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Ross, R.J.; Graves, A.; Fransman, M.

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# THE FIRST TWO CENTURIES OF COLONIAL AGRICULTURE IN THE CAPE COLONY: A HISTORIOGRAPHICAL REVIEW\*

ROBERT ROSS *Rijksuniversiteit, Leiden*

*Over the last fifteen years radical historiography has demolished the unstated presumption that South African history began in 1652. However, in emphasising the centrality of the mineral revolution, it encouraged a tendency to see South African history as really beginning in 1870. Many recent liberal works have done the same. This article argues that, no matter how much new was brought into South African society by the great transformation of the late nineteenth century, industrial capitalism was able to build on historical processes within pre-industrial colonial society to a degree that is far greater than is frequently realised. The article develops five main propositions: (i) as a colony, the Cape can only be understood within the context of the Dutch and British empires (ii) a necessary condition for the establishment of colonial agriculture was the generally forcible dispossession of the African population from the land (iii) colonial agriculture relied to a very large degree on forced labour systems, whether the labourers were legally slave or free (iv) almost all colonial farmers were linked to the urban, and so to the world, market, both to sell their produce and to raise credit and (v) the farming community was never homogeneous, but exhibited continual and various degrees of stratification. Focussing on colonial agriculture, the article concludes that capital accumulation by one class to the exclusion of others and with the help of the state had begun long before the mineral revolution, setting the pattern for modern South Africa.*

There are, we have recently been told, two basic plots around which South African history is organised.<sup>1</sup> One, the liberal plot, sometimes known incorrectly as the conventional wisdom, was essentially cultural and political, about the "irrational" establishment of contra-economic racial domination. The other, variously known as Marxist, neo-Marxist, radical or revisionist, is about class, capitalism and exploitation, and is primarily concerned to develop a class analysis of South African society, and in particular of its racial system. These are seen as radically distinct paradigms, so much so that it is sometimes difficult to believe they can talk to each other, and not just shout (at least when they are engaged in theoretical rather than empirical discourse). But, from another perspective, they do have a lot in common. Perhaps it is worth while spelling out some of the common denominators. They are both, very largely concerned with the socio-economic history of northern and eastern South Africa since about 1870. The starting point is the so-called grand transformation which was brought about by the establishment of the diamond and gold mines in the South African interior.

The consequences of this event are seen differently; to put it crudely, either it created modern South Africa in all its horrors, or it was not allowed to create South Africa as it should have been. But the centrality of the mineral revolution is so self-evident that radical South African historiography has a tendency — with numerous exceptions — to see South African history as beginning in 1870, and many of the more highly regarded recent liberal works have done the same.

A decade and a half ago, the complaint was not that South African history began in 1870, but that it began in 1652.<sup>2</sup> There used to be a rather formless plot — more a chronicle than a developed drama — than ran from the landing of Jan van Riebeeck, through the fight against Willem Adriaen van der Stel, the expansion of the trekboers, the Cape patriot movement, the First and Second British occupations, the Batavian republic, the 1820 settlers, the frontier wars with the Xhosa (known, in this tradition until very recently as "Kaffir"- wars), John Philip, for better or worse, and Ordinance 50 until it reached its culmination in the Great Trek. This was once "the great disaster of South African history"

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(MacMillan, 1927: 246) and in 1934 "it was, and still is, the central event in the history of European man in Southern Africa" (Walker, 1934: 8). Even in 1974 it was still "verseker van sy sentrale plek wat Walker daaraan toegeken het" (Muller, 1974: 21). This chronicle, as Eurocentric as ever, then continued through the establishment of the Orange Free State and Transvaal republics and through the growth of political institutions, leading to Responsible Government, in the Cape, until with the two wars between the Afrikaner republics and the British empire and the unification of South Africa, it reached some small point of contact with more recent interpretations.

With few exceptions, the work in the various traditions has yet to be brought into juxtaposition. The work, whether liberal or radical, on the history of South Africa since 1870, has not confronted, or been confronted by, the history, whether liberal or Afrikaner nationalist, concerning colonial South Africa before that caesura. To the best of my knowledge, there is as yet no class analysis of the Great Trek, and indeed "liberal" interpretations have been conspicuous for their absence over the last few decades. The *Oxford History*, for instance, thought the Trek so unimportant that it was presented out of chronological order. Conversely, the possible influences that pre-industrial social relations with the colonies might have had on the organisation of capitalist South Africa have in general been ignored or, if anything has been said, it is often asserted that they are irrelevant.

There are two main reasons for this neglect. The first is theoretical and historiographical. It derives from a mistaken, or at least partial, reading of two of the most important Marxist articles of the early 1970s. In "The frontier tradition in South African historiography", (1980, but really 1971), Legassick convincingly demonstrated the falsity of the claims made by W.M. MacMillan (1927), C.W. De Kiewiet (1937, 1941), Eric Walker (1930, 1934), Sheila Patterson (1937) and, perhaps above all, I.D. Macrone (1937) that twentieth century South African race relationships were a direct result of the experience of white frontiersmen a century or so earlier in their opposition to black enemies. Simultaneously a line of reasoning was being developed, notably by Wolpe (1972), which argued that the development of South African capitalism was bound up with

deterioration of the economies of the African reserves, and, more specifically that the policies of segregation and apartheid derive from the changing relationship of the capitalist mode of production with the African pre-capitalist ones.<sup>3</sup> The profits of South African industry, according to this well-known argument, were greatly enhanced by the super-exploitation possible in this unequal relationship. In other words, two more or less contemporary lines of thought at once demolished the old vision of modern South Africa's genesis, which placed considerable importance on the pre-industrial colonial society, and replaced it by a new one, which had no need for such an emphasis and indeed would have been more satisfactory (as an intellectual construction and for the capitalists) if industrial South Africa, the South Africa of the gold mines, had been created in a sub-continent where the previous contacts between European and African had been minimal. Given such a destruction and construction job, the Marxists did not need to return to the pre-industrial colonial past. Nor were they forced to do so by liberal criticism. The frontier hypothesis in its old form seems to have sunk virtually without trace.<sup>4</sup> The serious challenges have been with regard to the interpretations of the twentieth century, not of the more distant past. There was thus no need to take the history of pre-industrial colonial South Africa seriously.

Secondly, there was no immediate spur to do so. The traditions of historiography which had been concerned with pre-industrial colonial South Africa, had a proud past, and had produced two minor masterpieces (De Kiewiet, 1937; Van der Merwe, 1937, 1938, 1945) but had fallen on hard times. The literature is extensive — a recent bibliography on race relations (whatever they may be) in the Cape Colony between 1652 and 1795, which is not complete by any means, nevertheless lists 1 114 items (Scholtz *et. al.*, 1981). It is however stultifying in the extreme. Elphick recently described it as consisting "largely of pettifogging theses and amateur histories of churches, families and communities" (1983: 507). In this he is undoubtedly correct. Nevertheless this literature does contain a large amount of information, which can be put to other uses. It is as if one was trying to build an edifice with the chance production of a highly erratic brick factory. Some of the bricks can be used in the new design, even though they were



baked for other purposes, a great number cannot be used, not because they are in themselves unsound, but because they do not accord with the new plan, and a large number of the bricks that are necessary are still absent, and have to be fired.

