

CHAPTER FOUR

THE IMPACT OF STATE POLICIES/STRATEGIES ON THE PEOPLE OF SANYATI (1965-1979)

INTRODUCTION

Chapter four examines the major consequences of UDI policies and strategies on the plotholding irrigation population in Sanyati. It outlines the various challenges facing the outgrowers in the smallholder scheme in light of limited loan facilities and the imposition of conservation measures designed to counteract the effects of soil erosion.

The chapter argues that the introduction of cotton in 1963, to a large extent, determined the nature of development and the extent of socio-economic differentiation in the area. More than any other crop cotton irrigation informed the process of rural differentiation. The irrigation period, in particular, provided many plottolders with the opportunity to become successful farmers. The chapter also analyses the differential impact exerted by cotton cultivation on the peasantry by arguing that while some peasants definitely benefited from cotton irrigation agriculture others were disadvantaged. As illustrated in this study, there were income disparities among plottolders as well as between the Gowe farmers and their dryland neighbours.

In addition, chapter four argues that, irrigation plottolders were not only differentiated on the basis of land ownership or gender, but also on their ability to pay the water rate, land rent as well as their ability to access Agricultural Development Fund (ADF), Agricultural Loan Fund (ALF) and Co-operative Society loans. For those farmers who could access such loans, irrigation provided an opportunity to become richer (better-off) than their counterparts who did not find it so easy to secure credit.

This period also witnessed the birth of the Sanyati Main Irrigation Scheme. The core estate's interaction with Gowe is examined. This chapter advances the argument that the inception of both the smallholder irrigation scheme and Estate agriculture was responsible for heightening the levels of differentiation. TILCOR viewed the two sectors as enjoying a symbiotic relationship, but it is clear from this chapter that outgrower labour was often exploited for the benefit of the "Bigger Brother" (the Estate). The existence of the feudal landlord-tenant type of relationship between the two cannot be denied. The smallholder scheme (Gowe), therefore, can be used to illustrate the entrenchment of settler hegemony in Sanyati.

Last but not least, the escalation of the liberation struggle, especially after 1972, posed further challenges for both the smallholder scheme and the core estate. Whilst the former was not adversely affected since it was perceived as an African scheme, the latter was because it was seen as representing white enterprise. For example, it was difficult for the Estate to procure labour at the peak of the war. The establishment of protected villages ("keeps") by the settler government to try and monitor the movement of the guerrillas

was, in itself, self-defeating as it hindered inflows of casual labour to the Estate (a state enterprise).

THE CHALLENGES OF SMALLHOLDER IRRIGATION IN THE COLONIAL PERIOD: THE CASE OF GOWE (1967-1979)

The struggle to survive:-

Since its inception in 1967, there have been many challenges facing smallholder irrigation farmers at Gowe. In this area, as in other parts of rural Zimbabwe, irrigation was of paramount importance due to erratic and changing rainfall patterns. For the plotters to eke out a living from the small pieces of land, which were allocated to them at the beginning, they had to strive to produce both subsistence and money-spinning crops on an intensive scale. The overall aim was to attain significant yields, which, in turn, would help raise farm incomes as well as standards of living. Success in this regard largely depended on the efficient utilisation of two scarce resources, land and water.⁷²⁰

It is important to note that Gowe was launched amid pessimism from certain Ministry of Internal Affairs officials. This pessimism stemmed from the area's aridity, its generally poor soils and the fact that some government officials were not sure if the liberation struggle which commenced in earnest in 1966, a year before the commissioning of Gowe, would not disrupt production. There was divided opinion in the Ministry, if not in the government, on the economic potential and viability of this irrigation scheme. The Preliminary Project Report stated: "From the economic aspect the scheme appears unattractive."⁷²¹ After visiting the Gowe Irrigation Scheme on the 28th of November, 1967, Noel Robertson had this observation to make: "Not only is there nothing to be proud of here, there are grave doubts in my layman's mind of the efficiency, durability and safety of the scheme."⁷²² In the final analysis, the view that predominated was that the scheme was essential as an experiment in the development of the Sanyati communal lands. The first eighteen people to

⁷²⁰ Numerous studies have detailed the scarcity of both land and water but of grave concern today in the face of conditions of aridity, desertification, damage to the ozone layer and the el-nino effect often causing droughts in the world is the problem of water. Among the scholars who have written on irrigation and water scarcity are E. W. Anderson, "Water: the Next Strategic Resource," in J. R. Starr and D. C. Stoll (eds.), *The Politics of Scarcity*, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1988); Anderson, "White Oil," *Geographical Magazine*, 63(2), (February 1991), 10-14; P. Beaumont, "Water Scarcity as a Limiting Factor to Development in the Middle East," Paper presented at the Institute of Applied Economics and Geography, Salamanca, Spain, High Council of Scientific Research, December 1988; I. Carruthers and C. Clark (eds.), *The Economics of Irrigation*, (England: Liverpool University Press, 1983); H. E. Dregne, *Desertification of Arid Lands*, (London: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1983); S. Gregory, "El-Nino Years and the Spatial Pattern of Drought Over India 1901-70," in S. Gregory (ed.), *Recent Climatic Change*, (London: Belhaven Press, 1988), 226-36; A. L. Hall, *Drought and Irrigation in N. E. Brazil*, (London: Cambridge University Press, 1978) and C. E. Houston, "Irrigation Development in the World," in E. B. Worthington (ed.), *Arid Land Irrigation in Developing Countries*, (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1978), 425-32.

⁷²¹ NAZ (RC), DC Gatooma - Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158098, Location C19.10.7R, DC's File: Gowe Irrigation Scheme 1965-1971: Plans etc, Preliminary Project Report - Amended, R. L. Westcott (DC Gatooma) to the Provincial Commissioner, Mashonaland South, 31st March 1972, 9.

⁷²² NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 153673, Location C.36.18.2F, File: AGR/16/A/15 Vol. I, Gowe Irrigation Scheme (August 1965 - December 1969), N. Robertson (pp. Secretary for Internal Affairs) to the PC (Mashonaland South), 8th December 1967.

acquire plots at Gowe were, thus, given the responsibility to show the rest of Sanyati that this experiment had the potential to succeed.

Officially, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, which took over the control and management of all irrigation schemes in the communal areas from the Ministry of Agriculture on 1st July 1967, had to assist in the realisation of this goal. Hence, the Ministry of Internal Affairs immediately published the Tribal Trust Land [Control of Irrigation Schemes] Regulations, designed to provide District Commissioners throughout the country with the necessary legal powers to ensure that all irrigation schemes were properly farmed by plotholders.⁷²³ This publication came in the wake of a visit to Pretoria (South Africa) by a Rhodesian Ministry of Agriculture delegation (from Salisbury) that attended the Conference on the “Regulations for the Control of Irrigation Schemes in Bantu Areas” in January 1963. The Conference, among other things, adopted the concept of lease agreements, the charging of water rates and how the Department of Bantu Administration and Development under which the BIC fell would appropriate land earmarked for the setting up of an irrigation scheme.⁷²⁴ Similarly, the regulations published by Internal Affairs in 1967, also required all plotholders in Rhodesia, including those at Gowe, to enter into an agreement of lease and to pay a water rate which after two years of occupation, would amount to a maximum of £14 per acre per annum for all-the-year round irrigation.⁷²⁵ The two-year grace period was intended to give the plotholder an opportunity to learn the highly specialised methods of irrigation farming.

According to C. J. Perry who has written a research report on the pros and cons of water levies in countries such as Egypt, Australia and the USA including a case study on Iran, “A primary target for these interventions [water charges] is irrigation, because it is by far the largest consumer of water – typically 80 per cent – in most countries where shortage is a problem.”⁷²⁶ It is worth noting that in countries where water has been deemed to be plentiful, the role of water pricing as a means to ensure efficient allocation and productive use has attracted little attention among scholars, but because today water is manifestly scarce in many countries⁷²⁷ individuals, governments, donor agencies and international declarations advise that this commodity should be used frugally and should be treated as an “economic good.”⁷²⁸ Treating it as such is the major rationale for water pricing because,

⁷²³ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 86732, Location 8.17.5F, File: Annual Report 1967, “Acc.8/160 Report of the Secretary for Internal Affairs for the year 1967,” 8.

⁷²⁴ NASA (UA), SRP: 5/257: Republic of South Africa, Government Gazette Extraordinary (G.G.E.), (Regulation Gazette No. 159), Vol. vii, No. 415, “Proclamations: Regulations for the Control of Irrigation Schemes in Bantu Areas,” 4 January-15 February 1963, Pretoria: Department of Bantu Administration and Development, 11 January 1963, 1-12.

⁷²⁵ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 86732, Location 8.17.5F, File: Annual Report 1967, “Acc.8/160 Report of the Secretary for Internal Affairs for the year 1967,” 8.

⁷²⁶ C. J. Perry, “Charging for Irrigation Water: The Issues and Options, with a Case Study from Iran,” *Research Report* (52), (Colombo, Sri Lanka: International Water Management Institute/IWMI, 2001), 1.

⁷²⁷ More detail on global water scarcity can be gleaned from H. Peter Gleick (ed.), “Basic Water Requirements for Meeting Human Activities: Meeting Human Needs.” *Water International*, 21(2), (1996), 83-92; S. L. Postel, Daily C. Gretchen and R. Ehrlich Paul, “Human Appropriation of Renewable Fresh Water.” *Science*, 271, February 1996, 785-788 and David Seckler et al, “World Water Demand and Supply 1990 to 2025: Scenarios and Issues.” *Research Report 19*, (Colombo, Sri Lanka: IWMI, 1998).

⁷²⁸ This economic interpretation of the value and use of water has been emphasised by J. Briscoe, “Water as an Economic Good: The Idea and What it Means in Practice.” Paper presented to World Congress of ICID,

within irrigated agriculture or within an individual project, the farmer who receives irrigation and benefits from it is clearly privileged in relation to a farmer who does not receive irrigation water (i.e. dryland farmer). Thus, a service charge in the form of a water rate may be appropriate to recover a proportion of the benefits or to recover the costs of the service. The Gowe plotters would have preferred a situation of non-payment for irrigation water in line with some irrigation projects where water is provided as a free service. Alternatively, much lower charges (although the whole idea of paying was staunchly resisted) could have consoled some of them.

However, the point the Sanyati tenants were missing was that non-payment would have placed a heavy burden on the government, which was already reeling from the effects of subsidising irrigation projects throughout the country.⁷²⁹ Actually, the damage that can be caused to an economy by providing water free of charge or at very low rates has been demonstrated both in Zimbabwe and other parts of the world where, even the low charges, supposed to be collected are, in fact, not collected.⁷³⁰ In essence, what this means in practice is that where charges are low or not collected at all, the direct beneficiaries of irrigation – who typically are a privileged group in most agrarian economies – receive their service at the expense of the economy in general, as scarce public resources are used first to finance project construction⁷³¹ and subsequently, subsidise ongoing operations and maintenance costs. Therefore, it can be argued that, to achieve efficient water use, a price has to be attached to water and the price of water must be directly related to the volume delivered. If this rule is not applied strictly, there is bound to be abuse of a critical resource in life and this would not only be a negation of conservationist principles but also there will be nothing to bequeath to generations to come.

This water tariff for Gowe-Sanyati, which included the cost of land development, was calculated at £8 per acre for summer supplementary crops and £6 per acre for winter irrigation and was designed to exact, on average, a minimum net potential charge of £72 per

Cairo, Egypt, 1996; M. Rosegrant and H. Binswanger, “Markets in Tradable Water Rights: Potential for Efficiency Gains in Developing Country Water Allocation.” *World Development*, 22(22), (1994), 1, 613 and 625 as well as the ICWE (International Conference on Water and the Environment), “The Dublin Statement and Report of the Conference,” Geneva, Switzerland, WMO, 1992.

⁷²⁹ The idea of subsidising irrigation schemes is not a novel phenomenon in Africa let alone in the world. It is now a proven fact that delivering water on philanthropic grounds is ruinous to any economy. South Africa realised this fact probably earlier than colonial Zimbabwe. This is why when the question of subsidy was raised in the Annual Report for 1928-1929 by the Republic’s Irrigation Department as soon as 1929 a decision of Cabinet was conveyed to this Department that the principle of subsidy had been approved. More detail on this issue can be gleaned from: the NASA (UA), TES: 7629: 78/127 Vol. 1, File: 78/127 Vol. 1, Water Affairs – Irrigation Schemes: Policy with Regard to Subsidising of Irrigation Schemes, Correspondence to October 1961, “Subsidies: Irrigation Schemes,” Irrigation Department (Union of South Africa) to The Secretary for Finance (Pretoria), 23rd October 1936.

⁷³⁰ *World Bank*, “World Bank Lending Conditionality: A Review of Cost Recovery in Irrigation Projects,” Washington DC, 1986, 1.

⁷³¹ The high cost of construction may make it difficult to achieve an attractive return on the initial investment. Viability is highly dependent on the value of the crops grown because world prices or even local prices for some major irrigated crops in Sanyati, for example, wheat, maize and cotton tend to fluctuate. In such cases diversified cropping, with ample opportunities for farmers to alter the proportions of the crops they grow, substituting a food crop for an export crop when prices are low, will help reduce the level of risk and increase the long-term viability of irrigation schemes.

annum on each irrigator.⁷³² This, however, constituted a high water rate considering that the size of individual plots was kept at a bare minimum. As already noted, at Gowe, the plots seldom exceeded 4 acres in extent. In this instance, it can be argued that the consumers of irrigation produce living outside the schemes needed to make their contribution as well in recognition of the benefit they derived from these projects. Clearly, the most important benefit of irrigation to them was the overall reduction in food prices resulting from increased production by Gowe and the Main Estate when it was set up in the mid-1970s. Thus, the indirect beneficiaries of irrigation, the consumers of cheaper food, should have been happy to subsidise irrigation development through taxes.

It was on the 2-4 acre plots on the 80 acre Gowe Scheme,⁷³³ which were issued without any title deeds, that the farmers were expected to practise a 4-stage crop rotation involving maize, cotton, groundnuts and soya beans. The plots were too small for such a system of rotation, hence the clamours for more land which were directed at the DC. Some farmers discretely ploughed vacant plots before new incumbents took these up. This enabled them to surpass other plottolders' annual income. In addition, fruits and vegetables were grown for sale.⁷³⁴ According to the CONEX Irrigation Officer, A. G. Pilditch, the total area of land set aside for horticultural purposes was 4 acres.⁷³⁵ Plottolders were given equal portions of the garden to produce vegetables. The growing of vegetables, though on a small but intensive scale, enabled plottolders to diversify their farming activities and keep the local market well supplied. A conservative estimate shows that about two out of every three families grew vegetables to satiate nutritional demands and generate some income. Those who had acquired more sophisticated skills of tending their gardens used the proceeds from vegetable sales to raise their socio-economic status. Westcott has testified to how lucrative this subsidiary task was when he made this comment: "An attempt to alleviate the discipline involved in an overhead spray scheme was made by allocating vegetable gardens which incidentally provided plottolders with appreciable income."⁷³⁶ In his view then, Gowe became "an example of the introduction, or rather, extension of modern farming techniques into the Trust Lands leading to higher standard of living and food production."⁷³⁷ This was in sharp contrast to a general statement made in 1967 by the Secretary for Internal Affairs, W. H. H. Nicolle, in reference to the peasant farmers in the whole country: "We must not expect dramatic results in the field of agriculture. The African is an ultra-conservative

⁷³² NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 100816, Location 3.13.7F, File: AGR 7 Water Supplies General 97-117 (1966 - 1968), C. A. Hunter (pp. Secretary to the Treasury) to the Secretary for Agriculture, the Secretary for Mines and Lands, the Secretary for Internal Affairs, the Director of Water Development and the Chairman (ICC), 16th October, 1967, 2.

⁷³³ The initial 80 acres fell under what has been termed Gowe I. Of this total, only 70 acres were being fully utilised and the remaining 10 acres were either under-utilised or constituted vacant land.

⁷³⁴ NAZ (RC), DC Gatooma - Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158098, Location C.19.10.7R, DC's File: Gowe Irrigation Scheme 1965-1971: Plans etc., J. L. Paul (Extension Officer - Sanyati/ Chenjiri) to the DC Gatooma and the Provincial Conservation and Extension Officer (Mashonaland South), 30th November, 1967.

⁷³⁵ NAZ (RC), DC Gatooma - Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158098, Location C.19.10.7R, DC's File: Gowe Irrigation Scheme: Financial Plans, Water Reports etc. 1967-1971, "Sanyati TTL Gowe Irrigation Scheme: Vegetable Garden Layout," A. G. Pilditch, Irrigation Officer for Director of Conservation and Extension to DC Gatooma, 17th May 1968.

⁷³⁶ R. L. Westcott, (Former DC Gatooma), Personal Interview, Ramsgate, South Africa, 12th July 2005.

⁷³⁷ Westcott, Personal Interview, 12th July 2005.

person and does not readily take to or see the need for change.”⁷³⁸ The statement by Nicolle bears close resemblance to the erroneous notion of a backward peasantry, which Arensberg has strongly criticised in another context, which states that: “Agriculture in the developing world will continue to limp and stumble as long as its backbone is the peasant [and that] everything is wrong with the peasant ...”⁷³⁹

Contrary to this old stereotyped view that Africans were conservative⁷⁴⁰ and unresponsive to the new economic opportunities, existing literature demonstrates that in the period under examination, Zimbabwean peasants in general and Gowe small-scale farmers in particular did respond to market forces by increasing their maize and cotton production for sale.⁷⁴¹ This was not a novel phenomenon, as Africans in the Sanyati area were already in contact with the money economy well before independence, as evidenced by the fact that the peasants had to increase their agricultural produce for sale and for their own sustenance.⁷⁴² Thus, the battle to survive on the meagre tracts of land was launched with a lot of vigour at Gowe.

In fact, since November 1967 more and more people in Gowe were rotating their crops, applying fertiliser and instead of adhering to traditional food crops such as maize, they were also growing cotton, groundnuts, fruits (especially mangoes - mango orchards are a very conspicuous feature at this scheme), vegetables and soya beans. According to the Extension Officer for Sanyati/Chenjiri, J. L. Paul, maize and cotton were planted on the 2nd and 7th of November 1967, respectively.⁷⁴³ The S.H.52 maize seed variety, a high yielder, provided there is water, was grown. Due to very dry conditions before the rains started and the need for speed, night irrigation of maize and cotton was undertaken right through the month of November 1967⁷⁴⁴ when there was no danger of loss of moisture through evaporation.

In 1967, when the rains were late in Sanyati, maize, sorghum and cotton crops were severely affected throughout the area, with the exception of the Gowe Pools Pilot Irrigation Scheme where, due to hard work by the plottolders in moving the spray lines and ensuring the correct delivery of water from the sprinklers,⁷⁴⁵ crops were growing well. This persuaded the CONEX Group Officer, P. G. How, to look at the scheme as “a first class illustration of

⁷³⁸ NAZ, Rhodesia: Departmental Reports: Internal Affairs, 1964-73, “Report of the Secretary for Internal Affairs for the year 1967,” Salisbury: The Government Printer, 1968, 3.

⁷³⁹ C. M. Arensberg, “Upgrading Peasant Agriculture: Is Tradition the Snag?” *Columbia Journal of World Business*, 2(1), (January/February 1967), 63.

⁷⁴⁰ C. Hutton and R. Cohen, “African Peasants and Resistance to Change: A Reconsideration of Sociological Approaches.” I. Oxaal, T. Barnett and D. Booth (eds.), *Beyond the Sociology of Development: Economy and Society in Latin America and Africa*, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1975), 105-130.

⁷⁴¹ Prins Gwyn, “The End of the Beginning of African History,” [Review of *The Roots of Rural Poverty in Central and Southern Africa*]. *Social History*, 111(1), 1978, 116-119.

⁷⁴² Paraiwa, Personal Interview. See also C. Bundy, *The Rise and Fall of the South African Peasantry*, (Cape Town: David Philip, 1988), 132.

⁷⁴³ NAZ (RC), DC Gatooma - Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158098, Location C19.10.7R, DC’s File: Gowe Irrigation Scheme 1965-1971: Plans etc., J. L. Paul to the DC Gatooma and the Provincial Conservation and Extension Officer (Mashonaland South), 30th November 1967.

⁷⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴⁵ Response to Questionnaire, Westcott to Nyandoro.

the real need of irrigation in the Sanyati TTL,”⁷⁴⁶ notwithstanding the small size of the plots.

