

# Peasantry and State in Ghana

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Piet Konings

'The example of the Veia Irrigation Project  
in the Upper Region of Ghana

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PEASANTRY AND STATE IN GHANA:  
THE EXAMPLE OF THE VEA IRRIGATION PROJECT IN THE UPPER  
REGION OF GHANA

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## FOREWORD

This study is part of a wider research project on "Capitalisation and Proletarianisation in the Rural Areas of Ghana" undertaken in Ghana from February 1979 to June 1980. While full acknowledgement of all the institutions and persons who have enabled me to carry out this research will be included in the final report, I would like to single out those who have specifically contributed to the present, first product of this research.

First of all I would like to thank the Afrika-Studiecentrum at Leiden not only for financing the entire project but also for providing me with excellent conditions for the writing-up of my fieldwork. Among my colleagues at the Centre I am particularly indebted to: Dr. Gerrit Grootenhuis, managing director, for continuous advice and encouragement; Mr. Joop Nijssen, bursar, for taking care of the financial and administrative side of my research; Drs. Wim van Binsbergen and Robert Buijtenhuijs for stimulating intellectual exchange and comments on an earlier draft of this paper; and Ria van Hal and Bert Dubbeldam for typing and producing the final version.

During my fieldwork in Ghana I received much support from: The University of Ghana at Legon where I was appointed Research Fellow in the Department of Sociology; the Ghana National Archives at Accra and Tamale; the Irrigation Development Authority; the Labour Department; the Ghana Trades Union Congress; the Upper Regional Administration; and the Frafra District and Traditional Councils. I benefited greatly from the knowledge and personal network of my research assistant, Mr. Martin Akannuemenema. Mr. Freek Schiphorst made an in-depth study of one of the villages affected by the Veia Irrigation Project; not only did we constantly exchange fieldwork experiences but we also became close friends. At various occasions I enjoyed the hospitality of the Catholic Mission in Ghana, in particular the White Fathers and the Society of African Missions. My greatest debt lies with the peasants in the Veia Irrigation Project who entrusted me with writing their history and making it known in Ghana and elsewhere.

I dedicate this study to the memory of my father who died during my fieldwork on the Veia Irrigation Project.

Leiden, September 1980.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Veia Irrigation Project, a medium-sized irrigation project in the Upper Region of Ghana, was one of the schemes undertaken by the post-colonial state to bring about structural changes in the colonial export economy and to bridge regional inequalities.

The project aimed at and established a shift in local peasants' incorporation in the national and international market. It transformed local peasants in various ways from migrant labourers to the South Ghanaian export economy into (local) producers of cash crops for the national (or, more accurately, the South Ghanaian) and (hopefully) the international market, thus achieving what contradictory colonial economic policies visualized but never could fully realize:

"The importance of Northern labour (for the Southern export economy, P.K.) has been mentioned, but it is on the food markets of the South that Northern economy in the future should depend... Whether the North at a later stage could become an exporter of food to the world market is, at this stage, purely a matter of conjecture". (1)

It will be argued that the project was not primarily planned (and has not worked out) in the interest of (at least, most) local peasants, but in the interest of the state in the continued control and exploitation of Northern labour for capital accumulation and food supplies in the South.

This study tries to demonstrate first why the project aimed at a transformation of producers of use-values and migrant labourers into producers of commodities and how this transformation was achieved. It then tries to explain the reasons for the various consequent changes in the organisation of cash crop production in the project and to analyse the various ways peasants' labour is controlled and exploited. And finally it shows peasants' reaction and action towards the loss of control over the means of production, production process and terms of exchange.

## 2. DOMESTIC COMMUNITY'S COLONIAL FUNCTION: SUPPLY AND REPRODUCTION OF CHEAP LABOUR

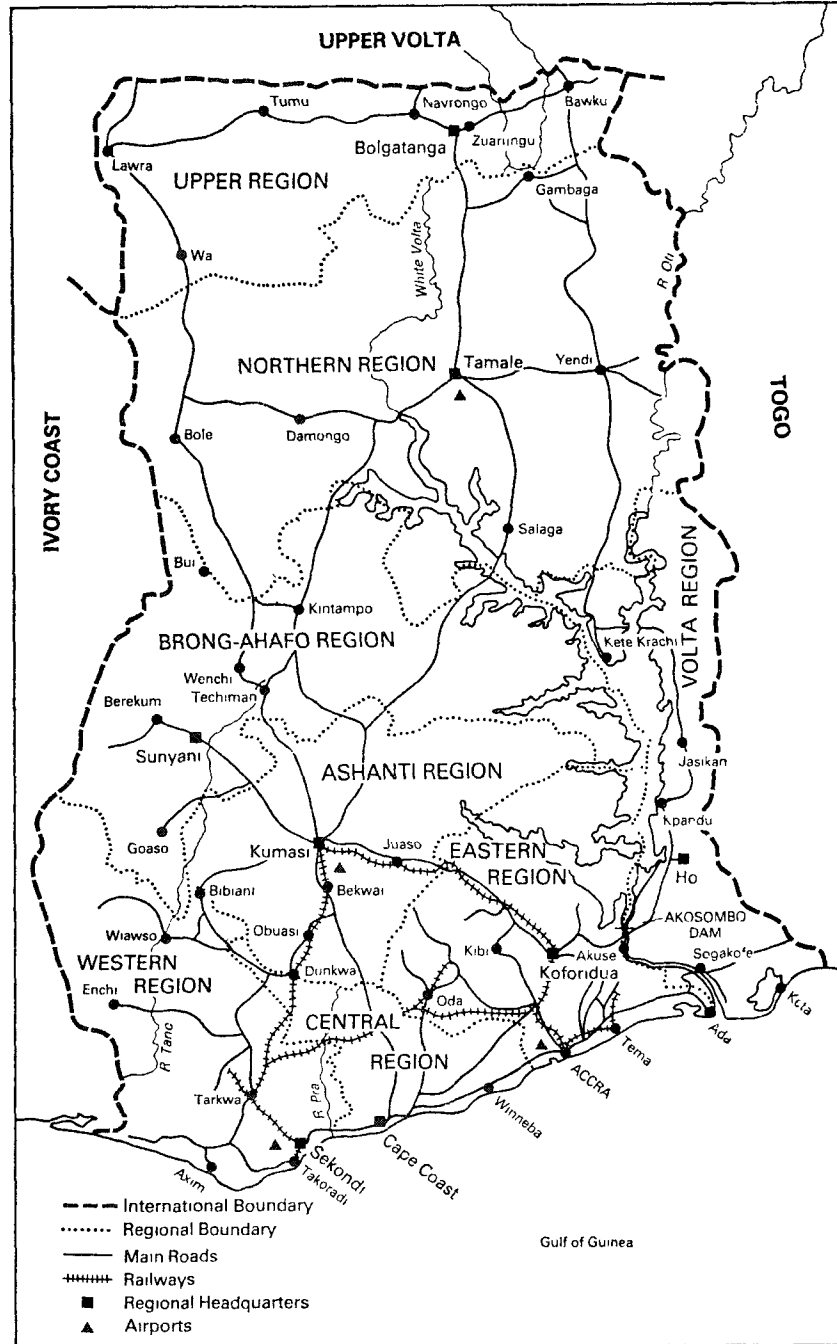
The Veia Irrigation Project area is situated some 10 km. to the north-west of Bolgatanga, the capital of the Upper Region, and is part of the Frafra Traditional Area. The project covers 7 villages, partly under the

jurisdiction of the (divisional) chief of Bolgatanga (Zaare, Yikine, Yorogo, Sumbrungu and part of Nyarega) partly under the jurisdiction of the (divisional) chief of Bongo (Vea, Gowrie and part of Nyarega). (see maps 1, 2 and 3)

The inhabitants of those villages were largely dependent on the land for their subsistence. Lands belong to the ancestors and allodium is vested in the tindana, the "custodian of the land" and "priest of the earth god", (2) in the Bolgatanga division, and in the chief in the Bongo division (where the tindana has only a religious function). (3) Chief or tindana allotted land to the patrilineal clans within their jurisdiction; once the right of ownership of land has been vested in a clan it cannot be revoked. Farmland is held by the family head who owes his position to genealogical seniority. He can call upon the labour power of all family members and can dispose of the product of family labour. He is, however, obliged to provide fairly for the needs and wants of those who share the farm work. Control over labour of young men by the family head is assured by "monopolistic control of religious power and access to marriage via bridewealth, gained through stewardship of ritual sacra and lineage herds". (4) The family head may portion out the land among the (married) male members of the family. When he dies, the land is divided up amongst his male children, thus creating a situation in which land is excessively fragmented. Female members of the family have no rights over land, but women may acquire temporary possession of land from their husbands, friends or relatives on which they can cultivate such cash crops as groundnuts, potatoes or rice. In return, they are expected to provide ingredients like pepper, salt or even meat for the family meal from the income obtained from such farms.

Mouton's observation about the Mamprusi sums up in a striking manner the quintessence of the traditional land tenure systems prevalent in the North and which is equally applicable to the Frafra: "The idea of selling land or of making a man live without it cannot be even understood by the people, a man having as much right to it as, say, to his arms or legs. This tends to lessen the food crops available for sale, as individual men naturally prefer to work their own plot for their own food and a very small surplus, than to engage as hired labourers to make big farms for a few men to sell and make money". (5) Land among the Frafra had no commercial value and land was always generously given to any person whose clan lands were exhausted and even to strangers (though strangers could

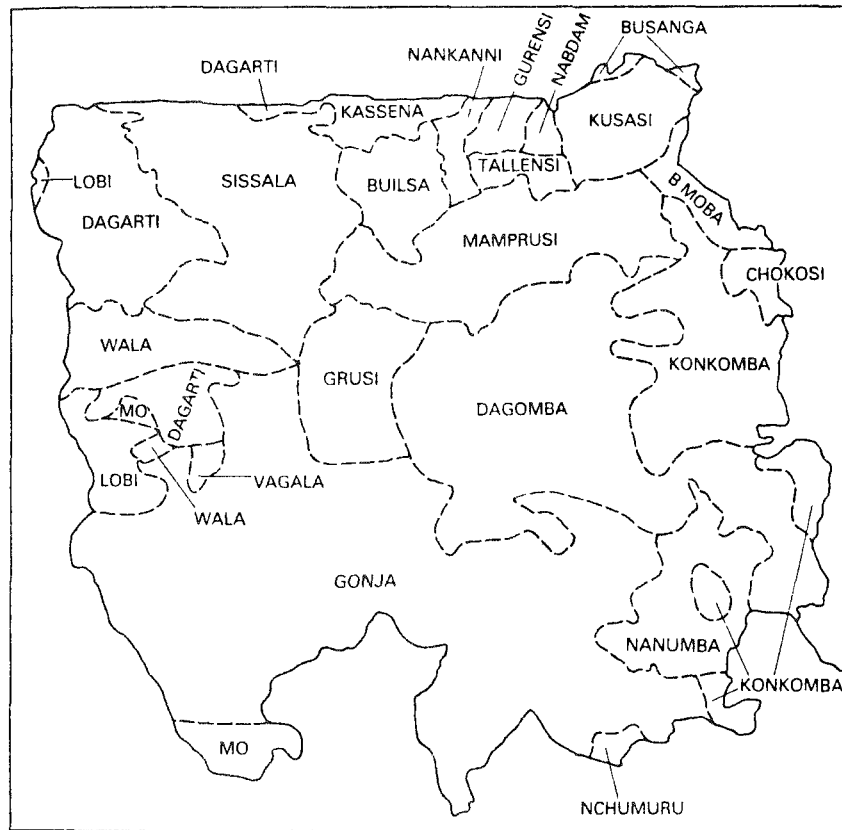
MAP 1  
GHANA



Map 1. Ghana

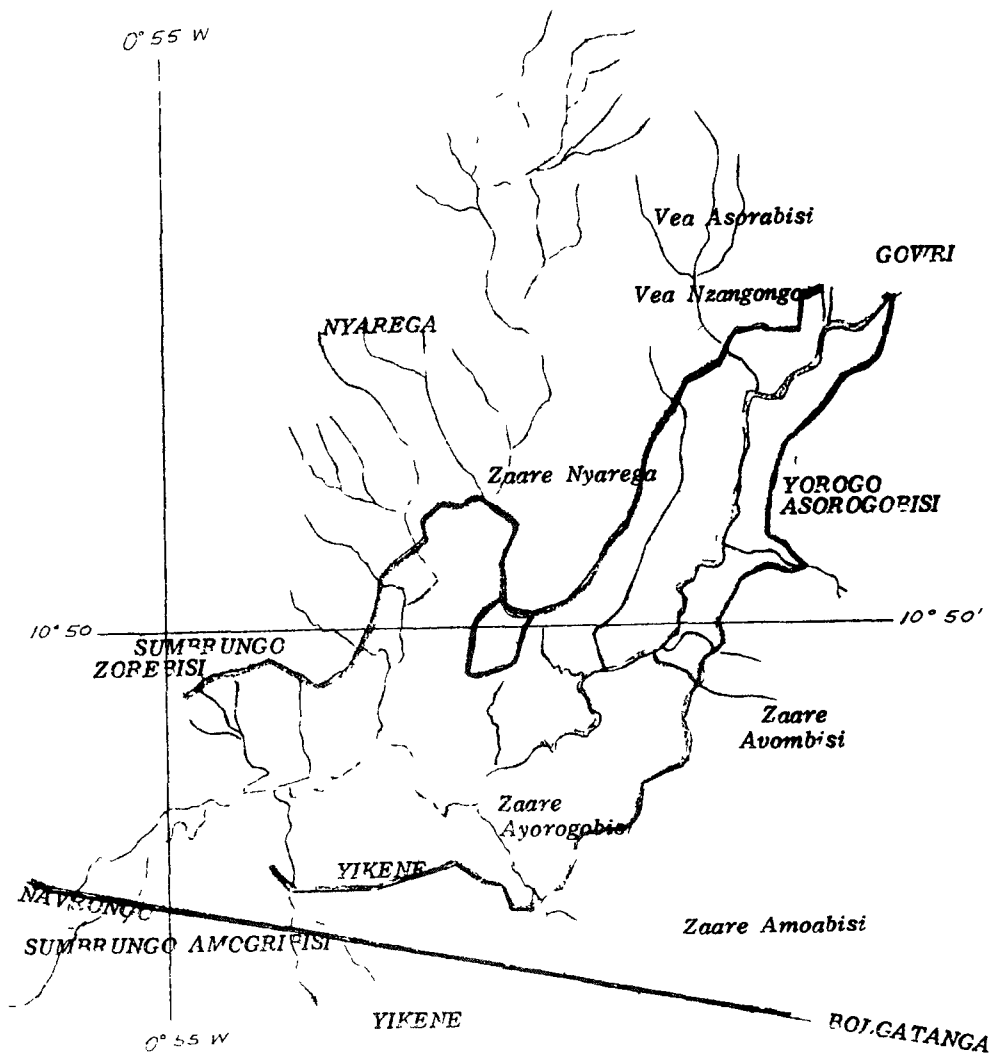
(Source: Ladouceur, 1979, cf. note 22)





