is continually involved in resistance and struggle against its erstwhile enemies. Thus the small peasant, historically a conservative force becomes politically a progressive democratic force and a surest ally of the working class in the struggle against imperialism and compradors. Today the countries dominated by imperialism are the hot-bed of such struggles. These social struggles are a concrete expression of the stranglehold that imperialism has imposed on the development of social productive forces. The question of agrarian development in these countries is therefore inseparably tied with the problem of the liberation of the peasantry from imperialism and its allies.

ANNEXURE I

SUDI

A Short Story*

by

PILI

I sat on a short stool in Mama Kidile's open-air kitchen as I had got used to doing for the last two years. Mama Kidile was labouriously preparing her evening meal.

While the *kisamvu* was boiling on the open fire, she cut half an onion into minute pieces and presently began grinding them skilfully between two halves of a coconut shell. She had already mixed together a quarter teaspoon of turmeric powder with a bit of spices which would eventually be mixed with the smashed onion.

"Turmeric powder, my God, it is so expensive: eighty shillings a kilo: You can't afford it. I buy it by spoonfuls, fifty cents each. Not like the old days. In those days Washihiri would sell you turmeric powder for a cent. But the old days, well...." Mama Kidile said.

Her usual lamenting about inflation was rudely interrupted by a cockroach which was trying to escape from the heat of the firewood. She swiftly picked up her slipper and at one fell swoop smashed it to death.

Mama Kidile was a well known figure in this neighbourhood. It was said that she had seen not only the two World Wars but also remembered Maji Maji. She had married an ex-Arab slave owner and had several children by him.

*Reprinted from: *Sunday News*, July 27, 1980.

Occasionally, her grandchildren and great-grandchildren visited her, bringing presents and a little money on which she survived. But she had stubbornly turned down all offers to go and stay with any of her relatives.

Mama Kidile, who I figure, must have by now lived at least eighty-five years, if not more, occupied one room in the 'house' and like others paid thirty shillings every month to the owner. Actually the so-called house was not much of a house at all.

It was a typical mud and wattle structure with thatched palm leaves as its roof. The tenants called it, not without bitter sarcasm, 'mbavu za mbwa'. This house with some six rooms was owned by one Mzee Mwinyigogo who was one time a Mayor of the City and now a respected Party leader.

My friend Sudi and his friend, who had been introduced to me only as Bob, occupied another room. The other four rooms were occupied by an assortment of bachelors, one of whom I had often seen hawking vegetables in the streets of Dar es Salaam.

About the other three, besides having a nodding acquaintance with them, I knew nothing. Their occupation, origin or tribes were all only a matter of conjecture on my part. I had never dared ask Sudi about them because he resented being prodded about his neighbours.

The truth is that I had never even dared to enquire how my friend Sudi and his friend Bob had managed to sleep on that narrow bed during the days when Sudi still had his job. The bed, incidentally, was the only piece of furniture in that room.

The room itself was not much bigger than the bed either. I reckoned it must have been about six feet by eight. On the wall facing the door the occupants hung their clothes; the side wall was decorated with cellophane paper cut out from cellophane paper bags while on the opposite one, Bob had hung a pin-up of a nude woman. Bob's 'fair lady' was hardly discernible, however. The soot from the kerosene cooker below had blackened her beyond recognition.

Majambazi

Anyway, it did not require much intelligence to make a guess as to the use of the ill-fated bed in the past. Two years of acquaintance with that neighbourhood and my close association with Sudi was good enough background to let me draw the conclusion that Sudi and Bob had hardly ever slept together in that room.

While Sudi would be doing his day-shift at the Twiga Nylon-Works his friend Bob would be fast asleep in that narrow bed. Bob, on the other hand, would go for his 'night-shift' — making the rounds of bazaar shops, selecting his picks — leaving his friend Sudi the comfort of the sponge mattress, their only dear possession. In short, the bed had been employed double-shift during those good old days.

"I know you have come to enquire about your friend", Mama Kidile having emptied the spicy paste into the "Sufuria of kisamvu", was now fully facing me. "Sudi, Bob and the others — all of them are cooling their backs at the Central Police Station". There was the usual humour in Mama Kidile's pronouncement, to which I had got used to.

But this time the usual humour was combined with unusual bitterness which was strange to me. Never before had I witnessed such bitterness in Mama Kidile's voice. "They came that night — what was it? — What's the day-to-day?..."

