

CHRISTIAN ZLOLNISKI

Wright, Angus

- 2005 *The Death of Ramón Gonzalez: The Modern Agricultural Dilemma*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Zabin, Carol

- 1997 U.S.-Mexico Economic Integration: Labor Relations and the Organization of Work in California and Baja California Agriculture. *Economic Geography* 73(3): 337-355.

Zabin, Carol, and Sallie Hughes

- 1995 Economic Integration and Labor Flows: Stage Migration in Farm Labor Markets in Mexico and the United States. *International Migration Review* 29(2): 395-422.

N I N E

The Tobacco Trap: Obstacles to Trade Unionism in Malawi

Marty Otañez

Based on ethnographic data on tobacco farmworkers and trade unionists in Malawi, this chapter analyzes child labor and labor organizing in Malawi's tobacco sector. Malawi is economically reliant on tobacco growing and experiences high levels of child labor on tobacco farms. Men and women with little or no access to land or wage work agree to contracts with farm owners to grow and sell tobacco on land the owners provide to them.

Black Malawians own virtually all of the country's tobacco farms and sell at auctions to U.S.-based leaf-buying companies that have prearranged contracts with Philip Morris, British American Tobacco, and other global cigarette manufacturers. Men and women send their children to the fields instead of to school so they can cultivate enough leaf to satisfy contracts. Children and their parents employed in tobacco farming become trapped in a downward cycle of poverty as tobacco farm owners and tobacco companies earn profits from leaf produced with child labor.

Union organizers in Malawi struggle to eliminate child labor and improve the livelihoods of tobacco farmworkers. However, organizers encounter obstacles in the global political economy of tobacco, where the Malawian

government promotes tobacco growing and health policy-makers seek to decrease it. Both sides present daunting challenges to labor organizers.

Political Economy of Tobacco in Malawi

Beginning in 1981, structural adjustment programs (renamed Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers in 2000) involved policies to promote tobacco and other cash crops to achieve economic growth and ensure that Malawi repays its debts to the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (International Monetary Fund 2007; Magalasi 2006; World Bank 2006a, 2006b). Malawi derives 70 percent of its foreign earnings from tobacco, making it the most tobacco-dependent economy in the world (International Monetary Fund 2007). Nearly 3 percent of Malawi's arable land (2.8 percent; 301,467 acres) is devoted to growing tobacco (Table 9.1) (Mackay and Eriksen 2006). With about 1.5 million jobs, tobacco is the second largest sector of the economy, after the civil service. Between 1990 and 1995, tobacco accounted for 20 percent of deforestation in Malawi (Geist 1999). Furthermore, pesticide and fertilizer use on the country's tobacco crop depletes nutrients from soils, pollutes water tables, and erodes landscapes.

Tobacco growing thrives alongside poverty in Malawi. Of Malawi's population of 13.2 million, 65.3 percent live at or below the national poverty line (\$1.50 U.S. income per day) (United Nations Development Program 2008), life expectancy at birth is 39.8 years, 14 percent are infected with HIV/AIDS (one of the highest rates in the world) (Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS 2006; World Health Organization 2006b), 64 percent of adults are literate, the per capita GDP is \$161 U.S., and 83 percent live in rural areas (United Nations Development Program 2008). Desperate to survive, Malawians sell their labor on tobacco farms but continue to fall deeper into poverty.

Philip Morris and other cigarette manufacturers save \$10 million U.S. per year in production costs because the 78,000 children who work growing tobacco are not paid the adult minimum agricultural wage (Mwasikakata 2003; Otañez 2004). Few consumers in the United States and other global markets where Marlboro, Camel, and other American-blend cigarette brands are sold know that men, women, and children in Malawi who earn little or no money and suffer from chronic poverty grow the tobacco contained in many of those cigarettes.

Table 9.1. The Tobacco Business in Malawi

Growing tobacco	
Land devoted to growing tobacco, acres	301,467
Agricultural land devoted to tobacco farming, percentage of total	2.8
Tobacco produced, thousands of metric tons	69.5
Tobacco trade	
Cigarette exports, millions	2
Cigarette imports, millions	269
Tobacco leaf exports, metric tons	107,031
Tobacco leaf imports, metric tons	202
Manufacturing	
Number of cigarette manufacturing workers per 100,000 workers	0.0
Cigarettes manufactured, millions	NA
Price	
Peter Stuyvesant (British American Tobacco) or equivalent international brand, U.S. dollars per pack (Maeresas 2006)	1.40
Local brand	NA
Tax	
Tax as a proportion of cigarette price	NA
Total tax base derived from growing, marketing, and selling tobacco, percent (Jaffe 2003)	23
Cigarette excise taxes as percentage of total excise taxes (Clarke 2006)	60
Tobacco export levy as percentage of total export levy (Clarke 2006)	92
Total tobacco tax as percentage of total tax (Clarke 2006)	8
World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control	
Signed	No
Ratified	No

NA = not applicable

Source: Mackay and Eriksen 2006.

