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**MATETEREKA:
TANZANIA'S LAST UJAMAA VILLAGE**

David M Edwards

1998

CENTRE OF AFRICAN STUDIES

Edinburgh University

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ABSTRACT

In the early 1960s approximately 1000 settlements emerged spontaneously throughout rural Tanzania in response to President Julius Nyerere's call for the formation of socialist 'Ujamaa Villages'. The vast majority collapsed after the first couple of years. However a few genuinely socialist communities emerged and prospered. The most successful of these were in the Southern Highlands of Tanzania where seventeen villages formed a democratic co-operative organisation called the Ruvuma Development Association (RDA) to co-ordinate their activities, educate their children, market their produce, and specialise in various cottage industries. At first, the RDA attracted considerable interest and support and in 1967 Nyerere used the RDA as a model for the nation's rural development programme. However village democracy of this kind soon proved to be too great a threat to the legitimacy of many of those who held powerful positions within the Party and the Government, and in 1969 the RDA was declared a prohibited organisation, its assets were confiscated, and further activity was suppressed. The only village which survived the disbanding of the RDA with its democratic and communal institutions intact was Matetereka in the north of Ruvuma Region. The original settlers of Matetereka also survived the resettlement of 180 new families within the village during the Government's villagisation programme in 1975 and, despite sustained opposition from both inside and outside the village, is still a powerful political and economic force within the locality. The aim of the paper is to describe and analyse the history of the Ujamaa Group in Matetereka, the reasons for the support and resistance its members received, and the successes and failure they experienced. The survival of the group can be attributed largely to the quality of its leaders: their ability to motivate, organise and unite their members, their practical and intellectual skills, and their political influence at different levels of the Party and the Government.

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CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

Socialism and Rural Development

In April 1962, five months after Tanzania gained independence, President Julius K. Nyerere published a pamphlet entitled *Ujamaa – the Basis of African Socialism*. The pamphlet described Nyerere's political philosophy and reaffirmed the commitment of the ruling party, the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU), to the principles of socialism and human equality. African Socialism was seen as an extension of the traditional concept of *ujamaa*, which Nyerere defined as the values of the extended family unit, whereby everybody had a right to be respected, an obligation to work, and the duty to assure the welfare of the whole community. The individualistic search for wealth and security at the expense of others was denounced as incompatible with this philosophy (Nyerere 1968[1967]:107-8; Von Freyhold 1979:xi).

Through speeches and radio broadcasts, Nyerere encouraged groups of farmers to relocate and reorganise themselves into small socialist communities. By 1963, about 1000 settlement schemes had emerged spontaneously throughout the country, with little help from the Government, mostly consisting of members of the TANU Youth League who had been radicalized during the independence struggle. Most of these had a brief existence because the early hardships involved were often too great. Production would typically be on an individual basis, but social institutions for co-operation were set up where some facility such as irrigation or domestic water supply had to be shared (Cliffe and Cunningham 1973:132; Coulson 1978:2; Von Freyhold 1979:xi). However, a few genuinely socialist communities emerged. The most successful of these were in Ruvuma Region in the Southern Highlands of Tanzania where seventeen such settlements prospered and formed an organisation called the Ruvuma Development Association (RDA) to co-ordinate their activities, educate their children, market their produce, and specialise in various cottage industries.

The RDA attracted considerable interest, support, and opposition. It was described in 1991 as "the most striking and most successful example of self-reliance and Ujamaa in Tanzania and possibly in Africa",² and in 1967, following a number of visits to the RDA headquarters in Litowa Village (Figure 1), Nyerere and his advisers used the RDA as a model for the nation's rural development programme, as detailed in three important policy documents which were published in that year (Coulson 1978:12; Hyden 1980:100).³ *The Arusha Declaration* spelled out Tanzania's path to socialism in more practical terms; *Education for Self-Reliance* described a strategy of practical education to support the socialist transformation, and *Socialism and Rural Development* explained

how the peasantry were to become the focus of, and driving force behind, both local and national development. At the local level, development required peasants to work harder and more intelligently; co-operation in agriculture and cottage industries would allow economies of scale and division of labour to emerge; reformed marketing institutions would become more reliable and honest, and the move towards agricultural capitalism would be checked. Nyerere argued that implementation of the new policies would make all of this possible by encouraging peasants throughout the country to form Ujamaa Villages of the kind which had emerged spontaneously since independence, where land was communally owned, labour was pooled, decisions were made through a radical participatory democracy, and the costs and benefits of co-operation were shared equitably among every participant. At the national level, the policy of socialist rural development was seen as a means to reduce dependence on foreign assistance by tapping the labour reserves of the peasantry (Nyerere 1968[1967a]:27; Von Freyhold 1979:xii).

The organisation and activities of the RDA represented the perfect embodiment of Nyerere's conception of a federation of self-governing socialist communities, yet on 24 September 1969, after a long and heated exchange during a meeting of the TANU Central Committee, the RDA was declared a prohibited organisation; their assets of approximately one million Tanzanian shillings (Tsh) were confiscated, their staff transferred to new positions throughout the country, and replaced with security officers to complete the destruction of their activities and institutions. The disbanding of the RDA represented a turning point in the Government's approach to rural development. The following day the Party declared its intention in the national press to control all development in Ujamaa Villages. From then on, coercion was increasingly used to implement rural development policies. In September 1973 the TANU Biennial Conference announced the forthcoming villagisation programme and resolved that by the end of 1976 the entire rural population of thirteen million people should live in villages. Incredibly, this deadline was met (Siddiqui 1990:40-1). The plan was that socialist modes of production would be encouraged once people were living together, and no longer scattered throughout the countryside, but by then the preconditions for the kind of village democracy necessary for effective communal production were undermined. The Party paid lip service to the ideals expressed in the Arusha Declaration for the next twenty years, but policies became increasingly capitalist-oriented, partly in response to demands from the World Bank and IMF. Perhaps the event which marked the end of African Socialism in Tanzania came in 1979 when the World Bank virtually threatened to withdraw current and future aid unless Nyerere suspended his ujamaa programme (Hatch 1975, cited in Ergas 1980:405). In retrospect, the 'socialist transformation' is generally regarded as a failure, although the Government's achievements in education and social welfare have been praised as "Herculean efforts" given the

limited resources available (Bryceson 1988:44). Nyerere is most famous for inheriting a diverse nation of 150 ethnic groups and three major religions and building lasting peace and unity, an achievement for which he has earned the title *Baba wa Taifa* – ‘The Father of the Nation’ (Omari 1995:23).

The Ruvuma Development Association

The story of the RDA begins in 1960 with Ntimbanjayo Millinga, who had recently become Secretary of the Peramiho Branch of the TANU Youth League in Songea District, in what was then the Southern Province of Tanzania (Figure 1). On 7 November, in response to Nyerere’s radio broadcasts, Millinga and fourteen other Youth League members set off on foot from Peramiho through the forests and selected a spot nine miles to the north on a ridge overlooking the fertile Litowa valley. There they built a shelter and planted three or four acres of maize. Within three months the scheme was abandoned because they had insufficient food to last until the first harvest (Coulson 1978:4; Ibbott 1970:21). Another start was made in June 1961, and this time they were successful. A few months later, while studying for a short course in economics and politics at Kivukone College in Dar es Salaam, Millinga attended a guest lecture given by Ralph Ibbott, who was working on a 2000 acre agricultural co-operative in southern Rhodesia. Millinga was impressed with Ibbott and invited him to visit Litowa and offer advice on how they might improve their farming. In April 1963, following a fundraising trip to Europe, Ibbott and his family took up permanent residence in Litowa and remained there until September 1969 (Coulson 1978:4; Ibbott 1970:26-34).

Government and Party officials were supportive of the efforts of the pioneer settlers. In particular, the first Area Commissioner in Songea, Hinjusun, encouraged Millinga and Ibbott to visit other groups in the area and provide advice based on what they had learnt from their work at Litowa. Such a role was appreciated by everyone, and soon the Ruvuma Development Association was born. Hinjusun made its registration possible under the Societies Ordinance, and a management committee for the Association was established which included the Regional Commissioner as Chairman, Regional Party officials and civil servants, and representatives from each village in the Association. During the first committee meeting in September 1963, Millinga was elected Secretary and Ibbott was recognised as Technical Adviser (Coulson 1978:6; Ibbott 35-50). In the same year the Committee produced a paper entitled *Ujamaa: An Outline of the Principles for a Plan for the Introduction of African Socialism into the Ruvuma Region of Tanganyika*. Its content was remarkably similar to that of Nyerere’s 1967 policy paper, *Socialism and Rural Development*. An extract is given below (cited in Ibbott 1970:52):

We believe it is possible to establish a reasonable number of communal villages in the Region over the next few years... apart from small pieces of land for individual use around family houses, the whole of agriculture would be carried out on a communal basis making possible the use of agricultural machinery on the most economic basis. Increased production through the introduction of modern methods and machines would enable the villages to be fed by only a proportion of the members of the community. This leaves labour free for the building of better houses and village amenities... for engaging in the village industries... and trading with surplus produce could take place between villages. This we believe possible because of the existence in the Region of small self-started settlement schemes... A great advantage however is that the project is growing out of the people themselves and not being implanted from above. A certain spirit therefore exists to begin with and without this spirit little can be achieved. The members of the project themselves seek advice, building up a confidence between the group and the district and regional departmental officers. Starting here we believe it is possible to get the confidence of the people on a growing scale.

The RDA grew slowly and steadily by giving advice, discipline and coherence to existing villages or groups of settlers. Before a village was accepted, it was made clear that its members should not expect to become wealthy overnight, and several prospective villages were either refused registration, or their registration was delayed until their commitment to working together became clearer. The RDA villages became self-sufficient in food, improved their health and nutrition, built a school and water supplies, and started village industries. A kind of politicized extension service was formed, which became known as the Social and Economic Revolutionary Army (SERA). The members were experts in various fields, selected from within the RDA, who could explain socialist policies, gather information, and solve institutional and technical problems faced by member villages (Coulson 1978:7-8; Ibbott 1969: 293; Ibbott 1970:139-144). By August 1964 there were eight villages, and their leaders met together in Litowa for a simple conference – the first of many. A new constitution was formed which turned the Association into a co-operative body, owned and controlled by its member villages. The constitution considerably reduced the influence of representatives of the State, who had already begun to undermine their autonomy. Nevertheless it was approved in principle by President Nyerere who visited Litowa for the first time in August 1965. This then was the framework within which the RDA operated until its dissolution in 1969 (Coulson 1978:8).

In 1966 the RDA purchased the only maize mill in Songea using a grant from Nyerere himself, and in the following year they also purchased a sawmill with money from a Swiss charity. It was the only reliable source of supply of sawn timber for Government development projects. Perhaps the most remarkable of its

many achievements was in the field of education. A primary school was established in Litowa for all children from the RDA villages which developed in an experimental way, creating its own syllabuses and integrating its educational work with the ongoing life of the villages. Plans were well advanced for a three-year post-primary technical training programme for the children before they went back to their villages, with training of individual pupils suited to the needs of the villages – a programme which was to be a pilot project in such education for the Ministry of Education (Coulson 1978:8). By the time of the disbanding there were seventeen member villages, comprising about 500 households. The milling businesses had just about finished payments of Tsh 95,000 on a diesel lorry and a diesel tractor and trailer so that, from then on, capital for development would be more available. Understanding among the RDA leadership was increasing on how better to assist the villages, which were growing and strengthening continually. According to Ibbott, “The importance was not however in these things, but in the fact that it was an organisation completely built up by the people who were in it, who always made all decisions and controlled development” (Ibbott 1969:293).

Aims and Methodology

The only village to survive the disbanding of the RDA with its communal and democratic institutions intact was Matetereka, in the north of Ruvuma Region. Remarkably, the Matetereka ‘Ujamaa Group’ also survived the influx of 180 families during the villagisation programme in 1975, despite often considerable antagonism from outsiders. Today the Group has just thirty active members in a village of over 2000 inhabitants, yet its members remain economically and politically powerful and have had a central role in the history of the village. This study describes and analyses this role and the reasons behind the Ujamaa Group’s survival. It explores the reasons for the support and resistance its members received, and the successes and failures they experienced. Chapter Two describes the period from 1962 to 1972 which includes the formation of Matetereka, and opposition to both Matetereka and the RDA. The most significant issue during this period is identified to have been the relationship between the *wajamaa* (Ujamaa Group members) and the State, which is analysed further in Chapter Three. The question is asked: why did the Party encourage the formation of Ujamaa Villages and then fail to support them? Chapter Four completes the history of Matetereka, from 1972 to 1998. In this period, the major issue was the conflict between the original *wajamaa* and the newcomers at villagisation. The power struggles between the two factions and the efforts of the Ujamaa Group leadership to unite them through institutions of communal production are described. These events are analysed further in Chapter Five and the conditions under which villagers were able to co-operate successfully are

identified and discussed. The concluding remarks touch upon the relevance of the story of Matetereka for rural development programmes in contemporary Tanzania.