"Saturday ...", I said softly. "Yes, it must have been Tuesday. A dozen of those people of peace came here. They raided our rooms. They searched each one of us, abusing and swearing at us and calling us 'majambazi'.

"They searched our rooms and overturned our beds. In the course of their furious search, they found some hundreds of hundred shilling notes packed in an envelope and tucked in under Sudi's mattress. There it was. That was all the proof they needed. How could we, the poor, have money? "That is the fruit of the loot", one of them had barked while putting the envelope in his pocket. The herded Sudi and Bob and others into their Land Rover and drove away. It was only because of my age — and may be because of my sharp "tongue", added Mama Kidile, not without a sense of self-importance, "that they left me alone.

Potential Client

"Go my child, go quickly. Rescue your friend before their batons claim his second arm as well ...," she added.

I had no time to waste. Without even saying 'kwaheri', I left Mama Kidile, hurriedly jumped over the open sewage and made my way to Aggrey Street. The single thought that preoccupied me was to reach Mr. Tomlison's bungalow at Msasani before six p.m. — before he got lost on his drinking spree.

Luck was on my side. I got the UDA as soon as I reached the nearest bus-stop. While I sat there holding tightly the handle-bar and while the rickety Ikarus dangerously negotiated the sharp corners of the narrow streets of Dar es Salaam, my whole two years association with Sudi began to unfold before me like a motion picture. Let me translate that 'picture' into words.

It was a hot afternoon. The time was around three p.m. Mr. Tomlison had just arrived and entered his office through the side door. I was furiously

typing away demand notes: in between answering phone calls and attending to clients.

Our reception room was full of people who had come to see Mr. Tomlison. Some of them I knew for they were our longstanding clients: others were coming for the first time. Some were businessmen who had been allegedly involved in this or that shady deal while others were well-dressed, middle-aged bureaucrats charged with theft, etc., etc.

There were even one or two harassed house-wives who probably wanted to petition for divorce. Some of the visitors had by now sat for more than an hour. Others had just come in. Regardless of who they were or when they came, they all anxiously waited to see Mr. Tomlison: 'F.C. Tomlison, Esquire, Advocate. Notary Public and Commissioner for Oaths'.

Mr. Tomlison was a well-known advocate in the city. He had been in private practice for the last twenty years and was known for not only winning cases but also for getting a lot of publicity in the newspapers.

There were differing opinions as to what exactly accounted for Mr. Tomlison's success. The public had no doubt. They thought he was brilliant because for one thing he was a great orator in court and for another he won his cases.

His learned brothers, however, were a bit less enthusiastic. They knew that he didn't read much law nor did his oratories contain much of it either. But he was a smooth talker and knew all magistrates, police officers, judges and journalists personally. He could 'talk' to appropriate authorities and was more successful in doing so than his other learned brothers who too, of course, 'talked' but with less success.

True, among the less successful were a handful who refused to 'talk'. They were fresh from the law school and fervently believed in law and justice. Presumably, with time, they too would learn the ways of practical men.

Anyway, to come back to the reasons for Mr. Tomlison's success. Actually neither Mr. Tomlison's learned brothers nor the members of the public were quite right. I had been working with Mr. Tomlison as his clerk for the last five years and knew the inside out of his office.

I knew not only how Mr. Tomlison worked but also how the legal system worked. The truth is that Mr. Tomlison did not rely on any one method for his success. He combined his brilliance in court (and, admittedly, occasionally he was capable of ingenious legal arguments) with his smooth 'talk' to appropriate authorities.

He did not flinch from loosening his pockets or tampering with evidence if that was what would win him a case. His sole motto in life was to win a case by hook or crook and to make money by hook or crook. And that is exactly what he did.

Fortunately for Mr. Tomlison, the legal system itself and those who ran it accommodated him perfectly. It was not so much that the legal system had adapted to the likes of Tomlison, rather it was the likes of Tomlison who had adapted themselves to the legal system. Or at least that is how my clerical head explained the state of affairs that I observed in its minutes details day in day out.

Mr. Tomlison himself summarised the whole situation in a nut-shell when he often remarked humorously; "My binding authority is not books but bucks".

But to return to my friend Sudi. As I said, I was furiously typing away when a young, tall man entered our office, stood in the doorway for a while, throwing hesitant glances on both sides. He must have been in his twenties although he looked older and worn out.

He was wearing a trouser with big holes exposing both his knees, rubber slippers and a short sleeved shirt. In his left hand he was tightly clutching a flat file while in the other ... he did not have another hand. On his right shoulder hung only a torn shirt sleeve without an arm in it.

