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FROM CATTLE HERDERS TO CASH EARNERS: THE EMERGENCE OF A MIGRANT WAGE LABOUR CLASS AND ITS IMPACT ON LIVESTOCK ECONOMY AMONG THE AKAMBA OF MACHAKOS, KENYA, 1895-1963.

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ABSTRACT:

The article examined the paradigm shift from livestock production to wage labor as a response to colonial capitalism among the Akamba of Machakos, 1895-1963. It used the ''concept of the articulation of modes of production" to explain the development of labour migration in Machakos during the colonial period as a result of the economic changes brought about by the British colonial rule. Methodology involved data collection from primary and secondary sources. Primary data included archival and oral sources while secondary data entailed a detailed analysis of existing literature on colonial labor history as well as livestock production in Kenya. The study established that on the eve of colonial rule, livestock economy was the mainstay of the Akamba and as such, labour was mainly directed to animal husbandry. It also established that colonial policies like land alienation, labor laws and taxation undermined the livestock sector while at the same time nurturing and intensifying the development of wage labor in Machakos. The study therefore maintains that the decline of the livestock economy among the Akamba of Machakos was corollary to the emergence of wage labor.

KEYWORDS: Akamba, Articulation of Modes of Production, Colonial Capitalism, Livestock Economy, Migrant Wage Labour.

INTRODUCTION

On the eve of colonial rule, the Akamba of Machakos had a reliable and self-sufficient livestock economy which was supplemented by crop production. Livestock was highly valued among the Akamba because it was the hallmark of wealth. It had both economic and social functions. However, cattle was highly valued among all because it had many advantages. Furthermore, cattle was an accepted measure for evaluating wealth, as it served as a unit of accounting against which the value of prestige goods, like hoes or cloth, was measured. Apart from that, it acted as a source of food during dry seasons when crops would fail. It would also be exchanged with the neighbouring communities like the Agikuyu to acquire other commodities like grains especially during famine. Livestock therefore, ensured food security to the Akamba (Matheka, 1992). As such, livestock was a dominant economic activity among the Akamba of Machakos on the eve of colonial rule. Accordingly, labour was mainly organized around livestock care and management where roles were assigned for different roles pertaining animal

husbandry. As such there was a clear division of labour for different roles like herding, animal care, milking and handling of milk and milk products as well as handling of livestock management equipment.

However, the establishment of colonial rule transformed the above type of relationship into something new that played a crucial role in the development of external labour migration at the expense of livestock production. This was necessitated by the negative attitude that the colonial state had towards livestock. According to Spencer (1983), the colonial state felt that its dream of turning Kenya into a flourishing European colony would never come true as long as livestock keeping continued being a dominant economic activity. This is because according to the colonial state, livestock industry had no part to play in the colonial economy. For instance, Sir Charles Eliot, the Commissioner of the East Africa Protectorate and the chief architect of European settlement in Kenya affirmed that the pastoralist way of life would not be sustained in the face of the advances of western ideas and technologies. He decried what he described as backward characteristics of pastoralists which he alleged were traceable to the infancy of the human race (Anderson, 1993). This negative perception of pastoralism was further reinforced by the Darwin three stage theory which placed the hunter –gatherer at the bottom of the civilization ladder and the cultivator at the top. Pastoralism being in the middle was viewed half-way between the two and was consequently regarded as a barrier to civilization which needed to be bridged (Spencer, 1983). As such, pastoralism as a whole was seen as a brake to the development of the country, an uncivilized body that could be curbed for the benefit of the entire country. Hence this kind of attitude became the guiding principal in the formulation of policies for pastoral areas. Hence, the colonial policies which were introduced during this time tended to favour other ventures like cash crop production and wage labour. However, given the poor environmental conditions in Machakos like erratic rainfall and infertile soil, the motivation to invest in cash crop production was not a major goal for the establishment of a British presence. Therefore, Machakos was seen majorly as a labour reservoir for the colonial administration and the white settlers. Accordingly, the colonial administration introduced policies like land alienation, labour laws and taxation which were tailored towards undermining livestock industry while at the same time promoting wage labour. As a result, many Akamba tended to abandon animal husbandry to engage in wage labour such that by the time Kenya gained its independence, livestock industry was no longer the principal sector of the economy of Machakos because it had already been subordinated to other ventures mainly wage labour. This article therefore employed the concept of the articulation of modes of production to explore the structural shift of labour from livestock economy to wage labour among the Akamba of Machakos and how it occurred. The study proceeded from the premise that the colonial policies like land alienation, forced labour, taxation and commercialization of the African indigenous economy acted as the principal catalysts that intensified the shift of labour from livestock industry to wage labour among the Akamba of Machakos.

Objective of the study
To analyze the impact of the development of a migrant wage labour class on livestock economy among the Akamba of Machakos.

Significance of the study
The findings of this study are expected to be useful to policy makers both at the national and county levels in policy formulation on livestock production. It is also expected that the outcomes of this study will go a long way into building the historiography of the history of livestock economy in Kenya, East Africa and the continent as a whole, inspiring other scholars and researchers and acting as reference resource for other scholars.

STUDY METHODOLOGY

Study Area
The study was conducted in Machakos County formerly Machakos District in the period 1895-1963. Machakos County is one of the forty seven counties in Kenya and one of the eight counties in the Eastern region (Tiffen et al 1994). Machakos District formed part of Kenya's former Eastern Province.

Data Collection
This study drew extensively from both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources included oral interviews (OI) and archival materials which were obtained from the Kenya National Archives (KNA). Oral interviews involved posing questions to individuals who were well acquainted with wage labour information. Colonial chiefs and colonial headmen were also interviewed. These informants provided data underscoring the place of labour in livestock industry during the pre-colonial period and also the effect of capitalism labour system in the context of Akamba livestock production system. Archival research was conducted at the Kenya National Archives (KNA) in Nairobi. Archival sources were used to corroborate and authenticate secondary data. The study also utilized secondary data on labour history and livestock industry in Kenya in general and Machakos in particular.

FINDINGS

Migration and Settlement
The Akamba, a fairly large Bantu tribe reside in present-day Machakos County, Kitui County and Makueni County. They have inhabited these places since the pre-colonial period (Manzi, 2000). Studies about the origin of the Akamba are diverse and sometimes contradictory. However, many historians, writing on the subject agree that the Akamba came to their present homelands from the south. Jackson (1976) traces the place of origin of Akamba migration northwards in the stretch of countryside that radiates outwards from Mount Kilimanjaro. He notes that in this semi-arid area, the Akamba kept livestock, hunted wildlife and collected edible plants and roots. According to Matheka (1992), the Akamba began to move out of the Kilimanjaro Plains towards the end of the 16th century due to competition for resources with the Maasai and other pastoral groups. They arrived in present-day Machakos around 1600. Here

