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'RATHER MENTAL THAN PHYSICAL' EMANCIPATIONS & THE CAPE ECONOMY

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In 1838, James Backhouse, the Quaker traveller, was visiting the Cape, and thus witnessed the final emancipation of Cape slaves, when the period of 'apprenticeship' came to its end. His observation was that there were few, if any, clear changes in the relations between masters and their slaves. As he wrote, 'the benefit of emancipation was rather mental than physical.'[1] In this chapter I intend to test the correctness of his observation, at least as regards the organization of labour on the Cape's farms. This is, of course, a matter of deliberate choice. Slavery oppressed its victims economically, but also socially, politically and psychologically. To the extent that these matters can be disentangled, its legacy can be analysed along any of these lines. Backhouse believed that emancipation would lead to the psychological liberation of the slaves from bondage, even if their conditions of employment remained little changed. However, it should not be forgotten that in the great majority of those slave societies which derived from European colonial expansion, slavery was essentially an institution for the organization of production. Therefore, I will address the question of the effects of emancipation upon the levels of production, agricultural and other, within the Cape Colony.

In so doing, of course, it is important to realize that there were two emancipations at the Cape, not one. As in the rest of the British Empire (outside India)[2], slaves were freed in 1834, although for four years after this they were held as 'apprentices' under restrictions which differed little from those which had been imposed on them under slavery. However, before the promulgation of Ordinance 50 in 1828, the *de facto* position of the colony's Khoisan differed from that of the slaves only in that they could not be sold,

1 J. Backhouse, *A Narrative of a Visit to the Mauritius and South Africa* (London, 1844), p. 507.

2 S. Miers and R. Roberts, 'Introduction' to *idem* (ed.) *The End of Slavery in Africa* (Madison and London, 1989), p. 12.

or in any other ways transferred from one master (or mistress) to another. Thus emancipation, even as a legal concept, was not a single event but a process which covered at least a decade.

THE CONDITIONS OF BONDAGE

From its foundation in the mid seventeenth century, the Cape Colony had been largely dependent on slave labour. The households of Cape Town, both of the Company officials and of the burghers, soon acquired significant numbers of slave domestic servants. The Company needed slaves to work its gardens and to load and unload its ships. Slave artisans were employed in the various workshops that sprung up in the town. From around 1690, the shale hills of the Zwartland, north of Cape Town, were parcelled out into wheat farms, and the valley lands of Stellenbosch, Drakenstein and the Wagenmakers Valley (Wellington) were opened up as vineyards.[3] These were heavily dependent on slave labour. Indeed, through the eighteenth century, over 90 per cent of arable farmers owned at least one slave—a remarkably high proportion.[4] But the slaves were not the only labourers on the farms. As the eighteenth century progressed, the indigenous Khoisan of the Cape increasingly were robbed of any independent access to grazing lands and hunting territories. As a result they were forced to become labourers on the farms. By 1806, even in the largely arable districts of Stellenbosch and Drakenstein, over 30 per cent of the labour force was Khoikhoi.[5] In the pastoral districts to the east of the mountain chains, some 80 kilometres from Cape Town, this proportion would have been much higher. The expansion of trekboers into the South African interior, a process which marked the whole of the eighteenth century—and much longer—would have been inconceivable without the subjugation and use of Khoisan labourers.

In the early part of the nineteenth century the slave-based agrarian economy of the western Cape was fully intact. Indeed, the production of wine nearly doubled between 1808 and 1824 as wine farmers profited from the opening of the British market to Cape wines. Thereafter a period of decline set in, as the tariff advantages which Cape wine had enjoyed in Great Britain, as against French vintages, were very sharply reduced.[6] There was also a

3 The early settlement can best be followed in L. Guelke, *The Southwestern Cape Colony 1657–1750: Freehold Land Grants*, Occasional Paper, no 5, Geography Publication Series, (University of Waterloo, Ontario, 1987). See also *idem*, 'The Early European Settlement of South Africa' (Ph.D. thesis, University of Toronto, 1974).

4 N. Worden, *Slavery in Dutch South Africa* (Cambridge, 1985), p. 27.

5 Worden, *Slavery in Dutch South Africa*, p. 35.

6 M. I. Rayner, 'Wine and Slaves: The Failure of an Export Economy and the Ending of Slavery in the Cape Colony, 1806–34' (Ph.D. thesis, Duke University, 1986), chs. 2 and 5.

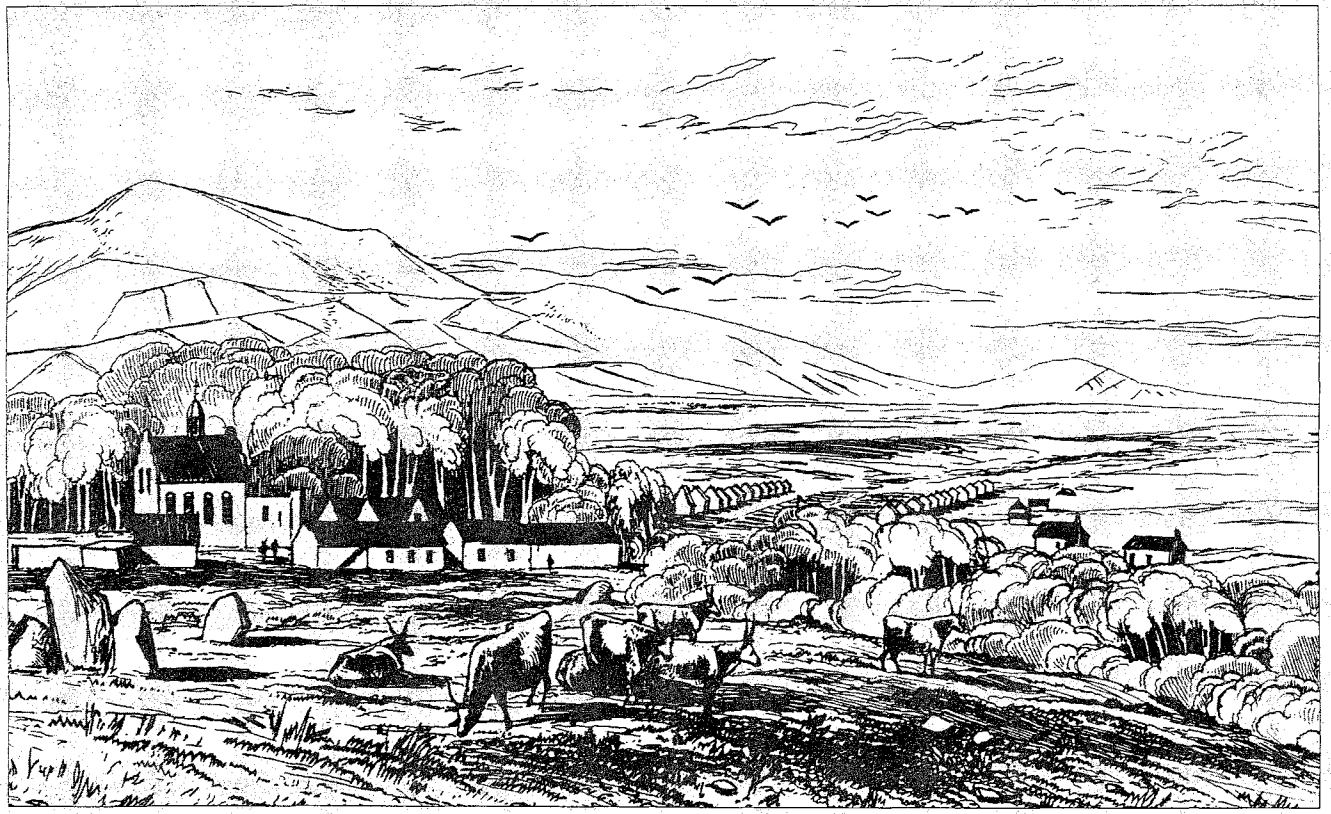

Plate 7 Groenekloof Mission Station, 1844, by James Backhouse. *South African Library.*

