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“The Unmaking of Datoga: Decreasing Resources and Increasing Conflict in Rural Tanzania”

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# The Unmaking of the Datoga: Decreasing Resources and Increasing Conflict in Rural Tanzania

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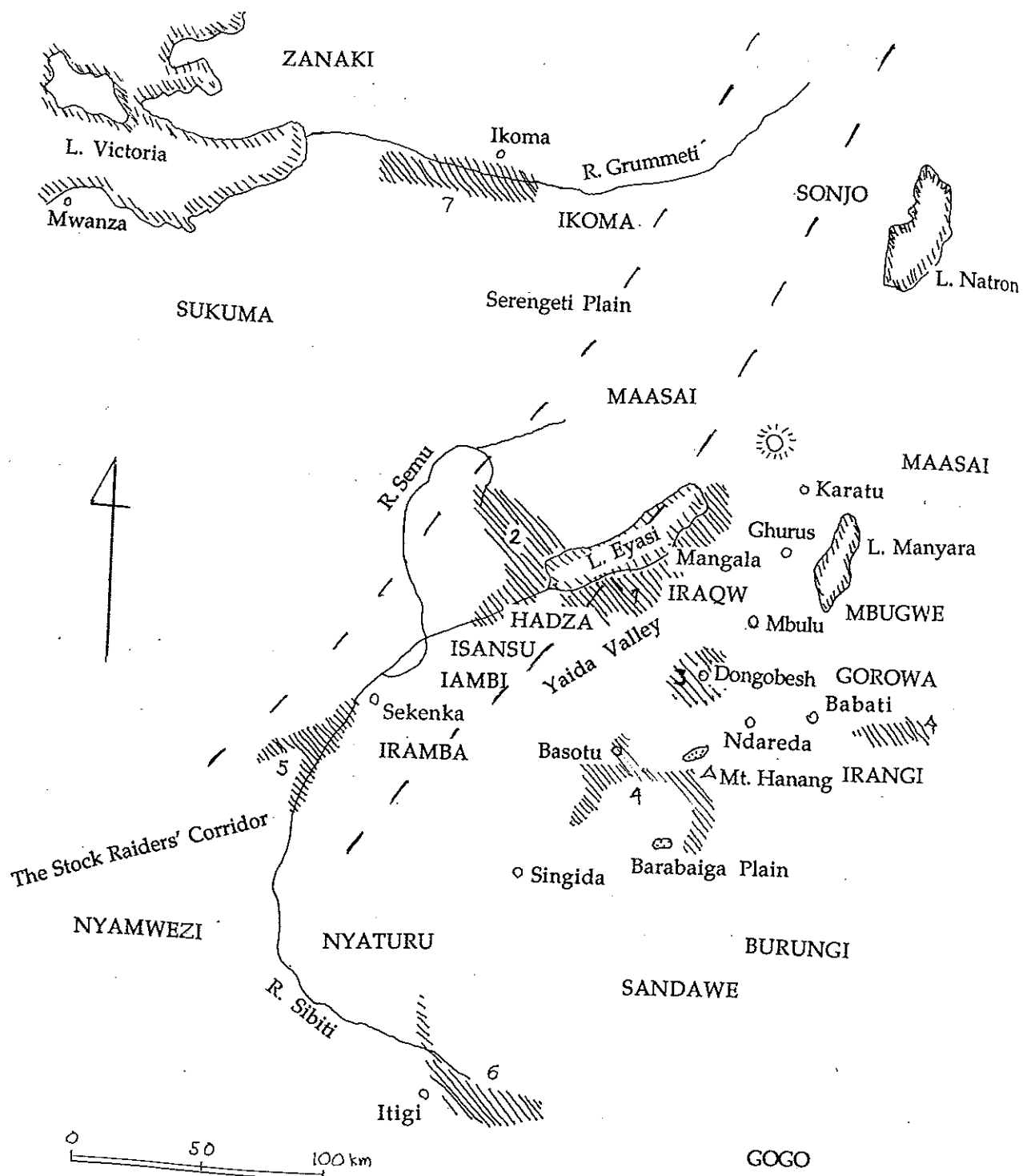
In many places, conflicts do punctuate the reciprocal relations which exist between pastoral peoples and their neighbours. The causes of these conflicts are many, but the main ones are the competition for resources and historical mistrust arising from inferences and ethnic stereotypes. In Tanzania, such conflicts between pastoral societies and their neighbours have been more marked in and around the Rift Valley. This article examines the recent conflicts in which a number of agricultural and agro-pastoral societies rose against the pastoral Datoga. Though the conflicts were fuelled by ethnic stereotypes and mistrust they were at the same time a reflection of the growing competition for the declining resources in the rural areas. Although the Datoga survived the onslaught, the paper concludes, they have to be helped to defend their land against alienation by their neighbours.