Through the torn sleeve you could clearly see the stump where the arm must have joined the shoulder and it gave evidence of a freshly healed wound. I suppose that is what attracted the attention of the visitors as well as mine. All of us stared at him as he slowly walked towards my table.

"I have a problem. I want to see the advocate", Sudi said as beads of sweat rolled down his forehead which with great effort he tried to shake off by jerking his head from side to side.

"Have a seat", I said. "I will call you. The advocate is very busy...."

Now I had standing instructions from my boss that I should not let anyone waste his time unless he was a 'potential client': which I understood to mean, unless he was capable of paying fees. "My time is my stock-in-trade, you know", Mr. Tomlison would often remind me.

Accident

Sudi, from his looks and apparel, could obviously not qualify. But I knew that in the past Mr. Tomlison had accepted people like Sudi. These were usually ordinary pedestrians who had been involved in run-down cases claiming damages from the insurance company. Partly because of this and partly because I somehow felt natural sympathy for

this one-armed young man. I decided I would interview Sudi to find out his whole story. So I beckoned him to follow me into an adjoining room.

Sudi's story was as simple as it was gruesome. For the last seven years he had been working for Twiga Nylon-Works Limited. He had joined as a casual worker but later was employed monthly as a machine operator getting some five hundred shillings a month. When he started Sudi said, Twiga was only a small concern employing a hundred workers. Now it had expanded and was employing more than five hundred. He had helped to build that company, Sudi declared with some pride.

I knew, had it been Mr. Tomlison, he would have brushed aside such talk by saying: "That is irrelevant, cut it out....Although I had fallen into a similar habit when interviewing clients, this time I decided to keep quiet and encouraged Sudi to go on.

On 26th February, 1978, Sudi continued, at around one p.m. he met bad luck. There was an accident. On the floor near his machine there was a splashing of oil which Sudi had not noticed. He accidently stepped on it and his left foot slipped. In a despetate effort to hold on to some thing his right hand landed on a roller, slipped over it and was pulled in between two rollers. That was the last thing he remembered. He had obviously fainted.

Champarty

His friends later told him that his arm was completely flattened like a piece of paper when they retrieved it from the rollers.

Sudi was taken to Muhimbili where he stayed for two months. When he was finally discharged he reported to his employers immediately.

No sooner had he entered the Personnel Manager's office, he was handed a notice of termination and was paid fifteen hundred shillings in terminal benefits. "We are sorry but we can't employ a one-handed man, you know", the Personnel Manager had said.

"But I have sweated for this company for seven years...."

"Yes...", the Personnel Manager had said, "we don't need your sweat. We need your hands. I am sorry".

"What about my compensation"? Sudi had demanded.

Here the Personnel Manager, who had been speaking softly and pleasantly up to now had become furious and had raised his voice: "What compensation? You should be grateful that we have given you your terminal benefits and your salary for two whole months. We could have easily dismissed you for absenteeism, you know. Now don't waste my time any more. I have other people to attend to....Next."

Sudi had walked out of that office totally depressed and confused. He did not know what to do. For in the whole big city of Dar es Salaam he had no one he could rely on. His old father and ailing mother were back in their village in Chalinze. He knew they would welcome him but they could not possibly support him.

And in any case what could he do in the village with only one hand? His closest friends were Bob and Mama Kidile. What could they do either to support him?

Sudi had narrated the whole story to Bob who had reached in his typically violent manner. "If I had been in your place, I would have killed the bloody Personnel Manager and the bloody 'tajiri' as well. I tell you I have always told you. These people are no good. Look I have bidden them farewell for ever. Let them make money and I will take my share of it — whether they like it or not".

Actually it was much later that Sudi had told me this part of the story about Bob. And in fact it was Bob who had suggested to Sudi that he ought to see an advocate because as Bob had put it: "From my experience I know advocates are wizards. They can perform many tricks and I am sure they can use one of these tricks for you".

That is how Sudi had come to Mr. Tomlison's office and wanted assistance.

Sudi as a person and Sudi's misfortune aroused a lot of sympathy in me. I wanted to help. I thought I would be able to convince Mr. Tomlison to take Sudi's case. So I did what I had rarely done before.

I jumped the queue of 'potential clients' and took Sudi straight to see Mr. Tomlison.

When Sudi saw Mr. Tomlison, a gant of a man sitting behind a big desk, he was a bit taken aback. It was not so much his girth that had come as a surprise to him, Sudi told me later.