Fieldwork was carried out in Tanzania between 25 June and 4 August 1998, during which time a total of twelve days were spent working in Dar es Salaam, eleven days in Matetereka, six in Songea, two in Peramiho, and one day in Litowa. For my first visit to Ruvuma, interpretation was provided by Peter Keasi, who had grown up in Peramiho and was educated at Wilima Secondary School in Matetereka. He introduced me to Lukas Mayemba, former Village Chairman of Matetereka and current Ujamaa Group Chairman. In Dar es Salaam I made contact with Suleiman Toroka, former headmaster of the RDA primary school in Litowa, Emmanuel Mginga, brother of Ado who was a founder member of the RDA, and Ntimbanjayo Millinga who agreed to act as my interpreter for the rest of my fieldwork. Apart from his role in the establishment of Litowa and the RDA, Millinga has held a series of Government and Party posts. In 1965 he was elected MP for Songea South. In 1967 he was chosen by Nyerere to head the new Department of Ujamaa Village Development, and to join the TANU Central Committee, for which he worked until 1972. He retired as Regional Party Secretary in Mbeya in Spring 1998. Millinga's knowledge of Tanzanian politics in general and the rise and fall of the RDA in particular was of considerable value to the study, as was his ability to translate from Kiswahili into clear, accurate English. Lukas Mayemba hosted Millinga and myself throughout our stay in Matetereka, and went to considerable effort to ensure that the fieldwork was a success. He provided all the necessary introductions and arranged most of the meetings, as well as being the most valuable source of first hand information on the history of the village.

One ethical problem I faced was how to justify extracting information from busy people, especially in Matetereka, to further my career without giving much in return. None of us were under the illusion that the research process would 'empower the community', although it was suggested by both Toroka and Mayemba that the Ujamaa Group members might appreciate their story being made available to the outside world, especially if written in an accessible style, and the study has been written up with this preference in mind. There was also the possibility that problems might arise as a result of publication of sensitive material about local politics. Informants were aware of the use to which their narratives would be put and there were few reservations about expressing opinions on people and events in the village. Millinga's view was that it is high time events such as these were made more public. After much deliberation and consultation I decided to retain the true names of key players and locations, rather than use pseudonyms, in order to preserve the historical value of the paper. However I have chosen to refer to certain individuals only by their official titles in order not to attract unnecessary attention to their personal identities. I

apologise that, at times, this has made the account a little clumsy. I also take full responsibility for any factual errors that may be found in the paper, and for any misunderstandings that its publication may cause.

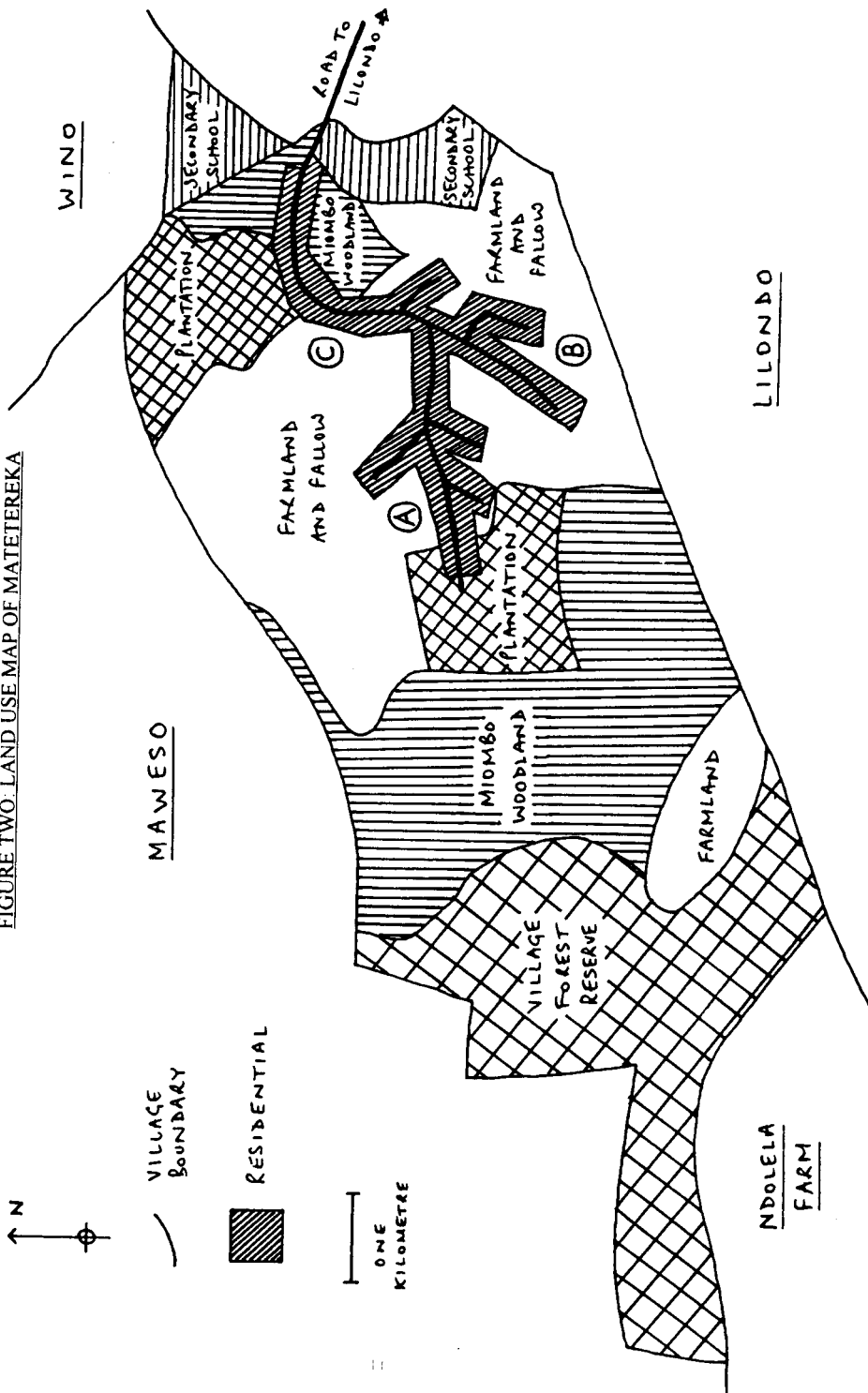
The methodology used was a combination of participant observation, focused interviews, and group discussions. Time was also spent examining the archives of the Daily News in Tanzania and the University of Dar es Salaam library. Key informants included former members of the RDA, villagers from both inside and outside the Ujamaa Group within Matetereka, and Government and Party officials in Matetereka, Litowa and Songea. Translation from Kiswahili was necessary for the majority of these informants, with the notable exception of Lukas Mayemba. The clarity of Millinga's interpretation was such that a tape recorder was not necessary and the bulk of conversation could be recorded word for word, by hand. Fieldwork of such short duration is bound to be subject to bias. In this case, the data largely reflected the interests and opinions of the Ujamaa Group leadership – half a dozen men who are relatively powerful and wealthy. With more time it would have been desirable to interview a greater number and range of people: youth, women, 'ethnic outsiders', local outsiders such as teachers, expatriates, and members of 'Wilima' – a small group of former Wino Ward residents, including a former Minister of Finance, who hold powerful positions in Dar es Salaam, and influence events in the village. I would also have interviewed more 'enemies' of the Ujamaa Group both in the Government and Matetereka itself. Given the time available I chose to ensure that the history of the village was reasonably accurate from at least one perspective.

Description of Matetereka

Matetereka is located in the north of Ruvuma Region near the border with Iringa Region about twelve miles from Lilondo which in turn is 150 km north of Songea on the Njombe-Songea road. The village is part of Wino Ward in Songea Rural District (Figure 1). It lies on two ridges, between 960 and 1300 metres above sea level, and forms a 'Y' shape. Each arm of the 'Y' comprises one of three sub-villages called Matetereka A, B and C respectively (Figure 2). There is an unmetalled road leading from the village to the main road at Lilondo although it is hardly passable during the rains. The inhabitants are primarily of the Wabena ethnic group, with a minority of Wapangwa. In 1994 the population was 2242 people, living in 320 households (Government of Tanzania 1995).

The environment in Matetereka is extremely favourable to agriculture. The village has fertile soils and receives ample rainfall of 1200 mm per year (Lewin 1973:189). There is one rainy season from November to April, which is also the main growing season. Farming today can be described as commercial production of coffee with subsistence maize grown for subsidiary sales. Although coffee is

FIGURE TWO. LAND USE MAP OF MATETEREKA



the main cash crop, additional income is derived from beans and groundnuts and small quantities of green peas, yams, round potatoes, bananas, finger millet, cassava, sweet potatoes and fruits such as pineapples and oranges. The main food crop is maize. During the dry season the maize is cultivated in the valley floors while during the rains it is grown on the ridgetops and slopes which gives a good all year round harvest. Each household typically has a coffee plot of up to one hectare located, for protection, near their compound, and between one and three hectares for all other crops located at a distance of up to five miles from the compound (Figure 2). The actual area cultivated in a season is normally between one and two hectares as other land is in fallow. There is no market for unimproved land; the Village Government allocates rights to land, and sufficient land is available for all residents for the foreseeable future. Farming is carried out entirely by hand, although in the past both oxen and tractors have been used. The labour market is not significant although, in recent years, a small proportion of farmers have begun to employ labour for maize and coffee operations (Government of Tanzania 1995).

Apart from farming, a number of economic activities are carried out on a small scale including running small shops, tailoring, manufacture and sale of local beer, fish farming, carpentry, potmaking, livestock husbandry, basket making, masonry, blacksmithing, and handicraft production. These activities supplement the income from farming to purchase basic household needs: cooking oil, salt, kerosine, soap, medical care, clothes, transport, sugar, tea, and school fees and materials. Houses are constructed from burnt bricks; about half have iron roofs but eighty percent are neither plastered nor cemented. The village has a dispensary, a primary school, cattle dip, village office, church, three shops, three milling machines, and since 1987 has been the location of a private secondary school (Figure 2). The main fuel is firewood, obtained from large tracts of miombo woodland to the west of the residential part of the village, and supply of forest products is not often identified as a problem. Gravity fed water supply was installed in 1993 which provides tapped water to within 100 metres of most compounds (Government of Tanzania 1995). Compared to other villages in Ruvuma, Matetereka is quite prosperous. The inhabitants are rarely without food, and incomes and production are sufficient for a reasonably secure life. Class formation does not appear to have progressed greatly, and institutions for mutual support appear to be strong. As will be seen, the quality of life can be attributed to a large extent to the leadership, organisation and effort of the Ujamaa Group.

CHAPTER TWO

MATETEREKA AND THE RUVUMA DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

Formation and Growth of Matetereka

Matetereka was formed in January 1962 when six men from Wino Village in the north of Songea Rural District settled on an uninhabited fertile ridge a few miles to the south and started communal cash cropping. They called their settlement Mahiwa. Their decision was encouraged by two local officials: the Wino Ward Executive Secretary, and Lukas Mayemba, the Ward Party Chairman. With the Executive Secretary's help, the settlers secured a loan from the Agricultural Credit Agency for Tsh 1000 which was enough to buy four cows and a plough. From among the group, Gelvas Mkombo was voted Village Chairman and Abel Njalika became Village Secretary.

By 1964, the Ward Executive Secretary had encouraged the formation of two further co-operative groups in the area – Lungemba and Kidondo – in addition to Mahiwa. There were approximately 10 members in each. The original plan was to focus on communal cash crop production and rely on their individual farms at their places of origin for subsistence food production. In Mahiwa, they planted five acres of groundnuts and maize; in Lungemba, one acre of maize; and, in Kidondo, one acre of groundnuts. In addition each member had an individual plot of approximately two and a half acres at the new sites and, at their places of origin, half an acre of coffee and one and a half acres for all other crops.

Following the advice of the Ward Executive Secretary and the Ward Agricultural Extension Officer the three groups decided to form a common *shamba* (farm) on the Mahiwa site. At the end of 1964, they planted two acres of coffee together, although they continued to live in three separate sites. At this time accommodation at Mahiwa consisted of just one temporary building in which they were all staying. They worked at Mahiwa from Monday to Friday and returned to their home farms for the weekends. Soon after, the three groups decided to form a single village, which they called Mahiwa Farm until a visiting District Commissioner pointed out that he was born in another place called Mahiwa, near Lindi, and as their village was on the road to Lindi, it might confuse people. So Abel Njalika suggested the name Matetereka, which is the local Kibena word for rifle cartridge. In his youth, while helping his father establish beehives in the area, Abel had discovered cartridges left over from the Second World War. The name Matetereka was seen as an expression of the villagers' intention to fight against hunger and poverty.

In August 1964 Abel Njalika and Gelvas Mkombo, in their capacity as Village leaders, received an invitation from Ntimbanjayo Millinga to attend the three-day seminar in Litowa organised by the RDA for its member villages. This

was only the second time they had been contacted by the RDA, the first being a brief visit by Millinga and Ibbott in 1963 while Njalika was away. The village decided that Njalika should go with the Chairman of neighbouring Ntandikeni Village to spread the benefits of the seminar to a wider audience. During the seminar, they were taught about the importance of crop rotation, and of living near the working site rather than walking long distances. They saw the people working and eating together. On one night a band came from Songea to entertain them. Abel was particularly attracted by these approaches and concluded that Litowa had advanced because of this. The Ntandikeni man appreciated the benefits of crop rotation but, perhaps because he was elderly, he did not see the importance of living and working together. When Abel returned he called a meeting and described how impressed he was by what he had seen in Litowa: "For the first time I spoke with all my power. I was known as a very quiet person beforehand. But I was convinced that it was the right thing to do." The people agreed to commit themselves to communal living and production and decided that the following season's crops should be the basis of their food supply so that their families could move in by the end of 1965. From then on, Abel and the Village Production Manager, Alto Ngerangera, attended regular RDA meetings.