While smokers may be unfamiliar with the people who cultivated the tobacco in their cigarettes, consumers are increasingly aware of the health effects of smoking. Tobacco is the most common preventable cause of death worldwide and kills nearly 5 million people each year (Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids 2007). Tobacco farmers and their trade unions in Malawi and other developing countries grow a toxic crop with few allies to help them increase labor rights or make tobacco an economically sustainable crop (Clay 2004). Farmworkers and union organizers with the Tobacco Tenants and Allied Workers Union of Malawi (TOTAWUM), the national union of tobacco farm workers, are inextricably tied to tobacco industry corporate social responsibility programs and campaigns to reduce global tobacco use.

Holdings Limited is a private government-regulated monopoly that has the only license to operate tobacco auction floors in Malawi (Maleta 2004). The Malawi government issued licenses to Limbe Leaf and Alliance One (formerly Dimon and Stancom), a subsidiary of U.S.-based Alliance One International, to buy raw tobacco at auction. These two companies purchase over 90 percent of Malawi's tobacco at three government-run auction floors: Lilongwe, Mzuzu, and Blantyre-Limbe (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations 2003; Matthews and Wilshaw 1992).

Philip Morris and British American Tobacco (BAT) purchase most of Malawi's tobacco from Limbe Leaf and Alliance One. Philip Morris is the top purchaser of Malawi's tobacco, which accounts for 20 percent of the company's burley tobacco supply (Elshof 1998; Opukah 1999; Philip Morris 1999). No corresponding figure is available for BAT, the second largest purchaser of Malawi's tobacco (Elshof 1998), but *The Guardian* newspaper (UK) has reported that Malawi "provides most of the tobacco for Britain's cigarettes" (Vidal 2005).

After auction, tobacco is delivered to Limbe Leaf's and Alliance One's processing factories adjacent to the auction site where threshing machines remove and turn the raw leaf into unmanufactured tobacco. Leaf companies then load the tobacco into shipping containers. Containers of tobacco travel by rail or trucks to ports in Beira, Mozambique, and Durban, South Africa, where they are loaded onto ocean-going ships. Because Malawi is surrounded by Zambia, Mozambique, and Tanzania and is landlocked, its tobacco industry has high transportation costs (Mbekeani 2005). Philip Morris and BAT use the leaf in Marlboro and Camel cigarettes after it arrives in the United States, Europe, or one of over fifty other countries (Otañez 2004; Otañez and Walker 2002). In 2007, Philip Morris posted cigarette revenues of \$73.6 billion U.S., and BAT posted cigarette revenues of \$48.8 billion U.S. (Table 9.2).

Workers and Their Union

Recognizing the economic disenfranchisement of tobacco farmworkers within the global tobacco industry, farmworkers established TOTAWUM in 1992. TOTAWUM is a member of the MCTU. In August 2008 TOTAWUM had 19,816 members in 245 branches in twenty districts in Malawi. The union is an affiliate of the Switzerland-based International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco, and

Table 9.2. Statistics on Cigarette Manufacturers and Leaf-Buying Companies, 2007

<i>Cigarette Manufacturers</i>	<i>Revenues (U.S.\$ billion)</i>	<i>Number of Markets</i>	<i>Number of Factories</i>	<i>Share of Global Cigarette Market (%)</i>
Philip Morris	18.5 (domestic) 55.1 (international)	160+	50+	18.7
British American Tobacco	48,881	180+	81+	17.1
Japan Tobacco (2008)	31.1 (domestic) 9.1 (international)	120+	40+	10.5
Leaf-Buying Companies				
Universal Corporation (2008)	2,145	90+	40+	NA
Alliance One International (2008)	2,011	90+	50+	NA

+, Over; NA = not applicable

Source: Alliance One International 2008; Altria 2008; British American Tobacco 2008; Japan Tobacco Inc. 2008; Universal Corporation 2008.

Allied Workers' Association (IUF). TOTAWUM has received financial support from Trócaire, a faith-based organization in Ireland; the Norwegian trade union movement; and other global trade unions. Very few members of TOTAWUM can afford or are willing to pay a total of \$1.00 U.S. for union entrance fees and annual membership dues.

Malawi has the highest incidence of child labor in southern Africa (Torres 2000), most of which is involved in growing tobacco (Phiri 2004). Since British colonial times, the nation's tobacco industry has relied heavily on different forms of child labor (Chirwa 1993; Nankumba 1990). The majority of children living on tobacco estates have been engaged in part-time or full-time adult work (United Nations Children's Fund 1993). Research has revealed that 45 percent of child workers are ages ten to fourteen and 55 percent are between seven and nine years old. The actual number of children working in Malawi's tobacco sector—78,000—is much higher because the number of child workers there and in other developing economies is commonly underestimated by researchers and the government (Otañez et al. 2006; Torres 2000; World Bank 1995).

