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The Nature of the Agrarian Land Question in the Republic of South Africa

By RUDOLPH DANIELS*

ABSTRACT. Most of the *land* in *South Africa* is dominated by 4.5 million Whites. A tiny fraction of this key resource is designated for *Black* occupation in Black townships in *White* South Africa and for Black ownership in the ten "homelands." Several interrelated factors account for the lop-sided *land distribution* that exists in South Africa. The two most important factors are the removal of native occupants from the majority of the land, accomplished by early *Dutch settlers*, and *legislative* measures that were designed to guarantee a White-controlled *economy* and foster *economic development* by assuring an abundant supply of disenfranchised and cheap black *labor*. The extent of the *inequality* in the land distribution suggests that, from the viewpoint of *ownership and control*, Blacks were better off prior to 1652 when the first Dutch settlers arrived at the *Cape*.

THE TRANSITION from a tribal or feudal economy into an industrial economy has occurred in some cases through a process that involved the separation of the majority of the population from their agrarian ties to the land. England, with its two enclosure movements in the 16th century and between 1770 and 1848, is often cited as an example of a country in which this process occurred. Small farmers were removed from their small plots, their land enclosed by fences or hedges, as large land owners responded to the high price of wool by raising sheep.¹

The existence of a cheap labor supply also is essential to the transition from

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a tribal economy to an industrial one. This factor, together with the separation of the majority of the population from their dependence on the land, characterized South Africa's early industrial development. However, the transition which occurred in South Africa must be considered unique from that which took place in other nations. In part, this is because of the manner in which the races were separated from the land, the degree to which this separation occurred, and the finality of the separation.

Indeed, South Africa is the only country where private ownership of land depends upon color and, in the main, is the legal right of only a minority of its people—the Whites, Asians (Indians) and Coloreds.² Although Indians and Coloreds are allowed to own land, zoning ordinances confine them, like Blacks who live in White sections of South Africa (here-in-below referred to as White

TABLE 1
LAND USE PATTERNS IN SOUTH AFRICA, 1980

	Number in Million Hectares ^a	Percentage of Total
Agriculture	103,350	85
Forestry	2,650	2
Urban Areas	2,000	2
Nature Reserves	3,000	2
Other	10,000	9
Total	122,000	100

^aA hectare is a measure of area in the metric system equivalent to 2.47 acres.

Source: Jill Natrass, *The South African Economy: Its Growth and Change*, (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1981), p. 4; *1980 Abstracts of Agricultural Statistics*, Division of Agricultural Economics and Marketing, Pretoria, 1980.

areas), to separate locations apart from White areas. Given the limited data available and the scant amount of literature on this issue, this paper will (1) examine the agricultural distribution of land between Blacks (Bantu) and Whites (Afrikaners), (2) analyze the agricultural potential of the agriculturally-based homelands—the only land Blacks are permitted to own, and (3) discuss, in particular, historical events and legislative measures that engendered the prevailing distributions.³

I

Overview of the Racial Distribution of Land

IT IS WIDELY KNOWN that the distribution of land between Black and White South Africans is substantially unequal. But the extent of this inequality remains an

issue worthy of consideration because of its adverse effects on the socioeconomic and political status of the Black majority population who imperil the stability of the White minority regime. The land issue is indeed one of South Africa's most complex and sensitive structural problems. Several factors account for this: (1) the denial of Blacks who live in "White-occupied" South Africa the right to private ownership of land; (2) apartheid policies that, for social, economic, and political reasons, have relegated the majority of Blacks to areas referred to as reserve areas or "homelands" on a quantity of land incapable of sustaining the population; (3) the confinement of the greater percentage of legal Black residents of the White occupied sections of South Africa to townships on the outskirts of urban areas; and (4) the continuing policy of removing Blacks from squatter communities in White areas to the homelands.⁴

Of the 122 million hectares of land in South Africa, approximately 81.2 percent are occupied by Whites in White areas and 3.6 percent by legal Blacks who have no legal right to landownership in these areas (Table 1). Indians and Coloreds occupy 2.4 percent in White areas and the remaining 12.8 percent is designated for Black occupation and ownership in the "homelands." Land occupation often means landownership for Whites, Indians, and Coloreds. For Blacks in White areas, land occupation and ownership are never synonymous. Thus, from the standpoint of ownership in the strictest sense, Whites own 84.8 percent of the land in South Africa, taking into account the 3.6 percent occupied by Blacks in White areas to which they can never attain freehold title.