MAP 2  
NORTHERN GHANA

Map 2. Predominant ethnic groups of Northern Ghana  
(Source: Ladouceur, 1979, cf. note 22)



Map 3. Vea Irrigation Project  
(Source: Irrigation Department, cf. note 43)

never acquire ownership of land) who had to sustain themselves and their dependents. This custom is maintained though land in this area of the Upper Region is in short supply. Population density is extremely high, exceeding in one estimation 450 per square mile in a large part of the project area. (6) Fragmentation of land through the existing inheritance pattern, rapidly deteriorating soil conditions and erosion contribute to the increasing land shortage. Lynn found in 1932-36 that the average peasant cultivated 2.49 acres in the area, which was only enough to support 3.7 persons (7); my research in 1979 seems to support Adu's estimated average 2 acre landholding in the project area before the construction of the dam. (8) Shortage of land, combined with declining soil fertility, increasing erosion, the low and unreliable rainfall, and simple production techniques (the general use of the hoe, dibble stick and cutlass, though some bullock ploughs were introduced in the area during the colonial period) make each successive year's survival precarious. Most people have to accept that during the period of peak labour demand (the time before harvest) they will have barely enough to survive on and that in a year of a disaster (drought, invasion of locusts) they will suffer famine. (9)

Local peasants have not only developed a stock of religious beliefs to cope with the hostile ecosystem, they have also demonstrated a great sense of adaptation and innovation:

- Esther Boserup's thesis that population pressure will lead to an intensification of agriculture certainly applies to this area. (10) Shortage of land has forced local peasants to a more intensive (permanent cropping system) and more diverse (mixed cropping) use of the compound farm (as the extended compound farm or bush farm are mostly not available). It is only recently that the scientific community has discovered the many benefits of the mixed cropping system, including higher yields, more even spreading of labour, soil protection and fertility, and pest and disease control. (11) The variety of crops grown comprise the staples millet and guinea corn which have social and religious significance (12) mixed with all kinds of vegetables and sometimes groundnuts, sorghum and rice, and provide for all family needs.
- Besides farming, most peasants keep sheep, chickens, guinea-fowls and cattle for consumption and sale in time of need. Cattle are parti-

cularly valued and the number of cattle is a visible sign of a person's prosperity and determines his social status. Cattle have many functions. Cattle are kept as a self-improving investment or insurance against sudden need, calamity or hard times, serving as bridal dowries and gifts and slaughtered for funerals, occasional feasts and festivals. Cattle supply manure vital for the permanent cropping system practised in the area. The ease with which cattle (bullocks) were accepted for cultivation purposes in the colonial period once more demonstrates the peasants' sense of innovation; the general use of bullocks is only prohibited by the high costs involved. Finally, as Polly Hill observed, contrary to the common statement that peasants in Northern Ghana do not or only rarely sell their cattle, all peasants - though peasants in our study area may be somewhat more reluctant - were willing and ready to sell male animals from their herds to traders and butchers. (13)

- The seasonality of agricultural labour requirements and the uneven demands of the farming schedule gave rise to all kinds of specialisms and secondary occupations which provide extra income during the agricultural off-season or command labour services during the agricultural season. Roofing and hut specialists were busily engaged in the dry season to build new houses or repair the damages caused by the wet season. Women were experienced brewers and sellers of pito, the local beer. Diviners and similar ritual and medical specialists were well awarded for their services. Many men and women were specialists in weaving, pottery, leather and metal work and other crafts. While some of the goods produced were for own use (blacksmiths used to supply peasants with all farm implements), many of them served trading purposes. The favourable geographical position of Northern Ghana with regard to the long distance trade between the South of Ghana and Northern Nigeria and North Africa promoted trading and the production of craft items.

The ecosystem and society (redistributive mechanisms) did not allow much differentiation. (14) Besides the chief and (to a lesser extent) the tindana who were entitled to communal labour for the cultivation of their farms and to a share in the community's farm produce, only very few men could hope to rise to the status of "nera gu'la", the "rich man". This success could only be achieved by a man who could command the labour of a large number of wives, chil-

dren and various compulsory (son-in-laws with their friends) and voluntary (which demanded considerable expenses in the provision of food and drinks and have increasingly acquired a cash nexus) working groups (15), possessed substantial herds, possibly earned supplementary income from specialization in crafts, and undoubtedly engaged in trading of some kind. Moreover, such a person was more often than not a lineage elder. (16)

The domestic community was incorporated into the national and international market as a supplier of cheap labour to the Southern export economy by the colonial power. (17) The colonial power's consideration that the North lacked any other important natural resource outside its labour power, capable of supplying the Southern export economy's growing demand for labour, gave rise to a deliberate strategy to transform the region into a reservoir of cheap labour for the mines and cocoa farms in the South. (18) Labour had initially to be forced out of the North by the colonial regime with the assistance of chiefs (often created by the colonial regime), (19) but various administrative measures were taken to promote a "voluntary" flow of labour to the South. These included starving of the North of development funds (for instance, for a long time no funds were available to raise agricultural production) and attempts to discourage or destroy any economic activity which could supplement the subsistence economy (e.g. attempts to cultivate cash crops were discouraged by the colonial power despite local peasants' initial enthusiasm). Control over lands in the North attained by colonial land laws which are of particular importance for our further discussion enabled the colonial regime not only to curb the growth of a land market but also to impede the development of capitalist relations in agriculture and other sectors of the economy which could have threatened the export of cheap Northern labour to the Southern export economy.

The importance the colonial regime attached to a secure flow of labour from the North to the South seems to a large extent to explain its renewed attempt to vest Northern lands in the state after earlier failure in the South. (20). Success in the North was achieved by the absence of those factors which roused opposition in the South: the absence of any commercial value attached to land and the absence of an educated elite who can mobilise chiefs and people. The 1931 Land and Native Rights Ordinance vested the mana-

gement, control and administration of Northern lands in the governor in trust for the people, which legal terminology cannot be assimilated, though this has been and still is often purposely done by bureaucrats and politicians, with "ownership" or "nationalization" of Northern lands. (21) The Act empowered the governor to grant rights of occupancy to natives and non-natives and to extract a rent in respect of rights of occupancy so granted. One of the far-reaching effects of the ordinance was that in practice the Lands Department, which manages the lands in the North, could claim any land for "development purposes" without equitable compensation and lease it to any Ghanaian. Attempts by the Northern Territories Council (NTC) to take over control over lands in the North from the governor failed in the fifties. (22) The reluctance of the colonial government to surrender control over lands in the North demonstrates the government's continued fear that loss of control over lands in the North would lead to loss of control over the flow of labour to the South.

The flow of labour to the South, initially a product of simple coercion, was kept going and actually increased by the neglect of transformation of precarious peasant agriculture, the prevention of employment opportunities in the North outside subsistence agriculture and the growing need for cash created by the colonial economy. Fortes speaks of a Frafra adult male absentee rate of between 7 and 15 per cent depending on the time of the year in the thirties. (23) At the end of the colonial period 30.5% of the men and 14% of the women of the Frafra ethnic group were away from home. (24)

While mainly women and older men continued to take care of agricultural production, thus providing capital in the South with the benefit of a cheap reproduction of labour, the absence of a large number of able-bodied men must have had a detrimental effect on agricultural production. Even so, foodstuffs were at times sucked out of the North by the lure of high food prices in Southern towns, creating absolute food-shortages in the North during periods of high demand in the South. (25) Moreover, those who profited most from the high food prices were not so much Northern producers as Southern traders who bought the produce in the North. Exploitation of Northerners by Southerners at the level of production (cheap labour) and exchange (buying foodstuffs below their value and selling them at, or above, their value) in colonial times tended to reinforce and even to deepen the pre-colonial conflict between Northerners and Southerners based

on Ashanti's extraction of tribute and control over trade in commodities and slaves in the North. (26)

Meillassoux has rightly pointed out the inherent contradiction in the system: the domestic community's function of supplying labour to the capitalist system must inevitably endanger its function of reproducing this labour power as food production tends to decrease or at least to stagnate. (27) The acknowledgement of the "food problem" as a threat not only to the economy (the reproduction of labour) but also to the polity, the regime itself, as food prices in Southern towns dangerously skyrocketed, (28) gave rise to more extensive state intervention and investment in agriculture starting in the thirties and culminating after the Second World War.

Initially the government tried to solve the food problem by some (modest) attempts to improve peasant production in the Frafra area. The thirties witnessed the establishment of an Agricultural Station at Zuarungu with a limited agricultural research and extension programme; there was the introduction of mixed farming through the use of animal traction and some attention was paid to veterinary services. Moreover, the government tried to "ease" the population problem in the Frafra area, which it considered one of the main reasons for low agricultural production. Various (small) resettlement schemes were introduced to move peasants from the densely populated Frafra area to the sparsely populated areas of Northern Ghana but all met with limited success and were abandoned. (29) After the Second World War, when Southern towns were hit by extensive food shortages and high food prices, the government concluded that peasant production could not meet urban demands: emphasis was shifted to large-scale, capital-intensive agricultural schemes. While the colonial government had "killed" peasant production by luring the best labour (young, able-bodied men) away from agriculture and by pursuing a policy of low investment (during the whole colonial period only £ 1-1½m. was invested in peasant production) (30), it over-staffed (with the best qualified personnel) and invested almost the same amount in one ambitious scheme, the Gonja Development Corporation, between 1950 and 1957. (31)

The scheme involved the resettlement of a relatively small number of peasants mainly from the Frafra area to the sparsely populated area of Gonja (32), acquainting them, under management supervision, with cashcropping by mechanical methods on a 30-acre plot (distributed to each participant). The Gonja scheme, like previous resettlement schemes,

faced many problems with settlers, like persuading the Frafra to leave their cherished, if impoverished land, and keeping them involved in the scheme when conflicts developed with the indigenous Gonja. Settlers, however, turned enthusiastically to cashcropping when their food supply was assured on a 2 acre plot around their new houses and traditional religious customs with regard to agriculture were preserved. The project proved a dismal failure with regard to increased food production because of the many problems facing large-scale mechanisation in Northern Ghana, overstaffing and managerial problems. The CPP, however, that took over the reins of government by the time of the dissolution of the Gonja scheme, completely overlooked the lesson of Gonja and continued to rely mainly on large-scale and capital-intensive schemes instead on improved peasant production to increase agricultural production.

