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Source: *African Affairs*, Oct., 1972, Vol. 71, No. 285 (Oct., 1972), pp. 369-388

Published by: Oxford University Press on behalf of The Royal African Society

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THE EMERGENCE AND DECLINE OF A SOUTH AFRICAN PEASANTRY

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MUCH OF SOUTH AFRICA'S history revolves about the transition of a majority of her people—the rural African population—from their pre-colonial existence as pastoralist-cultivators to their contemporary status: that of sub-subsistence rural dwellers, manifestly unable to support themselves by agriculture, and dependent for survival upon wages earned in 'white' industrial regions or on 'white' farms. The transition is an obvious one, and its external aspects have been described often enough: the diminution of Africans' lands by conquest and annexation, the creation of 'reserves', the deterioration of these into eroded, overstocked and overcrowded rural ghettos, and their function as the supply source of migratory labour.

The most widely accepted explanation of the 'failure' of African agriculture in South Africa to provide a living for people who were once herders and farmers is found in the works of de Kiewiet, Marais, Macmillan and others, who stress the destructive impact of white rule, the dislocation of the traditional economy and social order, and, especially, the hammer-blow of sudden land shortage. They were consciously writing corrective history, replacing the pro-settler complacency and misrepresentation of Theal and Cory; de Kiewiet was at pains to dispel the comfortable fiction that Africans continued even after the Frontier Wars to enjoy an agreeable *dolce far niente*, stressing that rural Africans underwent hardships 'of a much greater degree than is normally conceded'. Without available land for all, 'one of the corner-stones of tribal life had been wrenched away;' the cash nexus dissolved the old self-sufficient economic order, while rising consumption needs 'threw upon the tribes a burden their subsistence economy could not bear.'¹ The frailty of the subsistence economy was in large measure due to the 'unscientific and wasteful' agriculture and the 'ignorance and neglect' of 'native life'.²

A rather different emphasis is met in the works of D. Hobart Houghton, who has written widely on the economic history of the reserves. His explanation derives even more explicitly from a theoretical insistence upon the dual

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1. C. W. de Kiewiet, 'Social and Economic Developments in Native Tribal Life', *Cambridge History of the British Empire*, Vol. VIII (Cambridge, 1936), pp. 811, 812, 819.
2. C. W. de Kiewiet, *The Imperial Factor in South Africa* (Cambridge, 1937), p. 150 et passim; *A History of South Africa* (London, 1941), p. 197 et passim.

nature of the South African economy, the parallel existence of 'self-subsistence' and 'market' sectors of the economy. He argues that, for a variety of reasons, Africans failed to adapt the tribal economy to the novel condition of relative land scarcity, or to learn from their white neighbours more modern methods of farming. The 'failure to adapt their economy' is the 'root cause of their distress', and the failure is accounted for in terms of the shortcomings of the traditional or subsistence sphere of the dual economy: lack of technical knowledge, the inhibiting forces of social custom and a hostility to innovation, and a lack of response to market incentives. The thesis is underscored that these flaws stem from the nature of African society, that they are so deeply rooted there as to resist the enlightenment and economic rationality of

'far sighted administrators . . . missionaries . . . [and] agricultural demonstrators . . . Failure to effect significant change in agricultural methods should not be attributed to lack of zeal on the part of a noble band of dedicated workers, but must be explained in other ways.'³

These approaches—and the liberal tradition of South African historiography—posit the fundamental, inherent weakness of the traditional economy, and the inability of Africans either to adapt that economy or to forsake it for participation in the market economy. This explanation overlooks or underestimates a phenomenon to which Monica Wilson has recently drawn attention: an initial period of 'early prosperity' in the reserve areas of South Africa (and in the territories that today are Botswana, Lesotho, and Swaziland), followed only later by the symptoms of underdevelopment and sub-subsistence (i.e. a level below that of normal subsistence).⁴

This paper makes some preliminary suggestions about the history of African agriculture in South Africa, and particularly about the response by African peasants to economic changes in the late nineteenth century. It argues that there was a substantially more positive response by African agriculturists to market opportunities than has usually been indicated; that an adapted form of the traditional subsistence methods provided for hundreds of thousands of Africans a preferable alternative to wage labour on white colonists' terms; that a smaller group of African farmers made considerable adaptations, departing entirely from the traditional agricultural economy, and competed most effectively

3. For Houghton's writings generally on reserves and dual economy, see his *Some Economic Problems of the Bantu in South Africa* (Johannesburg, 1938) S.A.I.R.R. Monograph Series, No. 1; *The Economy of a Native Reserve*, Vol. 2 of *Keiskammahoek Rural Survey* (Pietermaritzburg, 1952); (ed.), *Economic Development in a Plural Society* (Cape Town, 1960), esp. p. 11; *The South African Economy*, (2nd edition, Cape Town, 1967) pp. 70–71 et passim; 'Economic Development in the Reserves', *Race Relations Journal*, 29, (Jan. 1962). The quotations here are from 'The Economy of a Native Reserve', pp. 2–3, and 'Economic Development in the Reserves', pp. 10–11.

4. M. Wilson and L. Thompson (Eds), *The Oxford History of South Africa*, Vol. 2 (Oxford, 1971), p. 55. Apart from her most useful treatment (*ibid.*, pp. 49–71), earlier treatments of this phenomenon include H. M. Robertson, '150 Years of Economic Contact between Black and White', *S. A. Jnl Econ.*, 2, 4 & 3, 1; S. T. van der Horst, *Native Labour in South Africa* (London, 1942), esp. pp. 103–5.

with white farmers. In explaining the subsequent failure of this response and these adaptations, it is suggested that the crucial post-mineral period was one in which non-market forces predominated; in which discriminatory and coercive means were utilized by the wielders of economic and political power to disadvantage the African peasantry; and that an economy was created whose structure was such as to render 'market forces' highly favourable to the white, capitalist sector. The decline in productivity and profitability of African agriculture—and the corollary of greater dependence by Africans on wage labour—is in an important sense the outcome of the nature of capitalist development in South Africa.

In short, I maintain that it is tenable to speak of the creation of an African peasantry in South Africa during the nineteenth century: a peasant I take to be a rural cultivator enjoying access to a specific portion of land, the fruits of which he can dispose of as if he owned the land; and who, by the use of family labour, seeks to satisfy the consumption needs of his family and to meet the demands rising from his involvement in a wider economic system.⁵ This definition focuses attention both upon the relationship between the cultivator and the land he farms, his crops, cattle, ploughs, and pastures, and upon the relationship between the cultivator and the holders of economic and political power outside his own social stratum, the transfer of surplus in rents, taxes, exchange, and labour. A feature of the transition of rural Africans from farmer-pastoralists to a reservoir of cheap, rightless, and largely migrant workers is that a portion of the peasantry was proletarianized almost as soon as it emerged as an identifiable element in the political economy.