All this, of course, presupposed a design, an architecture. Here the metaphor breaks down. The design is never finished, and many of the bricks indeed force the design to be changed. It is also not the work of one architect, but of a number, who often go about pulling down the walls another has laboriously erected. Nevertheless, a design is emerging, and in this paper I will attempt to give a sketch of the way I think it will look. The basic point is that, no matter how much new was brought into South African society by the great transformation of the late nineteenth century, industrial capitalism was able to build on historical processes within pre-industrial colonial society to a degree that is far greater than is frequently realised. Since, before 1870, South Africa, whether colonised or not, was very largely rural, and such towns as there were existed to service the countryside, the main focus of this work must be the development of colonial agriculture, in the broadest sense, during the first two centuries of its existence. I intend to limit my analysis largely to the Cape Colony, in which many of the processes were most salient. The paper will further be organised around, and in defence of, five propositions which are, I believe, the corner stones of the new architecture.

*I As a colony, the Cape can only be understood within the context of the Dutch and British Empires.*

In many ways, the understanding of the Imperial context of the Cape is the weakest link within the study of its early history. Nevertheless, as Atmore and Marks (1975: 105) claimed a decade ago, it is "a — perhaps the — most crucial area of South Africa's nineteenth century history", and also, I would add, of the history of at least the colony before then. The Cape owed its existence as a colonial society to the Dutch East India Company (VOC) and it was the Company, and later the British Imperial government, which set the limits within which Cape society could develop, but the extent to which this was the case, and the consequences of imperial action and non-action for Cape society have tended to be ignored.

The reasons for this neglect probably derive in the first place from the position of the Cape within the Imperial systems of the Netherlands and Britain. For both, the Cape of Good Hope was a necessary evil. For the VOC, the purpose of the Cape, first and foremost, was the revictualling of its large annual fleet, which sailed between India, the Indonesian archipelago and, from 1730 on, China, on the one hand, and Europe on the other. The VOC did not expect to make a profit out of its colony at the south point of Africa, and its prognosis was fully justified.<sup>5</sup> Its economic and political unimportance has meant that historians of the Company, from its advocate Pieter van Dam (1927-1954) at the end of the seventeenth century on, have paid scant attention to the Cape. Conversely, historians of South Africa have not been able to rely on a sufficient literature to provide them with a framework within which to place the developments at the Cape, and they have only rarely been able to reconstruct a convincing framework for themselves. Authors such as Robertson (1945, 1952A, 1952B), Godée Molsbergen (1912) (the exception to some of the above, since, as *landsarchivaris* in what was then Batavia, he was well versed in both VOC and Cape history), and Böeseken (1938) have been able to provide a certain amount of valuable information on the context of the early settlement, while Böeseken (1944), Geyer (1923), and Beyers (1930/1967) extended this work into the eighteenth century. It is notable, however, that, barring Anna Böeseken's biographies of Van Riebeeck and the Van der Stel family (1964, 1974), none of these works was published after 1953. Afrikaner historians became more specifically nationalist, the links with the Netherlands became ever more tenuous and English language writers generally shied away from the difficulties of eighteenth century Dutch. The consequence is that for three decades, during which understanding of the world economy of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had markedly improved, and during which the place of the East India Companies, Dutch and English, has been re-examined, the position of the Cape within that system has not been seriously re-investigated. Historians looking back at the Cape from a vantage point in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries therefore have no particular reason to suspect that the textbook vision of the relation of the Cape to the

world market may be radically wrong (e.g. Marks and Atmore, 1980: 20), and that this view has ramifications which, if it were false, would effect the understanding of the whole of Cape society. Nevertheless, it is arguable that this is the case — and as may be evident, I personally am convinced that it is.

There are signs that this deficiency may be remedied. In a sense the work of Neumark, published in 1957 but apparently written a decade earlier, is an attempt to demonstrate the importance of the world economy for even the most distant trekboer, and can be seen as a step in the right direction, although its empirical fallability and its extreme concern with the frontier have meant that it cannot be accepted as it stands. To turn to more recent work, Legassick (1979) too, known that this is a central issue, but he has the advantage that Namaqualand, Bushmanland and Transorangia, the area of his research, were the least effected of all colonial South Africa by the world economy, so that the points he makes cannot be worked out. Schutte (1979), who knows more of the Dutch context of the VOC than any other South African historian, is also aware of the central problems of the Cape's imperial relations, and many of the points he makes are most valuable. The difficulty with them, though, is that they are too exclusively concerned with the political history of the colony, rather than with the position of the Cape within the economy of the Company. Because of this, and because he does not have an economic history to fall back on, his analysis of the relation between the Company officials and the burghers is weakly founded. It is not enough to describe the changing power of Amsterdam factions as they effected VOC personnel. The changing fortunes of Cape agriculture, and of its markets, which led to emergence of an agrarian capitalist class, must also be brought into any description of eighteenth century Cape politics (Ross, 1983A).

To move into the nineteenth century is to move into another historiography as regards the imperial connections of the Cape. This is only partially justified. Until deep into the nineteenth century the place of the Cape in the world vista envisaged by the British Government was not so very different from that it had been granted by the *Heren XVII*. The Cape was seen, in 1797, as "the master link of connection between the western and eastern world" (Theal, 1897-1905, II: 114). This was the dominant impulse behind the

original colonisation of the Cape in 1652, and the point is still regularly made in the arguments by which the modern South African regime attempts to maintain Western support. While geography remains unchanged, strategists will draw the same conclusion from it (Graham, 1967).

The other major concern of the *Heren XVII* with the Cape, the cost of its establishment, (Geyer, 1928) was also maintained by the British. In 1853, the third Earl Grey, reflecting on his time as Colonial Secretary in which he had had to face both the War of the Axe and the beginnings of Mlanjeni's war, wrote that:

Few persons would probably dissent from the opinion that it would be far better for this country if the British territory in South Africa were confined to Cape Town and Simon's Bay. (cit Galbraith, 1963: 2-3).

The Cape cost Britain money. In 1852, for the first time more than a million pounds had to be remitted to cover the costs of the army (Ross, 1983B) and in the view of Imperial strategists the immediate, as opposed to the derived, returns on this running investment were few.

Grey admitted that the desirability of limiting the British presence to the peninsula was not practical. It was not consistent "with honour and duty" for Britain to cast aside the responsibilities it had assumed. Indeed the effects of the absorption of the Cape Colony into a colonial empire that was very different from that of the VOC were considerable. The historiography of British imperial action in South Africa has tended to concentrate on the frontiers, whether east of the Fish or north of the Orange. The reasons for this are clear. Frontier affairs were uppermost in the minds of the British, because they were the most expensive. This can be seen, for instance, in the number of British parliamentary papers which were concerned with the Xhosa wars.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, it was on the frontier that specifically South African considerations were most important in determining British actions. Here the direct results of British intervention, from 1811 onwards, (Giliomee, 1979), in altering the balance of force between the colony and the Xhosa in favour of the former were most dramatic. Nevertheless, this does not give a true reflection of the importance of the British takeover of the Cape for the development of colonial society.