### 3. DOMESTIC COMMUNITY'S POST-COLONIAL FUNCTION: PRODUCTION OF CASH CROPS

At the beginning of the sixties, the post-colonial state felt for the first time the full impact of one of the colonial economy's sharpest contradictions: the over-emphasis of cocoa production to the detriment of the production of food and other agricultural raw materials. The drastic fall in the cocoa prices and the increasing imports of food and agricultural raw materials largely reduced Ghana's foreign exchange, endangering its industrialization programme. High food prices in the Southern towns was one of the main causes of the 1961 Sekondi-Takoradi railway strike which was the first serious threat to the post-colonial state and the party in power. (33) The government seriously considered a revision of agricultural policy: attention had to be redirected from cocoa to the production of food crops to feed the rapidly growing non-agricultural population especially in the South and raw materials to supply the expanding manufacturing sector. (34) The substantial increase in agricultural production was to be primarily achieved, according to the Seven Year Development Plan, by the establishment of large-scale, mechanised state enterprises, which could serve as "shining examples of progress" to peasant farmers, and secondarily by an improvement or even a transformation of the production and organisation of the peasantry, especially in the North of Ghana, badly neglected by colonialism. (35)

The Veia Irrigation Project was to be an expression of the CPP's determination to provide the North with a larger share of the develop-



ment funds than ever had been the case in the colonial period and to "repay" Northern labour for its contribution to the growth of the Southern export economy. (36) The project was to be a large-scale, mechanised farming scheme which would transform local peasants into producers of cash crops best suited to irrigation conditions, which could supply the national and possibly the international market. W.A. Amoro, MP for Bongo, told parliamentarians that by irrigating the area "the government would be killing three birds with one stone. First the tomatoes that would be produced would be sufficient to meet the requirements of the people and the Pwalugu Tomato Processing factory. Secondly, the rice that would be produced would be sufficient to meet the needs of the whole country and so we would conserve foreign exchange, since we would no longer import rice. And the last but not the least, is that the people would have sufficient money to buy clothing for their families". (37)

It is clear from the parliamentarian's words that the project was primarily planned to feed the newly established tomato-processing factory at Pwalugu (one of the very few industrial enterprises established in the Upper Region during the CPP regime) and the regional rice-mills which could supply the petty bourgeoisie and (to a lesser extent) workers in the Southern towns who had acquired a "colonial" taste for rice. The reduction in import of food and agricultural raw materials would certainly conserve foreign exchange, but possible export would even enable the state to gain foreign exchange that could be used in industrializing the South. Obviously the project was not geared to the improvement of the domestic community's precarious food production. On the contrary, it aimed at the destruction of the domestic community's food production (and grazing land for livestock and cattle), thus forcing peasants into commodity production in order to maintain themselves and their household members, and increasing management control over the project (by making it impossible for peasants to withdraw and revert to food production). The domestic community's "colonial" function, supply and reproduction of labour to the capitalist system, was no longer required and had to be replaced by a new one: production of cash crops. The slowly expanding manufacturing sector in the South, capital-intensive in character, had to a large extent lost interest in (and could no longer absorb) the cheap, un-

skilled migrant labour from the North and wanted to create a stable and skilled proletariat (38) which could only be found in the South as colonialism had systematically deprived the North of educational opportunities. (39) Capitalism was now more interested in a further peasantisation rather than in a further proletarianisation of Northern labour power (40): the supply of raw materials to the agro-industry and the supply of cheap food, keeping wages low and workers quiet in the South, would go far to meet the demands of rapid industrialization.

The parliamentarian's contention that the introduction of irrigation would not only lead to increased food supplies and capital accumulation by the state, but also to an improvement in "transformed" peasants' living standard is very much open to question. Though marketing of cash crops by state corporations would ensure the peasantry a market for their crops, prices offered by state corporations were often lower than those by Southern middlemen, who used to be regularly attacked by the CPP as "exploiters" of the peasantry and the main cause of high food prices in the Southern towns. (41) Having sold their crops to the state corporations below their value, peasants would be left in the hands of those "exploiters" to buy their food-stuffs far above their value. Paraphrasing Shepherd: if the project set the peasantry on the path of a new development, it was not so much a path determined by peasants' interests as well by Southern urban interests and the logic of Southern capital accumulation. (42)

4. DOMESTIC COMMUNITY'S EXPROPRIATION OF LANDS (AND PROPERTY): MEANS TO TRANSFORM DOMESTIC COMMUNITY INTO A PRODUCER OF CASH CROPS

Colonial land laws enabled the colonial state to force labour out of the North; colonial land laws enabled the post-colonial state to force peasants into cash crop production by expropriating their lands for "development purposes". Colonial land laws again enabled the CPP to claim peasants' lands without individual compensation, thus reducing project's costs considerably. However, the CPP never foresaw that the transition from land expropriation to cash crop production would be a prolonged and painful process and that the same colonial land laws would be used (by its successors to power) to dishonour its promise of leasing the developed lands to the expropriated.

Work on the project started in 1965 but the construction of the dam and canals and land development was not only shoddily done but also "at a snail pace" by Ghanaian private and state contractors, greatly increasing the estimated project costs. (43) Only 120 ha out of the originally planned 1660 ha (4100 acres) project had been developed in 1976, when the state awarded a new contract on favourable terms to a British multinational, Taylor Woodrow (International) Ltd., to complete the project, including rehabilitation of a section of earlier construction works. (44) Changes in the hastily prepared original plan by Taylor Woodrow reduced the land to be developed to 760 ha. (45) Despite many setbacks and delays mainly due to the almost complete collapse of the Ghanaian economy since 1976, land development reached 520 ha during my research in 1979. The project is due to be completed in 1980. (46)

The construction and development works affected peasants' lands and houses situated in the project area. Lands were expropriated without compensation, but peasants were promised that lands would be leased to them after the project's completion and their temporary suffering (no land) would be more than compensated by the acquisition of high yielding irrigated lands. Those peasants who were actually living in the project area were asked to resettle and compensation would be paid for the loss of their houses. Table 1 shows the number of households in the various villages that lost their houses and the compensation paid; the number of people resettled are estimated at between 4000 and 6000.

Resettlement schemes in Africa in general clearly demonstrate the position of peasants in the colonial and post-colonial society marked as they are by lack of peasant consultation and surrounded with fraud, threats and force by bureaucrats. (47) Though previous resettlement schemes in Ghana, in particular the huge Volta River Project Resettlement Scheme in the beginning of the sixties, (48) had provided Ghanaian bureaucracy with invaluable resettlement experience, the Veia Resettlement Scheme adds another black page to previous resettlement schemes. The original plan of the Veia Resettlement Committee was to resettle the households affected in new resettlement townships (49) which would be provided with all kinds of amenities to introduce peasants to "modern life". (50) However,

Table 1. Number of Households Affected and Compensation Paid

Compensation paid in	Village	Number of Households <sup>1)</sup>	Amount of Compensation in c <sup>2)</sup>
1968	Sumbrungu	194	55,796.00
	Vea	17	4,086.00
	Yikine	62	6,355.00
	Zaare	86	19,538.00
	Yorogo	20	4,306.00
	Gowrie	14	3,729.00
	Nyarega	107	29,923.00
1973	Nyarega	26	
	Vea	1	10,115.00
1976	Nyarega	39	175,937.00
TOTAL		566	309,785.00

Source: Compiled from files in the Lands Department, Bolgatanga.

Notes: 1. The figure of 566 households may be not correct. Other sources speak of 660 households affected and compensated in 1968. See Aganah, S.A., *The Vea (Yaratanga River) Irrigation Project: An Appraisal of Farming Innovation*, B.A. thesis, Department of Geography, University of Ghana, Legon, 1972, p. 41; and file FDC 12/SF.5.

2. Ghanaian cedi was almost at par with the American dollar in 1968; its (official) value was equal to US \$ 0.78 in 1973 and to US \$ 0.87 in 1976.

while the state built bungalows and houses for project managers and workers, the Vea Resettlement Committee was informed that its plan was unacceptable because of the high cost involved. Individual compensation would be paid to peasant households affected and it was left to them to find a place to resettle and build a house. The compensation paid to those households in 1968, ranging from ¢ 40 to ¢ 800 per household, was by no means enough to pay for putting up a new building, and peasants were forced to use their small savings, sell their livestock and cattle and call upon their friends and relatives to enable them to build.

None of the peasants had any idea about the evaluation criteria and the amount to be paid. No official receipts were issued confirming that they actually received the amount indicated on the evaluation list. A petition presented by the Frafra Youth Movement in 1977 concluded: "We really cannot tell whether this is an administrative flaw or there was a reason. Whatever it is, we question the genuineness of the whole payment exercise". (51) Some peasants explained that at times they were threatened not to tell anybody the amount they had been paid. Peasants who dared to complain about the low compensation were either blatantly told to accept the money or leave it or made to understand that they had no claim as the money was paid on humanitarian grounds. In Sumbrungu one clan clashed with the chief who openly took a part of each peasant's compensation money; the chief retaliated by having those "agitators" beaten and locked up by the police and eventually forced them to leave the village. As their chiefs, considered by peasants and state alike as the representatives and spokesmen of the people, did not protest, peasants generally saw no other way out than grumblingly to accept the low compensation. Only very few refused to accept the compensation and/or to leave the house of their ancestors and gods till they were forcibly removed. Peasants not informed about the time-limit found themselves surprised by a bulldozer which threatened to demolish their property. The resettlement exercise resulted in family breakdowns due to inability to put up a house which could contain all the family members and to serious quarrels about the sharing of whatever compensation was paid. (52)

Some peasants were so shocked by the loss of their houses and lands and/or terrified by the display of force during the resettlement exercise that they left the area as shown by table 2.

As can be seen from table 2, the decrease in population from 20,709 in 1948 to 18,958 in 1960 represented a decrease of 8.4%, while the decrease between 1960 and 1970 was 35.6% which is about four times the original decrease. This demonstrates that instead of halting the "traditional" flow of labour, the project must have increased the flow of labour drastically due to peasants' dislocation by the expropriation exercise.

Most displaced peasants, however, begged their relatives or friends for a plot to cultivate and settle on, thus exacerbating the already existing land shortage. While their demand was "customarily" met, the plot acquired was much too small for them to exist on. The almost complete destruction of peasants' food production by the expropriation exercise made peasants to a large extent dependent on the market for obtaining their food supply: peasants were again forced to sell their remaining livestock and cattle, depriving them of their "traditional" insurance against hard times, to turn craft production from a seasonal into a year-round activity or to compete for wage-labour opportunities that were opened up by the development of the North in general and the project area in particular: not only the construction works in the project area demanded an increasing number of labourers but also nearby Bolgatanga, the newly created and quickly expanding capital of the Upper Region. Some peasants in the project area tried to combine all the mentioned activities in the struggle for survival.

The most important consequences of state's expropriation of peasants' lands and houses, prolonged by the slow progress of construction and development works, were:

- Peasants' increasing impoverishment as a result of the almost complete destruction of their food production (and grazing land) and a feeling of dejection. The Frafra Youth Movement described the situation of most peasants affected by the project as follows in 1977: "What the Frafra Youth Movement discovered is shocking. Malaria fever (as the dam lake and canals became breeding grounds for mosquitoes, P.K.), unbalanced diet or not getting the food at all, coupled with the psychological violence of feeling that one is landless is now the lot of

Table 2. Population of Villages in the Vea Project Area, 1948-1970

VILLAGE	POPULATION BY YEAR		
	1948	1960	1970
Sumbrungu	7,072	7,762	4,438
Yikine	1,285	1,656	1,037
Zaare	2,287	1,047	1,947 <sup>1)</sup>
Yorogo	3,932	1,795	870
Nyarega	752	839	.....
Ve a	2,840	3,409	2,680
Gowrie	2,541	2,450	1,246
TOTAL	20,709	18,958	12,218

Source: Ghana Population Censuses, 1948, 1960 and 1970, vol. II.

Note: 1. Zaare is situated at the outskirts of Bolgatanga and had its population increased due to Bolgatanga's rapid urbanization.

people of Gowrie and Vea. This has been aggravated by the absence of a health center. Decent living is a forgotten phase in those areas". (53) -Peasants' "liberation" from the land and increasing dependence on a cash-income opened the way for the various ways peasants would be incorporated as cashcroppers in the national and international market: proletarianisation and commodity production. Colonial land laws again determined peasants' fate. Those laws authorizing the state to lease lands in the North to any Ghanaian enabled the military and bureaucratic regimes which succeeded the CPP into power to jump over the CPP's promise of leasing the developed lands to the expropriated and use the developed lands to secure an economic base in Ghanaian society and promote private entrepreneurship in agriculture. (54) Overnight, peasants were transformed into proletarians on their own lands. Moreover, the entrepreneurs who were allocated lands by the state were mainly Southerners. The transfer of the traditional conflict between Southern capital and Northern labour to the North tended to deepen this conflict.

#### 5. THE DOMESTIC COMMUNITY AS PRODUCER OF CASH CROPS FOR THE NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL MARKET

The 1966 military coup not only eliminated the CPP regime, but also attempted to overhaul its ideology and policies. The CPP's successors to power ignored the previous regime's promise of leasing the developed lands in the project area to local peasants and started to allocate lands to "commercial farmers". It was only in 1977 that the second military regime, the Supreme Military Council (SMC), honoured the CPP's promise by re-allocating (most of) the developed lands to local peasants. The following section will discuss the reasons for changes in the land allocation policy and organisation of production by the post-coup regimes and their effect upon local peasants' incorporation as cash-croppers into the national and international market: peasants' position in the process of production changed from proletarians and outgrowers in the period 1968 - 1978/79 to peasants controlled and regulated by the Irrigation Development Authority (IDA) after the re-allocation of lands in 1978/79.



### 5.1. Proletarians and Outgrowers

The military-bureaucratic regime, the National Liberation Council (1966-69) and its successor, the liberal-democratic Progress Party regime (1969-72) tried hard (but were never fully able) to dismantle state controls and participation in the economy, liberalize the economy and promote private enterprise. Both regimes considered the establishment of large-scale private farming a necessary prerequisite to boost agricultural production and exhorted civil servants, in particular agricultural officers and businessmen, to move into capitalist agricultural production. (54) The state farm as the national ideal of progress was superseded by the image of the dynamic entrepreneur, stimulated by all kinds of tax-benefits, allocation of low interest loans, subsidized inputs supply and government fixed market prices for agricultural products. A similar "entrepreneurial" approach in agricultural extension services was developed by international aid organisations like FAO, USAID and the Ghanaian-German Agricultural Development Project (GGADP) with their concentration on "key farmers". (56) Extension officers of the Veia Irrigation Project advised the NLC and PP-regimes to lease the developed lands to "enterprising commercial farmers" after the failure of a few irrigation trials with local peasants.