The RDA lent Matetereka a tractor which allowed the villagers to cultivate their land and to transport bamboo and wood from the forest for the construction of more permanent houses. As a result, in January 1966, all families were able to move in from their places of origin. Now the villagers were able to sit together, discuss their work, and plan the whole week. Only Saturday and Sunday provided time for rest. That year they prepared and planted 15 acres of coffee, 10 acres of maize, and two acres of groundnuts on a communal basis. The coffee in particular represented a considerable investment, and the expectation of this income was one of the strong forces binding the people of Matetereka together (Lewin 1973:193).

Later, the RDA donated a brand new tractor to the village along with a plough, harrow and trailer. The tractor was a great success and changed the lives and thinking of the people. Its value lay in tilling land, on both the communal and individual plots, but it also improved agricultural marketing and transport. It was used to ferry maize, and children, to the RDA primary school in Litowa. They looked after it with great care, and it was still working, to the Ibbotts' surprise, when they visited Matetereka in 1992, although it was abandoned shortly afterwards due to the unavailability of spare parts. Another advantage of RDA membership came in 1967 in the form of a young American volunteer who worked in the village for one year. She introduced new ideas on how to raise children and helped with the formation of a women's group to discuss children's welfare. She established a nursery school and taught people of the need for well-ventilated housing. Her parents visited, and donated a small maize mill.

The village also had its problems. Communal coffee production failed to meet their expectations and was temporarily abandoned because the seed they had used was of inferior quality. The maize market was poor and so the decision was made to divide the harvest from the communal maize shamba among themselves as food. Fortunately, the RDA helped by supplying them with second-hand clothes donated from Europe. Critics from outside the village likened them to sisal workers, because of their strict organisation (“there was a time for everything”), and because the food dividends reminded them of the rations given on Saturdays to queues of workers on the sisal estates.

The Disbanding of the RDA

Despite official encouragement from people like Hinjusun and the Ward Executive Secretary during the first two years after independence, the RDA soon found itself attracting considerable opposition from the State. According to Millinga, the brain behind the movement to disband the RDA was the Minister for Regional Administration and Rural Development, Peter Kisumo. He paid very good lip service to the President. He would say, “Ujamaa is fantastic!” But behind the President’s back he was very open about his hatred of socialism, ujamaa and the RDA. Millinga gives an example:

Several months before the disbanding, there was a seminar in Sumbawanga in a place called Matai. The topic under discussion was nothing to do with ujamaa. Leaving the room the Minister said to me, “Why do you keep talking about Ujamaa Villages!” The remark was so out of context that I was quite taken aback. The Minister went on: “I assure you, as long as WE are in power, ujamaa will never succeed! We will make sure it fails!” I went to Mwalimu [Nyerere] later in the day to ask him why this remark had been made, out of the blue. But Mwalimu has many faces and moods. He said, “OK. Thank you for telling me that.” And that was all... At that time, many lies were penetrating his ear [so he may not have responded for that reason].

In July 1969, a recently reconstituted Central Committee met in Handeni to discuss ujamaa for a whole month. Millinga, John Ngairo (former Chairman of the RDA) and Suleiman Toroka (Headmaster of Litowa School) were invited to attend to represent the RDA. Millinga describes the attitude of some of the participants:

We were discussing something completely different, and then at the close of the session, all of a sudden, the Prime Minister and Vice President [Rashidi Kawawa] said: “The development of this country will be brought about by the people of this country, and no foreigners! The RDA will disband itself!” He

said this in English [perhaps to give greater authority].⁴ That evening I saw Mwalimu and asked him if he had decided that the RDA should be disbanded, given this 'order' from the Prime Minister. "Why has this move been taken?" I asked. Mwalimu said, "We will discuss it at the next sitting of the Central Committee".

At Handeni it was decided that the Central Committee members, in groups of three, would spend five weeks living in some of the country's more advanced Ujamaa Villages, including Litowa and Matetereka. But it seems they had already made up their minds, and they clearly had found it difficult to understand the actions and attitudes of their hosts. On 24 September the Central Committee met again in Dar es Salaam to decide the fate of the RDA. Some of the members complained that they had been received rudely during their stay. Others said that the people at Litowa were teaching the children to work against the Party (an absurd suggestion from the villagers' point of view who saw the RDA as a model example of Nyerere's policies in practice). Those Committee members who had visited Litowa accused the villagers of planning to kill them, and they gave several examples to support their claim: apparently they tried to make a tree fall on top of one member while he was witnessing a demonstration of how to fell trees with a winch. Similarly they had apparently tried to roll a large rock onto another member while he was inspecting the village water supply construction project. A third attempt to kill the visitors involved a hostile bull. According to Millinga:

Mwalimu was very annoyed with this [explanation]: "You people, are you serious!" You have failed to convince me that there is any reason for disbanding the RDA. If you think they wanted to kill you with a rock, a tree and a bull, then you must be very stupid! How many people have been killed in this way?" Everyone in the meeting responded by saying that they wanted the RDA dead. Then someone stood up and said to Mwalimu, "If you think the RDA should continue, then you should go and lead them on your own. They only respect you, anyway." Mwalimu turned to me and asked, "What are they saying?" I said, "I don't know anything about these accusations. I haven't been to Songea for the last three months but these people were there two weeks ago. Therefore I can't say this did not happen and I can't say this did happen, because I wasn't there. However I doubt these stories, from what I know of the RDA". One of the Committee members said, "Look at this man! Who is he cheating? He is very naive." Mwalimu replied, "But he says that he doesn't know anything. Why do you accuse him of cheating and saying naive things?" There was silence in the room.

After further argument, Mwalimu had only one supporter – the oldest member of the Committee (over 70 years old), Mr Selemani Mhigiri. Mhigiri said, “This is very strange. These people are making progress for themselves, for the pride of this nation. It makes me disbelieve these stories. Let them live in peace.” There was an uproar. Mwalimu said, “I think you people want to disband the RDA without any reason. But because you are ‘the power’, then let us disband it. But I want this kind of development for the country. If necessary, then, we will make TANU the controllers and implementers of this kind of development.” He said to me, “What is your feeling about this decision?” I said, “When we started the RDA we were simply following Party policy. The Party encouraged us to do this kind of development, so we did it. Today we will follow Party policy again. We are being told to stop, so we will stop.” Even this was not enough [for the anti-ujamaa Committee members].

But it was the end of the matter, and 21 out of the 24 Committee members came out in favour of disbanding the RDA (Coulson 1978:16; Ibbott 1969). *The Nationalist* of 25 September announced that TANU would run all Ujamaa Villages, and the RDA was declared a prohibited organisation (cited in Musti de Gennaro 1979:17):

The Ujamaa village is the model of socialism in rural areas and the Party and its government have arrangements in hand for the development of these villages, politically, socially and economically. There was thus clearly the danger that if matters continued as they were, we would have had a mushroom of ‘ujamaa’ villages representing at the most extreme, every shade of ‘idea’ of socialism. Already some regions were talking of starting their own Ujamaa villages development associations... It must be borne in mind that it is part of the philosophy of Ujamaa villages that the people who decide to come together to form such a community enjoy a large amount of self-organisation. Thus they would plan production, hours of work, schedule of economic activities and the like. But they can only prosper if they are TANU communities, inspired by its principles, politically guided by and looking up to TANU for assistance. The decision by the Party to take charge of all Ujamaa villages was a correct, logical, political and ideological necessity.

The following day a delegation from the Central Committee flew to Songea, including Peter Kisumo, Pius Msekwa (National TANU Party General Secretary) and Husen Makwaia (Ruvuma Regional Commissioner), and a meeting was organised to inform the Regional Party Executive Committee and District Party Working Committee of the decision to disband the RDA. At that time Lukas Mayemba was a member of both committees, as well as the RDA and the

Ujamaa Group in Matetereka. Consequently he found himself in a very difficult position. During the meeting most of the participants were not satisfied with the reasons given and were annoyed that the lower level of the Party didn't know what was going on at the top. Mayemba asked for further explanation and was told by Kisumo: "Shut up!" One old man had the courage to intervene on Mayemba's behalf and told the Minister that Mayemba's question should be answered. He explained that in his experience: "Litowa and the RDA are simply people working for their own development". The Minister responded with a story about "the wood and the axe", the essence of it being that the old trees in the forest fear neither the axe head on its own, nor the wooden handle on its own, but, when the two are joined, the trees should be on the lookout for danger. Perhaps he was referring to the expatriates who had joined forces with the RDA.

The delegation proceeded to Litowa, accompanied by the police. Mayemba had to sit with the officials while his friends were being "crucified". This meeting marked the end of the RDA. It was announced that all of the RDA property was to be confiscated – the grain mill, the sawmill, the mechanical workshop, vehicles and equipment. Within a week the expatriate staff had left quietly and the teaching staff in the school had been transferred to posts throughout the country (Coulson 1978:17). Member villages, deprived of the co-ordination and support of the RDA, became increasingly disorganised with few indications of their past achievements (Musti de Gennaro 1979:21). (Today, Litowa is littered with reminders of more prosperous times – rusty tractor parts, abandoned buildings, etc.) Apparently none of the 50 or so other Ujamaa Villages supported by Millinga's Department of Ujamaa Village Development survived beyond 1969. In Millinga's words: "How could they with the model for their development being publicly denounced?" In the words of another RDA member: "Once the mother is killed, the young children soon die" (Musti de Gennaro 1979:21). The only village which managed to continue its communal activities was Matetereka.

Matetereka Versus the Regional Commissioner

Soon after the delegation visited Litowa, the Regional Commissioner, Husen Makwaia, visited Maweso (a village adjacent to Matetereka) and called a meeting to which people from Matetereka secretly went and listened. A great deal was said about why the RDA had been disbanded. The Regional Commissioner concluded by declaring, "That is the end of Matetereka!" But the Maweso villagers asked, "You say that the RDA is disbanded and Matetereka is finished, but why is there a team of surveyors currently marking the boundaries between Matetereka and its neighbours?" The purpose of this work had been to provide Matetereka with an extension to its existing land. In fact, the surveyors had returned to Songea but the Regional Commissioner was unaware of this. He

then proceeded by car to Matetereka, accompanied by soldiers with guns. The Matetereka villagers rushed home on foot, taking shortcuts, and overtook the officials because the roads were so bad. They repeated what had been said about Matetereka to the village leaders. By the time the party arrived, the leaders were prepared. They asked the Regional Commissioner whether the surveyors could be brought back from Songea to finish their work. He replied, "Yes!" They asked for a new primary school as compensation for the disbanding of the RDA because their children could no longer attend the RDA school in Litowa. The Regional Commissioner said, "If the RDA could manage to own and run a school, then TANU cannot fail to do it! A school will be built!" Finally, they asked for a mason to build the school and dispensary. This time the Regional Commissioner refused: "Building a school is just a question of laying bricks on top of each other." The villagers did not think highly of this excuse but let the matter rest for the time being.

After the Regional Commissioner had left, the villagers convened a formal TANU meeting and decided to appeal to the District Party leadership for the Regional Commissioner to attend the meeting, in his capacity as Regional Party Secretary, to justify the accusations which he had made against them in Maweso and account for the discrepancy between what he had said there and in Matetereka itself. The Regional Commissioner refused to attend and sent the District Commissioner (who was also the District Party Secretary), but the people said they wanted the Regional Party Secretary in person.

When the Regional Commissioner heard that the people of Matetereka were questioning his behaviour he sent an undercover Security Officer to the village to spy on them.⁵ This is how they handled the situation. Soon after the disbanding of the RDA, the villagers in Matetereka resolved never to talk about the RDA, or ujamaa, in Kiswahili to *anyone* unless he or she was a member of the village. They only spoke in Kibena. A man arrived with his wife a couple of weeks after the disbanding and was dropped off by a driver, who left. Mayemba was not around. The man said that he was a social worker, and an old school friend of Lukas Mayemba. The people welcomed him, but spoke amongst themselves only in Kibena. When Mayemba returned, he was told about the arrival of his 'friend', but the visitor was unable to recognise him. So the villagers didn't tell him that Mayemba had returned; they kept it a secret to see what would happen. One day the village bell was rung to call a meeting and everyone came, except the Security Officer. Someone was sent to get him and he was confronted by Mayemba: "We have decided to take all security into our own hands and we suspect you of being a spy for an enemy. You have been lying! I am Mayemba! Tell me exactly where we met and went to school because I cannot remember ever meeting you before." The Security Officer could not answer, and he could not support his claim to be a social worker. The villagers said, "We will take you and your wife to the Ward Executive Officer" [for the authority to evict them].

He apologised, and made excuses about not being able to walk long distances, so the villagers said "You may stay, but we do not trust you. You are an enemy!" According to Mayemba, "He had come to Matetereka to confuse and harass us, but he had become confused himself."