The Datoga are traditionally a pastoral people who live in and around the Rift Valley in Tanzania in the Regions of Arusha, Singida, Dodoma, Shinyanga, Tabora and Mara. About 70 percent are found in the present Hanang and Mbulu Districts of Arusha Region. The Datoga consist of more than ten sections, *emojiga*, widely scattered over the area stretching from Grummeti River in Mara Region in the north to Manyoni, Singida Region, in the south. Kjaerby (1976:6) notes that of these sections less than eight retained their original identity and that most of them were being assimilated by neighbouring peoples (cf. Loiske 1990:79). Tomikawa (1979) lists thirteen *emojiga* which he calls sub-tribes and, like Kjaerby, singles out Barbaig (Barabaiga) as the largest and more or less homogeneous section (cf. Ndagala 1978). Traditionally, a section "was the largest political and ritual unit in Datoga society, and consisted of an autonomous territorial group" (Tomikawa 1979:15).

Although collectively the Datoga are often referred to as Barbaig, Tatog, Tatur, and Wamang'ati, each section has its own name. However, in different places

the Datoga are known by different names by their agricultural and agro-pastoral neighbours. For example, members of all the sections living in Tabora, Shinyanga and Mara Regions are called Tatur or Wataturu by their neighbours. In Arusha, Dodoma and Singida Regions the Datoga are called Barbaig or Mang'ati. The name Mang'ati comes from the Maasai word *Ilmang'ati* which means "enemies". The Datoga earned this name because, according to Jacobs (1979:37), they "have always ... bested pastoral Maasai in their occasional bouts of reciprocal cattle raiding and small scale wars" (cf. Ndagala 1978:2). Between themselves members of each section refer to their respective sections by their appropriate names. The distribution of the different sections is shown on Map 1.

There has always been stock raiding by and between the Datoga and their immediate neighbours. In the early 1980s, however, stock raiding grew to unprecedented heights, and with it numerous murders and plunder of property. By 1985 the inter-ethnic hostilities arising from cattle rustling and the murders had become so strong



Key to numerically Dominant Datoga Sections:

- |                          |                     |                |
|--------------------------|---------------------|----------------|
| 1. Bajuta                | 2. Buradiga         | 3. Gisamijanga |
| 4. Barabaiga             | 5. Bajuta, Buradiga | 6. Bianjida    |
| 7. Rotigenga, Ishimijega |                     |                |

Map. Distribution of Datoga Sections and their Neighbours (after Tomikawa 1979)

that large-scale fighting loomed in the air. Most of the groups with whom the Datoga share borders were all out to 'destroy' them. This paper is a descriptive analysis of the factors which led to this tense situation and how the Datoga reacted to it. It also looks at the role played by livestock, ethnicity and stereotype inference in the whole conflict. The paper concludes with a reflection on the future of pastoral peoples in the light of increasing competition for resources, particularly land.

