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Becoming wealthy: the life-history of a rural entrepreneur in Tanzania, 1922–80s

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This paper analyses the life history of a rural entrepreneur in late colonial and post-colonial Tanganyika, Julius Mtenda. Based on oral and archival evidence, including Mtenda's own diaries and private papers, this study examines the historical events that allowed him to move from poverty to relative prosperity, the rationale behind his investments, and the way in which he negotiated the challenges to accumulation that confronted him in the rural environment of Nachingwea. It is argued that the ad hoc convergence between the agenda of Mtenda and that of local government officers (both colonial and post-colonial), evident in many of Mtenda's most significant investments, was the critical factor in his capacity to sustain his accumulation over time.

Keywords: Tanzania; entrepreneurs; rural development; Groundnut Scheme; life history; retail trade

This article tells the story of Julius Mtenda, an African entrepreneur from the Nachingwea District of Southern Tanzania. A man of humble rural origins, in the course of his life Julius was able to move out of poverty and to sustain the wealth he had accumulated until old age.¹ Three factors makes the history of this man's ascendance worth telling: the unusual data on which it is based; the location in which Mtenda's ascendance took place – a highly remote and underdeveloped district of rural Tanganyika; and the way in which Mtenda's biography contributes to an understanding of the broader history of rural entrepreneurship in late colonial Africa. As this article illustrates, the main traits of Mtenda's career, his source of initial capital, his straddling between different activities, and above all, the centrality of political and administrative connections to his success, are characteristics common to many among the most successful entrepreneurs in late colonial Africa.

The data on which this history is based are unusual to African economic history. Mtenda was among a wider group of rural entrepreneurs in Southern Tanzania whose biographies were collected by the author, but his oral history was supplemented by a private archive Mtenda had produced over the years and which he consented to be used in the research.² This archive comprises written records produced by Mtenda himself, including diaries and accounts. In reconstructing his ascendance and early consolidation, his shop account books were especially useful, documenting stock inflows from the opening of his first retail outlet in 1950. In addition, Mtenda acted as agent to Asian traders and kept books that documented his crop purchases on their behalf, and the location of his wider economic investments, along with the names of others with whom he

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collaborated in business and the names of his several employees. For some years, profits earned through his trading activities were carefully calculated. These trading diaries allow us to establish the trends and settings of his business with an unusual degree of precision. Such detailed information was then used to prompt discussion in gathering Mtenda's oral history.³ By the time of the interviews with Mtenda, in his very old age, he had become blind. As Mtenda could no longer read his own diaries, extracts from his papers were read to him as a way of prompting further recollections and framing questions. In all, a total of 12 interviews were conducted with Julius Mtenda, plus five further interviews with relatives and others who were prominent in his life story.

Placing Mtenda's story in the context of wider archival research for the 1950s and 1960s allows for a detailed understanding of the structural constraints and individual agency that shaped strategies of rural capital accumulation. The paper takes the reader through the early years of Mtenda's career, when he accumulated the initial capital which he invested in small-scale trade, showing how historically contingent forces helped his capital to grow in size and value. Next it examines Mtenda's vulnerability through his reliance on capital in the sphere of circulation, and his decision then to combine this with investment in productive capitalism in agriculture, and the factors that eventually allowed him to succeed as a large-scale farmer.

Mtenda established himself as an entrepreneur in a rural area in which the development of capitalism was much less pronounced than in many other parts of Tanganyika or Africa. Nachingwea in the 1940s and 1950s had very little commercial farming, and was not a thriving trade economy. The district had long suffered from under investment and very low levels of development, and the Southern Province of Tanganyika was acknowledged as one of the most neglected provinces in one of the poorest countries of the British Empire: "Cinderella's Cinderella", as one British colonial officer put it.⁴ Mtenda's success in such a backwater district thus stands in contrast to those studies of successful entrepreneurs operating in more dynamic contexts.⁵

But this does not mean that Nachingwea had been untouched by capitalism before 1940. Trade routes linking the district to the south-eastern coast had been active well before the nineteenth century, and from the 1850s onwards this trade intensified. The march of trading caravans with captives and goods (most importantly ivory) from the interior to the coastal ports brought contact and exchange with local populations,⁶ although the impact on the local economy was ambivalent. Trade, especially the slave trade, had negative repercussions across much of southern Tanganyika, with thousands of able-bodied individuals, an average of 14,000 people per annum at the peak of the trade, being forcibly removed.⁷ However, as Kjekshus has pointed out, even the slave trade could have "a stimulating effect on the surrounding economies",⁸ providing an incentive to increase the production of foodstuffs. Wealthy individuals did emerge in this earlier period, like Mtenda building their fortune by connecting accumulation in the spheres of trade and of agricultural production. Unlike Mtenda however, for these earlier entrepreneurs the use of coercive strategies was crucial in determining their economic ascendance.⁹

Colonialism in Tanganyika was German first and then British (on behalf of the League of Nations) after 1918. It brought the slave trade to a halt, but did little to address the economic reasons that made the Southern Province Cinderella's Cinderella – most notably the lack of a transport infrastructure. Germans colonialists achieved control over the area, but then they "left it alone, for it had little apparent attraction".¹⁰ By 1911, after three decades of German rule, a colonial district officer complained that there was not one "serviceable road" in the area.¹¹ Motorised transport by lorry only became possible in 1927, when the first road was constructed from Lindi to Tunduru, via Masasi.¹² Without

roads, the expansion of commercial agriculture in the province was severely constrained. By 1945, peasant agrarian production accounted for only 45% of provincial exports by value, while the coastal sisal estates accounted for the remaining 55%. Nachingwea's peasants could only profitably produce grain for the market within eight miles of the ports (Kilwa, Lindi, and Mikindani). For sesame and groundnuts – these being far more profitable crops – peasant producers might make a decent return up to 150 miles from the ports.¹³ As the distance from production areas to ports increased, profit margins were swallowed by transport costs. For Mtenda, the logistics of profitable trade presented very real challenges.

His early years

Julius Mtenda was, in his own words, “the first person in [his] family to taste money”.¹⁴ He was born in 1922 in Mnyambe village, Newala District. Julius was the third of seven children from a family of poor subsistence farmers. His father could not afford to hire casual labourers, so all agricultural operations were carried out by “Mum, dad, [Julius] and [his] brothers and sisters”.¹⁵ Julius spent his childhood on the family farm, and learned the skills of farming as he grew up.

Mtenda's grandparents from his father's side were the first members of the family to be converted to Anglican Christianity. This introduced Mtenda and his siblings to formal western education. He started his formal education at the age of 9, at the Anglican Missionary School in Mnyambe.¹⁶ He completed four years. Once out of school he achieved economic independence from his family by starting to farm his own land. He cleared a small area of unoccupied land near to his parents' plot, and started farming it with the help of Tecla, a girl from the same village to whom he became engaged at the age of 17. To supplement his income as a young adult, Mtenda occasionally undertook casual work. This fell into two areas of activity. First, in 1939, he acted as an unpaid courier for Asian traders in the district. The gain was minimal, with no daily pay to rely on, but the certainty “to have the stomach full” and to be given occasional gifts made this attractive.¹⁷ Second, Mtenda went to Ndanda where he was employed in the construction of the local Anglican church. Early in 1941, at the age of 20, he married Tecla, and their first daughter, Airini, was born later that same year. For Mtenda, these early years were characterised by poverty.