While this was happening, the Regional Commissioner requested the Central Committee for permission to detain Mayemba, John Ngairo, and Emil Ndonde (a sociology graduate who joined Litowa after the disbanding). A delegation was sent to Matetereka (and presumably Litowa as well) to investigate the reasons behind this request. Meanwhile, Mayemba was sent to a 'meeting' in Songea which did not exist, apparently to get him out of the way. The villagers used the opportunity to ask the Regional Commissioner why he was spreading bad rumours about Matetereka: "The RDA is disbanded, and is now history, so what do you want us to do? Do you want to disband us, as well? Where should we go? If Mayemba was here today, he would be asking you the same questions." All this was said in Kiswahili. For the first time, the Security Officer began to understand what was going on. The Regional Commissioner must have relieved him of his mission there and then because he left the village the next day. After hearing the people via the delegation, the Central Committee apparently decided to dismiss the Regional Commissioner, but it appears that he held his post for a further two years. The detail surrounding this decision is unclear. It was a coincidence that the Regional Commissioner had confronted the villagers in Matetereka just a few days before the delegation arrived from the Party Headquarters to follow up his questionable requests to detain former RDA members, so the villagers were able to complain directly to the delegates about his attempts to disrupt the village. The delegation included the District Party Secretary (and District Commissioner), and the Regional Commissioner himself, but also Zaituni Fadhili (the Regional Party Chairwoman) and Alfred Kafanabo (Millinga's Principal Assistant Secretary at the Department of Ujamaa Village Development) both of whom were supportive of the RDA. It appears that the delegates were hand picked by Nyerere to ensure the removal of the Regional Commissioner.

During its last days the RDA was planning to establish a dispensary, a windmill, and a bigger grinding mill in Matetereka. Since the Government was responsible for the demise of the RDA, Mayemba made repeated demands to the Regional Commissioner for compensation for their loss, and reminded him of his promise to build a new primary school. In 1971 the Regional Commissioner finally came, accompanied by the police. He was rude and arrogant, and demanded to know why he had been asked to leave his important work in the office. So again the village got no help and had to request support from President Nyerere himself. Mayemba and the Village Chairman, Alto Ngerangera, travelled to Dar es Salaam and, with Millinga's help, prepared a memo which detailed the history of events and listed the inputs which were due to them. They presented it

to Nyerere. They predated the memo by a few days and copied it to the Regional Commissioner in Songea but, because of the date, the Party Headquarters contacted him before he had received it and he was made to look incompetent. Nyerere was angered by Mayemba's account of events, and demanded that his requests be carried out with the full support of the Regional Commissioner. As a result, Matetereka received the cement, iron sheets and labourers necessary for construction of the dispensary and the school; medical supplies, a grinding mill, and a pump to fill the water tank which had previously been constructed by Ralph Ibbott. (Prior to this the village had obtained its water from wells. Today the village has a gravity-fed water supply constructed by an NGO which was supporting women, so the water pump is no longer used.) Soon afterwards, Husen Makwaia was dismissed from the post of Regional Commissioner by the TANU Central Committee. There seems little doubt that Makwaia's dismissal was in part due to his antagonism towards Matetereka.

Abel Njalika describes how Matetereka survived with its co-operative institutions intact during these three years of active and passive opposition from the State:

What kept us together was our belief that we had benefited by working together – more than ever before in our lives. When the officials came, they gave us no convincing reason for the disbanding, so we thought it was done simply to humiliate the people. This made us stand stronger. The other thing that helped us continue was that I was a member of the Executive Committee of the RDA and so we had a clear understanding of what the RDA stood for. We wouldn't accept these stories. At that time, Lukas Mayemba had just joined the group and it was stronger with him. Alto Ngerangera and another member were delegates of the annual RDA conference. The leaders – Chairman and Secretary – of each village were automatically on the Executive Committee of the RDA... Mayemba was also a member of Matetereka at the disbanding, so he was in a powerful position to influence the future of the village. His role was mainly at the District level. His living in the village meant that he either had to scare the villagers [i.e. take the Government position] or encourage them [i.e. take the villagers' position. He chose the latter of course].

The reason Matetereka survived was because of the organisation, ideology and commitment of its members. But none of these qualities would have been sufficient without the political shrewdness and influence of their leadership, and the patronage of other powerholders such as Nyerere himself. It appears that they had just enough political patronage to keep their communal institutions going. Musti de Gennaro (1979:21) also reminds us of Matetereka's isolated geographical position which had perhaps forced the village to rely less on RDA

intervention, the unity of its members and the fortuitous preservation and reinforcement of its leadership. “Today with its high standard of living it is an example of what voluntary ujamaa might have achieved in the field of development.”

CHAPTER THREE

UJAMAA VILLAGES AND THE STATE

Village Democracy and Government Control

Given that the activities of the RDA and its member villages were so similar to those described in *Socialism and Rural Development*, why were the Central Committee members so antagonistic? After all, the membership was never greater than perhaps 500 families spread over the considerable area of Ruvuma Region (Coulson 1978:17). The simple answer is that the ideas expressed by the President on village democracy were greatly feared and hated by the vast majority of those who hold the most powerful positions in the Party and in Government (Ibbott 1969:294). It appears that the basis of the fear was the challenge made by democratic organisations to the legitimacy of the Government and Party officials. Some of these officials had reached positions of power simply because they had received slightly more education by the time of independence, or because they were slightly more assertive than their colleagues, but they had little to offer villagers in terms of technical knowledge, leadership ability or material inputs. If groups such as the RDA were the norm, it would not have been long before they had the power to ensure their own leaders were elected to the Party or employed by the bureaucracy.

In his analysis of the background to the Tanzanian election in 1970, John Saul noted that the general trend in post-colonial Africa was in the direction of more authoritarian regimes, either controlled by a single party or the army. This authoritarianism was generally constructed to serve the new ruling classes who inherited the fruits of independence along with continuing imperialist interests. The primary goal of these classes has been to control the political system to neutralise any challenge to their hegemony. "What such regimes fear most is mass participation based on a high level of consciousness on the part of the masses of their own exploited position within the national society" (Saul 1972:277-8; Fanon 1966). Seen in this light, Nyerere's appeal to 'traditional' family values and his construct of African Socialism can be seen as a means to obscure from view the privileged position of the ruling class. By stressing the moral superiority of hard work he tried to rally the energies of the populace for development purposes, and by trying to extend the concept of ujamaa to the national level he succeeded in damping down expressions of disunity which resulted when parochialism got out of hand (Saul 1972:278). A critique of Nyerere's political philosophy is clearly expressed by the *Journal of African Marxists* (1982:88-9):

Many African Regimes have sought to disguise class antagonisms by declaring themselves to be 'African Socialist'. They then go on to glorify a mythical African past where, in theory, all people were nice to each other and all shared communally the wealth produced communally... In practice African Socialism generally protects and nourishes a neo-colonial dependency with imperialist-oriented economics... The word 'socialism' – detached from its social and economic moorings – is merely bandied about by these regimes to cover their innate inadequacies with a cloak of morality.

In *The Arusha Declaration* (1968[1967a]:27) Nyerere concedes that his rural development policies would not be for the sole benefit of the farmer, but also the basic driving force behind urban development:

It is therefore obvious that the foreign currency we shall use to pay back the loans used in the development of the urban areas will not come from the towns or the industries. Where, then, shall we get it from? We shall get it from the villages and from agriculture... Everybody wants development; but not everybody understands and accepts the basic requirements for development. The biggest requirement is hard work.

This introduces a conflict over how surplus agricultural production should be used and who should control its use. Saul argues that it is not surprising if few regimes in Africa have attempted to raise the level of class consciousness of the masses while at the same time trying to enlist the energies of the rural masses to fund the ruling classes: "Such a programme would almost invariably involve a calling into question of the privileges of the regime's dominant elements" (Saul 1972:278). The RDA certainly called into question these privileges.

According to Goran Hyden, nowhere has a social class risen to power without making the many small and independent rural producers subordinate to their demands. In his analysis, "economic history throughout the world is largely the story of how to capture the peasants" (Hyden 1980:9). However Africa is today virtually the only place where peasants still have autonomy from the State. Ninety years of colonisation have not eradicated it (Hyden 1980:11). Despite strenuous efforts both by the colonial powers and the independent Governments, peasants in many parts of Africa have retained a considerable measure of autonomy with respect to other social classes (Hyden 1980:32). The peasants do not need the State for its own reproduction and they would prefer to be without its interventions (Hyden 1980:16). Therefore it is only logical that the peasants resist State policies as well as a total absorption by the market economy (Hyden 1980:18). Increased returns on land is an absolute necessity for the State, as otherwise it cannot strengthen its own position. However the things that the peasant values – schools, dispensaries, water, roads – are not absolutely

necessary, only desired. Thus the peasants have power as long as they can stay indifferent to what the ruling classes offer, or can secure these through alternative channels. This way they retain their autonomy and deny the rulers the opportunity to exercise power over them (Hyden 1980:31).

We are faced with what must appear to most people as a paradox: those with power in Africa are not necessarily those in control of the State but those who remain outside its control... The power of the rulers is largely illusory... Even such examples as intimidation of the peasants, in which officials often engage, are not really proof of power... On the contrary, such measures are often indications of the lack of real power on the part of the officials (Hyden 1980:32).

Rather than the rural farmer being dependent on the State, the State is dependent on the farmer. Hyden's analysis helps to account for the history of opposition between peasants and the State which continues to this day. Von Freyhold describes how, during colonial rule, if force did not succeed in making the farmers subordinate to their demands, the officials were convinced that they had not tried hard enough, and in some places this led to an endless repetition of the same measures which failed to meet with lasting success (Von Freyhold 1979:34). By the time of independence, many peasants had been forced to grow cassava or cotton for more than a generation and apparently had still not learnt to appreciate the necessity of doing so. Resistance to these policies, and others such as bench terracing, destocking, and cattle dipping became increasingly violent and provided the emerging nationalist movement with the mass support it needed (Von Freyhold 1979:35). Ten years after independence, there was no question of whether or not Government staff wanted to regain power over the peasants and to get their production under control; the question was how this could be achieved (Von Freyhold 1979:35-6). According to Ingle (1972:65) one of the independent Government's earliest moves was to enable the newly-created District Councils to pass by-laws requiring people to plant. In 1962 in Tanga Region, Handeni District Council passed a resolution to punish by six strokes any person not participating in development projects (Ingle 1972:101). And in 1967 the Tanga Regional Commissioner declared the following in a speech to the District Council (Ingle 1972:100):

The time of persuading citizens to work for their own benefit is finished. It's necessary from now to enforce them to work hard. The Government will take severe steps with those who are not willing to work in the jobs that they have been instructed to do.

At a village meeting in Tanga in 1968 a Divisional Executive Officer addressed a women's self-help group as follows: "What is necessary to get you to work in development projects? Do we have to bring the Kiboko?" [rhinoceros hide whip used by the Germans] (Ingle 1972:102). Such attitudes are commonplace in parts of Tanzania today (Caplan 1993:82) including Matetereka. Apparently, in May 1998 the Ward Executive Officer started a campaign with the help of the Village Executive Officers to extract money from villagers to fund a new secondary school in Madaba. The villagers said they would give some money after they had sold their crops. But for reasons best known to themselves, the officials would not wait. They called a meeting in Wino village hall. Once everyone was in the building the doors were shut and they were told that no one would be allowed to leave until they had given a donation. Few people had any money because the majority of them had come to the meeting directly from their shambas, so they were accompanied to their houses by the local militia to find the money. Many people had to borrow from others in order to pay. The same happened in Matetereka C. By the time the officials reached Matetereka B and A, news had spread that the meetings were not genuine, and hardly anybody turned up.⁶ Receipts were issued for the money donated, but the feeling was that the methods employed were unacceptable. The leadership of the Ujamaa Group later requested the Ward Executive Officer to visit Matetereka and promise that it would not happen again.

Von Freyhold notes that in practice most of the threats used by officials were empty because Local Government powers were quite limited. Also, there were some officials at all levels who considered compulsion distasteful and counter-productive (Von Freyhold 1979:37) and a minority of local staff existed which was able to sympathize with the aims of radical Ujamaa Villages such as those in the RDA. However even they were not very useful to the villagers since they had little advice to give and were thus often not able to contribute much more than ordinary members. They had lost their old function and were still unable to find a new one. Their specific functions tended to become vague and they assumed the role of general village representatives of the District Government. On the other hand villagers tended to view staff in terms of their ability to get things for them from the District rather than the value of their technical advice. Furthermore, the few staff who sided with the village against the inefficiency and authoritarianism of the State were not appreciated and soon found themselves transferred to a less radical environment. Understandably the leaders of radical Ujamaa Villages demanded training of their own villagers rather than advice from outsiders, and that posting and salaries of the staff should be subject to their approval (Von Freyhold 1979:53-4). We can begin to see why many of the Government and Party officials were particularly uncomfortable with the radical village democracy practiced by the RDA and its member villages. The officials probably realised – consciously or subconsciously – that if the RDA type of village became the norm

there would be no place for them. In agriculture, in administration, and in their industrial ventures, the villages already knew as much or more than most officials (Coulson 1978:17).

Specific Causes of Conflict in Ruvuma

Given the history of society-State relations outlined above, a primary cause of conflict can be identified as the issue of how to create and use the surplus product. The State stressed the importance of export crops which could be used for consumption or investment outside the producers' control. Once established, the RDA villages focused on food crops and were determined to retain control of the destination of surplus product at all times (Musti de Gennaro 1979:3). A further cause of resentment was the RDA's success with the maize and sawmilling businesses, which meant that they were controlling two of the three biggest industries in Songea town, and could increase their economic power in relation to the State. The maize mill also threatened the vested interests in the co-operative movement by which the State was exploiting peasant labour (Coulson 1978:15; Musti de Gennaro 1979:14).