### Relations with Neighbours

Relations between the Datoga and their neighbours vary from place to place depending on the spatial distance between them and the traditional practices particular to the individual sections or neighbours. For example, the Bajuta and Barbaig sections have had good relations with the Iraqw in Mbulu and Hanang Districts respectively. Not only has inter-marriage taken place between them, but also the adoption of each other's rituals. The Datoga have adopted an Iraqw ritual, *Mitimani*, which they call *Mitida*. Anyone who has come into contact with a dead body or has aborted or miscarried is considered 'impure', and is kept out of the homestead for a number of days for 'purification' (Tomikawa 1979). Moreover, the Iraqw join in the Datoga ritual, *Ghadoweda*, by which they obtain medicine and blessing from the Datoga medicinemen for success in their undertakings.

While maintaining peaceable and friendly relations between themselves and the Iraqw, the Datoga have remained unfriendly with their neighbours in the north, the Maasai. From time to time they have raided each other's cattle and caused many losses of life. The Ngorongoro highlands used to be the Bajuta section of the Datoga before they

were driven out by the Maasai. Tomikawa (1979:15) suggests that members of the Bajuta section have been migrating due to pressure from the pastoral Maasai. The Rotigenga and Ishimijega, who live along River Grummeti, have good relations with their neighbours; the Ikoma people. The three have sometimes joined forces to pursue Maasai raiders. In Itigi and Manyoni areas of Singida Region the Bianjida Datoga lived at relative peace with their neighbours the Nyaturu. The Bajuta and Buradiga living in the Wembere area were, until the recent conflict, at relative peace with the Nyamwezi and Iramba. The Buradiga, who constitute most of the Datoga in Shinyanga Region, enjoyed friendly relations with the Sukuma agro-pastoralists. There have been many inter-marriages between the Datoga and the Sukuma, the latter serving as wife-givers.

Generally, with the exception of the Barbaig who were resented due to their murder customs to be described shortly, the Datoga lived peacefully with their respective neighbours in all the Regions. Having only taken up agriculture in recent years the Datoga always buy their grain supplements from their agricultural and agro-pastoral neighbours. The neighbours receive livestock and livestock products in return for their grain. In 1986 the villagers of Kitangiri and Lyelembo villages of Iramba District claimed that 90 percent of all their cattle had Barbaig brands though they themselves were not Barbaig. This, they claimed, was due to the fact that they had trading relations with the Barbaig through barter for a long time.

In spite of these reciprocal relations between the Datoga and their neighbours, the historical mistrust between them continued to exist. The mistrust is attributed to the custom of some of the Datoga sections and, in recent times, competition for resources.

Although the Datoga were said by their neighbours to be the ones who commit most of the stock thefts police records revealed that the Sukuma had the highest *per capita* incidence of livestock thefts in Tanzania (Jacobs 1979:49). Cattle rustlers from Datoga communities are normally armed with sticks, spears, arrows and, occasionally, shotguns; nevertheless, when interrupted, the rustlers usually take to their heels leaving the stole animals behind.

### Barbaig Murder Customs

The Barbaig regard non-Datoga as potential cattle thieves and, therefore, like wild animals (lions, elephants), which threaten people and livestock as 'enemies of the people'. Anyone killing an enemy of the people is thus rewarded. If the enemy is a lion the killer is rewarded by his relatives and residents of the whole locality in which the lion is killed. If the enemy is human the killer is rewarded by his relatives, although other people may also reward him. In the 1950s the killer could collect five to twenty five head of cattle in rewards (Wilson 1953). Although the 'killer squad' may consist of several persons, the killing is credited only to the person who speared the victim first. In addition to being given cattle, the killer (*Ghajorachant*) is allowed to decorate himself during the 'stick dance' (*jibot dabit*), in which only those who have killed the 'enemies of the people' may join, to the acclaim of everybody present. In order to get the same honours the other members of the killer squad have to try their luck again.

A killer has to show evidence of his kill in the form of a lion's head, elephant tusks or, in case of human beings, the private parts of the deceased. Certain scholars have considered such killing of human beings to be ritual murders. For example, Klima (1970:60-2) describes such a killing as a ritual murder. He might have associated this murder with ritual due to the removal of the genitals

by the killer. However, the Oromo are also reported to sever and take the genitals of their enemies as trophies (Baxter 1979:69). In both cases, I think, the genitals are taken as proof that the enemy has been killed and to rule out fake claims. I agree with Wilson (1953:49) that the killings were motivated primarily by economic considerations. Until recently young Barbaig men were eager to kill any of the 'enemies of the people' in order to get wealth in the form of cattle, though social recognition during the stick dance was also important. It is reported that the killers of human 'enemies' are no longer rewarded (Kjaerby 1980, Loiske 1990:87).