Tobacco farmers, tenants, and workers are stuck in a cycle of poverty and indebtedness to landlords. Independent smallholders and tenant farmers cultivate most of the tobacco on 1.25- to 2.5-acre landholdings. Non-Malawians own only a handful of farms, primarily large-scale ones of over 400 acres.

Malawian landlords typically live in urban areas. They hire managers and clerks, often family members, to manage the farms; they themselves visit the farms only periodically during each growing season. Tenants agree to produce tobacco on one acre of the farm and sell it to the landlord. Landlords provide inputs such as seeds, fertilizer, and food and deduct their costs from the tenants' earnings at the end of the growing season. Landlords prefer married tenants with children to ensure enough labor to grow a sufficient amount of tobacco on the allotted land. Many tenants and their family members end up with little or no money at the end of the season because of the landlords' practices. Many landlords overcharge tenants for inputs, rig scales to reduce the weight of tobacco, and pay tobacco prices below what they receive from the tobacco auctions. Tenants in debt to landlords often work additional seasons under the same terms to pay them off.

Many tenants put their children to work in fields instead of sending them to school because they cannot afford clothing and other basic necessities for their children (Otañez 2004; Torres 2000). In 2005 the Center for Social Concern, a Catholic Church-based nongovernmental organization in Malawi, reported that "children spend all their time with the parents helping with tobacco production." Additionally:

The children are heavily involved in potentially hazardous tasks such as clearing fields, making nursery beds, and watering nurseries; uprooting, transporting and transplanting tobacco seedlings and weeding during the second phase; picking, transporting, tying the leaf, picking the dried tobacco and bundling during the last phase. Some other tasks include child minding, fetching water and firewood. Boys are mostly involved in agricultural related activities while the girls are much [more] into domestic work. (Center for Social Concern 2005:29)

One tenant stated that when her family's landlord discovered her plan to send her children to school instead of to the fields, he threatened to expel them from the farm. Beginning in 1999, when the number of foreign researchers and journalists investigating child labor on tobacco farms in Malawi increased, farm landlords and managers pressured the tobacco families on their farms to conceal their children when visitors came and to inform visitors that any children seen on the farm were eighteen or older.

In Malawi, primary schools are free, but families are unable to send their children to school if they are not within walking distance, as is the case in many tobacco-growing areas (Otañez 2004; Torres 2000). A shortage of teachers also prevents children from attending school (Otañez 2004;

Torres 2000). Each year, HIV/AIDS kills 40 percent of Malawi's teachers (Cammack 2004). Many orphans are being raised by their grandparents, who are unable to provide them with adequate food, clothing, and other basic needs (Center for Social Concern 2006).

Union organizers with TOTAWUM and leaders within the Catholic Church in Malawi recognized child labor and the tenancy system as major problems and, in response, helped create a draft Tenant Bill in 1994 (Center for Social Concern 2006; Greene 1997). The bill would "provide for the regulation of tenancy labour by clarifying the rights and obligations of landlords and tenants with a view to avoid exploitative situations" (Nyirenda 2005:5). Michael Mwasikakata, a representative of the United Nations International Labor Organization (ILO) in Malawi, said the ILO and key stakeholders in Malawi, including the Ministry of Justice, discussed the bill in the summer of 2005 (letter to the author, July 26, 2005). As of October 2009, the bill is in the hands of the Ministry of Justice, which will prepare a draft to send to the Office of the President and the Cabinet for further analysis.

It is doubtful that this process will lead to any enacted law because after the bill was tabled in Parliament and sent to the Ministry of Justice in 1999, the Ministry of Justice held up progress on its passage by doing nothing with it until 2004 (Otañez 2004). In 2003, trade union leaders who were frustrated by the delay asked the Ministry of Justice about the bill's status. The Ministry replied that it had lost the bill. Passage appears to have been delayed indefinitely because several members of Malawi's Parliament and other government officials are tobacco farm landlords (Davies 2003; Shorter 2002).

In 1999, pressure from workers and international groups forced the government of Malawi to publicly recognize for the first time the extremely poor living and working conditions within the tobacco industry. TOTAWUM was a leading force in the movement to publicize the use of extensive child labor and bonded labor in tobacco-growing areas. It continues to push for written labor contracts, higher wages for tobacco workers, and passage of the Tobacco Bill. TOTAWUM's financial and organizational weaknesses played a large part in its decision to partner with global tobacco companies to develop child labor projects in Malawi.

Corporate-Union Relations and Child Labor

In 2000, BAT launched the ECLT, a nongovernmental organization in Geneva, Switzerland, to reduce child labor through projects that included

planting trees, building schools, and improving skills such as bookkeeping among tobacco farmers in Malawi. BAT created the scheme to deflect public and media attention away from abusive labor conditions on tobacco farms in Malawi instead of paying better prices for tobacco (Otañez et al. 2006).