After the construction of the dam in 1968 a few attempts were made by a state corporation, the Ghana Industrial Holding Corporation (GIHOC), owner of the tomato processing factory at Pwalugu, and the Irrigation Division to introduce local peasants into the production of cash crops under irrigation conditions. In those experiments a few hundred peasant volunteers grouped on the basis of clan affiliation were brought together on a 200 acre developed land to grow tomatoes and rice under the supervision of irrigation officers. (57) Peasants were provided with inputs, ploughing and extension services by GIHOC and the Irrigation Division. Those experiments did not prove to be very successful. First of all, extension services were not up to the standard required to familiarize local peasants with irrigation techniques and rules. Secondly, while peasants were quite willing to participate in the experiment in the dry season, they were unwilling in the wet season as they wanted to grow food on their small compound plots. Finally, peasants most resisted having to sell the fruits of their labour

to management for very low prices (varying from ¢ 0.50 to ¢ 2 for a bag of rice). (58)

On the basis of these half-hearted experiments, irrigation officers jumped to the conclusion that local peasants were not enlightened enough, not even willing to undertake rice and tomato cultivation under irrigation conditions. They advised the government to lease the lands to "progressive" farmers who could serve as "guides" to local peasants. Their advice was readily accepted by the state; and so since 1971 a Vea Land Allocation Committee made up of regional top civil servants and the Bolga-naba (divisional chief of Bolgatanga) (59) started to allocate land in the project to mainly petty-bourgeois elements in society (civil servants, professionals, military and police officers, traders and businessmen), mostly absentee rice-farmers, and to state corporations engaged in food production. Table 3 shows a breakdown of land allocation in the Vea Project during the 1978-79 irrigation season, when re-allocation of lands to local peasants had already started and some commercial farmers had already left the area. It is striking from table 3 that whilst peasants who legally (22 so-called settler farmers) or illegally (about 400 peasants who squatted on undeveloped land but were constantly threatened with eviction) occupied land in the project area cropped all their land, commercial farmers and state corporations cropped only a small portion of their (developed) lands. Peasants, however, were not allowed to crop on this fallow land. Of course, commercial farmers and state corporations wanted to maintain a pool of landless peasants to guarantee a regular supply of cheap labour.

Commercial farmers and all state corporations except GIHOC operated almost exclusively along the left bank of the main canals (near the villages Gowrie and Yorogo), where lands were most fertile, wholly or partially developed and suitable to rice production. Commercial farmers were mostly Southerners, whose main occupation was in the civil service, armed and police forces, or business in Bolgatanga, but attracted to large-scale rice farming as it required lower capital investment and less labour than other cash crop farming (e.g. maize) and generally more lucrative. (60) Some of them had vast acreages of rice (and other cash crops) elsewhere in the Upper Region and Northern Region benefiting from the easy and cheap access to land in the North and leaving actual farm management to appointed farm managers (often relatives).

They were heavily dependent on the state for subsidized inputs and machinery and on bank loans.

Irrigated ricefields in the Veia Irrigation Project differed from rainfed ricefields elsewhere in the Upper Region (in particular in the Fumbisi Valley) in two aspects: First, they were much smaller, varying from around 8 to 20 acres compared with the 50 - 500 (and even more) acres in the Fumbisi Valley. This was not only due to the 30 acre limit land allocation policy of the Veia Land Allocation Committee but also to the higher labour requirements demanded by irrigated rice-farming. Secondly, closely connected with previous point, farming in the irrigated Veia ricefields was much less capital-intensive than in the Fumbisi Valley.

Though some initial investments had to be made in the preparation of the ricefields (as most of the project area was still undeveloped or semi-developed in the beginning of the seventies), commercial farmers were able to make nice profits as the high number of labour required was extremely cheap, rent and maintenance charges by the project management very low (¢ 3 per acre a year) and the ricefields could be cropped twice a year. Akanpatulsi has computed that any person who was cultivating 2 acres of rice at Veia in 1973 could count on a net income of between ¢ 632.00 to ¢ 824.00. (61) These figures are far better than the income of a local peasant on a 2 acre plot whose income at that time was around ¢ 200.00 and that of an industrial worker whose yearly wage was around ¢ 400.00. Moreover, Akanpatulsi's computation took place at a time when commercial farmers were still given seeds and inputs by the project management on condition that they sold their produce to the rice-mills where they only fetched ¢ 10 a bag of rice (though some of them had already invented means to sell part of their produce in the market where they fetched ¢ 45 a bag or smuggled it to near-by Upper Volta). A few years later (1975) when food prices started to rise dramatically in Ghana, commercial farmers were officially allowed to sell their produce in the market; but even then most of the produce was smuggled to Upper Volta as black market rates permitted commercial farmers to make huge profits. This means that the state was subsidizing some of the costs of commercial farmers (like inputs and seeds) but that the increased rice production was not benefiting Ghana and not reflected in prices paid by the consumers. Moreover, profits made were mostly not re-invested in

Table 3. Breakdown of Land Allocation at Veia Project during the 1978-79 Irrigation Season

INSTITUTION	HA	ACRES	REMARKS
1. Ghana Industrial Holding Corporation (GIHOC)	230	575	GIHOC occupies the whole developed area along the right bank of the main canals. Some land is allocated to the Ghana National Reconstruction Corps (GNRC) and private farmers. GIHOC uses 202 displaced peasants as outgrowers. Only 75 acres were cropped during the 1978/79 season.
2. Irrigation Development Authority (IDA)	10	25	Only 2 ha have been developed and in use
3. Food Production Corporation (FPC)	4	10	Only 1.2 ha in use.
4. Ghana National Reconstruction Corps (GNRC) and Upper Regional Development Corporation (URDECO)	38	95	GNRC cropped 15 acres employing 66 "settlers". URDECO cropped only 4 ha, employing 39 workers.
5. Commercial farmers	36.4	91	Only 8 commercial farmers, mainly absentee farmers, were left in 1978. They had only 16 ha in use.
6. Settler farmers	7.1	19	22 peasant farmers allowed to farm by the Land Allocation Committee, mostly from Gowrie. All land is cropped efficiently.
7. Gowrie Continuation School	1.2	3	All cropped efficiently.
8. Squatters	44.8	112	There are 400 illegal farmers or squatters who are occupying semi-developed or undeveloped lands. These squatters have between 1/8 to 1/4 of an acre each covering an estimated 44.8 ha, all cropped.

Source: Memorandum on Land Allocation Tono and Veia Irrigation Projects by Ag. Gen. Manager (A.A. Kaleem) to the Ag. Chief Executive IDA, 12th April 1979; and Situational Report on Veia Irrigation Project Interim Land Allocation Committee, in file UCR 03/11A.

agriculture in the area of exploitation but in business or houses and/or siphoned off to the South.

The allocation of lands to commercial farmers and state corporations along the left bank of the main canals created a landless peasantry (except a very small plot around the compound). Peasants were enraged about the transfer of their lands to strangers, and, even worse, Southerners, but should one of them dare confront one of the commercial farmers, he was told that the lands were "government lands" now, given to the commercial farmers, or that the commercial farmers were working for the government. As quite a number of the commercial farmers were civil servants (like agricultural and irrigation officers), peasants did not, at least initially, question the answer. Moreover, peasants were quite aware that commercial farmers were powerful and influential people in society with close links to the state apparatus and its instruments of force (some commercial farmers were police and army officers). Peasants who tried to occupy a portion of the land left fallow by the commercial farmers were forcibly evicted, threatened should they return, or even arrested. Peasants who decided not to migrate were left with the choice either to carve out an existence within the pre-capitalist sector, sell their labour power to the capitalist sector, or both.

Most household heads resented or refused to work for their expropriators, the commercial farmers, for low wages eroded by increasing inflation. They wanted to keep themselves to their traditional task of providing the family with food from the farm; and though the small compound farm could not supply more than a few months' food, any production of staples was of vital importance in a time when food prices in Ghana skyrocketed. They tried to combine food production with increased craft production and/or wage-labour (there was considerable competition for the job of watchman) with Taylor Woodrow, the Irrigation Development Authority (IDA) and the state corporations in the project area, which in contrast to the commercial farmers, paid at least the minimum wage. Those household heads who did not master a craft or could not secure wage-labour were worse off and sometimes forced to work for the commercial farmers.

Young men trying to escape from the control of the household heads and to secure an own income were often forced to work for the commercial farmers in the absence of more lucrative job openings. They, however, preferred to work in groups on contract basis for specific jobs which could not be easily done by women and children and/or which were tra-

ditionally done by men like soil preparation and weeding (though commercial farming blurred the traditional division of labour between men and women). Contract work enabled them at least some bargaining power vis-a-vis the employer in particular with regards to the most difficult jobs like land development.

Women and children (many under 15 years of age, by whose employment commercial farmers contravened the existing labour laws in Ghana) (62) formed the major labor supply to commercial farmers. Their labour power was no longer badly needed on the small compound farm and work in the commercial farmers' ricefields was almost the only wage-labour available to women and children in the project area, as the state corporations and the contractor, Taylor Woodrow, excluded women and children from recruitment. Wage-labour gave women a certain independence from their husbands since they lost their own farmland in the project area. Commercial farmers in general preferred women and children to men except for the most tedious jobs as they were traditionally more experienced in certain farm operations like sowing and harvesting, more easily controlled and cheaper. Wages were always about half the minimum wage and for children even less for a much longer working day than in the state corporations. However, though wages were abysmally low, they formed a welcome addition to the meagre family income.

While workers in the state corporations are organised by the Ghana TUC, providing them at least with some protection, workers with the commercial farmers are not. Labour relations in commercial farmers' ricefields demonstrated all the characteristics of what Cox has called the "primitive market"-system. (63) Labour relations varied from paternalism under the most favourable conditions to what resembles master-slave relations under the worst conditions. Some commercial farmers constantly bullied their workers; it even happened that they refused to pay or paid only part of the wages, especially to children, under the pretext that they did not finish a job in time or did not perform a job to the employer's satisfaction. Workers had no other choice than to accept this treatment or to look for a "good master". An open confrontation with the employer was simply too risky. Not only would a "troublemaker" be summarily dismissed but would also lose any chance to be employed by another commercial farmer. Moreover, some commercial farmers did not hesitate to call policemen and soldiers to deal with such "enemies of the agricultural revolution". Workers,

however, devised various informal means to protest individually or in groups against a "bad master": slow-downs, sabotage, stealing or burning the rice, blocking the irrigation canals, chasing their animals into the ricefields etc.

The majority of the commercial farmers, however, tried to play the role of "good master". They were well aware that the harsh treatment of workers would be counterproductive (slow-downs/sabotage) or even a threat to their ricefields (burning the ricefields). They tried to establish friendly relations with their workers, pay them the full wage regularly, provide them with food during working hours, supply them with some rice after harvest or allow them to pick the rice which was left in the fields after harvest, and send them to hospital or to the market in town by tractor.

A change in the land allocation policy forced the commercial farmers and state corporations to vacate their lands after the last harvest in 1979. Most of them, however, had already left the area by then. Some of them had to stop farming when Taylor Woodrow moved into the project and its construction and development works affected their lands. Others fled from the area during the "4th June (Rawlings) Revolution" fearing that peasant-workers would call in soldiers to punish their oppressors and exploiters. (64) Their ejection from the area may be only temporary as they were promised by the reconstituted Veal Land Allocation Committee that they were "to be reconsidered after top priority had been given to displaced farmers and institutions whose activities are meant to improve agriculture as a whole". (65)

Along the right bank of the main canals (near the villages Veal, Sumbrungu, Yikine, Nyarega and Zaare) land was mainly allocated to GIHOC which wanted to secure a regular and cheap supply of tomatoes for its tomato processing factory at Pwalugu. (66) Because of the slow pace of the construction and development works only 105 acres had been somewhat developed along the right bank by 1975/76 and GIHOC cultivated all this acreage, the largest acreage ever cultivated to tomatoes in Ghana. In the 1976/77 season 220 acres were made available by the Irrigation Division to GIHOC; and GIHOC started an outgrowers' scheme in co-operation with the Agricultural Development Bank (ADB). (67)

Displaced peasants from the nearby villages were grouped on voluntary basis during the dry season to produce tomatoes for GIHOC under GIHOC supervision; in the wet season part of the GIHOC land was distributed among individual outgrowers on which they were allowed to grow

their own crops. Though peasants resented GIHOC's occupation of their lands, quite a number of them were initially interested in the outgrowers' scheme, as it enabled them to obtain some income from the outgrowers' scheme in the dry season and an extra plot -though very small- to cultivate their staples in the wet season. Selection of the limited number of peasants required for the scheme was left to the chiefs. This procedure enabled chiefs to reward their followers and favourites with registration for the scheme and exclude their opponents. GIHOC management depended also to a large extent on the chiefs for peasant control during tomato production. The selected peasants were supplied by GIHOC with fertilizer and seedlings and tractor services and a monthly allowance of  $\text{C}\text{F}$  20 (in 1978 raised to  $\text{C}\text{F}$  30) during the production period of tomatoes on credit to be deducted at source after harvest. Outgrowers were forced to sell all their tomato produce to GIHOC after harvest at a price dictated by GIHOC which was far below the market price.