steady rise in grain production. In particular, the cultivation of barley, oats and rye increased very sharply—three to four fold between 1806 and 1834—in response to the improved market provided by the British army and its cavalry. The increase in wheat production, on the other hand, was much slower, so much so that a couple of bad years, as in the early 1820s, could make a trend, based on five-year averages, appear negative. Nevertheless, in general there was a steady rise in agricultural production throughout the first quarter of the nineteenth century.

This rise in production, sharper than at any stage during the eighteenth century, occurred despite the abolition of the slave trade in 1807. By the early nineteenth century, the Cape's slave population was just about reproducing itself, but the transition from a largely immigrant population, with a high over-representation of adult men, clearly entailed some decrease in the quantity of available labour. In 1806, 35 per cent of the slaves were children (defined as males under the age of 16 years and females under the age of 14); by 1824, under the same definition, this proportion had risen to 42 per cent.[7]

There were two other new sources of bonded labour for the agricultural districts. A certain number of slaves seem to have been sold from Cape Town to the country districts as owners profited from the increased prices in the latter sector.[8] Some recaptured Africans (or 'Prize Negroes') also found their way to the countryside, although the majority of these remained in Cape Town.[9] Nevertheless, these two groups were almost certainly too small to allow the labour force on the wine and grain farms to grow at a rate commensurate with the increase in production. The result would thus seem to have been an increase in the pressure on labourers to work harder.

In the other main sectors of the Cape's economy, Cape Town and the frontier, the early nineteenth century brought notably different developments. In the former, as Andrew Bank's recent research has shown, the institution of slavery was eroding away.[10] On the frontier, in contrast, bonded labour increased sharply, in step with the developing complexity of colonial economic life there. The number of legal slaves in the eastern districts grew slowly, though faster than that of the colony as a whole. Slavery never dominated labour relations in the east, though, particularly as the British settlers who arrived in 1820 were forbidden to own slaves. A number of Africans from north of the Orange River, conservatively estimated at 500, were held in contravention of the law and some may have been fraudulently registered as slaves. More importantly, many of the Khoisan of the southern and

7 G.M. Theal, *Records of the Cape Colony* (*RCC*), vol. 4, p. 75 and vol. 19, p. 375.

8 Rayner, 'Wine and Saves', p. 58.

9 See Saunders, ch. 4 in this volume.

10 See Bank, ch. 3 in this volume, and A. Bank, *The Decline of Urban Slavery at the Cape, 1806 to 1834*, Centre for African Studies, University of Cape Town, Communications, no. 22 (1991).

eastern Cape were reduced to *de facto* serfs.[11]

The enserfment of the Khoisan was a process which began with the extremely violent conquest of the Cape interior during the eighteenth century. Colonial settlement entailed the wresting of the land from the Khoisan, although, in general, those who had cattle and sheep were still able to run them on farms claimed by Europeans. Nevertheless, labour discipline was maintained by the use of force. The stories of brutality in early colonial Graaff-Reinet are widely confirmed in the archival record. The result was not just the Khoisan rebellion of 1799 but also considerable psycho-social dislocation among the Khoisan which manifested itself in a series of disturbing dreams and visions.[12]

With British conquest of the Cape, firmly established in 1806, the colonial government attempted to play Leviathan, to impose constraints on what they saw to be the farmers' unrestrained power. The codes of labour legislation issued by the Earl of Caledon in 1809 and by his successor, Sir John Cradock, as Governor in 1812, were ostensibly designed to protect the Khoikhoi from genocide. The application of the codes by the new civil and military administration in the eastern Cape certainly had its effects. After 1809 the reports of brutality on the farms of the eastern Cape die away sharply.[13] The price that was paid for this, however, was a code of labour legislation which tied the Khoisan to their white employers by one-sided contracts and a system of apprenticeship, which forced children (and by extension their parents) to remain on a farm until the the age of 25 years, and by prohibitions on mobility and land-ownership.[14] In addition, payment was often in stock, so that the refusal to allow men and women to leave a farm with their stock and the harassment of those who were on the road seeking work meant that a large proportion of the Khoisan were tied to particular farms. On these they were treated as slaves, but did not have the protection which slaves enjoyed as the living repositories of the masters' capital.

These practices were the target of John Philip's *Researches in South Africa*, the first great work of campaigning journalism to come from South

11 C. Crais, 'Slavery and Freedom Along a Frontier: The Eastern Cape, South Africa: 1770–1838', *Slavery and Abolition*, 10 (1990), pp. 190–215.

12 See Newton-King, ch. 9 in this volume, and 'The Enemy Within: The Struggle for Ascendancy on the Cape Eastern Frontier, 1760–99' (Ph.D. thesis, London University, 1992); S. Newton-King and V.C. Malherbe, *The Khoikhoi Rebellion in the Eastern Cape, 1799–1803* (Cape Town, 1984); E. Elbourne, 'To Colonise the Mind: Evangelicals and Missionaries in Britain and South Africa' (D.Phil., University of Oxford, 1991), pp. 255–6; A.A. van der Lingen, 'Bijzondere Droomen en Gezichten Gedroomd en Gezien door Hottentotten en Hottentottinnen', Archive of the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk (now in Cape Archives), P/38.

13 On this, see D. van Arkel, G.C. Quispel and R.J. Ross, *De Wijngaard des Heeren? Een Onderzoek naar de Wortels van 'die Blanke Baasskap' in Zuid-Afrika* (Leiden, 1983), pp. 58–9.

14 R. Elphick and V.C. Malherbe, 'The Khoisan to 1828', in R. Elphick and H. Giliomee (eds.), *The Shaping of South African Society, 1652–1840*, 2nd edn. (Cape Town, 1989), pp. 40–2.

Africa.[15] Only those who managed to gain access to one of the mission stations had any chance of escape.