Obviously, the transition varied in chronology and detail from area to area, but its broad features have a general applicability. Highly schematically:

- (i) After the initial shock of collision between colonists and farmer-pastoralists, the latter adapted considerably, and in areas of greatest contact a peasantry emerged which sought in part to meet its requirements through participation in the produce market.
- (ii) At first, such participation was favoured by imperial and colonial authorities, by missionaries and settlers: the peasants provided a buffer against hostile tribes, and economic activity was profitably advanced.
- (iii) African peasants displayed a tenacious preference for a life that drew subsistence from a family plot rather than from wage labour at low levels of remuneration. White farmers, in the period before mineral discoveries, sought for their part to ensure an increased labour supply; they did so either by levying taxes and fees and enacting laws to compel and control a labour flow, or by establishing quasi-feudal relations. This latter recourse best fulfilled the needs of white farmers who themselves were only shallowly involved in market production; in many instances, it gave absentee landlords a rent income;

5. This definition is derived from E. R. Wolf, *Peasants* (New Jersey, 1966), pp. 2, 11–13; and from J. S. Saul & R. Woods, 'African Peasantries', in T. Shanin, (Ed.) *Peasants and Peasant Societies* (London, 1971), pp. 103–15.

and it proffered to African squatters a *de facto* peasant existence, and blunted the severity of laws and taxes.

(iv) Mineral discoveries and economic growth evoked a rapid spread of peasant production, and increased peasant participation in the new market and entrepreneurial opportunities; innovation and diversification took place, and a group of relatively well-off African peasants and small commercial farmers emerged. Simultaneously, however, the competing needs of old and new employers of African labour, the gradual commercialization of agriculture, and the intensification of white political authority, greatly increased the pressures on the peasantry: an assault was launched upon the peasant's participation in the cash economy on his own terms—i.e., as a seller of produce rather than as a seller of labour. Real wages were kept permanently low in mines and on farms, and as their increase was no longer to be an equilibrating factor on the labour market, 'political mechanisms became of crucial importance in closing gaps between supply and demand.'⁶ There ensued not only an attempt to coerce more labour, but also an attempt to decrease the level of African competition in the produce and land markets. The early twentieth century saw a substantial rise in the social cost of peasant participation in the produce market, and a correlatively increasing reliance by peasants upon migrant labour for a cash income.

(v) One must ask why the transition process halted where it did; why the peasantry was not completely proletarianized; why South Africa's capitalist development proceeded (and proceeds) with the retention of certain pre-capitalist features. The answer lies largely in the comprehensively disadvantaged state of the peasantry by the second decade of this century: so reliant was the peasant sector upon migrant labour, so patently incapable of local development, that an adequate labour supply was assured. Moreover, the embedding of migrant labour in the economic structure conferred benefits on all the major interests which had a political voice in the state. For urban employers, it meant that labour was kept cheap, unorganized, and rightless, that overhead costs were kept to a minimum, and the formation of an urban proletariat was restricted. For white workers, it provided the security of membership in a labour elite: the protection of white labouring interests meant a partial solution to the Poor White problem—Afrikaner squatters were more fortunate than their black counterparts. For white farmers, it meant that low wages and the impermanence of compound life kept the labour force closer at hand, once the threat of black agricultural competition had been avoided.

c. 1830–1870: the emergence of a peasantry

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, most African peoples who were beginning to encounter white missionaries, hunters, traders, soldiers and settlers

6. G. Arrighi, 'Labour Supplies in Historical Perspective: a study of the proletarianization of the African peasantry in Rhodesia', *Journal of Development Studies*, 6, 3, (April 1970), pp. 197–235.

were still pre-colonial cultivators. In the first third of the century, small communities of peasants lived either on or around mission stations, or in the vicinity of markets like that at Grahamstown. Somerset and other imperial officials favoured the 'civilizing' influence of the missions as an aid to peaceful rule; and looked to the creation of 'quiet and useful neighbours'. The missionaries themselves were conscious of the creation of a peasant class: as early as 1820, Philip wrote:

'By locating them on a particular place, getting them to build houses, enclose gardens, cultivate Corn land, accumulate property, and by increasing their artificial wants, you increase their dependency on the Colony, and multiply the bonds of union and number of securities for the preservation of peace.'⁷

The *mfecane* (the dispersal of Africans westwards occasioned by the rise of the Zulu state) provided the Cape with its first significant numbers of African farm labourers, who in turn were able to use skills and stock thus accumulated to become peasants. The migration of the Mfengu into the Ciskei in 1835 marks the creation of the first sizeable peasant community in South Africa. Some 17,000 Mfengu entered the colony comparatively rich in cattle, and without strong chiefly authority; they proved willing to enter service in order to accumulate cash and stock, they adopted the plough, tilled more extensively, and transported their produce to nearby markets for sale or barter. They 'soon became the chief economic power' among the Cape African tribes,⁸ and were to serve as an agency of change, especially as numbers of them settled in most districts of the Colony.

The frontier wars of the 1830s, 1840s and 1850s were the violent expression of the pattern of those decades, in which mission and trade activity, and the extension of imperial authority, made corrosive contact with the political and economic organization of the tribes. Under the first sweeping expropriations of grazing lands, the mission station offered an alternative mode of access to the means of agricultural production, access that was not the less prized by the enterprising tribesman who thereby escaped the social sanctions upon accumulation exercised by his chief. By 1848, missions in the Cape held almost 450,000 acres either by deed or by 'ticket of occupation'.⁹ In their replies to a questionnaire of 1848, Ciskei missionaries attested to the prevalence of agricultural innovation and diversification amongst mission-oriented peasants. They raised vegetables, wheat, barley, maize, and millet, they bought 'spades, ploughs, waggons, and other useful articles'; they reared and purchased draught animals expressly for tillage and transport, and saved 'considerable sums' of money.¹⁰

7. cf. D. Williams, *When Races Meet* (Johannesburg, 1967), esp. quotations from Somerset, Cuyler and Philip on pp. 16, 18, 31 respectively.

8. Robertson, '150 Years of Economic Contact', *loc. cit.*

9. B. Hutchinson, 'Some Social Consequences of Nineteenth Century Missionary Activity among the South African Bantu', *Africa*, 28, 2 (April 1957).