It is worth noting that, while Blacks are not permitted to own land in White areas, the right of long-term occupation of land in White areas was granted to legal Blacks during the Second World War in what is known as the 30-year leasehold scheme. This scheme granted to Blacks the right of occupation of a stand for 30 years, whereupon another 30 years might be forthcoming at the expiry of the initial lease. Blacks, by this scheme, could apply to a government administration board for land on which to construct a house, or for a stand which included a house.⁵

The major reason for the creation of the 30-year leasehold scheme was a desire on the part of the government to manage the unprecedented influx of Blacks into urban areas during and immediately following the Second War War, an influx which led to a critical shortage of housing and slum conditions of substantial proportions.⁶ The fact that in 1975 75 percent of the houses in black townships were owned by government administration boards is ample evidence of how unsuccessful the 30-year leasehold scheme was in allocating the land resource. This was made so mainly by the unwillingness of lending institutions to provide mortgage financing and by the government's decision in 1968 to require that new leaseholders accept "homeland" citizenship as a precondition for the granting of a lease.⁷

Recognizing the ineffectiveness of the 30-year leasehold scheme and related systems that were designed to address the problems of housing shortage and land tenure, the government in 1978 introduced the 99-year leasehold scheme by amending the Blacks (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act of 1945, No. 25, which resulted in the Bantu (Urban Areas) Amendment Act of 1978, No. 97.⁸ Under this new act, a legal Black resident in an urban area may lease land, improve upon it, and transfer the lease to other individuals over the 99-year period by sale, donation, exchange or bequest. A noticeable and peculiar omission in this

TABLE 2
DISTRIBUTION OF LAND BETWEEN BLACK AND
WHITE SOUTH AFRICANS, 1980

	Land Area (Million Hectares)		Population		Land/Man Ratio	
	White	Black	White	Black	White	Black
Republic of South Africa (White Areas)	99,064,000	4,392,000	4,528,000	10,122,000	21.9	0.43
Homelands		15,711,385		11,052,134		1.42
Transkei		3,871,319		2,621,700		1.48
Ciskei		939,626		669,000		1.40
Kwazulu		3,271,667		3,409,000		0.96
Bophuthatswana		3,853,089		1,285,675		3.00
Lebowa		2,247,551		1,739,000		1.29
Venda		618,156		342,759		1.99
Gazankulu		633,110		512,000		1.24
KaNgwane		208,381		161,000		1.29
QwaQwa		48,243		156,000		0.31
Kwandebele		20,243		156,000		0.13

Source: *Survey of Race Relations in South Africa, 1981*, South African Institute of Race Relations, Johannesburg, 1981, p. 194; Jill Matrass, *The South African Economy: Its Growth and Change*, (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1981), p. 194; *South Africa 1976: Official Yearbook of the Republic of South Africa*, (Johannesburg: Chris Van Rensburg Publications, 1976), p. 618; *South Africa 1984: Official Yearbook of the Republic of South Africa*, (Johannesburg: Chris Van Rensburg Publications, 1984), p. 33.

act is that it makes no provisions for those who acquired land tenure under the 30-year leasehold scheme. Nevertheless the 99-year leasehold scheme is considered superior to the former in that it allows leaseholders to use their registered rights as collateral for a mortgage bond, and it provides for greater security of tenure. While the clear advantage of the 99-year leasehold scheme, which is the right to use registered rights as collateral, has enhanced the willingness of financial institutions to supply funds for residential construction and for the purchase of existing homes, many hopeful homeowners find the cost of a leasehold prohibitively expensive.

In 1981 the cost of a leasehold consisted of R6 for application processing,

R300 for surveying cost, and a right of leasehold fee which could range from R450 to R2,000, depending upon whether the area was an old township, a new township where services include tarred roads, street lights, waterborne sewerage, and so forth, or a prestigious township where services are more inclusive and homes more costly. The right of leasehold fee is clearly the most costly expense involved in acquiring a stand.⁹

Since its implementation, the 99-year leasehold scheme has been only marginally successful in rationing the land resource to those it is meant to benefit. Even the government has acknowledged that the cost is beyond the financial resources of many people, a reality which largely accounts for the fact that, by August 1981, only 1,122 rights of leasehold were registered while roughly 700

TABLE 3
LAND USE PATTERNS IN AGRICULTURE BY COLOR, 1980

	Million Hectares		Group Land ^a		Percentage of Total	
	White	Black	White	Black	White	Black
Cultivated Land	10,028	2,143	12.0	14.0	10.0	2.0
Permanent Crops	821	41	1.0	--	1.0	--
Artificial Pastures	897	35	1.0	--	1.0	--
Natural Pastures	71,342	11,920	81.0	79.0	69.0	12.0
Forest Land	1,071	419	1.0	3.0	1.0	--
Other	3,636	518	4.0	4.0	3.0	1.0
Total	87,795	15,076	100.0	100.0	85.0	15.0

^aGroup land for whites refers to land owned by land companies; for blacks it refers to land tenure on the basis of tribal organization.