The reason he was taken aback was that he had expected to see an Asian for, for him, all advocates must be Asians. He was therefore surprised to see a black man — as black as himself — and moreover, with an English name, being introduced to him as the advocate.

I explained the whole story to Mr. Tomlison leaving out 'immaterial' details and showed him various medical reports from Sudi's file.

Mr. Tomlison turned to Sudi and said:

"Usually I don't take such cases; and if I do, I

charge high fees, not less than ten thousand shillings".

"But I don't have a single cent ...", Sudi interrupted softly.

"Yes, I know, I know that. But I feel sorry for you. Now look I will help you. I will make a claim on your behalf and charge you a small percentage — about thirty per cent — if we win. Is that acceptable per cent? Of course, Sudi agreed. And, of course, without realising that, that was an illegal deal.

In legal language what Mr. Tomlison was proposing is called 'champarty' which in Osborne's Law Dictionary is defined as the "offence of assisting a party in a suit in which one is not naturally interested with a view to receiving a share of the disputed property". But champarty or no champarty there was no other way in which Sudi could be helped and I wanted Sudi to be helped.

Triumph

I was therefore pleased when Mr. Tomlison told me to open a file for Sudi and record his interview.

During the two years that Sudi's case lasted I saw him very often and we became very close friends. I often visited Sudi at his place and that is how I also came to know Mama Kidile and Bob and that neighbourhood behind Aggrey Street. As a matter of fact during all this period Sudi depended on Bob and me for his survival although it was clear that he resented this dependence; and yet was helpless.

Sudi would often dream aloud of the day when he would win his case. "The first thing", he would tell me, "I would buy khangas for my mother, even on the black market. I would give Bob some money to learn driving so that he becomes a driver and earns an honest living. The next thing: I would catch a bus to Chalinze. Build a house for my old people and buy a plot of land to cultivate. I am fed up with city life. It has robbed me of everything, even my hand ..." And his face would become serious as he would start reminiscing about his 'Nylon' days.

That day finally came. Sudi won a claim of thirty thousand shillings. That is what a hand of a worker was worth, the Judge had decided.

Some days later, on a Tuesday morning, to be exact, Sudi had come to our office to collect his money.

"Yes, my boy, thank Tomlison..." Mr. Tomlison had said with undisguised sense of personal triumph and self-congratulation. "Now as we had agreed, I take nine thousand shillings as my fees. I have also had to incur some incidental costs which cannot be claimed from the defendant party. These include the costs of 'talking' to appropriate authorities. Altogether they amount to three thousand shillings".

Bungalow

Mr. Tomlison was shuffling the pages of a thick book as if he was reading the costs therein: a practice Mr. Tomlison always adopted to impress his illiterate clients. In fact, Mr. Tomlison was only shuffling the pages of his desk diary.

"So that leaves you a clean eighteen thousand shillings. A lot of money, eh."

"Thank you", Sudi replied in his soft voice.

"I'll give you cash. And you sign this paper signifying that you have received your claim in full".

Sudi put his thumb-print, took the big brown envelope and without counting the money walked out of Mr. Tomlison's office wearing a broad smile on his face.

That evening I met Sudi and we had a long talk. We sat together in a bar — a European bar, Sudi called it — and drank beer — a European beer, Sudi called it. Sudi expounded to me in great detail his future plans.

He had already given a thousand shillings to Bob who had promised to use it to learn driving. He had bought a pair of khanga for Mama Kidile and he now offered me five hundred shillings as a present. I politely declined. Sudi had been a great friend, almost a borther to me and it had been my pleasure to assist him, I said in my short 'submission', for, after a couple of beers, it had really sounded like a submission.

Sudi was going to catch a bus to Chalinze the next day. We promised to write to each other and he implored me to visit Mama Kidile often. I had little realised then that any thing could come in the way of Sudi only to discover on Saturday that my poor brother and friend had never made it to Chalinze. Instead he was again facing the officers of law, this time on suspicion of being a common thief.

My motion picture abruptly came to a stop as the UDA screeched to a halt near Mr. Tomlison's bungalow.

As soon as I got off, I walked towards Mr. Tomlison's bungalow. Mrs. Tomlison (a white woman for she and his English name were Tomlison's gift from his law school, the Lincoln's Inn) opened the door.