From the start, the leaders of the RDA and its member villages adopted a strong moral line in its business dealings. They refused to accept or make bribes, for example in exchange for favourable decisions or issuing of permits. This was resented by many officials who became personal enemies of the Association or its leaders. Ten years after the disbanding, rumours were still being spread by officials about "those troublemakers in Matetereka" (Musti de Gennaro 1979:16). Their moral line discredited the local party clique. In particular, the RDA stood up against the repeated and arrogant demands of the Regional Commissioner to increase production of fire-cured tobacco, a time-consuming crop to grow which gave little return. Unlike all other farmers in the area, the RDA members were able to oppose these demands because they had an organisation through which to express their views. The issue came to a head when Nyerere visited Litowa in 1965, (despite efforts of the Regional Commissioner to keep him away by deliberately erasing the visit from his itinerary). Nyerere examined their tobacco, and made the Government staff admit in front of the villagers that it was planted properly. Attempts were made to undermine the RDA's economic power by denying them Government contracts for maize flour and timber. Both of these attempts failed because they were not dependent on these contracts. But, in the case of timber supply, the Regional Government soon realised that they were now dependent on the RDA. By 1968, then, the RDA was too powerful to be destroyed locally, and the conflict was transferred to the national level (Coulson 1978:15).

However at the national level the RDA was acquiring a growing political and ideological position within the Party. According to Cliffe and Cunningham no

better comment on their importance can be made than the fact that Nyerere on a personal visit to Litowa charged them with “develop Litowa as a practical example of Ujamaa where I can send (people) to see it in practice” (Ibbott 1968, cited in Cliffe and Cunningham 1973:139). In 1967 Nyerere offered Millinga a high position in the TANU Youth League headquarters, and in 1968 put him in charge of the newly formed Department of Ujamaa Villages. Millinga’s job was to identify sympathetic District and Regional leaders throughout the country and support them to initiate RDA-type Ujamaa Villages. RDA leaders were regularly invited to national seminars and meetings, and member villages were being used to train Party cadres (Musti de Gennaro 1979:20). It seems that a faction within the Party which had rallied around the RDA position was pushing for a certain development strategy (along the lines expressed by Nyerere), but its position was the antithesis of that held by the existing power bloc, and on 24 September 1969, the power bloc took steps to ensure this strategy would progress no further (Musti de Gennaro 1979:21).

Milinga holds the view that Nyerere’s unswerving support for the RDA inadvertently accelerated its downfall, because he so often made a point of contrasting their efforts with those of everyone else which made them a lot of enemies. Millinga described how once he was in a large meeting in Tanga, when Nyerere said, “Show me an ujamaa man here! None of you are ujamaa people except for that one! [pointing to Millinga]” Later he requested Nyerere to stop saying such things because it was giving him problems, and was probably not helping their cause either. Suleiman Toroka confirmed that officials were envious of the RDA, and believes that the RDA might have survived for much longer in some form or another if Nyerere had not been quite so determined about ujamaa in general and the RDA in particular. Millinga also believes that if the decision to disband the RDA had stayed at Regional level it would have survived, because the Regional Party Chairwoman, Zaituni Fadhili, was supportive and influential. After the disbanding it is likely that she prevented Millinga and other supporters of the RDA from being detained by their political enemies.

By mid-1969 Nyerere must have realised that his ujamaa programme as expressed in *Socialism and Rural Development* could not command support from all classes. It would be divisive – within the Party and within the villages themselves. At that time, he was receiving favourable reports from the first large-scale planned village resettlement scheme in the Rufiji Valley which had started in late 1968. Such developments were supported by the Government and Party officials perhaps because they were more in control. In 1973 villagisation had begun and the pressure to adopt communal agriculture was reduced. By 1976 almost the entire rural population of thirteen million were living in 7000 villages. Inevitably, the Government resorted to compulsion and abuses of power which have come under criticism, although technically the operation was a remarkable success (Coulson 1978:18; Ruthenberg 1964:60; Siddiqui 1990:37-8).

CHAPTER FOUR THE CONSEQUENCES OF VILLAGISATION

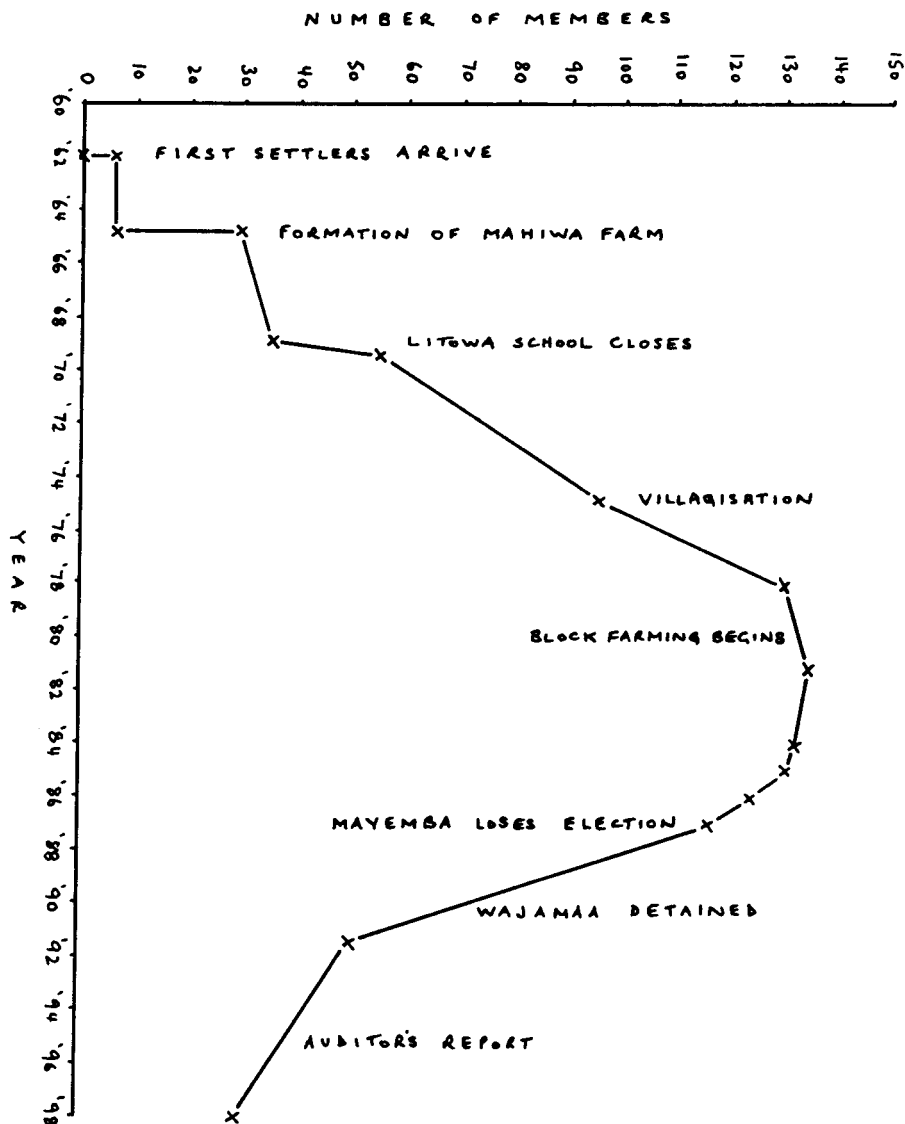
Villagisation Reaches Matetereka

After the removal of Husen Makwaia as Regional Commissioner in 1972 there was an improvement in relations with the State. The surveyors returned, and the school and dispensary were built. A new National Party General Secretary, Major Hashim Mbita, was appointed to replace Msekwa. Unlike his predecessor, Mbita could see no reason why the village should be punished and was an ally at national level. The villagers decided that it was time to work hard, rely on themselves, and forget the conflicts of the past. They entered a period of security and economic growth and attracted several young men from nearby villages who had just left school. When the RDA primary school in Litowa closed in 1969 about 25 students returned to Matetereka and joined the Ujamaa Group as full time members, making a total of around 50 to 60 able-bodied people. Now the total number was growing every year.

In 1972 Lukas Mayemba was elected as Chairman. Before Mayemba took over, communal maize production had taken place on 50 acres of land in the valleys where it was hotter and more fertile. In 1971 they had harvested 54 sacks. Mayemba persuaded everyone that they were wasting their time walking to these fields and that all maize should be grown on the high ground as near as possible to the village. He convinced them to use hybrids, chemical fertilisers, and new techniques such as improved spacing. In the first year they planted less than 50 acres but still managed to harvest 200 bags of maize. These achievements made Mayemba's leadership even more appreciated, and were followed by an increase in the yields of coffee, groundnuts and millet. By then they had also built up a herd of 80 communally-owned cattle. In 1974 they invited a banker to the village who was suitably impressed and agreed to provide a loan to the village for the purchase of a lorry for marketing produce.

Villagisation reached Matetereka in 1975, and 180 families of newcomers were resettled in the village from throughout the surrounding area. Prior to villagisation, Matetereka and the Ujamaa Group had been synonymous, consisting of nearly 100 active members from 30 families (Figure 3). The newcomers wanted to know why they, who were the majority, should move to Matetereka rather than to any of the other settlements in the area, and accused the Ujamaa Group of bribing the authorities. Mayemba was summoned by the Government in Songea to present their case, and argued successfully that they had worked hard to develop their village and had created the facilities which the Government was promising people if they moved into new settlements – the dispensary, store, water supply, cattle dip, primary school and nursery. "So why

FIGURE THREE
APPROXIMATE SIZE OF UJAMAA GROUP 'A' BETWEEN 1960 AND 1998



should we abandon all this?" he asked. Most of their communal land was donated to the newcomers requiring them to abandon semi-permanent crops like cassava. Plots for building new houses were demarcated, and the village quickly evolved into three sub-villages: the original settlement (i.e. the entire Ujamaa Group) was renamed Matetereka A, while the newcomers established Matetereka B and Matetereka C. The battle lines were drawn for a conflict over access to resources which prevails to this day.

An early manifestation of the conflict was the rumour that Mayemba and other members of the Ujamaa Group were actively opposing the settlement of newcomers. The rumour was allegedly spread by the man who, as Ward Executive Secretary, had helped to create the village in 1962. By this time he had reached the position of Divisional Executive Secretary. His antagonism to the Group started in 1971 after he requested them to allow him to introduce a labourer to the village (a young man with no parents) who would work solely for his benefit. Such exploitation was contrary to the ideology of the villagers, so they refused his membership of the group, and invited the labourer to join if he so wished, thus releasing him from his dependency. From then on, the Divisional Executive Secretary accused Mayemba of witchcraft.

The Divisional Executive Secretary persuaded the District Authorities to hold a meeting in Matetereka to challenge the Ujamaa Group on their apparent refusal to co-operate. But he did not officially announce the meeting to the villagers. This oversight was used by the villagers as an excuse not to turn up. The District Government saw their absence as proof that they were obstructing the villagisation programme. They drove to Mayemba's house and demanded, "Why weren't you at the meeting!?" Mayemba calmly suggested that they should direct their question to the Divisional Executive Secretary who admitted with embarrassment that he had not officially announced the meeting. Mayemba was asked whether he was indeed preventing people from moving in and he replied, "We've given land to them all, so why do you think we are preventing them from moving in?" The meeting eventually took place and Mayemba addressed everyone by welcoming them all to the village. So the Divisional Executive Secretary left embarrassed and has avoided Mayemba ever since. They met by chance in Matetereka in 1991, and when the Secretary was returning to his village he tried to urinate, but couldn't. Later he had an operation in Peramiho Hospital. Mayemba was blamed for this illness and the allegation of witchcraft spread further: "Nothing can be done in Matetereka. If you do anything, you will get sick!" Apparently, this rumour was even repeated recently by a Government Minister.

Soon after resettlement had been completed, many of the newcomers requested a share of the assets of Matetereka A, given that they were now also members of the village. The wajamaa were unprepared to share these without some contribution to the considerable costs they had incurred over the years.

Their reply was, "If you want the ujamaa way of life then start it on your own. What advice do you need? We will help you grow coffee and build houses and when you are ready we will increasingly co-operate on joint ventures [A, B and C together]." Many of the newcomers apparently tried to "kill" ujamaa by joining the group *en masse* and either contributing nothing, or actively destroying it. The wajamaa did their best to identify the destructive elements and prevented them from joining. There were some genuine requests for membership to the group, and these people were allowed to join.

Villagisation introduced a rival leadership to the village. The Ujamaa Group (located in Matetereka A) had its own Chairman, Secretary and Committee, while a Party Branch Chairman and Secretary was appointed for the entire village. (At that time the policy was for the local headmaster to be appointed automatically to the post of Party Branch Secretary.) Antagonism between the two leaderships was suppressed by the economic strength of the Ujamaa Group. The problem lasted for only one year because, in 1976, there was a local election and Mayemba contested successfully for the post of Party Branch Chairman, which meant that he was also automatically Village Chairman. Moses Njalika, also from the Ujamaa Group, was elected as Party Branch Secretary and Village Executive Officer. (The system of dual roles for Party and Government officials operated until the introduction of multipartyism in 1992.)