they first became consolidated as a separate people and turned increasingly to agriculture (Owako, 1947). Eventually, overpopulation and overcrowding forced them to move and clear the bushes, and the traditional land-use system of integrating highland agriculture with lowland cattle-grazing came into being (Lambert, 1947). According to Wamalwa (1989), cattle owners led the settlement of dry frontier lands, attracted to the superior grazing on the plains. They started establishing cattle posts which later became permanent villages. In this and other moves, the Akamba retained integrated highland/lowland, crop/livestock systems of land use. The main reason of the land-tenure system was to spread risk and ensure group survival. The system was flexible, equitable, and geared towards benefitting the community as a whole. The settlement of the Akamba in the above areas helped them to transform their pastoral economy. First, as Ambler (1988) states, the Akamba settlements in these areas had the advantage of access to extensive pasturelands, and as a rule, farmers living in these drier sections placed great emphasis on herding. He stresses that the great attraction of settling in the relatively open lands of northern Ulu was of course, the opportunity for increased livestock ownership. This emphasis on herding provided a basis for expanded trade with the highlands. They established a strong trade link with some agricultural societies living around Mount Kenya. Further, they established trade relations with the coastal Swahili and Arabs popularly known as the long distance trade. In this trade, the Akamba acted as middlemen between the Mount Kenya region and the coast. Ndolo (1989) also supports this by observing that the involvement of the Akamba in the long distance trade made their demand for livestock to go up thus intensifying their production of livestock. Accordingly, livestock keeping became predominant among the Akamba. Hence, the pre-colonial labour organization among the Akamba mainly revolved around livestock care and management where different roles pertaining animal husbandry were assigned to different members of the family according to age and gender. This is made clear in the next section.

The Place of Labour in the Pre-Colonial Akamba Livestock Economy.

During the pre-colonial period, livestock was not only a source of consumption goods but also an agency for protection, sustenance and perpetuation of labour. Ndege (1989) observes that livestock accumulation was not an end in itself but it was practiced in order to transform these cattle into human beings, thereby increasing the size of the social group and the amount of labour power at the command of an individual. Thus, individuals used livestock to expand their lineages and to create friends or clients which translated into more labour for creating more wealth.

In the same line, Ambler (1988) argues that livestock and labour were inextricably intertwined in the societies of Central Kenya (implying Kamba, kikuyu and Maasai). Since land was freely available, prosperity and security depended essentially on access to and control over labor. A fact that was illustrated in the popular aphorism *andu ni indo,* "people are livestock" in this case, livestock was the measure of wealth, so Indeed, "*andu ni indo"* could be translated to mean not only "people are livestock" but it also means "people are wealth." People in this case represented labour while livestock represented wealth. So we can go further and argue that 'labour was wealth'. As such, labour played a crucial role in accumulation of livestock or rather wealth. Thus, the

expansion of labour was the surest indicator of wealth as it meant further livestock accumulation. Thus, men built up their bases of wealth first by expanding their families, generally by marrying additional wives and sometimes through the adoption of dependents (Ambler, 1988). They gained control over more labor through hire, through the development of patron-client relationships, and through the manipulation of social obligations (Krapf, 1860). For example, the poor settled around a wealthy stock-owner so that they could obtain milk from his compound, in return they helped him with farm-work and in other activities (Oral Interview [OI]. Musembi Joseph at Ngelani on 07/11/2020).

Apparently, the Akamba household drew laborers not only from its own members but sometimes from the cattle associates in one homestead or nearby homesteads and clan's affine and brothers' in-law. All these groups of people were assigned different tasks in livestock management and care. It is therefore clear that there was division of labour as far as livestock management was concerned. This is revealed in the section below.

Division of Labour in Animal Husbandry

On the eve of colonial rule, the Akamba had a clear division of labour based on gender and age. Members of the family were assigned different roles including herding livestock, care of the young and sick animals, milking, handling of milk products and milking equipments (OI. Tabitha Kilonzo at Matuu on 30/11/2020).

According to the oral sources, it was the responsibility of men and boys to herd and also see to the wellbeing of the animals. Small animals like goats and sheep would be left under the care of women and young boys and sometimes, old men. When animals were taken to graze, if the distance was short, the animals were returned to the homestead in the evening and would be put in an enclosure located within the homestead. That was mostly during the wet season when the herders did not have to take the animals far away from home since pasture was plentiful. It was only during the times of famines or when the rains failed that the boys took the animals to graze far away in the fields in search of pasture and water. It was a usual practice for the livestock from the same village to mingle and graze together. Boys and young men who were grazing together helped one another to drive wild animals such as leopards, hyenas and even lions as it was easier for the boys to scare away hyenas or lions while in a group rather than as individuals (OI Katiko Musyoka at Iveti on 04/11/2020).

Secondly, this method of grazing the cattle together offered the herds boys the opportunity to co-operate and interact freely. It was a means of bringing the boys together for socialization. The boys would play various games such as archery, jumping, racing, throwing and hide-and-seek, while the cattle grazed in the fields or even rested in the shade. This way the herds' boys avoided loneliness and boredom throughout the day. Therefore, the boys enjoyed grazing the animals together (OI Katiko Musyoka at Iveti on 04/11/2020). The responsibility of exchanging livestock for other goods in barter trade rested squarely on men.

Milking was done by women twice a day. This was mainly in the morning and in the evening. However, when the calves grew older, the milking would be done only in the morning. Sometimes young unmarried boys helped their mothers with the milking (OI.Tabitha Kilonzo at Matuu on 30/10/2020).The handling and storage of milk was also a woman's affair. Milk that was not to be used immediately would put in a special gourd *kitete* and left for several days to become sour after which it was taken through the process called *kuthuka.* This involved shaking the *kitete* back and forth vigorously till the milk became fine. A plant called *mutei* would be used to season the milk. The sour milk would then be sieved to separate it from butter. The sour milk will be mixed with millet to make a meal while the butter would be used as cooking fat. Women could also prepare butter and ghee through a technique which called for churning the milk in a calabash until butter started collecting. The milk was then poured into a large half-calabash and then collected and ladled off by a wooden spoon. Butter that was not going to be used right away was mixed with millet flour then boiled. This was done to absorb the impurities of the remaining milk. This was the method used to extract ghee from butter (OI.Tabitha Kilonzo at Matuu on 30/10/2020). Women were also the ones who would exchange milk and milk products through barter trade to obtain other goods.

However, the establishment of an alien rule changed this scenario, hence leading to the alteration of this organization. Therefore, the next section examines how colonial rule changed the organization of labour in relation to the system of livestock production among the Akamba of Machakos.

The Advent of Colonialism

In the 1890s, the Akamba experienced the first significant contact with colonial officials and administration (Rocheleau *et.al,* 1995). In January 1889, Fredrick Jackson established an IBEA temporary post at Nzaui. The company officials then built the first permanent post near Masaku's homestead (which they misspelled as Machakos). The British used the company to administer the East Africa Protectorate as part of the Berlin Conference's requirement of effective occupation (Muendo, 2015). However, following the failure of the private Imperial British East Africa Company to administer the territory, The British Crown took over the administration of the East Africa Protectorate. Consequently on 15 June 1895, a protectorate henceforth known as the East Africa Protectorate (EAP) was declared over the territory between Uganda and the coast. Subsequently, the administration was formally transferred from the company to the protectorate authorities on 30 June, 1895. Thereafter, under John Ainsworth's (the first Sub-Commissioner of Ukamba province, 1892-1899), the whole of Ukambani was brought under British control and the IBEAC system of administration was replaced by formal colonialism in 1895 (Mwikali & Tanui, 2021). During this, the main concern of the embryonic colonial state was to find cheap labour and to create the conditions necessary for colonial development. Therefore, to control the sources of uncertainty and instability in the labour supply, the colonial state used coercion and expanded the scope and intensity of its intervention in Africans pre-colonial production system. The colonial state therefore instituted several measures to ensure steady supply of labour for government projects and for the white settlers.