Source: Jill Natrass, *The South African Economy: Its Growth and Change*, (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1981), p. 5; 1980 *Abstracts of Agricultural Statistics*, Division of Agricultural Economics and Marketing, Pretoria, 1980.

mortgage loans for 99-year leaseholds had been granted.¹⁰ Moreover, in 1981 it was estimated in a housing survey which included Soweto that more than two-thirds of householders were renting their homes.¹¹

The extent of inequality in the distribution of land in 1980 also is reflected in the land/man ratio (Table 2). For example, the land/man ratio indicates that 21.9 hectares were available to each White contrasted with 0.43 hectares for each Black in White areas and 1.42 hectares for each Black "homelands" inhabitant. Moreover, it can be inferred from the data in Table 2 that White land occupation exceeded Black by a ratio of 4.9:1 and White landownership exceeded Black by 6.3:1. The substantially uneven land occupation and land ownership ratios do not reflect the racial distribution of the population, as Blacks in 1980 outnumbered Whites by 5:1.

About 85 percent of the land resource in South Africa in 1980 was devoted to agricultural purposes, as is shown in Table 1. The most meaningful and noticeable features of the distribution of agricultural land are the following.

First, the racial allocation of agricultural land closely parallels the racial distribution of land in general, with 85 percent controlled by Whites and the remaining percentage tribally distributed between Black "homelands" inhabitants (Table 3).

Second, a strikingly small proportion of cultivated land (land under crops) existed in the "homelands" and in White areas, a result that may be partially attributed to arid soil in many areas and to cattle raising. Indeed, only about 2.2 million hectares of land in the homelands are arable (14 percent) compared to roughly 14.6 million hectares (14.7 percent) in White areas.¹² In 1980 about

TABLE 4
CHANGE IN FARM SIZE, 1919-80

Year	Number of White Farms	Average Farm Size (Million Hectares)	Area (Million Hectares)	Percentage Change in Farm Size Area	
1919	78,086	992.6	7,750.4	-	-
1936	103,360	831.6	8,492.0	-16.2	9.6
1951	118,097	736.5	8,697.9	-11.4	2.4
1970	91,153	978.8	8,921.7	32.4	2.6
1976	75,562	1,134.4	8,571.9	15.9	-3.9
1980	70,000 ^a	1,156.2	8,779.5	2.0	2.4

^aPreliminary estimates from *South Africa 1984: Official Yearbook of the Republic of South Africa*, (Johannesburg: Chris Van Rensburg Publications, 1984), p. 930.

Source: Jill Natrass, *The South African Economy: Its Growth and Change*, (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1981), p. 109.

one-fifth as much land was cultivated in the "homelands" compared to White areas where population pressures on the land are far less intense, where the most important economic activity is manufacturing as opposed to agriculture, and where agricultural production methods are modern in contrast to the primitive methods employed in the "homelands."

Aggregate estimates of the racial allocation of farmland conceal the concentration of land within the groups themselves. Furthermore, the fact that Black farmland is tribally distributed makes the distribution of land between Blacks ambiguous and probably accounts for the meager attention that has been accorded this issue in the literature. Presently, the most data students of this issue can acquire are the number and percentage of Blacks employed in subsistence agriculture, data which have been characterized as speculative and debatable.¹³ It may prove useful, however, to discuss the distribution of farmland among Whites since White farmers in 1983 accounted for 42.2 percent of South Africa's

wealth holdings while Blacks had virtually no wealth, and since White agriculture is so vastly different from that which exists in the "homelands."¹⁴

The third most notable characteristic of the distribution of farmland is the highly uneven distribution that exists between Whites. In the latest year for which data are available, 1975, Whites controlled more than 80 percent of farmland while 40 percent of this land was controlled by only 5 percent of farmers (3,500).¹⁵

Table 4 sheds additional light on the degree of concentration of farmland among Whites, albeit it does not reflect the fact that 40 percent of farmland was held in 1975 by so few farmers. It indicates that from 1919 to 1951 the number of White farmers increased dramatically with a concomitant increase in the amount of farmland. This trend mainly is because in 1913 Blacks were dispossessed of their landholdings by the government of the Union of South Africa (see below). Table 4 also shows that, after 1951, a reversal occurred in the allocation of farmland among Whites as reflected in the 41 percent drop in the number of White farms, accompanied by a 57 percent increase in average farm size. An important contributory factor to the decrease that occurred in the number of farms was an increase in the degree of concentration of farmland in the hands of fewer farmers.¹⁶ Over time fewer farmers have entrenched their holdings of farmland and simultaneously emerged as the wealthiest occupational group.

II

Overview of the Potential of Farmland

UNTIL THE ONSET in 1980 of South Africa's worst drought in more than 60 years, it had been regarded as the breadbasket of southern Africa.¹⁷ Numerous factors account for South Africa's rise to prominence in agricultural production and export after having been considered in 1940 by a government commission ". . . as a poor crop raising country. . . ."¹⁸ These factors include government-legislated property rights which restrict Black ownership of land to the "homelands" while allowing for the monopolization of farmland in White areas by large, White landholders who, through their monopsony power in the rural labor market, pay among the lowest wages earned by Blacks in any employment sector.¹⁹ Another factor of considerable importance is the use of production methods compatible with the terrain and the amount of rainfall.²⁰

South Africa can be considered as having two agricultures—one dominated by Whites and the other by Blacks in the "homelands." Jill Nattrass sharply contrasted the two when she said:

The two sectors of South African agriculture are so different that when one moves from a White-owned modern capital-using farming sector to a Black subsistence oriented and tribally organized farming area, it is almost like stepping through a time warp.²¹

It is important to emphasize that although the majority of Black farming activity occurs in the "homelands" where, in 1980, 37.9 percent of South Africa's people lived, there is continually some measure of agricultural production undertaken by Blacks living on White farms in White areas who are permitted, only for subsistence purposes, to cultivate designated parcels of land as payment-in-kind for their labor. Much ". . . good but underdeveloped agricultural land . . ." exists in White rural areas, "usually owned by absentee landlords. Millions of rural Black people lack access to it and the technical means or know-how to make it more fruitful."²² Such access would provide competition to the ". . . 90,000 rich, educated White farmers . . ." thereby undermining the purpose of the Native Land Act of 1913 (see below).²³ Thus the opportunity for Blacks in White areas to acquire farmland for commercial purposes does not exist.

TABLE 5
AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY BY COLOR, 1980

	Agricultural Sector	
	White	Black
Total Land Area (Million Hectares)	87,795	15,076
Percentage Cultivated	11.4	14.2
Employment (Millions)	1,143.0	2,276.0
Land Per Worker (Hectares)	78.0	13.7
Output Per Man	R4,991	R97
Output Per Hectare Cultivated	R36.7	R91

Source: Jill Matrass, *The South African Economy: Its Growth and Change*, (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1981), p. 100; *1980 Abstracts of Agricultural Statistics*, Division of Agricultural Economics and Marketing, Pretoria, 1980; *South Africa 1984: Official Yearbook of the Republic of South Africa*, (Johannesburg: Chris Van Rensburg Publications, 1984), p. 487.

Marked contrast between the productivity levels of the two agricultures are reflected in output per worker and output per hectare of cultivated land (Table 5). In 1980, White agricultural productivity per person was R4,991 compared to R91 for Blacks, a productivity differential of 55:1. Moreover, output per hectare of cultivated land was R367 and R97, respectively. Probably the most salient and revealing feature of the capacities of the two agricultures is the contribution each made in 1980 to South Africa's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).²⁴ White agriculture contributed R5,705 million (9 percent) compared to R207.6 million (.003 percent) Black.²⁵ These data suggest that the agricultural potential of the "homelands" was about 3.6 percent of White agriculture.²⁶ Furthermore, these data lend credence to Brand's observation that virtually the entire contribution to economic growth made by the agriculture sector can be ascribed to the highly mechanized, White-owned agriculture sector.²⁷

It is plausible to conclude that land to which Blacks legally hold claim is economically inviable and incapable of sustaining the masses that inhabit it. Moreover, the "homelands," as Black land is called, exist mainly for apartheid purposes and to assure continued economic growth of the White-owned economy, accomplished largely through the employment of the relatively abundant and cheap supply of Black "homelands" labor.²⁸

III

Historical Events and Legislative Measures

THE HIGHLY SKEWED DISTRIBUTION of land in South Africa had its genesis in what has come to be known as the "Great Trek" (the migration of Dutch farmers into the interior of South Africa) and in several legislative measures.

Long before the Union of South Africa was formed in 1910, it was traditional among Whites to consider the territorial segregation of Europeans and Africans and the separation of Africans from control of the land as a "natural policy." The stage was set for the "natural policy" within 50 years of the establishment of a trading station at the Cape by the Dutch East India Company in 1652. In 1700, Dutch cattle farmers began their migration into the interior of South Africa. They encountered at first thousands of native Africans (Hottentots and Bushmen) and later millions of Bantu and Zulu. In two brief wars, the "trekkers" convinced the Hottentots to accept their occupation and to hire themselves out to the new settlers as farm laborers and domestic servants. The Bushmen were far more reluctant to abandon their ancient way of life, but superior White weaponry compelled them to abandon the land. All the adult men who did not flee were exterminated, their children captured and enslaved as herdsman.²⁹

In the latter part of the 1700s Dutch trekkers encountered more formidable contenders for the land. They also were more culturally advanced: the Bantu on the eastern side of Africa and the Zulu who occupied what is now a South African province, Natal. Wars and continuous conflicts continued with the Bantu for almost 100 years. White colonists were made aware in their conflict with the Bantu that there was no longer an endless supply of unoccupied land. Efforts to acquire new grazing lands required trekkers to avoid the Bantu by travelling to northwestern portions of the new land, where new provinces were established (Orange Free State and the Transvaal). But the new encroachment was met with resistance by the Zulu who sought to rid the land entirely of White settlers. However, the Zulu were soundly defeated in 1838 at the Battle of Blood River. Natal was ordered annexed by the British Government in 1843.³⁰

By 1852 the British Parliament decided additional colonies were no longer economically advantageous and resigned itself to exercising authority only in

the Cape Colony and Natal, leaving the remaining new republics of Orange Free State and the Transvaal in the hands of the trekkers. Wealth in land and livestock was virtually evenly distributed among the inhabitants of these new republics, but