Among the crops that were said to be doing well were those of the former Secretary of the Gowe Co-operative Society, N. S. Gwacha, and his young brother, J. Gwacha, a former plotholder and currently one of the clerks at the Sanyati Depot of the Cotton Company of Zimbabwe Ltd. (formerly Cotton Marketing Board - CMB).⁷⁴⁷ N. S. Gwacha and his brother were encouraged to join the Gowe Irrigation Scheme in 1967 by the Extension Officer for Sanyati/Chenjiri, J. L. Paul, under whom their father worked as a cook.⁷⁴⁸ After learning that Gowe was meant to promote Sanyati citizens, they were willing to join the scheme. In their first year on the scheme, the two Gwacha brothers and the other plotholders mainly grew maize and cotton under the then resident Agricultural Assistant or Demonstrator, MaCloud Mushawarima,⁷⁴⁹ who is currently the Supervisor for Sanyati's Muzvezve I Resettlement Scheme. Among Mushawarima's main duties was to assist the Gowe farmers realise excellent yields on their plots. Between the 1960s and 1970s, wheat, cotton and maize were grown by most of the plotholders. T. Nyamutova feels that of the three

the crop that made farmers to prosper particularly in the 1970s was maize because it was cheaper to grow and the only deduction by the DC was for the seed loan but there were so many deductions on the cotton crop e.g. tillage, seed, fertilisers, pesticides, water charges and packing material [bales].⁷⁵⁰

Nyamutova observed:

In the 1970s cotton seemed to benefit the DC more than the growers. The farmers did not get any meaningful return from their crop. Farmers hardly got \$3 from their cotton sales. In 1977 I got a return on my cotton of 75 cents only. So, it was the DC's crop.⁷⁵¹

These sentiments expressed by Nyamutova were, on the one hand, reflective of a plotholder who was disgruntled by the exploitive tendencies of the DC (the symbol of the state in Sanyati at that time) and, on the other, of a mouthpiece of fellow plotholders who had initially resisted cotton because it could not be eaten in times of famine. He might have resented also the element of force that accompanied the cultivation of this crop especially during the anti-Rhodesian international sanctions that started in 1965 following UDI.⁷⁵² Notwithstanding Nyamutova's sentiments, it is true that the production of wheat,

⁷⁴⁶ NAZ (RC), DC Gatooma - Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158098, Location C19.10.7R, File: "Gowe Irrigation Scheme: Sanyati TTL (EX CONEX), P. G. How to DC Gatooma, 22nd December, 1967, 1.

⁷⁴⁷ N. S. Gwacha, Personal Interview, 8th January 1997.

⁷⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴⁹ Response to Questionnaire, Westcott to Nyandoro.

⁷⁵⁰ T. Nyamutova (Vice Chairman, Gowe Irrigation Committee), Personal Interview, Gowe-Sanyati, 14th May 2005.

⁷⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵² A fuller discussion of the coercive tendencies found in most colonial cotton schemes can be obtained from Isaacman, *Cotton is the Mother of Poverty*.

maize and cotton, in particular the latter, reached its all time colonial peak in the 1960s and 1970s even on the small allotments at Gowe. Distinct social and economic classes emerged in this period due to the combined effects of irrigation and the cultivation of cotton. To a large extent, Gowe farmers were cultivating small-standardised plots. Because of this, on paper, they appeared to be a homogeneous entity but, due to different levels of physical application and effectiveness in working their plots, differentiation emerged. However, because of the smallness of their plots and other factors, in order to survive, a lot of initiative was needed and many plottolders had a lot of it.

Apart from plottolder initiative, Gowe flourished in this decade due to other reasons such as the availability of demonstrator advice, effective pumps, fairly open lines of credit and the strict supervision by the DC. Signs of prosperity were revealed by a number of factor. For instance, the pump engines and pipes bought in the late 1960s were still in good functioning order by the end of the 1970s and this helped ensure a steady and efficient supply of water to plottolder crops. Farmers could access inputs easily from Co-ops and the DC.⁷⁵³ This enabled some farmers to increase their production and used the proceeds from cotton sales to build more decent homes, buy cars and accumulate livestock. Robson Maturure, a retired Criminal Investigations Department (CID) Officer, for example, bought an Austin Cambridge vehicle from the sale of his produce. (See Appendix V). Livestock wealth was quite visible on their dryland holdings. This was mainly because the raising of animals in the scheme was prohibited by the DC. Outstanding cotton irrigators also qualified to acquire farms in the NPAs like Copper Queen, which falls under Gokwe District, and Chenjiri in Sanyati where they could practice cotton cultivation on an extended scale because the PA farms were much bigger than the Gowe plots. This facilitated further accumulation. Copper Queen and Chenjiri were and are still renowned cotton growing regions in the northwestern part of Zimbabwe. Table 4.1 illustrates how the cotton growing momentum was maintained in these areas (compared to maize) following Melville Reid's cotton extension programmes and the establishment of Gowe in 1967.

The success of cotton was, in turn, used to push for a better road system to Gatooma where cotton was mainly marketed before the establishment of the CMB (COTTCO) depot at Sanyati Growth Point in 1976. Because the marketing of produce was mainly routed through Copper Queen PA, Sanyati TTL and the Gatooma Rural District Council road to Gatooma, the Gatooma District Council was concerned that the roads involved were "carrying a high density of traffic, a great deal more than they were designed to carry, or financed thereto."⁷⁵⁴ The Council argued that unless Maintenance Votes were increased, these roads would inevitably break down. It went further to suggest that the roads were of "national importance" and an integral part of the development of the region as well; so collective effort was required to facilitate a better transportation network. The need for improved roads also underscored the success of cotton in the area. Problems of a good road infrastructure were, to some extent, solved when the tarred strip road linking

⁷⁵³ Regis Shayamiti (Kusi Village Headman, Ward 24), Personal Interview, Kusi Village, Sanyati, 15th May 2005.

⁷⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

this area and Gatooma was completed after the establishment of the TILCOR Growth Point in Sanyati in 1977.

Table 4.1: CROP PRODUCTION: GOKWE TTL – COPPER QUEEN AND CHENJIRI PURCHASE AREAS.

<u>COPPER QUEEN PA</u>			<u>CHENJIRI PA</u>	
<u>YEAR</u>	<u>COTTON</u>	<u>MAIZE</u>	<u>COTTON</u>	<u>MAIZE</u>
1966/67	Almost Nil	Nil	-300 acres	Nil
1967/68	1500 acres	Nil	1800 acres	Nil
1968/69	2000 acres	Nil	2500 acres	Nil
1969/70	2800 acres	Nil	3200 acres	Nil
1970/71	3200 acres	Nil	4000 acres	2800 acres
Total	9500 acres	Nil	11200 acres	2800 acres
Cotton @ 3,5 bales per acre average @ 2,5 bales per acre ave. Maize @ 8 bags per acre average @ 8 bags per acre ave. Bulk Crop – Cotton =11200 bales 10000 bales ⁷⁵⁵				

Source: Extract from the Gokwe Agricultural Officer’s Report: Ministry of Internal Affairs, October 1973.

The advent of TILCOR also reduced transportation problems as the plotholders could now market their produce through the Estate. However, N. S. Gwacha pointed out that, in spite of this, the Estate gave rise to new problems for the tenants. In his opinion, Gowe was more profitable between 1967 and 1973, but with the installation of electricity after 1973, the plotholders were now required to pay water rates and the scheme was, therefore, no longer as profitable. ⁷⁵⁶ However, there was no unitary method of achieving profitability. Some plotholders were rich or simply better off because they were innovative. Others were poor because they lacked not only resources but also the necessary innovation expected in an irrigation scheme.

Gowe: The role of the ADF, ALF and the Co-operative Society:-

Since the scheme started operating, the ADF provided tractors for ploughing and recovered its costs from the plotholders, as ox-drawn ploughs were not allowed. Livestock rearing was not permitted within the confines of the irrigation scheme because tractors and other agricultural equipment were provided by the ADF. The ox-drawn plough, therefore, had no place at Gowe. There was also no provision for grazing land within the scheme, but a livestock-fattening programme had been introduced by the livestock demonstrator for

⁷⁵⁵ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158088, Location C19.6.8R, File: PTR 2 October 1951-October 1973, District Routes: “Appendix ‘A’ Crop Production: Gokwe TTL – Copper Queen and Chenjiri Purchase Areas, 1973.”

⁷⁵⁶ Norman Savata Gwacha, (Communal farmer and former Secretary of the Gowe Irrigation Co-operative Society), Personal Interview, Kusi Village, Sanyati, 15th May 2005.

farmers to sell beasts and make a handsome profit.⁷⁵⁷ N. S. Gwacha, who cultivated a 1,4 hectare (4 acre) plot remembers that in 1967, the ADF tractor service for ploughing was provided at the rate of £10 (\$20) per plowholder.⁷⁵⁸ Primarily, the ADF was involved in the financing of the smallholder scheme, the provision of farm equipment and the financing of cropping activities. The prime source of credit to the Gowe irrigators was the Agricultural Loan Fund (ALF), and by paying a nominal membership fee, these farmers had access to full seasonal credit through their co-operative known as the Gowe Co-operative Society. A brief historical background of the formation and operation of co-operative societies in Zimbabwe's African areas will help to situate the one at Gowe in its national context.

In 1954, the Government instructed that an investigation be carried out to discover whether co-operative societies had any role to play in the development of the African enterprise or not. It was found that while urban societies would have little value, agricultural societies would provide a needed service in the channelling of both input items to African farmers and the produce of these farmers to marketing bodies. In addition, they would provide a mechanism by which credit for the purchase of input items could be made available to African farmers. Early efforts were, however, concentrated on the African Purchase Lands (formerly APAs and now small-scale commercial farms) because of their more advanced farmers and greater output. Following this investigation, the first society was formed in Chitomborwizi African Purchase Land in 1956 and the first in a Tribal Trust Land in Madziwa in 1960.

From then, growth was steady. At the end of 1972, there were 291 primary societies – marketing and agricultural supply societies – with 33 000 members. These societies were later amalgamated into 11 marketing unions (secondary societies) in order to consolidate the negotiating power of the primary societies.⁷⁵⁹ The societies were controlled by the Co-operatives Branch of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, which administered both the Co-operative Companies Act and the Co-operative Societies Act. The Co-operative Societies Act was an enabling Act only, which provided the apparatus for the formation and registration of co-operatives. Strong controlling and inspection powers were provided to the Registrar by the Act. In 1967 the Sebungwe Co-operative Union Limited was formed, incorporating 27 co-operatives in the Gokwe, Gatooma and Que Que (now Kwekwe) areas. The Union provided several functions. For instance, it:

- (a) accumulated the buying power of 27 member co-operatives with 2 500 individual members into a single purchasing body, thus providing extra leverage in negotiation for discounts;
- (b) acted as banker for the member co-operatives, channelling all payments for crops through itself. This provided flexibility in the management of accounts;

⁷⁵⁷ A. Masenga (Gowe Pump Attendant), Personal Interview, Gowe, 8th January 1997 and R. L. Westcott, Personal Interview, Ramsgate, South Africa, 12th July 2005.

⁷⁵⁸ N. S. Gwacha, Personal Interview, Sanyati, 9th January 1997.

⁷⁵⁹ NAZ (RC), ARDA, Box 272099, Location R19.3.12.1F, File: ADA/MAR/2 Marketing – General, “Confidential Correspondence: Agricultural Development Authority – Co-operative Societies in African Areas,” 26th January 1973, 1.

- (c) enabled the accounting and secretarial function at primary co-operative level to be kept to the lowest possible level, as the more complex functions were performed in Que Que;
- (d) provided a training centre for staff which could ultimately disperse among primary societies; and
- (e) because of the degree of control exercised in the Union, it made feasible the operation of retail outlets for member societies. In the past it had proved impractical for primary co-operatives to operate retail stores.⁷⁶⁰

The Union, which was staffed and managed solely by Africans, operated a central warehouse in Que Que. It was this warehouse that supplied the needs of smaller co-operatives such as Gowe. The basic reason for the existence of the co-operatives was to meet the individual member's problems in the financing of his crop (credit), the supply and transportation of input items into the farming area, and the transportation of produce out of it to the market. To obtain credit well in advance of the growing season, a member submitted to his local committee his list of requirements for seed, fertiliser and pesticides. The committee, on advice from co-operative staff, ensured that the amounts requested were in balance with the intended acreage. A member was required to sign a stop order in favour of the co-operative for the cost of these items, plus handling and transport charges. The individual member's loans were consolidated into a single co-operative loan and application made to the District Commissioner by the co-operative for a communal loan.⁷⁶¹ Provided that the previous year's communal loan was completely liquidated, approval was granted and the co-operative became liable for repayment. As the individual delivered his crop, the stop order was paid off first in the normal way, and as soon as repayment was completed, the individual received full payment for his produce, less the usual transport and handling charges. The co-operative, however, remained responsible for the repayment of the communal debt to the ALF.

As far as agricultural inputs were concerned, orders for physical input items were consolidated and a single order placed through the Union. Delivery was made to a single collection depot, which was the secretary's house, an African Development Fund (ADF) store, a trading store or simply a shelter under a tree. The secretary and his committee handled distribution and the individual farmers collected and transported their own requirements. Delivery to the central depot (collection point) was by Union transport or contract transport arranged by the Union. During the marketing season, seed cotton was delivered to the same depot by individuals, with individual identification on each bale. On delivery, a produce receipt recording the weight of cotton was issued, but no grade or value was attached and no payment was made at that stage. Once a truckload had accumulated, transport was obtained from the Union and the cotton was delivered as a single consignment to the ginnery. Individual bales were recorded on the Cotton Marketing Board paysheet under the "Yield Reference" heading, to enable the payment to be broken down to individuals by the Union. A notification and cash analysis was

⁷⁶⁰ NAZ (RC), ARDA, Box 272099, Location R19.3.12.1F, File: ADA/MAR/2 Marketing – General, "Confidential Correspondence: Agricultural Development Authority – Co-operative Societies in African Areas," 26th January 1973, 3.

⁷⁶¹ *Ibid.*

provided to the bank for payment on its next visit to the area, and the secretary and committee drew the cash and made payment to individual growers.⁷⁶² Standard Bank Gatooma operated a mobile bank unit that serviced Gowe-Sanyati. As already indicated, payment was not always prompt. The delay from delivery to payout was approximately two weeks in normal circumstances. In other circumstances the delay was quite extended.

From the grower's point of view the co-operative's function of credit disbursement was not perceived in the same way. Some farmers saw the co-operative as fulfilling its function satisfactorily but others felt swindled by it. From the administration side, the communal responsibility for the loan ensured that at least some degree of individual creditworthiness was established before the committee approved the loan. Whilst problems occurred, the system nonetheless resulted in a debt recovery rate in excess of 95%, a considerably higher figure than where individual responsibility was the rule.

Gowe, like other co-operatives, also needed input assistance or credit. The Gowe Co-operative Society, whose first Chairman was Isaac Mutengo, sourced agricultural loans from the Agricultural Loan Fund (ALF) through the Union on behalf of the plottolders. The Co-op, as it became known, operated under the Sebungwe Co-operative Union, which had its headquarters in Kwekwe and a sub-branch in Kadoma.⁷⁶³ At the head of the Co-op were many renowned Master Farmers. A number of Co-operative officers only referred to by N. S. Gwacha as Shipley, Charumbira, Gorora and Bhango served on the Gowe Co-op and dominated its affairs. Among them was Gwacha himself, whose main functions as Secretary included checking the records of produce, issuing pesticides and ensuring that plottolders secured loans. He prepared co-operative loan forms before they were signed by the chairman.⁷⁶⁴ Gwacha was virtually the accounting officer of the Co-op who used his position to influence loan disbursement to the plottolders. Every plottolder, provided he was not a bad debtor, was entitled to a loan because the majority did not have ample capacity to self-finance their own operations. Without these loans, the idea of having this scheme in the first place would have been meaningless. However, although he does not openly admit it, Gwacha used his vast influence in the Co-op to help his relatives, for example his own brother, Job, and others obtain loans. At a local level, it was he who made the final recommendation on who should be given a loan and who should not. Invariably, those who had kinship links with him not only received favourable recommendations but also were assured of receiving the loans which they used to purchase inputs and access technical advice. Many who were privileged to have kinship ties with Gwacha took full advantage of this to accumulate more wealth than their counterparts. By 1979 they owned large heads of cattle and exhibited wealth in a number of other ways. For example, Job Gwacha had a 60 strong head of cattle which in 2000 stood at 42 (a big number by many rural standards) because he sold some to pay school fees for his children and others have

⁷⁶² Norman Savata Gwacha (Communal farmer and former Secretary, Gowe Co-operative Society), Personal Interview, Kusi Village, Sanyati, 15th May 2005. See also NAZ (RC), ARDA, Box 272099, Location R19.3.12.1F, File: ADA/MAR/2 Marketing – General, “Confidential Correspondence: Agricultural Development Authority – Co-operative Societies in African Areas,” 26th January 1973, 5.

⁷⁶³ J. Gwacha, (Former Plottolder), Personal Interview, COTTCO Depot, Sanyati Growth Point, 9th January 1997.

⁷⁶⁴ N. S. Gwacha, Personal Interview, 8th January 1997.

fallen prey to marauding cattle rustlers.⁷⁶⁵ He had built a beautiful home for himself and owned many farming implements. In addition, his children attended some of the best boarding schools in the area, including the Sanyati Baptist Mission.

Meanwhile, the embezzlement of funds by Co-op officials was quite rampant. The misappropriation of co-operative funds by secretaries was a depressing and continuous problem. In confidential correspondence on the operations of Co-operative Societies in African areas in general, the Agricultural Development Authority (ADA – the forerunner to ARDA) observed that: “Because they [Co-op officials] were not full-time employees and coming as they did from the community and controlling more cash than was commonly seen in the area, the social pressure on the secretaries to misappropriate resources on behalf of relations was extremely difficult to resist.”⁷⁶⁶ Nevertheless, although some officials like Norman Gwacha fraudulently converted cash and other resources for their personal use, it is wrong to suppose that part-time employees are, of necessity, prone to corruption.

In fact, because of the negative stigma attached to corrupt tendencies, Job Gwacha was wary to talk about his brother, Norman’s, membership of the Gowe Co-op. In an interview, he instead, preferred to talk about their family’s prosperity which they derived from cotton cultivation. He confessed that from the 1960s to the 1970s the major crop that gave farmers including his brother (Norman) a lot of profit and untold riches was cotton. He pointed out that he grew the Alba seed variety which gave farmers more yield than the other cotton varieties and that it gave more profit when compared to crops such as wheat and maize.⁷⁶⁷ Illustrating his point further he said:

The price of cotton (i.e. 8 cents per kilogram) was very lucrative. The price of maize was very low. A full 90 kg bag of maize sold for only £1.6s. At that time wheat prices were also low and the wheat variety they grew (i.e. the tall Tokwe variety) did not give good yields.⁷⁶⁸

The Gwacha example can be used to show that Norman’s position in the Co-op gave him and his kinsmen access to credit and ultimately riches. As the loans were performance related, every plowholder strove to do well but those with better access accumulated more than those with poor access to credit.

In the 1967/68 season, N. S. Gwacha produced 50 bags of maize and 8 bales of cotton. Of his 1,4 hectares, 0,7 ha. were planted to maize and the other half to cotton. His grade “A” maize and cotton were sold at the Grain Marketing Board (GMB) and CMB in Kadoma at £1.2s.6p per bag and 8p per pound respectively.⁷⁶⁹ Locally, maize produced in 1967 was

⁷⁶⁵ Job Gwacha (COTTCO Records Clerk, Former Plowholder and Kusi Village Communal Farmer), Personal Interview, COTTCO Depot, Sanyati Growth Point, 17th May 2005.

⁷⁶⁶ NAZ (RC), ARDA, Box 272099, Location R19.3.12.1F, File: ADA/MAR/2 Marketing – General, “Confidential Correspondence: Agricultural Development Authority – Co-operative Societies in African Areas,” 26th January 1973, 5.

⁷⁶⁷ J. Gwacha, Personal Interview, 17th May 2005.

⁷⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶⁹ N. S. Gwacha, Personal Interview, 8th January 1997. N.B. Historically, the GMB began operations in 1931 as the Maize Control Board (MCB). In 1951, the MCB was renamed the Grain Marketing Board

sold at \$3,00 a bag. The Gowe Co-operative Society provided a useful service to its members by marketing their produce.⁷⁷⁰ The Sebungwe Union Transport, Carriers Transport, Swift, A. W. Transporters, the Fireson Transport Company (owned by a Somali transport operator based in Kadoma), and other private transport owners were often hired to ferry the farmers' produce to the markets in Kadoma. The local CMB and the GMB depots at Sanyati had not yet been established. These were only established in 1976 and 1989 respectively. (See Map 14 for the location of planned and existing GMB and CMB Depots in Zimbabwe). It had been argued in the preliminary project report that the establishment of the scheme should be followed by the establishment of a local cotton ginnery for the processing of the cotton crop, but this did not materialise until much later.