Service in the British army during the Second World War gave Mtenda his first opportunity to accumulate enough surplus to enter trade.¹⁸ He was strongly aware of the role played by his employment in the army in moving him toward a more prosperous life based on small-scale farming: “I was just one of the farmers, like many other people. My father was a farmer, my mother was a farmer, I would have not been anything else but I started earning money when I went to war.”¹⁹ But his army career had begun inauspiciously, with forced recruitment in 1941.²⁰ The money earned as a soldier was partly sent as a remittance to his wife and his baby back in Mnyambe, but he also managed to save a little. On his return to Mnyambe in 1946 he had accumulated sufficient savings to invest in a small shop. This business, referred to by one informant as “very small-scale trade”,²¹ consisted of buying goods such as cooking pans and clothes in a nearby larger village for resale in Mnyambe.

During the Groundnut Scheme

Shortly after Mtenda's return from the war, the Groundnut Scheme arrived in the Southern Province. A clear departure from a past of under-investment in the area, the Groundnut Scheme represented an example (as well as a spectacular failure) of late colonial developmentalism. Hastily conceived in 1946 as part of an attempt by the British

government to address the worst economic crisis Britain had faced since the Great Depression of 1929, the scheme envisaged the mechanised cultivation of groundnuts on some 3,210,000 acres of land. About three-quarters of this area was in Tanganyika, where three sites were selected: Kongwa and Urambo along the central railway, and Nachingwea in the Southern Province. The scheme had highly ambitious targets: an annual production of 600,000 tons of peanuts by the fifth year, and eventually an annual output of 800,000 tons. However, once implementation began, early in 1947, the targets of the scheme were reduced year on year while its cost was progressively adjusted upwards.²² When finally abandoned in 1951, over £36 million of British public money had been spent on a scheme that imported more groundnuts as seed than it actually harvested.

The scheme brought a dramatic expansion of the labour market in the Southern Province, thanks to the availability of work on the groundnut farms, and (more significantly) ancillary works to the scheme (such as supply and transport, administration, engineering and the construction of saw mills and water pipelines).²³ Labour market estimates for the Southern Province suggest that in the period 1947–51 the number of people in employment doubled or nearly tripled from the figure of 21,600 in 1947. The growth of the labour market was accompanied by terrific increases in wages and in the price of wage goods. As soon as the scheme operations began, rumours of developments in Nachingwea travelled all across the Province, Newala District included. Wage and wage goods inflation were noticeable throughout the Southern Province. In 1948 the Newala District Officer wrote of “money as easy as never before, and a man [able to] sell his crops, his goats, and his labour at prices that would have seemed fantastic a few years ago”.²⁴ But there were significant differences in the extent of wage and wage goods inflation within the region. Archival evidence suggests that inflation in Nachingwea, where the scheme headquarters and the highest number of expatriate workers in Southern Province were, was higher than elsewhere in the province. This can be inferred by the burgeoning hawking trade linking Newala District to the scheme area.²⁵ Certain people were capitalising on the existence of different degrees of inflation in the area, and Mtenda was amongst them.

In 1948 Mtenda²⁶ took a lift to Nachingwea on a lorry – in effect a reconnaissance trip to personally investigate the feasibility, and profitability, of a move there. The colonial administration did not readily welcome him: he was instructed either to return to the District Commissioner in Newala and obtain a letter of reference, or to take up employment as a security guard for the Overseas Food Corporation (OFC). But Mtenda had higher ambitions than unskilled employment with the OFC. As he put it:

to be given a wage as an unskilled worker again, to be given a salary from them, to eat dried fish and bitter *ugali*²⁷ was not nice. I told myself “I am not doing this again.” As I had already woken up, I started trade because I knew that they came here with money.²⁸

So Mtenda returned to Newala and obtained the letter of reference. Returning to Nachingwea, he was now allowed to settle in the scheme Labour Camp. Mtenda then returned to Mnyambe to collect his wife, and to gather goods for supply to the fast expanding European and African communities of Nachingwea.²⁹ His decision to move to Nachingwea paid off dramatically: from 1949 until 1951 he accumulated wealth at an astonishing speed. Mtenda saw the scheme period as the watershed in his move from poverty to wealth:

[the scheme] period really helped me because this district was full of money. The company had a lot of money and many employees of all tribes. Therefore whatever small good I was bringing here, it was sold quickly. The profit was little but constant.³⁰

From 1949 until 1950 Mtenda traded by hawking, but in August 1950 he opened his first shop on permanent premises. His strategy as a hawker was to deal in goods in high demand, such as fish, eggs, chickens, oranges, pineapples and papayas.³¹ The main constraint he faced was the exiguous scale of his capital. However, despite this the acute inflation soon apparent in Nachingwea provided significant opportunities for profit. Mtenda took advantage of this inflationary trend by mobilising all his trade earnings for the purchase of further trade goods. He dealt mostly in “quick goods” with a rapid turn-around: “I was arriving, getting the money and going back again to buy more goods.”³² Mtenda explained:

With two cents I could get an egg and sell it for 5 cents in Nachingwea. A pineapple was 2 cents back home and 10 cents here, a chicken was 2 shillings and I would sell it for 10. Things were going point after point.³³ If you had one shilling, you knew you had already generated a two shillings profit, when you had 10 shillings, you knew things were slowly moving, when you had 20 shillings you knew you had a “scary capital”.³⁴ With 30 shillings you could open a little shop, with 50 shillings a sufficient shop for that time.³⁵

By travelling frequently back and forth from Newala to Nachingwea, he accumulated enough money to open a larger and better stocked shop at the OFC Labour Camp. The first trip to procure stock for this new shop took place on 8 August 1950.³⁶ The first stock for this shop was worth the remarkable sum of 2740 shillings.³⁷ Mtenda found the bulk of this money from his own accumulated resources, but obtained about one-sixth (440.35 shillings) of his initial trading stock on loan from an Asian trader.³⁸ Much of the retail trade in rural colonial Tanganyika was controlled by Asians at this time. This Asian trading class presented a significant barrier to African entrepreneurs, but where many other African traders were constrained by the cost of license fees and other charges to “the lowest rungs of the retail category”,³⁹ it is notable that Mtenda was able to act with relative independence.⁴⁰

Though we can gain a good idea of Mtenda’s capital resources at such moments, his business diary does not allow us to calculate his profit with any precision. However, we do have details of the date and value of goods bought for retail. The stimulus the Groundnut Scheme represented for his activity can be clearly seen from the fact that the stock bought initially lasted only three weeks. His next batch of stock was bought for a further 2924 shillings. In a three-week period a more than 100% turnover of merchandise had been achieved. The merchandise traded consisted of very ordinary goods. For example, during his first procurement trip he bought five boxes of milk, tea, four boxes of cigarettes, sesame oil, five boxes of soap, dates, two kilos of coffee, lamp oil, matches, bicycle oil, earrings, small hoes, envelopes, and pencils. He extended the range of goods traded as the shop became more established, but continued to invest in low value goods. As Figure 1 shows, in the period 1950–51, the value of his shop intake rose by five-fold, from about 20,000 shillings to about 100,000 shillings, equivalent to approximately £5,000.⁴¹

The growth in the volume of Mtenda’s business made the space “lent” to him by the OFC feel small. He therefore moved his shop and family to a house he himself built in Nachingwea. The move was made possible by the fact that his own interest in owning his business premises and domicile was supported by the OFC’s policies. The population of Nachingwea town grew at dramatic speed at this time because of the influx of workers on the scheme. However, during its pre-scheme history the area had been more densely populated by elephants, lions and other game than by human inhabitants. Once the scheme began, this resulted in the cohabitation of thousands of workers alongside game, with obvious dangers for the inhabitants of the town.⁴² The OFC had exclusive rights over Nachingwea township and the areas planned for both settlement and agricultural work. To encourage settlement, the officers of the OFC arranged the clearance of land for Africans,