Measures Instituted by the Colonial State to Obtain African Labour.

a. Land Alienation

One of the method used to force the Africans into wage labour was alienating their most fertile land hence rendering them landless and desperate. This was done through the encouragement of the settlement of the white settlers who were perceived as the would-be agents of change. European immigration was thus encouraged from the premises that they would produce for export. This was supported by Commissioner Charles Eliot who opposed the earlier proposals of the settlement of the Indians in the highlands (Sorrenson, 1968).

The settlement of the European immigrants in the Kenya highlands was made through a number of land ordinances which made it possible for the alienation of African land. The ordinances included; Lands Acquisition Act of 1894, the 1902 East Africa (Lands) Order in Council, Crown Lands Ordinance of 1902 among others. However, among the land laws, the one with the most adverse effect on the African population was the Crown Lands Ordinance of 1902 which declared all African "unoccupied" land as Crown Land (Mungeam, 1976). It provided for more stringent and detailed land policies which opened a new chapter in the history of land expropriation in Kenya. Moreover, it opened the way for European Settlement in Kenya, making large areas of land to be alienated for settlers under the principle of ownership of interest (Sorrenson, 1968). Under this act, the Europeans were given land alienated from Africans and Africans moved to the reserves. Another important Ordinance was the Crown Land Ordinance of 1915 which declared the Africans as the tenants at the will of the Crown. As such, Africans were then confined to reserves. The colonial policies put Africans at the mercy of the colonial government. Their land was taken away and they were denied the right to own land in the reserves. Consequently, the Akamba lost effective access to about two-thirds of the land which they had formerly controlled including their most fertile lands and half of all their pasture. Along with some of their best grazing land, they lost the freedom to migrate seasonally and periodically in search of water, pasture, and cropland. The unfavorable situation in the reserves forced many Akamba to look for alternative settlements. Some became squatters on European farms, while others sought paid employment in white settler farms. The effect was the withdrawal of labour from the livestock sector. Apart from land alienation, the colonial state also imposed tax to force the Africans to engage in wage labour. Thus, the next section describes how taxes were levied from the Akamba of Machakos and how it affected their pre-colonial labour and livestock economy.

b. Imposition of Taxes

As much as taxes were initially introduced to meet the cost of colonial administration and to make the country self- sufficient, Ndege (1989) argues that the colonial state also used taxation as one of the measures to compel Africans into wage labour. Thus, its intended advantages to the colonial administration were two-fold, namely to drive young men to work and to raise revenue for the Protectorate. To stress this point, the then colonial governor of Kenya Henry Belfield put it that;

> We consider that taxation is the only possible method of compelling the native to leave his reserve for the purpose of seeking work (Clayton and Savage, 1974).

The imposition of the Hut Tax Regulations, which gave the authority to the colonial government to collect hut tax (a tax on all huts used as a dwelling) from the Africans was imposed in 1900. However, due to the shortcomings of the hut tax to meet the needs of revenue collection, a Poll Tax became effective in the district in 1909. This tax was to be paid by all male adults of over sixteen years (Tarus, 2004).
For the Akamba who disliked wage labour, the easiest way to meet tax requirements for the Akamba was from the sale of stock. Indeed, the Akamba used to call the tax "a livestock tax", because they always had to part with their livestock to pay it. Nevertheless, the continual drain on livestock for tax payment affected the Akamba livestock industry adversely because money for the payment of hut tax was obtained almost entirely by the sale of livestock. The consequence of this was the further depletion of livestock among the Akamba. The depletion of livestock in turn led to more people turning into wage labour. Many people who did not have a lot of livestock to sell left the reserve in search of employment in order to meet their tax obligation. Hence, the study can advance that, as with other African communities in Kenya, the need to earn tax money forced the Akamba to offer their labour to the colonial capitalists hence impacting negatively on the pre-colonial livestock industry.

c. Monetization of the Economy

According to Matheka (1992), the first two decades of colonial rule in Machakos saw new developments in trade and exchange. This was marked by the emergence of new market centres and the introduction of money. The colonial state made effort to see to it that trade flourished in Machakos. For instance, in a circular to District Commissioners (D.Cs) in 1909, E.P.C. Girouard, the then Governor of Kenya, emphasised that it was "an important duty of District Commissioners to encourage trade by every means in their power". To ensure that the trade in Machakos succeeded, the colonial government with the help of Indian merchants undertook to set up shops in Machakos. Hence, by 1900, 54 shops had been set up in various trade centres in Machakos district. (Machakos District Annual Report, 1908-09). These shops were owned by Indian traders who for the first time sold consumption goods such as cotton, shawls, blankets, sugar, kerosene lamps and salt (Munro, 1975). One feature of this trade was that money was increasingly used as a medium of exchange while bartering of commodities was dying out slowly. Local commodities were now exchanged more often using the new currency introduced by the colonial government in trade between the Akamba, Maasai and Kikuyu. This new trend could only mean that livestock was gradually ceasing to be a medium of exchange as it had been during the pre-colonial era. On the other hand, the need to raise money for buying the foreign commodities sold by the Indian traders led to the intensification of livestock selling and engagement in wage labour. This means that cash economy had now penetrated the Machakos economy. Given that these commodities used to be bought with rupees and the wages also used to paid using the rupee, some Akamba opted to abandon livestock keeping and seek wage labour to obtain the cash money needed to acquire these material goods.

As such, the pre-colonial barter method, though still dominant, co-existed with the new cash economy. Apparently, the capitalist penetration through formal trade transformed the pre-colonial trade from barter trade to cash trade. Consequently, livestock ceased to be the medium of exchange and it's placed taken by cash money. As such, the pre-colonial barter method, though still dominant, co-existed with the new cash economy. As a result, livestock was no longer valued as a measure of value and wealth as it had been during the pre-colonial period. This impacted negatively on the sector. Apart from land alienation and taxation, the livestock economy of Machakos would also experience disruption from a punitive regime of forced labour. The following section addresses this issue.