EXPECTATIONS AT EMANCIPATION

In 1828, Ordinance 50 was issued by the Cape Government, which removed all discrimination on the basis of race from the legal system. Six years later, slavery itself was abolished, though a four-year period of so-called 'apprenticeship' followed during which the ex-slaves laboured under more or less the same restrictions as before. There were those at the Cape (notably, the 'philanthropic' group led by Philip and his son-in-law John Fairbairn), whose views on the outcome of emancipation mirrored those of the British abolitionists.[16] Following Adam Smith in their economic doctrines, they believed slavery to be a highly-inefficient economic institution, for two reasons. Firstly, because of the absence both of economic rewards for harder and more efficient work and of economic penalties for laziness and incapacity, it provided no incentives to the labour force to maximize their productivity. Direct compulsion, rather than the iron laws of the market, was a thoroughly wasteful way of getting people to work. Secondly, slavery severely restricted the rational reallocation of labour in response to changing economic opportunities. Rather, it tended to keep labour tied up in enterprises which, though not unprofitable in an absolute sense—or they would have gone out of business—were certainly not operating at maximum profitability. In other words, slavery shielded some entrepreneurs from the effects of a competitive labour market and prevented others, namely those who did not initially possess slaves, from expanding as they would have wished, for want of sufficient labour. If these hindrances were removed, so it was thought, the only result would be economic progress, with concomitant benefits for both the ex-slaves and their former owners.

The slaveowners and their apologists, in contrast, argued that the mass emancipation of slaves would be disastrous for the colonial economy. The arguments which they used were essentially racist. They believed blacks to be too childlike, or too lazy, to work on a regular basis, except under the threat of punishment. Compulsion was, therefore, essential to the continuance of an economic system which had brought such benefits to the metropolis—and, not

15 J. Philip, *Researches in South Africa*, 2 vols. (London, 1828).

16 On Fairbairn, see J.L. Meltzer, 'The Growth of Cape Town Commerce and the Role of John Fairbairn's *Advertiser*, 1835–1859' (MA thesis, University of Cape Town, 1989), esp ch. 2, and ch. 7 in this volume; Philip did not directly discuss slavery to any extent, but his *Researches in South Africa* are shot through with Smithian economics; on the British abolitionists, see D. Eltis, 'Abolitionist Perceptions of Society after Slavery', in J. Walvin (ed.), *Slavery and British Society, 1776–1846* (London and Basingstoke, 1982), pp. 195–213.

coincidentally, to themselves.[17] Such racist arguments cannot, of course, be accepted today, though the concomitant argument that the state had no right to interfere in the enjoyment of property is still very much with us. Nevertheless, it is quite possible to translate the slaveholders' arguments into terms which are both reasonable and plausible. The ending of slavery, it might be supposed, would be accompanied by such a revulsion on the part of the ex-slaves for the system of labour organization under which they had been exploited, that they would withdraw their labour on a massive scale for estate-organized agricultural labour. Obviously enough, they could only do this if alternative ways of acquiring a living were available to them, presumably primarily as subsistence-orientated peasant farmers. If the choice had been simply one of starvation versus continued work for their own, or some other, former masters, there would have been few ex-slaves who would have chosen the former. But if other alternatives had been available, then, on these premises, it could be predicted that the result would have been a massive fall in the production of agricultural commodities for the commercial and, above all, the export market. This was certainly the case in certain of the Caribbean sugar colonies, notably Jamaica and Surinam.

Therefore there were two diametrically opposed predictions: the one suggests that emancipation would increase the efficiency of slave economies, and the other that it would decrease it. In both cases, the validity of the prediction can be ascertained by examining production statistics. However, matters are not quite that simple. Three further possibilities exist. In all of these the result would be that levels of production would remain more or less constant, or at least that the trend which had preceded emancipation would continue. The first possibility is that the agricultural enterprises continued very much as before, because the ex-slaves were unable to find any alternative employment so they continued to work under conditions similar to those experienced while they were still slaves. The second is that the ex-slaveowners were able to find (and afford) an alternative source of labour or labour-saving capital goods to replace their slaves.[18] The third possibility is that natural and agronomic conditions allowed the old systems of slavery to be replaced by another system, but that the ex-slaves were constrained, by whatever means, to continue producing the same commodities in more or less the

17 R.L. Watson, *The Slave Question: Liberty and Property in South Africa* (Hanover and London, 1990), esp. pp. 106–9, 117–35; J.E. Mason, 'Hendrik Albertus and his Ex-Slave Mey: A Drama in Three Acts', *Journal of African History*, 31 (1990), pp. 423–45. Probably as a result of my ignorance, I do not know of any modern study of the ideology of the British anti-abolitionists and planters, except for L.J. Bellot, 'Evangelicals and the Defence of Slavery in Britain's Old Colonial Empire', *Journal of Southern History*, 27 (1971), pp. 19–40. Studies of those in the United States, on the contrary, are relatively numerous.

18 The importation of Asian labourers into Trinidad, Guyana and Cuba, and of Italians into the coffee counties of Brazil, are examples of this possibility.

same quantities—as was the case in the southern United States, where share-cropping replaced plantation agriculture in the production of cotton.

Clearly there is no reason to suppose that any one of these possibilities obtained in all the European colonies which had been organized on the basis of slave, or quasi-slave, labour. The outcome depended on the specific economic and political circumstances in each case.[19] It has been argued that the level of population density in the slave colonies at emancipation is a very good predictor of the course of the post-emancipation economy. In densely populated small islands, notably Antigua and Barbados, estate production continued to expand after 1838. Given a slave population of 500 and 269 to the square mile, respectively, the ex-slaves were unable to escape from this labour since there was no land available for peasant agriculture, and also no tradition of slaves working and controlling their own provision grounds.[20] However, in Jamaica, with only 74 slaves to the square mile, ex-slaves were able to find the land on which to build up 'reconstituted peasant' communities, and thus to resist the pressure which their former owners placed on them to continue to work on the sugar estates.[21]

But, as Nigel Bolland has argued, such a simple correlation of population density and post-emancipation sugar production is an insufficient explanation. Rather it is necessary to look at the whole complex of methods of labour control after emancipation. Repressive measures may have been easier to apply in colonies where land shortages reduced the options of the ex-slaves, but there were cases such as Belize, Bolland's focus of study, where circumstances allowed the imposition of severe restrictions on the ex-slaves, despite an apparent abundance of land.[22]

POST-EMANCIPATION PRODUCTION AND POPULATION

How, then, does the Cape Colony fit into this pattern? Essentially, if one discounts the inevitable but relatively minor annual fluctuations, the two

19 For a valuable discussion of these matters, see S.L. Engerman, 'Economic Adjustments to Emancipation in the United States and British West Indies', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 13 (1982), pp.191–220 and *idem*, 'Slavery and Emancipation in Comparative Perspective: A Look at Some Recent Debates', *Journal of Economic History*, 46 (1986), pp. 35–9.

20 A further complication in this case relates to the fact that sugar production on the long-established and worn-out estates was raised by the application of considerable amounts of Peruvian guano from the 1840s onwards; W.A. Green, *British Slave Emancipation: The Sugar Colonies and the Great Experiment, 1830–65* (Oxford, 1976), p. 202.