Many of the Africans who lived in the Transvaal and [Orange] Free State were deprived of their rights to occupy land. This was sometimes accompanied by violence and war, but much more frequently it was a silent process . . . Possession meant different things to Europeans and to Africans. To the former it meant physical possession, the right to property; to the latter it meant use . . . What really happened was that two totally different conceptions of land-ownership were in conflict, and neither side knew or recognized the conflict.³¹

In the new republics, the trekkers, later known as Boers, recognized the sovereignty of the chiefs where there was clear, though not "legal," occupation by Africans.³² From these two republics and from this recognition the idea of African reserves was born, an idea which would be formalized 61 years later by the Parliament of the Republic of South Africa, legally confining Black land-ownership to a tiny fraction of South African soil.³³

The Great Trek is directly linked to an array of historical events relating to land distribution that have made South Africa one of the world's most complex and troubled nations. These events include the facts that (1) it acquired European political control of millions of natives; (2) it contributed heavily to the rise of Afrikaner nationalism and the National Party, which came to power over the more tolerant Union Party in 1948 with promises of legal separation of the races (apartheid); and (3) it reduced native "control" of land to the reserves.³⁴

Thus, it seems that from the viewpoint of European settlers, particularly Dutch Boers whose descendants now guide the destiny of South Africa, Black property rights to the land resource as natives understood such rights ended with each encounter of trekkers with native inhabitants. The "natural policy" was underway.

Legislative measures also have been major factors in creating the ruling White minority. A plethora of written laws were enacted by the Union of South Africa to implement a single native policy, formalize the long established view of the "natural policy," assure an adequate labor supply, and allow for economic growth and dominance of the economic resources of the developing nation by Whites. These aspirations manifested themselves in such measures as the Mines and Works Act (1911), the Native Land Act (1913), the Native Registration and Protection Bill (1923), the Native Urban Areas Act (1923), and so on.³⁵

Six legislative measures were most important from the standpoint of racial distribution of land.

Through the Native Land Act (1913), No. 27, slightly more than 9 million hectares of land in the provinces of Orange Free State, the Transvaal, Cape Province, and Natal were declared inalienable Black territory. This was land Blacks had always occupied and had come to be called reserves. The enactment

of this act made it illegal to sell land outside the reserves to Blacks and also ended squatting and sharecropping by Blacks on White farms. Blacks who remained on White farms after the act went into effect were reduced to labor tenants.³⁶

The effects of the 1913 Land Act were many and varied. It limited Black rights to landownership to reserve areas, it legalized and regularized territorial segregation and the "natural policy," and it increased the supply of cheap Black labor to South Africa's predominantly White-owned industry. The latter was assured by Black disenfranchisement and by Black population growth on a fixed amount of land, which would eventually result in an erosion of the agricultural potential of the land.³⁷ With virtually no agricultural potential in the reserves or the means to provide that potential, Blacks were required to seek employment in areas where jobs could be found.

The Development Trust and Land Act of 1936 augmented the land that had been set aside for Black occupation and ownership under its 1913 predecessor by adding 6.3 million additional hectares of land. Contemporary Whites regard this act as forming the bases for Black political dispensation, thus precluding Black participation in the political process in White areas. Such participation would have disastrous results for Whites.³⁸

The long established custom of racial apartheid was formalized in 1950 with the passage of the Group Areas Act which demarcated separate areas of residence for Blacks, Whites, Coloreds, and Indians. For Blacks, this act has implications only for land use and land occupation, since Black landownership outside the reserves was made unlawful by the 1913 Land Act. This act is considered the cornerstone of apartheid and is regarded, like the 1913 Land Act, as a landmark act because it was the first in the Union of South Africa to address the issue of Non-White land use and occupation in White areas.³⁹

In 1950 Professor F. R. Tomlinson was authorized by the government to study viable means of providing for separate economic and political development of the Bantu. Several recommendations were made by the Tomlinson Commission, but the most important from the standpoint of land distribution was that the 264 scattered Bantu reserves should be consolidated to form the present-day "homelands" for the various Black peoples: Xhosa, Zulu, Venda, Tswana, Swazi, Tsonga, and the Sotho group.⁴⁰

The first steps toward implementing the ideas of the Tomlinson Commission came when the Bantu Authorities Act of 1951 empowered chiefs to merge various tribes and designate individuals who would later assume responsibility of entire territories. This act also provided for similar arrangements for self-government in Bantu townships existing on the outskirts of White cities.⁴¹

The Tomlinson Commission's recommendations regarding independent "homelands" for Bantu were implemented in 1959 with the enactment of the

Promotion of Self-Government Act (1958) which reduced the 264 reserve areas to eight (later to become 10), appointed a commissioner to serve as head in guiding each region to self-government, and granted political rights to the Bantu within the newly created "homelands."⁴²

These measures had several important, interrelated, and long-lasting effects. They legitimized and assured White domination of the land resource and thus of the economy of South Africa; they eliminated the need for granting political representation to Blacks in White local, provincial, and national governments in the Union; and they provided for economic development by making Black landlessness a cornerstone of this development. Landless and largely without industry of their own, Blacks would be obliged to supply their labor at low rates of pay, thus fostering the economic expansion of South Africa's predominantly White-oriented industry. This is precisely what has happened throughout the economic development of the Union, later the Republic of South Africa, when, in 1960, South Africa ceased to be a member of the British Commonwealth.