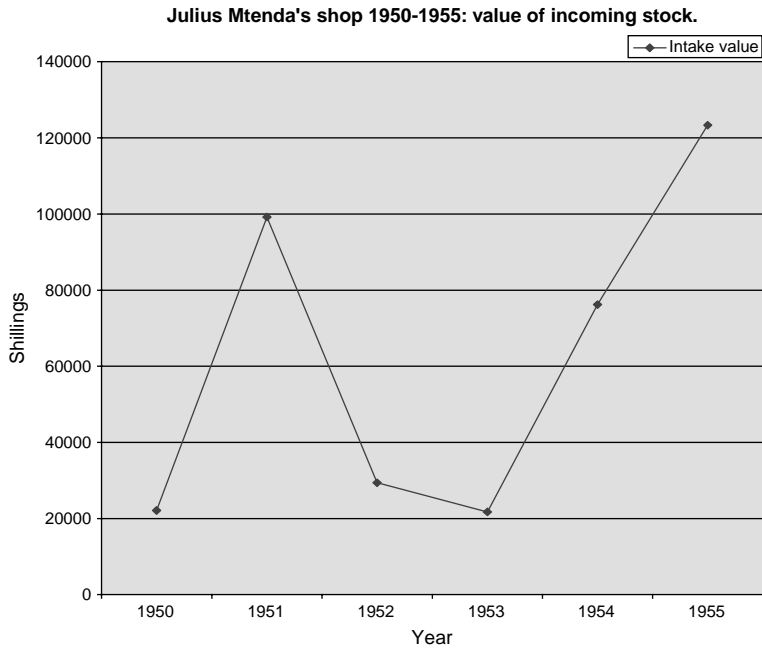


Figure 1. Julius Mtenda's shop 1950–55: value of incoming stock.

including Mtenda, to construct houses. Despite the fact that the area offered to him meant that he would live right on the bush frontier, this meant that Mtenda would occupy the first house on Nachingwea's Government Road.⁴³

With the building of the house, Mtenda put down roots in Nachingwea. From this new base he now diversified his investments by adding two new economic activities to his portfolio. First, he started a restaurant-cum-bar, run by his wife from his house which also incorporated the family shop. There the Mtendas sold tea, *chapati*, *maandazi* and alcohol.⁴⁴ The rationale for this new investment strongly resembled Mtenda's trade philosophy. Both activities aimed to profit from the presence in Nachingwea of a multitude of workers with spare cash, by providing basic services and basic goods. Arguably, what had previously restrained the Mtendas from investing in this activity was the lack of appropriate premises, not the lack of finance, as the capital required to run the restaurant was far smaller than that invested in trade. The eclectic economic dynamism of the Mtendas was rare by African standards in Nachingwea. They were always prepared to open the shop or bar for customers no matter whether late at night or early in the morning, earning their business the proto-nationalist name of *Sisi kwa Sisi* – "Us for us". Local people chose this name because, as Julius Mtenda put it, "for once we were not Indians, we were not Europeans, it was African for African, family for family, brother for brother".⁴⁵

The second economic activity Mtenda began was agriculture.⁴⁶ The convergence between his ambition to farm and the scheme implementers' interests in expanding the size of Nachingwea proved, yet again, to be crucial. When he asked for an area to settle as a farmer, Mtenda was offered a patch of bush approximately a quarter of a mile square. However, whilst the OFC supported this initiative, Mtenda was advised to concentrate upon annual crops, and not to plant cashew-nut trees or coconut palms. The deal between the parties allowed Mtenda access to the land on the explicit agreement that as soon as the OFC required the land he should leave. The terms of the concession made him aware that "the

White people were clever, ‘don’t plant anything but sesame’. They were using me as unpaid labour to clear the bush,” he observed. But even on such insecure terms, farming in Nachingwea was a good investment. With a plot close to his home, Mtenda found among the OFC labourers a ready supply of cheap workers ready to be employed for a few hours a day after their work on the scheme.⁴⁷ He planted sesame and cassava in the first year, which in fact proved to be the only year before the OFC claimed the land back. Though this first venture into agricultural production was short-lived, Mtenda would soon find further opportunities of this kind.

To this point, Mtenda’s success had been rapid, galvanised by Nachingwea’s Groundnut Scheme. However, the scheme was not to last for ever. When it came to an end, as Julius Mtenda recalled, there was an exodus of people from Nachingwea: “after the company left, nobody was left here in Nachingwea. People from Songea left, the Arabs left, the Gogo left, the Chaga left. All kind of tribes arrived here and they all went back to their places.”⁴⁸ This was the first serious challenge Mtenda faced to the sustainability of his strategy of accumulation. As Figure 1 shows, when the number of people in employment started to decrease during 1952, Mtenda experienced a sharp contraction in the volume of his business. The total intake of his shop dropped to 29,406 shillings from the (approximately) 100,000 shillings of the year before. This contraction continued in 1953, his takings reaching a level lower than in the year of its opening – 22,094 shillings in 1950, compared with 21,718 shillings in 1953. With the scheme no longer fuelling Mtenda’s capital accumulation, the African entrepreneur needed a change of strategy if he was to survive.

Mtenda reacted to the recession caused by the progressive scaling down of the Groundnut Scheme by reshaping his portfolio of activities. These new activities would complement well the goals and efforts of the colonial administration in Nachingwea from the early 1950s onwards, taking advantage of the space that the state was then opening up for African economic initiative. When the groundnut scheme ended, the priority of the state in Nachingwea, as in other parts of Tanganyika and the colonial territories, was to step up agricultural production, especially cash crop production. Coulson, with reference to the whole of Tanganyika, writes about two main approaches that were deployed by the state in the 1950s to achieve this goal. Both were informed by an understanding of peasants as backward, stubborn and irrationally conservative.⁴⁹ The first approach drew on coercion, in the form of by-laws making cultivation of some crops compulsory, as a mechanism to step up production. By the mid-1950s, having come to terms with the unpopularity and unfeasibility of a strategy purely based on coercion, the colonial state then began concentrating its resources to support the most dynamic farmers. The “focal point approach”, as this new paradigm was named, meant targeting support to the most progressive areas and/or farmers in the belief that, “once success [had] been achieved at these points, it [was] then a comparatively simple matter to spread outwards from them.”⁵⁰ The implementation of these approaches at Nachingwea can be seen to greater and lesser extents. On the one hand, while by-laws were indeed passed, coercion cannot be described as the main mechanism through which the district office attempted to achieve an increase in agricultural production. This was due to severe problems with understaffing and difficulties in accessing the population to enforce by-laws and pursue non-compliant farmers. The energies of officers in Nachingwea focussed rather on persuasion (through extension services) and on improving the underdeveloped transport system so that private traders and peasants could more easily access markets. In contrast, the implementation of the “focal point” approach can be vividly identified in Nachingwea. As the following section will show, in this endeavour Mtenda himself became the “focal point” of the administration’s efforts.