Prior to the massive killings of the 1980s large-scale murders had taken place at Kidogwi and Singa in July 1975 (Daily News, 11/7/1975) and at Kihonda in January 1976 (Daily News, 8/1/1976; see also Loiske 1990:84). Most of these victims were Nyaturu with whom the Barbaig have had misunderstandings for a long time. The misunderstandings date back to the 1940s when the agro-pastoral Nyaturu began to move into Barbaig areas. The movement created competition between the two groups for pastures and water (Loiske 1990:81).

### Competition for Resources

In the past the Datoga occupied well watered areas full of good pastures. Up to the 1940s these areas were very sparsely populated and were avoided by agricultural groups as inhospitable bush, *pori*. In some of these areas the agricultural and agro-pastoral societies were separated from the pastoral Datoga by large expanses of tsetse infested woodlands. With time, human and livestock population growth in the agricultural and agro-pastoral areas forced people to turn to areas hitherto considered inhospitable. While agriculture expanded into tsetse free areas many tsetse infested areas were

subjected to tsetse clearance schemes thereby making them attractive to agriculturists and pastoralists alike. Due to growing pressure on their pastures the Datoga were forced to look for new grazing land in the hitherto marginal areas. The expansion into the new areas by both occupational groups gradually reduced the spatial distance between the Datoga and their neighbours. In the process some of the Datoga sections were assimilated.

The introduction and expansion of cash-crop farming, and the consequent increase in the use of ox-ploughs and tractors, have not only converted much of the so-called inhospitable bush into arable land, but have also led to the alienation of traditional Datoga grazing areas. Apart from losing their grazing land to their agricultural and agro-pastoral neighbours, the Datoga—particularly the Barbaig—have lost plenty of their fine pastures to State institutions. For example, between 1978 and 1981 the National Agricultural and Food Company (NAFCO), a parastatal company, uncompromisingly alienated most of what constituted the high quality traditional grazing land of the Barbaig for its wheat project in Hanang District. Total land alienated by NAFCO for its wheat project is about 40,000 hectares (Land and Pretty 1990:9). Consequently, the pastoralists have been forced to depend on pastures too limited to support sufficient livestock for their needs. This action by the State and the other pressures mentioned earlier have intensified competition for resources and increased inter-group conflicts.

### **The Villagization Programme**

In the mid-1970s Tanzania's rural population was subjected to the villagization programme. About 8,000 villages were established in order to make it easier for the State to provide the people with social services. The programme is discussed in detail

elsewhere (Coulson 1981; Abrahams 1985; Ndagala 1985), but it should be noted here that the moves to resettle the Datoga during the programme failed. After resisting all the initial moves by the State to have them resettled, the Datoga were labelled as a group too difficult to deal with and left alone. Nevertheless, many fertile areas hitherto used by the Datoga in their respective Districts were allocated to the newly formed villages for agriculture. Despite the loss of their resources to the villagization programme the Datoga stood out as a challenge to the power of the State and were a source of dissatisfaction on the part of the people who were resettled. The latter did not understand why they had been resettled, sometimes forcefully, whereas the Datoga were left to live at large as they liked.

### **Operation Barbaig**

By 1978 a fresh move to resettle the Datoga had been designed by the Government and was carried out as *Operation Barbaig*. Sites for the new villages were determined by the different District authorities. In most districts, save for nominal involvement of the Datoga elders (cf. Loiske 1990:88), most of the plans were drawn up by the "experts" and endorsed by the authorities with little regard to the special needs of the pastoralists (Ndagala 1978; Kjaerby 1979). In sedentarising the Datoga through *Operation Barbaig* the State sought to increase social services for the pastoralists. At that time the areas occupied by the Datoga had very limited social services. Livestock husbandry facilities were also few. For example, with 484,540 heads of cattle and 264,903 sheep and goats, the Datoga had a total of 11 dips and 4 veterinary centres. These facilities were also used by members of other neighbouring ethnic groups.