d. The Imposition of Labour Laws

Land without labour to work on was of little use to the settlers. This was a statement made by Lord Delamere, the mouthpiece of the white settlers. His statement thus set the motion for the determined efforts by the colonial administration to make the African people provide the labour force required to prop the settler economy. Wolff (1974) argues that even though the colonial state needed labour for its own work like construction of roads and bridges, the turning-point of the articulation process and colonial demand for labour in the country was the colonial state's decision to promote a settler economy. The establishment of farms run by settlers created tension that remained at the basis of the Kenyan economy for the subsequent years. The establishment of white settlers' plantations, together with the demand for workers coming from the colonial state, produced a "perpetual search for labour" that lasted from the early twentieth century until the 1950s (Pallaver, 2018).There was conflicting co-existence of African peasant production with the settlers' demand for cheap African labour. Settlers were convinced that, given that the government had "invited" them to East Africa, it was its duty to provide labourers for their undertakings. Therefore, one of the main concerns of the government became to find labourers for the white settlers (Pallaver, 2018). To this end, these years witnessed the passing of a series of labour laws. These included among others the Master and Servants Ordinance of 1906 and 1910 which defined labour relations between the employers and employees. The Native Registration Ordinance of 1915 enforced the registration of African adult males to facilitate labour recruitment. The Resident Natives Ordinance of 1918 stated that all rent paid by squatters on European farms must be paid in labor. Further, all squatters had to work at least 180 days in the European farm in a year. This labour laws had an adverse effect on the African socio-economic development as they did not have the time and freedom to attend to their own duties. However, the labour law that had the most profound effect on the Africans was the Native Registration Ordinance of 1920 which forced all the African men over sixteen years to carry a pass or *kipande* (Ochieng, 1985). The Ordinance made a 'servant" desertion from his "master" a criminal offence (Zwanenberg, 1975). Henceforth, the infamous *kipande* system started operations in the whole colony. This was an attempt to systemize and control African labour in that; once a worker was registered he could not be deregistered. Moreover, it facilitated the enforcement of labour contracts in that it enabled penal sections to be returned to their former employers. Tracing of runaways employees was possible because local chiefs helped in tracing such deserters. Any African who travelled outside his reserve without his *Kipande* was liable to be arrested by the police (Karigi, 2015).

It is therefore clear that by using the labour policies, the colonial government was able to force the people of Machakos into new capitalist mode of production as it forced them to engage in wage labour. Furthermore, the expatriation of Akamba men to work outside their homelands greatly affected their livestock production as the outflow of male labour created acute labour shortages for the livestock economy in Machakos. The result was a breakdown of the traditional division of labour between men and women because many men left the reserve and went to seek for wage labour outside the district. In response, the traditional household division of labour was adjusted. Young men, the elderly and women increasingly took part in animal husbandry as opposed to the pre-colonial period. In light of the foregoing, this article concludes that the colonial labour demands impacted negatively on the Akamba pre-colonial production systems especially livestock production. Nevertheless, the labour laws could not be imposed effectively on the Africans without the involvement of native authority which could act as a link between the natives and the colonial state. Therefore, colonial chiefs were appointed to help in labour mobilization. Therefore, the next section delves into the appointment of chiefs and their role in the development of wage labour class.

e. Appointment of Chiefs

Despite the imposition of labour laws and taxation, the supply of African labour was still felt to be inadequate. Hence, there was need for a system of native administration to help in procuring cheap labour (Ochieng', 1985). This was the reasoning behind the village Headman Ordinance of 1902 which greatly helped in labour mobilization from the Africans. This led to a system of state control on labour that by the 1920s was, in its scope and intensity, greater than in any other British colony in Africa (Pallaver, 2018). The ordinance authorized government appointed officials to recruit labour for public work deemed to be in the interest of the village. According to Tarus (2004), Chiefs and Headmen were expected to do their best to provide labour for the construction of roads, government buildings, construction of dams, bridges and for the European settlers. Later, using Native Authority Laws of 1910 and 1912, these headmen were required to compel Africans to suspend their domestic production to work on assigned government projects (Mwaruvie, 1991). All able-bodied males and females in the reserves were forced to offer labour in government projects (Presley, 1992).

Through the colonial chiefs, coercion became one of the chief tools employed by the colonial government to obtain African labour. The colonial chiefs punished those who failed to turn out for communal work. For instance, failure to carry out such colonial requirements as roadwork was punished by seizure of one's livestock as a fine. One informant noted that the construction of roads was so forceful that if an individual within the location which the road was under construction did not participate, his livestock would be confiscated (OI. Musyoka Ndolo at Mbiuni on 01/11/2020). As a consequent, the Akamba became fully integrated in the wage labour force. This consumed much of their time which they could have used in attending to their livestock, hence, undermining the development of the livestock industry in Machakos. The onset of WWI would further occasion a transformation in the livestock economy of Machakos.

The First World War and Its Impact on Machakos Livestock Production.

The outbreak of the First World War had contradictory effects on the Akamba livestock economy. It became a catalyst for transforming the African livestock economy into an important aspect of a market economy and a source of income. By so doing, it caused a closer incorporation of African peasants into the colonial economy. African local production of foodstuff came under the control of the state, owing to the enormous demand for food for troops and porters engaged in the East African Campaign (Tarus, 2004). The military also demanded livestock for slaughter to feed the soldiers and as a means of transport in areas where tsetse flies were absent. Required were sheep, goats and cattle while camels were procured in the dry and remote Northern Frontier District. It is estimated that up to 3000 cattle and 15,000 sheep were required each month to serve the needs of the combatants during the war (Overton, 1989). The army supply officers established stations for buying livestock among the Maasai, the Akamba, Kalenjin and in Nyanza exclusively to purchase livestock from Africans (Overton, 1989). The Africans were forced to sell large numbers of livestock to meet the war demands.

Furthermore, from 1916, the colonial government raised the hut and poll tax from Rs. 5 to Rs. 6 in order to raise funds for the war demands. In this case, the Akamba of Machakos had to sell more livestock to buy food and also meet the tax obligations. This had an adverse effect on livestock.

Apart from livestock, the colonial government also procured large amounts of labour to serve in the First World War and in the civil service. In regard to this, the P.C. for Ukamba Province observed that;

> The government asked without ceasing for two of the main assets and most cherished possessions of a native tribe - their young men and stock (Overton, 1989).

Apparently, so many people left the reserve to go and take part in the WWI. In comparative terms, the specific impact of war-time labour demands on the people of Machakos can be discerned from the statistics reproduced in table 1 below.

Table 1: Labour Recruitment for the War Effort in Machakos District (1914-1919)

Type of labour	1914-1915	1915-1916	1916-1917	1917-18	1918-19
Registered for labour outside the district	1,411	3,115	4,095	4,369	91
Registered for labour inside the district	-	150	450	413	660
Carrier corps	516	2,117	3,900	5,076	-

Source: KNA/DC/MKS 1/1/10, 1917-18:47; 1919-20:7.

It is evident from the table above that many Akamba of Machakos were recruited for work outside the district between 1916 and 1919. In this case, they were recruited to provide labour for the war. The years 1916-1918 are depicted as having the highest number of the recruits from Machakos. This can be explained by the forced recruitment from 1916. According to Parsons (1999), at first, recruitment to the war was voluntary. However, not enough men volunteered to join the Carrier Corps, and forced recruitment began in 1916. Chiefs and their assistants pressed Africans into war service by outright armed forces. The colonial government also recruited carrier corps in large numbers. Machakos district contributed a considerable number of carrier corps as compared to her neighbours in Ukamba Province. Table 2 summarizes the number of carrier corps recruited in Ukamba Province during WWI.