21 Population figures are taken from Green, *British Slave Emancipation*, p. 193.

22 O.N. Bolland, 'Systems of Domination after Slavery: The Control of Land and Labour in the British West Indies After 1838', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 23 (1981), p. 591–619; W.A. Green, 'The Perils of Comparative History: Belize and the British Sugar Colonies after Slavery', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 26 (1984), pp.112–19 and Bolland's 'Reply' in the same journal, pp. 120–5.

decades after the emancipation of slaves saw a boom in the agricultural economy of the colony. This can be shown most clearly from the production figures presented in Tables 6.1 and 6.2. Table 6.1 gives production figures, derived from the Cape Blue Books,[23] for the main crops, grain (wheat, barley, oats and rye) and wine, with its derivative brandy, grown on the farms with slave labour. It shows that the production of grain was scarcely affected, even in the medium term, by the emancipation of slaves, and, if anything, emancipation led to an increase in production. In the immediate aftermath of effective emancipation, in 1838, production of both wheat, and oats and rye (which for reasons of recording have to be taken together) were lower than in any year in either the previous or the subsequent decade, while the production of barley was only marginally higher than that of the previous year, which was the minimum for the period 1828–46.[24] The heavy drought no doubt exacerbated labour problems.[25] In the subsequent one or, perhaps, two years, production was also low. However, if the period 1829–34 (excluding 1832) is compared with that between 1842–6, then the speed of the recovery from the effects of emancipation becomes clear. The production of both wheat, and oats and rye is 35 per cent higher in the latter period than in the former, while that of barley is lower, but only by 7 per cent.

For grape products the situation is complicated, but in an interesting way. The figures demonstrate that the period around and immediately subsequent to emancipation saw the high point of both wine and, in particular, brandy production. More wine was pressed between 1838 and 1841 than in any other four-year period, for which there is information, between 1806 and 1855, while more than twice as much brandy was distilled in each of those four years than in any other year before the 1850s. In part this may represent a recovery from the depression which had followed the ending of the wine boom in the 1820s.[26] More importantly, this phenomenon was, paradoxically enough, a response to a temporary labour shortage. In general, there is a trade-off between the quantity of the wine produced in any vineyard and its quality. If there is a reduced input of labour at certain crucial stages of the agricultural year, notably when the vines have to be pruned, then the amount of juice which can be pressed from the grapes will be considerably higher,

23 These figures probably suffer from a certain degree of under-reporting, but nevertheless provide an accurate assessment of the relative performance of the agricultural economy in particular years.

24 There is an exception to these statements for wheat in 1832. However, the district totals show that production in the major wheat-producing district of the colony, the Cape district, was less than 10% of that in neighbouring years (11,000 as opposed to 120,000 in 1831 and 142,800 in 1833), while no other crop or district shows such a pattern. The most likely reason for this is thus a clerical error, with one digit being omitted from the tabulation before calculation of the total was made.

25 J. Marincowitz, 'Rural Production and Labour in the Western Cape, 1838 to 1888, with Special Reference to the Wheat Growing Districts' (Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1985), p. 30.

26 On which, see Rayner, 'Wine and Slaves'.

but, since its sugar content will be lower, the wine that can be made from it will be of an inferior quality. What seems to have happened, then, is that a decrease in the husbandry of the vineyards increased the total supply of wine, but that much of it was so bad that farmers had no option but to convert it into brandy, aptly known as 'Cape Smoke'.[27]

The other main sector of the colony's agriculture was stock farming. As a general rule, the sheep and cattle which were held on the enormous ranches of the Cape's interior were herded mostly by Khoisan, whose positition in the first quarter of the nineteenth century was, if anything, worse than that of the slave. It follows that the lifting of all civil disabilities on the Khoisan, and other free 'coloureds', by the measure known as Ordinance 50 of 1828, was probably more important in many of the eastern districts of the colony than the emancipation of slaves.[28] As is shown in Table 6.2, there was no fall-off in production as a result of Ordinance 50 or, indeed, of the emancipation of slaves a decade later. The figures are less self-evident than in the case of agriculture because frontier wars, notably those of 1835, 1846 and 1850–3, could have reduced the colony's flocks and herds fairly drastically, and it could have taken several years for them to recover. All the same, it is clear that the colony's herds and flocks increased steadily, if unevenly, and that the export of wool rose dramatically in the years after emancipation. from around 500,000 pounds in 1838 to about 12,000,000 pounds in 1855.[29]

After 1855, any pretence at an annual reporting of agricultural production disappeared. The decennial censuses of 1865 and 1875 do give production figures for the previous year, but clearly random fluctuations, caused by the weather and so forth, make it more difficult to derive any trend from such information. Moreover, there is less reason to suppose that the incidence of

27 The increase in brandy production eliminates the possibility that Blue Book production figures in fact represent sale figures, and that post-1838 increases were caused by decreasing on-farm consumption as the ex-slaves departed. There is no reason to believe that slaves received large quantities of brandy—as opposed to wine—before emancipation.

28 S. Newton-King, 'The Labour Market of the Cape Colony, 1807–28', in S. Marks and A. Atmore (eds.), *Economy and Society in Pre-Industrial South Africa* (London, 1980) pp. 171–207; Van Arkel, Quispel and Ross, *De Wijngaard des Heren?*; Crais, 'Slavery and Freedom'; W. Dooling 'Slaves, Slaveowners and Amelioration in Graaff-Reinet, 1823–30' (BA Hons. thesis, University of Cape Town, 1989); V.C. Malherbe, 'Diversification and Mobility of Khoikhoi Labour in the Eastern Districts of the Cape Colony Prior to the Labour Law of 1 November 1809' (MA thesis, University of Cape Town, 1978).

29 The figures for the colony's wool exports are to be found in R. Ross, *Adam Kok's Griquas: A Study in the Development of Stratification in South Africa* (Cambridge, 1976), p. 141.

30 The census of 1875 commented as follows: 'The numbers in this part [Agriculture and Livestock] are defective because of ignorance and fear of taxation influencing the returns. Moreover, occasional drought, disease, insect plagues, rains and floods had wrought such damage to crops and to large and small cattle [i.e. sheep] that the numbers here returned may be estimates as one-forth, perhaps one-third, less than the numbers which would have been arrived at under more favourable circumstances.' Results of a census of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope taken on the night of Sunday, the 7th March, 1875, Cape Parliamentary Paper, G42–1876, p. 21. The first part of this comment applies *a fortiori* to the Blue Book returns, but does not, I believe vitiate their use for the discernment of trends.