Various authors have pointed out that the structural position of those outgrowers in the process of production and exchange resembles that of a proletariat referring to them as "semi-proletarians" (68), "disguised" proletarians (69) or "wage-labour equivalents". (70) GIHOC outgrowers are dispossessed of their lands (though GIHOC allows them to farm on its land during the wet season), their production is subordinated to and controlled by and their surplus value is appropriated by industrial (state-) capital by control of the exchange relations through which the value of the product is realized. I consider GIHOC's outgrowers' scheme as one concrete form of the proletarianisation process that may present itself in various forms and in various degrees largely according to the needs of and benefits to capital in a specific period of time. (71) The outgrowers' scheme enables GIHOC:

- to control and exploit the producers' labour power during the production period in order to ensure a regular supply of cheap commodities to its processing plant whilst shifting part of the production costs and risks (inputs and agricultural services are only supplied on credit to be deducted at source after harvest even if production fails) to the producers;

- to escape from the burden of full proletarianisation, e.g., payment of social security during the working season and wages during the off-season.



The outgrowers' scheme is preferred by GIHOC to full proletarianisation not only because it is a cheaper and less risky form of production, but also more easily accepted by peasants as it does not involve a sharp and complete break with peasant production (outgrowers regain control over their own production and exchange during the off-season). However, the consequence of the latter (and a disadvantage of the scheme for GIHOC) may be that control over outgrowers, standing midway between peasants and proletarians, will be more problematical than over (full) proletarians.

The scheme, indeed, did not prove to be very successful. GIHOC management faced, besides problems of lack of supervisory personnel and machinery and erratic water supply which made the scheme already a haphazard undertaking, constant difficulties in keeping control over outgrowers in the process of production and imposing its terms of exchange on them. Some of those difficulties were already manifest during the experimental trials after the construction of the dam:

- Outgrowers did not keep (strictly) to the rules and regulations set by management. This practice was still promoted by the lack of supervisory personnel and extension officers. Many outgrowers, for example, were regularly absent to attend funerals or market days even though tomato production under irrigation conditions requires regular and meticulous care.

- Outgrowers resented working in a group. Those who worked hard and were never absent were paid the same amount as those who were lazy and frequently absent. (72) GIHOC's refusal to make changes in the organisation of production gave rise to an overall decrease in productivity.

- Outgrowers did not trust GIHOC officers. Some managers underrecorded the outgrowers' produce, eg., if an outgrower presented 20 crates of tomatoes to GIHOC only 15 crates were recorded against his name. Other managers tried to cheat outgrowers during payment as no receipts were issued. Outgrowers' discovery of those practices gave rise to withdrawal from the scheme, refusal to work under certain supervisors and sometimes physical confrontation.

- Outgrowers remained reluctant to sell tomatoes to GIHOC at the price dictated by GIHOC. Outgrowers received ¢ 15 a crate from GIHOC, while a crate of tomatoes fetched ¢ 45 in the market. Outgrowers tried to find ways to sell part of the produce in the market in order to realize

a higher return to labour, though those found selling tomatoes in the market would be brought to court by GIHOC or reported to the Regional Administration. GIHOC, however, was sometimes forced to allow outgrowers to sell part of the perishable produce in the market as it faced storage and transport difficulties. For example, in 1979 GIHOC management allowed 54 outgrowers from Zaare to sell part of the produce in the market and those outgrowers made together a nice profit of about ₦ 50,000.00. This event well known in the whole area made outgrowers even more reluctant to sell to GIHOC at its dictated price.

Faced with the problems of technical and social control of the scheme described above, GIHOC was not able to cultivate more than 75 acres out of the 575 allocated to it by the Irrigation Development Authority (IDA) during the 1978/79 season. Though GIHOC used the allocated land as inefficiently as the other state corporations and commercial farmers, cropping only a very small portion of the allocated land (see table 3), GIHOC was not, like the other state corporations and commercial farmers, forced by IDA to leave the project area when a reconstituted Land Allocation Committee started to re-allocate lands to displaced peasants. GIHOC was granted this special favour as the project's primary aim had always been (and continued to be) to feed GIHOC's tomato processing factory at Pwalugu.

In a memorandum to the Regional Commissioner GIHOC sought to acquire in 1979 an 1800-acre farm in the project area, which would enable GIHOC to produce 60% of the requirements of the Pwalugu factory from its own farm while the remaining 40% would be purchased from outgrowers. (73) The main arguments advanced by GIHOC to acquire such a large acreage farm in the Veia project area were: (1) the difficulties of peasant control faced in the outgrowers' scheme; and (2) the acquisition of new machinery and personnel to run such a large irrigated farm. (74)

While the reconstituted Veia Land Allocation Committee wanted to consider GIHOC for land allocation in the project area, it was not prepared to allocate the huge acreage demanded by GIHOC as its policy was now to re-allocate lands to the displaced peasants first. Finally it was agreed that GIHOC would be granted a 150-acre farm mainly for the purpose of cultivating tomato seedlings; the production of tomatoes would be left to peasants along the right bank of the main canals on their

allocated plots during the dry season. An arrangement was made between IDA and GIHOC that IDA would supervise those peasants grouped together during the dry season for tomato production whilst GIHOC would supply peasants with inputs, tractor services and a monthly allowance on credit to be deducted at source after harvest. Allocated plots would be given back to peasants in the wet season for individual cash crop production under IDA supervision. While IDA and GIHOC proclaimed that peasants were free to join tomato-group-farming during the dry season, peasants were regularly threatened with eviction from their allocated plots in the project area if they did not join tomato-group-farming and did not keep to the rules and regulations of irrigated tomato production set by IDA. To overcome peasants' continuing resistance against group-farming, it was now decided that IDA supervisors would keep records of those peasants present or absent every day. Payment after harvest would now be done by the chiefs; and the chiefs were empowered to determine on the basis of the work records what to pay to each peasant. This arrangement which served to boost the chief's controlling function over peasants in the scheme may lead to an even greater abuse of power by chiefs (e.g. chiefs underpaying opponents).

This new scheme not only relieves GIHOC of the trouble of controlling peasants, it also tends to increase the new supervisor's control over the peasantry (and thus GIHOC's supply of tomatoes): The final leasing of lands to the peasantry does not give rise to increased peasant control over his own production but to increased management control over the peasantry's production: as the peasant does not own the land, he can be evicted from it at any time should he disobey the rules and regulations set by management. Local peasants, not displaced by the project and as such not (yet) entitled to land in the project area after the re-allocation of lands, serve as a kind of "agrarian reserve army" useful for maintaining discipline and control over those who participate in the project. (75)

## 5.2. Producers of Cash Crops Regulated and Controlled by IDA

The second military regime in Ghana, the NRC/SMC (1972-79), which had been vigorously pursuing the establishment of Ghanaian capitalism in agriculture, often in partnership with foreign capital, in order to reach the targets of its programmes, Operation Feed Yourself (OFY) and

Operation Feed Your Industries (OFI), had increasingly become dissatisfied with this development strategy and more aware of the social and political imbalances it created by 1977. (76) The state's previous support for commercial farming was rapidly waning as high state investment in this capitalist "venture" had not resulted in the expected self-sufficiency in the production of food and agricultural raw materials. The state turned again to "innovated" peasant production as the most viable strategy to increase agricultural production. This remarkable change in the state's agricultural policies was not only set into motion by the state's dissatisfaction with the performance of large-scale farming but also by the state's increasing dependence on the World Bank for financing its development projects and its consequent acceptance of the World Bank's "new" philosophy (of increasing the living standards of the poorest) in order to acquire the bank's loans. (77) The year 1977 witnessed the establishment of the Upper Regional Agricultural Development Programme (URADEP), an agricultural project covering the whole Upper Region with large World Bank aid whose main objective was "to improve the living conditions of small farmers' families by increasing agricultural production and to establish permanent farmers' support services". (78)

Moreover, the military regime met growing opposition against local peasants' eviction from their traditional lands in the Veia project area and the allocation of those lands to mainly Southern petty-bourgeois elements, demonstrated by the number of petitions presented by individual peasants, local chiefs, literates and students in the project villages and the Frafra Traditional Area, and Frafra influential in government circles. (79) This appeal to the SMC to revise the land allocation policy in the Veia Project area took place in a time that the ownership of Northern lands was a matter of national debate and a very sensible issue in the North. (80) The SMC, looking desperately for support in the North in the most critical period of its existence, (81) wanted to appease those dissatisfied elements in the North by re-allocating lands to the original owners.

The final decision to re-allocate lands to local peasants was taken after project management's complaints of inefficient land use by mostly absentee commercial farmers and state corporations despite high state investment in the project. To this end management recommended that lands in the project area should be blocked according to traditional village lands boundaries. Commercial farmers and state corporations whose legal

title to land was often difficult to establish (as there were all kinds of "arrangements" between them and the Land Allocation Committee) should be given a deadline for leaving the area and displaced peasants whose production would be "modernized" and supervised by project management, should be given priority over any other prospective land user. (82).

Registration of displaced peasants by a reconstituted Vea Land Allocation Committee started on 24th October 1977. The help of chiefs and elders was solicited in conducting the registration because no preliminary survey was ever held about the number of peasants displaced and their acreage. Qualification for tenure were:

(1) Registration was limited to local (displaced) peasants who actually farmed or intended to farm exclusively; absentee-farming amongst displaced peasants and "wavering allegiance" to the project should be discouraged. This regulation should guarantee a more optimal use of irrigated land by and increased management control over participants in the project than had been the case during the commercial farmers' period. As this new regulation made it almost impossible for participants in the project to engage in any other productive activity than cashcropping, it made them (already deprived of land for food production) largely dependent on cashcropping for their sustenance and thus more subject to management control;

(2) The age limit was set at 18 years as young men were customarily not supposed to have an own land but to work on the family head's farm;

(3) Women were not considered since, according to the Land Allocation Committee (but not entirely correct as we have seen), customarily they work on their husbands' farms; an exception was later made for widows.

Considering the large number of peasants who qualified for land allocation, the head of each household was to be selected to hold in trust the land to be allocated for all individuals under his jurisdiction. This regulation had the advantage of making the household head, the traditional controller of family lands and family labour, a co-partner in management's control over the project's lands and labour supply. It was suggested that each landowner should be accorded some legal title to the land for a specific period which had to be reviewed every year in order to control peasants' production; a person's title to land was to be revoked if he was found "unproductive or delinquent". Initially it was accepted that each

peasant should be allocated 0.20 ha ( $\frac{1}{2}$  acre) of land, considered the maximum of land a peasant could handle under irrigation conditions. Providing each peasant with the same amount of high yielding irrigated land to be cultivated with "modern" production techniques tends, according to Cowen, to avoid the uncontrollable aspects of rich peasant differentiation and to create a stable middle peasantry, better off than non-participants in the project, and therefore more easily controlled by project management. (83) Later it was discovered that the theoretical fraction of  $\frac{1}{2}$  acre would not work considering the large number of peasants qualifying for a plot and the size of the plot had to be determined by the number of prospective peasants in each village. The very small plots which were finally to be allocated makes one already doubt that the creation of a middle peasantry, better off than non-participants in the project, could ever be achieved.

If the number of peasants in a household was small, they should be grouped into units with other households as "this system of grouping would ensure that holdings are not unduly divided to impede use of mechanical appliances. It also has the advantage, among other things, of ensuring close supervision". After displaced peasants had been satisfied, the remaining land should be allocated to indigenous, not displaced peasants and to commercial, non-absentee farmers, who could not only serve as "shining examples of modern farming" to peasants but also render agricultural services (like tractor services) and as such lighten management's burden. (84) The latter should be allocated plots not exceeding 30 acres. The re-introduction of commercial farmers will certainly re-create the old problems of management control over commercial farmers' production and exchange and the re-emergence of the uncontrollable aspects of rich peasant differentiation, undermining the policy of creating a stable, undifferentiated middle peasantry.

The registration and the actual land allocation were surrounded by many "illegal" actions, gave rise to increased differentiation among peasants and brought many conflicts into the open:

- As there were no records about previous landowners and their holdings, the reconstituted Land Allocation Committee had to rely on the chiefs for the identification of peasants entitled to land. Some of the chiefs entered fictitious names in the register and names of persons not entitled to land in the project area, often richer peasants and petty-bourgeois elements from

Bolgatanga, to gain favour from such persons and to have access to a relatively large tract of irrigated land. Some peasants, dissatisfied with the small plot to be allocated to them (often less than  $\frac{1}{2}$  acre) followed the chiefs' example. Especially able to do this were the chiefs' favourites, who did it with the chiefs' connivance. This practice enabled those peasants to hold land in trust for their relatives in the South who did not yet intend to return to the project area and as such were excluded from land allocation.

Even if they were unable to cultivate all the land acquired, they could sublet land to less fortunate clansmen and friends. Peasants who registered the correct number of household members entitled to land suffered because this "illegal" practice reduced the land allocated to them. The resulting differentiation tended to create tensions and conflicts among peasants undermining even further the establishment of a stable middle peasantry and lowering management control over the peasantry.