10. A. E. du Toit, *The Earliest South African Documents on the Education and Civilization of the Bantu* (Pretoria, 1963), pp. 40, 57, 64, 73 et passim.

The Xhosa and Thembu cattle-killing of 1857 saw an acceleration of the integration of the colonial and traditional societies, on terms largely of the former's choosing. Tens of thousands of Africans, in response to the messianic exhortation of prophets among them, sacrificed their means of subsistence in an ill-fated attempt to reverse at a stroke the process of their domination. They sped it instead. Perhaps 20,000 died, and 30,000 survivors sought sustenance as labourers in white employ. Sir George Grey, then Governor, vigorously promoted a dual policy of land expropriation and civilization, by which he intended the rapid creation of a distinct small-holding class and of a wage-earning class: 'useful servants, consumers of our goods, contributors to our revenue, in short, a source of wealth and strength to this colony'.¹¹

From the mid-50s to 1870, the annexation of the Ciskei and the extension of control over large areas of the Transkei brought increasing numbers into inescapable relations with traders, magistrates, and employers. But the tribesmen did not succumb *en masse* to these forces: the same forces which pressed some into bondage enabled others to escape; land expropriation during the wars was accompanied by grants to Mfengu and other loyalists; the large influx of traders into the Ciskei and Transkei is also an index of the increased sales of animal and agricultural products by Africans. Mfengu, Thembu, Gcalekas, Ngqikas and others demonstrated in the 1860s how effectively peasants could adjust to their new circumstances: crucial in the dispersal of new methods were the Mfengu and Thembu migrations into the Fingoland and Emigrant Tembuland areas of the Transkei in 1864–66. Throughout the Ciskei, North-Eastern Cape and western Transkei, peasants gained a foothold as land-holders and cultivators, selling grains, forage, stock, and animal products. They won prizes at agricultural shows in competition with white farmers, and a statistician noted in 1870 that 'taking everything into consideration, the native district of Peddie surpasses the European district of Albany in its productive powers'.¹² The Wittebergen reserve raised such quantities of wheat, maize and millet that the area served as 'the granary of both the Northern Districts and the Free State too'. Hundreds of Mfengu, Thembu and others—especially in the districts of Peddie, Victoria East, Queenstown and Kingwilliamstown—bought land, and many more leased land from white proprietors. From these districts, and from Stutterheim, Bedford, Somerset, Glen Grey and Keiskama Hoek came reports of sale of large quantities of agricultural surplus.¹³ An extremely significant development was the adoption by African peasants of sheep-raising and wool production: 17,000 lbs of wool was sold from the district of Peddie alone in 1864; and it was estimated in 1870 that Africans in the Eastern Cape sold produce worth £150,000—white produce in the same area was worth £582,000.¹⁴

11. Cited in Hobart Houghton, (Ed.) *Economic Development in a Plural Society*, p. 3.

12. W. L. Blore, *Statistics of the Cape Colony* (Cape Town, 1871), p. 137.

13. Wesleyan Missionary Society archives, Box XV, South African, H. H. Dugmore to W. Boyce, 1/11/1869; Cape Commission on Native Affairs, 1865.

14. Cape Commission on Native Affairs, 1865; Blore, *Statistics of the Cape*, p. 109.

In general terms, the adoption of the plough and other implements, of new crops and methods, had provided a superior mode of production to precolonial agriculture, and many Africans responded to the imposition of taxes and the desirability of traders' wares by participating in the produce market. White farmers complained in this period of an acute labour shortage. The 'little' labour forthcoming is often attributed to the lack of responsiveness by tribesmen to the opportunities opened up by cash wages. Part, at the very least, of this shortage was due to the preference of the land-based African for meeting the new wants by selling his produce, a preference reinforced by a resistance to a qualitative change in his social relations. Even the drastic effects of large-scale land expropriation were cushioned, as the Cape possessed neither the coercive instruments, nor its economy the need, to clear all white-owned land of African occupiers. Land speculators and farmers alike, in the absence of a developed commercial agriculture, found it more profitable to have African tenants (who might be cash tenants, tenants paying in kind, tenants performing labour dues, or a combination) on their lands. The leasing of land to Africans for cash or kind was known as 'kaffir-farming', an inelegant phrase that nevertheless conveys accurately the source of non-productive white land-owners' profits. The establishment of these quasi-feudal relations on extensive lands of low cash value provided a short-term answer to white labour needs; afforded a rent income to absentee proprietors; and permitted the development of a numerically significant sector of the African peasantry (hereafter referred to as 'squatter-peasants').

In Natal, too, by 1870 the basic patterns of land usage were established, and the transition from precolonial cultivator to peasant was well under way, with numbers of mission-based and peri-urban peasants or small farmers. A prominent feature in this British colony was the prevalence of the quasi-feudal relations described above. Land speculators, particularly land companies, had secured vast holdings since annexation in 1843: a single company held nearly 1,000,000 acres of superior farming country. Falling land values during the depression of the mid-1860s saw land ownership concentrated in still fewer hands—to such an extent that immigration schemes aimed at swelling Natal's meagre white population (less than 20,000 in 1870) were crippled by the dearth of available arable land for settlers. The circumstances which frustrated the Immigration Board spelt to African cultivators an opportunity of pursuing an agricultural life not radically different from that of their precolonial existence. They resided in huge numbers upon nominally 'white' lands: quite apart from the 2,000,000 acres of government reserves, Africans could, and did, choose between occupation of unalienated crown lands, of unoccupied land owned by individuals or companies, of mission lands, or of land provided in exchange for labour-service or rent by white farmers and graziers; the greater freedom attainable on unoccupied lands might be offset by the prospects of accumulation when in service.¹⁵

15. For note 15, see next page.

Under these conditions, Natal's peasants were 'rapidly becoming rich and independent', complained the 1852-53 Native Affairs Commission; they 'preferred the most independent state, and hence has arisen the uniformly insufficient supply of labour.' The major proprietors in the colony found that their easiest source of revenue lay in renting land to Africans; prior to 1870 these latter were 'able to withstand pressures on them to work for the white man and had been able to pay their taxes by selling off their surplus grain or cattle.'¹⁶ It was estimated in 1874 that 5,000,000 acres of land belonging to whites were occupied by Africans, and with a good proportion of the peasantry capable of ignoring the blandishments and bullying of prospective employers, the Natal government was forced to import labour in the form of indentured Indian workers and various immigration schemes.