In 2001, the Tobacco Association of Malawi (TAMA)—a commercial organization representing farmers responsible for 85 percent of the tobacco cultivated in Malawi (Tobacco Association of Malawi 2007)—established the AECL, the country's first child labor group (BBC World Service 2002). Albert Kamulaga, TAMA's president, said his organization initiated the child labor project "to sensitize local people [to] the evils of child labor" (Kamulaga interview with the author, February 27, 2003). With the appearance of a broadly based social movement such as Sandi Smith-Nonini describes in her chapter in this book or at least a regional group such as Christian Zlalniski describes in his chapter, the AECL board members included representatives from TAMA, TOTAWUM, and traditional chiefs. But they also included members from government ministries, Limbe Leaf, Alliance One, and Save the Children, a nongovernmental organization based in Malawi. Philip Morris, Universal Corporation, Alliance One International, the ILO, and the IUF became members of the ECLT beginning in 2002. In 2002, when BAT and other tobacco companies launched the ECLT in Malawi, the ECLT took control of the AECL (Eliminating Child Labour in Tobacco Growing Foundation 2003). The ECLT takeover of the Association for the Elimination of Child Labor was part of the tobacco industry's effort to increase its control of project funding and decision-making and to consolidate projects funded by leaf companies and cigarette manufacturers.

When tobacco companies, through the ECLT, assumed control of the AECL, companies began to work through TOTAWUM to administer child labor activities. TOTAWUM leaders actively reported child labor in Malawi's tobacco industry at meetings of the ILO in Switzerland and at other global meetings on child labor in Malawi in the late 1990s. Representatives of TOTAWUM and TAMA also participated in the BAT-sponsored child labor conference in Kenya in 2000 at which BAT announced the creation of the ECLT. Nkhosakota District in Malawi, the site of TOTAWUM's headquarters, was the location for ECLT's pilot project under the AECL.

The partnership between TOTAWUM and TAMA within the Association for the Elimination of Child Labor contrasted sharply with the adversarial relations between the two groups prior to the partnership. Since TOTAWUM had registered with the Malawi government as a trade union

in 1997, TOTAWUM tried to begin negotiations for a labor contract with TAMA. In 1999 the two groups signed a Memorandum of Understanding to institute collective bargaining, but between 2000 and 2007 TAMA refused TOTAWUM's multiple requests to begin the negotiation process. Revealing TAMA's disregard for its agreement with the union, in 2003 TAMA's Kamulaga said "there is no union" of tobacco workers in Malawi (Kamulaga interview with the author, February 27, 2003). TOTAWUM thus has little or no option except to participate in partnerships with TAMA as well as tobacco companies in hopes of securing a better future for tobacco farmworkers or, at the very least, to access financial resources otherwise unavailable to TOTAWUM leaders.

Through the ECLT, the tobacco companies hired Gibson (a pseudonym), a TOTAWUM organizer and one of my main fieldwork collaborators since 1997, to manage its child labor project. In discussing the mutual dependency between tobacco companies and TOTAWUM, Gibson stated in 2003 that TOTAWUM and union members had received a new primary school, money for administrative costs, and wider public recognition of tobacco workers' struggles through participation in the industry-funded project to end child labor in Malawi (Gibson interview with the author, February 22, 2003).

Such material and financial benefits were valuable in a union campaign that continually battled economic insecurity and neglect by state authorities. In return, the tobacco industry, through its sponsorship of a school construction initiative, has used its relationship with the union and tobacco workers to make claims that it contributes to local economies and generates employment and to threaten that effective tobacco control policies advocated by the World Health Organization (WHO) and other public health groups would reduce domestic demand and threaten farmers' livelihood and government revenue. TOTAWUM organizers who have been able to obtain enforceable labor contracts maintain a tenuous balance among the competing agendas of the tobacco companies, TAMA, and the union in implementing tobacco industry corporate social responsibility projects involving child labor.

Eliminating Child Labor?

At most, a few thousand of the 78,000 children engaged in child labor in Malawi have been affected positively by tobacco industry corporate social responsibility projects, and the overall impact on the number of child laborers in

the country has been negligible (Mwasikakata 2003; Otañez 2004). By contrast, in its 2003–2004 annual report (*Eliminating Child Labour in Tobacco Growing Foundation 2005:3*), the ECLT elaborated the achievements of its Association for the Elimination of Child Labor:

The school was completed in September 2003 and started to operate in January 2004 after being handed over to the Department of Education [in Malawi]. 328 children were enrolled: 61 percent of them were former child labourers. Teachers' houses, a borehole and latrines were also built. A parent-teacher association was set up; child labour and school committees were formed to consolidate and ensure a long-term impact of the project, beyond its completion.

By associating themselves with child labor achievements, tobacco companies seek to improve their reputations and create distance between child labor and the wealth created through the use of that labor in tobacco growing.