Since 1967, in order to market produce, a plotholder at Gowe needed to be a registered member of the Co-op (with a Co-op number), and a holder of a Master Farmer certificate.⁷⁷¹ The Co-op number indicated the produce items a farmer was dispatching to the market. In turn, the Co-op had a Growers card or number against which it sold plotholders' produce. J. Gwacha vividly remembers that, in the 1967/68 season, his Co-op number, which had to be clearly labelled on each bale was 229, and the Co-op Growers card number was 027206A.⁷⁷² To avoid erroneously marketing produce on another grower's number and thereby risk losing the proceeds of a harvest it was important for a farmer to remember his or her number. It should be pointed out here that, before the CMB was formed as an arm of the Agricultural Marketing Authority (AMA), the Gowe plotholders marketed their cotton through the Cotton Company Committee (CCC), which was based in Kadoma.⁷⁷³ The CMB was only created in terms of the Cotton Marketing and Control Act Chapter 106 in 1969.⁷⁷⁴

After the plotholders had sent their produce to the market, the Gowe Co-operative Society would receive cheques from the GMB and CMB, which in turn would be cashed by the Co-op officers at the Kadoma Standard Bank Branch.⁷⁷⁵ Eventually, the farmers would be paid in cash by the Co-op officers or the Standard Bank on production of a "producer's statement."⁷⁷⁶ This ensured that the money would not be paid out to fraudulent claimants, but subordination of the Co-op to Sebungwe sometimes disadvantaged the growers. In this connection, the former DC Gatooma lamented the fact that "Sebungwe covered a larger area

(GMB) and its mandate extended to several other products. Jones calls it Africa's first statutory marketing board. See William O. Jones, "Food-Crop Marketing Boards in Tropical Africa," *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 25(3), (1987), 375-402; Masters, *Government and Agriculture in Zimbabwe*, 80-81 and C. F. Keyter, *Maize Control in Southern Rhodesia, 1931-1941: The African Historical Contribution to White Survival*, Salisbury: The Central Africa Historical Association, Local Series, (34), 1978.

⁷⁷⁰ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 86732, Location 8.17.5F, File: Annual Report 1967, "Acc.8/160 Report of the Secretary for Internal Affairs for the year 1967," 11.

⁷⁷¹ J. Gwacha, Personal Interview, 9th January 1997.

⁷⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷⁷³ J. Gwacha, Personal Interview, 9th January 1997.

⁷⁷⁴ *Cotton Marketing and Control Act*, Chapter 106, 1969, 39. The CMB (now COTTCO) operates in close co-operation with the GMB as the sole buyer of raw cotton and processor of lint and seed. See Masters, *Government and Agriculture in Zimbabwe*, 81 and Cotton Marketing Board (CMB), (various years), *Annual Reports*, Harare: CMB.

⁷⁷⁵ N. S. Gwacha, Personal Interview, 8th January 1997.

⁷⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

than Gowe and consequently introduced costs which were not applicable and delays in payments to the plottolders were quite commonplace.”⁷⁷⁷

From an economic point of view, the Gowe Co-op also needed to survive by charging a “small” service fee. For instance, the Co-op bought seed, pesticides, fertiliser and other essential inputs from the Zimbabwe Fertiliser Company (ZFC), Windmill and Agricura.⁷⁷⁸ It then sold these to the plottolders at the Co-op’s own mark up price. The Co-op’s price included a handling charge or service fee. The Co-op used its profits to settle its own debts to the ZFC, Windmill and Agricura.⁷⁷⁹

Sometimes, the DC marketed plottolders’ produce on their behalf. T. Nyamutova, one of the well-to-do farmers at Gowe, remembers that, in the 1975/76 season, all plottolders grew and sold their crops on one growers’ card on the advice of the then DC, A. Q. Cozens. “We produced on one card and got our money from the DC after deducting the cost of inputs such as seed and fertiliser.”⁷⁸⁰ However, the DC was an employee of the Ministry of Internal Affairs whose Co-operatives Branch administered the Co-operative Societies Act. Whilst there were problems associated with marketing produce through the Gowe Co-op, the co-operatives clearly represented a very convenient way for the plottolders to obtain their input items. The majority of co-operatives, save for the hitches pointed out by Gwacha, processed their orders efficiently and the goods were supplied practically at the user’s doorstep. This compares favourably with the alternative of ordering personally from outlets in the main centres, then depending on unreliable local contractors for the transport of these goods.

The control and organisation provided by the co-operatives were invaluable. From the grower’s point of view, the convenience of marketing through the co-operative brought considerable relief especially to the resource poor plottolders who could not afford to buy their input requirements for cash. From the Cotton Marketing Board point of view, the consolidation of Gokwe District’s (which included Sanyati) 1 935 individual growers by December 31, 1972 into only 19 accounts reduced drastically the volume of administrative work involved.⁷⁸¹ Nevertheless, not all producers, save for the resource rich and consistent performers, qualified for these loans. The others found it difficult to access credit and this impeded accumulation.

Formidable Problems: Lack of Loans, Imposition of Fines and Evictions:-

Schemes like Gowe were invariably starved of credit facilities, and this almost incapacitated them, as they could not keep pace with maintenance costs. In spite of this, in 1974, TILCOR stated that, with the right amount of capital injection, professional management and the availability of irrigation equipment at low cost, “Gowe offers great scope for intensive

⁷⁷⁷ R. L. Westcott, (Former DC Gatooma), Personal Interview, Ramsgate, South Africa, 12th July 2005.

⁷⁷⁸ J. Gwacha, Personal interview, 9th January 1997.

⁷⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸⁰ T. Nyamutova (Vice Chairman, Gowe Irrigation Committee), Personal Interview, Gowe, 14th May 2005.

⁷⁸¹ NAZ (RC), ARDA, Box 272099, Location R19.3.12.1F, File: ADA/MAR/2 Marketing – General, “Confidential Correspondence: Agricultural Development Authority – Co-operative Societies in African Areas,” 26th January 1973, 2 and 6.

agricultural development.”⁷⁸² A number of problems, however, beset Gowe in its first season of operation. Loans were only availed to farmers through their Co-operative Society (i.e. the Gowe Co-op). Whilst the co-operative offered convenient service to some, it was cumbersome for other plotters to conduct their business through a Co-op instead of dealing directly with the providers of services, such as the ADF, ALF, the CMB and GMB. Even the Secretary of the Co-op complained that, “it took them [plotters] too long (i.e. 5 weeks or more) to get their payments from the Co-op for produce sold or delivered to the market.”⁷⁸³ Early payments would enable the farmers to have ready cash with which to pay school fees for their children and purchase food, clothing and other needs.⁷⁸⁴

The tenure system was another cause for concern for the plotters. Private ownership of land at Gowe and other communal irrigation schemes was, and still is, unknown. All land was owned by the government and was only allocated to individual plotters on the basis of leasehold tenure.⁷⁸⁵ Because of this, individual Gowe farmers lacked the means and the incentives to invest in irrigation holdings. It was not appreciated that, private ownership of land would enable plotters to raise capital on their own, using the land as collateral. Individual ownership would also provide an additional stimulus to the Gowe farmers’ efforts. From the outset, it was doubtful whether leasehold arrangements would be acceptable in the long-term to the Gowe irrigators, since there was little inducement for them to continue cultivating land in which they had no stake, except in a veritable effort to survive and avoid eviction.⁷⁸⁶ To demonstrate their disgruntlement against the existing tenure system, a few plotters did demand to have title deeds. Others sought audience with the DC or the Minister of Internal Affairs to present their case for individual ownership of land but to no avail.

The position of the plotters was not ameliorated either by the imposition of exorbitant water rates since 1967. In the 1967/68 season, N. S. Gwacha’s total water charge amounted to £26.10s, which was quite unaffordable considering his other needs, for example, food, clothes and so on.⁷⁸⁷ The plotters resented paying what they considered to be exorbitant water rates, especially since the Thames Trader Engines and the Heath Robinson Pump operated by the MOWD were largely inefficient in supplying water to the Gowe plots. The first Pump Supervisor for Gowe, Elton Gilbert, whose chief duty was “to pump water from the Munyati River to the pump station and then to the irrigation scheme,”⁷⁸⁸ was finding it

⁷⁸² *Tribal Trust Land Development Corporation (TILCOR): Sanyati Project Report*, Salisbury, Rhodesia: January 1974, 24.

⁷⁸³ N. S. Gwacha, Personal Interview, 9th January 1997.

⁷⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸⁵ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 100816, Location 3.13.7F, File: AGR 7 Water Supplies General 97-117 (1966-1968), C. A. Hunter (pp. Secretary to the Treasury) to the Secretaries for Agriculture, Mines and Lands, Internal Affairs, the Director of Water Development and the Chairman (ICC), 16th October, 1967, 2.

⁷⁸⁶ Many farmers strove to produce good yields for their personal benefit and out of fear of eviction as poor agricultural performance entailed eviction.

⁷⁸⁷ N. S. Gwacha, Personal Interview, 9th January 1997.

⁷⁸⁸ Elton Gilbert, (Former Pump Supervisor for the Gowe Irrigation Scheme – Ministry of Water Development), Personal Interview, West End Hospital, Harare, 20th October 2006. Gilbert, who says water for irrigation was abstracted straight from the river (Munyati) into the 2 x 50 000 gallon pump station tanks, worked as supervisor and paymaster for his department (Water Development) from September 1967 to

difficult to operate what Noel Robertson described as an “amateurish water pumping installation.”⁷⁸⁹ To correct the situation, Water Development had to provide a “standby pump and engine.”⁷⁹⁰ Nonetheless, the pumping hitches afflicting Gowe were not completely eradicated.

In the light of these pumping problems, plotholders did not consider the high water rates they were charged to be justified. However, the government’s justification for the water rate was that “water, as a factor of production, should be paid for in the same way as other inputs like fertiliser, capital and land.”⁷⁹¹ Water tariffs were also introduced to recoup Government expenditure on irrigation schemes in general, but such impositions had the effect of draining the farmers’ small net income. As indicated earlier, it was a prudent economic decision to charge a certain fee for water supplied, but whilst many plotholders were not objecting to paying for the water, they were objecting to the high rates charged. Clearly, they understood the rationale behind this requirement in as much as they knew that by being asked to pay exorbitant rates they were being exploited or short changed.

Apart from the issue of the water rate, the plotholders’ operations were affected by “the problem of livestock from the nearby dryland holdings overstepping boundaries and destroying irrigation crops, especially maize.”⁷⁹² As if this was not enough, baboons were “an utter nuisance and a constant worry for plotholders.”⁷⁹³ They dug up seed just germinating and caused severe damage to plots. It was envisaged that these troubles would continue, particularly during reaping, and measures had to be considered to keep the baboons at bay.⁷⁹⁴ N. S. Gwacha has pointed out that, as a result of the baboon menace, the late Mheremhere Diura, was selected at a plotholders meeting in 1967/68 to mount an afternoon guard of the fields.⁷⁹⁵ Only an afternoon or “crop guard” was required because baboons were largely inactive during the night. Because of the baboon problem, crop harvesting had to occur simultaneously. The baboon menace ended, however, when the DC Gatooma, R. L. Westcott, allowed Diura to carry a gun and shoot the baboons. This, together with the erection of a barbed wire fence around the scheme in 1967 ended the plotholders’ problems with baboons.⁷⁹⁶

December 1974. His departure from Gowe coincided with the establishment of the TILCOR Estate in Sanyati.

⁷⁸⁹ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 153673, Location C.36.18.2F, File: AGR/16/A/15 Vol. 1, Gowe Irrigation Scheme (August 1965 - December 1969), N. Robertson to the PC (Mashonaland South), 8th December 1967.

⁷⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹¹ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 100816, Location 3.13.7F, File: AGR 7 Water Supplies General 97-117 (1966-1968), C. A. Hunter (pp. Secretary to Treasury) to the Secretaries for Agriculture, Mines and Lands, Internal Affairs, the Director of Water Development and the Chairman (ICC), 16th October, 1967, 5.

⁷⁹² N. S. Gwacha, Personal Interview, 9th January 1997.

⁷⁹³ NAZ (RC), DC Gatooma - Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158098, Location C19.10.7R, DC’s File: Gowe Irrigation Scheme 1965-1971: Plans etc., J. L. Paul to the DC Gatooma and the Provincial Conservation and Extension Officer (Mashonaland South), 30th November, 1967.

⁷⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹⁵ N. S. Gwacha, Personal Interview, 9th January 1997.

⁷⁹⁶ NAZ (RC), DC Gatooma - Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158098, Location C.19.10.7R, DC’s File: Gowe Irrigation Scheme 1965-1971: Plans etc., “Quarterly Irrigation Report for The 3rd and 4th Quarter 1969,” 4th August 1969.

The success of the first irrigators led to growing local demand for further irrigation plots. According to N. Robertson, “The very success of the schemes and in particular of the Gowe Pilot Scheme in Sanyati has engendered tremendous interest amongst the tribesmen who are clamouring for schemes in their areas.”⁷⁹⁷ Because the plottolders exhibited a high level of industriousness on their plots, CONEX did not hesitate to send a recommendation to the DC for Gatooma to have the existing 80 acres extended to 120 acres.⁷⁹⁸ Eventually, in early 1968 a further 60 acres (Gowe II)⁷⁹⁹ was added, and “the whole scheme put on a more permanent basis.”⁸⁰⁰ This was the Government’s response to clamours for more land. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the addition of Gowe II did not do much to address the plottolders’ land hunger. It merely meant more people could be accommodated on the scheme and still cultivate the old standard size plot. This frustrated the aspirations of the resource rich tenants who were bent on further accumulation.

There was no difficulty, though, in finding plottolders for the scheme. A great deal of interest had been shown by sons of “Purchase Area farmers” for whom an irrigation scheme was an obvious answer to their settlement problem.⁸⁰¹ Once the area had been settled, there was need to appoint an irrigation manager, who would be in full control of the Gowe Irrigation Scheme. The following passage, extracted from the DC Gatooma’s Annual Report (1967/68), summarises what he felt was the importance of appointing an irrigation manager:

The limited experience here in establishing and running this scheme, has shown beyond all doubt that the irrigation specialist must be asked to plan from the beginning, as also, from the same point, must the overall supervision and running be entrusted to specifically trained persons. Unless this is done the optimum production will not be realised and the plottolder, who in this instance is working hard, will see his not very wide profit margin shrink through no fault on his part.⁸⁰²

There was mounting criticism against the Extension Officer, J. L. Paul, who was roundly blamed by the DC (Westcott) for having, “no training or experience in irrigation farming.”⁸⁰³ In 1968, he was accused of having applied nitrogen to the cotton crop when it

⁷⁹⁷ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 100817, Location, 3.13.8R, File: AGR/16/570-640 Irrigation Schemes (Individual) - March 1967 - December 1968, N. Robertson to The Provincial Water Engineer (Mashonaland) and the PC (Mashonaland South), 1st November, 1968.

⁷⁹⁸ NAZ (RC), DC Gatooma - Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158098, Location C.19.10.7R, File: “Gowe Irrigation Scheme: Sanyati TTL (EX CONEX),” P. G. How to DC Gatooma, 22nd December 1967, 1.

⁷⁹⁹ The additional 60 acres comprised Gowe II. However, only 50 acres of the new portion were being fully utilised and the remainder (10 acres) lay vacant. The total area under cultivation at Gowe was, therefore, 120 acres.

⁸⁰⁰ NAZ (RC), DC Gatooma - Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158098, Location C19.10.7R, File: Gowe Irrigation Scheme: Sanyati TTL (EX CONEX), “Preliminary Project Report, 1968,” 1.

⁸⁰¹ NAZ (RC), DC Gatooma - Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158098, Location C19.10.7R, File: Gowe Irrigation Scheme: Sanyati TTL (EX CONEX), “Preliminary Project Report, 1968,” 2.

⁸⁰² NAZ (RC), DC Gatooma - Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158098, Location C19.10.7R, DC’s File: Gowe Irrigation Scheme 1965-1971: Plans etc. R. L. Westcott to the PC (Mashonaland South), 8th March 1968, 1.

⁸⁰³ *Ibid.*

was already “too late by a month.”⁸⁰⁴ He also angered members of the Gowe Co-operative by failing to comply with the organisation’s procedural requirements which stipulated that once the Co-op had disbursed inputs and chemicals it was the duty of the Extension Officer to advise farmers on the dates to sow seeds or plant, apply fertiliser and chemicals and in what quantities. Still insisting that Paul had violated a technical procedure, the DC further noted that, “With plotters paying water rates and carrying out to the letter the instructions given them mistakes in technique can no longer be tolerated.”⁸⁰⁵

It was against this background that the Primary Development Officer (PDO), T. R. Whiting, who had recently been on an irrigation course and scheme (i.e. the Tuli-Makwe Scheme in the Gwanda District) was appointed as Manager for Gowe on the 1st of April 1968.⁸⁰⁶ He was to undertake the normal duties of a resident field or agricultural assistant in view of the comparative smallness of Gowe.⁸⁰⁷ In light of the extensions to the Gowe Scheme, every effort was being made to provide the DC Gatooma with a Field Assistant by the 1st of July 1968. Before this was done Whiting had to do both jobs, that is, Manager-cum-Field Assistant.⁸⁰⁸

Gowe also had two closely allied teams made up entirely of elected farmers that attended to scheme organisation. The two teams comprised a Management Board (the Gowe Irrigation Co-ordinating Committee - ICC) and a Co-operative Society. Basically, the Management Board dealt with the day-to-day field management and the plotters’ Co-op attended to financial matters and the purchase of spray equipment. The CONEX and Co-op advisory service was available to offer technical advice as needed.⁸⁰⁹ An additional PDO was required for the Irrigation Manager, with effect from the 1st of July 1969. This would help lessen the burden on Whiting.

After consultation with CONEX, the Irrigation Managers who were made “ex Officio members” of the Co-op Committees, advised Co-operative officers what their seed and fertiliser requirements were before delivering these to the schemes.⁸¹⁰ Co-ops kept all the records, arranged for repayment and also collected water rates. As a safeguard against

⁸⁰⁴ NAZ (RC), DC Gatooma - Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158098, Location C19.10.7R, DC’s File: Gowe Irrigation Scheme 1965-1971: Plans etc. R. L. Westcott to the PC (Mashonaland South), 8th March 1968, 1.

⁸⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁸⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰⁷ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 153673, Location C.36.18.2F, File: AGR/16/A/15 Vol. 1, Gowe Irrigation Scheme (August 1965-December 1969), L. G. Leach (pp. Secretary for Internal Affairs) to the PC (Mashonaland South), 3rd April, 1968, 1. The agricultural assistant was required to be resident on the scheme in order to constantly impart knowledge and advice to the new irrigators as well as monitor progress on the ground. Westcott, Personal Interview, 12th July 2005.

⁸⁰⁸ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 153673, Location C.36.18.2F, File: AGR/16/A/15 Vol. 1, Gowe Irrigation Scheme (August 1965-December 1969), L. G. Leach (pp. Secretary for Internal Affairs) to the PC (Mashonaland South), 3rd April, 1968, 1.

⁸⁰⁹ NAZ (RC), DC Gatooma - Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158098, Location C19.10.7R, DC’s File: Gowe Irrigation Scheme 1965 - 1971: Plans etc., DC Gatooma, 24th July 1968, 1.

⁸¹⁰ NAZ (RC), DC Gatooma - Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158098, Location C19.10.7R, DC’s File: Gowe Irrigation Scheme 1965-1971: Plans etc., L. G. Leach to the PC (Mashonaland South), 3rd April, 1968.

possible defaulters, Irrigation Managers ensured that when crops were reaped sufficient quantities were held back to cover outstanding loans and water rates.⁸¹¹ Although ploholders were not compelled to be members of the Co-op, circumstances sometimes, did force them to join, as illustrated in the following statement:

A ploholder may decline to become a member of a Co-op but as he will still be required to plant the correct seed and apply the recommended fertiliser on a specified date or get off the scheme he will in all probability find it to his advantage to join.⁸¹²

It is significant to note that, in the early days of the scheme and on the insistence of the DC, irrigation work was largely routine, involving very strict adherence to instructions in order to ensure proper take off. Seed was distributed at the same time. The clearing and ploughing of fields had to conform to a clearly stipulated schedule, and, most importantly, watering schedules had to be observed by ploholders all the time. This illustrated that the ploholders' area of decision in the productive process was tightly circumscribed, contrary to Westcott's argument that "crops suitable to the area and yielding the highest output under the circumstances were chosen by the agricultural staff in conjunction with the ploholders."⁸¹³ In reality, they could not choose the main crop they wanted to grow but only enjoyed limited choice in respect to their subsidiary crops. They had no leverage to choose when to plant and when to pick. Although some ploholders watered their plots illegally, officially, they had no choice as to the frequency and method of watering their crops. Thus, the conditions of tenancy in the scheme meant that the tenants were compelled to cultivate their plots in an appropriate way and in accordance with the scheme of crop rotation dictated by the field assistant in consultation with the DC who maintained that "with an overhead irrigation scheme there had to be uniformity,"⁸¹⁴ in the interests of efficiency and viability.

From the beginning of the scheme, a number of offences were punishable by eviction. For failure to conserve water and to plant, weed or fertilise crops on time, an offender was given a warning and, at the same time, served with a three-month notice to vacate his plot if the problem persisted. For other offences, such as habitual stealing, offenders were given four hours in which to pack their belongings and leave the scheme.⁸¹⁵ Because eviction was the penalty for failure to plant or fertilise on stipulated dates, ploholders, out of fear of an obvious fate that awaited them, were bound to co-operate with the irrigation officials, including the Co-op Officers who disbursed loans to them. By 1968 it was clear policy that ADF and ALF loans to African farmers on irrigation settlements would be channelled through Co-operative Societies.⁸¹⁶ Regrettably, the Gowe Co-op was often in debt to the

⁸¹¹ NAZ (RC), DC Gatooma - Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158098, Location C19.10.7R, DC's File: Gowe Irrigation Scheme 1965-1971: Plans etc., L. G. Leach to the PC (Mashonaland South), 3rd April, 1968.

⁸¹² *Ibid.*

⁸¹³ Westcott, Personal Interview, 12th July 2005.

⁸¹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸¹⁵ Mjoli, Personal Interview, 14th May 2005.