IV

Perspective

SINCE THE PASSAGE of the 1913 Land Act, Blacks have been virtually landless and largely impoverished. Most Blacks who seek to earn an honest living have but two choices available to them: (1) supply their labor to White-owned industry in White areas or (2) try to make a living on drought-stricken, infertile soil in the "homelands." It is plain that these two choices were among the major objectives of the House of Assembly when it enacted this far-reaching, landmark legislation which formalized the "natural policy" and created and entrenched an unparalleled inequality between Blacks and Whites in the distribution of land, income and wealth.

Other things remaining the same, Black landlessness will worsen over time as Black population growth (2.7 percent annually compared to 1.5 percent for Whites) continues.⁴³ Furthermore, soil in the "homelands" will be further depleted by population growth on a fixed quantity of land and by overinvestment in cattle due to tribal custom and to the inability of farm families to finance irrigation, purchase other agricultural hardware, or simply to provide basic infrastructure.

It is recognized that many families in the "homelands" receive remittances from a family member who is contracted for eleven months out of the year to work in a White area; but these remittances average only between 20 to 35 percent of the earnings of these migrant workers.⁴⁴ Since Blacks employed in the dominant sector of the South African economy, the modern sector (all industrial components except agriculture, forestry, and fisheries sector, domestic

services, and the informal sector consisting of street vendors and small shops), earned only an average of R2,268 in 1980 compared to R9,204 for Whites, remittances from migrant laborers are too inadequate to provide for the financial resources to make the land fruitful.⁴⁵ Moreover, assistance from the South African government has been marginal at best. In fact, the bulk of government financial assistance to agriculture has gone to the White farming sector, which has added to the broadening racial agricultural productivity differential.⁴⁶

It seems reasonable to conclude that high unemployment, high mortality and morbidity rates, malnutrition and abject poverty will continue in the "homelands" as increased landlessness, the lack of financial resources and technical means to make the land bountiful continue to persist, and as the tribal custom of accumulating wealth in the form of cattle holdings is perpetuated.⁴⁷ The "homelands" population will not be the only Blacks affected by these problems; urban Blacks will face similar ones, though not as severe. Consequently, Whites may be required to ward off social unrest of proportions unparalleled by South African standards.

It appears that from the viewpoint of the land resource, its ownership and control, Blacks were better off when they roamed the bush freely, hunting for game and unaware of the more advanced European technology—and of the institution of private property in land particularly.

Notes

1. See for example, N. S. B. Gras, *A History of Agriculture in Europe and America* (New York: Appleton-Century Crofts, Inc., 1940) and J. D. Chambers, "Enclosures and Labor Supply in the Industrial Revolution," *Economic History Review*, Series 2, Vol. 5, No. 3 (New York: Kraus Reprint Corporation, 1953), pp. 319 ff.

2. This paper limits its discussion of the land question to relevant issues and facts that pertain to Blacks *vis-à-vis* their White counterparts. Three reasons account for this emphasis: (1) Indians and Coloreds constitute a relatively small percentage of the South African population and, as such, pose no real threat to the political, social, and economic stability of the Republic of South Africa; (2) Indians and Coloreds are better off than Blacks, as they are accorded more privileges (landownership in White controlled areas, higher earnings, better living conditions, political rights, and greater social acceptance) than Blacks; and (3) the lop-sided distributions of land, wealth, and income, based mainly on color, are the most unequal in the world. Moreover, the study of the land issue as it pertains to Blacks and Whites is regarded as more important in this paper because of the stark political, social, and economic differences that have resulted from its allocation—differences that may lead to massive social upheaval of such major proportions that the whole of South African society and foreign companies operating there may be adversely affected.

3. The "homelands" are reserve areas created by the South African Government in its efforts to relocate the vast majority of the Black population. These areas include Ciskei, Kwazulu, QwaQwa, Lebowa, Gazankulu, KaNgwane, KwaNdebele, Transkei, Bophuthatswana, and Venda. Three of the biggest homelands—Transkei, Bophuthatswana, and Venda—have been declared independent and have their own constitutions and presidents. The term "homelands" is used

for convenience to denote both the "national States" (those moving toward independence) and the independent States.

4. Blacks are considered legal residents of White-occupied South Africa if they (1) were born in a White area in "native townships," (2) remained in the employment of one employer for a minimum of 10 years, (3) lawfully lived in a native township for a minimum of 15 years, (4) or are dependents of a man satisfying these criteria. For more detailed information on citizenship rights for Blacks, see H. Schomer, "South Africa Beyond Fair Employment," *Harvard Business Review*, Vol. 61, No. 3 (May-June, 1983), pp. 145-56.