Chiefs and elders in some villages (often pushed by the not-displaced peasants in the village) refused to give priority to displaced peasants during the allocation exercise and wanted to grant all peasants in the village an "equal" chance to land allocation in the project area as "everybody" had suffered as a result of the construction and development works: relatives had provided displaced peasants with a small plot to settle. While indeed some peasants in the village had given a small portion of land to their displaced "brothers", this does not hold true for all of them. Moreover, the sufferings of even those peasants who had to give lands to their displaced "brothers" cannot be compared with those of peasants who lost all their lands (and some even their houses) in the project area. While local peasants normally accept and respect every decision taken by the chief, and displaced peasants in some villages accepted even this decision, others were not willing to do so. After all their sufferings they were not prepared to sacrifice on behalf of those peasants who had not lost any (or hardly any) land. They became even more determined not to give in when they heard what happened in those villages where displaced peasants had accepted the chief's decision: more land was often allocated to those peasants who were not displaced than to the displaced ones; and in some cases displaced peasants did not even acquire any land as the developed land to be allocated got finished, thus further increasing differentiation among peasants. They had meetings convened in which the question was hotly discussed between displaced peasants on one side and the chiefs and not-displaced

peasants on the other. Displaced peasants were able to achieve first or exclusive consideration during the land allocation exercise.

- The land allocation exercise brought into open conflicts between peasants and the Land Allocation Committee. Some developed land was not allocated to peasants and they alleged that this lands was "reserved" by the Land Allocation Committee for project managers and extension officers. Most peasants complained that the allocated land was too small or less fertile in comparison with their previous plot(s) in the project area. They were, however, told that the lands were "government lands" and that the Land Allocation Committee was authorized to handle the allocation exercise. Peasants should accept the plot allocated to them or leave it. Most peasants not knowing how to channel their grievances, did not pursue the matter; only a few literates dared to confront the Land Allocation Committee and managed to get more land.

- The registration and land allocation exercise brought about a conflict between the tindana and the chief and Land Allocation Committee. The post-colonial state tends, just like the colonial state, to overlook the tindana and his authority and to promote the power of the chiefs. (85) During the registration and land allocation exercise the tindana was neither consulted with regards to land matters nor asked to perform the necessary rites. Everything was arranged between the Land Allocation Committee and the chiefs (who make use of their newly acquired power with regard to land matters to enrich themselves and to establish a network of clients). Peasants resent the infringement of tradition and the present subordination of the tindana to the chief in land matters and they fear calamities as the earth gods were never pacified during the land allocation exercise. The Nyarega tindana showed his protest by refusing to accept any compensation for the loss of his house and to register for land allocation as "the lands belong to me and I was never consulted during the allocation exercise".

- The registration and land allocation exercise brought about conflicts about the traditional village land boundaries. A conflict between Yikine and Sumbrungu peasants about the land boundaries in the project area forced the Land Allocation Committee to stop land allocation. Lands which were among the most fertile in the project site lay fallow for



some time till the Yikine chief finally consented to allow Sumbrungu peasants to farm in the disputed area (without dropping his claim on the disputed lands).

After the allocation of lands peasants hold the irrigated lands on lease (and a nominal rent for the land and a nominal fee for the supply of irrigation water will have to be paid to IDA) which expires immediately upon peasants' disobedience to the rules and regulations of production and exchange set by IDA.

IDA tells peasants what to grow. Peasants have to grow cash crops (mainly rice and tomatoes, but also maize, groundnuts and sorghum). Peasants do not even have a voice in what cash crops to grow. For example, peasants were forced to grow tomatoes for GIHOC even though some of them would have liked to grow groundnuts and maize (cash crops which can be consumed in time of need). Peasants are struggling to make management revise its policy of growing cash crops exclusively in the project area (and will surely devise means to obstruct production if not allowed).

As Wolf has demonstrated peasants favour commodity production only within the context of an assured production of use-values (86) and the Gonga Development Corporation scheme is a clear proof of Wolf's thesis. There is always some increment of risk in shifting from the production of use-values to commodities. Quite apart from the frequently higher cost of producing cash crops, a bumper harvest does not, by itself, assure a family's food supply. (87)

IDA tells peasants how to grow. Not only the choice of products are determined from above but also the cultivation techniques, thus inflicting upon the peasants higher production costs. Peasants are supplied with inputs and tractor services by IDA (and GIHOC during the dry season tomato production) the costs of which have to be repaid immediately after harvesting. Peasants resent their lands being prepared by IDA since the operation is expensive and subject to delays. IDA lacks machinery and competent personnel for tractor services and its supply of inputs is often irregular and not at the correct time. Last year peasants waited for tractor services and inputs supply till it was almost too late and finally decided to plough themselves (sometimes with their own bullock ploughs) and use their own seeds. Tractors which finally appeared ploughed so inexpertly that the water could not flow through the ridges, resulting in low yields. Peasants want to continue ploughing the lands themselves using their own bullocks. The supply of tractor services and inputs, though subsidized, is quite costly for most peasants

It may be that the re-allocation of lands to peasants combined with the control and regulation of their production and exchange is more likely to achieve the aim of the project than the previous (full) proletarianisation and outgrowers' scheme: a regular and cheap supply of cash crops to the national (or, more accurately, Southern) and possibly international market. However, this section shows that the conflict between management and the peasantry about the peasants' loss of control over the means of production, production process and terms of exchange has not disappeared despite increased management control. The question may be posed: is there any chance that this conflict will move peasants into (collective) action to regain control over the means of production, production and exchange?

#### 6. DOMESTIC COMMUNITY: CONTROL OR ACTION?

Peasants in the Veia Irrigation Project have been subjected to expropriation of their lands which deprived them to a large extent of their food production (and grazing land) and forced them to become cashcroppers in various ways for the national and international market. Even after the re-allocation of lands peasants do not consider the allocated lands as their own (and project management emphasizes constantly that the lands are "government lands") because they entirely lack any control over the means of production, and the processes of production and exchange. Peasants were deeply aggrieved by the loss of (control over) their lands and the exploitation of their labour power by state and commercial farmers. Various formidable obstacles, some of which have been mentioned as general obstacles to peasant organisation and action (88) while others are more peculiar to the region and the project, would have to be overcome by peasants in order to translate their feelings of grievance and exploitation into organisation and (collective) action:

- The power of the state with its legal and coercive apparatus. Though local peasants were not aware of it, the state had acquired a legal title to land in the colonial period. The state could claim any land in the North for development purposes and lease it to any Ghanaian. Legal title to land could always be backed by force. State control over land in the North is a serious obstacle to what Wolf has called the "tactical power" of the peasant. (89) "Government land" used to be com-

mercial farmers' warning to any peasant willing to occupy the land; "government land" is management's most important weapon of peasant control and action after the re-allocation of lands.

- The chiefs' "middleman" function between the domestic community and the state and capitalist system. The colonial state wanted to use the existing and newly created chiefs in the North for control of the domestic community and supply of its labour power. The development of indirect rule not only installed the chief as a junior partner in the colonial administration but was also a cheap way to reproduce the labour power. The post-colonial state maintains the chiefs' "colonial" role: it was only the chiefs' consent (not the peasants') which was "asked" for the construction of the project; it was their task to inform the people and secure (and maintain) their support. The chiefs' "permission" was obtained before commercial farmers and state corporations could enter the project area; it was their task to guarantee peace and supply workers. After changes in the land allocation policies the chief kept his "middleman" function as supplier of the domestic community's labour power (registration and land allocation exercise) and controller of this labour power (GIHOC and IDA schemes). The post-colonial state uses the same means of rewarding the "loyal" chiefs for their services: the chief's authority is pushed at the expense of the tindana and ample room is left for the chiefs to exploit their people and enrich themselves (some chiefs were farming alongside the commercial farmers; others acquired vast tracts of land in the project area while they had none before, etc.)

The "middleman" role of the chief based on his "traditional" leadership function within the domestic community is well consolidated by the state. The chief is the leader of the people whose authority is highly respected and whose directives are hardly ever challenged. He who takes any action without the chief's knowledge let alone against the chief takes great risks; a whole scala of "traditional" sanctions are at the chief's disposal. The chief's leadership of the domestic community is acknowledged and reinforced by the state. No peasant can approach the state apparatus without the consent or even the presence of the chief (e.g. to lodge a complaint). Peasants are completely dependent on the chief for the representation of their interests to the state. Moreover, if the chief's "middleman" function is challenged, he may count on state sanctions against his challengers.

Considering the chiefs' "middleman" function it is not surpri-

sing that those "traditional" leaders have not played any remarkable leadership role on behalf of their subjects. The pressures from above on those "junior partners" are simply too big to overcome; to oppose the state is as risky for them as for their subjects. Moreover, they themselves are divided by all kinds of petty conflicts (90); and last but not least they have benefited in one way or the other from the project. Still their role is not completely negative. Their peculiar role as "middlemen" does not allow them to overlook completely their subjects' interests in particular with regards to a project that deeply affected people's lives and livelihood (even some chiefs lost their lands in the project area). Most chiefs have written petitions calling the state's attention to their people's misery and humbly requesting the retrieval of their lands.

- Internal differentiation and divisions already existing before the construction of the project but enlarged and enhanced by the project:

- (1) First of all, one can distinguish between those who were completely dependent on the land and those who derived part of their income from trade, craft production or wage-labour. As the latter were less dependent on the land, the project did not threaten their existence as much. Moreover, while a small number of those who were completely dependent on the land resigned to the "fate" of losing their lands (hardened by a long history of suffering and hunger), most of them either withdrew from the project (migration) or adapted to the new situation by taking up craft production or wage-labour.
- (2) Secondly, there was the division between those who were evicted from the land immediately after the construction of the dam (especially those close to the dam) and those who squatted on the land in the project area till the construction and development works reached their lands. The slow progress of the construction and development works had the unintended consequence that quite a number of peasants could continue to farm on their lands for some time. The project did not affect a large body of peasants at the same time and to the same extent which could have moved them to collective action. (91)
- (3) And finally there were those who got better off by the project and those who got worse off. Some peasants who had no land or a small plot in the project area managed to get a large plot during the

registration and allocation exercise (chiefs in collusion with richer peasants and petty-bourgeois elements) while others who previously had land in the project area received smaller plots or, in some cases, none at all. Moreover, those peasants who are forced to grow tomatoes by management (peasants along the right bank of the main canals) have always been better off than those who are forced to grow other cash crops. Bumper harvests of tomatoes (as GIHOC was able to provide peasants with a regular supply of inputs and tractor services) combined with the permission to sell in the market (as GIHOC lacked storage and transport facilities) enabled tomato-growers to obtain a much better income than other cashcroppers in the project area. This new differentiation tended to give rise to internal conflicts among peasants and to prevent formation of a common front against the exploiter.

- (4) Lack of leadership. We have seen that the "traditional" peasant leaders, the chiefs, did not (or better could not) mobilize their subjects. Various authors have referred to the difficulties encountered by "outside" leaders in rallying peasants behind them and the (initial) mistrust they face from the side of peasants. (92) Schiphorst shows how the Zaare Youth Movement, an organisation of literates (mainly teachers) in one of the villages in the project site, Zaare, failed to mobilize peasants against the commercial farmers for mainly the same reasons. (93) Being illiterate and not knowing how to channel their grievances, peasants relied initially on the literates in the villages for writing petitions and presenting their grievances and complaints to the Regional Administration, but as soon as it became evident that the Regional Administrators did not pay attention to them (and even did not want to receive them) peasants' reliance on them stopped. The activities of a regional organisation of literates, the Frafra Youth Movement, did not go beyond presenting a petition for the review of the allocation of lands to the Commissioner of Lands and Mineral Resources in Accra. (94) At present, the General Agricultural Workers Union (GAWU) of the Ghana TUC attempts, after years of neglect, to organise workers and peasant-workers outside the state farms and state corporations, but mainly lack of staff and finance prevents it from making a big inroad.
- (5) Dependence on cashcropping and individualised cashcropping. The almost complete destruction of their food production (and grazing land) made peasants to a large extent dependent on the production of cash

crops in the project area. While peasants resent the control and exploitation of their labour power by commercial farmers and the state, represented by the state corporations and IDA, any (open) collective action threatens their livelihood, because a large agrarian reserve army is waiting to replace them. Moreover, cashcropping under IDA supervision (after the re-allocation of lands) individualises peasants instead of socialising them. While peasants controlled and regulated by IDA show many characteristics of a proletariat, they are not socially concentrated: production takes place on the basis of individual households which makes collective action more difficult.

While those factors were important impediments to (formal) organisation and (collective) action, peasants, proletarianized in various degrees and forms, have, just like the industrial proletariat (95), shown a capacity to protest informally against the loss of control over the means of production, and the processes of production and exchange. Peasants have devised various ways of protesting as individuals and as larger groups, such as: (96)

- illegal squatting on the lands till the construction and development works reached their lands;
- entering fictitious names and names of persons not entitled to land in the registration list in order to acquire more land;
- refusal to adopt new cultivation practices, evasion of (irrigation) regulations (e.g., consistent absence), lowering production, bearing in mind that such measures introduce a considerable amount of risk in the already precarious peasant living conditions;
- evasion of/withdrawal from cashcropping and/or finding alternative sources of income (labour migration and craft production);
- various forms of protest against conditions of labour: commercial farmers were regularly confronted with stealing and burning of rice, blocking of the irrigation canals, chasing animals into the rice-fields, and "slow-downs";
- evasion of the terms of exchange imposed by the state by selling in the market in order to realize a higher return to labour or consuming cash crops which - though involving a change in dietary practices- formed a welcome addition to the almost completely destroyed food production.