⁸¹⁶ NAZ (RC), DC Gatooma - Ministry of Internal Affairs Box 158098, Location C19.10.7R, DC's File: Gowe Irrigation scheme: Financial Plans, Water Reports etc. (1967-1971), R. R. Price (pp. Under Secretary Co-operatives and Loans Branch) to all Principal Co-operative Officers, 2nd April, 1968, 1.

ALF and sometimes not enough funds for the irrigators' purposes were made available to the society for the purchase of essentials such as fertiliser and seed. At Gowe, the Extension Officer, J. L. Paul, aptly summed up the position that obtained in 1968 in the following words:

It appears that most Co-operative Societies, operating in African Areas are heavily indebted to the Agricultural Loan Fund and subsequently refused further credit. The well being of the Irrigation Scheme [Gowe] is therefore being subjected to a Co-op without means of finance. This is indeed a sorry state of affairs and optimum results cannot be obtained.⁸¹⁷

In spite of the problems, many plottolders increasingly endeavoured to improve their yields. A few plottolders on the Gowe Scheme, in an attempt to increase yields and maintain their security on the land, decided to retain their dryland plots. Such irrigators were, however, served with warnings that failure to give them up would result in their leaving the scheme when the crops for 1968 were harvested.⁸¹⁸ Some plottolders heeded the warning, but others did not as the quest to produce more and become richer took centre-stage.

In 1968, a number of plottolders tried their luck with wheat and beans on the encouragement of the Irrigation Manager, Whiting. Given the irrigators' enthusiasm with these relatively new crops at Gowe, Whiting was convinced that, it was possible that "with care and attention of on the spot management an average of £100 per acre net profit will be produced this 12 month cropping period."⁸¹⁹ In the same year, cotton profits were £40 - £50 per acre, and the farmers were aiming at higher profits in 1969.⁸²⁰ They also decided to grow only half an acre of a high yielding maize variety (SR 52) per family because the farmers felt that this choice was not only more productive, but also left more of their acreage available for cash cropping.⁸²¹ Such kind of planning certainly did not make these plottolders "ultra-conservative" people as alleged earlier by the Secretary for Internal Affairs in his annual report for 1967. They were economic men who were fully cognisant of their economic needs.

Plottolder wheat and bean crops for 1968 were estimated by Whiting at a net value of ±£40 per acre.⁸²² In the final analysis, however, this estimate could not be realised due to mechanical and pumping faults, which took rather too long to be remedied. The failure to correct the faults immediately affected the plottolders' yields. For example, in 1968, mechanical faults depressed the potential wheat yield by ±15%. Lack of appropriate advice,

⁸¹⁷ NAZ (RC), DC Gatooma - Ministry of Internal Affairs Box 158098, Location C19.10.7R, DC's File: Gowe Irrigation Scheme 1965-1971: Plans etc., J. L. Paul to the DC Gatooma, 4th March 1968.

⁸¹⁸ NAZ, Rhodesia: Departmental Reports: Internal Affairs, 1964-73, "Report of the Secretary for Internal Affairs for the Year 1968," Salisbury: The Government Printer, 1969, 6.

⁸¹⁹ NAZ (RC), DC Gatooma - Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158098, Location C19.10.7R, DC's File: Gowe Irrigation Scheme 1965-1971: Plans etc., T. R. Whiting, "Progress Report – Sanyati." 15th July 1968.

⁸²⁰ NAZ (RC), DC Gatooma - Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158098, Location C19.10.7R, DC's File: Gowe Irrigation Scheme 1965-1971: Plans etc, DC Gatooma, 24th July, 1968.

⁸²¹ *Ibid.*

⁸²² NAZ (RC) DC Gatooma - Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158098, Location C19.10.7R, DC's File: Gowe Irrigation Scheme 1965-1971: Plans etc, Return for The Month of July, 1968."

in conjunction with mechanical faults, also depressed the potential bean yield by $\pm 30\%$.⁸²³ In relation to beans Whiting noted that

Watering misadvice caused false germination and loss of 15% of bean seed and subsequent population; loss of a further 15% of yield due to unequal distribution of water with overlarge drop size, damaging broad leafed plants and panning soil. Further reduction in yield will occur with the damaging of imminent bean flowers.⁸²⁴

Due to this untenable situation, the DC felt that, depending on yields, recommendations would have to be made for the partial remission of water rates.⁸²⁵ Actually, in terms of Section 38 of Circular 178, the DC Gatooma was empowered to remit £3 per acre for the 1968/69 water rate in respect of 18 plotholders who were seriously affected, and the rate for the same plotholders was set at £7 for the year 1969/70.⁸²⁶ In addition, Whiting was of the opinion that, due to the mechanical faults, ADF compensation was necessary in some cases.⁸²⁷ Such gestures would be a great consolation to the plotholders for loss of projected yields.

However, the CONEX Group Officer, P. G. How, was not amused by this development, which seemed to be a result of Whiting's negligence. During How's visit to the scheme from the 12th to the 14th of August 1968, he had estimated that the wheat would yield ± 18 bags per acre whilst the bean crop showed promise of a good yield. However, on his latest visit, on the 10th of September the same year, he doubted if the wheat would do better than 12 bags per acre and the beans 2-3 bags per acre.⁸²⁸ This, in How's view, was entirely due to gross under-watering of the wheat and over-watering of the beans. Crops adjacent to the irrigation rainers were over-watered and those further away were drought-stricken, as the lack of pressure placed them largely out of range of the nearest rainer. Before these technical faults were corrected, the Irrigation Manager needed to have amended and adapted his watering schedules and spray lines. In other words, he should have compensated for the faults by juggling with water schedules.⁸²⁹ In spite of this need, sometimes he seemed to lack the initiative. As a result, Whiting could hardly be absolved from blame by How for this maldistribution of water: "I [How] cannot understand why Mr. Whiting had not seen this himself, and if he was uncertain what to do, [he should] have asked for advice. Unless,

⁸²³ NAZ (RC), DC Gatooma - Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158098, Location C19.10.7R, DC's File: Gowe Irrigation Scheme 1965-1971: Plans etc., "Return for the Month of August, 1968."

⁸²⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸²⁵ NAZ (RC), DC Gatooma Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158098, Location C19.10.7R, DC's File: Gowe Irrigation Scheme 1965-1971: Plans etc., R. L. Westcott to the PC (Mashonaland South), 11th September, 1968, 2.

⁸²⁶ NAZ (RC), DC Gatooma - Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158098, Location C19.10.7R, DC's File: Gowe Irrigation Scheme 1965-1971: Plans etc. W. H. Sutherns (pp. Secretary for Internal affairs) to the PC (Mashonaland South), 25th August 1969.

⁸²⁷ NAZ (RC), DC Gatooma - Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158098, Location C19.10.7R, DC's File: Gowe Irrigation Scheme 1965-1971: Plans etc., "Return for the Month of August, 1968."

⁸²⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸²⁹ NAZ (RC), DC Gatooma - Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158098, Location C19.10.7R, DC's File: Gowe Irrigation Scheme 1965-1971: Plans etc., R. L. Westcott to the PC (Mashonaland South), 23rd September, 1968, 1.

of course it was his usual reluctance to ask for - or take - advice.”⁸³⁰ This statement illustrated the growing tension between the Group Extension Officer and one of his senior lieutenants.

The deterioration of crops was noticed by the farmers and they too expressed great concern about the situation.⁸³¹ In an attempt to redress the problem, the Group Officer advised Whiting that a demonstration plot of soya beans had to be grown by the plottolders, on the plots reserved for this purpose, to gain experience.⁸³² A 4-acre demonstration or experimental plot, run by CONEX, together with a 10-acre orchard were established as part of the Gowe Irrigation Scheme. The demonstration plot officials undertook investigations with the intention of finding more profitable crops.⁸³³ They also investigated the prospect of seed production. In this regard, the DC was convinced that “accurately controlled irrigation lends itself well to meeting quality requirements of seed production.”⁸³⁴ Almost every crop grown at Gowe was tried on the demonstration plot but the CONEX groundnut demonstration for the 1967 summer season was a failure, as the GMB (Gatooma) rejected the nuts because they were not up to the expected standard.⁸³⁵ In spite of this failure, on the whole, the idea of a demonstration plot was worthwhile to the Gowe farmers as it enabled them to obtain improved crop yields. The DC testified that yields by the farmers who grew their first crops on the Gowe Irrigation Scheme in Sanyati were a success.⁸³⁶ This, however, was the official view, which was not always reflected in practice.

On the one hand, although various factors, technical or otherwise, were preventing the realisation of the full crop yields possible on the Gowe Scheme since its inception, on the other, there was no doubt that the people in Sanyati saw the advantages of such a scheme. The desirability of establishing such a scheme, which had the potential to settle and introduce over 200 families into the cash economy, had already been proved. In this connection, it should be mentioned that since the introduction of cotton into Sanyati in 1963, there was a rapid increase in the number of growers and the acreage, and there was no evidence of any tendency by the plottolders to revert to subsistence farming.⁸³⁷ Although financing was carried out through the DC’s office and crops marketed by it, plottolders always retained part of the maize and wheat crops for home consumption and sales.⁸³⁸

⁸³⁰ NAZ (RC), DC Gatooma - Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158098, Location C19.10.7R, DC’s File: Gowe Irrigation Scheme 1965-1971: Plans etc., R. L. Westcott to the PC (Mashonaland South), 23rd September, 1968, 1.

⁸³¹ *Ibid.*

⁸³² *Ibid.*

⁸³³ NAZ (RC), DC Gatooma - Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158098, Location C19.10.7R, DC’s File: Gowe Irrigation Scheme 1965-1971: Plans etc., DC Gatooma, 24th July 1968.

⁸³⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸³⁵ NAZ (RC), DC Gatooma - Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158098, Location C19.10.7R, DC’s File: Gowe Irrigation Scheme 1965 - 1971: Plans etc., T. R. Whiting to the DC Gatooma, 21st September, 1968, 1.

⁸³⁶ NAZ (RC), DC Gatooma - Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158098, Location C19.10.7R, DC’s File: Gowe Irrigation Scheme 1965 - 1971: Plans etc., DC Gatooma, 24th July 1968.

⁸³⁷ NAZ (RC), DC Gatooma - Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158098, Location C19.10.7R, DC’s File: Gowe Irrigation Scheme 1965-1971: Plans etc., R. L. Westcott to the Provincial Water Engineer (Mashonaland), 2nd October, 1968.

⁸³⁸ Westcott, Personal Interview, 12th July 2005.

There was some awareness too of the disadvantages such as the ascending scale of water rates and the eventual disposal or transfer of cattle and dryland holdings.⁸³⁹ This was because the DC forbade the rearing of cattle as well as the dual ownership of dryland and irrigation plots.

Between the 28th of October 1968 and the 31st of January 1969, Whiting was on leave and the Field Assistant, H. C. Jordaan, took over the responsibility of managing the Gowe Scheme in addition to his other duties.⁸⁴⁰ Jordaan faced a number of challenges from the time he was appointed. He had to implement some changes to ensure viability. For example, on seeing that the Gowe Irrigation Scheme was not large enough, he decided to discontinue the services of the Scheme Management Board or the ICC⁸⁴¹ He, however, retained the Gowe Co-op as well as the CONEX Demonstrators who functioned in an advisory capacity to the Irrigation Manager.

Under Jordaan's management, most of the plotholders' cash crops continued to be marketed (through the Co-op) in Kadoma. Only a few bales and bags were sold through other sources, and some maize was sold to unofficial buyers (private buyers) at an average price of \$3,50 per bag in 1968.⁸⁴² The Co-op's handling charges and the ADF sales levy amounted to 2½% and 10% of total sales, respectively. Transport to Kadoma was charged at the rate of 75c per bale for cotton and 58c per bag for wheat.⁸⁴³ These charges affected the farmers in view of the fact that, in the planting season, there had been considerable concern over the incidence of the American Boll Worm. This worm, together with the drought, adversely affected the cotton crop, which, by December 1968, was in the flowering stage.⁸⁴⁴ CONEX had to re-arrange and step up the spraying schedule. Whilst this effort was quite commendable, yields hit an all-time low, which added to the problems already inflicting Gowe. These included the drought, technical faults, transport costs to markets in Kadoma, ADF sales levy, co-op handling charges, and the lack of adequate loan facilities from the ALF.

Notwithstanding all these problems, the Gowe Irrigation Scheme made steady progress. Although from an economic point of view, this scheme appeared unattractive due to insignificant farm incomes, it was considered essential for the continued development of the area in line with the original objectives. In support of this view, the Deputy Secretary for Internal Affairs, Noel Robertson, on 1st November 1968, commented: "In spite of the

⁸³⁹ NAZ (RC), DC Gatooma - Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158098, Location C19.10.7R, DC's File: Gowe Irrigation Scheme 1965-1971: Plans etc., R. L. Westcott to the Provincial Water Engineer (Mashonaland), 2nd October, 1968.

⁸⁴⁰ NAZ (RC), DC Gatooma - Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158098, Location C19.10.7R, DC's File: Gowe Irrigation Scheme 1965-1971: Plans etc., R. L. Westcott to the PC (Mashonaland South), 23rd September, 1968, 1.

⁸⁴¹ NAZ (RC), DC Gatooma - Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158098, Location C19.10.7R, DC's File: Gowe Irrigation Scheme 1965-1971: Plans etc, Report for the Month of November, 1968, 1.

⁸⁴² NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 153673, Location C36.18.2F, File: AGR/16/A/15 Vol. II, Gowe Irrigation Scheme (January 1970 - February 1976), P. Rutledge (pp. Chief Agricultural Economist), 27th April 1970, 1.

⁸⁴³ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁸⁴⁴ NAZ (RC), DC Gatooma - Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158098, Location C19.10.7R, DC's File: Gowe Irrigation Scheme 1965-1971: Plans etc., "Report for the Month of December, 1968," 1.

scheme appearing sub-economic, its value to the Tribal Area and the country in general cannot be calculated.”⁸⁴⁵ Robertson noted that Gowe and other irrigation schemes in the endemic famine areas of the country were a success story, as evidenced by the fact that: “Despite the supposedly worst drought in our history, up to date, Government has not been called upon for one penny piece for famine relief.”⁸⁴⁶ Thus, from an official point of view, by the end of 1968, Gowe was showing signs of rapid growth.

At the beginning of 1969, it was agreed, at a meeting between H. C. Jordaan and the plotholders, that only three crops a year would be grown, namely, cotton, maize and 75 acres of wheat.⁸⁴⁷ A four-crop rotation had proved rather difficult to implement due to the size of the plots. Most of the plotholders were encouraged to grow more maize for sale on the local market as they stood to realise more profit. The Regional Co-operative Officer, K. Hahn conceded that, ideally, members were supposed to sell their maize through the Co-op, but owing to the drought, they could sell more profitably locally (i.e. at £2 or \$4 per bag).⁸⁴⁸

Hahn added that locally sold maize would fetch more than if it were sent through the GMB, because when maize was sold through the GMB, an initial payment was made to the farmer, and once the GMB had sold it, the farmer could only receive more if the GMB had surplus to distribute.⁸⁴⁹ Since the plotholders were likely to make a profit by selling their maize on the local market, this would also enable them to repay their agricultural loans obtained through the Co-op. However, individual farmers (resource rich plotholders) who had the capacity to finance their own operations were free to do so. In reality, though, not many of the plotholders had sufficient capital to finance themselves. For example, buying a single bag of fertiliser through the Co-op for cash cost 5/-d and 7/3d in town (Kadoma) and very few could afford it.⁸⁵⁰

Under the circumstances, the majority, if not all, were dependent on the Co-op for ALF loans, but the conditions under which they were entitled to a loan, including that disbursed through the DC’s office, were quite stringent. The Acting DC for Gatooma, D. K. Parkinson, clearly stated that if a farmer went into the new year with outstanding debts he could not get a new loan.⁸⁵¹ This position was re-affirmed by Hahn when he said that outstanding loans were considered on a yearly basis and not on a crop basis and that loans were only granted on the strength of a plotholder’s past history (record).⁸⁵² Because of the

⁸⁴⁵ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 100817, Location 3.13.8F, File: AGR/16/570-640 Irrigation Schemes (Individual), March 1967 - December 1968, N. Robertson to the Provincial Water Engineer (Mashonaland) and to the PC (Mashonaland South), 1st November, 1968.

⁸⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴⁷ NAZ (RC), DC Gatooma - Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158098, Location C19.10.7R, DC’s File: Gowe Irrigation Scheme 1965-1971: Plans etc., “Report for The Month of January, 1969.”

⁸⁴⁸ NAZ (RC), DC Gatooma - Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158098, Location C19.10.7R, File: “Gowe Irrigation Scheme: Sanyati TTL (EX CONEX),” Minutes of a meeting held at Gowe Irrigation Scheme on 5th May, 1969, 1.

⁸⁴⁹ NAZ (RC), DC Gatooma - Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158098, Location C19.10.7R, File: “Gowe Irrigation Scheme: Sanyati TTL (EX CONEX),” Minutes of a meeting held at Gowe Irrigation Scheme on 5th May, 1969, 1.

⁸⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁸⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 1

⁸⁵² *Ibid.*

serious drought in 1968, many farmers failed to pay back their loans in 1969. J. Gwacha argues that Parkinson was very strict and did not tolerate loan defaulters.⁸⁵³ Defaulters were forced to make a double repayment as a deterrent in future. In 1969, one farmer, who had outstanding debts, was instructed by Parkinson to let a portion of his land lie fallow until he was in a position to clear his outstanding debts.⁸⁵⁴ The farmer expected some mercy from the latter because his and the other plotters' profit for that particular year was very low. Nonetheless, Parkinson could not rescind his earlier decision and action such as this temporarily arrested differentiation in Sanyati because forcing a farmer to cease production had a negative impact on accumulation.

This and the charging of fines for various "farming offences" made the Acting DC very unpopular among the plotters to a point where they nick-named him "Mbudziyazvara."⁸⁵⁵ This implied that, at the slightest provocation, he would demand very huge fines. He would unilaterally multiply the fines by the number of times he saw fit depending, in his opinion, on the gravity of the matter. Parkinson also threatened plotters with eviction from the scheme for refusal to accept advice from CONEX and for ownership of both a dryland and an irrigation plot. A man with land in both places was adjudged to be an unsatisfactory plotter for various reasons.

The DC himself, R. L. Westcott, spoke strongly against the dual ownership of land on the part of the plotters and the penalty for infringing this rule tended to be draconian. He made his stance very clear when he said:

Plots on irrigation schemes were not adjuncts to dry land holdings, but were intended to support families independent of any other resource ... there were many people without land, such as the sons of Purchase Area farmers, and the numbers were increasing at an alarming rate.⁸⁵⁶

Those allocated irrigation plots, but who, at the same time, had dryland holdings, were then warned by the DC that, after two years in some cases, and one in others, they had to choose which type of farming they preferred to do.⁸⁵⁷ Considering the fact that this was one way for the plotters to redress their land hunger and become wealthy rural capitalists, Westcott's policy of ordering those still cultivating their dryland plots to leave Gowe was regarded as authoritarian. However, in an interview, Westcott argued that, if a tenant neglected or was careless in the cultivation of his crops, he was evicted on the basis of poor performance, which militated against achieving the scheme's long-term self-financing objectives. He also suggested that eviction was self-inflicted when he said

⁸⁵³ J. Gwacha, Personal Interview, 9th January 1997.

⁸⁵⁴ NAZ (RC), DC Gatooma - Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158098, Location C19.10.7R, File: Gowe Irrigation Scheme: Sanyati TTL (EX CONEX), "Minutes of a meeting held at Gowe Irrigation Scheme on 5th May, 1969," 3.

⁸⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵⁶ NAZ (RC), DC Gatooma - Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158098, Location C19.10.7R, DC's File: Gowe Irrigation Scheme 1965-1971: Plans etc., R. L. Westcott to the PC (Mashonaland South), 14th February 1969.

⁸⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

Poor performance [anyway] would have led to poor yields and the individual would not have wished to stay and carry out the tasks of moving pipes when his plot was due for water, clearing his crop and generally caring for it especially when cotton was concerned for an inadequate yield. Peer pressure would also have played a part as inefficiency or lack of co-operation with his neighbours would probably have had an adverse effect on their crops.⁸⁵⁸

There was a clause in the statute books that empowered the DC to terminate a plotholder's right to irrigable land in cases of demonstrable underperformance but this did not change the images of authoritarianism already embedded in the tenants' minds.

Equally totalitarian was Jordaan's decision to withdraw permanently a small stand on which maize was growing, that had been allocated to the local Women's Club by the previous manager (Whiting).⁸⁵⁹ The Women's Club on the scheme had been allowed to make use of one of the vacant vegetable garden plots as a source of revenue for their club. Jordaan's argument was that the plot had not been used for this purpose as he saw some of the members of the club "actually eating the maize as if it had been grown for their individual benefit."⁸⁶⁰ The fact that there was very little or no gender sensitivity at Gowe would seem to be highlighted by this incident. It was also astonishing that the eating of maize (a staple food among the African population in Zimbabwe) was made such a big issue.