First, the ending of Company rule significantly changed the patterns of Cape trade (Swart, 1949; Giliomee, 1975). As regards

agricultural producers this was perhaps not as significant as might be thought. Even under the VOC, a surplus of a particular product would find a market, as the VOC was prepared to exploit any commercial opportunity. Thus the 1770s saw a boom in wheat production and exports to Europe, as the *Heren XVII* realised that prevailing price levels made the export of grain to the Amsterdam market an attractive proposition. (Van Duin and Ross, forthcoming). The ending of this trade was the result of an increased internal market and a succession of harvest failures, not of VOC policy. There is no reason to suppose that large-scale wool production would not have been similarly encouraged, but it was only in the middle years of the next century that a breed of woolled sheep suited to the hot and arid climate of the Cape interior became generally available (Thom, 1937; Lopez, 1953). British imperial action, though, did bring about the boom in wine production from 1815 on, and its slump after 1827, as a result of changes in tariffs and imperial preference measure (Van Zyl, 1974).

The ending of Company rule, though, did do much to stimulate the growth of a Cape Town mercantile class. Previously a large proportion of the colony's import trade had been in the hands of the Company, or of its officials in their private capacity (Beyers, 1930; Ross, 1983A). In a number of commodities, notably Indian textiles, coffee, sugar, iron and tobacco (though not significantly, slaves) the VOC had a virtual monopoly, or at least a very large share of the market (Van Duin and Ross, forthcoming), and the ending of this competitive advantage must have given a considerable fillip to Cape Town's import merchants (Immelman, 1955). The English East India Company did have a number of similar rights, notably in Chinese teas (Arkin, 1960, 1964, 1965, 1973) but this in no way hindered the establishment of a small mercantile elite. The relationship between these men and the agricultural life of the colony is badly in need of study, but there are certain indications that their financial resources made them crucial figures in the colony's credit market (Le Cordeur, 1982: 123-8).

An increased liberalisation of commerce was only one of the consequences of the British occupations. In addition, there were numerous measures which were in effect the application to the Cape of programmes

developed for other parts of the colonial empire. A steady Anglicisation of the civil service, the law and public life was one of these. (Sturgis, 1982). Further, the long period of neglect of land policy was ended in the 1840s when the Colonial Office attempted to impose on the Cape measures analogous to those developed for Australia under the influence of Edward Gibbon Wakefield. (Duly, 1968). More important were a complex of changes in the two related fields of labour and social organisation, on the one hand, and government on the other.

For some time it has been becoming increasingly clear how the British ruling class's vision of the proper relations between master and servant changed in the decades after about 1790.<sup>7</sup> The results of this were felt not only in the metropolis but also in the colonies. Everyone was still to be forced to work — everyone that is except for the fortunate possessors of inherited wealth — but they were no longer to be forced by such legal bonds as slavery<sup>8</sup>, but by moral compulsion and by the hard facts of economics. This was not only the vision of materialist utilitarians but was also thought by evangelical Christians to provide the only social basis for salvation. Economics and conversion could go hand in hand, in the new industrial towns of the north of England as well as in the colonies. The ideological basis of the anti-slavery movement is tied in to the changing social relations of Britain during the Industrial Revolution. Indeed the relationship between the two is much more at an ideological than at a straight financial level. Translated into South African terms, it resulted in the application of a number of measures designed for other colonies, notably the abolition of the slave trade, the promulgation of various measures for the amelioration of slavery, in imitation of Trinidad ordinance of 1823 and eventually in the abolition of slavery itself. (Edwards, 1942). This ideology also found a specifically South African form in the writings of missionaries who were able, by returning to a higher level of abstraction in their discourse, to impress on the British Government the necessity of abolishing the judicial disabilities of the Koisans, by Ordinance 50 of 1828.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, the assisted emigration that led to the 1820 settlement was as much a response to the conditions in Britain, as those reduced to poverty by the Industrial Revolution had to be "shovelled out". (Johnstone, 1972). This



was seen by the rulers, but also by the oppressed. To the Nottinghamshire framework-knitters of 1819, emigration to the Cape of Good Hope was the only alternative to starvation and Luddism. (Thompson, 1963: 60-2). Once in South Africa, the settlers, it was vainly hoped, would reconstruct the hierarchial social relations of England. (Nash, 1982). They maintained a hierarchy, but not the Colonial Office's view of their place within it.<sup>10</sup>

It should be possible to sketch the outlines of an explanation along these lines to account for some of the imperial interventions in South Africa early in the nineteenth century, and it is to be expected that the work of Mary Rayner will make it increasingly clear. There are also a number of studies which demonstrate the relation of the Cape's constitutional development to changes in general colonial policy. (Fryer, 1964; Kirk, 1972). While it is now possible to describe the administrative and constitutional arrangements of the colony; (Donaldson, 1974, Leverton, 1961; Breitenbach, 1959) and the political struggles which led to the granting of a Representative Assembly in 1854 and, to a certain extent, to relate the actions of the various parties to their position within the social structure of the colony, (Hattersley, 1965; Duminy, 1960; Le Cordeur, 1981; Trapido, 1964), what is still lacking is an analysis of the ways in which the working of Government were related to the maintenance of social control and the development of the Cape's ruling class.<sup>11</sup> This is especially the case after the institution of the Cape Parliament. It is strange that the historiography of the colony as it now stands contains a valuable analysis of Cape Liberalism which "failed to make a bridgehead ... outside the eastern (African peasant) districts of the colony and the port towns and Kimberley", (Trapido: 1980, 267; cf. Hogan, 1980) but which only begins with an investigation of Cape conservatism, dominant in its various forms, in the rest of the colony, after the organisation of the *Boerenbeschermingsverenigingen* and the Afrikaner Bond from the late 1870s. (Davenport, 1966; Le Cordeur, 1959; Smith, 1976). But it was Cape conservatism, in conjunction with the local administration of justice, which maintained the class structure of the Cape countryside.

## II A necessary condition for the establish-

*ment of colonial agriculture was the generally forcible dispossession of the African population from the land*

The modern historiography of South Africa began with Dr John Philip. In his *Researches in South Africa*, first published in 1828, he claimed that in the century and a half of Dutch rule

the Hottentots had been despoiled of their lands, robbed and cajoled out of their flocks and herds and, with a few exceptions, reduced to personal servitude, under circumstances which rendered them more wretched and more helpless than the slaves with whom they now associated. (I, 55).

Those who survived became the "Bushmen", who, despoiled of the stock, had no option but to become the thieves so hated by the pastoralist community of the Cape.