Table 2: Carrier Corps Labour, Ukamba Province (1915-18)

STATION	1915-16	1916-17	1917-18
Nairobi	747	832	1,345
Kikuyu	2,599	2,359	2,552
Machakos (Ulu)	2,117	3,900	5,076
Kitui	3,064	3,885	3,470
TOTAL	8,527	10,976	12,443

Source: KNA/DC/KBU 1/11, 1917-18, 64

Table 2 above demonstrates that Machakos was the largest contributor of the Carrier Corps in Ukamba Province especially in 1918-1919 when it contributed 41% of the total number of carrier corps in the whole province. The spike in the numbers in 1918-1919 can be explained by the increased demands by the colonial state to the Machakos Akamba. According to Munro (1975), in early 1917, when animal and mechanical transport for the East African Campaign failed due to tsetse fly, Machakos District was forced to surrender 77.15 per cent of her able-bodied men as carrier corps for the war effort. In addition, as the allied troops advanced into German East Africa in 1916 and 1917, the need for carriers increased, and the administration in African areas more aggressively sought out able-bodied men from the Africans (Maxon, 1986).

Besides the procurement cited above, the war intensified the impoverishment of the livestock economy of the district in various ways. First, about 3,000 Carriers died in the war. To borrow from Maxon's words, 'Many men who went to war never returned as they died in a war of little concern to them' (Maxon, 1986). Consequently, for the Akamba, loss of livestock was one enduring collective memory. By 1918, the continued calls for military labour had led to severe population loss and dislocation in many parts of Kenya. As the demand for fighters grew, so did labour supplies and livestock in Machakos decrease. Consequently, during this period, not enough men were home to provide adequate labour for livestock production. Generally, Machakos had become a labour pool for the colony hence, draining it of its best youthful labourers who, during the pre-colonial era, had been relied upon for herding and raiding for livestock. Famine and social distress resulted. Again, in 1916, tax was also increased considerably to meet

the cost of the war (Tarus, 2004).Given that most of the Akamba people obtained their tax money from the sale of livestock, the increase in tax rates definitely meant selling more livestock and also more involvement in wage labour.

The forgoing indicates that the continual exploitation of the Akamba livestock economy for military use resulted in the general decline of its performance. Furthermore, the demand for labour to serve in the war also resulted in loss of livestock among those who had to bribe the chiefs with livestock so as to spare them from being forcefully conscripted into the war. To make matters worse, the war depleted the able-bodied men who had been charged with livestock management duties during the pre-colonial period. Consequently, African manpower resource was diverted to the war effort hence livestock production was abandoned or left to the old men, women and children.

The Kakuti Famine, the Dwindling Livestock Economy and the Shift to Wage Labour

The Kakuti famine describes the locusts' action of stripping the land of its vegetative cover. It occurred from 1928-29 as a result of locust plague and the interruption of established rainfall patterns. The famine forced many Akamba who in the earlier years avoided wage labour to finally seek for it. This was a major change because as noted earlier, up to the end of the First World War, although some Akamba were in wage labour, most of them fulfilled their tax obligation and material needs through the sale of livestock. Until then, the Akamba entered the labor market selectively. They sought jobs, which offered either higher pay or were considered superior. They were therefore found mostly as porters, in the police and K.A.R., in the railways and on the Mombasa Docks. (Machakos District Annual Report, 1928). However, they disliked working in the settler farms. For instance, the fiber plantations located halfway between the Akamba reserves and Mombasa looked to Kavirondo labour to meet their labour requirements as Akamba labour was disinterested in the jobs offered by them. They had to be forced out under the Native Authority Ordinance or redirected on to European farms through the use of the Native Registration Ordinance (Gupta, 1973). As a result, throughout the first two decades of colonial rule, the District Commissioners complained of their unwillingness to work on government projects and settler farms. Even many young, unestablished men avoided wage labour because their fathers paid their taxes through the sale of livestock thereby outbidding the government and settlers for their labour. This tendency to escape wage labour was often interpreted in terms of the 'lazy native' (Munro, 1975). Tignor (1976) has argued that for the Akamba, livestock was not just a buffer against crop failures but also a protection against the exploitative colonial labour market (Parsons, 1999).

However, from the mid-1920s, the *Kakuti* famine which occurred as a result of the 1928-29 drought struck a blow at the self-sufficiency of the tribe (Machakos District Annual Report.1930: 9).The great famine resulted from locust plague and the interruption of established rainfall patterns. These factors combined to eliminate the interdependence between ecological zones. Second, the locusts destroyed both crops and pasture. This weakened the livestock industry which the Akamba had depended on for milk and blood in periods of food scarcity. Lack of pasture not only made cattle too

weak to provide food and/or sell but also caused a heavy mortality (Matheka, 1992). Moreover, it was estimated that during the drought, as many as 60,000 head of Akamba cattle were either sold, eaten in place of other food or died from lack of pasture (Machakos District Annual Report, 1930). The colonial government, eager to see a reduction in the number of Akamba livestock, refused to offer any assistance and insisted that the Akamba had a lot livestock which they could sell to get money for food and tax. This led to a major paradigm shift from majorly livestock oriented economy to more preferences in wage labour.

The shift was evident from the number of the Akamba seeking wage labour in the late 1920s and early 1930s. For example, while there were only 2,581 people working outside the district in 1926, the number grew to a monthly average of 6,730 in October 1928 and 8,501 in October 1929. (Machakos District Annual Report, 1928-30). The increase in labour migrancy was a reflection of worsening conditions in the reserve. For example, in 1931, the D.C. observed that;

> "In the previous decades, the Machakos Akamba paid their taxes and fines promptly due to their livestock wealth and only extra-economic measures could force them to enter wage labour in large numbers the way they are doing now." (Machakos District Annual Report, 1931).

The paradox of the time was that although before 1925 it had been necessary to apply the provisions of the Native Authority Ordinance to obtain 500 men for work on the Thika-Nyeri railway line, in 1929, labour recruiters in Machakos now easily obtained considerable numbers of men for work outside the district. (Machakos District Annual Report, 1931). Similarly, European sisal estates in Kiambu and Thika, which were renowned for their oppressive labour conditions, had enough Akamba casual labourers in 1929 (Tignor, 1976). The labour Department Report of 1937 noted that neither secondary industry nor agriculture outside the Native Land Units could absorb a very much larger proportion of African labour as was the number seeking for wage labour (Parsons, 1999).

Other Akamba men were offered employment in the military which was a reliable source of income. In addition, military service also granted *askaris* an exemption from taxation and forced labor. Thus, the government service in general, and the KAR in particular, became increasingly popular among the Akamba in the 1930s. acknowledging this new development, the District Commissioner noted that;

> Although the Kamba still dislike manual labor, there is a sharp rise in the number of applicants for the few available openings in the KAR" (Machakos District Annual Report, 1931).

In addition to formal employment, the Akamba also engaged in squatting. One of the main reasons why the Akamba were willing to move onto European farms as squatters was because squatting provided land for cultivation and for the grazing of their herd.