Penniless

Mr. Tomlison was surprised to see me, for I

hardly ever visited him at home. I knew Mr. Tomlison was rich but the extent of his richness only now began to register on my mind when I saw the inside of his posh bungalow. It was a kind of thing I could imagine a white governor or a rich Asian industrialist having. But an African advocate however, I didn't have much time nor the inclination to observe in detail the gadgets in Mr. Tomlison's living room.

I quickly told Mr. Tomlison what had happened to Sudi.

"So what do you want me to do?."

"But, sir, he has now been detained for almost three days without being brought to court."

"Well, why should that surprise you? After all, he is only a common man. Even bigger people than him have been detained", said Mr. Tomlison confidently.

"But surely we can file 'habeas corpus", I said with some diffidence.

"I know that, Pascal. I know you have picked up a bit of law from me but you don't appear to have picked up enough business. I cannot defend penniless 'jambazi.' "

Psychiatric

Mr. Tomlison's emphasis on 'penniless' did not escape me because I, more than anyone else, knew that otherwise Mr. Tomlison had no qualms about defending 'majambazi' as such.

I knew that was the end of the matter and saying 'thank you' I began to walk out of Mr. Tomlison's bungalow.

"Pascal", Mr. Tomilson called out, "I might do you a small favour. Take this note and give it to Ralph, the Police Superintendent. It might work, I don't know. But that won't release your friend. It might only bring him to court".

"Thank you, Sir, thank you very much. I am much obliged". And I bowed — as they do in court — and gracefully walked out.

The note was duly delivered to Ndugu Ralph and my friend Sudi was duly produced before a magistrate on Monday morning.

Sudi walked straight to the dock. He did not even care to look around him. One by one charges were read out against him and Sudi was asked to plead. Sudi remained completely quiet. He did not say a single word.

When the Magistrate began to wonder and enquiringly looked at the Prosecutor, the Prosecutor said:

"I am sorry your Honour. But the accused has behaved in a funny manner since he was arrested on Saturday. We suspect he has some mental problem. I would therefore request the Honourable Court to adjourn this case and keep it for mention on 15th June. Meanwhile, may the accused be removed to the Muhimbili Psychiatric Ward for examination".

"Adjournment granted: Order accordingly."

"My God ... What has happened to my dear Sudi? A mental wreck... What have they done to him?" My sub-conscious cried out.

But my conscious mind, disciplined by years of attendance at court, bid me otherwise. Without a word I stood up, made a bow and tiptoed out of the court room.

NOTES

1. Karl-Heinz Friedrich: "Coffee-banana holdings at Bukoba", in H. Ruthenberg (ed). *Smallholder Farming and Smallholder Development in Tanzania* (1968). (Ifo-Institut fur Wirstchafts forschung Munchen Afrika-studienstelle), p. 197.

2. A number of cases are cited by H. Kjekshus: *Ecology control and economic development in East African history* (The case of Tanganyika 1950-19), (London: Heinemann, 1977).

3. Calculated by the author from the farm survey data in H. Ruthenberg: *Smallholder farming ..., op. cit.*

4. K.H. Friedrich: *op. cit.*, p. 206.

5. Bureau of Resource Assessment and Land Use Planning (BRALUP): *Preliminary Report of the Sukumaland Interdisciplinary Research Project*, Research Report No. 40 (June, 1971). Calculated from Table 4-5, p. 92.

6. *Ibid*, pp. 149-50.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 161.

8. *World Bank Report*, Vol. II, Annexe 6, pp, 1 & 3 (1974).

9. *Ibid.*

10. I.e., the ratio: *Surplus labour* necessary labour.

11. Since independence the state in Tanzania has assumed greater and greater control over marketing of agriculture produce. Firstly, the cooperatives were given monopoly rights to buy agricultural produce thus replacing private merchants. At the same time the cooperatives themselves came under increasing state control until 1976 when they were abolished. Now, the state crop authorities buy directly from the villages.

12. Figures for 1955-1969 computed from K. Malima: *The determinants of cotton industry in Tanzania*, ERB. Paper 71.4, pp. 8 & 9. Figures for 1970-71 to 1976-77 computed from Min. of Agriculture: *Price Policy Recommendations*, (Dar es Salaam, July, 1976), p. 97. The seed cotton producer prices for Gracle A per pound are converted to lint producer prices by assuming an outturn ginning rate of 33 per cent.

13. V.I. Lenin: *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*, Collected Works, Vol. 3, p. 27.

14. Kautsky: *On the Agrarian Question.*

15. On this see Stalin, *Economic Problems of Socialism.*

16. See Lenin: *Imperialism the Highest Stage of Capitalism.*