The diversification of the location of retail outlets and the purchase of agricultural produce

Having introduced the main goals of the colonial state in Nachingwea District in the 1950s, it is now possible to make sense of how Mtenda worked with them to pursue his own agenda. Two activities decreased his reliance on Nachingwea buyers as the engine of his own development, both linked to the agenda of promoting commercial agriculture in the district. First, he began to purchase agricultural produce, such as cashew nuts and sesame, on behalf of Asian traders. In 1952 he established a connection with two produce buyers based in Lindi and Mtama who paid him a 5% fee for his services.⁵¹ For the period 1953–55, the volume of cash he handled as a produce sub-buyer, systematically documented in his diaries, rose dramatically from 5300 shillings in 1953 to 113,974 shillings in 1955. The second new activity in his accumulation strategy was the multiplication of retail outlets, which he began sometime between 1953 and 1954. This allowed Mtenda to reach new markets in the wider district following the contraction of the volume of retail trade in Nachingwea town.⁵² Mtenda's new strategy of distributing his goods throughout the district proved of crucial importance to the steep rise of the value of his shop takings following the closure of the Groundnut Scheme.⁵³ Data from 1954 and 1955 show the relative weight of Nachingwea and the new rural retail outlets: in both years the value of the Nachingwea shop was worth only 44% of total takings. The new rural outlets were thus crucial to Mtenda maintaining the extent of his business.

As the map, Figure 2, shows, the list of places where Mtenda established branches over these years covered virtually every corner of Nachingwea District: Geita, Kibutuka, Kiegei, Kilimarondo, Lionja, Liwale, Lukuledi, Mbondo, Namapwuya, Nditi, Ndomoni, Noli.⁵⁴ How, then, did Mtenda choose the areas in which he traded? By his own admission, he did not make these decisions alone. It was the District Commissioner who advised him “go there, people are having problems with the lack of goods”,⁵⁵ and this advice was not without design. In suggesting that Mtenda supply goods to areas in which cash was available but consumer goods were not, the District Commissioner hoped to promote cash cropping and improve tax collection in rural areas by rewarding the benefits of cash crop sales with consumer goods.

Mtenda opened both seasonal and permanent branches. Nachingwea was used as the business headquarters, where all goods were delivered. Purchased stock was divided between permanent branches and the seasonal ones, taking account of the advice given by the district officers. Trends in the supply of goods in each retail outlet thus mirrored the seasonality of cash availability in rural areas. Consider for instance the case of Noli, where he opened a branch for the period 1954–56. As shown in Figure 3, the quantity of goods here peaked in the period from June to August, during and after the main sesame season. Sesame was the leading cash crop in Noli throughout the 1950s. Therefore, the bulk of shop goods were brought in when farmers were most likely to have cash in hand. Moreover, Mtenda bought agricultural produce in those areas where he also opened his shops, injecting cash into the local economy with one hand whilst taking the money back for his sale of goods with the other.

Agricultural investment in Mbondo

In 1956, after relying almost exclusively on retail trade for almost three years, Mtenda undertook large-scale investment in agriculture in Mbondo, a remote and little inhabited place 40 miles west of Nachingwea. This new investment marked a crucial step in Mtenda's career. Until then his wealth had come from merchant capital. To borrow from Kennedy, the liquidity Mtenda had earned to date was nothing more “than bits of paper chasing

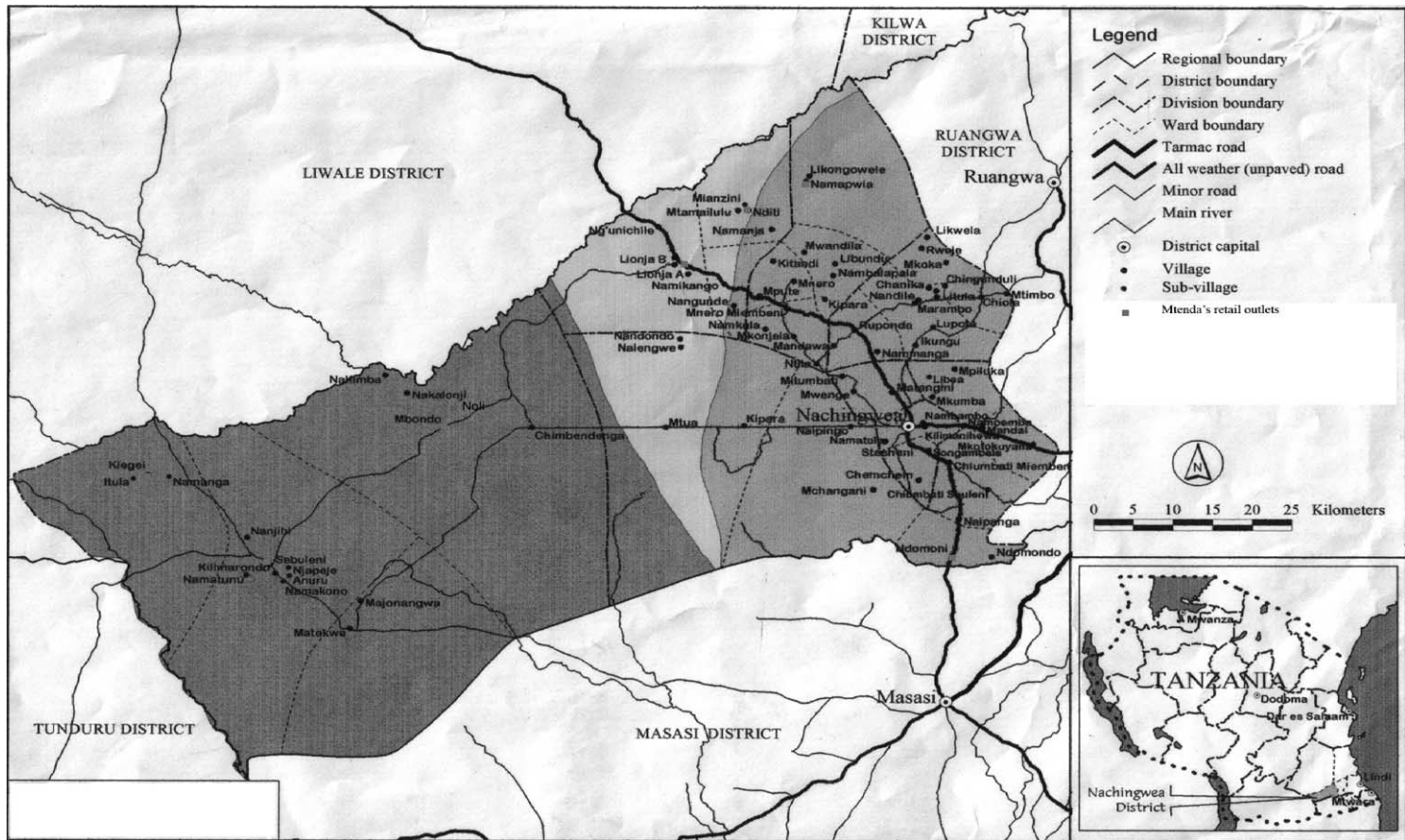


Figure 2. The location of some of Julius Mtenda's retail outlets, 1953 onwards.