Secondly, even though the level of wages on European farms was low, these supplemented the income obtained from land cultivation and livestock grazing and finally, the Native Authority Ordinance under which compulsory labour had to be provided for the repair and maintenance of roads, etc., exempted those who had provided wage labour for a period of 90 days in the settler farms (Gupta, 1973). However, as Tiffen (1994) notes, from 1929, the demand for squatting facilities in Machakos was greater than the European farms in the district could provide. Consequently, settlers took advantage of the situation and began agitating for conditions which were more favourable to them at the detriment of the African employees. For instance, they started pressing for the implementation of a 270-day working year and the reduction of the squatters stock in their farms from 10 to 5 heads of cattle for every male squatter. In short, the 1928-29 food and pasture shortage led to abundance of cheap labour and therefore the need to tighten squatting conditions. (Tiffen et al, 1994) While corroborating this reality, the D.C reported that;

> The shortage of food in the Reserve brought out both more casual and squatter labour for work on the farms. An endeavor has been made to tighten up the provisions of the Resident Native Laborers' Ordinance" (Machakos District Annual Report, 1928-30).

Nevertheless, the colonial administrators could not protect the African labourers because for them, the worsening condition of the Akamba reserve was a welcome development. This is evident from the words of the then D.C. who enthusiastically noted that;

> The lack of food consequent on drought had done something to cause the Akamba to seek employment away from home and it was only for such economic crisis that would have resulted in Akamba going out in large numbers to seek for wage employment as the Kavirondo and Kikuyu (Machakos District Annual Report, 1928-30).

The above statement shows that many Akamba especially men left the reserve to seek for wage labor. Consequently, socio-economic relation between men and women were greatly transformed. Women had to carry the burden regarding the production and the running of daily affairs of the household in the absence of men. Women cultivated land, took care of the livestock and even engaged in local trade to maintain their households. It was these new developments in division of labour between men in their work places and women in the reserves that became one of the means through which women were made to subsidize the development of the European economic sector. The impact on women was that they were left as the foundation of the subsistence sector. As such, women were indirectly integrated into the capitalist system. In other words, the traditional subsistence sector (pre-capitalist mode of production) and modern sector (capitalist mode of production) were existing side by side, as a product of capitalism.

From the foregoing, the study can advance several observations. Firstly, colonialism through its economic and labour policies created a crisis in local economic production. It accelerated the tendency to remove labour from animal husbandry in order to invest it in wage employment. Acute labour shortages also contributed to the famines in Machakos as the Akamba had relied on livestock for their food security during the pre-colonial period. Secondly, migratory labour caused the gradual decline of the once valued traditional communal work. The people of Machakos now attached more importance to cash as an exchange value. This meant that there was no free labour any longer. Labour itself had become a commodity which could be sold in exchange for money. Accordingly, there was deprivation of labour for animal husbandry. To make matters worse, just as the Akamba were adjusting to wage labour, the Great World Depression which occurred in the early 1930s dealt another blow to their livestock economy. This is detailed in the next section.

The Impact of the Great Depression

The Great Depression of 1929-33 immediately following the 1928-29 drought gave a death-blow to the self-sufficiency of the Akamba tribe. For instance in Machakos, the depression stagnated trade and virtually eliminated the demand for livestock and other locally produced commodities. The depression also affected the Machakos economy in that the prices of livestock, hides, skins and ghee fell drastically. These being the major trade items of the Akamba, they were left with no other choice but to sell most of their stock at any price offered in order to buy food and pay taxes (Gupta,1973).This in turn led to a sharp plunge in the value of livestock. In particular, cattle prices during 1932-1934 fell to a fifth of their level ten years earlier. According to indices compiled by Stanner (1938), in 1933, prices of cattle dropped not only in Machakos but Kenya as a whole. Kitching (1980) has also observed that during this time, cattle prices in Kenya were more adversely affected as compared to other commodities. He notes that;

> Though the money prices of food crops fell continuously from the late 1929 to 1934, the prices of cattle fell even more drastically during the same period. This was more due to a series of drought and locusts infestation, which affected pastoral areas particularly badly. (Kitching, 1980).

Surprisingly, the fall in stock prices during the depression was applauded as a "blessing in disguise" by the administration. In 1933 the District Commissioner of Machakos asserted that;

> Stock prices remain very low. This should be taken as a blessing in disguise in a district such as this, because it tends to dispel the illusion often cherished by natives as to the high value of their stock; and also because it necessitates a greater number of animals being sold to obtain a given sum of money, thus helping to reduce numbers (Machakos District Annual Report, 1934).

The economic disasters drove large numbers of Akamba seeking wage employment, and accepting employment as sisal cutters. Interestingly, jobs which would have been rejected before the depression were now acceptable. This indicated a general decline in alternative opportunities of earning income in the reserve. (Machakos District Annual Report 1937: 12). The trend was also accelerated by a nearly 30 percent jump in Ukambani's population during the interwar era (Gupta, 1973).

However, the availability of labour opportunities was short-lived as many settlers became bankrupt as a result of the depression. Hence, some were forced to abandon farming. Accordingly, the demand for African labour declined. As a result, employment and wages paid to workers declined. This made some of the Akamba who had been absorbed in wage to be declared redundant. Thus, the number of Machakos Akamba labourers in European farms was reduced from 6,739 in 1930 to 4,651 in 1931 and those who remained had their wages reduced by 15 per cent (Machakos District Annual Report, 1928-30). In short, the Akamba, who for a long time had been blamed for the colony's labour problems because of their being 'lazy and indolent' could not get employment when they needed it most (Matheka, 1992). The situation changed from one where labour shortages were frequently reported by European farmers to one of labour surplus. As Stitcher (1975) argues in the context of Kenya as a whole;

> Whereas in the 1920s the problem for settlers had been to extract enough labour from the peasant economy to realise profits from the high export prices, during the depression, the problem was swiftly reversed; how to wind down the settler enterprise, disemploy labour and tighten belts for a period of adversity became the problem (Stitcher, 1975).

While the Depression was taking its toll, Machakos livestock economy was further affected by the famine of Mavindi in 1934-35. The famine was an aftermath of the locust invasion which devastated the vegetation, crops and pastures not only in Machakos but in the entire Ukambani region Matheka (1992). This famine forced the Akamba whose livestock had been depleted as a result of the drought to seek for wage labour in order to buy food.

The conclusion that can be made from the foregoing is that the period of the Great depression was terribly a demoralizing one for the Machakos livestock economy in many ways. First, following the Great depression, the people of Machakos were fully drawn into the colonial economy. They had no choice but to participate in that economy through selling their labour. As a consequence, the people of Machakos became so dependent on wage-labour that they suffered a shock after the settlers laid most of them off. This is a clear indication of how a majority of the Akamba had come to accept wage labour as the only way to help them out of economic constrains. This was to the disadvantage of livestock economy which had hitherto played that role. Furthermore, before the Akamba could recover from the shockwaves of the Great Depression, they were further plunged into another world catastrophe; the outbreak of the Second World War. This is discussed below.

The World War II and the Increased Preference for Wage Labour

Perhaps the most demanding aspect of the World War II was the withdrawal of labour from Machakos for service in the King's African Rifles (KAR) in addition to other forms of employment. For example, in 1945, there were 15,000 Machakos Akamba in civilian employment, a similar number in the KAR, and many more conscripted as labourers in sisal farms in Thika. In short, over 50 per cent of the reserve's able-bodied men were out at work during the early 1940s (Machakos District Annual Report, 1939-45).