TABLE 6.1 PRODUCTION OF AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES IN THE CAPE COLONY

Year	Wheat bushels	Barley bushels	Oats/Rye bushels	Wine leggers	Brandy leggers
1806	376,721	189,568	26,385	9,643	974
1807	323,565	143,126	24,668	9,443	841
1808	350,628	130,368	68,160	9,525	823
1809	546,674	145,307	77,035	8,411	774
1810	339,456	151,780	88,165	10,400	977
1811	358,774	158,253	77,871	11,010	1,014
1812	472,298	180,311	119,705	11,279	933
1813	370,431	158,580	99,618	6,724	579
1814	327,278	142,880	125,394	8,697	729
1815	508,776	193,647	129,640	14,365	1,167
1816	513,188	212,801	129,364	15,398	1,303
1817	407,332	185,561	142,217	10,713	860
1818	446,210	176,869	141,174	12,382	914
1819	486,210	186,445	168,223	13,543	1,059
1820	528,078	238,455	206,530	15,210	1,152
1821	271,021	191,829	193,030	16,254	1,205
1822	229,615	229,858	222,552	15,348	1,169
1823	381,998	360,720	267,707	21,147	1,656
1824	445,064	281,856	235,449	16,183	1,326
1825	NA				
1826	NA				
1827	NA				
1828	322,635	351,188	329,928	20,405	1,413
1829	520,768	300,625	321,570	15,539	1,060
1830	410,472	224,676	283,785	14,977	1,845
1831	443,693	271,147	282,182	18,467	1,382
1832	306,063	282,380	275,106	16,973	1,394
1833	528,147	286,197	237,012	14,501	1,207
1834	540,528	257,602	276,553	12,005	1,075
1835	NA				
1836	NA	218,490	241,185	16,693	1,282
1837	494,280	220,534	211,535	18,103	1,373
1838	463,691	180,847	187,860	21,915	5,846
1839	395,329	203,323	185,759	22,899	5,861
1840	433,454	244,600	197,663	20,229	6,190
1841	471,804	295,718	215,006	25,312	6,161
1842	592,054	271,983	286,075	18,299	1,653
1843	705,647	242,662	392,672	13,426	1,386
1844	771,760	293,569	419,587	16,412	2,075
1845	650,849	262,912	436,526	17,156	1,996
1846	579,421	180,856	350,159	18,640	2,069
1847	NA				
1848	516,219	233,667	248,615	10,308	1,671
1849	585,325	265,663	249,307	19,943	2,151
1850	NA				
1851	NA				
1852	721,775	244,432	451,981	16,261	2,418
1853	864,272	302,753	846,520	23,705	3,393
1854	1,012,488	424,134	925,235	23,088	3,891
1855	994,273	400,237	NA	23,640	3,797
1865	1,389,766	308,318	607,359	21,299	2,835
1875	1,687,935	447,991	1,132,754	29,511	7,025

Source: Opgaaf returns in G. Theal (ed.), *Records of the Cape Colony*, 36 vols. (London, 1895–1906); Cape Colony Government Blue Books; Census of the Cape Colony, 1875, CPP G42–1876.

TABLE 6.2 STOCK NUMBERS IN THE CAPE COLONY

Year	Oxen	Other cattle	Wooled sheep	African sheep
1806	69,487	138,958	14,233	1,240,151
1807	69,060	130,601	18,282	1,476,174
1808	63,596	130,808	11,622	1,596,642
1809	85,378	148,186	23,921	NA
1810	87,762	144,831	22,325	1,961,607
1811	92,943	171,500	43,479	2,107,615
1812	84,264	158,541	41,021	1,821,631
1813	88,992	166,728	40,824	1,817,387
1814	74,417	135,674	11,508	1,227,835
1815	90,375	167,627	15,465	1,577,543
1816	93,888	166,850	10,620	1,557,017
1817	99,016	172,269	9,546	1,604,736
1818	103,968	181,692	14,325	1,624,113
1819	99,489	233,433	11,361	NA
1820	111,228	232,048	13,708	1,942,749
1821	116,002	253,435	12,177	1,843,391
1822	109,395	237,276	14,151	2,082,996
1823	112,553	240,475	17,883	1,103,665
1824	115,415	236,925	10,241	2,192,470
1825	NA			
1826	NA			
1827	NA			
1828		357,531		2,181,952
1829		322,021		1,839,402
1830		311,938		1,905,728
1831		315,355		1,087,614
1832		334,907		1,923,132
1833		343,644		1,960,886
1834		312,569		1,919,778
1835	NA			
1836	NA			
1837		279,818		1,923,082
1838		266,255		2,030,145
1839		306,809		2,339,191
1840		334,201		2,456,176
1841		377,803		3,008,613
1842		451,852		3,706,791
1843		452,886		3,949,354
1844		471,635		4,513,534
1845		466,558		4,557,227
1846	122,720	210,082	1,502,611	1,740,835
1847	NA			
1848	169,877	249,189	2,093,074	2,042,767
1849	198,899	390,485	2,283,232	2,114,919
1850	NA			
1851	NA			
1852	203,058	291,600	2,651,136	1,679,941
1853	198,542	273,112	3,476,209	1,528,386
1854	NA			
1855	157,886	292,142	4,827,926	1,625,857
1865	249,307	443,207	8,370,179	1,465,886
1875*	421,732	689,951	9,986,240	990,423

Source: Opgaaf returns in G. Theal (ed.), *Records of the Cape Colony*, 36 vols. (London, 1895–1906); Cape Colony Government Blue Books; Census of the Cape Colony, 1875, CPP G42–1876.

* The 1875 stock figures are distorted by the inclusion for the first time of the Ciskeian districts of Wodehouse, King Williamstown and East London in the census.

under-reporting was relatively constant.[30] Nevertheless, despite these caveats, it is clear that the steady expansion evident before 1855 continued. Even though it was taken after several years of drought and in the middle of a sharp depression,[31] the 1865 census recorded wheat production substantially higher than in any year before 1855, though significantly this was not the case for forage grains or for wine. Equally, stock numbers had increased substantially. By 1875, when the effects of the diamond boom were making themselves felt, the production of forage grains had recovered and wine and, particularly, brandy production had increased sharply—though the increase in the wheat crop was probably due more to better weather than to an expansion of cultivation.

On the basis of production figures, especially as there was no significant change in the size of the units of production,[32] the experience of emancipation at the Cape appears to be similar to that of Barbados and Antigua.[33] If all other things were equal—which of course they were not—it would be tempting to conclude that the Cape Colony had a high population density, since in many ways its history resembles that of these New World societies. But that would be absurd.

The absurdity lies in this: in comparative and, indeed, absolute terms, the Cape was very underpopulated. In 1829, there were 1.07 people, slave and free, to every square mile in the colony, and by 1842 there were only 1.45.[34] Even in the agricultural heartland of the Cape and Stellenbosch districts, there were only 3.3 people to the square mile in 1829 and 4.6 in 1842.[35] Compare this to a density of 74 slaves to the square mile in Jamaica in 1834, and of 12 per squale mile in Trinidad.[36] Indeed, when in 1833 the officials of the Colonial Office in London were predicting the likely outcomes of emancipation, they included the Cape among those colonies where there was a great expanse of free land and where 'the facility of procuring land has invariably created a proportionate difficulty in obtaining hired labour.'[37] In

31 Marincowitz, 'Rural Production and Labour', p. 159.

32 There are some indications that forms of share-cropping and labour tenancy were emerging in the aftermath of emancipation, but never to any great extent. See the petition on the Masters and Servants Bill from the inhabitants of Wagenmakers Valley, 7 Sept. 1839, Cape Archives, LCA 10/17.