Philip's work was a polemic, and he himself was notoriously careless as to precise historical fact. Nevertheless, the white community, from the Governor downwards, felt that its name had been besmirched and that Philip required an answer, especially as his conclusions were accepted by the influential British Parliamentary Special Committee on Aborigines. (Elphick, 1977: 235). The result was the appointment of Donald Moodie, a former protector of slaves, who conducted serious research into the as yet unordered Cape archives, and published a series of sources known as *The Record: or a series of official papers relative to the condition and treatment of the Native Tribes of South Africa* (1960). This has remained a most valuable compilation, which transcends the immediate circumstances under which it was compiled. Nevertheless, it was also used for polemical purposes. Its publication caused Cape Town tempers to rise and resulted in a libel suit brought by Moodie against John Fairbairn, editor of the *South African Commercial Advertiser* and Philip's son-in-law. Moreover, it was Moodie who first developed the argument, as mythical and less accurate than Philip's (Ross, 1977) that the disintegration of Khoikhoi society had to be ascribed to the effects of newly imported diseases, notably smallpox, "compared to [which] the effects of war was evidently altogether trivial." (Elphick, 1977: 236).

In general recent historiography has tended to follow Philip's description rather than Moodie's. It is true that the Dutch did not systematically round up the indigenous population of the Cape Colony and export



the survivors, to make way for plantation agriculture, as they had done on Banda and in parts of the Moluccas. But it was due to acts of Europeans, not of some imperialist God, that Khoisan society disintegrated and that the white settlers were able to establish their farms across the whole of the colony south of the Orange and west of the Gamtoos. From there on, of course, they had to deal with agriculturalist peoples, particularly the Xhosa, who were driven from much of their lands in a long series of military encounters which have been termed "The Hundred Years War". (Saunders, 1976). The European conquest of the Cape Colony, and later of the rest of South Africa, was a violent process.

The historiography of this process is patchy. The destruction of the Western Cape Khoikhoi during the first sixty years after the landing of Jan van Riebeeck has been very thoroughly studied. (Elphick, 1977; Bredenkamp, 1979, 1980, 1981). Indeed, Elphick (1977) is one of the most satisfying of all the works on the history of the Cape. He argues that Khoikhoi leadership was so dependent on the possession of stock that the permanent loss of grazing lands and stock precluded any coordinated action to recover them, or even to hold firm. With the Europeans not allowing the old road to recovery, through clientage, at least the larger groups could only continue the downward spiral to impoverishment. By the second decade of the eighteenth century, all independent Khoikhoi villages in the strip of country between Cape Town and the mountains had disappeared, while there had occurred the first of the guerrilla style "Bushman" wars, in which the colony's adversaries were largely dispossessed Khoikhoi and which were to typify the eighteenth century history of resistance.

Between the Griqua attacks on the northern border of the colony in 1701 and the last !Kora attacks from the Orange River bush in 1879 (Ross, 1975; Strauss, 1977), the same pattern repeated itself regularly. As European farmers drove deeper and deeper into the interior of the Cape Colony, they brought about the steady impoverishment of the Khoisan of each successive region. Stock was lifted, grazing and water holes were expropriated, game was exterminated and life in any other status than as labourer for the whites was made impossible.

This is surely the basic plot of a large part of eighteenth century Cape history, and, in the

north-west, much of the nineteenth too. It is not a plot which historians have managed to tell, with two rather schematic exceptions. (Marks, 1972; Elphick, 1979, cf. Wright, 1978). The reason is twofold. First, the historiography of the Cape interior is dominated by the expansion of the trekboers, the other side of the same coin. Secondly, even when historians do concentrate on the subjection of the Khoisan, they are driven by the nature of the available sources to look first at the so-called "Bushman" raids and at the commandoes that were undertaken against them. To a certain extent these guerrilla attacks on the colonists may have been the "primary" reaction of hunter-gatherer groups against white invasion, but they were also the struggle of the dispossessed against what, stretching the concept not too far, might be described as their proletarianisation. To write of Khoikhoi opposition to colonial expansion as "Usually no more than local disturbances" (Elphick, 1979: 25) is to fail to realise how far the raids were the work of dispossessed stock-keepers (e.g. Saunders, 1981). Even more than in the seventeenth century the distinction between "Khoi" and "San" is meaningless, and when the history of their suppression comes to be written, then these points must be recognised.

These points are confirmed by the recent work that has been done around the Khoikhoi rebellion of 1799-1801. (Newton-King, 1981; Newton-King and Malherbe, 1981; Malherbe, 1981, 1982). For this period the sources are much more abundant than previously, and the circumstances are rather different to further west and earlier. Nevertheless, for the present purposes two points are clear. First, the various phases in the struggle between the colonists and the Khoisan — localised violence on the farms, open warfare and banditry — were logical continuations one of the other, as they must have been in the eighteenth century proper. Secondly, the struggle was seen, at least by the Khoisan, as being about the expropriation of their land by the invading colonists. Those families which had played an important and brutal part in this process were particularly hard hit by the Khoi "rebels" of 1799, or later by the banditry of the subsequent decades. There seems no reason to suppose that these arguments would not also hold good for the previous period, while they also support the basic proposition argued here, namely that the establishment of white agriculture was

dependent on the preceding conquest of the land from the African population.

By the 1790s, of course, this conflict had become part of a much wider confrontation, that between colonists and Xhosa. In the days of Theal (1892-1919) and Cory (1910-1930) the struggle on the eastern border of the Cape colony was the major theme of South African history, and up till the 1950s there were regularly academic studies of various aspects of colonial policy towards the Xhosa. What is strange is that, at the moment when the study of "collaboration and resistance" to the advance of colonialism became such a major theme in African history north of the Limpopo, in the 1960s, work on the most complicated and drawn out set of events anywhere in Africa almost came to a halt.<sup>12</sup> It is as if the presence of those massive tomes of settler historiography inhibited the writing of works in which the Xhosa were seen as other than irredeemable cattle-thieving savages. Luckily, though, the hiatus was of short duration. (Freund, 1972; Giliomee, 1979; Saunders, 1976), and particularly with the work of J.B. Peires (1982) it has become possible once more to reintegrate the long series of cattle raids and trading fairs, of wars and treaties, of conversions and Xhosa religious revivals, into the wider tapestry of South African history.

The subjugation of the Xhosa entailed, in this context, above all the alienation of their land and, concomitantly, of their labour. The steady drive eastward of the official border of the colony, from Bushmans River to the Fish, to the Keiskamma and finally to the Kei, was justified in terms of military security, but was certainly caused largely by the colonists' desire for ever more land. Until 1812, the battles were over the rich summer grazing of the Zuurveld. Thereafter, hunger for sheep farms was a prime motive. In the middle of the 1825 war, T.H. Bowker, a leading settler, wrote of what was for a year to become Queen Adelaide Province that "The appearance of the country is very fine. It will make excellent sheep farms" (cit. Peires, 1982: 123). Over 400 requests for land grants were received for the Province, before Lord Glenelg rescinded its annexation, and the Grahamstown merchants and other 1820 settlers grew rich on army contracts, land speculation and merino sheep farming. Robert Godlonton and his cronies appear as land-hungry warmongers, though this is hard to document since as Peires notes, "few contemporaries

were prepared to risk libel suits" by detailing their activities in public. (1982, 123 Duminy; 1960; Webb, 1975). Kirk (1973, 1980) has convincingly documented the pressure that the developing sheep industry placed on the Kat River Settlement, but a detailed analysis of land transaction (possibly on the basis of records in the Cape Deeds Office), is needed before the true extent of this activity can be ascertained.