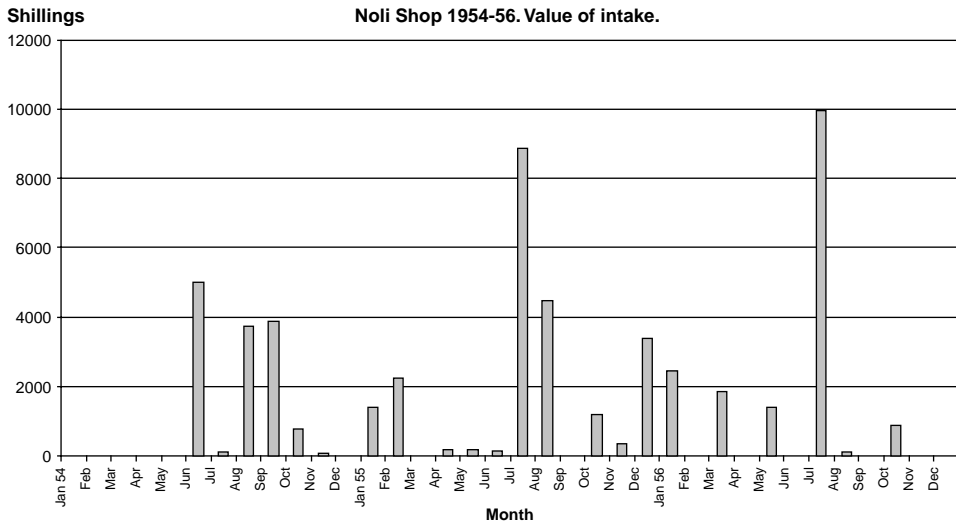


Figure 3. Noli shop 1954–56: value of intake.

round in ever-decreasing circles capable of benefiting fewer and fewer people”.⁵⁶ By investing in agriculture he was increasing his sources of income and partly putting his resources “into production and directly under control of capital”.⁵⁷

But why did Mtenda become a farmer in Mbondo, and why in 1956? The simple answer is that he was advised to do so. From 1953 onwards, the local administration had been trying, and failing, to promote the resettlement in villages of a scattered population of peasants in the western part of the district. The rationale behind the proposed resettlement was twofold. First, the uneasy access of district staff to the population was constraining the promotion of commercial farming. By re-settling scattered households of farmers in villages, went the reasoning, the collection of taxes, the enforcement of legislation on agriculture and the provision of agricultural extension services would not prove the administrative nightmare they had thus far been. Second, the resettlement of the population was designed to fight the presence of game, and therefore of tsetse flies. Also, game land invasions, especially by elephants, meant that crop destruction was a frequent experience for the local farmers, with resulting food scarcity. However, initial attempts to influence patterns of settlement through persuasion did not achieve satisfactory results.⁵⁸ Although the Provincial Tsetse Officer advocated a strategy of resettlement informed by “patience and care”,⁵⁹ by 1954 the District Officer acknowledged that resettlement was not going to be “well received by the people”.⁶⁰

These developments initially saw Mtenda as an uninvolved witness. Prior to his investment in Mbondo, Mtenda opened a branch of his shop in neighbouring Noli, where he also bought agricultural produce. However, it was here that he again took up farming,⁶¹ attracted by the high quality of uninhabited land available in the area.⁶² In 1956, colonial officials decided to move the local agricultural market from Noli to Mbondo.⁶³ Whilst Noli was a small village a few miles off the main road linking Nachingwea to Kilimarondo, Mbondo was a little inhabited settlement right on the main road. By moving the market to Mbondo, colonial officials hoped to succeed in influencing patterns of settlement by easing buyers’ access to peasants’ produce, increasing the availability of cash and trade goods in the area, and consequently stepping up the collection of taxes. So it was that Mtenda followed the market to its new premises in Mbondo.

The magnitude of his investment in the area radically rose when Mtenda became part of the implementation of its resettlement policy, as he explains:

The White people, as I told you, trusted me a lot. People there were living scattered.⁶⁴ And in this district there were elephants and all kinds of game. As I was leading in terms of following the agricultural experts' advice [...] those White people asked me whether I could start farming there.⁶⁵

And so it was that once again, his connection to the administration provoked another of Mtenda's private initiatives. The advice given to Mtenda to farm in Mbondo was part of the government's new resettlement strategy, a strategy now furnished with tangible incentives such as the relocation of the market to the main road and the provision of employment opportunities on Mtenda's land.

To write about Mbondo with reference to the pre-1956 period is perhaps anachronistic. Mtenda referred to the state of Mbondo on his arrival as "completely bush".⁶⁶ At the time, there were only two households living in what would later become a village and then a ward headquarters. Mr Kajiname, his wife and children, together with his sister, her husband, and offspring were the first to settle. At the time of Mtenda's arrival, no more than 20 people inhabited the area. As an outsider, Mtenda had to negotiate the modalities of his settlement in the area with his new neighbours.⁶⁷ Mr Kajiname accepted the arrival of an outsider who planned to start, by local standards, an uncommonly large farm, because the employment opportunities generated by it were "very good news".⁶⁸ Having agreed with the residents over his area of settlement, Mtenda began agricultural operations – although he did not move to the area permanently.⁶⁹ After clearing the land, he planted rice, maize, sorghum, sesame, and green peas. His efforts were rewarded by an abundant harvest of sesame. When Justin Mpelumbe, the Nachingwea District Senior Field Assistant for Agriculture, visited Mtenda's Mbondo farm in 1957, he was impressed:

Mr Julius Mtenda, an African businessman and farmer, has shown the best example to African people. He has farmed many acres of sesame together with sorghum, approximately 80 acres or more. He is the first African in this district to have shown commitment to agriculture.⁷⁰

In only one year, Mtenda had placed more than 80 acres of land under cultivation.

With regard to cropping patterns, there are two characteristics of Mtenda's farming strategy that are worth underlining. First, sesame, sorghum, and rice – the crops mentioned in both oral and written sources – are all annual crops. There is no reference to perennial crops, even to cashew nut trees, the planting of which had been steadily increasing throughout the district.⁷¹ The predominance of annual crops on his land represents a clear continuity with the strategy he had adopted a few years earlier (1949) in Nachingwea. But whilst in Nachingwea the choice of an annual crop (sesame) was due to the fact that his settlement on the land was only temporary, at Mbondo it rested on the fact that large-scale agriculture in the area was a highly risky activity. In Mbondo, crops were both vulnerable to the weariness of rainfall and threatened by the possibility of game invasions. Indeed, in his first year in Mbondo a harvest failure occurred on his land due to destruction caused by elephants. Seen from this perspective his choice for annual rather than perennial crops reflected a "wait and see" attitude, in which the long-term feasibility of large-scale agriculture in a hostile environment was explored to minimise risk whilst maximising short-term income. The second characteristic to be stressed is his practice of intercropping referred to by both archival and oral sources. Its rationale is well explained by Mtenda in the statement that follows: "If I lost the sorghum harvest, I could still harvest the maize one. The land should not fail all harvests, this is our thought."⁷²

The large area under crop at Mbondo required labour, and this presented Mtenda with very real challenges. His shop therefore became the agent of capitalist development in two ways. First, at a general level, he helped the spread of cash cropping in the area by providing material rewards for the proceeds of peasants' cash crop harvests. Without cash availability, the practice of cash cropping would have failed to spread, let alone remain constant. Second, by providing consumer goods in his shop, Mtenda stimulated the demand for cash that laid the ground for labour supply to his farm. In short, selling produce to Mtenda, or working for Mtenda on his land, were the only sources of cash available in the area.