Implementation of the Operation started in 1978 and lasted three years. By



the end of the set period the majority of the Datoga had been put into villages. In terms of the services, however, only 28% of the target had been achieved. The situation was as follows:

Facility	Target	Achieved
Dips	21	9
Veterinary Centres	10	5
Classrooms	20	10
Dispensaries	19	7
Deep Wells	12	4
Shallow Wells	-	3

Source: Prime Minister's Office

Given the fact that the services realised by the Operation were in addition to those which already existed before the Operation, the situation was expected to be much better than before. On the contrary, the situation soon got worse for the Datoga in a number of localities. The improvement brought about by the additional services attracted more non-Datoga into or near Datoga villages. As a consequence, the services in some of the villages were utilised more by non-Datoga than the Datoga for whom they were initially installed. Increasing competition for land and social services reinforced the feelings of hatred and mistrust between the different ethnic groups.

### Livestock Raiding

Livestock thefts in the pastoral and agro-pastoral areas are as old as livestock keeping itself. With effect from 1982, however, thefts involving a few animals became a thing of the past. Homesteads began to be raided by armed gangs of up to fifty men. The raiders attacked herdsmen in broad daylight, at watering points or in open pastures, and drove away all the animals leaving the herdsmen dead or wounded. There were very few chances of recovering the animals once they had been driven away.

For example, only 29,281 heads of cattle were recovered out of 151,306 stolen between 1981 and 1985 in the Regions indicated in Table 1. Most of the stolen livestock could not be found in Datoga areas or those of their neighbours. There were indications that the stolen animals were driven northwards through Ngorongoro and Serengeti Districts and were sold illegally across the country's border. Pursuit of the raiders became very risky because the rustlers, being armed to the teeth with machine-guns and powerful rifles, confronted their pursuers instead of running away. These confrontations led to many deaths.

These bloody raids were confined almost entirely to and around areas occupied by the Datoga and herein called the *corridor*. As the number of raids increased so did the number of people killed in the raids. It is important at this point to look at the reasons why these bloody raids were confined to the corridor in the early 1980s. The corridor is made up of pastoral and agro-pastoral areas in which a greater part of Tanzania's cattle herd is found. Similar raids had been experienced on a smaller scale in Tabora, Shinyanga and Mwanza Regions, west of the corridor. Similarly, the previous raids west of the corridor threatened human lives. The 'Law and Order' enforcement organs proved ineffective in bringing these practices to an end. Consequently, the people of these Regions decided to take up the matter in their own hands. They organised themselves into communal defence groups on the basis of traditional practices of community defence (Abrahams 1987). These groups called *Sungusungu* embraced all members of the individual localities in which they were formed. Every member of the locality was scrutinised, and anybody known to have committed a criminal act in the past had to confess and to pay a fine determined by the defence committee and, finally, swear never to

Table 1. *Number of Cattle Stolen 1981-1985*

Region	District	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	Total
SINGIDA	Iramba	213	2878	2300	7140	11968	24499
	Singida	313	679	1827	5159	8856	16833
	Manyoni	211	3273	1625	5555	9198	19862
SHINYANGA	Maswa	10021	19688	2496	18044	1943	52192
	Shinyanga Rural	304	529	218	2747	3414	7212
TABORA	Igunga	1561	993	152	6583	10891	20180
ARUSHA	Hanang	786	980	1060	432	669	3927
	Mbulu	306	1038	522	374	1741	3981
TOTAL		14576	30177	10602	46315	49634	151306

be involved in criminal acts. Once the cleanliness or innocence of the members had been established the next and prime task was to defend the locality. The members kept watch in turns and gave a signal or made an alarm when there was danger. This system became so powerful and effective that, apart from deterring would-be criminals, it forced the hard-core criminals to flee. The places which fell easy prey to the fleeing criminals are those comprising the corridor, i.e. the Wembere plains and the surroundings of the Lake Kitangiri - River Sibiti - Lake Eyasi chain. Prime factors among the many which made this area become a sanctuary for the criminals are the scanty scattered population, abundance of livestock, large thickets and forests. Moreover, the residents of these areas had not yet organised themselves into self-defence groups. After entering these areas the criminals organised themselves into raiding gangs and established links

with illegal cattle traders and bogus businessmen.