As to the appropriation of labour, there seems little doubt that the large scale proletarianisation of Africans (as opposed to Khoisan) did not begin until around the middle of the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, the beginnings had certainly been made. The first large-scale influx of Africans into the colonial labour market were the Sotho and Tswana in the late 1820s, following the Difaqane, but this was a temporary phenomenon, and, as peace returned to the Highveld, most moved back north, apparently mainly to Lesotho. (Ross, 1981; Muller, 1974). There had already been a steady trickle of Xhosa into white service (Kallaway, 1982; Peires, 1982: 104-6), and after 1835 large numbers of Mfengu entered the colony and were in great demand as agricultural labourers. (Webb, 1975; Moyer, 1976). Unfortunately the available studies concentrate very largely on the position of these people in the towns, not on the farms. (Judges and Saunders, 1976; Moyer, 1976). Just as we have as yet no clear study of the processes whereby the Khoisan were reduced to the status of an agricultural proletariat in the eighteenth century, so the historiography, symptomatically, has not addressed the same problem as regards Xhosa and Mfengu in the nineteenth.

### *III Colonial agriculture relied to a very large degree on forced labour systems, whether the labourers were legally slave or free.*

From its earliest establishment until 1834, the labour system of especially the western part of the Cape colony was based on slavery. Throughout the eighteenth century approximately half of the non-Khoisan population of the colony was enslaved. Moreover, the farming community relied on slave labour to a degree that is rare, comparatively speaking. Around 1800, about 66 per cent of all farmers owned at least one slave, and, if the pure pastoralists, who used much more Khoisan labour are excluded this figure rises to 90 percent. (Worden, 1982A:

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independent access to land within the colonial boundaries were a rarity by 1800, and significantly most of them seem to have been in the western portion of the colony (Malherbe, 1978), as the more highly capitalised farmers there were able to use slave labour and thus prepared to allow a few Khoikhoi villages an independent existence. They seem to have functioned as reservoirs of seasonal labour from an early period. Further east, this pattern was not to be found. The Khoikhoi were fully forced to sell their labour power in order to survive. To MacMillan (1927: 133) this was "forced service and virtual slavery", a formulation on which Marais (1939: 123) pours rather unjustified scorn. But it was not so much the proletarianisation of the Khoikhoi which MacMillan and indeed Marais, criticised, but rather the series of legislative measures of 1809 and 1812, which immobilised Khoikhoi labour. With their bargaining power diminished through these measures, and further reduced by such measures as the payment of the Khoikhoi in stock, which could not be moved off the farm (Newton-King, 1980), large numbers of Khoikhoi were fully tied to a particular farm. On the other hand, it was not an inevitable servitude. There remained a certain scope for Khoi mobility, both physical and social, from which a considerable number were able to benefit in the course of the early nineteenth century. (Malherbe, 1978, 1979). Moreover, those who did work on the farms were not only indispensable, as labourers, but also often had an important function in the management of the farm. It was from their Khoikhoi servants that the trekboers learnt how to exploit the environment of the South African interior. (Van der Merwe, 1938: 145-66; Van Arkel *et al.*, 1983).

The first important piece of legislation on which the proletarianisation of the Khoikhoi was based was Caledon's Hottentot Code of 1809. This was in part a measure designed to increase the administrative control of the central government over all sections of the interior of South Africa, by subjecting the community to its laws, but it is also important to remember that the British saw this as a measure to relieve the oppression of the Boers on the Khoikhoi. (Giliomee, 1966: 276-7). This may seem hypocritical, given the new opportunities for oppression that such a measure allowed, but it was not. The first decades after white settlement in the eastern districts of the Cape colony not only

witnessed the conquest of the land from the Khoikhoi and the growth of interdependence between Khoikhoi and invader, but also an enormous amount of systematic violence perpetrated by the new landowners on those who laboured for them. Attempts to play down the level of this violence (e.g. Giliomee, 1979: 300 but cf. 321; Legassick, 1980: 67) are not convincing, but rather the old horror stories of Barrow, of Van der Kemp and of James Read, seem to be confirmed, in essence if not in detail in the archival record of Graaff-Reinet. (Newton-King, 1980B). My own impression is that the Eastern Cape farms exceeded those of the West in general brutality, though, as Legassick noted, it is hard to give any precision to such a statement. But the point is that, in the absence of a legal apparatus, the control of labour required systematic use of force, and it was from this Hobbesian state of nature, not from exploitation, that the British were claiming to be saving the Khoikhoi. There is indeed every indication that they succeeded. The missionaries' complaints are to the maltreatment of the Khoikhoi die away in the course of the next decade. (Van Arkel *et al.*, 1983). But as yet it is rather unclear how either the state of nature (up till around 1809) or the new world of Leviathan (thereafter) really worked, nor equally importantly, is it fully possible to reconcile the various contradictory reports of violence towards and trust of the Khoikhoi farm labourers.<sup>16</sup>

At least, thought, the initial stages of research on the Khoikhoi before 1828 and on the slaves have been done. The labour relations of the agricultural Cape colony after Ordinance 50 and the emancipation of slaves is one of the most salient blank spaces on the map of South African historiography. These two measures were designed to change the structure of those relationships radically, but we do not know how far they actually had that effect. The problem is often simply not seen. Van Zyl (1974) in his description of the wine industry covering the period of slave emancipation — and this was the prime slave-worked crop — only mentions the problem in three pages on "labour relations and bad roads". Rather more serious attempts were made by Duly (1972), which is mainly concerned with the attitudes of the judges to Ordinance 50, and by Hengherr (1952), who tends to accept the complaints of ex-slave owners at face value, but who does give a lot of useful data on the years immediately



after emancipation. But the most valuable work on the subject remains Marais (1939), in which the various measures to restrict the mobility of those who now came to be called "coloured", and to render them subservient to their employers, are set out. He also shows that the wages for slaves and ex-Khoisan were rising through the 1840s, making those measures even more desirable to those who held power. But Marais' work remains at the level of administrative fiat. It is a history of labour legislation not of labour relations. That is an essential first step, but, almost half a century later, we scarcely seem to have got any further.<sup>17</sup>

The possible amelioration following the proclamations of emancipation and the subsequent hardening of control through the middle of the century, are vital subjects in the history of South African agriculture, since they represent the moment at which methods of labour control other than the legal institution of slavery or the blatant brutality of early Graaff-Reinet were widely applied. But, as things now stand, we cannot even be certain that this was the basic course of events, let alone know what were the regional variations in pressure on labour and the varying responses of farm labourers to their renewed compulsion.