Such harsh decisions compounded the problems of the people in an otherwise very difficult season in which yields were generally poor. The 1968/69 maize and cotton yields averaged 24 bags per acre and 2 260 lbs per acre respectively.⁸⁶¹ The poor yield of the former was due to the replacement of the proposed soya bean crop with the No. 11 seed and this maize variety did not offer as high a yield as the No. 52 seed. These relatively poor yields and lack of profit considerably discouraged the plotholders and with the prospect of paying the full £14 per acre water rate from the 1st of July, 1969 onwards, 21 plotholders, among them J. Gwacha, decided to go back and concentrate on dryland farming.⁸⁶²

As already mentioned, no loans were granted to plotholders who had accumulated debts. A number were mostly too heavily indebted to be able to finance the next crop. Invariably, it was these farmers who had failed or were "making strenuous efforts"⁸⁶³ to repay their loans who eventually quit the Gowe Irrigation Scheme for dryland holdings. It can be pointed out that even after the Co-operative society had folded up on the 21st of October 1969, some 19

⁸⁵⁸ Westcott, Personal Interview, 12th July 2005.

⁸⁵⁹ NAZ (RC), DC Gatooma -Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158098, Location C19.10.7R, DC's File: Gowe Irrigation Scheme 1965-1971: Plans etc., B. B. Fitz-Patrick (PC - Mashonaland South) to the DC Gatooma, 12th February 1969.

⁸⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶¹ NAZ (RC), DC Gatooma - Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158098, Location C19.10.7R, DC's File: Gowe Irrigation Scheme 1965-1971: Plans etc., R. L. Westcott to the PC (Mashonaland South), 12th August 1969.

⁸⁶² *Ibid.*

⁸⁶³ NAZ (RC), DC Gatooma - Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158098, Location C19.10.7R, DC's File: Gowe Irrigation Scheme 1965 - 1971: Plans etc., R. L. Westcott to the PC (Mashonaland South), "Report for the Month of October 1969."

former plotholders owing the Society money to the tune of £637 after being credited with the proceeds of the wheat crop, were still expected to pay this amount back.⁸⁶⁴ After the closure of the Co-op at the scheme due to bankruptcy, all business related to loans now fell within the jurisdiction of the Irrigation Manager.

The plotholders' indebtedness assumed major proportions in 1969 when each farmer was supposed to pay about £16 for maize seed and fertiliser.⁸⁶⁵ Cottonseed, fertiliser and insecticide cost approximately £28, and to the cost of the cotton crop was added the price of a Cotton Spray Pump (£27.10.0d), which was a must for each plot.⁸⁶⁶ Cotton spraying was largely done by hand. Because it was hard to spray by hand, some plotholders did not undertake the task, resulting in poor yields. However, they did not necessarily attribute a low yield to poor spraying, and in comparing yields with those on the dryland (about 165 bags of maize on a 10-acre piece of land),⁸⁶⁷ they might have felt that these were only additional costs for being on the scheme and they would have been better off as dryland farmers than as irrigators.⁸⁶⁸ Some abhorred the manual spraying exercise and felt that by being asked to move irrigation pipes at times stipulated by the estate they were being exploited as labourers under the Scheme Manager. Therefore, for plotholders to realise the full crop potential, there was need to cut down on costs and in certain areas (i.e. cotton spraying) machinery was essential. Their failure to acquire the latter and escalating maintenance costs sometimes influenced their decision to leave.

Those who remained on the irrigation scheme entered the 1970s with a renewed vigour to excel. In the 1969/70 season, they cultivated the Alba, SR 52 and the Tokwe cotton, maize and wheat varieties, respectively. Most of the maize was marketed locally by the plotholders with varying amounts (i.e. between 1 and 25 bags) retained for family consumption.⁸⁶⁹ An average of a little over 2 bags of wheat was retained for consumption and there was a possibility that some barter of the cotton crop took place with local storekeepers.⁸⁷⁰ This was the situation that obtained at Gowe at the beginning of the 1970s. Official pronouncements indicated that Gowe entered the 1970s on a very strong footing. However, the plotholder's position was precarious.

⁸⁶⁴ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 153673, Location C36.18.2F, File: AGR/16/A/15 Vol. 1, Gowe Irrigation Scheme (August 1965 - December 1969), R. L. Westcott to the PC (Mashonaland South), 10th December 1969.

⁸⁶⁵ NAZ (RC), DC Gatooma - Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158098, Location C19.10.7R, DC's File: Gowe Irrigation Scheme 1965 - 1971: Plans etc., R. L. Westcott to the Secretary for Internal Affairs, 20th October 1969.

⁸⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶⁷ Shupile J. Sithole, Telephone discussion with Nyandoro, 23rd June 1997.

⁸⁶⁸ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 153673, Location C36.18.2F, File: AGR/16/A/15 Vol. 1, Gowe Irrigation Scheme (August 1965 - December 1969), N. Shrive (pp. R. L. Westcott) to the PC (Mashonaland South), 20th October 1969.

⁸⁶⁹ NAZ (RC), DC Gatooma - Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158098, Location C19.10.7R, DC's File: Gowe Irrigation Scheme 1965-1971: Plans etc., R. L. Westcott, 23rd December 1970, 2.

⁸⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

Birth of Sanyati Main Estate: Rationale, Performance and Interaction with Gowe:-

Since the forced evictions from Rhodesdale in the 1950s, Wozhele's people under headmen Mudzingwa and Dubugwane inhabited the area now occupied by the ARDA Main Irrigation Estate. They grew sorghum, rapoko, millet and groundnuts.⁸⁷¹ These communities were, subsequently, moved by the government to the adjoining lands of Dubugwane (under Wozhele) and Maviru (controlled by Neuso) because the land they had earlier occupied was designated an "irrigable area"⁸⁷² and was now required by the Ministry of Internal Affairs for the establishment of an irrigation scheme.

Under the law, the relevant Minister could appropriate all land or terminate any right of use or occupation over such land after serving the affected people with a written notice three months in advance, provided that those whose land was taken were compensated either with land elsewhere or with cash. The regulations also stated that any African who was in lawful occupation of an allotment on any such irrigation scheme or who was permitted to occupy and use land in the irrigable area would be deemed by the District Commissioner to be a probationer lessee in terms of sub-section (3) of section 9 of the Land Tenure Act of 1969.⁸⁷³ This is what was to define the relationship between Gowe and the Estate in Sanyati

⁸⁷¹ Mukwiza, Personal Interview, 14th October 2004.

⁸⁷² "Irrigable area" referred to an area of land declared and defined as such by the Minister of Internal Affairs in terms of sub-section (1) of section 44 of the Land Tenure Act of 1969 or any part of such an area. The Land Tenure Act constituted a revision and consolidation of land apportionment legislation in operation since 1941. All land in Rhodesia was classified into three categories i.e. State Land (including all National Land, Forest, Parks and Wildlife Land); Private Land (incorporating European General, African Purchase and Specially Designated Areas); and Tribal Trust Land (African Area). See Land Tenure Act, 1969; Act 55/69: Land Tenure (Control of Irrigable Areas) Regulations, Rhodesia Government Notice No. 679 of 1970, 173-198; NAZ (RC), ARDA, Box 280745, Location R19.10.5.3F, File: DEV/1 Planning Policy, "Confidential Correspondence: Interim Report on Discussions and Suggestions Consequential to the Land Tenure Amendment Act, 1977," 15th August 1977, 1-10; C. J. Sibanda, "The Tribal Trust Lands of Rhodesia: Problems of Development," Unpublished M.Sc thesis, Swansea: University of Wales, 1978; and J. Sprack, *Rhodesia: South Africa's Sixth Province*, (London: International Defense and Aid Fund, 1974). There are many analogues that can be drawn between how the Ministry of Internal Affairs in Rhodesia and that of Bantu Administration and Development in South Africa operated. For a more contemporary presentation of South African agricultural policy see Ministry for Agriculture and Land Affairs, "Agricultural Policy in South Africa: A Discussion Document," Pretoria: National Department of Agriculture, 1998: <http://www.nda.agric.za/docs/policy98.htm>, 11-08-05.

⁸⁷³ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158098, Location C19.10.7R, File: DC's File: Gowe Irrigation Scheme: Financial Plans, Water Reports etc 1967-1971, "Act 55/69: Land Tenure (Control of Irrigable Areas) Regulations, 1970, Rhodesia Government Notice No. 679 of 1970, 176; Act 9/67 Tribal Trust Land (Control of Irrigation Schemes) Regulations, Rhodesia Government Notice No. 903 of 1967, 1735-1745 and Act 9/67 Tribal Trust Land (Irrigable Areas), Amendment Notice, No. 2, Rhodesia Government Notice No. 81 of 1969. There are major similarities between these regulations and those published in South Africa in 1963. See NASA (UA), SRP: 5/257: Republic of South Africa, Government Gazette Extraordinary (G.G.E.), (Regulation Gazette No. 159), Vol. vii, No. 415, "Proclamations: Regulations for the Control of Irrigation Schemes in Bantu Areas," 4 January-15 February 1963, Pretoria: Department of Bantu Administration and Development, 11 January 1963, 1-12. For documents dealing specifically with Sanyati leases see NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158087, Location C19.6.7F: File: LEA 1 Sanyati Correspondence: July 1963 – March 1973 and File: LEA 1 General: January 1965 – December 1973.

since the former's take over by TILCOR who were going to run the pilot scheme in conjunction with their main scheme.⁸⁷⁴

The plan to convert the area, originally inhabited by Mudzingwa and Dubugwane and its people into an irrigation estate, was already on the cards by the beginning of Gowe smallholder irrigation, as revealed by the Deputy Provincial Water Engineer, K. F. Solberg in 1967 when he stated: "The project [Gowe] is a pilot scheme for a larger scheme in future."⁸⁷⁵

When the state moved in to set up the Main Irrigation Scheme, Wozhele encouraged his subjects to be removed a second time after the viciously detested evictions from Rhodesdale. He supported their removal because he had witnessed the merits of irrigation at Gowe. The Chief had accepted that irrigation would be a major factor in the alleviation of drought and hunger. Some of the worst droughts occurred in 1964, 1965 and 1973, the last occurring one occurred just a year before the establishment of the Main Scheme. The DC Gatooma, A. Q. Cozens, provided the lorries and trucks that ferried the people of Mudzingwa and Dubugwane to Maviru. Compared to the earlier evictions of the same communities from Rhodesdale, their removal to Maviru was carried out in relatively amicable circumstances because the two major chiefs had approved them. There are some sources, however, that claim that Neuso was never consulted before the TILCOR/ARDA Estate was established.⁸⁷⁶

Nevertheless, in 1974, the scheme started operating under Alex Harvey as the Estate Manager. Its major supply of irrigation water was from the 25 feet Lodestar Weir installed by the Hydrological Branch of the Ministry of Water Development.⁸⁷⁷ The TILCOR or ARDA compound which houses the Estate's permanent workers was named "Mudzingwa Village" after the Headman who had paved way for this project.

The Estate (1 000 ha in size), which was established in March 1974 with the aim of developing the surrounding Communal Area, included the Smallholder Settlement Scheme at Gowe, which was 120 hectares in size.⁸⁷⁸ TILCOR was set up as a major vehicle for the development of an irrigation-based growth point at Sanyati. Gowe was not big enough to help accomplish this objective. On the whole, the reasons for setting up the Sanyati Main

⁸⁷⁴ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 153673, Location C36.18.2F, File: AGR/16/A/15 Vol. II: Gowe Irrigation Scheme: January 1970 – February 1976, "Gowe Irrigation Scheme," P. G. Wright (Provincial Water Engineer, Mashonaland) to Secretary for Internal Affairs, Causeway, Salisbury, 15th August 1974.

⁸⁷⁵ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158098, Location C19.10.7R, File: DC's File: Gowe Irrigation Scheme: Financial Plans, Water Reports etc 1967-1971, "Ministry of Water Development: Report on Application for Water Rights," by K. F. Solberg (Deputy Provincial Water Engineer), 21st June 1967.

⁸⁷⁶ Andrew Kachinga, (Gambiza Village Headman), Personal Interview, Chief's Court, Nyimo Business Centre, Sanyati, 19th October 2004.

⁸⁷⁷ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 153673, Location C36.18.2F, File: AGR/16/A/15 Vol. II: Gowe Irrigation Scheme: January 1970 – February 1976, "Gowe Pools Main Scheme: Lodestar Weir," P. Hawkins (Executive Secretary – TILCOR) to S. C. Cumming (for Provincial Water Engineer, Mashonaland, Ministry of Water Development, Salisbury), 4th April 1974, 1-3.

⁸⁷⁸ J. Gwerengwe, "Sanyati Estate Corporate Plan," ADA, 1995, 1.

Estate (referred to in its draft stages as the Gowe Main Scheme) were varied. To some extent, the steady growth and development of the Pilot Scheme⁸⁷⁹ determined the creation of the Main Irrigation Project. However, in 1968 the MOWD, with the help of the DC Gatooma and the Group Conservation Officer, P. G. How, had started surveys of the project. The irrigation potential of the area had already been proved.⁸⁸⁰ It was envisaged that the capital cost to finance the first phase of the project, which involved the development of the relevant irrigation infrastructure, for example, road networks and weirs, was \$426 000.⁸⁸¹

By the early 1970s, the Ministry of Internal Affairs was committed to sourcing the required funds because the Gowe Pools area had already been selected by this Ministry as one of the six TILCOR Growth Points in the country to be based on irrigation.⁸⁸² A large and rapidly growing agricultural industry already existed in the area as evidenced by the fact that in 1972/73, the value of agricultural output in the entire Sanyati region, including Gowe, was estimated at \$5 million, with 18 million kilograms of cotton accounting for \$3,5 million.⁸⁸³ The Ministry of Internal Affairs' view was that irrigation was not only going to boost agricultural production, but was also going to help stabilise it, thereby providing the basis for secondary industry.⁸⁸⁴

It was, therefore, proposed that an irrigation project, occupying approximately 1 000 ha of land adjacent to the Gowe Pools Pilot Scheme, be developed. Water for Sanyati would be provided from the Robbs and Lodestar Weirs on the Munyati River. At the commissioning of the Scheme, it was agreed that the existing Pilot Scheme should continue operating as a separate entity until arrangements were made to absorb it into the Sanyati Estate.⁸⁸⁵ However, whilst the possibility of incorporating Gowe under the Main Scheme, was paramount in the colonial period, by the end of 2000, this had not materialised.

On the one hand, out of fear of contradicting UDI policies of African self-reliance and risk intensifying the liberation struggle, the colonial government endeavoured to secure the plottolders on the Gowe Irrigation Scheme. On the other hand, after Independence, the emphasis on making Gowe a "self-provisioning" asset took precedence. However, the relationship between Gowe and the Main Estate has been very unequal. The greater part of the profits have invariably accrued to the "Big Brother" (Sanyati) which has always had

⁸⁷⁹ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 153673, Location C36.18.2F, File: AGR/16/A/15 Vol. II: Gowe Irrigation Scheme (January 1970 - February 1976), T. A. Murton (pp. Secretary for Internal Affairs) to the PC (Mashonaland South), 31st March 1971.

⁸⁸⁰ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 100816, Location 3.13.7F, File: AGR/16/183 Mashonaland ICC Minutes and Meetings (June 1967 - April 1969).

⁸⁸¹ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 153673, Location C36.18.2F, File: AGR/16/A/15 Vol. II: Gowe Irrigation Scheme (January 1970 - February 1976), A. D. B. Yardley (PC - Mashonaland South) to The Secretary for Internal Affairs, 11th April 1972.

⁸⁸² NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 153673, Location C36.18.2F, File: AGR/16/A/15 Vol. II: Gowe Irrigation Scheme (January 1970 - February 1976), L. J. de Bruijn (pp. Secretary for Internal Affairs) to the PC (Mashonaland South), 3rd March, 1972.

⁸⁸³ TILCOR: *Sanyati Project Report*, 1.

⁸⁸⁴ Mushayavanhu, "The Tribal Trust Land Development Corporation (TILCOR)," 35.

⁸⁸⁵ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 153673, Location C36.18.2F, File: AGR/16/A/15 Vol. II: Gowe Irrigation Scheme (January 1970 - February 1976), A. V. J. Muggleton (pp. Secretary for Internal Affairs), 18th October 1974.

more resources than the “young brother” (Gowe),⁸⁸⁶ with the former exploiting the latter under the guise of improving the operational efficiency of the Gowe plottolders.

In the interests of increased efficiency, TILCOR started electrifying the pumping station at Gowe in 1974, in order for it to be able to maintain the water supply to the edges of the fields.⁸⁸⁷ The pumping station was commissioned on the 1st of July 1975.⁸⁸⁸ By then, all the plottolders were paying, via the Estate, the full water rate of \$28,00 per acre charged by the Ministry of Internal Affairs.⁸⁸⁹ The charge was the irrigation farmers’ contribution to Government subsidisation of their scheme.

Focusing on the economic aspect of subsidies Wynn, working in Sudan, has argued that the tendencies of governments to use water charges for purposes of either subsidisation or taxation are economically undesirable, as in the case of Sudan, which taxes cotton, by making it bear the whole cost of irrigation, and subsidises other crops, by providing them with water free of charge. He proposed that the fixed costs of a dam and irrigation system should be isolated and recouped in the form of a levy on all land capable of receiving water from it (i.e. at the time when the land becomes capable of irrigation; not during construction; interest during construction is another element in fixed costs).⁸⁹⁰ Such a system, however, would have been very difficult to implement in Sanyati where the plottolders were averse to paying either land rent or the water rate.

It is worth noting that by the 1974/75 season, Gowe had its fair share of problems. One of the major drawbacks of the scheme was competition for irrigation water with the Main Estate. Although Gowe had its own pumphouse, the plottolders were not in charge of this installation. Estate-appointed pump attendants operated it on their behalf. In this season, due to frequent pump breakdowns and the strict control of water supply by the core estate plottolders, feeling disadvantaged, asked several questions such as: 1. Who owned the water? 2. Who processed it? 3. Who controlled it? 4. For whose needs was it? and 5. Who can access it?⁸⁹¹ The last question was a result of non-delivery of water by the estate to farmers who had failed to pay their water rates and problems of supply to the smallholder scheme that seemed to be aggravated through illegal water abstraction by plottolders’ non-irrigation counterparts in the dryland area. On the whole, these incisive questions by the plottolders revealed that something symptomatic to a water war was brewing between the

⁸⁸⁶ Pazvakavambwa, Personal Interview, 2nd April 1997.

⁸⁸⁷ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 153673, Location C36.18.2F, File: AGR/16/A/15 Vol. II: Gowe Irrigation Scheme (January 1970 - February 1976), M. R. Jacobs (pp. Secretary for Internal Affairs) to the Secretary for Water Development, 19th September 1974.

⁸⁸⁸ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 153673, Location C36.18.2F, File: AGR/16/A/15 Vol. II: Gowe Irrigation Scheme (January 1970 - February 1976), A. A. Watt (pp. Provincial Water Engineer), to The Secretary for Internal Affairs, 28th May 1975, 1.

⁸⁸⁹ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 153673, Location C36.18.2F, File: AGR/16/A/15 Vol. II: Gowe Irrigation Scheme (January 1970 - February 1976), A. Q. Cozens (DC Gatooma) to the PC (Mashonaland West), 11th February 1975.

⁸⁹⁰ Wynn, *Sudan Agricultural Journal*, (June 1965) cited in Colin Clark, *The Economics of Irrigation*, 2nd Edition, (Oxford: Pergamon Press Ltd., 1967), 116-117 and Wynn, *Research Bulletin 9*, University of Khartoum, Department of Rural Economy in *Irrigation by Pumps*, (Khartoum: Ministry of Irrigation and Hydro-Electric Power, 1955).

⁸⁹¹ T. Nyamutova, Personal Interview, Gowe, 14th May 2005.

tenants and the Main Estate, on the one hand, and the tenants and their dryland neighbours, on the other. Although the water shortages did not contribute to violent skirmishes, the plotters did not hide their feeling or suspicion that their more powerful and richer upstream “Bigger Brother” was trying to use water as a weapon to sabotage them in order to force them to provide labour on the estate as well as honour their water rate obligations.⁸⁹²

Another problem was caused by the excessive powers vested in the District Commissioner for Gatooma over the leases of land covered by this irrigation project. According to the Tribal Trust Land [Control of Irrigation Schemes] Act of 1967, he had the power to “give orders” with regard to methods of cultivation, types of crops to be grown, rotation times and manner of irrigation, the dates on which any kind of crops could be planted, treated or harvested, and so on.⁸⁹³ Failure to comply with these orders entailed eviction and other forms of fines. The DC held this power up to June 1980,⁸⁹⁴ and the effect was to make Gowe tenants nothing more than labourers of the Sanyati Main Estate and to limit their managerial experiences. It was, in fact, mandatory for the plotters to provide labour to the TILCOR core estate.⁸⁹⁵

Because irrigation is expensive, capital-intensive, and requires greater managerial skills than dryland agriculture, the Gowe tenants further found themselves in a difficult position since their capital base was not very sound. Before the establishment of the Sanyati Estate, the local Grain Marketing Board (GMB) and the Cotton Marketing Board (CMB), now the Cotton Company of Zimbabwe (COTTCO), there was virtually no local market for the plotters’ cash produce. This prompted the farmers to travel long distances to sell their produce through the Co-operative Centre located at the DC’s Office (now the DA’s office) in Kadoma.⁸⁹⁶ A Co-operative Officer stationed in the DA’s office advised the Gowe tenants on the marketing situation and he kept all the records of sale of produce.⁸⁹⁷

In light of this experience, it would appear that one of the greatest achievements in Sanyati was the establishment of the GMB and the CMB depots, which were to significantly cut

⁸⁹² Since there was no history of antagonism between Gowe and the Estate as early as 1974 this must have marked its beginning since water has four primary characteristics of political importance i.e. extreme importance, scarcity, maldistribution and being a shared commodity. These seem to make internecine conflict over water more likely than similar conflicts over other resources. A number of studies have examined the tendencies towards water conflicts and what exacerbates them e.g. rampant population growth and water-wasteful economic development. Different scholars have perceived water in different ways. Mark Twain believes “Whisky is for drinking; water is for fighting.” However, more detailed studies on water conflicts have been carried out by Marq de Villiers, *Water Wars: Is the World’s Water Running Out?* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1999), 3-365. Olga Cossi, *Water Wars: The Fight to Control and Conserve Nature’s Most Precious Resource*, (New York: New Discovery Books, 1993) and Leif Ohlsson (ed), *Hydropolitics: Conflicts Over Water as a Development Constraint*, (London: Zed Books, 1995).