33 The Cape did not receive any major imports of indentured labour at this stage, and only after the cattle killing of 1856–7 did Xhosa labourers begin to reach the agricultural heartland of the south-west Cape. For this reason comparisons with, say, Trinidad or Cuba are not in order.

34 These figures are based on the populations given in the Blue Books for the two years, and the area given for 1842. The area given in 1829 was considerably larger, presumably as a result of the lack of good surveyors.

35 The district comparisons given here are illegitimate, because there had been considerable boundary shifts between the two dates, but the basic point of the low density of even the agricultural heartland of the Cape still holds.

36 Green, *British Slave Emancipation*, p. 193.

37 'Heads of a Plan for the Abolition of Negro Slavery, and for the Securing of the Continued Cultivation of

this, of course, they were describing the experience which successive governments had had with white, non-slave settlers. After the emancipations, though, the Khoisan and the ex-slaves should have had the same opportunities as the white trekboers, if all other things had been equal, which of course they were not.

Clearly, then, it is not possible to explain the Cape's agricultural production by its population density. Other explanations have to be found. Clearly, it would seem that an investigation of post-emancipatory forms of labour organization could provide an answer, but it would be mistaken to assume *a priori* that it is sufficient in itself. Therefore it is necessary to investigate first those other economic factors which may have had a considerable, or even a decisive, influence on production.

THE MARKET

The first of these, of course, is the market. In analysing the trends in the market for Cape produce, it is necessary to make a sharp distinction between the various sectors of agricultural and pastoral production. Wine farmers were by far the most dependent on exports before the 1840s. Between 1825 and 1829 as much as 50 per cent of wine produced in the colony was exported, most of it to Great Britain, although there were growing, if temporary, markets in the southern hemisphere, notably in Australia. These exports seem to have been the most heavily hit by emancipation. At the high point of wine exports, in the 1820s, on average more than 5,500 leggers of wine were sent to Britain annually. This had declined to just over 3,500 by the early 1830s, and by 1840–4 had dropped to no more than 2,365 leggers a year.[38] This may in part have been a result of a perceived decline in the quality of Cape wine as labour became short, but it is more likely that rumours of British tariff changes were responsible. In 1831, the British government passed a law which greatly reduced the differentials on duties between Cape wine and that from continental Europe, and in 1840 rumours reached Cape Town that a tariff agreement between Britain and France would further weaken the competitive position of Cape wine in its major export market. The result was that Cape wine merchants were unwilling to risk shipping wine to Britain where it might prove to be unsaleable.[39] Even though these rumours proved to be untrue, Cape wine was unable to recapture the market share that it had once held.

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the Estates by the Manumitted Slaves', Public Record Office (PRO), CO 320/8, cited by Engerman, 'Slavery and Emancipation', p. 328.

38 D.J. van Zyl, *Kaapse Wyn en Brandewyn 1795–1860* (Cape Town, 1974), pp. 169–70.

39 *Ibid.*, pp. 143–4, 149–50.

The result for Cape wine farmers was a period of decline. In 1843 and 1844 wine production was lower than it had been for two decades. It should be noted that this fall did not occur until well after emancipation. Moreover, perhaps as early as 1846, and certainly by the 1850s, there were clear signs of recovery, even though wine exports continued to fall sharply. The internal market of the Cape evidently was able to absorb significantly more wine, and the vineyards of Stellenbosch and surrounding areas could produce it.

Grain farming, on the other hand, which in financial terms was by far the largest sector of the colony's agricultural economy, suffered no such problems. The dependence on the internal market which had always characterized this sector, except for a short period in the 1770s,[40] stood it in good stead. It is difficult to provide precise figures on the proportion of grain production which was exported, since the largest proportion of those exports were in the form of flour, and in the milling process the volume of the grain was reduced and its value increased. However, it is unlikely that during the second quarter of the nineteenth century more than about a tenth of the colony's grain production was ever exported, even by way of sales to provision the ships in Cape Town harbour.

In the final major section of the rural economy, that of pastoral production, two distinct trends can be observed. The investment in merino sheep was very strong during the 1840s and 1850s, buoyed up by the demand of the British market. During this period wool overtook wine as the colony's largest export, and Port Elizabeth, with its pastoralist hinterland in the east of the colony, exceeded Cape Town as a port for the outward, though not the inward, trade of the colony.[41] However, even by the mid 1850s, wool accounted for no more than between 30 and 45 per cent of the value of pastoral production—and well under a quarter of the total rural production—in the colony.[42] The greater proportion of the rest consisted of meat and draft oxen, and in the nature of things these had to be consumed, or utilized, within the colony itself.[43]

At mid century, a decade or more after the emancipation of slaves, and two decades after that of the Khoikhoi, the colony's agrarian economy depended primarily on the local market. Growth in one part of the economy stimulated demand for other products. It is possible that the demand itself

40 P. van Duin and R. Ross, *The Economy of the Cape Colony in the Eighteenth Century* (Leiden, 1987).

41 A. Mabin, 'The Rise and Decline of Port Elizabeth, 1850–1900', *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 19 (1986), pp. 275–303.

42 On this, see R. Ross, 'The Relative Importance of Exports and the Internal Market for the Agriculture of the Cape Colony, 1770–1855', in G. Liesegang, H. Pasch and A. Jones (eds.), *Figuring African Trade* (Berlin, 1985), p. 259.

43 There was a certain trade in salt meat, to the passing ships and for export to the Mascareignes, but this was comparatively negligible.

could have been sufficient to alleviate the problems that emancipation might have caused, by providing income sufficient to satisfy landowner and labourer alike. But, for this to have happened, prices would have had to have risen dramatically in the 1840s, whereas, in fact, they seem to have stayed fairly stable. Post-emancipation economic expansion was thus not demand driven, although demand was sufficient to sustain the expansion achieved.

CAPITAL

The other possibility is that farmers were able to compensate for the loss of labour by sharply increasing their productivity. This would have entailed a considerable injection of capital. The capital was, indeed, available in the form of the compensation money paid at the emancipation of slaves. There were complaints, which have been exaggerated in later historiography, that Cape slaveowners did not receive the full value for their slaves, largely because the money had to be collected in London and the agents obviously took a commission. Nevertheless, since there was considerable competition between those vying for agency,[44] and since the number of absentee slaveowners at the Cape was minimal, the majority of the £1,193,085 8s. 6d. granted by the British government to the Cape slaveowners as compensation money certainly reached the Cape.[45] Some of this obviously had to be used to redeem mortgages secured on slave property, but the farmers would nevertheless have had a clean slate and thus have been able to raise capital again on the credit market against the security of their landed property. This would have been available, since their pre-emancipation creditors were largely residents of the colony.[46]

The injection of capital into the Cape Colony which resulted from emancipation allowed, and in many ways gave rise to, the development of the Cape's banking system. The first private bank in the colony was established in 1837, and within a few years several others had followed. The government-run Lombard and Discount Banks were driven out of business as a result.[47] The farmers found that credit had become easier to obtain, and thus cheaper. In this context, though, what needs to be asked is how did a ready availability of capital improve the productivity of Cape farms? The most likely possibility is that guano, from Malagas Island to the north of Cape

44 In 1834, the Cape newspapers, notably the *South African Commercial Advertiser* and *De Zuid-Afrikaan*, contain numerous advertisements from those merchants who were buying up compensation claims.