After 1976, there were several genuine applicants to the Ujamaa Group from Matetereka B and C, and the additional manpower allowed the economy to strengthen. Apparently, it became difficult for men from outside the group to marry women in Matetereka A because they were seen as economically prosperous. Similarly, men from the group found it easier to marry outsiders. Following a probation period of one month, the new wajamaa received dividends for each day they worked. They discovered that, not only were they earning more than before, they could harvest greater yields from their individual plots due to the use of inputs, support, and new techniques supplied by the Group. Money was set aside by the Group to cover medical expenses, and fees for secondary and adult education. This system was seen as an investment for the entire Group: health problems were considered a threat to economic production, and those receiving education were expected to take up leadership positions or specialise in other roles on completion of their training.

The Ujamaa Group in Matetereka A could not absorb everyone who wanted to join, and so Mayemba successfully persuaded people in Matetereka B and C to start their own groups. Two communal plots, each of about four acres, were established and planted with coffee, fruit, maize and groundnuts. Initial enthusiasm was high: "At a certain point nearly the entire population of Matetereka seemed to be working towards ujamaa." All three groups were under the same leadership (i.e. Mayemba) which gave participants the feeling of belonging to one society. The bonds were strengthened by co-operation between

the groups: Group A would help the work in Group B, or Group C, and so on. Things went well and the atmosphere was positive. By 1978 the three groups had five joint projects under the same leadership: a project to cut timber from the forest for house construction and for sale; a loan from SIDO (Small Industries Development Organisation) for the purchase of a maize grinding and dehusking machine; improved house construction; health care, and education of children and adults. The members of Group A helped to build two nurseries, and plant two coffee shambas, for Groups B and C respectively. Meanwhile the numbers in Group A reached their peak, with over 130 active members, and they were able to operate an effective division of labour between livestock husbandry, agriculture, gardening, and the running of the nursery school. Dividends were issued annually and were the same per day regardless of the activity carried out.

Towards the end of 1979, after three years of cordial relations and effective communal production, the co-operative spirit in Groups B and C began to disintegrate. Membership fell below a threshold required for efficient co-operation and the plots were eventually abandoned. The two groups disowned themselves of the rights to the maize mill, which forced Group A to pay off the loan (and keep the mill). Apparently, from the start, there had been a conceptual misunderstanding. Members of Groups B and C were under the impression that the income derived from Group A's assets (including those acquired before villagisation) would be distributed equally among all three groups but when they realised that they would only receive the benefits from their own work they lost interest. All three groups suffered. By abandoning their communal plots the members of Groups B and C received less income and consequently needed larger individual plots. Members of Group A also suffered because a large proportion of their manpower was used to help the other groups rather than themselves. It appeared to be more efficient for each group to work independently. Also the membership of Group A had increased, but, on average, individuals were working less and annual dividends fell. This was partly because land under production did not increase accordingly, but primarily because it was harder for the management to supervise and monitor the activities of such a large group. No single person was to blame. As one villager put it: there was a "quietness" throughout the village; "We had *all* failed".

In 1979, in his capacity as Village Chairman, Mayemba introduced a successful system of block farming. Unlike the three Ujamaa Groups which were based on communal production on jointly-owned land, the block farm involved individual production on Government-owned land. Every family in the village was allocated a one acre plot, and the Village Government deducted a proportion of the total income to pay taxes, or whatever else the State demanded. Under this system, total agricultural production in the village increased because fertilisers were given to families for use on their own private plots. For every three bags of maize harvested a family received one bag of fertiliser. This provided an effective

incentive to increase production on the Government farm. In fact the system was so successful that it generated serious competition for the labour of Ujamaa Group A. People began to spend a greater proportion of their time on the Government shamba and lost interest in the Ujamaa Group which fell in membership and production, despite the social services the Group had provided. Mayemba was pulled in two directions – he was Ujamaa Group Chairman and Village Chairman – which perhaps contributed to the gradual decline in the quality of the Ujamaa Group’s supervision. Absenteeism increased, and with the decline in production people received lower dividends and fewer social services. The whole point of ujamaa lost ground. The changes in maize and coffee production between 1984 and 1990 are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Area planted and quantity harvested from the annual communal production of maize and coffee by Matetereka Ujamaa Group A between 1984 and 1990

Year	Maize		Coffee	
	Area (acres)	Quantity (t)	Area (acres)	Quantity (t)
1984/85	106	118.8	15	1.4
1985/86	134	91.2	15	0.5
1986/87	134	101.8	15	0.5
1987/88	96	50.0	15	1.2
1988/89	39	20.0	19	3.1
1989/90	10	7.2	19	3.0

Despite the deterioration of the economy, and of institutions for communal production and mutual support, the village must have appeared healthy and well managed to outside observers. Between 1984 and 1987, Matetereka received a series of awards for best village in the Region, and even the sixth best village in the country. The Government block farm remained a success and in 1987 the maize harvest was 1200 bags. Perhaps as a result of their reputation, Nyerere visited Matetereka in May 1987. When he heard during a speech that villagers’ tax was being paid for from the income obtained from the Government plot, he was impressed, partly because it eliminated the harassment and evasion normally associated with tax collection. The President was also impressed that part of the income from the same shamba was allocated to the Ten-Cell Leaders as an incentive to co-operate with Government activities. In their speech, the village leaders asked to be sent on educational trips, inside or outside the country. When

he was back in Dar es Salaam, the President decided to send Mayemba to Bulgaria to attend a course on socialism for six months as his "present to the village".

Tensions are Exposed

While Mayemba was in Bulgaria, tensions between the members and non-members of Ujamaa Group A were exposed. Local Government elections were due to be held, and members of Matetereka B and C saw this as an opportunity to gain power and acquire a share of Group A's assets. Mayemba contested in his absence for another term as Village Chairman, but he was beaten by just five votes by a former policeman from Matetereka B. The majority of Matetereka B, and half of C, had apparently voted against Mayemba. Once in power, the new Village Chairman accused the Ujamaa Group of monopolising village property, and tried hard to 'nationalise' their assets. His actions demoralised many of the wajamaa and apparently put the entire community under tension. A tug of war followed, and the village economy on both sides started to collapse. "Given this situation," said one villager, "you cannot have anything constructive taking place. The wajamaa [group A] have spent all their time trying to defend themselves." The former policeman's election campaign and subsequent antagonism towards Group A was supported by a certain District Party Accountant. He was originally from Matetereka but had fallen out with the leadership, and had hoped to contest for the post of Village Chairman himself but had been prevented from doing so by the District Executive Committee (partly because he was already employed). So apparently the accountant worked hand in hand with the policeman to make sure an enemy of the Group won the election so that their assets might be redistributed. If they had not done this, Mayemba would certainly have been re-elected. The Ujamaa Group leadership believe that the election result was rigged. For some time the new Village Chairman was afraid of Mayemba and avoided his end of the village.

The main criticism of Mayemba spread by his opponents during the election campaign was that he is an outsider. Mayemba is of the same ethnic group as those in Matetereka but was originally from a district of Njombe town approximately 75 miles away. He came to Wino in the late 1950s to help build a mission station and church. He got married, settled, became popular and got involved in local politics. Ever since, he has worked hard for the community and the accusation of being an outsider was insulting and upsetting to him and his supporters. Those who were for progress in the village were also upset because he was not able to apply the knowledge gained from Bulgaria on how to develop the village better. Many villagers felt that they would also lose the chance to win future competitions for best village. They had received significant grants from these competitions, and they were a source of pride for the villagers as well.

Since his defeat Mayemba has often been asked if he would stand again as Chairman, but has always refused. However, he has held several other influential roles in the village and ward.

About one month after the new Village Chairman from Matetereka B came to power, Nyerere summoned him and the Village Executive Officer (Moses Njalika) and the equivalent leaders from fourteen other Ujamaa Villages remaining in the country to a meeting in Dodoma. He asked each Chairman to give a short presentation. Apparently, after the Matetereka man had spoken, Nyerere was not impressed. He said, "So it was YOU who threw out my Chairman!" He reigned for only one year (as opposed to the five year term). This is how the Ujamaa Group succeeded in getting him expelled from his post. The Regional Commissioner used to visit Matetereka frequently to carry out research for his Ph.D. thesis, and the wajamaa used these visits to complain about the new Chairman's actions. But this Regional Commissioner, as before, was against the wajamaa, and did nothing. However, on another occasion, he advised them to complain, in turn, to three Branch (i.e. Village) level organs: the Political Committee, the Executive Committee, and Congress. The Political Committee agreed that he was causing the downfall of the whole village and decided that the man should resign. They reported their decision to the Executive Committee (a higher organ) which also agreed. Unlike the previous two Committees, the majority of Branch Congress members were not wajamaa and they voted against the Ujamaa Group. However, the Branch Secretary was from Matetereka A. He carefully recorded the minutes of all three meetings and sent them to the District Government, who agreed that the Village Chairman should resign. The Regional Political Committee also agreed, and summoned him to a meeting to request his resignation, but he refused and asked to appeal to the Central Committee. Therefore a delegation was sent from the Central Committee to Songea. The Village Chairman told them that he wanted to face the entire Central Committee in person. He was allowed to do this, in Dodoma, but the Central Committee finally decided against him and he was expelled.

In 1988 a byelection was held for a new Party Branch Chairman/Village Chairman. There were two contestants: the younger brother of the man who had just been expelled, and mild-mannered man, both of whom were from Matetereka C. The wajamaa decided not to put forward a candidate because it would have prolonged the conflict between the groups. They all wanted someone neutral, from B or C, and, following Mayemba's lead, voted for the mild-mannered man. Unfortunately, once in power, this man adopted his predecessor's destructive attitude to the Ujamaa Group, but because he was not a strong leader he failed to destroy them. This has resulted in a stalemate between the wajamaa and non-wajamaa and a feeling of political apathy. Moses Njalika, as Party Secretary, tried to bring peace and let the new Chairman see the Ujamaa Group's point of view, but various people told the Chairman: "Don't listen to the

Secretary – he will mislead you”. Njalika left his post in 1989, but the Village Chairman has been the same ever since. In 1992 the law changed with multipartyism and there were two posts, each requiring an election. He stood for the post of Branch Party Chairman and was unopposed. In 1993 he was unopposed for the post of Village Chairman. He didn't contest for the Party Chairmanship in 1996 and has let it be known that he will not be standing for the Village Chairmanship in 1999.

In 1990 relations between the two factions reached their lowest point. Ujamaa Group livestock was poisoned and slashed with pangas, and many wajamaa were convinced that their communal assets would finally be appropriated by the Village Government. Apparently, the former policeman did not stop his anti-ujamaa campaign after he was expelled from office. One of his “programmes” was to send Ujamaa Group leaders to court on false charges in collaboration with the Primary Court Magistrate, whom allegedly he had bribed with chickens and money. One by one the Ujamaa Group leaders ended up in court. Abel Njalika had caught some people stealing timber from the Ujamaa Group forest. Abel had told them to stop, but the thieves later claimed that he had threatened to kill them with a panga, and he was imprisoned for six hours, twice. Odo Msambwa (the current Ujamaa Group Secretary) was also detained for another reason. During Msambwa's trial, the Magistrate made the mistake of saying “I wish Mayemba was one of those charged here”. He had given the game away, and the matter was reported to Mayemba who was Ward Executive Officer at the time. Mayemba told the Divisional Executive Officer, who had by then also received a copy of a letter sent by Moses Njalika to the Area Magistrate which described the corruption which had taken place. The Divisional Executive Officer was sympathetic and summoned the Primary Court Magistrate, who confessed, apologised and was later dismissed. The event indicates the degree of tension present in the village and explains why many wajamaa, in particular the youth, left the group because of fear and the risk of losing their assets. By 1992 the group had abandoned communal production of groundnuts, maize and beans. Later they reduced the area actively managed for coffee from fifteen to eight acres.

The resources over which ownership is in dispute include fifteen acres of forest, the nursery buildings, the former joint-owned maize mill paid for by Ujamaa Group A, an anvil, the water pump acquired before villagisation, and several items of office furniture. The furniture had always belonged to Group A, but it was lent to the Village Government Office during Mwalimu's visit in 1987. Members of Matetereka B and C regard the furniture as theirs, because they were there on the day. The claim to the nursery is supported by the fact that it was used to accommodate a delegation from the women's wing of CCM and people from all three sub-villages helped to prepare the building by plastering the rooms. No claim is being made on Group A's communal coffee shamba, cattle,

lorry, or the grinding mill provided by the Government in 1970. The other side of the argument is that the entire village was awarded considerable sums of money from the village competitions. In both 1985 and 1986 the village received Tsh 62,000 for being first in the District, *and* Tsh 100,000 for being first at Regional level. In 1987 they were first in the District. This money was used to benefit the whole village, yet their successes in the competitions were largely due to the sustained efforts of members of Group A: they had provided the management capability, financial control, systems of production and mutual support, buildings, and many other assets. Also the members of Group A had long since agreed to share access to the dispensary, store and cattle dip and are resentful that the newcomers want even more.