By December 2004, these impacts had been achieved through Together Ensuring Children's Security, ECLT's second group instituted to combat child labor:

- Ngala primary schools (Dowa district): children's enrolment rate was up 45% (630 additional children); dropout and repeat rates were down 33%
- Ngala primary schools (Dowa district): children's enrolment rate was up 45% (630 additional children); dropout and repeat rates were down 33%
- Dwanga primary schools (Kasungu district): children's enrolment rate was up 9% (160 additional children); dropout and repeat rates were down 33% and 30% respectively
- 3 primary schools were rehabilitated; 4 new classrooms were built
- 480 treadle pumps were installed (vs. 150 in the original 4-year project) which provided irrigation to 69 ha. (vs. an initial target of 18). Farmers who benefited from this programme generated an average of USD 350 resulting from the sale of green maize and vegetables. The overall food security situation of the communities thus improved dramatically
- The provision of safe water through the project's shallow wells reduced the incidence of waterborne diseases and death: cholera cases were down 97%
- As a positive and unexpected result of the mobilization campaign, the communities developed their own initiative—outside of the project

framework—and built kindergartens and one additional primary school. (*Eliminating Child Labour in Tobacco Growing Foundation 2005:3*)

Since 2001, the model of child labor-free projects developed in Malawi has also been applied to programs in Tanzania, Zambia, Uganda, the Philippines, and Kyrgyzstan and been considered for development in Fiji, Indonesia, and the Dominican Republic (Puckett 2003). In 2005 the ECLT was developing additional programs in Mozambique and Mexico (*Eliminating Child Labour in Tobacco Growing Foundation 2005*). The content of these programs is similar, involving school construction and rehabilitation projects, reforestation schemes, workshops and training to educate villagers and farmers about child labor, and clean water projects involving shallow boreholes and treadle pumps.

The contradiction between what the tobacco industry says and what it does is evidence that tobacco companies use the ECLT for public relations purposes. ECLT funding of two different, competing child labor groups in Malawi—the Association for the Elimination of Child Labor and Together Ensuring Children's Security—is an example of companies managing partnerships to minimize actual changes in the country's child labor situation. The AECL received \$200,000 U.S. for child labor projects from the ECLT in 2003–2004 (*Eliminating Child Labour in Tobacco Growing Foundation 2004*).

In 2002 Limbe Leaf withdrew its membership in the AECL (Otañez 2004) and, with other processing companies, created Together Ensuring Children's Security, which received \$2.1 million from the ECLT (*Eliminating Child Labour in Tobacco Growing Foundation 2002*). Officials of the leaf-processing companies that operated Together Ensuring Children's Security did not include representatives from TAMA and TOTAWUM and did not contact or consult with union leaders regarding the creation of the group (Otañez 2004). An executive member of TOTAWUM said officials of Together Ensuring Children's Security are “bluffing” about their concern for reducing the amount of child labor and that they have “no constituency” at the farm level (interview with the author, February 22, 2003). Together Ensuring Children's Security is focused more on protecting tobacco companies from negative publicity about their use of child labor than on improving the substandard wages that give rise to child labor in the first place.

An Impossible Situation

TOTAWUM organizers are concerned about global discussions involving the WHO's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC). The convention seeks to reduce the global demand for tobacco products and curb tobacco-related mortality through both demand interventions such as marketing, health warnings, and cigarette taxes and supply interventions such as smuggling and tobacco cultivation (World Health Organization 2006a). On May 21, 2003, members of the World Health Assembly (WHA) unanimously adopted the FCTC. On February 27, 2005, the FCTC was enacted after 40 WHA members ratified the convention. As of October 2009, 167 countries had ratified the FCTC. Philip Morris, BAT, and other cigarette manufacturers feared the convention would weaken cigarette sales and profits and lobbied government officials and health policy-makers in Malawi, other developing countries, and developed countries to weaken the FCTC (Mamudu and Glantz 2009).

Gibson participated in meetings with officials at Limbe Leaf, Alliance One, and Malawi government ministries to formulate Malawi's position against the FCTC. In August 2000, when the tobacco industry was using Malawi and other tobacco farming countries to lobby for a weak WHO treaty in talks leading up to the writing of the convention in Geneva, Switzerland, Gibson spoke to me about his concerns over the FCTC and global tobacco control policies generally. According to Gibson, the FCTC would threaten job losses and reduced earnings for tobacco farmers. Gibson's view is that relatively wealthy countries that grow tobacco, such as the United States, Brazil, and India, should stop doing so and leave tobacco growing for Malawi. Gibson and TOTAWUM are not opposed to the FCTC. Gibson recognizes Malawi's problems with improving the conditions of work on tobacco farms, protecting farmers from job losses related to the global decrease in tobacco demand, and encouraging the search for resources to assist tobacco farmers who have no other option but to grow tobacco. Gibson stated:

Yes, this anti-smoking lobby [in support of the WHO treaty] could be there, the convention could be signed, but the government and those who are interested [in seeing] that tobacco [continues to be grown here] should at least find a way to support these workers in the estates. . . . We know at this time that these workers are being mistreated, they are being exploited on these estates, but they get something from these landlords from the beginning [of the growing season] because they agree

on loans—to take some things on loan on an estate, but at the end [of the season] even though they are being cheated they [get food] from September [when nursery beds for tobacco seedlings are prepared] to May or June [when tobacco harvesting ends in Malawi]. Even though landlords don't take good care of farmworkers, they do something. [Malawians] are growing tobacco not for the sake of liking to grow tobacco; they don't have other means. (Gibson interview with the author, August 6, 2000)