1870-1886: new opportunities, successful—and unsuccessful—peasants

The discovery in 1867 of diamonds in the soil of Griqualand West wrenched the Cape, and South Africa, out of the slough of depression of the 1860s. Men flocked to the diamond fields to seek their fortunes, and others followed to provide goods and services. Roads and railways etched their simple economic geometry across the land: from the ports to the mines. The Cape's Governor exulted in the commercial resurgence:

'Probably no more prosperous year is noted in its annals . . . the prices of produce ruled high in both the Colonial and the European markets; and trade, thus rendered brisk, attained an extraordinary development. . .'¹⁷

For African peasants, this quickened pace had a dual impact. It suddenly raised demands for labour, on mines, roads, and railways, and also on white-owned farms whose owners increased their food production. The Cape Assembly, elevated to 'responsible government' in 1872, did its best to accelerate supply to meet these demands: new taxes, pass laws, location laws, and vagrancy laws reflected the industry of the legislators and the interests of their constituents. At the same time, however, new markets and opportunities presented many peasants with an enhanced cash income to meet new taxes and growing consumption wants, and the early 1870s saw a virtual explosion of peasant economic activity. Five hundred waggons of corn were sold by Fingoland's peasants in 1873, as well as a wool crop worth £60,000; and in 1875 the trade of Fingoland 'at lowest computation' was adjudged to be worth £150,000. From Gaikaland, Gcalekaland, Tembuland and East Griqualand came similar reports: peasants were selling cattle in order to invest in sheep; the number of traders across the Kei trebled; African produce in 1875 was estimated

15. For a fuller discussion, see H. Slater, 'The Changing Patterns of Economic Relations in Rural Natal, 1838-1914', unpublished seminar paper, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, London University, January 1972.

16. S. Marks, *Reluctant Rebellion: the 1906-8 disturbances in Natal* (Oxford, 1970), p. 119.

17. Public Record Office, CO 48/460, Desp. 54, Barkly to Kimberley, 27/5/1872.

to be worth £750,000. A single firm bought £58,000 worth of African produce, while a merchant's house in Port Elizabeth boasted an annual turnover of goods for the African trade of £200,000.¹⁸ New methods and resources rippled from tribe to tribe, and even amongst the most 'backward' tribes crop diversification and wider cultivation were common by the 1880s.

Agricultural success was hard won. Despite the colonial stereotype of the 'indolent savage', the converse was occasionally acknowledged. In Glen Grey, commented a traveller,

'man for man the Kafirs of these parts are better farmers than the Europeans, more careful of their stock, cultivating a larger area of land, and working themselves more assiduously.'

A magistrate from a neighbouring district concurred: 'Taking man for man, and acre for acre, the native produces more . . . than the European . . .' While an official in a district of 7,000 people argued, cogently enough, that it should

'be conceded that the people in this neighbourhood who have in one year raised 250,820 lbs of wool of a superior quality and excellent get up, besides 7,484 muids of corn, who attend to 77 waggons, which are mostly employed in the transport business, to say nothing of the labour they undertake . . . cannot fairly be charged en masse with indolence.'¹⁹

The reaction by Natal's Africans to changed economic circumstances also took the form of a rise in production in response to opportunities. Magistrates from a dozen districts reported in the late 1870s and early 1880s that

'the high wages the natives now obtain, together with the profitable sale of their superfluous crops, and also the increase amongst their flocks and herds, tend rapidly to enrich them;'

that Africans were 'a race who are eminently fitted for taking advantage of any favourable opportunity for sale or barter'; and that

'the natives become richer and yearly cultivate a larger acreage with the plough, besides engaging in transport riding on their own account.'²⁰

Africans accumulated enough capital by transport-riding or other services to settle as farmers; peasants competed with white settlers at sales of Crown land. Such enterprise continued to reduce the flow of labour, and a report by the Ixopo magistrate differs from several others only in its stylistic individuality:

18. Cape Parl. Papers G.21-'75, G.16-'76, G.12-'77, G.17-'78; J. Noble, *Descriptive Handbook of the Cape Colony* (Cape Town, 1875), pp. 230-1; Br. Parl. Papers, C.2000, Frere to Carnarvon, 13/11/1877.

19. V. Sampson, 'A Letter on Frontier and Natal Travelling', *Cape Monthly*, 3rd Ser., v. II, June 1880; de Kiewiet, *Imperial Factor*, p. 150, fn. 3. Cape Parl. Papers, G.16-'76, p. 74.

20. Natal Blue Book, Native Affairs (NBBNA) 1877, magistrate of Umlazi; NBBNA 1878, magistrates Weenen & Umkomaas, NBBNA 1880, magistrate Umgeni.

'It has been seldom that Natives here have been at all dependent on wages, earned by entering the service of the whiteman [sic]. Nay! All, or nearly so, have ploughs . . . enabling them to dispose of produce on a much larger scale than formerly . . .'²¹

But—and the *caveat* is crucial—progress and prosperity were not bestowed freely or equally. The danger in sketching the impressive advances made by peasants in the post-diamond years is that an overly roseate picture of conditions in the peasant areas may emerge. Room must be found in the painting for the less fortunate and less able, the poor, the hungry, and the resourceless. Particularly after 1876, when the diamond boom tailed off and recession set in, to be cruelly compounded by the droughts of 1876–78, certain peasant communities evinced want and distress. It was in Ciskei districts—Kingwilliamstown, East London, Victoria East, Peddie—the areas where peasants had been established for the longest time—that impoverishment and proletarianization of a proportion of the peasantry were most evident. The recurrent symptoms were that the young men in the area could not obtain land; that overcrowding of people and stock was increasing; and that more and more men left the land each year in search of work. Some comments will be made later on why and how proletarianization took place: for the moment it need merely be noted that falling production and overcrowding in the Ciskei was greatly exacerbated by the confiscation of the Ngqika lands, as well as the destruction of their crops and herds, during the war of 1877–78.