5. T. R. H. Davenport, *South Africa: A Modern History* (New York: The Macmillan Press, Ltd.), p. 342.

6. *South Africa 1984: Official Yearbook of the Republic of South Africa* (Johannesburg: Chris Van Rensburg Publications, 1984), p. 225.

7. *South Africa 1976: Official Yearbook of the Republic of South Africa* (Johannesburg: Chris Van Rensburg Publications, 1976), pp. 227-29.

8. B. G. Boaden, "The Financial Aspects of Black Homeownership with Reference to the New 99-Year Leasehold Legislation," Occasional Paper (Johannesburg: University of Witwatersrand, 1979), pp. 3-4.

9. In 1981, the leasehold fee on residential plots, for example, was calculated on the basis of R1.50 per square meter and R2.42 per square meter in prestigious townships. By the law each of these fees may be adjusted at the discretion of the Director General of the Department of Cooperation and Development, whose responsibility includes the development of housing schemes. See *South Africa 1981: Official Yearbook of the Republic of South Africa*, (Johannesburg: Chris Van Rensburg Publications, 1981), p. 247; Boaden, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

10. *South Africa 1981: Official Yearbook of the Republic of South Africa, op. cit.*, p. 247.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 248.

12. J. H. Nattrass, *The South African Economy: Its Growth and Change* (Cape Town: Oxford Univ. Press, 1981), p. 4.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

14. Land monopolization by Whites has fostered substantial wealth inequality among Whites as well as between Whites and Blacks. The distribution of wealth was reported in *The Star*, March 14, 1983, Johannesburg, from a University of Natal economic research project conducted by M. D. McGrath. Among McGrath's findings were that 42.2 percent of South Africa's wealth was held by White farmers, 21 percent by those in professional and technical occupations, 12 percent by directors and managers, 6.9 percent by senior civil servants, 7.6 percent by salesmen and representatives, and 10.3 percent by retired Whites. The report added that 24 percent of the White population had zero wealth while other races also had no wealth. The relative economic position of White farmers is in part explained by land monopolization but low wages paid to Blacks who, in the main, must supply their labor to White farmers and other White employers also are an important explanatory factor. The best accounts of Black earnings in agriculture have appeared in non-academic and non-government reports. According to "Farm Labour," *Financial Mail*, September 17, 1982, some Black workers earned no cash wage in agriculture in 1981 while others were paid a maximum amount of about R952, roughly two-thirds of which was in the form of fringe benefits.

15. Nattrass, *op. cit.*, pp. 99-100.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 78.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

19. *South Africa 1984: Official Yearbook of the Republic of South Africa, op. cit.*, p. 484-85.

20. Natrass, *op. cit.*, p. 4.
21. *Ibid.*, pp. 99-100.
22. Schomer, *op. cit.*, p. 151.
23. R. Tomlinson, "Industrial Decentralization and the Relief of Poverty in the Homelands," *South African Journal of Economics*, 51 (April 1983), p. 557.
24. Gross Domestic Product is defined as the total value of all goods and services produced in a country in the current year. It is similar to Gross National Product in this regard, except that GDP includes net factor payments paid to the rest of the world. See *South Africa 1984: Official Yearbook of the Republic of South Africa*, *op. cit.*, pp. 348 and 356.
25. C. Simpkins, "Agricultural Production in African Reserves, 1918-1969," *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 7 (May 1981), pp. 256-83.
26. Natrass, *op. cit.*, p. 118.
27. F. Wilson, A. Kooy, and D. Hendric, *Farm Labour in South Africa* (Cape Town: David Phillips Publishers, 1977), p. 75.
28. "Black Development in South Africa," *Bureau for Economic Development, Cooperation and Research (BENSOC)*, Pretoria, 1969.
29. L. Marquard, *Peoples and Policies of South Africa* (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1967), p. 38.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 11-12.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 13-15.
32. The terms Boer (farmer) and Afrikaner came to be used interchangeably among the new Dutch settlers. Boer was a name given by the Governor of the Cape Colony, Wilem Adriaan Van Des Stel, to Dutch farmers who advanced into the interior of the new land. Governor Van Des Stel allegedly resented trekkers for this advance because it interfered with his attempts to monopolize the produce market along with his friends. The term was elevated by trekkers to a badge of honor, denoting a people reared on southern African soil, imbued with a patriotism centered in the new land into which they carried the cultural virtues of western Europe. See *South Africa 1984: Official Yearbook of the Republic of South Africa*, *op. cit.*, p. 38.
33. It is worth noting that Britain's indifference toward the Orange Free State and the Transvaal was short-lived, as economic and political events in these republics sparked renewed British involvement. In the first place, many settlers in the Cape Colony resented the balkanization of South Africa, in addition to many people in the Orange Free State and the Transvaal who espoused the notion of federation. Second, the spectacular diamond discoveries in Griqualand West (now known as Kimberly) led to bitter disputes over the ownership of the area between both Boer republics and such African tribes as the Tswana and Griqua (a mixed Hottentot and half-breed tribe led by Chief Waterboer). The land was awarded by the British to Waterboer, who was promptly persuaded in 1871 to align the Griqua with Britain in the creation of the Crown Colony of Griqualand West. This action left the Transvaal and Orange Free State bitter and suspicious of British intentions. Nevertheless Britain forged ahead in its efforts to federate the Boer republics and, when all diplomatic efforts failed, the Transvaal was annexed in 1877. The Transvaal annexation led to the defeat of British forces at the Battle of Majuba Hill in what is referred to as South Africa's First War of Independence. Despite this defeat Britain's political and economic interests in South Africa intensified as the rise of colonial ambition in Europe brought Germany, France, Belgium, and Portugal into the struggle for Africa. Among the most important factors which account for Britain's continued efforts to expand its influence in southern Africa are: Germany's annexation of the territory now known as South West Africa (Namibia), the discovery of the world's richest gold-bearing reef on the Witwatersrand in 1886 (where Johannesburg now stands), and the unacceptable economic and political status of British subjects (Uitlanders) on