Here, in Mtenda's own words, is the explanation for the success of his farming venture at Mbondo:

As there was a lot of game, that was an area of great famine. My strategy was to make people farm for food. Their money was the hoe. "Would you like to farm an area worth how many kilos [of flour]?" An area worth 5 kilos would be measured, he would not finish it in one day, so after two days if he had finished I would weigh for him 5 kilos. Another one wanted one kilo, and we would do the same. The place was full of people, more than thirty, forty, and fifty. They were after eating only. When supplies of flour were running out, I would send another lorry with flour [...] I could farm even ten acres a day. When the famine was bad people would come from as far as Kiegei.⁷³

Despite the fact that Mtenda's farm provided starved peasants with famine relief work on several occasions, a systematic reliance on famine as a source of adequate labour supply would have been risky, as this was a process outside Mtenda's control. He therefore sometimes imported labour from his own village to secure a reliable labour supply. In this way people from Mtenda's own village in Newala District, including some of his relatives, moved to Mbondo.⁷⁴

The combination of an adequate supply of trade goods, of the widespread poverty of the local population, and of the import of labour to the area, allowed Julius Mtenda to secure himself an adequate labour supply and to progress steadily with the expansion of his farm in Mbondo. Several informants converged in linking the increasing size of Mbondo with the presence of Julius Mtenda. As one of them put it: "people do not fail to move to a beautiful place. If a place has some joy, people come slowly, and enjoy the place. People enjoyed life there."⁷⁵ The local administration's attempt to encourage resettlement, not only by persuasion but also by providing peasants with material rewards, therefore succeeded in tandem with Mtenda's entrepreneurial accumulation. By 1957, Mbondo had become a small, thriving village. Julius Mtenda then still owned only 80 acres of land. He would soon acquire further land-holdings, however, and once again the expansion of his ventures would be stimulated by his association with the local government. Having noticed the success of this African entrepreneur in such a hostile environment, local officers asked Mtenda to expand the acreage of his farm in order to foster further population growth at Mbondo, and a loan was pledged to provide an incentive.⁷⁶ The loan made in 1957 allowed Mtenda to rapidly expand the size of his farm to 400 acres,⁷⁷ and also to begin cultivating perennial crops with the planting of cashew nut trees on the land.

By 1957, Mtenda had become involved in the Tanganyika African National Union, the nationalist political party of Julius Nyerere that recruited its first members in Nachingwea in 1955. As Mtenda wrote,

It was April 1955, at the time of the Company of Overseas. There were tribes of all kinds 1) Europeans 2) Indians 3) Arabs 4) Africans. There was a man called Abdul Mubaraka Athmani from Kilwa Kiwinje. He was the one who first publicised TANU in Nachingwea. This man

brought three membership cards from Dar es Salaam to show them around. The three men who, in secret, received the cards were:

Name	Card Number	Date
Abdul Mubarak Athumani	2638	12/4/1955
Charles Henry Francis	2639	15/4/1955
Maximillian M Simba	2640	15/4/1955

There were complaints amongst people who did not get the chance to get their cards. After a discussion our leader M M Simba ordered more cards. Ten were sent and they were sold to the following people.

Name	Card Number	Date
Chad Jab Simba	3169	1/6/1955
Peter Mahundi	3170	2/6/1955
Lawrence Nipwapwacha	3171	1/6/1955
Benjamin Mnolela	3172	1/6/1955
Eliakini Luchina	3173	1/6/1955
Hadija Muhamedi	3174	1/9/1955
George Mwalikunja	3175	3/6/1955
Sylvano Alfredi	3176	3/6/1955
Mvano D Magumbwa	3177	1/6/1955
Raymondi Mbangnile	3178	1/9/1955
Julius Mtenda	3179	1/9/1955. ⁷⁸

Mubarak, the first to be enrolled in Tanganyika African National Union (TANU), was a clerk working at the spare-parts workshop of the Tanganyika Agricultural Corporation (TAC) in Nachingwea. He was sent to Dar es Salaam to collect supplies for the workshop, and whilst there he attended a TANU meeting at which Julius Nyerere spoke. On returning to Nachingwea he set about furthering support for TANU within the TAC. With the exception of Julius Mtenda, all the pioneers of TANU were clerks employed by the Corporation,⁷⁹ all “men who had broken the bonds of rural life through education, experience, travel, study and employment”.⁸⁰ As Iliffe has pointed out, the fact that many traders held party offices was related to their need for access to “the money TANU needed before mass membership supplied it”.⁸¹ The importance of the TAC in the life of TANU was not only related to the occupational background of its early leadership: the secret meetings that were staged at night to recruit new members of the party took place at the Corporation workers’ labour camps around Nachingwea.⁸²

Nationalism and agricultural openings in Stesheni

Mtenda’s early involvement with TANU, of which he became district chairman in the late 1950s, helps to make sense of the next major change in his life story. Between 1961 and 1962, Mtenda embarked upon large-scale farming at Stesheni, a small centre less than a mile from Nachingwea on the road to Masasi. He was attracted to Stesheni by the distribution to African farmers of land that had previously been cleared for the Groundnut Scheme. As land clearance from thick bush was, and still is, a very time consuming activity around Nachingwea, “Many people came back [...] everyone was trying to get some cashew nut land because there was land which had already been used [...] every one, and by force if that’s what it took, everyone was occupying land without asking for permission.”⁸³ With high demand for this land, it is apparent that Mtenda’s position as a TANU leader helped him to secure a holding, a fact that he acknowledges:

At that time I was District Chairman, and when a person becomes independent, he knows what places are worth moving to and then you run for them. If you are a leader, you know everywhere. Here was the place which was best, there was oil and therefore people were occupying the area. A leader lives in a nice place. If I had to choose a house to live, what house would I choose? I would look for a place which is big, I would choose Ikulu [the State House and residence of the Tanzanian President].⁸⁴

Having thus secured ten acres of land for himself in 1961, and having observed the prospects for further land holding expansion, Mtenda moved his family from Nachingwea to Stesheni. As his diary records: “Julius Mtenda Necessary activities”: “I bought a house No. 6 f 11 Stesheni sh 500 on the 27 August 1962.”⁸⁵

Stesheni is the Swahili name for station. The village received this name because it was the final stop on the railway linking the coast to Nachingwea. Large concrete houses were built here for the European railway workers, and once they left the Nachingwea District Office inherited the buildings. Julius Mtenda once more used the political leverage that TANU chairmanship conferred, buying one of the two largest houses from the District Office.

The wealth Mtenda accumulated in the late 1940s and 1950s and consolidated in the 1960s has sustained his family to the present day. Following the Arusha Declaration, Mtenda stepped down as TANU district chairman. The *ujamaa* period posed some challenges to his entrepreneurial activities, most notably the fact that part of his farm in Mbondo became the site for the short-lived village farm that was established there as part of the state villagisation programme. However, the vast majority of his assets survived the socialist period. During *ujamaa* Mtenda even continued to accumulate assets, progressively expanded his land holdings at Stesheni through the purchase of four plots from people who moved out of the area. By the early 1980s, Julius Mtenda owned and farmed approximately 400 acres at Stesheni, thus matching the size of his farm at Mbondo. More importantly, his strategies of agricultural investment in the two areas show strong similarity: both rested on a combination of strong personal initiative and political alliance with the state.

Conclusion

In drawing conclusions from Mtenda’s experience we must be careful to capture the analytical themes that his biography illuminates whilst avoiding over-generalisation based on one individual’s personal story. One broader theme to which Mtenda’s biography can clearly contribute is that concerning the sources of initial capital. Mtenda opened a small shop thanks to the money he saved from his wages as a soldier of the British army during World War II. Whilst the role played by wage earning is shared by other entrepreneurs in rural Africa,⁸⁶ Mtenda was unusual in seeking to invest that money for profit in a markedly underdeveloped area. His opportunism in capitalising upon the Groundnut Scheme was clearly critical. The dramatic stimulus to the demand of wage goods generated by the scheme explains the astonishing rate at which he expanded the volume of his retail trade. Mtenda then experienced a dramatic contraction in business when the number of waged workers in the town shrank during 1952–53 as the scheme was run down. But by 1955 Mtenda’s trade had recovered, again reaching the peak values of the Groundnut Scheme years. This was achieved largely through the expansion of his retail outlets into new and often remote parts of the district, facilitated by his contingent alliance with local government officers. They provided Mtenda with information on cash flows and trade demand in different parts of the district, as part of a wider effort to promote the commercialisation of rural areas. In common with virtually all other successful entrepreneurs in colonial Africa, Mtenda’s political links with the local administration proved invaluable. As Kennedy has cogently

concluded in reviewing the link between access to colonial state resources and African entrepreneurship, “political power was absolutely crucial for economic advance”.⁸⁷

To borrow from Kennedy again, the liquidity Mtenda had earned in this first stage of his entrepreneurial career was nothing more “than bits of paper chasing round in ever-decreasing circles capable of benefiting fewer and fewer people”⁸⁸. From 1956, with his direct investment in agriculture, he put his resources “into production and directly under control of capital”.⁸⁹ When Mtenda started farming in a remote area of the district, local officers saw him as an ally in promoting resettlement and the commercialisation of the district and supported him with financial aid. The administration thus enjoyed success in influencing resettlement, whilst Mtenda benefited from the easy credit and support in kind that the government was able to provide.