⁸⁹³ *The Tribal Trust Land [Control of Irrigation Schemes] Act, 1967*. See also Munengami, Personal Interview, and *Zimbabwe: Towards a New Order: An Economic and Social Survey*, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNDP/UNCTAD Project PAF/78/010) United Nations, 1980, 53.

⁸⁹⁴ NAZ (RC), (ARDA), Box 280742, Location R19.10.5.3R, File: P23/2C/Gowe (Sanyati) M. G. Paraiwa, Paper P23/2C/Gowe/7, s.a., 3.

⁸⁹⁵ Pazvakavambwa, Personal Interview, 2nd April 1997.

⁸⁹⁶ Paraiwa, Personal Interview. N.B. Coop-organised transport sometimes took too long to arrive.

⁸⁹⁷ Paraiwa, Personal Interview.

down on the problems once faced by Gowe farmers when they used to transport their crops to Kadoma.⁸⁹⁸ The GMB depot at Sanyati growth point was established in 1989,⁸⁹⁹ while the Sanyati CMB depot was set up in 1976 and the cotton ginnery in 1984.⁹⁰⁰ According to the then COTTCO Manager for the Sanyati depot, S. Mandimika, up to 1983, the Sanyati CMB was just a “mere collection point” as cotton from the whole of Sanyati, including Gowe, was delivered to Chegutu for ginning.⁹⁰¹ Currently, Sanyati has the largest rural cotton depot in the country that has served as a springboard for the growth of the town.⁹⁰²

In addition, the Sanyati Estate, which managed the Gowe Settler Scheme, became the marketing and crop-processing centre for the greater area since it was next to the main road along which practically all produce was transported.⁹⁰³ The proximity of the Estate to Gowe, thus, helped the farmers to reduce transport costs. The need for a marketing institution in the vicinity of Gowe became greater in 1975 when about 30 Gowe settler farmers were allocated 1,24 hectares of land each (in what came to be known as Gowe II) because of the vast entrepreneurial skills they had demonstrated. These settlers operated a double-cropping programme incorporating maize and cotton. In succeeding years, the ploholders added sorghum, wheat, vegetables and groundnuts to their list of crops. Cotton became the main summer crop and wheat was the major winter crop grown under the spray systems of irrigation. Towards the end of the 1970s these crops recorded good yields which however were not as high as those achieved during the boom period in the 1980s partly because of the war. In the 1987/88 season, for example, the settlers achieved a cotton yield of 2 600 kg/ha and a wheat yield of 4 000 kg/ha,⁹⁰⁴ which was quite satisfactory for the small-scale farmers but rather higher than the yield (i.e. 2 300 kg/ha for cotton and 3 000 kg/ha for wheat)⁹⁰⁵ realised at the close of the 1970s.

It is important to note that Gowe is not endowed with very fertile soils. The sandy texture of the soil, coupled with the fact that the area is prone to persistent droughts, makes the cultivation of cotton (a drought resistant crop), on an irrigation basis, a worthwhile undertaking in this part of the country. As already mentioned, apart from cotton being indigenous to Zimbabwe, to a large extent, the proximity to Sanyati of the Cotton Research Institute in Kadoma has influenced the growing of cotton in this locality.⁹⁰⁶ The success of cotton at Gowe has also been determined by the fact that, of all the summer crops in

⁸⁹⁸ NAZ (RC), ARDA, Box 280742, Location R19.10.5.3R, File: P23/2C/General (Sanyati), Letter P23.2C/GEN/189, s.a.

⁸⁹⁹ J. Gwandira (GMB Manager - Sanyati Depot), Telephone discussion with Nyandoro, 23rd June 1997.

⁹⁰⁰ S. Mandimika (COTTCO Manager - Sanyati Depot), Telephone discussion with Nyandoro, 6th May 1997. See also Chicheko, “A History of Cotton Growing in Sanyati (1968-1990),” 41 and 43.

⁹⁰¹ Mandimika, Telephone discussion with Nyandoro.

⁹⁰² “Cotton Boosts Sanyati.” *The Farmer: Zimbabwe Farming News Magazine*, Harare: Modern Farming Publications, November 30, 1981. See also “Cotton - A Life Saver for Zimbabwe in Three Years of Bad Drought.” *AFC Forum: The House Magazine of the Agricultural Finance Corporation*, (7), September 1984, 4-5.

⁹⁰³ NAZ (RC), ARDA, Box 280742, Location R19.10.5.3R, File: P23/2C/General (Sanyati), B. M. Visser, TILCOR Regional Manager (Mashonaland) to the Commission of Inquiry on Incomes, Prices and Conditions of Service, 4th December, 1980, 1.

⁹⁰⁴ ARDA Annual Report and Accounts for the Year Ended 31st October 1986, 12.

⁹⁰⁵ Munengami, Personal Interview.

⁹⁰⁶ “Cotton - A Lifesaver for Zimbabwe in Three Years of Bad Drought,” 4.

Zimbabwe which are suitable for irrigation and for which there is an assured market at stabilised prices, cotton, is by far the most remunerative.⁹⁰⁷

Gowe: An attempt at settler hegemony:-

When TILCOR came to the area, it assisted the Gowe settlers with technical advice and, apart from preparing and planting the lands for them, the corporation also applied fertiliser and sprayed the crops. The Senior Field Foreman for ARDA, L. Madziire, who started working for the Corporation in March 1974 as a tractor driver, noted that settlers paid for these services, as well as water charges, from the proceeds of their yields; a position Westcott agrees with when he says, “the water rate was included or incorporated into the costs of the crop.”⁹⁰⁸ However, there was a general outcry against TILCOR’s exorbitant charges for the provision of these services. Ivy Nyamutova, the wife of T. Nyamutova (a plotholder and the then Vice Secretary of the Gowe Irrigation Committee which met regularly to deliberate on plotholder issues – See Appendix VI), argued that the majority of the plotholders were “disgruntled with having to pay water charges when such services as the repair of broken down pumps were not provided in time.”⁹⁰⁹ For her and many others, this was discouraging.

In February 1975, the then Chairman of TILCOR, W. Bailey stated how he and the Corporation viewed the settler scheme at Gowe: “There is nothing benevolent in this. There is nobody turning around and saying we must help the poor people.”⁹¹⁰ Indeed, TILCOR was a vehicle for the furtherance of white settler interests and not the opposite. It was a “white-based Corporation” which had little or no interest in African areas. This was echoed in 1969 by A. D. B. Yardley of the Ministry of Internal Affairs when he said, he did not think the Tribal Trust Land Development Corporation would be interested in Gowe because, “as they [TILCOR] are run on a company basis they must show a profit which they cannot do on small schemes.”⁹¹¹

Although TILCOR was allegedly established in Sanyati in order to promote rural development, reality reveals otherwise. A number of impediments prevented the fulfilment of this objective at Gowe. One of the obstacles was the State itself. As an instrument of racial segregation, the colonial State always protected the interests of an elite group of people (the Whites) upon whom it depended for support. In this connection, P. Sweezy made an illuminating observation when he said: “any particular state is the child of the

⁹⁰⁷ NAZ (RC), DC Gatooma - Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158098, Location C19.10.7R, File: “Gowe Irrigation Scheme: Sanyati TTL (EX CONEX),” A. G. Pilditch (Irrigation Officer), “Irrigated Cotton in Rhodesia,” s.a., 1.

⁹⁰⁸ L. Madziire, (ARDA Sanyati Senior Field Foreman), Personal Interview, Sanyati Estate, 9th January 1997 and Westcott, Personal Interview, 12th July 2005.

⁹⁰⁹ I. Nyamutova, Personal Interview, Gowe, 9th January 1997.

⁹¹⁰ W. Bailey, “From Bush to Showpiece at Sanyati.” *The Rhodesia Herald*, Salisbury: Friday February 28 1975, 9.

⁹¹¹ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 100834, Location 25.10.2F, File: LAN/2/TTL, Tribal Trust Land Development Corporation Act (June 1967 - November 1968), W. J. Harper (Secretary for Internal Affairs), 19th June, 1968, 3.

[race] in society which benefit from the particular set of property relations which it is the State's obligation to enforce.”⁹¹²

On the whole,

The direction and progress of rural development in Rhodesia, indeed of every sector of the economy were largely controlled by the policies of racial segregation adopted by successive European-dominated governments over ninety years of colonial rule.⁹¹³

According to Paraiwa, there was nothing altruistic about the formation of TILCOR (Sanyati) as well as the Gowe settler component.⁹¹⁴ There were more baneful effects than positive. For instance, exploitation of plowholder labour by the estate was increasing since 1974. The tenants were further disgruntled by an unclear lease system proposed by the Corporation, which did not give the settlers autonomy on their plots. Paraiwa concedes that the creation of the Gowe Pools Irrigation Scheme, which was integrated into ARDA (then TILCOR) in 1974, was a stopgap measure against African political agitation at the height of the Second Chimurenga (1966-1979).⁹¹⁵ In fact, although

the blacks did not have ample means to influence government decisions, they had become politically conscious, and so, the government, as a pre-emptive measure, tried to carry out development activities as an excuse for not permitting blacks to become involved in making important decisions together with them [the whites].⁹¹⁶

For the government, therefore, “the best way for the people to accept White Settler Estates in their midst was to create outgrowers to the main State farm which would act as a catalyst for growth.”⁹¹⁷

This analysis shows that Africans throughout the country were economically disadvantaged and disgruntled. Hence, for Ian Douglas Smith to claim that Rhodesia had the happiest Africans in the world, was not only a mockery of reality but also grossly unacceptable. For instance, speaking in Chiredzi at a party held to mark the 5th anniversary of the Chiredzi Town Board⁹¹⁸ Smith said “Rhodesia's greatest asset was probably the peace and harmony among its people in a free society.”⁹¹⁹ He added:

⁹¹² P. M. Sweezy, *The Theory of Capitalist Development: Principles of Marxian Political Economy*, (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1956), 242.

⁹¹³ N. D. Mutizwa-Mangiza, *Community Development in Pre-Independence Zimbabwe: A Study of Policy with Special Reference to Rural Land* in supplement to *Zambezia*, 1985. *The Journal of the University of Zimbabwe* (1985), 1.

⁹¹⁴ Paraiwa, Personal Interview.

⁹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹¹⁶ Paraiwa, Personal Interview.

⁹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹¹⁸ The Chiredzi Town Board administered the Tsovane (“Tshovani”) Township or growth centre which was also developed on the basis of irrigation.

⁹¹⁹ “Harmony Rhodesia's Greatest Asset – PM,” *The Rhodesia Herald*, Salisbury: Friday, August 28 1970, 15.

“People from over the world had said that Rhodesians, including the Africans, were the freest and happiest people they had seen ... When we look at the results of our system of government we should be well satisfied ... Rhodesia was a wonderful example of how people could progress in a free society.”⁹²⁰

In another speech made in parliament in 1971/72 on the development programme aimed at expanding the economy generally and stimulating economic growth in what were known as Tribal Trust Lands after the proclamation of UDI, Smith stated that UDI was “a period in our [Rhodesia’s] history which will be marked by [happiness and] its economic development and expansion; an improvement in standards of living - especially that of the lower income groups [Africans].”⁹²¹ However, it is difficult to appreciate where the Rhodesian Africans derived their happiness from, given a scenario where the population was mainly rural in character and development in the African areas was subordinated to white commercial agriculture which was supposed to be the keystone of the economy.⁹²² Bearing this in mind, it is, thus, an inescapable fact that the Smith regime was more interested in impoverishing and marginalising the African peasantry than safeguarding their economic interests. In fact, nothing was done by the colonial government with the primary objective of benefiting the inhabitants of any rural area in Zimbabwe.⁹²³

Gowe was no exception to this rule. Irrigation land was often disproportionately allocated. More land was granted to the Estate (1 000 hectares)⁹²⁴ at the expense of outgrowers (120 hectares) at Gowe, yet there was a real need for the peasants to be involved in these projects in large numbers for their general upliftment. This kind of development, which took place in the Sanyati Communal Lands, did not provide any basis for the inclusion of local knowledge, skills or innovation. There was no participatory input at any stage of planning or implementation as the local political leadership (chiefs) was never consulted.⁹²⁵ Chiefs Neuso and Wozhele were only “consulted” in order to rubber-stamp already existing colonial designs at Gowe. On the whole, therefore, the need to achieve settler hegemony could not be subordinated to any other aim. The lack of attention to African demands for more land, for example, meant that plot sizes remained small and inevitably erosion set in.

⁹²⁰ “Harmony Rhodesia’s Greatest Asset – PM,” 15. See also The Herald Library, Herald House, Box - Ian Smith, *Ian Smith Speeches*, 1968-1979.

⁹²¹ *Rhodesia Parliamentary Debates*, House of Assembly, 80, Second Session, Twelfth Parliament, 24th August to 7th September, 16th November to 26th November 1971, and 29th February 1972, (Salisbury: The Government Printer, 1971-72), 1143 and 1146.

⁹²² ADA Annual Report and Accounts for the Year Ended 30th June 1978, 5.

⁹²³ *Rhodesia Parliamentary Debates*, House of Assembly, (Salisbury, Rhodesia: The Government Printer, 1 October 1968), 24.

⁹²⁴ *Tribal Trust Land Development Corporation (TILCOR): Sanyati Project Report*.

⁹²⁵ O. Cluer, “An Assessment of Rural Development and Planning in the Tribal Areas of Zimbabwe Under the Rhodesian Settler Government 1890-1980,” PhD thesis, Department of Anthropology and Sociology, University of Queensland, 1980, 143.

The erosion menace and conservation measures:-

The over-cultivation of small but predominantly sandy plots meant that erosion would consequently become a menace. The spectre of soil erosion is one problem that needed urgent redress. On a global scale, soil erosion is widely viewed as a serious threat to the long-term capacity of world agriculture to produce food.⁹²⁶ In this respect, preventing the washing away of the top soil through erosion which reduces the productivity of the remaining soil is paramount. It has been noted with concern that ARDA's smallholder scheme in Sanyati was highly susceptible to erosion. The former ARDA General Manager (GM), Liberty Mhlanga, has argued that "There was erosion because of the slope. Conservation was not properly developed. [Gowe] fields used to get flooded during a storm because of lack of conservation structures on the scheme."⁹²⁷ Since the inception of Gowe, extension officers were engaged in efforts to ensure that the smallholder irrigation scheme was properly farmed using effective soil protection mechanisms. To prevent erosion-induced production losses, the first extension agents for Gowe, Lazarus Sithole and Macloud Mushawarima, prioritised the conservation of soils and forests.⁹²⁸ Plottolders were required to grow fruit trees as well as build contour ridges. Contours, in particular, were enforced amid resistance from the farmers who saw them as nothing less than structures that limited their ploughing land area. For G. Maturure, whilst land degradation generated productivity losses, enforcing "very wide contours" which extension superiors "could drive through,"⁹²⁹ caused relatively bigger yield discrepancies at a local level. He estimated that having contours on either side of a 2-ha plot reduced the yield by about 2%.⁹³⁰ Although his computation method is rather questionable, it cannot be denied that irrigation plottolders considered that, any reduction in plot size by the width of a jeep truck (the main vehicle used by extension demonstrators in the colonial period) on each side of the field, was a significant loss.

Notwithstanding the loss, plottolders, the majority of whom were master farmers, were deeply upset by a scenario where extension personnel dictated to them how to counteract the effects of erosion. A very vocal tenant, T. Nyamutova, argued "we fought for this land, so we should not be taught how to conserve the land (sic). Our forefathers practiced agriculture, but there was no erosion." Referring to the African extension agents, he said, "these people think we don't know [farming]." He proceeded to allege, in Shona, that, "taive tisingabvunzwi,"⁹³¹ (meaning, our opinion was never sought). By this, he implied that, extension personnel had come to teach them the so-called new conservation

⁹²⁶ Pierre Crosson, "Global Consequences of Land Degradation: An Economic Perspective," in Keith Wiebe (ed.), *Land Quality, Agricultural Productivity, and Food Security: Biophysical Processes and Economic Choices at Local, Regional and Global Levels*, (Northampton, Massachusetts, USA: Edward Elgar Publishing Limited, 2003), 36.

⁹²⁷ Liberty Mhlanga, (Chairman of Land Settlement Board in the Ministry of Lands and Land Resettlement), Personal Interview, ARDA Head Office, Harare, 25th September 2006.

⁹²⁸ NAZ (RC), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158081, Location C.19.5.6R, File: HIS 3, November 1968-November 1970, D. K. Parkinson for DC Gatooma to the National Archives of Rhodesia, Salisbury, 12th November 1968.

⁹²⁹ Grey Maturure (Plottolder and Gowe Irrigation Committee Member), Personal Interview, Gowe-Sanyati, 9th January 1997.

⁹³⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹³¹ T. Nyamutova, Personal Interview, Gowe-Sanyati, 14th May 2005.

techniques, which however, tended to shun indigenous knowledge. This was the major basis of resistance to the teachings of the agricultural officers deployed in Sanyati to address the effects of erosion.

Resistance to conservation partly emanated from the fact that, conservation technology and other agricultural teachings were regarded as imported practices and it was also partly necessitated by the small plots that the irrigators were allocated compared to the bigger plots they cultivated in Rhodesdale prior to the 1950s. Agricultural extension agents should not always expect farmers to accept prescriptions from above. To a large extent, local farmers' opinions and decisions on conservation matters should also be respected.⁹³² At Gowe, just like in other parts of the country, the extension worker was expected to "teach" the plotters good farming methods. However, apart from conscientising plotters on the necessity of contours, no extension officer ever alluded to how repeatedly cultivating small pieces of land would contribute to the erosion menace. Prominent names of extension workers, which almost became synonymous with the Gowe Irrigation Scheme, were M. Mushawarima, Lazarus Sithole and Shupile J. Sithole. The latter, who in 2000, was still an Extension Officer under AGRITEX (now AREX), resides at his dryland holding in Mapani Village under Chief Wozhele.⁹³³ The three performed a wide array of duties at the scheme. Because of the problem of erosion, they were engaged in the afforestation programme. They were responsible for planting the mango, orange, guava and lemon trees including the pegging of contours at Gowe and the Main Estate.⁹³⁴ Apart from forestry conservation activities, they also provided technical know-how on all aspects of farming, for instance, irrigation management (water management), fertiliser application and ensuring that planting was done properly.⁹³⁵

An extensive interview with S. J. Sithole revealed that the plotters at Gowe were supposed to be recipients of the Extension Officer's conservation knowledge and rarely were their (farmers) own views sought.⁹³⁶ Such knowledge was often imported from western European countries such as Britain and the United States of America (USA). No or very little consultation was undertaken with such small communities as Gowe. They were merely expected to "receive" that education from appointed disseminators of that knowledge.⁹³⁷ According to S. J. Sithole, apparently questioning the role of the extension worker, Gowe tenants were only told to "construct contours [and] no one told them why or asked them how they thought this could be done?"⁹³⁸ Every plotter was "forced to abide by measures that were designed by the DC to keep erosion in check."⁹³⁹ Non-compliance was punishable by eviction. However, there is no known case of a farmer who was evicted, which suggests that, the strong objection to contour making of the 1950s and early 1960s,

⁹³² A. W. Van Den Ban and H. S. Hawkins, *Agricultural Extension*, (UK: Longman Group Ltd., 1988), 293.

⁹³³ S. J. Sithole, (AGRITEX Extension Officer), Personal Interview, Mapani Village, Sanyati, 10th January 1997.

⁹³⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹³⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹³⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹³⁷ Arensberg, "Upgrading Peasant Agriculture: Is Tradition the Snag?" 63-69.