Gibson's view that farmers have no options except to grow tobacco shows the precarious position of both tobacco farmers and TOTAWUM organizers. In addition to problems of chronic poverty for many tobacco families and reliance on foreign donors to fund TOTAWUM, tobacco families and union organizers lack crop substitutes and alternative livelihoods. Since the 1960s, the Malawi government has tried unsuccessfully to implement crop diversification schemes to reduce the country's economic reliance on tobacco (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations 2003).

In addition to TOTAWUM, TAMA has participated in lobbying for a treaty that would not harm tobacco farming in Malawi. Kamulaga, TAMA's president, advised the Malawi government and other tobacco-growing countries during negotiations for the FCTC to refuse to sign the convention. According to Kamulaga, "Malawi should not ratify that convention because we depend on tobacco. If we sign it what message will we be sending to the buyers? . . . Ratifying the treaty will mean banning advertisements and smoking in all public places[,] among several issues that have been highlighted in the FCTC" (newswire article from *Xinhau News* 2000). Kamulaga later explained to me that TAMA's main concern regarding the FCTC is that Malawians

have no alternative to tobacco at the moment and if we are given financial assistance to diversify . . . until we find an alternative to tobacco we will comply fully [with the FCTC]. But at the moment we can't. We are happy to see that it is left up to countries. [The World Health Organization] is not a world body now ruling for everybody. [Treaty adoption] would [vary] from country to country. The countries that want to adopt that ban can adopt it, those who can't can take their own law. We are happier that way. And I believe some countries have rejected [the treaty] because they feel that smoking is a human right.

If someone wants to smoke you can't stop him. You can sensitize him but it is up to him to make a choice. So, a breach of human rights

should be avoided so people are left free to decide what they want. You can sensitize them but not ban it outright. That way we can go along with [the FCTC]. [The WHO] wanted to force countries to adopt certain restrictive measures. But now it depends from country to country. Whichever country wants to adopt those restrictive measures they can adopt it. Those that feel they can't are not forced to do it. (Kamulaga interview with the author, March 10, 2003)

TAMA's position on the FCTC is little different from TOTAWUM's position. However, Gibson suggested that TOTAWUM and tobacco farmworkers felt betrayed by TAMA for partnering with the union on tobacco industry-funded child labor activities while TAMA, Limbe Leaf, and Alliance One used TOTAWUM to argue that the WHO treaty will destroy jobs and hurt tobacco workers in Malawi. Tobacco companies took up Gibson's concern about the livelihoods of tobacco farmworkers in negotiations with members of the World Health Assembly over the drafting of the FCTC beginning in October 2000. Tobacco companies used the livelihoods of tobacco farmers and potential threats to them posed by the FCTC to lobby Malawi officials to argue for a treaty that was weak from the standpoint of tobacco industry interests in Malawi and other tobacco-farming countries (Otañez et al. 2006; World Health Organization 2000).

Conclusion

As the only substantial organization in Malawi asserting the rights of tobacco workers, TOTAWUM remains stuck in a tobacco commodity trap. Tobacco workers produce a product that harms human health. Tobacco companies use tobacco workers and their trade union in public relations campaigns to counter criticism of the tobacco industry's reliance on child labor, and tobacco control campaigners prioritize public health at the expense of tobacco labor issues. These apparently unresolvable problems for union organizers in Malawi impede the rights of tobacco farmworkers as tobacco companies' reputations grow and health policy-makers' victories spread.

References Cited

- Alliance One International
 2008 2008 Annual Report. http://media.corporate-ir.net/media_files/IROL/96/96341/Reports/AOI2008AR.pdf, accessed August 18, 2008.