#### *IV Almost all colonial farmers were linked to the urban, and so to the world, market, both to sell their produce and to raise credit*

It should be one of the accepted facts of early South African history that a large proportion of the colony's farmers were dependent to a greater or lesser degree on the Cape Town market, and organised the production of their farms to meet the requirements of that market. This does not mean to imply that most, if not all, basic foodstuffs might not have been home-grown — or home-slaughtered — but rather that the farmers were concerned to achieve the production of a surplus, which was sent to the market. The problem at issue is, how high a proportion of Cape farmers worked on these principles.

As to the wine and wheat farmers of the South-West Cape, there can be no real question; they all were. The detailed studies of viticulture and grain growing produced as a series of Stellenbosch MA theses, all have a — more or less inadequate — chapter on the marketing of the product. (Du Plessis, 1933;

Van Rensburg, 1954; Schreuder, 1948; Jooste, 1973; Van Zyl, 1968, 1974). More seriously, as was shown above, almost all these farmers possessed slaves, most of whom would have purchased, and all of whom would have been saleable. It must be assumed that at the time of purchase the farmer either had the necessary cash in hand, as a result of profitable marketing, or that he was able to raise sufficient credit, on the assumption that his future operations would provide the means to repay the debt with interest. In the circumstances of the Cape, all slaveowners, and thus virtually all arable farmers, were necessarily tied into the market.

In a sense, though, this debate is irrelevant to the basic proposition of this section. Rather the major argument is about the trekboers of the interior. Especially by those English writers who were castigated by Legassick in his article on the "Frontier tradition" (1980)<sup>20</sup>, they were seen as withdrawn from the market, for all but the marginal activities, and self-sufficient. Walker (1934: Ch. 2) is perhaps the most lyrical of these descriptions. In this tradition economic rationality in a market sense was irrelevant to the trekboers, and thus to the explanation of their behaviour. Their expansion into the interior would be due, then, to their demographic increase, coupled with the custom which assumed that each son had the right to a farm of his own.

Indeed, the major argument with regard to these farmers is not that they did not want the market, but that the market did not want them. To Guelke (1974: 262) for instance, "overproduction of agricultural produce ... continued to plague the Cape Farmer throughout the eighteenth century". This is a widely held view<sup>18</sup>, but one which I believe to be mistaken. (Ross, 1983B; Van Duin and Ross, forthcoming). It would seem axiomatic that in such a situation the prices of the produce would be driven down to such an extent that profits would be minimal and expansion out of the question, at least until a demand arose or was created sufficient to absorb the supply. At the Cape this was not the case. Wine production and, except for a short hiatus in the 1740s, wheat production rose continually throughout the century, on the basis of imported slave labour<sup>19</sup>. Prices, it is true, remained stable (Guelke, 1974: 264) — it is difficult in the late twentieth century to remember that this is their normal condition — and did not fall to the extent that a drastic

overproduction model would predict. At least from the 1780s, a grain shortage was a more usual condition than a glut. (Van Duin and Ross, forthcoming; Van Zyl, 1968). Furthermore, as Worden (1982A) has shown, slave prices increased considerably over the course of the century, and the rates of return on investment would appear to have been satisfactory, though by no means spectacular.

The first major assault on this view of the trekboers was delivered by Neumark (1957). In his attack on the vision of the Afrikaner frontiersman as an irrational non-economic being, Neumark made, in essence, two points. First, he pointed out that every Cape farm, no matter how distant, had recourse to the market for some of the necessities of life. This is surely correct, but the relationship need not have been necessarily decisive. It is at least theoretically possible that the market production of a frontier farmer was as marginal to his general activity as, analogously, the kitchen garden in the most modern and specialised farm. Why market production should be so privileged, of its essence, as to determine the character of the whole enterprise is nowhere explained.

Neumark's second proposition was that those farmers who established themselves as pastoralists in the interior did so because the returns on capital in the stock business were higher than in arable farming. To say that he was mistaken in this is not to disparage his most important contribution in taking the study of trekboer expansion out of the psychological or political sphere. But Neumark clearly forced his data in unacceptable ways to defend an indefensible hypothesis. Neumark probably overestimates the rate of return on capital among the pastoralists and underestimates that among the arable farmers; moreover, he is forced (38) to admit that if a man could acquire sufficient capital, his income from arable farming would be considerably higher than from stockfarming, even after interest had been paid on his debt. There can really be no doubt that the standard of living of the farmers of the south-west was vastly higher than of those in the interior, and would therefore have been preferable to those who could achieve it. Guelke (1976: 41-2) is surely correct to point out that very few of those with substantial capital decided to invest it all, or even a large proportion of it, in pastoral farming, but rather that "the people on the frontier were

there because they were unable to compete for valuable farms closer to the market".

Guelke's series of works (1974, 1977, 1978B) has been the major recent contribution to the study of the trekboers. His basic point is that, at a certain point of European colonisation, the availability of "free" land — "free" in that it did not have to be paid for, not in that it did not have to be conquered — meant that individuals with little capital could achieve an independent existence, albeit through a farm economy which was largely at a subsistence level. This does not mean, though, that the trekboers were behaving in some atavistic, uneconomic manner. Rather, under the conditions of early European settlement, in North America as well as in South Africa, subsistence agriculture (or pastoralism) "for a brief period ... made good economic sense" (1977: 466). Indeed, as is stressed in Guelke's most illuminating exchange with Norton (1977), frontier farmers "retained liberal (individualistic) commercial outlooks", and were thoroughly prepared to exploit such market opportunities as were offered. If Guelke's theoretical analysis is accepted, and surely it must be, then the, essentially empirical, problem becomes one of ascertaining when, in any given region of the South African interior, the conditions developed that would allow of increased market orientation.

It is in this context that the data collected by Neumark takes its meaning. He shows the almost desperate attempts of the frontier farmers to conjure a cash income out of almost anything that would allow their basic capital — their flocks and herds — to build up. Guelke argues, it is true, that the degree of commercialisation before 1779 was not sufficient to bring the full switch over from subsistence pastoralism. Depending on the region of the country concerned, he may well be right, but there are clear indications, of specialised butter production in the Swellendam area by this date, among a number of similar developments. (Neumark, 1957: 58-9; Ross, 1981). But, for the great sweep of what were later to be the Cape midlands, from the Sneeuwberg south to Algoa Bay, and probably also for the northern borderlands of the Bokkevelen and the Roggeveld,<sup>21</sup> this was just about the last moment for which such a characterisation would be feasible — and this, it should be remembered, was less than two decades after the colonial conquest and settlement of the

eastern districts (Van der Walt, 1928: 74-5). From then on, the interest of the major butchers in the Graaff-Reinet sheep flocks, and conversely of the frontier farmers in the development of the Cape Town market, is very evident. (Wagenaar, 1976). The Graaff-Reinet farmers were being drawn, willingly, into the orbit of commercial capitalism. (Newton-King, 1980B), and it is at the least an arguable hypothesis that the brutality which characterised labour relations in the area at the time was a consequence, in some way or other, of this transformation. However that may be, thereafter it was only on the desert fringes of the North-west Cape that subsistence orientated colonial farmers were still to be found.