But, to what extent was Mtenda really in control of his agricultural investment? This investment presented him with risks that derived from the distinctive features of agricultural production. Agricultural production, compared with industrial production, implies a distinctive process in the transformation of nature. While in industrial production, materials, already turned into inputs by previous extractive processes from nature, are transformed, agriculture transforms nature “through the very activity of appropriating it”.⁹⁰ This peculiarity comes with a set of consequences acting as potential disincentives to investment in agriculture. Agricultural investors are subject to the unpredictable whims of nature. Events such as inadequate or excessive rainfall, and game or locust crop destruction, represent additional obstacles unknown to, for example, the owner of an industrial factory. Land clearance, land preparation for planting, weeding, and harvesting are all agricultural operations rewarded after the harvest and its sale. As a result, capitalist agriculture requires the immobilisation of capital for a longer time than industrial production. Given these characteristics of agricultural production, it has often been noted that access to a reliable monthly wage gives the small rural man the capital needed to grow. As Kitching concludes for other parts of East Africa, “‘big farmers’ and ‘holders of high-level jobs in the formal sector’ are very largely coterminous”.⁹¹ This is because the constant inflow of cash from salaried employment allows farmers to overcome the immobilisation of capital between the preparation of land for planting and the sale of the harvest, and thus to pay for labour and other inputs before the harvest, notwithstanding the outcome of the previous year’s harvest. Mtenda, whilst not a formal sector employee, had access to a reliable income. His extensive retail business became a source of income as reliable as salaried employment.

The convergence between Mtenda’s interests and the colonial state’s development agenda thus goes a long way to explain Mtenda’s success in his investments in trade and agriculture within a very challenging rural environment. With wealth came prominence, and with prominence came political leadership in TANU. His prestige and respectability were then deployed to secure for himself further land in an advantageous setting, and then to enlarge this holding through opportunistic purchases. Thus politics, on the local scale but eventually connected to national development, played a primary role in the life story of Mtenda. His achievements may therefore be seen as exceptional in the context of rural Nachingwea, but they also fit a broader historical pattern we can recognise from other parts of Africa.

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Notes

1. Julius Mtenda was 80 years old at the time of fieldwork in 2002.
2. See Rizzo, "The Groundnut Scheme Revisited," 139–201, for the life histories of nine men who, like Mtenda, established themselves as entrepreneurs in south-eastern Tanganyika during the late colonial period.
3. For a discussion of the methodological challenges of life history research based on oral sources see van Onselen, "The Reconstruction of a Rural Life."
4. Quoted in Liebenow, *Colonial Rule*, 11.
5. For two examples, see Hill, *The Migrant Cocoa-farmers*, and Kitching, *Class and Economic Change*.
6. Alpers, *Ivory and Slaves*.
7. Becker, "A Social History," 53. Background information presented in the next paragraph, unless otherwise stated, comes from *ibid.* pp. 28–9, 32–3, 36.
8. Kjekshus, *Ecology Control*, 122.
9. For one example of a wealthy individual in the area, see Ranger, "European Attitudes." On socio-economic change and local politics in late pre-colonial and early colonial South-Eastern Tanzania, see also Becker, "Traders."
10. See Iliffe, *Tanganyika*, 18.
11. Koponen, *Development for Exploitation*, 449.
12. Information on the transport conditions in the Southern Province has been gathered from Becker, "A Social History," pp. 154–5.
13. Provincial Agricultural Officer, Southern Province AR [Annual Report], 1945, Tanzania National Archives (TNA) 16/15/44 Vol. 2.
14. Julius Mtenda, interview with author, Stesheni, August 29, 2002. All interviews were carried out in Swahili by the author. The translation of all sources is the author's work.
15. *Ibid.*
16. *Ibid.*
17. J. Mtenda, interview, September 8, 2002.
18. J. Mtenda, interview, August 10, 2002. Wage employment has been identified as a key feature in allowing rural (and urban) entrepreneurs to earn their initial capital throughout Africa. See, for example, Bowden and Moris. "Social Characteristics," 60; Muntemba, "Regional and Social Differentiation," 263; Weinrich, *African Farmers*, 117–37, 205–24; Kitching, *Class and Economic Change*, 297–311; Hill, *The Migrant Cocoa-farmers*; Marris and Somerset, *African Businessmen*, 60; Harriss and Rowe, "Entrepreneurial Patterns"; Beveridge and Oberschall, *African Businessmen and Development*, 122–6.
19. J. Mtenda, interview, May 7, 2002.
20. Mtenda refused to talk about his army service because he believes military matters to be secret. J. Mtenda, interview, August 10, 2002.
21. *Ibid.* Literal translation from *biashara ndogo ndogo*.
22. For a concise reconstruction of the striking contrast between the scheme's goals and results, see Hogendorn and Scott, "Very Large-scale Agricultural Projects," 172–4.
23. Rizzo, "What Was Left."
24. Newala District AR, 1948, TNA 16/11/260.
25. A passage from the 1948 Newala District AR, TNA 16/11/260, states that "goats command a price as high as 100 shillings a head if taken down and hawked to the camps in the Lukuledi Valley [within the groundnut scheme area]; the prices of chickens and eggs are similarly inflated."
26. J. Mtenda, interview, September 8, 2002.
27. *Ugali* is the Tanzanian staple, made with (maize or cassava) flour and water.
28. J. Mtenda, interview, May 7, 2002.
29. J. Mtenda, interview, September 8, 2002.
30. J. Mtenda, interview, May 7, 2002. Literal translation from *percenti ilikuwa haisimami*.
31. J. Mtenda, interview, May 7, 2002.