A further aspect of the 1870s and 1880s, closely related to the foregoing, is the degree of differentiation and social stratification taking place amongst the peasantry. This process was sedulously fostered by magistrates, missionaries and mercantile interests, who held that the tribes would be rendered more peaceful, more tractable, and more profitable. It was given further impetus by the ambitions and enterprise of individual peasants, who appreciated not merely the material benefits of being a successful farmer, but also that mission lands or individually-owned land afforded an escape from the political and social obligations to chief and tribe. At one end of the spectrum was the class of landless young men in the Ciskei, who had no other resource to dispose of than their labour. One can identify various other strata—peasant migrants, marginally self-sufficient small peasants, better-off 'middle' peasants using family labour—all the way up to the group of farmers who consolidated early peasant successes, and became small commercial farmers. These last-named bought and/or hired land; they were conspicuously loyal to the government; their farms were distinctive for the amount of improvement and re-investment of capital in the shape of fencing, irrigation, improved stock breeds, and for the adoption of mixed farming. Their transition from the peasant to the capitalist mode of production involved greater material differences and more fundamental changes in their social relations than did the transition from pre-colonial cultivator

21. NBBNA, 1879, p. JJ18.

to peasant. Traditional responsibilities to one's kinship group, and the redistributive norms of the tribe, were replaced by profit-seeking and exploitative relations; African farmers of this class had tenants and wage labourers on their lands—and they used the Cape's Masters and Servants Act to punish defaulters. Their life-style, in material and ideological aspects, closely resembled that of small, solvent farmers of other races in South Africa.

In the Boer republics, on the eve of the Witwatersrand gold strikes in 1886, the tempo of economic life lagged considerably behind that of the British colonies. The Dutch farmers, on the spacious farms granted them by the state, practised extensive stock-farming, usually growing only enough crops to meet their own requirements. Currency was scarce—particularly in the South African Republic (Transvaal)—and the itinerant pedlars who were the chief contact outlying farmers had with the exchange economy were content to take stock or farm produce. State expenditure and revenue were minimal, and the South African Republic's precarious solvency had slithered into bankruptcy when that country was annexed by Shepstone and his two dozen policemen in 1877. It was in the republics that the territorial rights of the tribes had been most brusquely ignored; after a combination of conquest and concessions—aided where post-*mfecane* conflict and migrations had weakened resistance—the incoming trekkers announced ownership over virtually all land within the new states' boundaries. In the Transvaal, the burgher councils set aside 280,000 morgen (the treaty areas) plus 580,000 morgen (government locations) for African occupation—out of a total of 71,000,000 morgen!

On the face of it, a land-allocation so lop-sidedly in favour of the dispossessors made impossible the creation of a peasantry. In fact, the republics' coercive equipment was so lacking, their rule so tenuous, and the value of land so low for so long, that Africans occupied, tilled, and grazed nominally white lands in enormous numbers; their ability to subsist not drastically altered, and their involvement in the exchange economy almost entirely discretionary. In the South African Republic, only £3,000 in taxes was collected from three quarters of a million Africans in the 1870s, and, sniffed a British official after Shepstone's annexation,

‘I can come to no other conclusion but that the late government did not attempt to collect from any of the strong and powerful tribes.’²²

In the Transvaal, two main types of peasant response are evident. Firstly, where possible, Africans occupied state or private lands, paying rent where they had to, and evading it where they could. The imperatives of the exchange economy were so low that little transformation of the traditional methods seems to have taken place. Secondly, where land expropriation had been more

22. P.R.O. CO 879/13, Conf. Print African No. 156, ‘Report on Province of Transvaal’, by W. C. Sargeant, p. 15.

effective, African peasants stepped up production, disposed of their surplus, and 'adopted the only method open to them, and proceeded to buy back when possible the land of which they had been deprived.'²³ Although this happened more frequently after the discovery of gold, there were reports in the late 1870s that 'not only the chiefs but individual kaffirs in the district of Rustenburg are anxious to acquire landed property;' and that 'in several instances the blacks are paying high rents to acquire irrigated lands.'²⁴

Ruses were adopted to foil the ban on land purchase by Africans, the most common of which was the use of a missionary as a 'dummy' purchaser; 'leases' which were *de facto* sales were also resorted to. On mission stations and near those town markets which existed, Transvaal peasants raised and sold quantities of grains, fruits, and animal products.

The commercial economy was far more firmly established by 1886 in the Orange Free State than in its northern neighbour. The Free State had already begun to claw its way out of an abyss of depression in the late 1860s, in part by its conquest of the rich grain lands of the Southern Sotho, and in part by increased production of merino wool. Next door to the diamond fields, the republic was well situated to prosper further, and a considerable amount of early agricultural commercialization and economic recovery occurred between 1870 and 1875. The persistent litany of farmers for labour was answered by a thicket of proclamations and laws, notable for their unambiguous determination to force Africans on to the labour market. The statutes undoubtedly made life difficult for their targets, especially those who were effectively denied access to land. But for a majority of the Africans, quasi-feudal relations were secured, and squatter-peasants on fertile state and private lands were probably less subject to the pressures of the market and the tax collector than their counterpart in Natal. Angry farmers denounced the 'idle existence' of squatters, protesting that '*de Kaffers te rijk zijn, om zich eenig zints met werken te vermoijen*' (the Kafirs are too rich to trouble themselves with anything to do with labour); that they congregated on unoccupied farms while white farmers were deprived of servants.²⁵ Absentee landlords were content to receive rent in cash or kind; a Mr Green in the Harrismith district held 50,000 morgen (or 106,000 acres) on which there were over 100 'kraals', more than 800 squatters. Too much pressure on squatter-peasants bore the twin dangers of provoking resistance, or of their departure to more amenable areas. Peasants in the Free State exchanged or sold grain and stock; the republic imported a major part of its grain from Basutoland, and in its early history, the Barolong within the Free State acted as middlemen.

23. F. J. Newnham, 'Transvaal Native Locations History', Unpublished typescript, 1908; Royal Comm. Soc. Lib., Mss55V.

24. P.R.O. CO 879/16, Conf. Print African No. 204.

25. Cited in H. J. van Aswegen, 'Die Verhouding tussen Blank en nie-Blank in die Oranje-Vrystaat, 1854-1902' (Unpublished D.Phil. thesis, Univ. of OFS, 1968), p. 492. cf. also pp. 493-500.

1886–1913: peasant self-sufficiency under attack

The discovery of gold in 1886 reproduced with greater intensity the commercial quickening that had attended the diamond boom. Between 1886 and 1899, opportunities for gain and expansion were again seized by some peasants, and notable advances recorded, but the pressure on the peasantry was also increased on a number of fronts. The 1890s saw the emergence of gold-mine owners as a powerful interest group in South Africa. The cost structure of the mines demanded that an increase in the labour supply be achieved by means other than higher wages: baldly summarized, the mine-owners' demands were for cheap labour and cheap foodstuffs. By the turn of the century, the mines had agreed upon a maximum wages average, and the real wages for African miners were dragged down from the 'heights' of the early 1890s (when African miners could earn £4 a month and more) to a level which was not to alter substantially until World War II. The demand for foodstuffs began in earnest the commercialization of South African agriculture, and raised further the value of land. It was now less profitable, twice over, for white farmers to have African squatters—or white *bywoners* (squatters)—on their lands. The subsequent pressures on African squatters had a counterpart in the process that pushed thousands of indigent Afrikaners out of the countryside into the towns in the early twentieth century. A natural disaster that added significantly to the man-made difficulties of the peasantry was the rinderpest epidemic of 1896–97 that killed off Africans' cattle in numbers exceeding 80 per cent in some districts.