It is important to note that during the Second World War, wage labour especially military service, began to have a greater appeal among the Akamba. This was contrary to what had been witnessed during World War I when the Akamba had shown little interest in military service and actively resisted conscription into the Carrier Corps (Gupta 1973). One of the primary reasons for this change in attitude of the Akamba toward military service was the gradual economic transformation of the Akamba Reserves during the 1930s. Throughout Ukambani, new commercial opportunities and the increased desire for material goods, coupled with the growing land shortage and also livestock depletion, led to increased interest in cash money and wage labor (Parsons, 1999). Added to those factors already mentioned were the introduction of some sort of compulsory destocking in 1938, and the increases in the prices of all imported goods at the outbreak of the war, especially for such articles as blankets, wire, pangas, jembes, etc (Gupta, 1973). As pointed out earlier, during the relative prosperity of the pre WWI period, most of the Akamba fulfilled their material needs through the sale of livestock, or in the well-watered areas of Machakos District, through the commercial production of poultry and vegetables for Nairobi markets. As a result, the Akamba entered the labour market selectively. It is for this reason that throughout the decade, most of the District Commissioners who served in Machakos complained of the unwillingness of the Akamba to provide labour (Pallaver, 2018). Even many young Akamba men avoided wage labour because their fathers could pay their taxes by selling livestock, thereby evading the government and settlers demand for labour.

However, with the dwindling land and livestock resources, many Akamba found themselves unable to sustain the previously highly cherished livestock ownership owing to diminished land that had previously supported the grazing of huge numbers of livestock. Consequently, the Akamba found themselves in different forms of wage labour. As such, there were 28, 800 Akamba employed in different sectors during the Second World War with the military service being particularly more attractive. This was because of its comparatively higher wages as compared to the other sectors. The twenty eight shillings per month plus food and clothing earned by a newly trained private was substantially more than the six to eight shillings they could have made in unskilled civil labour (Parsons, 1999). Although the military wages were not as attractive in the more prosperous regions of Kenya, in Ukambani these wages were considered to be very good because of lack of alternative means. Gradually, the KAR became a preferred occupation because of its relatively high pay rates and its prestige as a "manly" occupation as compared to working in settler farms. People who worked for the army gradually attracted greater respect in Machakos. As David Matheka notes,

> I wanted to join the army so that I could marry the woman of my choice. I envied my friends in the army who were well-respected, had large amounts of disposable income and women preferred to marry them. Men who wore the army uniform and carried a gun were regarded as privileged members of the society. Many Akamba women would be attracted to the men with uniforms and good pay from the military service (OI. David Matheka at Syokimau on 14/11/2020).

As a result, KAR and the military became the most popular form of paid employment during World War II and only the strict recruiting quotas of the KAR would limit more Akamba men from being recruited there. As a consequence, the demand for the Akamba soldiers finally matched the supply as opposed to the case during the First World War when the Akamba men would forcefully be conscripted to the army. This can be discerned by the statistic given by Parsons (1999) who has documented that in I942, the Akamba made up 30 percent of the Kenyan component of the KAR, 32 percent of the East African Army Education Corps, 43 percent of the East African Corps of Military Police, 46 percent of the East African Artillery, 46 percent of all signalers, and 13 percent of the non-combatant labour services. Further, according to the Kenyan Labour Department, nearly one-third of all employed Akamba males were in the military from I943 to I946. To put it another way, by I944 one in three Akamba men between the ages of fifteen and forty-five were in the army. In comparison, the enlistment figures for the more populous Luo and Kikuyu ethnic groups were 18 percent and 6 percent respectively, while the percentage of the reputedly more martial Nandi and Kipsigis groups was only 10 percent (KNA/Kenya Labour Department, Manpower Bulletins, 1942-46).

In view of the above, the most lasting impact of the war was the extent to which it changed the Akamba attitude towards wage labour. The Akamba, who had always been blamed for not being as reliable as the kikuyu in terms of engaging in wage labour to the extent of being labelled ‘lazy and indolent’ became the most reliable during this time. No wonder the DC commented that;

> ‘I think that in the whole country of Kenya there is no any other tribe which does the service for their King in the KAR as the Akamba tribe" (Machakos District: Annual Report, 1939-45).

It is no wonder then that the Akamba got one of the best war records of any East African community during World War II. They held 56 percent of the British Empire Medals earned by Kenyan Africans, 32 percent of all East Africa Force Badges, and 24 percent of all "Mention in Despatches" (Parsons, 1999). These acts of bravery impressed British officers. In addition, the East Africa civil liaison officer concluded that the Akamba showed more courage than any other Kenyan ethnic group during the fighting against the Japanese in Burma (Osborne, 2008). Further, the Kenyan government's official report on the war agreed and labelled the Akamba the colony's best martial race in terms

of courage and dependability. (Colony and Protectorate of Kenya, Native Affairs Department, Report on Native Affairs, 1939-1945).

As such, more and more Akamba got involved in military labour and relied on it more than livestock. Young men started being self-reliant and no longer needed their parents to pay their taxes or bride wealth as it had been the case in the previous years. If anything, the reverse happened. The order men, whose livestock had been depleted, started relying on the young men for survival.

The study thus contends that this process of personal enrichment for young men had socio-economic repercussions. Earlier, we noted that the Akamba marriage practices included the exchange of livestock as a form of bride wealth payment. In most cases, it was only older men who could afford such amount of livestock. Hence, the high value of livestock reinforced the authority of older men, as sons usually needed help from their fathers to acquire enough livestock to pay bride wealth. However, with most of the young men opting for wage labour, this balance was disrupted. This disruption sowed the seeds of a socio-economic revolution in Machakos because the young men now earned their own bride-wealth, thereby undermining the authority of their elders. The emerging drain of manpower undermined food production which in turn led to two war-time famines. *Nzaa ya Makovo* and *Nzaa ya Mwolyo* (Matheka, 1992*)*.

The Akamba relied so much on the military remittances to cope with the famines. For instance, *Nzaa ya Makovo* which can be translated to mean 'the famine of the boots' was so named because the Akamba relied on their family members who were working in the army for to survive the famine. Those who were in the military remitted some of their earnings to the reserve, and the money was used to purchase food-stuffs during the food shortages, but still, the absence of such labour power hindered the development of the livestock industry in the reserve. (O'Leary's, 1984) observes that the influx of military remittances in Kitui helped the people to survive famines in the 1940s. This equally applied to the whole ukambani region. The Akamba *askaris* sent home an average 12.67 shillings in family allotments per month. (Machakos District Annual Report, 1939-45). Indeed, the remittances by the military servicemen alone exceeded the amount of money spent on food during the famine (Machakos District Annual Report, 1939-45). The Makovo famine clearly reveals that there was no shortage of money in the reserves. This is according to Anderson & Throup (1985) who observe that in addition to paying £100,000 to the Kikuyu and the Kitui Akamba to buy food, the Machakos Akamba spent a further £67,000 on 118,000 bags of food from the government. From the foregoing, we can deduce that the people of Machakos were very dependent on this war remittances. No wonder the D.C. observed that; "Had it not been for the military remittances, the Akamba would have been a tribe of paupers" (Machakos District Annual Report, 1939-45)

The famine problem was made worse by the inability of the Akamba to meet their tax obligation due to the decline of livestock numbers. The livestock which the Akamba could have sold to pay taxes had either died due to lack of pasture or forcefully sold to

the meat supply board for war purposes. Thus, many still relied on the military remittances made for food purchase to pay tax. For instance, in 1942, the Akamba spent £ 28,000 from the military remittances on poll tax. (Machakos District Annual Report, 1939-45: KNA/DC/MKS 1/1/29, 5) Apparently, the Akamba survived this difficult period by relying on money that the soldiers sent home in almost all aspects. As the District Commissioner confirmed;

> Kamba civilians are so dependent on these remittances that the district would not be able to survive another famine without them (Machakos District Annual Report, 1939-45).