- Altria
 2008 2007 Annual Report. www.altria.com/download/pdf/investors_AltriaGroupInc_2007_AnnualRpt.pdf, accessed August 17, 2008.
- BBC World Service
 2002 Malawi: Non-smokers Hooked on Tobacco. www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/sci_tech/features/health/tobaccotrial/malawi.htm, accessed August 5, 2005.
- British American Tobacco
 2008 Annual Reports and Accounts 2007. [http://www.bat.com/group/sites/uk__3mnfen.nsf/vwPagesWebLive/DO52AK34/\\$FILE/medMD-7D9KKN.pdf?openelement](http://www.bat.com/group/sites/uk__3mnfen.nsf/vwPagesWebLive/DO52AK34/$FILE/medMD-7D9KKN.pdf?openelement), accessed August 17, 2008.
- Cammack, D.
 2004 Poorly Performing Countries: Malawi, 1980–2002. www.odi.org.uk/pppg/activities/concepts_analysis/poorperformers/BackgroundPaper3-Malawi.pdf, accessed February 23, 2006.
- Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids
 2007 Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids. <http://tobaccofreekids.org>, accessed March 25, 2007.
- Center for Social Concern
 2005 Working and Living Conditions of Tobacco Tenants. *The Lamp* [Malawi] (May-June): 23.
- Chirwa, W.
 1993 Child and Youth Labour on the Nyasaland Plantations, 1890–1953. *Journal of Southern African Studies* 19(4): 662–680.
- Clarke, J.
 2006 Country Study: Malawi. www.wti.org/conf/documents/Clarketobaccoin-Malawi.doc, accessed March 3, 2006.
- Clay, J.
 2004 *World Agriculture and the Environment: A Commodity-by-Commodity Guide to the Impacts and Practices*. Washington, DC: Island Press.
- Davies, P.
 2003 Malawi: Addicted to the Leaf. *Tobacco Control* 12(1): 91–93.
- Eliminating Child Labour in Tobacco Growing Foundation
 2002 ECLT Foundation Program in Malawi with “Together Ensuring Children's Security” (TECS) 2002–2006. www.eclt.org/filestore/TECSProgramme.pdf, accessed March 21, 2007.
- 2003 Annual Report 2001 and 2002. www.eclt.org/filestore/ECLTAnnualReport.pdf, accessed November 22, 2004.
- 2004 ECLT brochure. www.eclt.org, accessed August 12, 2004.

- 2005 Annual Report 2003–2004. www.eclt.org/filestore/Annual%20report%202003–2004.pdf, accessed May 1, 2006.
- Elshof, P.
1998 Malawi Tobacco and Child Labour: The Involvement of Tobacco Companies. October 13, British American Tobacco. <http://bat.library.ucsf.edu/tid/tzt63a99>, accessed September 14, 2006.
- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
2003 Issues in the Global Tobacco Economy: Selected Case Studies. <ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/006/y4997E/y4997e01.pdf>, accessed January 3, 2007.
- Geist, H. J.
1999 Global Assessment of Deforestation Related to Tobacco Farming. *Tobacco Control* 8(1): 18–28.
- Greene, J.
1997 Tobacco Tenants: Justice and Peace. www.thewhitefathers.org.uk/336ml.pdf, accessed January 26, 2006.
- International Monetary Fund
2007 Malawi: Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper—Growth and Development Strategy. www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2007/cr0755.pdf, accessed March 1, 2007.
- Jaffe, S.
2003 Malawi's Tobacco Sector: Standing on One Strong Leg Is Better Than on None. www.worldbank.org/afr/wps/wp55.pdf, accessed January 25, 2006.
- Japan Tobacco Inc.
2008 Annual Report 2008. www.jti.co.jp/JTI_E/IR/08/annual2008/annual2008_E_all.pdf, accessed August 17, 2008.
- Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
2006 2006 Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic. www.unaids.org/en/HIV_data/2006GlobalReport/default.asp, accessed September 5, 2006.
- Mackay, J., and M. Eriksen
2006 The Tobacco Atlas, 2nd ed. <http://62.193.232.43:8080/statmap>, accessed March 14, 2007.
- Maeres, A.
2006 Fate of Country's Tobacco Farmers Goes under the Hammer. www.panos.org.uk/global/featuredetails.asp?featureid=1257&ID=1023, accessed February 13, 2007.
- Magalasi, C.
2006 Little to Celebrate as IMF, World Bank Clock 60. *Business Evolution* [Malawi]: 17.
- Malera, M.
2004 Malawi Tobacco Sector Performance Audit. [http://lnweb18.worldbank.org/ESSD/sdvext.nsf/81ByDocName/Malawi:TobaccoReformInstitutionalAssessmentNov2004/\\$FILE/MW+Tobacco+Study+-+institutional+component+-+121404.pdf](http://lnweb18.worldbank.org/ESSD/sdvext.nsf/81ByDocName/Malawi:TobaccoReformInstitutionalAssessmentNov2004/$FILE/MW+Tobacco+Study+-+institutional+component+-+121404.pdf), accessed September 21, 2006.
- Mamudu, H., and S. Glantz
2009 Civil Society and the Negotiations of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC). *Global Public Health* 4(2): 150–168.
- Matthews, A., and C. Wilshaw
1992 *Fodya: The Tobacco Handbook*. Blantyre: Central Africana Limited.
- Mbekeani, K.
2005 Malawi: Studies on Past Industrial Trade Reforms; Experience and Economic Implications. In *Coping with Trade Reforms: A Developing Country Perspective on the WTO Industrial Tariff Negotiations*, ed. S. de Cordoba and S. Laird, pp. 158–170. New York: United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.
- Mwasikakata, M.
2003 Tobacco: An Economic Lifeline? The Case of Tobacco Farming in the Kasungu Agricultural Development Division, Malawi. www.ilo-mirror.cornell.edu/public/english/dialogue/sector/papers/tobacco/wp184.pdf, accessed January 22, 2003.
- Nankumba, J. S.
1990 *A Case Study of Tenancy Arrangements on Private Burley Tobacco Estates in Malawi*. Report no. 4. Zomba: University of Malawi.
- Nyirenda, K.
2005 Tenancy Labor Bill [draft]. Lilongwe.
- Opukah, S.
1999 Unofficial Minutes—CECCM Board Mfg & Argumentation Group 3rd June Brussels. June 7, British American Tobacco. <http://bat.library.ucsf.edu/tid/bzw92a99>, accessed March 26, 2007.
- Otañez, M.
2004 “Thank You for Smoking”: Corporate Power and Tobacco Worker Struggles in Malawi. PhD dissertation, University of California, Irvine.
- Otañez, M., M. E. Muggli, R. D. Hurt, and S. A. Glantz
2006 Eliminating Child Labour in Malawi: A British American Tobacco Corporate Responsibility Project to Sidestep Tobacco Labour Exploitation. *Tobacco Control* 15(3): 224–230.