Claims and counter claims to the Ujamaa Group forest have been particularly complicated. In the early 1980s the United Nations started a forestry project in the village to distribute tree seedlings to farmers, and later awarded the village a certificate in recognition of their exemplary afforestation record. Matetereka B and C used this certificate to support their claim to the Ujamaa Group forest. But Group A point out that the forest was planted in 1974, before the newcomers had even arrived. However, members Matetereka B and C have invested time in the forest on other occasions. In the late 1980s they helped to clean an access road to the forest to increase the chances of Matetereka winning the best village competition. Similarly, school children from throughout the village had helped to replant the site after a fire had destroyed part of the forest. One wajamaa said in response, "if someone helps you to thatch your roof does that mean it belongs to the one who helped you?"⁷

In 1995 the Ujamaa Group requested the District Government to send an auditor to resolve the ownership disputes. The report was completed but, at the time of the public reading in the village, neither the Divisional Executive Officer nor the Ward Executive Officer turned up and the meeting had to be postponed. The feeling amongst the wajamaa was that they deliberately did not come because they knew that the report favoured the Ujamaa Group. Mayemba however was shown the report unofficially. Apparently, the auditor's findings were that if anyone apart from Ujamaa Group A had a claim to the disputed assets it was the people from the defunct Ujamaa Groups in Matetereka B and C, and not the Village Government. The auditor then went on leave, and a second meeting was scheduled for immediately after his return. However while he was on leave the auditor died. The present Village Chairman, and the previous one, tried on several occasions to obtain the report from Songea, but the wajamaa suspect they both knew they had little chance of winning and have not tried hard enough. Meanwhile, in Matetereka B, rumours were spreading that Mayemba must have killed the auditor with witchcraft. The long history of this dispute, and the absence of any workable solution, have created an atmosphere of apathy in Matetereka. As a result many developments in the village have ground to a halt.

Attitudes to the Future of Matetereka

For many years after villagisation the opinion among villagers in Matetereka A had been that they should help those in Matetereka B and C attain the relatively high standard of living enjoyed in A (For example, during fieldwork one of the wealthiest members of the village said: "It is not good to be a tall tree surrounded by low bush, because a strong wind may come and blow you over".) The idea was that eventually the ujamaa way of life would become established throughout the village. Today people feel their good intentions were not only detrimental to themselves, but were also not appreciated by Matetereka B and C. Few signs remain of their efforts to help the rest of the village: the nursery buildings have been put to other uses by individuals; the coffee planted for groups B and C are abandoned and overgrown, the improved housing scheme ground to a halt, and the forests which A helped to plant for B and C have been partly destroyed by fire. The ups and downs which were the result of these events brought about distrust and laziness among all villagers including the wajamaa themselves. The wajamaa have hoped for a long time that eventually everyone will be so tired with the current situation that the Village Chairman will surrender, leaving room for a new dynamic personality to take over. They feel that the next Village Chairman should be from Matetereka B or C to avoid a continuation of the conflict. It would be hard for someone from Matetereka A to stand because the word 'ujamaa' now has a stigma attached to it, both locally and nationally. The number of people who really understand the meaning of ujamaa, as practiced in Matetereka, has fallen over the years. The youth have been "hypnotised" by "ten years of naive leadership" which has tried to convince them that the days before 1987 were a failure. One of the six original settlers expressed his views of the future:

I don't see a bright future for [the youth] because they don't want to work and there is no system to guide their thinking – it's mostly just talk. They just go to the kijuweni ["a place where jobless people sit and talk rubbish"] or they become thieves. I have discussed this with my children and I said to them that they must decide their future [he has nine children]. The other worry is education. Having made the efforts to get our children to Standard 7, our grandchildren won't do the same. Ignorance will reign, because there is no money or effort anymore.

One youth, who grew up in Matetereka, supported the view that the current leadership is not very effective, but also highlighted the resentment created by the attempts of the wajamaa to "monopolise the means of production in the village":

I don't think much of ujamaa as practiced today [in Matetereka]. It is old and outdated. I think this is the general opinion of the younger generation. There is no particular problem with the idea of sharing a tractor or a milling machine or managing coffee communally, but the problem is when a small group try to monopolise these resources. There are perhaps only 30 people in the Ujamaa Group now. Even some of the trees are owned by them.

If the Ujamaa Group's view is valid, potential candidates for the post of Village Chairman, who have the right qualities of leadership, education, skills, and vision, are more likely to be found in Matetereka A with their history of investment in the training of future leaders. They see two ways forward. First is for their members to seize every opportunity to get leadership positions in all institutions – inside and outside the village – and perform their best, so that members of Matetereka B and C increasingly recognise that they are working for the society as a whole, and not just for themselves. Secondly they may gather the elders from all three parts of the village to ask them for constructive suggestions which involve the youth and prepare them for the next local election. “Otherwise the village is doomed to be a total wreck.” The general feeling is that Mayemba could win the election, if he were to stand.⁸

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CHAPTER FIVE A COMMUNAL PATH OF DEVELOPMENT

Traditions of Co-operation in Tanzania

By all accounts the Ujamaa Group in Matetereka is the only surviving example of the pioneer communal settlements which emerged during the 1960s. The significance of this achievement can be judged better by comparing the communal institutions in Matetereka with other forms of co-operation throughout history in other parts of Tanzania.

The literature on Ujamaa Villages identifies three types of co-operation. First, there is ujamaa itself, which, for Nyerere (1968[1967]:107-8), combined an attitude of respect, common property, and an obligation to work. According to Hyden (1980:99) there is no doubt that Nyerere struck a familiar chord in rural Tanzania when he appealed to a return to ujamaa values, but it is important to remember that the principles of ujamaa were traditionally practiced only within each extended family. They did not refer to the responsibilities and rights of individuals within a wider community. For this, the term *ujima* has been used, which refers to co-operation among villagers in certain peak seasons (cultivating, planting, harvesting, etc.) or in cases of emergency where someone can finish a certain job in a couple of days with the help of his neighbours and relatives, instead of the weeks or months necessary if it were done alone (Mushi 1971:13-29). *Ujima* might involve young people working on the farms of different households in turn. The head of the household might invite these young men or relatives to come and help him on the farm or in the construction of his house and conclude the day with a 'beer party'. The next day someone else might prepare some beer and invite co-operation (Von Freyhold 1979:67). Thus Nyerere's political philosophy was much more than a reactivation of deteriorating traditional ujamaa values; he was asking for ujamaa to be extended beyond the household level so that it replaced *ujima* as the normal form of co-operation at village level as well. Such practices were not 'traditional' at all. A third type of co-operation, which was apparently common in precolonial Tanzania, is communal work on the field of the clan elder or the chief. This was a way of assuring a reserve for famine or various undertakings of the community concerned (Von Freyhold 1979:68). It has similarities with Mayemba's system of block farming which operated in the village between 1979 and 1987.

Von Freyhold (1979:67) holds the view that by the end of colonialism there was hardly any tradition of co-operation left in Tanzania. Drawing on Migot-Adholla (1970) she argues that the material losses suffered by sharing wealth in pre-colonial society were compensated by the social esteem gained from it, while the parasitism of the poor was held in check by social sanctions against idleness.

During colonialism, as people became increasingly engaged in production for the market, those who managed to get a higher income were no longer interested in exchanging their surplus for social esteem but rather used it to obtain more tangible benefits, while those who were left behind found themselves exploited, discouraged or resentful (Migot-Adholla 1970, cited in Von Freyhold 1979:61). As a result, by the time of independence, 'traditional ujamaa' was reduced to co-operation within family households, which had often been reduced to the size of the nucleated family. Between households within a neighbourhood or a village there was very little sharing and pooling. Each household was an entity to itself, economically virtually independent of all the others (Von Freyhold 1979:61). All mutual assistance beyond certain forms of moral support had become rare:

Within the village only parents and adult children might help each other in any substantial way and even this was not always seen as a binding obligation. Borrowing from neighbours in case of need was difficult and frowned upon. Visits between neighbours generally ended when the time for the meal was approaching – despite the fact that neighbours were often related to each other. Peasants in severe difficulties often had no one but the few rich people in the village to turn to who might be prepared to employ them or to lend them food or cash or to attach them to their households as working dependents (Von Freyhold 1979:65).

Such an analysis seems to be completely out of place in Matetereka. The ujima form of mutual assistance is common in Matetereka, and normally called *chama*, which is the standard Swahili term for any kind of association (Abrahams and Bukurura 1993:96). In addition there are the several other co-operative and communal institutions, and it is important to make a clear distinction between two forms. First, there is co-operation which involves joint (i.e. communal) ownership of a resource. This is the case for the Ujamaa Groups in Matetereka, the communal activities of the RDA, and ujamaa within the 'traditional' household. Secondly there are kinds of mutual aid and reciprocity which do not imply any form of joint ownership. This is the case for ujima. Thus, those who assist their neighbours do not expect a share in their harvest, only some entertainment at the completion of the task (Hyden 1980:99; Mushi 1971:13-29). In fact, confusion over the extent to which ujima has been replaced with ujamaa in Matetereka could be seen as the root cause of the ongoing dispute over access to resources.

The latter kind of co-operation also applies to the Village Government block farm, construction or maintenance of public buildings or amenities, and cleaning up the village in preparation for best village competitions. Two other important co-operative institutions in Matetereka – The Savings and Credit Co-operative Organisation (SACCO) and Wino Agricultural Marketing Co-operative Society

(WAMCS) – do not involve joint ownership either. Costs and benefits of membership are divided equally between individuals, and their functioning does not depend upon a sense of unity or ideology among members. If Von Freyhold's view is even partly valid, Matetereka appears to have a rich history of both communalism and mutual support compared with many other parts of Tanzania. She describes how communal institutions have tended to disintegrate over time in response to the increasing effects of the market, yet in Matetereka such institutions have come and gone regardless of the broader changes in the political economy. One conclusion which might be drawn from the history of Matetereka, and the RDA, is that communal institutions can be remarkably flexible in Tanzania; there certainly does not appear to be a 'natural' individualism acting as a barrier to their formation. With strong leadership, new efficient and equitable institutions can evolve and achieve a great deal.

A Communal Path of Development

We have seen that there are many advantages of co-operation in agriculture, the most obvious being economies of scale. Building a store or water tank for the entire Ujamaa Group will obviously be cheaper than building one of equal quality for each household. There is also the 'complementation effect': one family may succeed in eliminating pests from their compound, but only when every household in the village makes a similar co-ordinated effort can the village move to a new level of hygiene. Thirdly there is the 'timing effect': self-help projects during the dry season can use time which each participant would have wasted, for example with traditional mutual aid in house building. The three effects apply not only to labour, but also to communal savings which can be pooled to purchase agricultural implements, bulk orders of inputs, or to start enterprises such as shops which are jointly owned, managed and maintained. Knowledge can be pooled as well, allowing more efficient, let alone more democratic, decision-making and planning. Planning is also assisted by the predictability of applying a regular quantity and quality of labour to each activity (Von Freyhold 1979:23-5).

Productivity gains from simple co-operation can be enhanced further with division of labour (Von Freyhold 1979:26). At the end of a day spent harvesting coffee together, the Ujamaa Group sub-divide the tasks of dehusking, cleaning and washing the beans before they are left to ferment in water. More significant, however, has been their specialization on different product lines – livestock, coffee, vegetables, fruit, maize, nursery schooling, etc. – during the Group's heyday in the late 1970s. Such specialisation is normally held back in villages like Matetereka by the small size of the family unit. Cliffe and Cunningham (1973:138) observed in the late 1960s that "the Ruvuma settlements, because they run genuinely co-operative farms, do in fact achieve greater efficiency

through a division of labour, through both horizontal and vertical expansion of activities and by generating a spirit of hard work”.

Greater gains can be had when division of labour is extended beyond the village to society as a whole. It opens up the possibility for a restructuring of the economic relations between villages, and between villages and towns. Von Freyhold (1979:29) argues that the technical, economic and political inferiority of the peasants is mainly the result of their isolation from each other and from other producers in the national economy, an isolation which is bridged by mediators and middlemen who control their lives by marketing their products, giving them advice and ruling on their behalf. By combining, they can regain control over their lives and their surplus production. The goal of development is ‘self-reliance’ which she defines, not in terms of the individual or household but as: “local, regional and national integration and co-ordination so that each village can engage in a specialized combination of activities most adapted to the natural advantages of the particular environment and the particular skills which members of each village will acquire” (Von Freyhold 1979:27). Outside rural China and North Vietnam, the proof that such a communal path of development is feasible was being demonstrated by the RDA, at least until 1969. New and cheaper trading connections had been found outside the villages, so that members were able to trade a larger variety of goods than before and at better prices (Von Freyhold 1979:107). However, the idea of trading between RDA villages did not develop far, and according to Joan Wicken, Nyerere’s Personal Assistant from 1960-1994, it was probably another cause of the downfall of the RDA: “The RDA was seen as trying to set up an independent State. They were discussing the possibility of introducing a local currency. They did not see the big picture in the way Nyerere could” (Wicken pers. comm.). From Ralph Ibbott’s perspective, however, their intentions were rather less controversial (Ibbott pers. comm.):

Joan Wicken seems to have been worried at one time along with others in Dar es Salaam about the idea of exchange of goods between villages. I’ve no idea how this idea that came up at one time came to be heard of in State House or why they should be worried and think that the RDA was wanting to opt out of Tanzania. It was never carried on with but was a perfectly reasonable idea in a situation where money was in short supply and the villages were in so many ‘climates’ e.g. coffee from the likes of Matetereka and in Mbinga, fish from Lake Nyasa, Songea as one of the best maize growing areas, cashew nuts from Tunduru.