From the above discussion, the study maintains that World War II, through its economic and labour policies created a crisis in labour needed for livestock production. Civil and military recruitment accelerated the tendency to remove labour from the livestock economy and direct it towards outside employment. The interference with labour coupled with acute depletion of livestock and the occurrence of natural calamities, combined to generate the two major wartime famines.

Secondly, the study argues that the severe food shortage during the Second World War was a grim but eloquent testimony to the outcome of the cumulative effect of discriminative economic policies. The proliferation of opportunity for wage labour, together with the constant food shortages, produced the conviction that wage labour was the most reliable economic activity and certainly the most secure. Accordingly, livestock was no longer such a feasible measure of wealth as it had been in the past. By 1945 a large number of the people had come to feel that the only real economic security lay in some form of long-term wage employment outside the reserve.

The Post WWII Developments and the Reorganization of Labour

The period after the Second World War witnessed increased desire for education which was of course closely tied to the rise of social welfare and the return of educated soldiers from (Shorter, 1974). With the introduction of the CD&W, the colonial government considered the African ex-soldiers to be the ideal vehicles through which the spread of development and welfare in Kenya could be achieved. This was due to the fact that they were to some extent considered to be educated and literate, and were well-trained and had worked closely with British soldiers during the war (Osborne, 2008). The ex-soldiers had been sensitized on education while in India and Burma, particularly from contact with other soldiers. They even received some education, from the Army Educational Corps. Literacy became a thing of great respect and pride. As a result, a great number of soldiers returned from the war as great believers in education which they wanted for their children. Accordingly, they were the ones on whom welfare would rely, the aim being “to transform swords into ploughshares” (Osborne, 2008). Their influence, catalysed by the establishment of more schools in Machakos resulted to more desire for education. It was now every parent’s desire to see their children going to school. The annual reports of the DCs indicated a constant demand for education and the building of schools. This was clear from the DCs statement who noted in 1945 that

"the demand for more schools is incessant" (Machakos District Annual Report, 1946-52).

As a result, the number of learning institution went up. For instance, in 1945, the district had 29 elementary schools, 11 mission and 18 government schools, plus government primary schools at Machakos Town and Kangundo, and a Roman Catholic Mission primary school at Kabaa, but by 1957, the district had 114 DEB schools and 168 mission schools (Machakos District Annual Report, 1957). This also resulted to an increased number of school going children. This is evident from the fact that while in 1945 slightly more than 5,000 pupils in Machakos attended school, by 1956, the number of children who were attending school had risen to 28,493 boys and 11,433 girls. This meant in effect that the same number of labour hitherto directed to livestock industry had been deducted because the school going children started devoting more of their time to education rather than herding livestock. However, the absence of a curricula geared to the environmental needs of the Akamba economy led to an increased flow of the school leavers into the wage economy outside the district. This was induced by the impoverishment of the Akamba (as a "push factor"), as well as the increase in urban wages (as a "pull factor"), which was occasioned by the withdrawal of the Kikuyu, Embu and Meru (K.E.M.), from the urban areas during the Mau Mau period forcing the employees to seek more labour from the Akamba and giving them better wages (Gupta, 1973).

Meanwhile, the dearth of opportunities on land forced a number of the ex-'Askaris to seek wage labour in urban areas. (Machakos District Annual Report, 1946: 11). Some training as artisans was provided by the administration to redundant army personnel. Some Akamba were then able to get jobs as skilled craftsmen, as a result of this training, which supplemented the one that had been provided from an earlier period by the Government African School at Machakos (Machakos District Annual Report, 1931). Armed with this training together with the training from the war, the Akamba ex-soldiers felt that they could not fit in the rural areas. Others were too proud to engage in 'dirty jobs' like herding livestock or going to the farm. As Osborne (2008) argues, the "Second World War had transformed the Mkamba soldier from a barefoot porter dressed in rags into a professional soldier." Oral evidence also indicates that these men now believed themselves "above" herding livestock as they were now used to the cash economy and all that wages could bring. Consequently, many former soldiers left the reserve to Mombasa or Nairobi in search of wage labour.

The Swynnerton Plan of 1954 which entailed land adjudication, land consolidation and land registration which resulted in the simultaneous creation of a successful large holder class and a landless and/or near-landless class also pushed many Akamba to seek wage labour outside the district. Land hunger led to the pursuit of wage labor because many people who found themselves pushed off the best lands in their home areas went to work in the cities, the army, and the police force (Rocheleau, D. *et.al, 1995).* This further dealt a death blow to the livestock industry which had earlier depended on abundance of both labour and land.

In the light of the above, the conclusion that the development of wage labour class had impacted negatively on the livestock industry of the people of Machakos is inescapable. This disruption of Akamba to embrace of wage labour corroborates what Atieno Adhiambo (1972) has described as the decline of the Kenyan peasant and the emergence of a proletariat. He argues that there was the emergence of peasant inferiority in relation to the urban worker, the schoolteacher, the Indian trader, to the settler. Apparently, the peasant became a poor man and consequently a ready source for the proletarianisation. Wage labour as opposed to livestock became an important source of revenue not only for the payment tax, but also for general survival.

CONCLUSION

The study has looked at the development of wage labour class in relation to its role in undermining livestock economy the Akamba of Machakos. The study argues that as a result of the articulation between the Akamba pre-colonial society and the colonial capitalist state, Machakos was transformed into a labour reservoir for the colonial government and the white settlers. This was done through the impoverishment of the people of Machakos through various colonial policies like land alienation, taxation, forced labour among others. These policies forced the Akamba to abandon animal husbandry and seek for wage labour. For instance, the need to pay taxes and acquire material goods like sugar, kerosene blankets among others necessitated continued sale of livestock. The continual sale of livestock led to its depletion which in turn forced many Akamba to seek for wage labour outside the reserve. Thus, the study can convincingly argue that the engagement of the Akamba in wage labour made them to shift their attention from the livestock sector to wage labour which was deemed to be more lucrative. Wage labour had now gained more attention to the detriment of the livestock sector. This was in essence institutionalizing a rival venture to livestock economy which gradually, resulted in the decline of the hitherto cherished livestock economy among the Akamba of Machakos.

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