It may be expected that in a situation of tight control by state and management (the sanction of eviction from the land and the use of force) peasants will continue to devise ways to protest informally against their control and exploitation. Possibly their action may go beyond these admittedly negative forms of protest and acquire a broader base in the future. After the re-allocation of lands peasants face a common situation of control and exploitation. It may be that this common situation will help peasants to overcome their internal differentiation and divisions and direct their attention and action against their common outside enemies: IDA management and the state. That the possibility of such a broadly based action is not merely speculative is shown by peasant action during the 1980 tomato season.

During the 1980 bumper harvest of tomatoes, tons of tomatoes were allowed to rot daily, when, initially, GIHOC management of the tomato processing plant at Pwalugu did not supply IDA with the promised storage and transport facilities and the plant faced many machinery breakdowns. Following this clear demonstration of GIHOC management's incompetence, and already resenting forced tomato-group-farming for GIHOC, peasants threatened to refuse to harvest or produce tomatoes unless they were allowed to sell them in the market. Having made a nice profit after being allowed by IDA to sell in the market, peasants refused to sell to GIHOC at controlled price (at a later stage when the initial difficulties faced by GIHOC were overcome) and simply abandoned the fields. (97) The example may be an exceptional case (as IDA management faced circumstances beyond its control), but it demonstrates the possibility and the forms of peasants' collective action.

## 7. CONCLUSION

The Veia Irrigation Project has brought about a shift rather in the domestic community's way of incorporation into the national (or, more accurately, Southern) and international market than in its function: the supply of cheap labour. Peasants' transformation from producers of use-values and migrant labourers into local producers of cash crops originated from the post-colonial state's interest in increased agricultural production for capital accumulation and food supplies in the South, and ultimately for its own survival; it was achieved by land expropria-

tion by the state resulting in the almost complete destruction of the domestic community's food production and grazing land for livestock and cattle, forcing peasants into cash crop production.

The state's initial attempt to increase agricultural production in the project area by expropriating peasants and replacing them with "progressive" commercial farmers, heavily subsidized by the state and exploiting the cheap labour power of proletarianized local peasants, proved to be a failure. Not only did this scheme create serious social and political imbalances, it was incapable of state control. Instead of increasing state capital and cheap food supplies to the South, it increased commercial farmers' capital at the expense of the state.

It was only after this failure that the state turned to peasant production, leasing the developed lands to local peasants and "modernizing" their production both to increase the level of production and the level of (relative) surplus value to be appropriated by shifting part of the costs of (modernized) production to peasants and buying their produce far below its value: colonial cheap labour policy in a post-colonial disguise! The previous GIHOC outgrowers' scheme had demonstrated that peasants were not prepared voluntarily to keep to the **rules and regulations** of increased production and exchange while having to sell their produce far below its value and at the same time bearing increased production costs. Therefore, stricter control over production and exchange had to be applied. Control over production and exchange had to be acquired by means such as:

- the regulation that all participants in the project had to be full-time cashcroppers. Whilst the expropriation of lands had resulted in the almost complete destruction of peasants' food production, this new regulation made it almost impossible for peasants to engage in any other productive activity than cashcropping and made them largely dependent on cashcropping for their subsistence. While this regulation had the disadvantage of overruling the domestic community's "colonial" function of subsidizing the reproduction of labour (which would have enabled the state to lower even further the exchange-value of commodities), it had the advantage of increased control (and the state seemed prepared to pay for it);

- Prevention of differentiation and the tensions and conflicts connected with it by allocating the same amount of land to every displaced peasant



in the project area. However, the attempt to create a stable middle peasantry with a higher living standard than that of non-participants in the project, and consequently more easily controlled, failed to a large extent, as not-displaced (and often richer) peasants managed to get land and sometimes even more land than displaced peasants;

- Control became centralised in one agency, IDA, which made use of the traditional instruments of control and supply of labour, the household heads and the chiefs. IDA has various sanctions at its disposal like withdrawing the supply of inputs and agricultural services to peasants (forced to produce cash crops in the project area) if they try to avoid selling their produce to IDA and GIHOC; refusing to pay for days of absence from work; and forcing peasants to repay the loan for inputs and agricultural services supplied if the crop gets spoilt through negligence or absence. State ownership of land provided IDA with the most severe sanction: eviction from the land in case of "delinquent" behaviour.

The virtually total control of IDA over the means of production, production process and terms of exchange puts peasants in a structural position that closely resembles that of a proletariat, though the form of peasant production appears to be largely maintained (individual household production on an "own" land) tending even to enhance management control.

The state's attraction to such development schemes as the Veia Irrigation Project for the virtually total control they allow over the process of production and exchange and their potential for capital accumulation and increased cheap food supplies to the South will certainly lead to a further promotion of such capital-intensive schemes. Various medium-sized and large irrigation schemes are already planned or under construction in the Upper Region, like the Tono Irrigation Project, the Tamne Basin Irrigation Project, and the Lower White Volta Basin Irrigation Project. Although these schemes are attractive to the state, the costs involved are high and no safe guarantee can be obtained for increased agricultural production.

The state's shortage of investment funds and the general lack of qualified manpower and required technology in Ghana may give rise to an increasing financial and technical dependence on foreign capital and foreign aid organisations (especially World Bank and FAO). Although

state funds covered the construction of the Vea Irrigation Project, the successful completion of the project depended to a large extent on Taylor Woodrow's (costly) delivery of technical and management skills and technology. Dependency will continue and may even grow after the project's completion: there are, for example, contracts with foreign companies for the regular supply of fertilizer, and the grant of a three-year management contract to another British multinational, Tate and Lyle, has been seriously considered. Even if the state is able to control opposition to the growing dependence on foreign capital, are even the direct costs (irrespective of repayment of foreign loans supplied) not prohibitive to the state? The virtually total collapse of the economy after 1976 has prevented the regular supply of machinery, spare parts, petrol, oil and lubricants, inputs, transport and storage facilities to the Vea project. The project envisages the re-introduction of (non-absentee) commercial farmers who have to lighten the state's burden of provision of agricultural machinery and services. However, the re-introduction of commercial farmers will certainly give rise to the re-appearance of old problems: state control over commercial farmers' production and exchange and increased differentiation.

Apart from surmounting the costs involved, the success of those schemes will also largely depend on the tightness of state control over the peasantry's production and exchange. IDA's attempt to establish a stable, undifferentiated, easily controlled, middle peasantry in the Vea project failed to a large extent. Differentiation among the peasantry has even increased based upon the kind of cash crops produced: tomato-growers have been much better off than other cashcroppers so far. While the existing differentiation may create internal divisions and conflicts among peasants, their common position in the process of production and exchange and their common subordination to control and exploitation may help them to overcome these divisions and unite them against their common enemy: the state. Is management's security-net, if necessary backed by the state's coercive power, tight enough to "contain" the existing conflict between the peasantry and the state about the loss of control over the means of production, and the processes of production and exchange? We have demonstrated that peasants have been able to devise ways to protest against their control and exploitation despite formidable obstacles to organisation and action. While this protest had mostly an individual (though sometimes based on informally organised

groups) and negative character until the re-allocation of the lands, the post-re-allocation circumstances of control and exploitation (which all peasants in the project area have in common) open the way to collective struggle, already manifest during the 1980 tomato-growers' protest.

NOTES

1. GNA, Tamale, Adm. 1/457, The problems involved in the development of a backward area and their application to the economic development of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast (by P. Helps M.A., Ass. DC, NT, Gold Coast); for a useful discussion of colonial economic policies in Northern Ghana, see Shepherd, A., The Development of Capitalist Rice Farming in Northern Ghana, Ph.D.- thesis, University of Cambridge, 1979.
2. For the position of the tindana in the Frafra Traditional Area, see Fortes, M., The Dynamics of Clanship among the Tallensi, London, 1945.
3. For land ownership in the Frafra Traditional Area, see Report by the Committee on Ownership of Lands and Position of Tenants in the Northern and Upper Region, unp. report, 1978.
4. Hart, J.K., Migration and the Opportunity Structure: A Ghanaian case-study, in Amin, S., (ed.), Modern Migrations in Western Africa, Oxford, 1974, p. 322.
5. Mouton, P.C.R., Answers to Questionnaire by the Chief Commissioner of Northern Territories: South Mamprusi, p. 7. NAG-A/ADM 56/1/375.
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9. See Hunter, J., Population Pressure in a part of the West African Savanna: A Study of Nangodi, North East Ghana, in Annals of the Association of American Geographers, LVII, 1967, p. 105: "Seasonal hunger is faced with equanimity, and seasonal loss of body weight accepted as part of the normal pattern of events". For the effects of drought on this area in the seventies, see Ofori-Sarpong, E., Impact of Drought in Ghana and Upper Volta (1970-1977), Climatological Research Paper no. 1, Department of Geography, University of Ghana, Legon, 1980.
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11. For a review of the literature, see Bennett, A., and Schork, W., Studies toward a Sustainable Agriculture in Northern Ghana, Heidelberg, 1979. For the mixed cropping system among the Frafra, see Aganah, S.A., The Vea (Yaratanga River) Irrigation Project: An Appraisal of Farming Innovation, B.A. thesis, Department of Geography, University of Ghana, Legon, 1972, pp. 4-7.
12. See Bening, R.B., Land Tenure System and Traditional Agriculture of the Sissala, in Bulletin of Ghana Geographical Association, vol. 18, 1976, p. 20.
13. Hill, P., Studies in Rural Capitalism in West Africa, Cambridge University Press, 1970. See also Plange, Nii-K., Underdevelopment in Northern Ghana: Natural Causes or Colonial Capitalism, in Review of African Political Economy, nos. 15-16, 1979, pp. 7-9.

14. Fortes noted in 1945 among the Tallensi, a sub-grouping of the Frafra "the almost complete absence of economic differentiation by occupation or by ownership of resources and, in particular, the absence of both material and institutional possibilities for capital accumulation or for technical advance". Fortes, M., op. cit., 1945, p. X; *ibid.*, p. 240.
15. For the various types of voluntary and compulsory working groups in the North, see Benneh, G., *Types of Farm Labour in Northern Ghana*, unpubl. paper, Department of Geography, University of Ghana, Legon, n.d.; and Bening, R.B., op. cit., 1976, pp. 23-24.
16. Fortes, M., op. cit., 1945, p. 28; and Hart, J.K., op. cit., 1974.
17. Songsore, J., *Structural Crisis, Dependent Capitalist Development and Regional Inequalities in Ghana*, ISS occasional paper, no. 71, The Hague, July, 1979.
18. The Frafra worked, according to Hill, less in the cocoa farms than in the mines. See Hill, P., *The Occupations of Migrants in Ghana*, University of Michigan, occasional paper no. 42. For the transformation of the North into a reservoir of cheap labour, see for example Plange, Nii-K., *Opportunity Cost and Labour Migration*, in *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 17, No. 4, 1979, pp. 655-76; and for the Frafra area, Nabila, J.S., *The Migration of the Frafra of Northern Ghana. A Case Study of Cyclical Labour Migration in West Africa*, Ph.D. -thesis, Michigan University, 1974, pp. 67-72.
19. Thomas, R.G., *Forced Labour in British West Africa: The Case of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast*, in *Journal of African History*, XIV, 1 (1973), pp. 79-103.
20. For the attempt and failure to vest Southern lands in the state, see Kimble, D., *A Political History of Ghana, 1850-1928*, Oxford, 1963, pp. 330-71.
21. This is exactly one of the most important differences with the proposed but never accepted 1927 Land and Native Rights Ordinance which stated that the whole of the land in the Protectorate, whether occupied or unoccupied at the commencement of the Ordinance, was thereby declared public lands. See Agbosu, L.K., *Statutory Foundations of Land Administration in the Northern and Upper Regions in Ghana*, in Mensah-Brown, A.K., (ed.), *Land Ownership and Registration in Ghana*, UST, Kumasi: LARC, 1978, pp. 122-39. See also Der, B.G., *Colonial Land Policy in the Northern Territories in the Gold Coast*, in *Universitas*, vol. IV, no. 2, 1975; and *West Africa*, 22 May, 1978, pp. 978-79.
22. See Ladouceur, P.A., *Chiefs and Politicians: The Politics of Regionalism in Northern Ghana*, London/New York, 1979, p. 123.
23. Fortes, M., op. cit., 1945.
24. Ghana Population Census, 1960.
25. Shepherd, A., op. cit., 1979, pp. 35-36.
26. See Ladouceur, P.A., op. cit., 1979, p. 49.
27. Meillassoux, C., *Femmes, greniers et capitaux*, Paris, 1975.
28. For the 1948 Christiansborg riots, see Austin, D., *Politics in Ghana, 1946-1960*, Oxford University Press, 1964, p. 77.
29. See Hilton, T.E., *Land Planning and Resettlement in Northern Ghana*, in *Geography*, XLIV, 1959, pp. 227-40; and Nabila, J.S., op. cit., 1974, pp. 76-79.
30. Chitsike, L.T., *Aspects of Agricultural Development in North-East Ghana*, Ph.D. thesis, University of Ghana, 1975, p. 12.