By entering the labour market, the mines had the effect of making farmers' demands for labour more shrill and remedies more drastic. The laggard nature of agricultural commercialization afforded the peasantry an important degree of protection, however; there remained in colonies and republics some access to land on the relatively easy quasi-feudal terms. As a general rule, where peasants retained relatively undisturbed control of their agriculture—that is, where the coercive powers of the relevant state authority were insufficient to enforce its will—it still remained possible, and certainly more attractive, to extract from their plots sufficient surplus to meet the demands of landlord and government as well as consumption needs. Two accounts, from either side of the employment line, illustrate this: the 1893–94 Cape Labour Commission explained that labour was in short supply because Africans could meet the necessities of life 'with little effort' and, because many of them were leaseholders or land-owners, could not be attracted to white employment: 'These [Transkeian] territories' observed the commissioners,

'appear to produce labour for work outside them somewhat in proportion to the length of time their inhabitants have enjoyed good government. . .'

Or, as Pondo peasants told recruiting officials,

'Why should we work, is not the country ours, and have we not lots of land

and many women and children to cultivate it? We prefer to remain as we are.²⁶

Between 1886 and 1899, the pattern noted in the Ciskei in the 1870s became apparent in certain areas of the Transkei: Fingoland, Tembuland, and East Griqualand. That is, agriculture in these areas displayed the seemingly contradictory signs of advancement and of degeneration. There were still peasants who had sufficient capital, or enterprise, to adapt and succeed, but others succumbed to economic pressures, either to cling on desperately at the lower strata of the peasantry, or to be extruded as migrant workers. It was no longer profitable in the 1890s to export grain to the large towns, and there were many reports of peasant underproduction for want of markets. Wool was increasingly resorted to as a source of cash income—and sheep wrought a heavy toll on deteriorating grazing land. Several officials, recounting rising indebtedness, falling production, and pressures on land, said specifically that their districts were not as prosperous as they had been ten or twenty years earlier.²⁷

In Natal, the 1890s saw peasant subsistence slide even faster towards disintegration. The Achilles heel of the squatter-peasant was his insecurity of tenure; commercial agriculture began to take advantage of this weakness. Whereas less than 2,000,000 acres were under European cultivation in 1875, 5,800,000 acres in 1893 (and over 7,000,000 by 1904) were being farmed by white Natalians. In almost every case, this meant a reduction *in pari passu* of land used by squatters; in addition, farmers and other landlords began to raise rents and other fees payable by squatters.

In the northern republics, as has been suggested, squatters were harder to dislodge, and peasants also demonstrated other means of defending their chosen way of life. In the South African Republic, as mentioned, Africans purchased and hired a considerable amount of land: one tribe leased no less than 22 farms for grazing; others bought 18 and 11 farms respectively. Just over a quarter million acres of land were bought in the Transvaal—and population pressure on this land was only half that on government locations.²⁸ In the Free State, a new form of peasant-squatting became widespread, a form of sharecropping or 'farming-on-the-halves', in which white proprietors supplied seed and land, African peasants farmed the grain, and the returns were shared. There crystallized around this practice a growing class of relatively well-off peasants in the Orange Free State, and share-cropping was also a prominent feature of the Eastern Cape.

The Anglo-Boer war had galvanic effects upon certain sections of the peasantry, bestowing quick profits on those who were in a position to supply produce or draught animals at inflated prices to the troops. Many availed themselves of the wages, considerably in excess of those normally paid in South Africa,

26. Labour Commission, G.3-'94, p. 5; Native Affairs Bluebook, G.42-'98, p. 111.

27. See Cape Parl. Papers, G.3-'94, pp. 71, 76, 110; G.9-'94, pp. 55, 63.

28. Newnham, 'Transvaal Native Locations', p. 19.

offered by the British Army, and translated their savings into land purchases or improvements. Other peasants were disrupted, harried, looted, and dispersed by the exigencies of war. In broad terms, the decade after the war was one in which a sustained, several-pronged offensive was launched by white legislators and administrators in all the regions joined by the Act of Union in 1910, against the self-reliance and independence of the peasantry. A determination by would-be employers of cheap labour to make untenable those quasi-feudal relations permitting a peasant existence outside the labour market was reinforced by fears of African competition, both in the produce market and in the land market.

In the Transvaal, where peasants remained less fully integrated into the capitalist economy than elsewhere, Africans withheld the greater proportion of their labour from mines and farms for five or six years after the war.²⁹ They were afforded the necessary 'bargaining basis' to be able to do so partly by higher wages in construction activity, and in part by that level of subsistence still available from peasant agriculture. This latter was enhanced by the continuing high incidence of absentee landlordism in the Transvaal, where most of the 1,300 farms held by land companies, as well as much privately owned land, were leased to Africans. African peasants, Horwitz has indicated, 'showed a keener insight into the functions of capital and the market . . . than did the whites'—and the land company agents certainly held the same view. They would not rent land to white *bywoners* who were 'uninterested in farming for profit and paid no rent', but found African small-holders profitable tenants.³⁰ Further, the Milner administration, solicitous as it was of the needs of mining capital, was less sensitive to the demands of Dutch farmers in the Transvaal. By allowing squatters on crown land, the Commissioner for Native Affairs, Godfrey Lagden, presented Africans with a preferable alternative to renting white-owned land, and the tax discriminating in favour of farm labourers was abolished. Lagden's expressed reason for refusing to apply existing anti-squatter provisions is an interesting commentary upon the role of the peasantry within the Transvaal economy: apart from the risk of driving Africans out of the territory, wrote Lagden,

'it would tend to place a good deal of land out of cultivation which is now of benefit to the country . . . moreover, they [the peasants] produce a considerable amount of cereals, especially mealies, used for consumption in this country.'³¹

29. See D. J. N. Denoon, 'The Transvaal Labour Crisis, 1901-6', *Jnl African History*, 7, 3 (1967), pp. 481-94 for a discussion of this.