45 British Parliamentary Paper (BPP) 215 of 1837–8, Accounts of Slave Compensation Claims, pp. 351–3.

46 This was pointed out by John Fairbairn in the *South African Commercial Advertiser*, 11 Sept. 1833, cited by Meltzer, p. 175 in this volume.

47 E.H.D. Arndt, *Banking and Currency Development in South Africa, 1652–1927* (Cape Town, 1928); J.L. Meltzer, 'The Growth of Cape Town Commerce and the Role of John Fairbairn's *Advertiser*, 1835–59' (MA thesis, University of Cape Town, 1989).

Town, gave at least some farms the added fertility they needed. The government, which shrewdly took a monopoly on the sales, made a profit of nearly £150,000 over an unspecified period in the 1840s, but it is impossible to estimate how much manure this would have been, or how effective it was. Since guano revenues were concentrated heavily in a single year, 1845, it cannot have been of major importance.[48] It may have been that farmers could now buy machinery which they previously either could not afford or saw no reason to purchase, given sufficient labour. They also might have introduced new systems of husbandry in an attempt to compensate for the labour shortage. Only a close study of the equipment actually on the farms at the time, which as yet has not been undertaken, could test the accuracy of this supposition.[49] However, even in Europe, both grain and wine farming remained extremely labour-intensive throughout the nineteenth century, so the possibility of technological improvements at that date seems slight. Equally, even though they lauded 'progress' in virtually every other sphere of life, such journals as the *Cape Almanac* or the *South African Commercial Advertiser* do not seem to have focused on agronomic improvement. Dangerous as it is to argue from such negative evidence, it would seem that they did not have a great deal to applaud.[50]

THE BIFURCATION OF THE RURAL LABOUR FORCE

All in all, then, it seems unlikely that either the development of new markets by itself or the import of capital could have maintained the level of agricultural production in the wake of the emancipations. It has to be assumed, therefore, that the labour supply remained sufficient to allow the farms of the Cape Colony, both in the (largely) agricultural west and in the (largely) pastoral east, to continue at much the same level. This 'happy' result—for the farm owners at least—was in part the result of the concerted action of the landowning class, in conjunction with the colonial state, but was also, to a large degree, the result of contingent historical circumstances which were at once unplanned, unexpected and propitious.

The landowners' offensive was successful because it was based on experience, acquired over two or three decades, of holding the officially free Khoisan effectively in bondage. The supposedly emancipatory Ordinance 50

48 W.A. Newman, *Biographical Memoir of John Montagu* (London and Cape Town, 1855), p. 57. The figure which Newman gives does not tally with the much lower figures in the Cape Blue Books. I am grateful to Andrew Bank for his investigations of the latter for me.

49 Given the number of wills and inventories, such a study is not doomed for lack of evidence.

50 On the limits of technical progress in grain agriculture see Marincowitz, 'Rural Production and Labour', pp.108–11; on the progressive movement in general, see J. du Plessis, 'Colonial Progress and Countryside Conservatism: An essay on the Legacy of Van der Lingen of Paarl, 1831–75' (MA thesis, University of Stellenbosch, 1988), pp. 30–83.

was subverted fairly systematically at the local level. Even had they been willing to enforce it fully, which is most doubtful, the courts simply did not have the staff to do so.[51]

With the emancipation of slaves the number of those who were free, but whom the landowners still considered to be subservient, increased dramatically. The result was a two-pronged offensive by landowners. The first prong was legislative. This took three forms. The first, contemporary with the abolition of slavery, was the attempt to have a legislation controlling vagrancy introduced into the colony. The Ordinance in question, which was published on 14 May 1834, empowered and required 'every field-commandant, field-cornet and provisional field-cornet [the local officers of law and administration, elected from among the wealthiest farmers of a district]...to apprehend all persons found within his jurisdiction, whom he may reasonably suspect of having no reasonable means of subsistence, or who cannot give a satisfactory account of themselves.'[52] This Ordinance was passed by the Cape's Legislative Council, largely by the votes of the 'unofficial members, that is to say those who did not owe their membership to their tenure of a high position in the administration. It was then submitted to the Colonial Office in London for approval before enactment.

Even before it had been tabled, Colonel T.F. Wade, who had been Acting Governor of the Cape and was the Ordinance's main sponsor, had, rather disingenuously, informed the Colonial Office that laws would be introduced with, as their objects

> the prevention or punishment of vagrancy...and for securing [sic] a sufficiency of labourers to the colony by compelling not only the liberated apprentices to earn an honest livelihood, but all others who, being capable of doing so, may be inclined to lead an idle and vagabondizing life.[53]

In other words, the Vagrancy Ordinance was explicitly designed to re-establish the control of slaveowners over their erstwhile slaves, and also of landowners in general over the Khoisan. Indeed, Ordinance 50 had already been followed by an offensive along these lines.[54] For this reason, the Vagrancy Ordinance was greeted both with a large-scale movement of those Khoisan who were able to the mission stations, where they expected a degree of protection,[55] and with a storm of protest—from the missionaries and other

51 L.C. Duly, 'A Revisit with the Cape's Hottentot Ordinance of 1828', in M. Kooy (ed.), *Studies in Economics and Economic History: Essays in Honour of Professor H.M. Robertson*, (London, 1972), pp. 34–46.

52 Report of the Select Committee on Aborigines (British Settlements), Together With the Minutes of Evidence, British Parliamentary Paper (BPP) 538 of 1836, pp. 723–4.

53 Cited in W.M. Macmillan, *The Cape Colour Question: A Historical Survey* (London, 1927), p. 234.

54 'Evidence of Major W.B. Dundas', BPP 538 of 1836, p. 128.

55 Macmillan, *Cape Colour Question*, p. 238.

defenders of Khoisan and slave rights, as well as from a substantial group of the Khoisan themselves.[56] Essentially, as they were all too well aware from past experience, the passing of such an ordinance would allow a farmer to arrest any employee who left the farm on which he or she worked. This would prevent any form of bargaining as to wages or conditions, by weighting the scales far too heavily in the farmer's favour. As a result, the Colonial Office disallowed the Vagrancy Ordinance as being incompatible with Ordinance 50.