31. Quansah, S.T., The Gonja Settlement and Development Scheme -Ghana, in The Economic Bulletin of Ghana, ii, 1(1972).
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33. See Jeffries, R., Class, Power and Ideology in Ghana: The Railwaymen of Sekondi, Cambridge, 1978.
34. Beckman, B., The Agrarian Basis of the Post-Colonial State, Ghana: 1951-1978, in Nigerian Journal of Political Science, vol. I, no. 1, June, 1979, pp. 35-37.
35. Ghana, Seven Year Plan for National Reconstruction and Development. Financial Years 1963/64 - 1969/70, Accra: GP, 1964, pp. 73-74. See also Dadson, J.A., Socialised Agriculture in Ghana, 1962-1965, Ph. D. thesis, Harvard University, 1970.
36. See Ladouceur, P.A., op. cit., 1979.
37. W.A. Amoro, MP for Bongo, in Ghana Parliamentary Debates, vol. 38, p. 542.
38. See Arn, Jack, Political Economy of Urban Poverty in Ghana: The Case of Nima, Accra, Ph.D. thesis, University of Toronto, 1978.
39. Bening, R.B., Development of Education in Northern Ghana, 1908-1957, in Ghana Social Science Journal. vol. I, no.2, 1972.
40. For the terminology, see Post, K., Peasantisation and Rural Political Movements in Western Africa, in Archives Européennes de Sociologie, III, 2 (1973), pp. 223-54; and Cohen, R., From Peasant to Workers, in Gutkind, P.C.W., and Wallerstein, I., (eds.), The Political Economy of Contemporary Africa, Beverly Hills/London, 1976, pp. 155-68.
41. See Gore, C.G., Food Marketing and Rural Underdevelopment: A study of an Urban Supply System in Ghana, Ph.D. thesis, Pennsylvania State University, 1978.
42. Shepherd, A., op. cit., 1979, p. 51.
43. Project costs were initially estimated at  $\text{C}\text{€}$  2.5 m., but doubled soon to  $\text{C}\text{€}$  5 m., and reached  $\text{C}\text{€}$  15 m. in 1979. For the history of the project and its technical details, see Report of Veia Irrigation Project, Irrigation Department, n.d.
44. Contract involved favourable foreign exchange terms, management and design services, and delivery of machinery and spare parts. Taylor Woodrow was first awarded a contract to construct the Tono Irrigation Project near Navrongo in 1975. The Veia Irrigation Project enabled Taylor Woodrow to penetrate further the Ghanaian economy. It was soon awarded a huge building contract in Accra.
45. Interview with local manager Taylor Woodrow at Gowrie, 17 October, 1979.
46. Taylor Woodrow Main Office, Accra, sent many letters to the Ministry on Finance and the Irrigation Development Authority to complain about the many delays and setbacks. See for example Letter Taylor Woodrow, Accra, to Ag. Chief Executive Irrigation Development Authority, Accra, 9th April, 1979, ref. no. MDW/SA.
47. For one of such experiences in Zambia, see Colson, E., The Social Consequences of Resettlement. Kariba Studies IV, Manchester University Press, 1971.
48. See Chambers, R., (ed.), The Volta Resettlement Experience, London, 1970; Lumsden, D.P., Nchumuru Social Organization and the Impact of the Volta River Project, Ph.D. thesis, University of Cambridge, 1973; and Hart, D., The Volta River Project. A Case Study in Politics and Technology, Edinburgh University Press, 1980.

49. See the 1967 and 1968 Minutes of the Veia Resettlement Committee Meetings, in file FDC/12/SF. 5.
50. See Memorandum submitted by Upper Regional Agricultural Officer on behalf of the Veia Resettlement Committee to the Commissioner for Agriculture through the Principal Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Bolgatanga, 19th July 1968, ref. no. UG/59/SF.73/219.
51. Petition Presented by the Frafra Youth Movement: For a Review of the Allocation of the Veia Dam Farmland, Bolgatanga, 28th February, 1977.
52. Akuto Atanga, P., The Veia Irrigation Scheme, B.A. thesis, Department of Geography, University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast, August, 1979.
53. See note 51.
54. See Hutchful, E., A Tale of Two Regimes: Imperialism, the Military and Class in Ghana, in Review of African Political Economy, no. 14, 1979, pp. 36-56.
55. Two Year Development Plan. From Stabilization to Development, Accra, July, 1968; and Budget Statement for 1970-71, Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, Accra, August, 1970, in particular pars. 43 and 67-68.
56. See Chitsike, L.T., op. cit., 1975, pp. 14-16; For USAID's "Focus and Concentrate" programme, see Van Logchem, J.Th., The Focus and Concentrate Programme in the Bolgatanga District. Evaluation of an Extension Programme, Cape Coast, 1972.
57. Aganah, S.A., op. cit., 1972, p. 39.
58. See Letter Chief of Gowrie to Regional Commissioner, entitled, "Share of Land for Re-settlement of the Gowrie Inhabitants for farming within the Gowrie/Veia Dam", Bongo, 11th September, 1972.
59. The original Veia Land Allocation Committee consisted of the Regional Commissioner as Chairman, the Regional Agricultural Officer, the Frafra District Chief Executive and the Bolga-naba. However, it appears that the actual land allocation was done by Regional Administrative officers or Veia project officers who informed the Veia Land Allocation Committee of any allocation done.
60. See URADEP, Commercial Rice Production in the Upper Region, Farm Management Division, April, 1979. Ref. no. URADEP/FO/FM/TRP/vol. 1.
61. Akanpatulsi, J.H.A., The Impact of Irrigation and Associated Schemes on the Economy and Settlement Pattern of the Bolgatanga Subregion, M.Sc. Thesis (Regional Planning), Kumasi: UST, September, 1977.
62. Labour Act Decree 1967 (NLC Decree 157).
63. Cox, E.W., Approaches to a Futurology of Industrial Relations, in Bulletin of the ILLS, VIII, 1971.
64. See Hansen, E., and Collins, P., The Army, The State and the "Rawlings Revolution" in Ghana, in African Affairs, vol. 79, no. 314, January, 1980, pp. 3-23.
65. Letter Upper Regional Administration to Commercial Farmers and State Corporations - Reallocation of Irrigated Land at Veia, Bolgatanga, 20th June 1979, in file UCR. 03/11A.
66. This factory, however, has hardly been activated till 1980, mainly because of underutilization of capacity and technical problems; tomatoes had to be transported all the way to GIHOC's cannery at Wenchi in the Brong-Ahafo Region. See Kaleem, A., The Importance of Irrigation in Savannah Ghana, public lecture held at the 1980 Easter School of the Institute of Adult Education, Legon, at Bolgatanga.

67. Letter GIHOC Farms Ltd. to Regional Commissioner, Bolgatanga, 2/3/1979, ref. no. GF/CE/5/vol. 1/III.
68. Amin, S., *Le Capitalisme et la Rente Foncière (la domination du capitalisme sur l'agriculture)*, in Amin, S., and Vergopoulos, K., *La Question Paysanne et le Capitalisme*, Paris, 1974. For a critique, see Boesen, Jannik, *On peasantry and the "Modes of Production" Debate*, in *Review of African Political Economy*, nos. 15-16, 1979.
69. Ibid.; and Bromley, R., and Gerry, C., (eds.), *Casual Work and Poverty in Third World Cities*, John Wiley and Sons, 1979.
70. Bernstein, H., *Notes on Capital and Peasantry*, in *Review of African Political Economy*, no. 10, 1977, pp. 60-74; and Bernstein, H., *African Peasantries: A Theoretical Framework*, in *Journal of Peasant Studies*, VI, 4(1979).
71. See Bromley, R., and Gerry, C., (eds.), op. cit., 1979.
72. Peasants' resentment of tomato-group-farming for the agro-industry is noted for Nigeria as well. See Agbonifo, P.O., and Cohen, R., *The Peasant Connection: a case study of the bureaucracy of agro-industry*, in *Human Organization*, vol. 35, no. 4, 1976, p. 372: "Peasants indicated a desire for individualized holdings of tomato farms. They explained these desires by expressing mistrust of the larger groups and a desire for fewer quarrels".
73. See Letter GIHOC Farms Ltd. to Regional Commissioner, Bolgatanga, 2/3/1979, ref. no. GF/CE/5/vol. 1/III.
74. Memorandum on Land Allocation Tono and Veia Irrigation Projects by Ag. General Manager (A.A. Kaleem) to the Ag. Chief Executive IDA, 12th April 1979, in file UCR 03/11A.
75. Hill, F., *Experiments with a Public Sector Peasantry: Agricultural Schemes and Class Formation in Africa*, in *The African Studies Review*, XX, 3(1977), p. 27.
76. See Hutchful, E., op. cit., 1979; and Hansen, E., *Food and Development: National Food Policies and Organizations in Ghana*, paper presented to the Third Annual Meeting of the Social Science History Association held in Columbia, Ohio, November 3-5, 1978.
77. For a critique of the World Bank's "new" philosophy, see Feder, E., *The New World Bank Programme and the Third World Peasantry*, in *Journal of Peasant Studies*, vol. 3, 1975/76, pp. 343-54; and Feder, E., *Capitalism's last ditch effort to save underdeveloped countries: international agro-business, the World Bank and the rural poor*, in *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, vol. 7, no. 1, 1977.
78. World Bank, *Appraisal of Upper Regional Agricultural Development Project*, Report no. 1061a-GH, Western Africa Regional Office, June 3, 1976; for a concise criticism of the project, see Shepherd, A., *The World Bank Project*, in *West Africa*, 23 January 1978.
79. See file FDC 18/SF.1, General Complaints and Petitions.
80. See Report by the Committee on Ownership of Lands and Position of Tenants in the Northern and Upper Region, unp. report, 1978; and Report of the Committee on Allocation of Farm Lands in Builsa District, unp. report, 1977.
81. See Hansen, E., and Collins, P., op. cit., 1980.
82. Memorandum on Land Allocation Tono and Veia Irrigation Projects by Ag. General Manager (A.A. Kaleem) to the Ag. Chief Executive IDA, 12th April 1979, in file UCR 03/11A.
83. Cowen, M.P., *Capital, Class and Household Production*, University of Nairobi: IDS, 1976 (mimeo). See also Raikes, P., *The Development of a Middle-Peasantry in Kenya*, CDR Project Paper A. 78.3, Copenhagen, October 1978.



84. Memorandum on Land Allocation Tono and Veia Irrigation Projects by Ag. General Manager (A.A. Kaleem) to the Ag. Chief Executive IDA, 12th April 1979; and Situational Report on Veia Irrigation Project Interim Land Allocation Committee, in file UCR 03/11A. By 4th May 1979 the reconstituted Land Allocation Committee had received 94 applications for land from prospective commercial farmers, but also from state and private corporations and institutions like schools.
85. See Mendonsa, E.L., Traditional and Imposed Political Systems among the Sisala of Northern Ghana, in Savanna, vol. 4, no. 2, December 1975.
86. Wolf, E., Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century, New York, 1969, p. XIV.
87. See Scott, J., The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia, New Haven, 1976.
88. Scott, J., op. cit., 1976; Wolf, E., op. cit., 1969; Moore, B. Jr., Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy, Boston, 1966; and Muller, V., The Revolutionary Fate of the Peasantry, in Dialectical Anthropology, vol. 4, no. 3, 1979.
89. Wolf, E., op. cit., 1969, p. 268.
90. There is a conflict between the Gowrie and Veia chief about the project's name; there is a conflict between the Yikine and Sumbrungu chief about the traditional village land boundaries in the project area; and there is a conflict between the Nyarega no. 1 and the Nyarega no. 2 chief about their jurisdiction.
91. See Scott, J., op. cit., 1976, pp. 193-94.
92. See Wolf, E., op. cit., 1969; and Saul, J.S., African Peasants and Revolution, in Review of African Political Economy, no. 1, 1974, p. 43.
93. Schiphorst, F., The State and the Peasantry. A case study of a rural development project in Ghana, a preliminary report, Amsterdam/Legon, 1980.
94. Petition presented by the Frafra Youth Movement: for a Review of the Allocation of the Veia Dam Farmland, Bolgatanga, 28th February 1977.
95. See Van Onselen, C., Chibaro: African Mine Labour in Southern Rhodesia 1900-1973, London, 1976. For Ghana, see Konings, P., Political Consciousness and Political Action of Industrial Workers in Ghana: A Case Study of Valco Workers at Tema, in Buijtenhuijs, R., and Geschiere, P., (eds.), Stratification and Class Formation, in African Perspectives, 1978/2, pp. 69-82; and Konings, P., The Political Potential of Ghanaian Miners. A Case Study of the AGC-Workers at Obuasi, Leiden: Afrika-Studiecentrum Research Report no. 9, 1980.
96. See Bernstein, H., op. cit., 1979.
97. See Daily Graphic, 5 March, 1980; Ghanaian Times, 2 April, 1980; and Weekly Spectator, 3 April 1980, reporting: "The rest (of the rotting tomatoes, P.K.) are on the farms of people who have made so much money during the beginning of the current tomato season that they have abandoned harvesting the crops...."

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