30. R. Horwitz, *The Political Economy of South Africa* (London, 1967), p. 34; D. J. N. Denoon, 'Reconstruction in the Transvaal, 1903-5', (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Cambridge, 1965), p. 71.

31. Denoon, *Ibid.*, 'Reconstruction', pp. 104-5, 109; Lagden in 'Report by the Commissioner for Native Affairs relative to acquisition and tenure of land by Natives in the Transvaal' (Pretoria, 1904), p. 4, and 'Report of Native Affairs Department', Transvaal, 1903-4, p. B18.

It seems that a proportion of these cereals was used as cheap food for the labour force being recruited with unremitting vigour by the mines.

The 1907 electoral victory for Botha and *Het Volk* in the Transvaal was also a victory for Afrikaner farmers, and they now moved against the economic independence of the squatter-peasant. The 1908 Natives Tax Act imposed a levy of £2 on squatters, while labour tenants were wooed with a tax of £1. In the northern regions, rent squatters were moved from some farms by direct government action; rents rose sharply in all areas. This sniping was succeeded by the heavy artillery of the 1913 Natives Land Act.

Despite the concentration by most historians on the prohibition of land purchase by Africans in 'white' areas, and the demarcation of 13 per cent of the surface area of the country as Reserves, a more important function of the act was that squatters and share-croppers were to be reduced to the level of labour tenants. The pressure for the act, argues Francis Wilson, came almost entirely 'from those who wished to ensure a cheap supply of labour by eliminating squatters and by doing away with the system of farming-on-the-half.'³² The closing of the free market in land not only soothed white fears—expressed throughout the previous decade—about the amount of land purchased by Africans, but also effectively put the brake on the process of class differentiation in African rural areas, thus inhibiting the growing group of small commercial farmers, potential competitors with white farmers. This slowing down of stratification (or 'class suppression') also meant avoiding the creation of a permanently landless majority of Africans, whose urbanization would have further drained the supply of rural labour, as well as posing a potential political threat.³³

In the Orange River Colony, farming-on-the-halves spread even more widely after the war, producing at the upper reaches extremely comfortably-situated peasants and small farmers; they used 'up to date machinery', sold a lot of grain directly to merchants, on equal terms with whites, and ran large herds of sheep, goats, and cattle.³⁴ Even before the war a member of the Volksraad was

'bevreesd dat Kleurlingen de boeren langzamerhand zullen uitboeren. Kleurlingen worden nu al langzamerhand rijker dan blanken. Wij moeten onze burgers te hulp komen' (. . . worried that Coloureds [Africans] would outfarm the [white] farmers. Coloureds were gradually becoming richer than whites. We must come to the aid of our citizens.)

A separate chapter of the 1913 Lands Act specifically outlawed farming-on-the-halves in the Orange Free State: said an economic historian fifteen years later,

32. F. Wilson, 'Farming, 1866–1966' in *Ox. Hist. S. Africa*, vol. 2, p. 129.

33. cf. M. Legassick, 'Forced Labour and Racial Differentiation in South Africa', (Unpublished paper, 1972).

34. Department of Native Affairs Bluebook, U.G.17–1911, esp. pp. 52–3, 127–9, 153–4.

35. Cited in van Aswegen, 'Verhouding tussen Blank en nie-Blank', p. 581.

“To put it quite bluntly”, as was said at the time, “The Natives have become too rich.”³⁶

In Natal, where the ravages of rinderpest had been most severe, the peasantry came under greater pressures, and possessed less resources effectively to counter them. The peasant's income and his access to land were attacked from half a dozen angles. Firstly, the government tightened the labour-coercive screws as tightly as it dared: the Identification of Native Servants Act (1901), its amendment (1904), the amended Masters and Servants Act (1901), the amended Squatters' Rent Act (1903), and the imposition of a Poll Tax on all male adults (1905) graced the statute books. The direct contribution by Africans to the revenue rose after poll tax by £76,490 to a total of £306,484. At the same time, rents rose sharply all over Natal, while the profits available from dairy-farming and wattle-planting led to the purchase by farmers of much land from the companies. A wave of evictions of peasants in occupation of such lands took place in 1905–6, especially in the Natal Midlands.³⁷ Peasants who could afford it sought security of tenure through the purchase or hire of land, but were blocked here too: further sale of crown land to Africans was suspended in 1904, while white farmers unwilling to perpetuate old or permit new rent-paying squatters sought to change the relations to those of labour-tenancy.

The Bambatha rebellion of 1906–7 bears a close family resemblance to the Ngqika rebellion of 1877–78—an unavailing effort to throw off by force the burdens of economic under-development. A Natal peasant, although he had fought for the government against Bambatha, was only too keenly aware of all these pressures:

‘The government had them [Africans] by the head and the farmers by the legs . . . They were extremely poor. How much remained of their earnings after they had paid their taxes and their rents and bought food for their children? . . . the Europeans had taken up every available bit of good ground. Natives, generally speaking, were poverty-stricken and had no means of making wealth.’³⁸

In the Cape, the employers' anthem of labour-shortage was still being sung, and a new verse had been added: that of opposition to more productive African peasants, and an awareness of the threat of African competition. As elsewhere, share-croppers and wealthy squatters were a particular target.³⁹ A 1908 Committee examined the status of squatter-peasants in the Eastern Province, and found that they were ‘forming a distinct and very numerous class’, that they were displacing Europeans from the land, and ‘considerably enhancing’ the labour shortage.⁴⁰ Control over squatters was stepped up assiduously in

36. D. M. Goodfellow, *A Modern Economic History of South Africa* (London, 1931), p. 232.

37. Natal Native Affairs Commission 1905–6, pp. 27, 259, 363, 398, 436, 723, et passim.

38. *Ibid.*, evidence of Nkantolo, p. 711.

39. Cf. Cape Parl. Papers, G.12*–1904, pp. 5, 23, 43, G.46–1906, pp. 18–19, G.24–1908, pp. 12–13, and esp. G.46–1908, passim.