⁹³⁸ S. J. Sithole, Personal Interview, Mapani Village, Sanyati, 10th January 1997

⁹³⁹ *Ibid.*

had now degenerated into passive resistance due to fear of eviction. Although it was important to curb erosion, this did not justify the coercive methods used to achieve that goal. Forcing people to adopt alien techniques of conserving the soil was generally resented. In fact, development work seems to suffer from an entrenched superiority complex with respect to the small farmer. The belief that “modern” or European technology is infinitely superior to that of the smallholder or peasant farmer should be abandoned. Africa, and indeed the whole “Third World,” is littered with relics of development projects, which were based on the assumption that the solutions to development could be drawn from western experience, with little need to examine the suitability of these to specific environments.⁹⁴⁰ It is true that contours were an essential conservation measure, but implementing them from above was perceived as part and parcel of the marginalisation of African knowledge by the government of Rhodesia, which, to a large extent, was also influenced by the west in its agricultural policies.

This is a very naive and wrong assumption. Perhaps African leaders could take a leaf from the former President of Tanzania, Julius Mwalimu Nyerere’s observation: “so-called leaders do entirely too much talking to the peasants. No one ever wants to listen to them.”⁹⁴¹ Indeed, Zimbabwe smallholder farmers, including those at Gowe, also need to be consulted (i.e. on how to combat erosion) in order for them to participate fully in their own development, and if there is dialogue with these farmers there would be no reason to underestimate them.⁹⁴² As already noted, very little consultation, if any, was conducted by TILCOR or ARDA especially on matters of policy relating to conservation issues.

However, while it cannot be denied that TILCOR’s policies of rural development, to some extent, benefited Gowe plottolders through the provision of a market, an increase in the range of crops produced and employment generation, it must be asserted that conservation measures implemented in liaison with the intended targets were bound to be more beneficial to agriculture as a whole. Efforts to address the problem of erosion did not end in this period. They were continued by ARDA after independence, as will be seen in the next chapter.

IRRIGATION: COTTON CULTIVATION AND DIFFERENTIATION

Early efforts to introduce cotton cultivation:-

Cotton is a crop that flourishes both under dryland and rain fed conditions, and under irrigation. In parts of Africa with sandy soils and which receive scanty rainfall the crop does well because of its relatively greater capacity to withstand drought, compared to

⁹⁴⁰ D. H. Cummings, “Foreword,” A. J. B. Hughes, *Development in Rhodesian Tribal Areas: An Overview*, (Rhodesia: Tribal Areas of Rhodesia Research Foundation, 1974), ix.

⁹⁴¹ R. Chambers, *Rural Development: Putting the Last First*, (UK: Longman Group Ltd., 1983), 75.

⁹⁴² M. Drinkwater, *The State and Agrarian Change in Zimbabwe’s Communal Areas*, 268. More recent literature encouraging a participatory approach in agriculture include FAO, *Participatory Experiences in Irrigation Water Management: Proceedings of the Expert Consultation on Irrigation Water Management* held in Yogyakarta and Bali, Indonesia, 16-22 July 1984, (1985) and N. Uphoff, R. Meinzen-Dick and N. St Julien, *Improving Policies and Programs for Farmer Organisation and Participation in Irrigation Water Management*, Cornell University, Ithaca, for the Water Management Synthesis II Project, USAID, (1985).

other crops. In Sanyati, irrigation was introduced not only because the area was susceptible to drought but also it was adopted as a way of boosting cotton production in a more significant manner particularly at a time in the 1960s when the “golden leaf” (tobacco) was facing stiff competition on the international market from America who in 1968 was making “millions and millions of extra pounds ... selling their tobacco to Britain instead of Rhodesian tobacco.”⁹⁴³ According to the Minister of Agriculture, David Colville Smith, during the second reading of the Agricultural Development Authority Bill, “the agricultural industry has been under severe strain for a long time.”⁹⁴⁴ He went on to say this was due, in the main, to “the vagaries of the seasons and the large proportion of our total production which is exported and has to compete in world markets at prices which we cannot influence. Sanctions imposed since November 1965, particularly on tobacco, have naturally had a serious effect.”⁹⁴⁵ In the early 1960s, efforts to introduce cotton agriculture in the communal lands of Zimbabwe were stimulated by two major economic and political developments.

In the first instance, in the colonial scheme of things, the 1960s were a period of experimentation with African agriculture by state agencies. In this decade, serious efforts were made to promote cotton cultivation in Sanyati as well as other ecologically suitable outlying areas of the country such as Gokwe, Kana, Msengezi (a part of Hartley/Chegutu) and Mondoro (comprising Hartley and Gatooma districts). In the 1950s, agricultural demonstrators had been fully occupied with implementing agricultural reforms under the NLHA, and this was perpetuated in the succeeding decade. They continued to devote their attention to training Africans in improved methods of agriculture. As already indicated, their activities were, however, primarily directed towards the, so-called, “progressive” farmers.⁹⁴⁶ Secondly, the announcement, in 1965, of the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) by Ian Douglas Smith was also a factor. Subsequently, the imposition of economic or trade sanctions⁹⁴⁷ on Rhodesia by the

⁹⁴³ *Rhodesia Parliamentary Debates*, House of Assembly, 70, Third Session, Eleventh Parliament, 23rd January to 9th February, 18th April to 19th April 1968, (Salisbury: The Government Printer, 1968), 367.

⁹⁴⁴ *Rhodesia Parliamentary Debates*, House of Assembly, 78, First Session, Twelfth Parliament, 25th August to 16th September 1970; 2nd March to 6th April 1971, (Salisbury: The Government Printer, 3rd March 1971), 1029.

⁹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴⁶ Colonial agricultural officials often used the term “progressive” farmers to refer collectively to “Master Farmers,” “Co-operators,” and “Plotolders.” In the developmental rhetoric of the 1950s and 1960s, these categories of farmers constituted a small elite of entrepreneurial farmers who farmed according to “modern” farming techniques recommended by the Native Department.

⁹⁴⁷ On 11 November 1965, the British Government placed sanctions on Rhodesia in which the country was suspended from the Commonwealth Preference Area and her goods no longer received preferential treatment on entering the United Kingdom. The United Kingdom also banned purchases of Rhodesian sugar and tobacco – stopping a net total of 71% (by value) of Rhodesian exports to Britain. UDI and its political and economic repercussions on the country taken together with the ensuing need for greater self-sufficiency, not only improved the local market for Rhodesian-grown cotton but made it possible to offer higher prices for the crop, especially from 1965 to about 1972. For detailed studies on the impact of sanctions on the Rhodesian economy see A. J. Hawkins, *Economic Growth and Structural Change and Economic Policy in Rhodesia 1965-1975*, (Salisbury: Whitsun Foundation, June 1976); Hawkins T., “The Rhodesian Economy Under Sanctions,” *Rhodesia Journal of Economics*, 1, (August 1967), 44-58; R. B. Sutcliffe, “The Political Economy of Rhodesian Sanctions,” *Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies*, 7, (July 1967); Harry, R. Strack, *Sanctions: The Case of Rhodesia*, (New York, USA: Syracuse University

international community, was instrumental in forcing import substitution into non-agricultural activities. This was done at the expense of farm export earnings. Furthermore, a self-inflicted closing off of trade by the Rhodesian Government itself by imposing strict foreign exchange controls in an attempt to block capital flight and provide more political control over the economy induced a lot of pain into the economy. Sanctions had devastating implications especially on the tobacco industry, which was one of the chief pillars of Rhodesia's agro-industrial base.

One way of counteracting the deleterious effects of sanctions was to practice crop-diversification, with cotton remaining a major cash crop. Lint or cotton fibre was required by the colonial state to feed a growing number of local spinning industries, which had emerged during and in the aftermath of the Second World War. Consequently, considerable effort was devoted by state officials to promoting cotton agriculture in suitable African areas, including Sanyati. However, the major factors in the establishment of the Gowe and Sanyati Main Irrigation Schemes were not only related to the decline of the Southern Rhodesian tobacco industry which was under stress from international sanctions but this development was also dictated by the requirements, not only of the imperial grand strategy, but of the necessity to create contented rural Africans in the face of escalating politico-economic problems. Once irrigation got under way, Sanyati was on the path to unprecedented development and differentiation as a process assumed much bigger dimensions.

Irrigation, mainly emphasising cotton, wheat, groundnuts and maize, together with Melville G. Reid's ambitious cotton extension programme,⁹⁴⁸ combined to produce an agricultural miracle in Sanyati in the 1980s, but not necessarily in the succeeding decade. Cotton had become so popularised by Reid, the DC Gatooma, and research experts at the Gatooma Cotton Research Institute⁹⁴⁹ that the local community harnessed the crop almost wholesale. It offered incomparable prospects for prosperity for the farmers who did not hesitate to integrate this new technology into their lifestyles. According to M. G. Reid whose inseparable association with this fibrous crop earned him the accolade "Cotton Reid,"⁹⁵⁰

Press, 1978), 1-296. The most recent assessment of the period Rhodesia was under sanctions has been compiled by William Minter and Elizabeth Schmidt, "When Sanctions Worked: The Case of Rhodesia Re-examined," *African Affairs*, 87(347), (April 1988), 207-237.

⁹⁴⁸ In Gokwe and Sanyati, the introduction of cotton, together with extension services, has been attributed to the efforts of the Agronomist in the Extension Department, Melville G. Reid. See NAZ, Extract from the Gokwe Agricultural Officer's Report: Ministry of Internal Affairs, October 1973.

⁹⁴⁹ Cotton growing in Sanyati and the adjacent Gokwe District was encouraged from 1963 onwards. It was popularised in these predominantly dry areas of Zimbabwe because it is a drought resistant crop that does well in those agro-ecological zones. Its cultivation was also stimulated by the stiff competition tobacco was facing from America. The campaign leading to the adoption of cotton in these areas entailed encouraging master farmers through experimental demonstration plots to grow the crop. This was done under the close supervision and advice of agricultural demonstrators. N.B. Demonstrators gave African farmers agricultural extension advice i.e. on "proper" methods of farming which included conservationist education.

⁹⁵⁰ S. C. Pazvakavambwa, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Rural Housing and Social Amenities, Personal Interview, Munhumutapa Government Offices, Harare, 7th June 2005. Reid is credited with establishing the cotton extension programme in the Gokwe-Sanyati region. However, Pazvakavambwa strongly feels that as far as Sanyati is concerned this is giving the Agronomist (Reid) credit that he does not deserve. According

The farmer who had always existed at a subsistence level was suddenly faced with the possibility of achieving an increase in income, not a slight increase in his normal income, but a two-, or three-, or even tenfold increase. He saw for the first time in his life the possibility of obtaining, by his own efforts, what to him was great wealth.⁹⁵¹

There is a noticeably big contrast in the type of organisation found in the Main Scheme, on the one hand, and that of the Plotholders component, on the other. There were also significant disparities in the benefits that accrued to each one of these between the 1960s and 1970s as a result of irrigation and cotton. The core estate, in comparison to its outgrower section, derived immeasurable advantages in that it had the unreserved access and monopoly to the labour provided by the latter.

Cotton irrigation: socio-economic disparities among plotholders and between Gowe and dryland:-

Prior to the advent of irrigation, most rural residential structures were made of pole and dagga, and they did not depict any signs of modernity. Brick architectural designs featured more prominently from the mid-1970s onwards almost ten years after the inception of irrigation. Because of the uncertainties on plotholder permanence on the scheme caused by restrictions imposed by the DC, not many Gowe plotholders were keen to build state of the art rural homes. Instead, they used proceeds from cotton sales to improve their dryland houses and homesteads where they felt their security of tenure was more guaranteed. Thus, plotholder progress and wealth was sometimes not reflected on the irrigation plots that were allotted to them but on the dryland adjuncts to these plots. However, the emergence of the Main Estate in 1974 gave the outgrowers a sense of insecurity, as it required large labour reserves in its vicinity to ensure large-scale productivity was achieved let alone maintained. Their own production sometimes suffered. However, a few farmers concentrated on cultivating their own fields and competed with the estate for labour. It was from that date onwards that resource-rich owners of irrigation plots embarked on refurbishing the old pole and mud houses or building magnificent brick homes within the scheme. The construction of brick houses by some plotholders, whether in or outside the scheme, was a veritable claim to status, for it enabled the house-holder to stand out and be distinguished as an example of a successful, progressive and development-oriented agrarian entrepreneur.⁹⁵²

to Pazvakavambwa, the Sanyati cotton extension programme was introduced by another Agronomist, Harry Howden, who was responsible for African areas under the Department of African Agriculture, which later became DEVAG. See Pazvakavambwa, Personal Interview, 15th November 2004. N.B. Before his new appointment in 2005 as the Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Rural Housing and Social Amenities he was the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Lands, Land Reform and Resettlement.

⁹⁵¹ M. G. Reid, Senior Agricultural Officer, Ministry of Internal Affairs, 1971 cited in Worby, "Remaking Labour, Reshaping Identity, 172. Greater detail on the cotton extension programme and its benefits is found in Melville Reid, "An Agricultural Programme at Gokwe." *Rhodesia Agricultural Journal*, 71, (1977), 54-60.

⁹⁵² Territorially ARDA's irrigation schemes in Sanyati are a far cry from the Gezira in the Sudan but a number of parallels can be drawn as far as cotton differentially impacted on the Main Scheme on the one

Although at the opposite extreme of these modern brick houses stand the poorest and most rudimentary mud plastered type of house, the construction of brick houses is indicative of the material changes that the Gowe Irrigation Scheme has brought to the lives of the plottolders. After a while, some plottolder households could boast of a vegetable garden,⁹⁵³ an orchard (See Appendices VII, VIII and IX), a car,⁹⁵⁴ a tractor, a radio set, among other possessions reflecting their newly-found prosperity. Their involvement in a cash economy and the standard of material upliftment they had come to enjoy had two major implications on the plottolders. Firstly, an awareness of cash values hitherto unknown in the Sanyati hinterland started to permeate life throughout the irrigation scheme and the adjacent dryland area. Secondly, the plottolders' participation in the more rewarding cotton economy not only raised their standard of living but it also gave the tenants an appreciation of the relative deprivation they had experienced in the two decades after W.W.II when cotton had not been embraced in a big way. Mjoli, a holder of a Master Farmer Certificate acquired at the Government Experimental Farm in Msengezi, said that, in the 1960s and 1970s, cotton helped him achieve progress mainly because the soils were still very productive and gave excellent yields.⁹⁵⁵ Cotton was also the main crop encouraged by the DC because the farmers could use the money it generated to pay back their debts. With the adoption of irrigation technology at the Gowe Smallholder Scheme, there is irrefutable evidence that one particular group (i.e. the Master Farmer category), over the years, improved its economic and social position. The persistence and adaptability of the irrigators to changing circumstances and their ability to exploit the opportunities presented by an irrigation environment have been responsible for altering the pattern of differentiation in the area.

For instance, before the advent of irrigation, relying on their rainland holdings, peasant farmers participated in a flourishing trade in grain, tobacco,⁹⁵⁶ and some traditional wares of pottery or weaving. With the onset of irrigation agriculture, those farmers who were allocated plots at the Gowe Co-operative Scheme were able to produce even greater

hand and its tenants section on the other. An in-depth examination of differentiation in the Sudan's Gezira Scheme can be gleaned from Tony Barnett, *The Gezira Scheme*, 30-180.

⁹⁵³ See Appendices VII, VIII and IX showing Gowe Vegetable Gardens, Orchard, the local sale (marketing) of fresh vegetables and Gowe women sharing a joke over the vegetable produce.

⁹⁵⁴ See Appendix V for picture of a retired CID officer and plottolder (G. Maturure) with his newly acquired Austin Cambridge motorcar.

⁹⁵⁵ Mjoli, Personal Interview, 14th May 2005.

⁹⁵⁶ Svisvi Township, the point at which the five wards under Chief Nemangwe in Gokwe begin, is the area that used to be known as "Nyoka." It is the site both of Chief Chireya's old residence (before he was moved to the north in the early part of the 20th century by the colonial authorities) and that of the original police camp established in Gokwe in the 1890s. It was at "Nyoka" that the evanescent attempt was made to harness the local knowledge of tobacco production and trade for the benefit of settler commerce before 1938. For more detail on the tobacco industry of the "Shangwe" see B. Kosmin, "The Inyoka Tobacco Industry of the Shangwe People: the Displacement of a Pre-Colonial Economy in Southern Rhodesia, 1898-1938" in Palmer and Parsons (eds.), *The Roots of Rural Poverty*, 268. According to Worby, "Remaking Labour: Reshaping Identity," 173-174, 176-177 and 179, the name "Manyoka" (plural form) comes from a mopane tree in Svisvi where spears were said to be hidden. There was another tree also with a special spear and a snake inside. The people burned down the tree and later went to the spirit medium to report that they had done something wrong. What happened to them is not known, but that is how the place came to be known as Manyoka or Inyoka.

surpluses from their irrigated lands and, simultaneously, expanded their trade not only in grain but cotton as well. Perhaps, the only grey area in their changed economic circumstances was that they were often compelled to sell their crops to the Estate or the Co-operative Society which were not always offering the most lucrative prices for their produce. However, with this trade, many plottolders were able to accumulate enough capital to open retail shops, butcheries, grinding mills and become relatively better off despite the effects of sanctions against the UDI Government. One outstanding example is a man only referred to by Gilbert as Muzaya. He said, this man, who hailed from Chipinge (Manicaland Province), was a shop owner and “all scheme people came to buy from him,” adding that “another shinning example was G. Maturure.”⁹⁵⁷ According to Gilbert, “When TILCOR bought them [Gowe outgrowers] over there were some who became rich because of irrigation and because TILCOR had developed more acres for them [i.e. Gowe II] to grow cotton and maize.” Acknowledging that “some of the farmers sold their produce at the Kadoma GMB,” he went on to state that, “A lot of people ‘with brains’ ‘vakabudirira ipapo apa,’”⁹⁵⁸ meaning that, those with access to markets and more initiative became very successful from farming on this scheme. This exhibition of wealth during the time of grinding sanctions was commendable. Thus, the wealth, which the outgrowers were able to amass, led them to become a prestigious group not only within the scheme but also in Sanyati as a whole.

The opportunities enjoyed by the plottolders over their dryland counterparts were considerable. Irrigation enabled the plottolders to get a constant inflow of cash from January to December. They had the advantage of producing winter and summer crops, whereas the dryland peasant farmers depended for their livelihood on summer cropping only and, in the case of Sanyati, a good yield was not always guaranteed because of the vagaries of the weather. However, in a good season, dryland holders had greater opportunities of producing more because they cultivated larger pieces of land than their irrigation neighbours. On the contrary, irrigators were assured of a yield each cropping season. They also grew a wider variety of cash-generating crops than the dryland cultivators who mainly relied on either maize or cotton. Dryland farmers grew other crops such as groundnuts, beans, pumpkins and cucumber but these were not grown on a substantial scale to yield surpluses for sale. Gowe plottolders, in comparison, produced wheat, cotton, maize (which they sold as dry or green mealies), beans and groundnuts for the market. They were hardly affected by erratic rains in summer because they had irrigation water whenever they needed it. With proper planning, they could never run short of cash. Relatively higher and assured annual incomes, therefore, characterised life at Gowe compared to dryland agriculture. This also determined plottolder success and affluence. In this instance, it can be noted that irrigation created further forms of differentiation because of the opportunity for multiple cropping it offered.

Paradoxically, as some plottolders were basking in the euphoria of success generated by the cotton miracle and a variety of irrigated crops, there were others who were finding it difficult to break even. The reasons for their lack of prosperity can be explained in their failure to command productive resources of their own or to influence the processes of

⁹⁵⁷ Gilbert, Personal Interview.

⁹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

credit advancement. Sometimes they were “blacklisted” for failure to pay back Co-op loans. This, in turn, determined the amount of money that flowed into their pockets, which, at best, was insignificant, and, at worst, amounted to nothing. The dichotomy between resource-rich and resource-poor within the plotholder strata is quite discernible. There is clear separation between those who have economic and social resources and those who do not, thereby illustrating the way in which money has come to mediate between and to differentiate peasants within the irrigation community. Poorer irrigators’ interaction with the Main Estate and the Co-operative Union provided further productive bottlenecks for them. The following section examines how the domineering presence of the Estate caused further forms of differentiation and the general plummeting of plotholder affluence the moment the “Bigger Brother” was created in 1974. Clearly, from this date onwards, Gowe assumed the position of a labour repository of the Main Irrigation Estate.⁹⁵⁹

Estate agriculture: opportunity or benign neglect?:-

Gowe plotholders, unlike those in other irrigation schemes in Zimbabwe and many parts of Africa, saw themselves as groundbreakers that had more say in Sanyati’s new agrarian economy. Their personal sacrifice and devotion to irrigation and the commoditisation process was supposed to put them in a strong bargaining position in their relationship with the Estate. Nevertheless, any benevolence that TILCOR or the Estate might have promised did not materialise. The creation of the Main Scheme, instead, marked the beginning of long-term subordination of the Pilot Scheme to the whims of the former. All of a sudden the plotholders found themselves faced with countless disadvantages, which reminded them that the formation of the bigger irrigation scheme was not a benign gesture at all. As indicated by Pazvakavambwa in an interview, the smallholder scheme was, among other things, required to facilitate the easy recruitment of labour that was so desperately needed by the “Big Brother,” that was keen to register an instant impact in the field of irrigation. The Estate was, therefore, conveniently situated in close proximity to Gowe so that the labour objective would not be cumbersome to implement.