32. J. Mtenda, August 10, 2002.
33. Literal translation from *pointi kwa pointi*.
34. J. Mtenda, interview, May 7, 2002. Literal translation from *mtaji wa kutisha*.
35. Ibid.
36. Julius Mtenda, “Daftari ya duka Nachingwea” (Book of the shop in Nachingwea), no. 1, 1.
37. £1.00 sterling was worth 20 shillings in 1950, making the initial intake of the shop worth £137 sterling.
38. Mtenda, “Daftari ya duka Nachingwea,” 2. The relative weight of stock bought with his own finances – not on credit – can be discerned from the fact that the first entry in the diary says “we closed the stock from Lindi 440/35 shillings.” This is followed by a list of all the goods he bought with his own resources.
39. McCarthy, *Colonial Bureaucracy*, 36.
40. Further research is needed to fully investigate Mtenda’s link with Asian traders and the broader relationship between Asian and African traders in the area.
41. In 1951 Julius Mtenda’s goods were worth approximately £5,000.00 sterling.
42. Evidence of the game problem can be found in the Swahili News sheet of Nachingwea: “Lion (Very good news),” “Habari za Nachingwea katika Kiswahili” (Nachingwea News in Swahili), no.11/52, stamp of Provincial Office, February 28, 1952, TNA 16/32/35 Vol. 2; and three short reports entitled “Snake Danger,” two in “Habari za Nachingwea katika Kiswahili” (Nachingwea News in Swahili), no. 1, date received June 4, 1952, TNA 16/32/35 Vol. 2; and one in “Habari za Nachingwea katika Kiswahili” (Nachingwea News in Swahili), no. 73, 26 March 1953, TNA 16/32/35 Vol. 2.
43. J. Mtenda, interview, August 29, 2002.
44. *Chapati* is a type of bread. *Maandazi* are sweet pastries similar to donuts.
45. J. Mtenda, interview, September 8, 2002.
46. This section based on J. Mtenda, interview, August 24, 2002.
47. See Rizzo, “What was Left,” 221–8 on the politics of labour market regulation and the scramble for workers by employer. One of the strategies adopted by employers to attract labourers was to reduce the daily output expected from them.
48. J. Mtenda, interview, August 24, 2002.
49. Coulson, *Tanzania*, 50–9.
50. Government of Tanganyika, “Annual Report of the Department of Agriculture 1956,” 1, quoted in Coulson, *Tanzania*, 55.
51. Diary entries with the heading “cash,” meaning that he received cash from the Asian traders, appear from mid-1953 onwards. However, in an interview (NLH 1/1/2) Mtenda stated that “this [business of purchasing agricultural produce] is what allowed me to buy lorries.” His first lorry was purchased on December 13, 1952, suggesting he did not initially record cash from Asian traders. Once the volume of money he managed rose, it seems that he wrote entries in his accounts regularly.
52. Mtenda could not recall the exact moment of diversification. Until 1954 diary entries refer to merchandise for the Nachingwea shop only. From 1954 onwards, merchandise for other outlets are reported. On March 6, 1953, despite reporting only under the “Nachingwea” heading, Mtenda listed three additional retail outlets – Lukuledi, Kibutuka, and Lionja (see Mtenda, “Daftari ya duka,” no.1, p.78). In the early 1950s, Mtenda may simply have moved some of his goods from Nachingwea to rural areas in the district without recording the transfer.
53. This can be seen in Figure 1.
54. J. Mtenda, interview, August 10, 2002. The only place outside the district in this list was Lukuledi, situated just inside Masasi District, not far from the border with Nachingwea border.
55. Ibid.
56. Kennedy, *African Capitalism*, 188.
57. Ibid.
58. Aidano Lali, interview, Mbondo, September 1, 2002: the population in Mbondo still remembers the European officer who attempted to convince people of the benefit of resettlement as *Bwana Kukaa* (Mr To-Live-Together) – a reference to his persuasion of households to form villages.
59. Nachingwea District AR, 1953, 14, TNA 492/GEN/38.
60. Nachingwea District AR, 1954, 1, TNA 492/GEN/38.
61. Lukuledi was the only other place until this point at which he farmed as well as traded, although the scale of his agricultural undertaking was much smaller than in Mbondo.

62. NLH 1/1/4.
63. Nachingwea District AR, 1956, p.4, TNA 492/GEN/38.
64. In Julius Mtenda's words "*Watu walikuwa wanakaa mmoja mmoja.*"
65. J. Mtenda, interview, May 7, 2002.
66. J. Mtenda, interview, August 10, 2002. Mtenda's statement should be read with a degree of scepticism, as his claim that his farm was the main factor in Mbondo's growth was possibly driven by a desire to overemphasise his influence on the history of the area. However, the very words *porini kabisa* "completely bush," were used by several other informants when asked about Mbondo history. See Swalehe Mnango, interview, Mbondo, September 1, 2002; A. Lali, interview, September 1, 2002; Ali bin Saidi Maundu, interview, Mbondo, September 2, 2002; and Vincent Ibrahim Lipunju, interview, Mbondo, September 2, 2002.
67. Bi Mbelenje, interview, Mbondo, September 2, 2002.
68. V. I. Lipunju, interview, September 2, 2002.
69. The history of the expansion of his land holdings and of cropping patterns draws on two interviews with J. Mtenda, August 24 and 30, 2002. He sometimes visited the area two or three times a week, but might then be absent for weeks on end.
70. "Taarifa ya habari za wilaya ya Nachingwea. Kuanzia tarehe 16/06/1957-30/06/57" (News of Nachingwea District from July 16, 1957 until July 30, 1957), TNA 492/B.2/1.
71. 1954 was the first year in which cashew nuts were marketed in the district, suggesting that plantings took place no later than 1952. The colonial state distributed seeds to promote cultivation. See Field Officer (Agriculture), Nachingwea District AR 1954, TNA 492/GEN/38.
72. J. Mtenda, interview, August 30, 2002. On the rationale behind intercropping see Belshaw and Hall, "The Analysis and Use."
73. J. Mtenda, interview, August 24, 2002.
74. The claim was confirmed by interviews with S. Mnango, and A. Lali, both from nearby Mnyambe.
75. A. b. S. Maundu, interview, September 2, 2002.
76. J. Mtenda, interview, May 7, 2002.
77. The further expansion of his farm was accompanied by an important change in his cropping strategy which included perennial crops. In 1957, or shortly afterwards, the widespread planting of cashew nut trees on Mtenda's land began. Mtenda erroneously stated that the planting of cashew trees started in 1954 (see J. Mtenda, interview, August 30, 2002), but he was then in Noli not Mbondo and the description of his farm in the Senior Agricultural Officer's report quoted above does not mention cashew nut trees. John Matayo, a relative who first visited Mbondo in 1962, recalled the presence of mature cashew nut trees (see John Matayo, interview, Mbondo, September 2, 2002). Given that cashew trees mature in 3 to 5 years, we may conclude that planting started between 1957 and 1959.
78. Julius Mtenda, "Historia ya Tanu, Wilaya ya Nachingwea" (History of TANU, Nachingwea District), 1955. Handwritten one page document in author's possession.
79. See Nachingwea Life History (NLH) 1/1/2.
80. Maguire, *Towards Uhuru*, 217, quoted in Iliffe, *A Modern History*, 523.
81. Iliffe, *A Modern History*, 542.
82. NLH 1/1/2.
83. J. Mtenda, interview, August 24, 2002.
84. Ibid. Here "oil" is used as a metaphor for good land, fit for agricultural purposes. The land was also termed "oil" because it had been cleared by TAC. The analysis of how TANU took roots in Nachingwea is beyond the scope of this paper. However the presence of the TAC was crucial to TANU's spread and leadership recruitment. Mtenda wrote a one page history of the initial days of TANU in the district, kept in his private archive (photocopy in author's possession). All 13 TANU cardholders, with the exception of Mtenda, were TAC employees. See Mtenda, "Historia ya Tanu, Wilaya ya Nachingwea" (History of TANU, Nachingwea District), 1955.
85. Mtenda, "Personal Diary," March 16, 1965. The entry contains the signature of the District Commissioner who sold his house to Mtenda. This entry records information on a transaction which took place in 1962, yet is found within a 1965 diary.
86. See note 18.
87. Kennedy, *African Capitalism*, 55.
88. Ibid, p.188.
89. Ibid.

90. This section draws on Bernstein, "Agrarian Classes," especially 50–2. The quotation is from p. 51.
 91. Kitching, *Class and Economic Change*, 408.

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