The increase in raiding corresponds to the sharp increases in the price of cattle and the overall economic crises in which Tanzania found itself in the 1980s. At that time commodities were in short supply and the few which were available sold at very exorbitant prices. Racketeering developed and an illegal export-import system operated side by side with the formal one which had almost collapsed, especially in the rural areas. A growing number of livestock were sold at illegal stock markets across the country's borders to obtain consumer goods which were brought back and sold on the black market. The average prices of cattle for the years 1981 to 1986 are shown in Table 2.



Table 2. *Average Cattle Prices in TShs in Select Regions*

Year	Arusha	Dodoma	Kigoma	Shinyanga
1981	1,996/=	1,413/=	2,936/=	1,466/=
1982	2,732/=	-	6,209/=	2,101/=
1983	-	2,145/=	6,200/=	2,758/=
1984	7,855/=	-	11,562/=	3,243/=
1985	6,216/=	7,409/=	11,517/=	4,277/=
March 1986	8,977/=	-	-	6,180/=

Source: Ministry of Agriculture

It was claimed by some informants that in 1985 the prices of cattle had gone up to 20,200/= Tanzania shillings per head at the Kenya - Tanzania border. The illegal sales across the border created domestic shortages, prompted rises in livestock prices and made big business for many traders and raiders alike.

### **Ethnic Stereotypes and Inference**

For the five years or so from 1981 the stock raids went on unabated in the corridor because the people tried to deal with them in the traditional way. The criminal acts were masked by the historical rivalries and suspicions, or the hatred arising from competition for resources. For example, stock thieves continued to be considered as coming from groups other than one's own. And when spotted, depending on their attire, the thieves were immediately labelled as belonging to such and such ethnic group. This was based on the fact that, normally, members of each ethnic group prefer dresses of a given colour as follows:

Ethnic Groups	Colour/Type of dress
Sukuma	Green cloth (usually on top of other clothing)
Barbaig	Pink or violet cloth
Other Datoga Sections	Black cloth with copper ornaments
Iramba	Trousers, shirts and other dress
Maasai	Red or blue cloth

These marked differences in dress and the ethnic rivalries gave rise to stereotypes which were effectively used by the livestock raiders. When the raiders went into Barbaig localities they dressed like the Iramba or Sukuma, and usually managed to deceive the Barbaig into concluding that their cattle had been taken by the Iramba or the Sukuma, depending on the colour or type of dress. When raiding Sukuma villages the raiders put on violet or black cloth causing the Sukuma to infer that the raiders were Barbaig or from other Datoga sections. This intensified hatred and suspicion between the respective groups. The raiders were able to drive

away their loot and turn the various ethnic groups against one another because of the stereotypes and consequent inferences. The actual identity of the raiders got lost in ethnic attire. Members of such and such an ethnic group would be alleged to have stolen so many cattle just because the raiders were dressed in such a manner. Although all the groups in the corridor lost most of their cattle to the raiders, they never joined forces against their common enemy. They remained blind to the true identity of the criminals. Instead, inter-ethnic conflicts and hostilities escalated.

### The Unmaking Let Loose

The situation became so tense that by the beginning of 1984 only a small misunderstanding was enough to trigger off large scale fighting. What took place early in the morning of 23rd May 1984 at Mwamalole in Shinyanga Region is regarded as what let loose the 'unmaking' of the Datoga by the Sukuma.