Factors which Influenced the Ujamaa Group’s Success

Clearly there can be considerable technical advantages of communal production, but it is also clear that villagers do not to make use of such

advantages just because they are living together. Wherever possibilities of this kind have been utilised, it has been through the efforts of cadres or villagers who were committed to communalization for social and political reasons. "Socialism is the result of deliberate and conscious action and organization" (Von Freyhold 1979:30-1). Similarly, the opening words of The Arusha Declaration are: "Socialism – like democracy – is an attitude of mind" (Nyerere 1968[1962]:1). The history of Matetereka Ujamaa Group is full of examples of such "conscious action and organisation". An examination of their philosophy, or credo, and that of other RDA villages, reveals some of the elements of their success.

In the early days, the atmosphere among many of the pioneer settlements was political, and quite idealistic, with a "touch of peasant millenarianism". For example in Tanga (Von Freyhold 1979:73-4):

Political songs recalling the sufferings under colonialism and the need to start afresh after independence created the right sort of atmosphere, for instance in Mbambara, where the founder members lived for two years together in mud and wattle barracks assuring each other that they would overcome the wilderness outside, despite the lions and the hyenas they heard at night, exhorting each other to build the nation and to free themselves from the wage slavery they had come from.

Toroka (1973) describes a similar atmosphere in the early days of Litowa:

The first few months were spent on evening discussions and exchanging ideas around the fire about various aspects of experiences each one had while working in the sisal estates, on mission farms or any other experience... Together with these discussions, were highly touching political songs... These songs recounted the evils inflicted upon Africans by colonialism. The thought that Uhuru was nearing when everybody was still ignorant and so poor made them weep. Though sometimes the weeping was hysterical and pretty childish, it was a big source of inspiration and provided the emotion so much desired in those days. They even prayed to God for more strength and inspiration.

And in Matetereka in 1969 (Lewin 1973:190):

Twice weekly, the members of the village eat together and discuss whatever aspects of village life require regulation... When they have finished eating the villagers sing a few political songs, like "TANU yajeng Nchi", "Rais Nyerere" and the vigorous "Shamba letu la Matetereka" which they have composed themselves. After the singing, the elected chairman calls the meeting to order by shouting "Uhuru" and then "Ujamaa". To these slogans,

the people respond by crying "Kazi ya TANU". The Chairman then makes a routine plea that the speaker holding the floor be shown respect. Since discussion frequently gets very hot, this is often a problem.

The attitudes and ideology among the Ujamaa Group members in Matetereka has become more sober, realistic and practical over the years, and this is understandable given the opposition they have faced. An attempt to piece together their 'guiding principles' from fieldwork and from the literature on the RDA is given below.

Perhaps the most important principle is the goal of self-reliance. The Group maintains control of its own decision-making, and sees the State as potential providers of desirable, but not essential, material inputs such as buildings and grants. This attitude reinforces Hyden's view that peasants will avoid dependency on the State. Many of the pioneer settlements in the early 1960s failed because they were controlled incompetently from the outside, or because groups started with an unrealistic idea of the problems they wished to attack. According to Lewin (1973:189) this was not the case for Matetereka: "there has never been a moment's doubt that it belonged to the people themselves."

A second principle is that "development means development of people and their capabilities" (Cliffe and Cunningham 1973:138). This is apparent from the investment which the Group has made in education and training for future political leaders and productive managers. They have a willingness to learn from experience and experiment (Lewin 1973:189). In Ibbott's words "they will suffer through their mistakes and benefit from their success. This is a hard method of education but the best" (Ibbott 1968, cited in Cliffe and Cunningham 1973:138-9).

Thirdly, progress is the result of practical hard work. They also value thrift, or *uchumi* which literally means economy, which they see as the key to accumulation and hence investment and development. There is little room for laziness or absenteeism. Their motto could have been "an honest day's pay for an honest day's work". Lewin (1973:194) also suggests "start small, grow steadily".

There is a sense of unity, purpose, determination, and commitment about the activities of the Group. Having said that, some of the communal activities are also enjoyable for the wajamaa. During the coffee harvest, they chat away, tell jokes, and anyone working on their individual shamba would miss out on a lot of village gossip and politics. The sense of purpose is partly a result of the radical democracy employed in decision-making. Lewin (1973:190) describes how this operated in Matetereka in 1969, and the indications are that within the Ujamaa Group little has changed:

...everyone is given a full hearing, however unreasonable his point of view and however trivial the issue at hand is... Long winded participatory

democracy, provided the long windedness is not excessive, is of great educational importance... people in Matetereka are never in the position of implementing plans whose purpose they do not understand or about which they have grave, if unspoken, doubts... In accordance with the traditional familyhood decisions are only very rarely taken by vote... The manager and the secretary [play the largest role]. Their work is supervised by a management committee which watches to make sure that they are serving the village's best interests.

Their adherence to the principles of equity, honesty, participation, democracy, hard work, pragmatism and thrift must all contribute to the strong sense of the moral superiority which they appear to have. There is also a professionalism which they apply to political and business dealings. Corruption or nepotism of any kind are out of the question. But use of political allies to remove enemies from positions of power or to influence decisions is entirely acceptable, and has been the most important strategy in their struggle to survive. They attract, and are dependent on, allies who share their honesty and integrity. They identify with Nyerere's conception of ujamaa, but the reverse is also true: Nyerere identified with *their* embodiment of ujamaa, a fact which still gives them a sense of pride. However, the perceptions of ujamaa and socialism which prevail among villagers in Tanzania today appear to have been coloured by their memories of villagisation and are associated more with coercion than with Nyerere's "Utopian socialism". Although Mayemba still calls himself a socialist, the word socialism was almost never used during fieldwork, and the political ideologies of other contemporary members of the Group remain unclear. The members of the group know exactly what they mean by ujamaa in practice, and perhaps that is all the political ideology they need.

The sense of unity among the Ujamaa Group members has been fundamental to its survival. This sense was probably supported by the fact that prior to villagisation everyone in the village was a member of a single ethnic group, the Wabena, although during fieldwork there was little unprompted discussion of ethnicity, kinship or gender – either as unifying or divisive factors in the history of the Group. The disunity which eventually set in after 1975 was inevitable with the arrival of so many disorganised newcomers most of whom must have been strangers to the Group as well as to each other. Today, an important rift has emerged between the elders and the youth, although the causes of this rift no doubt lie in wider social processes than those in the village.

Perhaps the most important factors contributing to the unity within the Group have been its relatively small size and the slow, steady rate at which membership increased, in particular before villagisation. Studies of Ujamaa Villages in the 1970s concluded that the smaller the village the easier it was for people to meet, discuss and plan activities. It was also easier for the leaders to communicate their

proposals and secure their members' support, and to monitor the level of effort of each individual on communal projects. Free riders could be identified and met with disapproval from others perhaps even before the leadership felt the need to introduce sanctions. Small groups are perhaps likely to be socially more homogeneous with a similar social background, ethnic group or lineage, and frequent face-to-face contacts allow people to develop more of a common social identity. Within larger villages it is harder to achieve a common sense of purpose. The optimum size for an Ujamaa Village practicing communal agriculture appeared to have been between 60 and 150 households. Larger villages tended to become unmanageable (McHenry 1979; Niinivaara 1974; Von Freyhold 1979:87).

The problem of the cost of communal organisation in Matetereka was noted by Lewin (1973:191-2) back in 1969. In his view, "division of responsibility is one of the most important characteristics of advanced producers' co-operatives." It is one of the basic jobs of any leader, and the way to do it is through careful education of the people:

The basic issue behind work organization is somehow getting the people to feel that the communal shamba is 'ours' and, therefore, the personal responsibility of its owner. Only then will people other than the manager and secretary and a very few others pause on their way home to do little tasks like setting the roots of a disturbed coffee plant back in place.

He observed that unless quotas were assigned, some people would take advantage of this and do as little work as possible. It was necessary to make them accountable through a clearer definition of their responsibilities. Yet the task of allocating responsibilities fell on the manager alone. In Matetereka, communalism prospered with increasing group size in the mid-1970s, but the increased costs of supervision began to take their toll when the membership had reached around 120 (Figure 3). A more structured system might have relieved Mayemba of some of the burden of delegating responsibility to others, but it seems that this did not develop in time.

A final point of discussion concerns the different strategies employed by the two factions in the village to secure economic and political power. An examination of these strategies sheds more light on the nature of the Ujamaa Group. Those employed by Matetereka B and C included the spreading of rumours, allegations of witchcraft, anonymous vandalism and petty theft, illegitimate harassment and corruption of officials, and the acts of joining the Group *en masse* in order to undermine them from within, either actively or passively. They show many similarities with James Scott's everyday forms of peasant resistance. According to Scott (1990; 1986): these can range from "clandestine arson and sabotage, to footdragging, dissimulation, false-

compliance, pilfering, slander, flight and so forth". Such forms of resistance have in common the fact that they require little or no co-ordination or planning, and they avoid any direct symbolic affront to authority (Scott 1986:5-6). However, he underlines the point that actions of this kind can only be called 'resistance' if the act is at the expense of or directed towards superordinates, not equals or subordinates. The aim of the act must intentionally be to deny or mitigate claims from appropriating classes (Scott 1986:30). If use of these strategies is an indication of the relative dominance of different factions, then this raises the question, to what extent do members of Matetereka B and C see themselves as victims of exploitation? Or is their antagonism just an expression of their resentment for having been excluded from the economic and political activities in the village?

In contrast, the strategies adopted by the Ujamaa Group to protect their interests, both before and after villagisation, have been quite different from those of Matetereka B and C. Rather than anonymous, clandestine and disorganised, their approaches have tended to be more up front, confident and planned. The most effective means of defence appears to have been their appeals to political allies such as Nyerere. However they have also appealed to reason, for example when requesting an auditor to solve the ownership dispute, and they have done so with the confidence and openness that comes from a sense of moral superiority. They know they have nothing to hide. Some of the Ujamaa Group members describe their opponents in the village as lazy and jealous. But perhaps they simply do not have the sense of unity, the organisation, and political influence which comes from a history of strong leadership, democracy, and co-operation. One conclusion is clear from the history of Matetereka; the most important factor which determined the survival of the Group was the quality of its leaders – their ability to motivate and organise, their political influence at different levels of the Party and Government, their practical and intellectual skills, and their vision and sense of purpose.

Concluding Remarks

The study has demonstrated that self-governing communal organisations such as the Ujamaa Group in Matetereka can provide a link between the political and technical problems at the village level and achieve meaningful social and economic development. By combining to form federations, a communal path of development can emerge which allows a restructuring of wider economic relations between villages and a chance for smallholder farmers to regain control of their lives and surplus production. During the 1960s such a path was followed by the Ruvuma Development Association, but it soon came up against fatal opposition from the State. The reason the transformation finally failed was that only a small faction of the Party which initially promoted it were willing to

support it against an authoritarian bureaucracy. There were frequent debates within the Party about the form in which socialism should take, but ultimately the dominant power bloc did not want effective control from below.

The only Ujamaa Village to survive to the present day with its democratic and communal institutions intact is Matetereka. Its success can be attributed largely to the quality of its leadership, but also the effort, commitment and unity of its members. The history of the Ujamaa Group in Matetereka has been a continual political battle with its opponents – non-members within the village, and various Party and Government officials. Clearly there are likely to be considerable costs incurred in ensuring the success and sustainability of democratic, self-governing communal organisations in rural Tanzania. Nyerere's policy of Ujamaa Village development is now part of history, but the participatory approaches to rural development which are currently being promoted by aid agencies throughout the country, especially in natural resource management, share many of the characteristics of the grassroots development described in this study. This comparison raises the question, how will participatory development programmes work out in practice, given the continual opposition encountered by groups such as those in Matetereka and the Ruvuma Development Association.

NOTES

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2. This comment was made in 1991 by Fr. Bernard Joinet, a priest who had been commissioned by the "Religious Superiors of Tanzania" to report on current affairs in the country (Ibbott pers. comm.)

3. The RDA is mentioned in *Socialism and Rural Development* as a helpful source of ideas for Ujamaa Village constitutions (Nyerere 1968[1967]:143). A few months before *Education for Self-Reliance* (Nyerere 1968[1967b]) was published, Joan Wicken, Nyerere's personal assistant, spent several days in Litowa concentrating her time mainly on the school. It is certain that many of the ideas expressed in the paper originated at Litowa (Coulson 1978:12; Wicken pers. comm.).

4. Kawawa later apologized to Millinga for what they had done to the RDA, although he did not visit the remaining groups and apologize to them, perhaps because he would have been asked for compensation (Ibbott pers. comm.). In the mid-1980s both Kawawa and Nyerere were supportive of the Sungusungu vigilante movement which, like the RDA, was a grassroots development in Tanzania (Abrahams and Bukurura 1993:99).

5. This was news to Millinga, who pointed out that a Security Officer was also sent to Litowa. Perhaps the same happened in Liweta and other RDA villages.
6. During fieldwork, few villagers turned up to the SACCO Annual General Meeting, despite the importance of SACCO in their lives, because they were scared that it might be another trap.
7. A similar history of conflict took place in Litowa between the former wajamaa and the newcomers at villagisation.
8. During our stay, Millinga renewed old friendships with several wajamaa in Matetereka, and expressed his wish to help find someone forward-thinking, encourage them to stand for the election, and to support them during the campaign. Given the influence and respect he holds, his support might help the two factions move beyond the antagonism of the past.

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