40. G.46–1908, *Report . . . on the Occupation of Land by Natives in Unreserved Areas*.

successive Location Acts of 1892, 1899, and 1909. In the 1890s, many squatters were driven off farms in the Eastern Province, causing stock loss and much land 'to be thrown out of cultivation'. In 1905, the Cape Mounted Police took over the enforcement of the widely-evaded anti-squatting measures. Landlords passed the higher fees directly on to their tenants, and in 1909–10, many squatter-peasants were driven off their plots for refusing to pay the higher licence fees of the 1909 Act. Much is usually made of the fact that the 1913 Lands Act was constitutionally inapplicable in the Cape, but less often is it appreciated how effectively the Cape had undermined the position of the peasantry without the aid of the 1913 Act. A squatting population of at least 40,000 (and probably much more) was reduced by the 1909 Act to 7,000 by 1931; a 1930 Report indicated that of 1,990 farms owned but not occupied by whites in South Africa, only 74 were in the Cape.⁴¹

By 1913, the peasant sector showed serious signs of agrarian degeneration, and the transformation of the once fertile reserve areas into teeming rural slums was well under way. Yields per capita were falling, and after the 1920s, the absolute yield dropped. Areas which had been food exporting, then grimly self-reliant, now needed to import grain, and peasant families could only subsist with the remittance of wages by migrant labourers. There is a vast and depressing body of evidence as to the nature and extent of underdevelopment in the Reserves: malnutrition, infant mortality, desiccation, erosion, social evils, indebtedness, and hopeless poverty are its recurrent themes.⁴²

Conclusions: the peasantry and underdevelopment

With this skeletal history serving as a background, it may be useful to isolate some of the economic factors which affected the development of, and the decay of, peasant agriculture, in addition to those measures already described, aimed directly at reducing peasant independence or competition.

The most obvious and the most far-reaching single factor is the shortage of land available to the peasantry; it is

'the key to the status of inferiority, exploitation, poverty, lack of culture, in a word the status of underdevelopment . . . of [peasants] who participate all too fully in the social process of capitalist development.'⁴³

The disequilibrium between the peasant population and its basic means of production was brought into being by the sweeping expropriations of the first

41. J. S. Marais, 'African Squatting on European Farms in South Africa, with Particular Reference to the Cape Colony (1892–1913)', Unpublished seminar paper, ICS, University of London, 1967.

42. See especially the following: *Report of the Native Economic Commission, 1930–2*, U.G.22–1932; Social and Economic Planning Council, *Report No. 9*, U.G.32–1946; *Keiskammahoek Rural Survey* (4 vols, Pietermaritzburg, 1952); 'Fagan Report', U.G.28–1948; 'Tomlinson Commission Report', U.G.61–55. Reports of the Native Affairs Departments and Native Affairs Commission since 1910; Transkeian Territories General Council, Proceedings and Reports.

43. A. G. Frank, *Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America*, (New York, 1969), p. 136.

half of the nineteenth century, but its effects were greatly increased after the 1890s, when the quasi-feudal system of squatter-peasants on white lands came under pressure. Politically, too, by the end of the nineteenth century it was no longer held necessary in the Cape to have a 'buffer' class of African small-holders, and the policy of fostering such a class gradually gave way to one in favour of creating a uniformly small-peasant rural population.⁴⁴

Another long-term factor was the changing character of African involvement in the money economy: a change that can be summed up as the movement from 'discretionary' spending to 'necessary' cash requirements. The spread of traders into every corner of the peasant areas saw a sharply rising index of purchases of agricultural implements, clothes, blankets, tin and iron ware, fuel, and new foodstuffs, which gradually became necessary to subsistence. There are many forces at work here: the psychological ones of habit and reliance; state insistence on certain purchases, such as European clothing; the decline in the face of competition from manufactured goods of peasant crafts; and the importance and expense of education as a new requirement.

A further aspect of peasant-trader relations which diminished the peasant's access to his own surplus was his contractual inferiority. In the trader's hands were concentrated the several economic functions of purchaser of agricultural produce, purveyor of manufactured goods, and supplier of credit. Trader and peasant enacted in microcosm the adverse terms of trade of a colonial relationship.

Perhaps the most important variable introduced into structural relations after the mineral discoveries was the relative ease of access of capitalist white farmers and peasant farmers to markets. W. M. Macmillan has pointed out that 'to locate the native reserves, it is no bad rule . . . to look for the areas circumvented or entirely missed by even branch railway lines.'⁴⁵ The costs of ox-waggon borne produce made competition (especially in grain) prohibitive; late nineteenth and early twentieth century documents are replete with reports of peasant underproduction for want of market access. As the Chief Magistrate of the Transkei put it,

'The easy access to the labour market . . . contrasts with the difficulty or absolute lack of transport for agricultural produce. . .'⁴⁶

The peasant sector also suffered an almost total dearth of public or private investment. In addition, one must bear in mind the drain of human capital from the area in the form of migrant labour, and the lack of social investment in terms of health, welfare, and education. This—as well as outright discrimination against African-raised produce at some points—is starkly contrasted by the responsiveness of the South African state to the needs of white farmers.

44. The Glen Grey Act of 1894, with its insistence upon the principle of 'one man one lot' and equal-sized lots was a major step in this direction; see also van der Horst, *Native Labour*, p. 309, and *Keiskammahoek Rural Survey*, vol. 4, pp. 129–30.

45. W. M. Macmillan, *Complex South Africa* (London, 1930), p. 212.

46. Cape Parl. Papers, G.24–1908, p. 24.

All these factors are mutually reinforcing and self-perpetuating in their effects. They all contributed to the diminution of the surplus-generating capacity of the peasant, and to a lessened control by the peasant over the disposal of his surplus: at the same time that the possibilities for accumulation were thus restricted, the capitalist penetration raised the demand for a cash income. The peasant's increasing involvement in migrant labour depleted the intensity of economic activity in the peasant areas, thereby reproducing the necessity for more migrant labour.

I suggested at the outset that the creation of an African peasantry in South Africa was also the process of transition from a rural population of pastoral-cultivators to a rural population of land-based, sub-subsistence migrant workers, and that the emergence and decline of the peasantry was a necessary component of, and not separate from, the process of capitalist development in South Africa—that the structural underdevelopment of the peasant sector was the other side of the coin of capitalist development in South Africa. If I have adequately demonstrated that which I set out to, then the dualist model of the South African economy is a misleading one: the distance between the races in economic, cultural, and political spheres was not an original state lessened by capitalist development, but rather the outcome of that development;⁴⁷ and explanations of the underdevelopment of the peasant sector which rest upon the inherited backwardness and inadequacy of that sector are incorrectly premised. The conventional wisdom of South African economic historiography—already questioned in these pages⁴⁸—stands in need of a continuing re-examination.

47. Arrighi, 'Labour Supplies', *loc. cit.*

48. F. R. Johnstone, 'White Prosperity and White Supremacy in South Africa', *African Affairs*, 275, 69, (April 1970).

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