Otañez M., and C. Walker, dirs.

- 2002 Up in Smoke. 26 min. Television Trust for the Environment, London. www.tve.org/lifeonline/index.cfm?aid=1228, accessed January 9, 2007.

Philip Morris.

- 1999 RE GMT. Philip Morris. <http://legacy.library.ucsf.edu/tid/hzx04c00>, accessed March 26, 2007.

Phiri, M.

- 2004 Assessment of the Potential Impact of the Abolition of the Tenancy Labour System in Malawi: International Labor Organization. ILO Report. Lilongwe: Malawi Commercial Agriculture Program.

Puckett, A.

- 2003 Unacceptable: Supported by the Tobacco Industry, a New Foundation Is Fighting Child Labour in Leaf-Producing Countries. *Tobacco Reporter*. 182–184.

Shorter, D.

- 2002 Up in Smoke: Tobacco, Health, and Hunger in Africa. www.abc.net.au/science/slab/tobacco/default.htm, accessed August 10, 2006.

Tobacco Association of Malawi

- 2007 Agricultural Diversification and Crop Alternatives to Tobacco—A Perspective of the Tobacco Association of Malawi. www.who.int/tobacco/framework/cop/events/tobacco_association_malawi.pdf, accessed February 27, 2007.

Torres, L.

- 2000 The Smoking Business: Tobacco Workers in Malawi. www.fafo.no/pub/rapp/339/339-web.pdf, accessed June 3, 2007.

United Nations Children's Fund

- 1993 *Situation Analysis of Poverty in Malawi*. Lilongwe: Association with the Government of Malawi.

United Nations Development Program

- 2008 Human Development Report 2007/2008: Fighting Climate Change: Human Solidarity in a Divided World. http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/HDR_20072008_EN_Complete.pdf, accessed August 17, 2008.

Universal Corporation

- 2008 Annual Report. <http://library.corporate-ir.net/library/89/890/89047/items/298788/2008AnnualReport.pdf>, accessed August 17, 2008.

Vidal, J.

- 2005 How Malawi's Livelihood Went up in Smoke. www.guardian.co.uk/international/story/0,1501416,00.html, accessed August 26, 2006.

World Bank

- 1995 *Labor and the Growth Crisis in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Washington, DC: World Bank.
- 2006a Malawi: Country Assistance Evaluation. [http://lnweb18.worldbank.org/oed/oeddoelib.nsf/DocUNIDViewForJavaSearch/B82C98258A9044B9852571BE007892E4/\\$file/malawi_cae.pdf](http://lnweb18.worldbank.org/oed/oeddoelib.nsf/DocUNIDViewForJavaSearch/B82C98258A9044B9852571BE007892E4/$file/malawi_cae.pdf), accessed January 26, 2007.
- 2006b Malawi: Country Assistance Evaluation. [http://lnweb18.worldbank.org/oed/oeddoelib.nsf/DocUNIDViewForJavaSearch/F62810BF345B232B852571BF007240A1/\\$file/malawi_reach.pdf](http://lnweb18.worldbank.org/oed/oeddoelib.nsf/DocUNIDViewForJavaSearch/F62810BF345B232B852571BF007240A1/$file/malawi_reach.pdf), accessed October 31, 2006.

World Health Organization

- 2000 Tobacco Company Strategies to Undermine Tobacco Control Activities. <http://repositories.cdlib.org/context/tc/article/1107/type/pdf/viewcontent>, accessed January 11, 2007.
- 2006a WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. www.who.int/tobacco/framework/en/, accessed September 12, 2007.
- 2006b Working Together for Health: The World Health Report 2006. www.who.int/whr/2006/whr06_en.pdf, accessed March 24, 2007.

Xinhau News

- 2000 Malawi to Ratify WHO Convention on Tobacco Control. www.eastday.com, accessed October 12, 2006.

THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF
**LABOR
UNIONS**
EDITED BY E. Paul Durrenberger and Karaleah S. Reichart

UNIVERSITY PRESS OF COLORADO