Such a statement is only a beginning in the analysis of the rural economy of the Cape. The relations between merchants and farmers have often been antagonistic, but they can also be mutually supportive. Locked into this was the provision of credit, so often an essential and disputed part of agricultural operations. The incorporation of the Cape countryside into market relations entailed an involvement with merchant capital, but the consequences of this have scarcely begun to be investigated. There are all sorts of snippets — to give some examples Guelke (1974) has shown the high level of indebtedness of mid-eighteenth century farmers, without, unfortunately, reporting on who the creditors were; Wagenaar (1976) describes the conflicts between the Van Reenens, the largest butchers of the colony, and the Graaff-Reinet stock farmers; Swart (1953) has minutely detailed the financial operations of the first, government-operated Cape bank, without even positing the basic questions of how this institution effected its clients or how it competed with the already existing private credit business; Van Zyl (1978) has pointed to the fact that many slave-owners used their slaves as security for their loans and Rayner (personal communication) is looking into the effects of emancipation on this, as compensation forced farmers to pay off their debts, but often left them with few opportunities to raise new loans; Arndt, indeed, had pointed to the relation between the arrival of the compensation money and the founding of the first country banks; Le Cordeur (1981) has described the deployments of Cape Town capital in the Eastern Province; and Kirk (1973; 1981) has investigated the importance of credit

relationships in the destruction of the Kat river settlement. But none of these provide much more than incidental information on the crucial questions of the relations between merchants and financiers (merchant capital, if you like) and the farming community. There is still only one, bland history of the activities of a merchant firm (Buirsky, 1952).<sup>22</sup> And only Dubow (1982) had addressed the central issue, in Graaff-Reinet during the wool booms after the mid-century, and his work, I think would be admitted, is essentially preliminary. This clearly is going to be one of the major fields of research on the pre-industrial Cape.

*V The farming community was never homogeneous, but exhibited continual and varying degrees of stratification.*

Strictly speaking, this proposition is incorrect. On 14 April 1657, the day of the first land grants, all nine farmers received identically sized plots of ground — although their true value and potential may well have differed. But as Guelke and Shell (1983) put it "this state of equality was to last one day", for on 15 April two somewhat larger grants were made. From that day on the farming community was internally differentiated, with substantial levels of stratification developing.

This fact is at variance with the vision which sees Afrikaner society as egalitarian, a vision which was almost certainly a myth owing its existence to populist Afrikaner nationalism. To the extent that the myth ever had substance, it may have had it in the interior of the country during the phase of pastoralist subsistence. At that stage there may well have been a relatively high level of equality — albeit an equality of poverty (Guelke, 1974) — but this disappeared with the effective penetration of merchant capital and market dependence into any given region. Before the ending of what was generally a short phase, influence was based to a large degree on personality and on the size of the kin group of a particular leader. Thereafter, even in the far north-east, status depended on wealth. Thus, even though, despite the enormous number of studies on the Great Trek, there is as yet no satisfactory study of the background of the trekkers, it would seem as though a large majority of those who settled north of the Orange were those who had lost out in the increasingly keen competition for land in the more valuable areas further south. (Van der Merwe, 1937).<sup>23</sup>



There would thus be a good case for considering even the great symbol of trekboer solidarity as at least in part a populist movement of the dispossessed.

In the long-settled and fully commercialised areas of the colony, and notably in the wheat and wine growing districts of the South-West Cape, the evidence for considerable differentiation among the burghers is so great that it could only be denied by ignoring the history of the colony's agricultural heartland. While this has too long been done,<sup>24</sup> the recent resurgence of interest in this field has brought a considerable number of studies demonstrating the existing above all of wine-growers in the region of Stellenbosch and Drakenstein and wheatfarmers on the Tjgerberg and the southern Swartland. (De Wet, 1981; Guelke, 1974, 1979; Guelke and Shell, forthcoming; Schutte, 1979; Ross 1983A; Worden, 1982A; Freund, 1971, 1979). These studies have so far dealt exclusively with a (slightly elongated) eighteenth century, and extension into the nineteenth would show the continuation of the pattern and its greater establishment in other regions of the Cape. But the domination of the colony, economically and, at least at district level, politically by an elite of relatively rich farmers is beyond doubt.

The character of this elite should not, however, be misunderstood. In comparison with the great sugar-barons of the West Indies, they were humble. Moreover, after the defeat of Willem Adriaen van der Stel's attempt at monopoly, (Schutte, 1979) the peaks of society were not excessively mountainous, or long-lived. There were occasionally men and families who were able to acquire exceptional agricultural wealth — Martin Melck (Franken, 1938), the Cloetes and perhaps the Van Reenens (Wagenaar, 1976) are the most salient examples — but their holdings were not contiguous and the property did not pass intact from generation to generation. Colonial South Africa became early what it has largely remained, a country of middle-sized farms, not of hacienda-like estates. The point is that possession of one or two of the relatively limited number of highly productive and profitable farms entailed a position within the elite.

On the other hand, the existence of an elite necessarily entails a group, larger than the elite, which is excluded from it. Some of these would have been less prosperous farmers, but there were many others from whom such a

description would have been inappropriate. Little is known of who these people were and how they lived. It has been assumed, perhaps too easily, that they disappeared to the frontier, and there themselves became trekboers. This may well have been the lot of many, but by no means all men in this category had the capital or the experience to enable them to be at all successful in this line of business. The research into the life of the slaves on the farms (Ross, 1983C; Worden, 1982A, B), moreover, has demonstrated the presence of large numbers of *knechten* working as bailiffs and overseers in the South-West Cape. Many of these were immigrants, discharged from the service of the VOC, but there were also numerous Cape-born men employed in this function. But we do not know how these tasks were performed in the nineteenth century, nor by whom. Similarly, the growth of a rural artisanat is unstudied, and indeed unrecognised. Even the emergence of the characteristic "poor whites" of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the *bywoners*, has only recently begun to be investigated. (Dubow, 1982).

Part of the reason for the historical neglect of these groups stems from the fact that no serious conflict of interest developed between them and the elite. Even if the Great Trek was a populist movement, it was led by men of considerable standing within rural society and did not aim at the destruction of its basis. Indeed, until the South African war,<sup>25</sup> after the period dealt with in this paper, there was no moment in which conflict within the white rural community seemed possible. In general, then, this means that the ruling class of colonial South Africa — among whom it should be evident, the landowners, the large merchants and the officials would have to be numbered — were able to incorporate a great majority of those men and women of European descent if not as equals, at least as allies. It is not the purpose of this paper to review the enormous questions that derive from such a statement. Nevertheless, it is still necessary to point out that the development of the class (and racial) structure of pre-industrial South Africa, which cannot be left out of a full account of their later development (Ross, 1982), can only be understood through an analysis of its rural economy and of the place of the landowners, farm labourers and intermediary groups within it.