The Sukuma side of the story has it that on 19/5/1984, 680 cattle, 4 donkeys, 30 goats and 20 sheep were stolen and one herdsman killed in Mwamanoni, a Sukuma village. Following that incident the village defence group collected near Mwamalole village. They waited there from the 20th to the 22nd of May, 1984 while preparing themselves to enter the Datoga area as the latter were believed to have stolen the livestock. On the evening of 22/5/1984 the Sukuma who had added up to several hundred were advised to disperse and leave the matter to the police. As it was getting dark most people decided to spend the night there. The following morning a group of Datoga ambushed them and killed 48 people. The Datoga, on the other hand, claim that on 9/5/1984, 607 of their cattle were stolen by the Sukuma from Mwabagimu. While still looking for their cattle they learnt that the Sukuma had

collected at Mwamalole in order to invade them. On getting this information they also mobilised themselves ready for self-defence. Very early in the morning of 23/5/1984 the Datoga claim that the Sukuma again stole their cattle and that, while pursuing the thieves, they came across the assembled Sukuma at Mwamalole. There was fighting in which 48 Sukuma were killed.

In terms of the numbers involved on both sides and the total killed in one day, the Mwamalole incident was the biggest and bloodiest confrontation between the Datoga and their agro-pastoral neighbours. Before the incident each side had lost cattle and each had suspected the other of the theft. The Sukuma were determined to kill as many Datoga as they could and force the rest to flee. Though relatively fewer in number, the Datoga were more organised militarily. They laid a better strategy and used better tactics to defeat the Sukuma. What they did not know was that they had won the battle but not the war. Deputations were sent by the Sukuma to all Sukuma localities informing them of the Mwamalole massacre and requiring them to do everything possible to annihilate the enemies, the Datoga. A delegation was also sent to the Iramba requesting them to support the Sukuma in their fight against their common enemies, the Datoga. The response was tremendous. Datoga stock were stolen or killed whenever and wherever possible by Sukuma, and Iramba armed groups formed specifically to kill Datoga; Datoga houses were looted, people beaten-up or killed, crops in the fields were harvested or set on fire, and the villages established for the Datoga under *Operation Barbaig* were taken over by the Sukuma or Iramba in Maswa, Igunga and Iramba Districts. The Datoga were forced to take refuge elsewhere. From Iramba District alone 349 people moved to Mbulu district and another 500 moved to Manyoni District.

The whole corridor was tense and dangerous. People walked armed (with spears, bows and arrows, stocks and guns) for fear of being attacked, or ready to attack as and when need arose. Although neutral voices could still be heard these were very few. Even public servants took sides with their respective ethnic groups. Individuals' security was no longer dependent on the instruments of the state but was seen to be in one's ethnic group.

The meeting out of justice became very difficult. Since most of the positions were held by non-Datoga, the Datoga were, and felt to be, treated unfairly by the local-level state institutions. The Sukuma and Iramba 'defence groups' sang in praise of the killing of the Datoga and the looting of their belongings. Killing the Datoga and raiding their cattle were seen to be the best way in which the Sukuma and Iramba could compensate themselves for their slain brethren and stolen cattle, both of which were blamed on the Datoga.

### **Datoga Reaction**

Being a minority and with the forces of annihilation trying to besiege them, the Datoga in the corridor reacted in a number of ways. Some took refuge in the forests hoping to return to their localities when the situation became calm. Others left to join the Datoga living outside the corridor or whose areas were not affected by the inter-ethnic conflict such as Hanang, Mbulu and Manyoni Districts. While the Sukuma and the Iramba were claiming that the pastoral Datoga should be chased out of the forests, the Datoga told the Government functionaries who visited the corridor during the crisis that the forests were their best and only home. Their villages had either been destroyed or occupied by the Sukuma or Iramba. Out of the forests the Datoga would become open targets and be quickly eliminated by their enemies. Forests,

therefore, served as an instrument for defence. At this time, almost all the 51 Datoga enclaves I visited in 1986 were multi-sectional, in that they harboured members of many other Datoga sections who had run away from their own localities. They grazed their cattle together and shared food and other amenities that the host members possessed. When explaining their plight to the Government authorities they referred to themselves "we the Datoga" and not by their individual section names. Their commonality and unity became of paramount importance at this time of crisis. Although this was not the first Datoga migration in response to specific problems (Tomikawa 1979:30) it was the largest.