the Witwatersrand, who had been accused in the Jameson Raid of 1895–96 of attempting to overthrow President Paul Kruger's government in the Transvaal. When diplomatic efforts to resolve the dispute over the status of the Uitlanders proved unsatisfactory, Britain launched the Anglo-Boer War (the Second War of Independence). The Boers were forced to become a part of the British Empire at the conclusion of the war in 1902. The Treaty of Vereeniging was negotiated on May 31, 1902, the treaty on which the Union of South Africa was formed eight years later. The most important terms of the generous treaty were these: responsible government would be granted by Britain upon settlement of the country; the Dutch language was recognized as equal to English, which already was the case; non-European franchise was postponed until after the granting of responsible government; and the British Government agreed to assist in the economic reconstruction of the Boer Republics. For a more in-depth discussion of the early history of South Africa, the reader will do well to consult Marquard, *op. cit.*, pp. 11 ff and *South Africa 1984: Official Yearbook of the Republic of South Africa, op. cit.*, pp. 3–65.

34. Marquard, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

35. P. L. Wickins, "The Native Land Act of 1913: A Cautionary Essay on Simple Explanations of Complex Change," *South African Journal of Economics*, 49 (February 1981), pp. 107–29. According to Wickins, these acts were passed in an effort ". . . to implement a single 'native policy' for the Union of South Africa . . .," particularly the Native Land Act of 1913. Wickins adds that ". . . these Bills shared a number of features: Firstly, they were concerned with assuring White enterprise an adequate supply of disciplined and inexpensive Black labor. Secondly, they aimed to hamper the economic competition and social integration of Africans by restricting their access to skills, labor organization and land; and, thirdly, they were generally resented by African opinion, which was not directly consulted." *Ibid.*, p. 106.

36. *Ibid.*, pp. 107–29; J. Selby, *A Short History of South Africa* (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1973), p. 247. R. Tomlinson, *op. cit.*, pp. 545–46; Nattrass, *op. cit.*, p. 118; M. S. Jacobs, *The Law of Expropriation in South Africa* (Cape Town: Juta, 1982); A. D. J. and S. H. Treiman, *The Practitioner's Guide to the Alienation of Land Act* (Durban: Butterworth, 1982); Marquard, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

37. Tomlinson, *op. cit.*, p. 557.

38. *South Africa 1984: Official Yearbook of the Republic of South Africa, op. cit.*, pp. 202–03; Marquard, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

39. Marquard, *op. cit.*, p. 53; Selby, *op. cit.*, pp. 245–46.

40. Tomlinson, *op. cit.*, pp. 545–46; Marquard, *op. cit.*, pp. 43 and 53.

41. Selby, *op. cit.*, p. 248.

42. Tomlinson, *op. cit.*, p. 547; *South Africa 1984: Official Yearbook of the Republic of South Africa, op. cit.*, p. 203.

43. *Ibid.*, p. 27.

44. Nattrass, *op. cit.*, pp. 116–21.

45. *Ibid.*, p. 116; Schomer, *op. cit.*, p. 150. A more in-depth discussion of the modern sector is provided in J. H. Nattrass, "The Narrowing of Wage Differentials in South Africa," *South African Journal of Economics*, 45 (December 1977), pp. 408–30 and in *South Africa 1984: Official Yearbook of the Republic of South Africa, op. cit.*, pp. 481–84.

46. Nattrass, *op. cit.*, pp. 116–21.

47. This practice is known to have resulted in overstocking, which has created semi-desert conditions in many parts of the "homelands." Many of the problems that are associated with the reserves, particularly malnutrition and mortality, could be lessened if much grazing land were used more productively such as in the raising of cereal crops.