## VI Conclusion

Some twenty-five years ago, W.K. Hancock (1958, 338-9) wrote:

It would be wrong to begin the study of economic growth [in South Africa] either with Barny Barnato and Cecil Rhodes or with the first British governor and the 1820 settlers. Throughout the slow generations of restricted opportunity, forces of growth had been at work within Afrikaner society itself — *behind the trekkers' frontier*. There is a story to be told of agricultural improvement moving northwards and eastwards as the raw pastoral fringe became 'old settlement' in one district after another ... (and) of the little towns that grew up to buy the produce of the settled farmers and to supply what they needed for their households and farms.

His comments have rarely been heeded since he wrote them, but he was basically right, even though the vocabulary of history has changed somewhat since then. Well before the Great Transformation of diamonds and gold, a previous slow process of transformation had occurred, as the colonisers of South Africa had been able, by the use of force, to establish over at least the southern half of the modern country the system of agriculture, essentially capitalist, that, *mutatis mutandis* was later to be applied further north. The pattern was set early, and was later extended as necessary. Modern South African agriculture developed out of the pre-industrial but at least quasi-capitalist relations of productions, as I have tried to outline in this paper. If this is not taken into account, then the basis and nature of social relations and economic trends in the South African countryside in the twentieth century can at best but partially be understood. Capital accumulation, if by that is meant the accumulation of power and resources in the hands of one class to the exclusion of others and with the help of the state, (Cooper, 1981: 19; Brenner, 1977) had begun long before then. It is the task of those historians who investigate the enormous amount of material on the pre-industrial Cape Colony<sup>26</sup> to demonstrate how this process occurred.

## NOTES

1. One of the most recent and clearest of these statements, followed in this paragraph, is Johnstone (1982).
2. See e.g. Wilson and Thompson (eds.), (1969), vii—viii.

3. There is of course a vast literature developing and criticising this thesis.
4. For instance, it does not seem to be present in Davenport (1977), Elphick and Giliomee (1979) or Lamar and Thompson (1981). The most serious exception I know is an unpublished paper by Leonard Guelke (1979).
5. The most up-to-date and useful discussion of the VOC's activities is Gastra (1982).
6. See the list published in Walker (ed.), (1953).
7. Among the most useful recent works on the ideological nature of British abolitionism and its relation to the industrial revolution are Davis (1975), Temperley (1977) and Cooper (1980: Ch. 2). For an application to South Africa see Rayner (1981), and her forthcoming thesis.
8. Men and women were, of course, forced to be free. Those who were unsuccessful in this were condemned to the workhouse by the new Poor Law of 1834 (Thompson, 1963: 295-6), those who made too much use of their freedom to the prisons (Ignatieff, 1978; Foucault, 1979). The contemporaneity of the Poor Law, Prison Reform and the Abolition of Slavery is in no way coincidental.
9. In this I part company from Newton-King (1980A), who argues that Ordinance 50 was a result of the labour demands of the 1820 settlers. It would seem, admittedly purely on the basis of *a priori* arguments, that the recent work on the abolition of slavery would tend to support the old arguments of MacMillan (1927) and Gailey (1963), by showing why the British rulers were ideologically predisposed to accept the arguments of John Philip. In contrast it seems unlikely that the 1820 settlers had enough political clout to force their economic demands through the Colonial Office in London.
10. As one of the two most salient pieces of nonsense I have discovered in my reading on early South Africa, I cannot resist quoting Mitford-Barberton and White (1968: 1-2):  
The arrival of the 1820 settlers was quite the most important event in the history of South Africa and can be compared with the coming of the Normans to England in 1066 or the Pilgrim Fathers sailing to America in the Mayflower.
11. Sachs (1973) is valuable, if somewhat sketchy on the workings of the courts. As yet local studies, such as Stopforth (1974) on Swellendam, Scholtz (1968) on the Oliphants River or Wagenaar (1977) on Burgersdorp, do not help. Smith (1976) and Dubow (1982) on Graaff-Reinet districts are the most valuable, but neither is entirely satisfactory, the former because it fails to impose a structure on a mass of data, the latter because it is so concerned with structure that individual actions are ignored.
12. The major exceptions are Galbraith (1963) and Wilson (1969). In some ways, these represent the last work in the old tradition and the first in the new.
13. For this, see Armstrong (1979).
14. It may seem anomalous to describe slave-owners as capitalists, though by any criterion other than the form of labour organisation they clearly were. Cf. Marx (1964: 119) "If we now talk of plantation-owners in America as capitalists, if they are capitalists (his emphasis), this is due to the fact that they exist as anomalies within a world market based

upon free labour". The same could be said of South African wine and wheat farmers from at least 1700 on.

15. Notably Worden (1982 A, B); Ross (1983 C).
16. It is to be hoped that the work of Susan Newton-King will do much to unravel some of these knots. For a preliminary attempt see Van Arkel *et. al.* (forthcoming).
17. The most promising advance is Dubow (1982). The work on which Nigel Worden is currently engaged will no doubt do much to improve the situation.
18. e.g. Davenport (1969: 198); Schutte (1979: 204); Giliomee and Elphick (1979: 368).
19. The assertion that wheat production grew is at variance with the figures in the tax returns (*opgaaf*), but there are very good reasons for assuming that the level of under-reporting increased enormously during the second half of the eighteenth century. See Van Duin and Ross (forthcoming), Ch. III.
20. But not interestingly an Afrikaner empiricist as Van der Merwe (1938; 1945).
21. For instance, the inspection trip of the *Commissie van Veeteelt* in 1804 describes a population that to all appearances was settled and commercialised for at least a generation. See Theal, ed. (1911), 335f. There is no modern study of this area, but see Van der Merwe (1945).
22. A history of the Mosenthals, the largest wool-merchants and financiers in the Eastern Province, has been announced, but I have not seen it yet. It could be very interesting.
23. Many of the exceptions, including most of the leaders, came from the Tarka (Cradock) area, which had been thoroughly devastated in the 1835 war and suffered a fairly comprehensive exodus. See Duvenage (1981).
24. It is striking that Elphick and Giliomee (1979) reflecting the contemporary state of the historiography contained no satisfactory analysis of the core of the colony which consisted of Cape Town and the agricultural districts of the south-west Cape.
25. It is notable that many of the *Hendsoppers* and Joiners in the South African War were bywoners, hoping for a better deal under the British. See Giliomee (1981), 112.
26. In many ways the greatest danger is that they will sink in the morass of material. The excesses to which this can lead are shown by the second of the two most salient pieces of nonsense, (see footnote 10): In terms of genealogy, South Africa is in an unique position. On the one hand the available genealogical sources describe in fact the total population of that period, so that here indeed a miracle of God is presented before us on paper, namely the establishment of two new population groups — namely the native white and brown Afrikaans speakers. It is impossible for us to allow the acts of God to remain unrevealed by ignoring them and keeping silence — but rather they must be studied. (Hatingh, 1982: 26, my translation).

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Abbreviations: *AYB*: Archives Year Book for South African History  
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