Whereas the Government intervened and managed to bring back law and order in the corridor in 1986, the ruling Party (CCM) went a step further. The Party formed a team to investigate the conflict thoroughly in order to understand its causes and, more importantly, to prevent its occurrence in the future. Among the issues strongly aired by the Datoga during the investigation were shortage of land, inadequate social services and lack of representation in decision-making circles. Although solutions have yet to be found to the problems arising from some of these issues, the Government seems to have given serious consideration to the issues and steps are being taken to evolve solutions. This is, to some extent, due to the fact that the Datoga were able to present their grievances more strongly by speaking out as one people that would have been the case prior to their 'unmaking'. It is ironical, therefore, that the moves to annihilate the Datoga made the latter more conscious of their threatened existence and gave them a unity of purpose. The loosened 'unmaking' actually made them socio-culturally

stronger and worth more attention from the Government.

## Conclusion

The whole conflict brings to the fore a number of questions on pastoralism and resources in rural Tanzania. Competition for land between pastoral and agricultural activities is an ever present threat to pastoral production in particular and rural production in general. The Datoga are now living in relatively poor areas not only because of the current conflict but also because of the unfair competition for land which favours agriculture. Fine pastures have been lost to agriculture including State farms. As the hoe or the plough closes in on the pastoralists they turn to wooded often tsetse-infested areas for pastures. In so doing they 'melt' the belt which separates them from other forms of land use. The displacement of pastoral people will continue unless pastoralists are helped by governmental and non-governmental institutions to get long-term legal rights over their territories. Evidence from the pastoral Datoga and pastoral Maasai shows a tendency by many members of these groups to practice agriculture. In order to safeguard grazing land from further alienation areas will have to be set aside exclusively for livestock keeping so that, even in the same villages, members who adopt some agriculture will do so outside the areas reserved for pastures.

Finally, there is this question of identity. How do people identify themselves and what are their self-images? The way the Datoga view themselves, for instance, in relation to other societies in their neighbourhoods was summed up by their delegation to the Prime Minister in 1978. The following is an extract from their statement:

... the Datoga are seen to be grave enemies in many Regions particularly Singida, especially after the killings of between 1966 and 1975 although these were not

started by the Datoga ... Having been portrayed as enemies, Government has also come to hate us and take stern action against us without making the necessary investigations. Though we the Datoga may be aggressive, we request that investigations be made to establish the actual culprits instead of punishing the entire people. We request the Party and Government to investigate the murders of our relatives because so far when the Nyaturu kill our people no investigations are made ... In addition, the misleading beliefs held by our neighbours that we are enemies should be fought because they lead to our being ill-treated especially in Luono. (Translated from a Kiswahili quotation in Ndagala 1978:6-7).

As indicated in the above quotation, the Datoga are well aware of the way in which they are regarded by their neighbours and Government functionaries. Nevertheless, identity is contextual depending on who is giving it and when it is being given. The way the Datoga are identified by others is in many cases different from the way they identify themselves. Again, the way in which they are regarded during conflicts is likely to be different from that of peaceful times. The move against the Datoga was partly due to inter-ethnic stereotypes and inferences in interpreting what happened or was happening.

The material on the pastoral Datoga suggests that we have to handle our concepts and data very carefully to avoid the distortions which may be created by inter-ethnic stereotypes, self-images and inference. Actually, some distortions and exaggerations are perpetuated by the respective peoples to conceal some of their practices. Underlying the stereotypes and consequent conflicts is the decline in the resources available to the rural populace—particularly pastoralists. Pastoralists in general, and the Datoga in particular, have persisted not only because they have been able to adjust to changed circumstances but also because they have been capable of fighting the constant battles at the

various fronts. The future of pastoralism lies in the pastoralists' ability to fight bigger battles especially those arising from declining resources.

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