In practice, what this entailed was that the position of the plotholders, in relation to the Estate, meant that the provision of labour by the plotholders was not always a voluntary process. Barnett, who was writing on the Gezira Scheme made an observation that is consonant with or applicable to what evolved in the Sanyati Scheme when he said: “The decision by a plotholder to offer his labour to the Estate was mediated through an individual plotholder’s range of social and ultimately financial resources [at his disposal] and this became a major component of his class position.”⁹⁶⁰

Because the plotholder was obliged to take advice from the Estate Manager to whom the DC Gatooma often ceded his management role, the scenario where the Manager categorised outgrowers as either “good” or “bad” farmers was not uncommon. This will be demonstrated in the next chapter. Given the influential position held by the Estate Boss, in the long-term, a plotholder’s class position in relation to the Estate, or the chief

⁹⁵⁹ Pazvakavambwa, Personal Interview, 7th June 2005.

⁹⁶⁰ Barnett, *The Gezira Scheme*, 57.

means of production, was partially determined by how he related to the Estate Manager and how the Estate management perceived him in terms of the “backward” or “progressive” dichotomy. Thus, this analysis serves to strengthen the distinctions in socio-economic power and influence between the bigger project and its smallholder neighbour in Sanyati.

Lines of credit or loan facilities were also controlled by the Estate Manager even in instances where the Gowe Co-operative Society, the GMB, CMB (COTTCO) or agro-chemical industries advanced input loans to the plottolders. This was so because the Estate played the role of selecting its plottolders and recommending to the providers of loans who was creditworthy and who was not. The sources of credit and finance institutions’ strict repayment conditions were also some of the major causes of debt among the irrigation tenants.

There were three reasons why a plottolder accumulated debts. One was the payment system operated by the Estate for grain or cotton delivered to the market, the mandatory deduction of costs incurred for services rendered, such as tillage and inputs. This method of payment was, in effect, a compromise between the Estate, which was not able to predict when, and for how much, it would sell the crop, and the plottolders who needed cash (but were invariably incapacitated by lack of cash) in order to support themselves and pay for the hiring of labour or the input needs of the succeeding season. Incidentally, the primary producer of a commodity like cotton had very little or no control over prices, hence the scheme operated very efficiently as a mechanism for the production of cotton at a price which created continual indebtedness for the majority of the tenants because of their obligations to the Estate. The other was the smallness of plottolders’ allotments. For example, a 2 or 4-acre plot was rather too small to be a very sound financial proposition. The third and final point was that the holder of a plot was party to a complex system of other payments such as land rent and the water rate.⁹⁶¹ All these entailments, it should be conceded, moulded the tenant’s entire financial situation unless he had alternative sources of income other than those coming from the small plot.

In Sanyati, serious concern was expressed by holders of plots who felt that the Estate was exploiting them. Most tenants found it difficult to relate their cash income to the effort which they put into their work. Besides, they also found the rationale behind this payment system extremely incomprehensible apart from the mere fact that the Estate made certain, apparently arbitrary, payments to them. Lamentably, the payment system failed to build into it what Barnett has described as “stress periods,” when the plottolder found himself in a financially stressful position when no crop was being cultivated.⁹⁶² In the Sanyati schemes, such periods of stress were during planting, weeding, the concurrent harvesting of summer maize and the picking of cotton, followed by the cutting and burning of cotton stalks, the time when the cotton cheque had already been expended as well as periods of persistent drought spells or during the ever so frequent breakdowns of irrigation pumps. These periods also coincided with the heavy demands for hired labour on the Estate. It

⁹⁶¹ NAZ (RC), DC Gatooma – Ministry of Internal Affairs, Box 158098, Location C19.10.7R, DC’s File: Gowe Irrigation Scheme: Financial Plans, Water Reports etc (1967-1971), “Sanyati Irrigation Plots,” 1-2.

⁹⁶² Barnett, *The Gezira Scheme*, 75-76.

was during and after these “stress periods” that plottolders were in dire need of cash or credit. For example, it was during the weeding and cotton-picking periods of the season that the labour demands of the irrigation plot were also high. Consequently, the labour demands of the plot frequently took up all the cash that might have been realised after the previous harvest, thereby leaving the plottolder, particularly the polygamous one, with little or nothing to cover the day-to-day costs of his household. On the other hand, during cotton picking periods the Estate wanted the tenant’s labour at a time the latter needed his own labour on the plot more than to give it to the Estate.

In addition to these Estate induced “stress periods,” the plottolder’s position was aggravated by a new sort of reality dawning on him that in spite of the original euphoria about the merits of this new technology an irrigation plot, small as it was, was not a very profitable undertaking after all.⁹⁶³ In fact, in this case for most tenants, it was responsible for the reproduction of a cycle of poverty and perpetual indebtedness to the ARDA Sanyati Main Irrigation Scheme. For them, the origins of debt and the precariousness of their financial position lay within the structure of the Main Irrigation Estate and its management. Most of the tenants were situated at the lowest level of a large producing concern (i.e. the Estate) and were bound by a predetermined contractual relationship. Only a few plottolders with a large reserve of economic resources were insulated from the basic stipulations or obligations to the Estate, which included, inter alia, tillage, planting and harvesting. Those who were not properly insulated ended up opting out of the scheme and concentrating their energies on their dryland plots. Clearly, there were relations of credit and debt between the smallholder and Estate irrigation categories, but both categories, in their turn, as similarly observed by Barnett for the Gezira, stood in a common contractual relationship with the state.⁹⁶⁴ This fact provides an additional element in the analysis of differential relations in Sanyati’s irrigation schemes.

The relationship between the two ARDA schemes was clearly an unequal one. A larger share of the profits accrued to the Estate, whereas a minute percentage of the proceeds went to the plottolders to cover the cost of labour, seed, agricultural implements, the use of tractors and plottolders’ profit. In reality, just like in the Gezira scheme, what this partnership or relationship between the plottolders and the Estate, about which the plottolders were not consulted and were not to be consulted throughout this period, did was to spread the risk of production without, at the same time, spreading the opportunity to participate actively in policy-making.⁹⁶⁵ In fact, the plottolder’s area of effective decision was, more often than not, almost entirely restricted to whether or not he should work for the Estate at given points in time and space. A more apt and relevant assertion that tallies in closely with the situation besetting the Sanyati tenant has been provided by Barnett when he says “Because the plottolder is not allowed to make production

⁹⁶³ Field research has revealed that tenants were getting very little from their holdings and it is clear that the average return from cotton for the period 1965-1979 ranged between \$100 and \$500. See also T. Barnett, “Evaluating the Gezira Scheme: Black Box or Pandora’s Box,” in J. Heyer, R. Pepe and G. Williams (eds.), *Rural Development in Tropical Africa*, (London: Macmillan Press, 1981) and T. Bembridge, “Problems and Lessons from Irrigation Projects in Less Developed Countries of Africa,” *Development Southern Africa*, 3(4), (1986).

⁹⁶⁴ Barnett, *The Gezira Scheme*, 88.

⁹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 93.

decisions, he resembles the industrial wage-worker or other employee far more closely than he does the peasant.”⁹⁶⁶ Attempts to devolve decision-making power, though, have been made but they have always been frustrated, because the attainment of such a goal would contradict the entire rationale of the scheme, which thrived on maintaining the plottolders as a subordinate category to its administration. That relationship made it easier for the Estate to exploit their labour.

Because cotton was the largest income earner in Sanyati, a strong bond between the plottolders (the “small rural irrigation capitalists”) and the Main Scheme should promote more production-oriented interaction. It is counterproductive for the local and national economy (both in the short and long-term) if the interests of the plottolders and Estate administrators are kept at variance. Given the fact that there was no alternative livelihood available to most of them, plottolders stayed trapped in a production situation, which offered them a regular but low standard of living with little hope of improvement. A more conciliatory approach to existing relationships was likely to raise agricultural productivity to much greater heights. The onus probably lay with the State to reconcile the two agrarian entities and ultimately create an atmosphere conducive to business. However, the colonial government found itself constrained to create an enabling environment and to spearhead further irrigation development at Gowe and the core estate as a result of the war.

Impact of liberation struggle on ARDA irrigation:-

In the 1970s the war caused some production stoppages especially among the dryland farmers. Petros Bvunzawabaya, a former Sanyati Estate Manager, argues that the struggle (Second Chimurenga 1966-1979) directly affected the surrounding area where hordes of peasant cultivators were forced to stay in protected villages (“keeps”).⁹⁶⁷ The time they went out to tend their fields was determined by the curfew that had been imposed on them which restricted movement from 3 o’clock in the afternoon to 8 o’clock in the morning. This meant that many hours of production were lost as the colonial state stepped up efforts to defeat the guerrillas by ensuring that they would not be in contact with the villagers who were accused of harbouring and feeding them. Some townships especially the Kasirisiri and Gowe business centres near the DC’s Rest Camp where the white troops were stationed were destroyed during the war.⁹⁶⁸ Produce collection points run by co-operative societies⁹⁶⁹ in the rural areas of Sanyati were closed down. To a large extent, the war disrupted the cultivation of cotton particularly in the rainfed area of the district as it made it difficult for extension agents to conduct their business of advising farmers under this situation. A number of young men and women “were

⁹⁶⁶ Barnett, *The Gezira Scheme*, 172-173.

⁹⁶⁷ Petros Bvunzawabaya, (Managing Director of Cynthesis Agriculture Pvt. Ltd. and Former Estate Manager, ARDA Sanyati), Personal Interview, Cynthesis Agriculture, Harare, 17th October 2006.

⁹⁶⁸ Ibid. See also J. Gwacha, (COTTCO Accounts Clerk and former Gowe plottolder), Telephone discussion with Nyandoro, 18th October 2006.

⁹⁶⁹ By the time the war intensified, the Gowe Co-operative Society which exclusively served the smallholder irrigation scheme had folded up. It collapsed in October 1969 not as a direct result of the war but because of corruption and mismanagement. N.B. A more detailed explanation of the operation of co-operative societies in Zimbabwe’s communal lands is given in Chapter five.

recruited to join the struggle and this deprived the rural community of an able-bodied labour-force.”⁹⁷⁰ According to the first black TILCOR General Manager, Robbie Mupawose, “The whole [agricultural] set up got caught up in the war situation and the government of Zimbabwe needs to go back and revitalise the rural development aspect of ARDA.”⁹⁷¹

Whilst literature on the effects of the liberation struggle on Sanyati’s two major irrigation schemes is rather sketchy, it is not possible that the war could have disrupted operations in the dryland area and left the adjoining irrigation sector untouched. Bvunzawabaya acknowledges that during the struggle there was contact between the Gowe irrigators and the fighters, but “because schemes like Gowe benefited Africans they were not targeted for attack by the guerrillas.” “Production-wise, the Sanyati schemes continued operating normally and no one lost his or her plot because of the war.”⁹⁷² In fact, not a single ARDA irrigation estate was closed during the war, save for Mushumbi Pools on the Dande River. In his correspondence with Van Zeeland (the Head of Hatfield High School), the TILCOR Urban Controller, E. F. Hanratty, pointed out that “we have 11 Estates, one of which has had to be closed down because of the war. There are 3 in Matabeleland (1 in the North and 2 in the South), one in Mashonaland West, 2 (one closed) in the Zambezi Valley, and 3 in Manicaland [including an industrial estate at ‘Seki’]”⁹⁷³ However, Mupawose has made it clear that this scheme (Mushumbi), which was the second to be developed in the Zambezi Valley after Muzarabani, was not destroyed by the war. “What killed Mushumbi was a huge storm which carried the pump station/house into the river.”⁹⁷⁴ In an interview, Bvunzawabaya went on to say, although the Main Estate was seen as a symbol of white hegemony, it was spared from attack because it “assisted African settlers.”⁹⁷⁵ Nevertheless, smallholder irrigation productivity was to some extent affected because well-to-do plotters who, in a good season, sometimes hired local labour from the surrounding community could not get all their labour requirements at crucial times during the war.

Labour supply constraints indirectly affected Estate farming as workers could only leave the “keeps” to work on the irrigation scheme as late as 8 o’clock in the morning and had to be back in the protected village by 3 o’clock in the afternoon. As the colonial government tried to defeat the guerrillas by denying them contact with the people, it was the Estate that felt the pinch because ideally it needed labour from as early as 6 o’clock in the morning to around 3 o’clock in the afternoon, the time the workers were supposed to be back in the “keep.” This had a negative effect on production since casual labour was often given specific targets, which needed to be accomplished within specific time frames. The war situation, thus, made it very difficult for the core estate to mobilise all the labour resources it required at certain times. However, the effects of the war on

⁹⁷⁰ J. Gwacha, Personal Interview, 18th October 2006.

⁹⁷¹ Robbie Mupawose, (Former General Manager of TILCOR and Former Secretary for Lands, Agriculture and Resettlement), Personal Interview, Monomotapa Hotel, Harare, 19th October 2006.

⁹⁷² Bvunzawabaya, Personal Interview, 17th October 2006.

⁹⁷³ NAZ (RC), TILCOR, File: S10/EFH/ks, E. F. Hanratty (Urban Controller – TILCOR) to Wayne Van Zeeland (Hatfield School Head), 19th June 1979.

⁹⁷⁴ Mupawose, Personal Interview.

⁹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

production were more pronounced on the dryland than on the irrigation sector. This partly explains why the average yields for Communal Lands irrigation schemes for the period 1970 to 1979 were always higher than those for dryland Communal Areas. (See table below).

Table 4.2: AVERAGE YIELDS (Kg/Ha) 1970-1979 – COMMUNAL LAND IRRIGATION SCHEMES

Crop	Irrigation Communal Lands	Dryland Communal Lands	Dryland Commercial Farms	Dryland Smallscale Commercial Farms
Maize	5 494	656	4 732	1 586
Wheat	2 256	-	2 025*	-
Cotton	1 887	822	1 650	800
Groundnuts	1 687	581	1 710	549
Sorghum	2 020	516	1 854	520
Soya Beans	2 036	-	1 601	526
Potatoes	4 183	-	-	-
Finger Millet	1 724	500	-	587

* Commercial Irrigation

Source: CSO cited in K. Muir, “Crop Production Statistics,” (1981).

Clearly, it is an indisputable fact that from the mid-1970s up to the end of the war numerous factors militated against peasant agricultural prosperity in general. For example, the escalation of the guerrilla war and the accompanying insecurity and disruption of agricultural activities, a severe drought in the mid-1970s and the shortage of credit facilities all combined to impede accumulation and temporarily arrested differentiation as successful peasant farmers became the targets of resentment and attacks by the poor.⁹⁷⁶ Because of their prosperity sometimes they were labelled witches or sell-outs,⁹⁷⁷ which was obviously a vain attempt by the poor to obstruct the process of peasant accumulation which dates back to the colonial era. Indeed, it was a vain effort as the guerrillas soon discovered for themselves that a number of these accusations were not justified at all. The interview with Bvunzawabaya and other plottolders revealed that well-off plottolders were sold out to the soldiers “for having a son or daughter who had joined the ‘terrorist forces.’ ” “Because they were rich they were alleged to have accrued wealth from selling out activities.”⁹⁷⁸ Incidentally, as another former estate manager,

⁹⁷⁶ Nyambara, “A History of Land Acquisition in Gokwe,” 27.

⁹⁷⁷ One of the major themes in the relationship between the guerrillas and the peasants was that the attack against sell-outs (i.e. those who betrayed the guerrillas) and the long-established fear of and hatred of witches were bound together. See David Lan, *Guns and Rain: Guerrillas and Spirit Mediums in Zimbabwe*, (Harare: Zimbabwe Publishing House Pvt Ltd, 1985), 134 and Norma Kriger, *Zimbabwe’s Guerrilla War: Peasant Voices*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

⁹⁷⁸ Bvunzawabaya, Personal Interview, 17th October 2006. See also Mjoli, Personal Interview, 14th May 2005 and Maturure, Personal Interview, 9th January 1997.

Gwerengwe, testified, the labeling of each other as “sell outs” was not only a liberation phenomenon, but also this phenomenon continued even after independence. For example, after the war well-to-do plotters were targeted on the grounds that “anga ane mwana musoja aikurwisai.”⁹⁷⁹ This literally meant that such plotters should be persecuted for having a relative (e.g. son or daughter) who was fighting on the side of the enemy. Richer plotters were also targeted by young men and women who were all deprived of land ownership rights by the ARDA lease agreement. This in essence revealed that the solidarity for a common cause, which characterised early resistance against the government, was later translated into divisions along generational, class and gender lines. Thus, since UDI, ARDA irrigation in Sanyati endured a number of problems which included sanctions, drought, lack of adequate loan facilities, unfavourable lease conditions and the war.

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that the inception of irrigation in Sanyati since the 1960s has met with mixed fortunes. It was not always a case of success but it was also a story of failed attempts to convince people to believe in the new technology as well as a new crop (cotton). One of its major contentions is that, to a large extent, smallholder irrigation benefited both the local and regional community, and to a lesser extent the national economy. The impact of smallholder irrigation (Gowe) obviously was minimal because of the small size of plots leased out to the irrigators by TILCOR or ARDA. In fact, complex projects like Gowe involving a great deal of administrative control and long-term involvement by the controlling agency (ARDA) were less likely to succeed than small schemes which require low levels of initial capital investment and provide maximum independence to the settlers (tenants). However, the impact of the Main Estate on the development not only of the surrounding community but also of the regional as well as the national economy cannot be underestimated.

The impact of the Major Irrigation Estate can be measured against the background that it was responsible for employment creation, provision of housing for its permanent workforce and development of a major irrigation-based growth point in the northwestern part of the country among other things. The Growth Point and the related services that it provides are largely attributable to the TILCOR-Estate irrigation idea, which was mooted by the colonial government some four decades ago. Sanyati is a hive of activity with the services that the GMB, COTTCO, GRAFAX Cotton (Pvt) Ltd, FSI Cotton, Cargill, Takwirira Trading and other retail shops are providing to the neighbouring farming community including parts of Gokwe along the Munyati River and close to the ARDA Estate such as Mero and Ganyungu. Cotton has been at the centre of this development.

Quite distinctly, cotton irrigation in Sanyati has produced very diverse forms of differentiation in the area between the plotters, the Estate administration and the surrounding dryland communities. As already alluded to, literature on peasant cotton production in colonial Africa has demonstrated that wherever cotton was grown, it

⁹⁷⁹ J. Gwerengwe (Estate Manager, ARDA Sanyati), Personal Interview, Sanyati Estate, 2nd May 1996. See also Bvunzawabaya, Personal Interview, 17th October 2006.

generated significant social inequalities. Clearly, the main beneficiaries of the cotton programme in ARDA's schemes were the resource-rich peasants of "immigrant" extraction who had ample access to essential productive resources, the Estate and of course the state. It is imperative to note that the Estate is mainly concerned with processes of control and it is an efficient means of relaying instructions downwards to the tenants, yet communication upwards is blocked. Therefore, there is very little feedback or contribution that comes from below. The DC, on the other hand, who was the overseer of the Estate, appeared to be the representative of the plottolders but in his supervisory role it was evident that he did not support the numerous calls for more land from the very people he purported to represent. For example, he would drive from Gatooma to the Estate merely to use the Rest House for his purposes and then drive back without attending to the growing clamours for bigger plots on the part of the Gowe tenants. In addition to his chief duties, this also made him an ever-present symbol of the authority of the Scheme. The DC's attitude is understandable in the context of an Estate which was developed more with the interests of the state in mind than of the Gowe farmers.

Cotton agriculture is a labour and capital intensive venture and since the availability of capital was not always guaranteed to the plottolders a lot of personal initiative was required to compete with the rest and measure up to the expectations of the DC or the Estate management. It has been noted in chapter two that differentiation predated the irrigation era. This chapter has demonstrated that differentiation assumed much greater proportions with the advent of both cotton and irrigation. In the irrigation era, the bases of differentiation became more diversified. This was so as land and labour were no longer the only major determinants of this process. An array of factors ranging from the plottolder's relationship with the Estate, the DC and his capital base which was also a function of his ability to meet land rent and water rate obligations increasingly became important bases of differentiation. For the majority of the Gowe tenants, however, participation in large-scale cotton growing was constrained by lack of adequate land, lack of sufficient productive resources, big enough loan packages and other agricultural support services, which were so generously availed to their white commercial counterparts by the Government and Agro-Finance Houses such as the AFC.

The chapter has also examined the impact of the liberation war on both the dryland and irrigation sectors in Sanyati. It has noted that the struggle had a more significant effect on dryland production than it had on ARDA irrigation. As far as the Estate was concerned the reduction in the activities of the labour force and reduced time of work because of the enforcement of an all-night curfew was its greatest impact. To some extent, the Second Chimurenga impeded accumulation among both the well-to-do and the less-to-do plottolders.

However, despite the problems experienced by the two irrigation schemes it cannot be doubted that with proper management, sufficient resources and higher levels of community participation (ownership) irrigation can be an instrument for sustainable development and for the promotion of social and economic differentiation in the rural areas. While irrigation has not benefited everyone the forms of socio-economic differentiation it engendered in Sanyati are significant. Clearly, in this period irrigation

differentiated peasant farmers more than the system of agriculture in the 1930s up to the early 1960s. Thus, the irrigation era led to the emergence of more distinct categories of rich (better off peasants) and poor than at any time before. Whether Independence provided a congenial economic and political environment for the development of rural differentiation will be examined in the next chapter.