If the vagrancy measures failed to achieve the desired control over the labouring population, the subsequent Master and Servant Ordinance did so, to a large degree. It, too, had a difficult passage. The first draft which was submitted to London was rejected because its operation was limited to 'people of colour'.[57] However, shorn of such racial excrescences, a revised version became law in 1841, and indeed remained so, in somewhat amended form, until the 1960s.[58] The basic import of the measure, as John Marincowitz has noted, was that it transferred numerous aspects of an essentially civil law contract between an employer and an employee into the sphere of criminal law. This was because the Ordinance made 'misconduct' on the part of the employee a punishable offence. Misconduct was an elastic concept, defined to include 'refusals or neglect to perform work, negligent work, damage of a master's property through negligence, violence, insolence, scandalous immorality, drunkenness, gross misconduct'[59] and so forth. The punishments were not so vague; offenders could be docked one month's wages, or imprisoned, with or without hard labour, for 14 days. The result was thus a more stringent labour code than that imposed on the emancipated slaves of the Caribbean or Mauritius.

Nevertheless, this was thought to be not enough. The third measure of labour control was the Bill to prevent the practice of squatting on government lands, which was introduced into the Legislative Assembly on 10 October 1851. Rightly or wrongly, many farmers thought that government land and the farms of their less scrupulous colleagues[60] were being used by

56 For the former, see the evidence before the Select Committee on Aborigines, notably that provided by Capt. C. Bradford, the Rev. H.P. Hallbeck and Dr. J. Philip; for the latter, see E. Bradlow, 'The Khoi and the Proposed Vagrancy Legislation of 1834', *Quarterly Bulletin of the South African Public Library*, 39 (1985), pp. 99–105, and S. Trapido, 'The Emergence of Liberalism and the Making of "Hottentot Nationalism", 1815–34', in Collected Seminar Papers of the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, London: *The Societies of Southern Africa in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, 17 (1991).

57 Otherwise, so it was argued, no European workmen would ever be prepared to emigrate to South Africa.

58 Marincowitz, 'Rural Production and Labour', pp. 57–65; C. Bundy, 'The Abolition of the Master and Servants Act', *South African Labour Bulletin*, 2 (1975), pp. 37–46.

59 Master and Servant: Documents on the Working of the Order-in-Council of 21 July 1846 (Cape Town, for the Legislative Council, 1849), p. 3.

60 W.F. Bergh, Resident Magistrate of Malmesbury to Secretay to Government, 20 Feb. 1849, in Master and Servant: Addenda to the Documents on the Working of the Order-in-Council of the 21st July 1846

potential labourers to escape the necessity of regular labour. Once again, there was considerable protest against the Bill, and it was dropped at the final moment of its passage through the legislature. The western Cape landowners believed, rightly or wrongly, that its enactment would be the signal for an armed uprising among their labourers, and they panicked.[61] One cynical official wrote of the panic that 'It has been good for the dealers in gunpowder here.'[62]

The remarkable thing about the Squatting Bill was that it was largely unnecessary. The second prong of the landowners' offensive had seen to that. As the Caribbean experience showed clearly, ex-slaves—and for that matter the emancipated Khoisan— needed independent access to land if they were to reconstitute themselves as a peasantry and thus escape their former masters' control. There were a few areas of the eastern Cape where this was possible for a time, both as squatters on Crown lands[63] and, above all, in the Kat River Settlement.[64] Even before emancipation a number of Free Blacks and their descendants had set up as market gardeners in the neighbourhood of Cape Town.[65] In general, however, the land of the Cape had been taken over by the landowning class to such an extent that this was impossible. This could be done, despite the low density of population, because of the highly uneven distribution of water throughout the Cape countryside. Without access to a reasonably permanent stream, an independent existence as a peasantry was not feasible, and the small communities which attempted this were few and poverty stricken.[66] Slave gardens, worked mostly on Sundays, as

(Cape Town, for the Legislative Council, 1849), p. 191; *De Zuid-Afrikaan*, 28 Sept. 1848, cited in Marincowitz, 'Rural Production and Labour', pp. 84–5.

61 For divergent views on the reality of the planned uprising, see J. Marincowitz, 'From "Colour Question" to "Agrarian Problem" at the Cape: Reflections on the Interim', in H. Macmillan and S. Marks (eds.), *Africa and Empire: W.M. Macmillan, Historian and Social Critic* (London, 1989), pp. 155–60; E. Bradlow, 'The "Great Fear" at the Cape of Good Hope, 1851–2', *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 23 (1989) pp. 401–22. In general, I believe that the evidence favours Bradlow's argument that the panic was without foundation.

62 John Rainier to John Montagu, 3 Jan. 1852, in Further Papers Detailing an Alarm in the District of Riversdale in Reference to the Proposed Ordinance 'To Prevent the Practice of Settling or Squatting on Government Lands' (Cape Town, for the Legislative Council, 1852), p. 28, CA, LCA 26/8, 10.

63 S. Dubow, *Land, Labour and Merchant Capital: The Experience of the Graaff-Reinet District in the Pre-Industrial Economy of the Cape (1852–72)*, Centre for African Studies, University of Cape Town, Communications, no. 6 (1982), pp. 63–70.

64 T. Kirk, 'Progress and Decline in the Kat River Settlement', *Journal of African History*, 14 (1973), pp. 411–28; J.B. Peires, 'The British and the Cape, 1814–34', in R. Elphick and H.B. Giliomee (eds.), *The Shaping of South African Society, 1652–1840*, 2nd edn. (London, 1989), p. 484; J.C. Visagie 'Die Katriviernedersetting, 1829–39' (Ph.D. thesis, University of South Africa, 1978); C. Crais, *White Supremacy and Black Resistance in Pre-Industrial South Africa: The Making of a Colonial Order in the Eastern Cape, 1770–1865* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 79–86.

65 Bank, *Decline of Urban Slavery at the Cape*.

66 Proceedings of Evidence Given Before the Committee of the Legislative Council Respecting the Proposed Ordinance 'To Prevent the Practice of Settling or Squatting Upon Government Lands (Cape Town, for the Legislative Council, 1852), esp. pp. 8–10, 19, 40–1.

they had been before emancipation,[67] could thus only continue, as they had started, by the grace of the landowner. These then formed extra bonds, tying the ex-slaves to the farms on which they worked.

The main alternative for those seeking a modicum of independence were the mission stations. During the 1840s, the number of those who were prepared to accept the discipline imposed by the missionaries increased sharply. Between around 1838 and the early 1850s, the population of the missions of the western Cape doubled, from about 6,000 to around 12,000.[68] In particular, the southern plains of Caledon and Swellendam districts had a number of very large such stations, especially at Genadendal and Elim, but there were also a number of smaller stations in the Stellenbosch and Cape districts, in addition to the old established village of Mamre in the Groenkloof, in the heart of the wheat-growing Zwartland.

The mission stations could not in any way directly support the hundreds of ex-slaves who thronged to them. They could provide a house and a vegetable garden but not sufficient land to provide subsistence for a family. There might have been a certain amount of employment on the stations itself, as teachers, or in workshops such as the famous Genadendal knife works. But the great majority, at least of the men, had to find work outside on the farms. Those who were able returned to the stations every weekend, but many had to work at greater distance, and were away from home for weeks at a time. The missions could provide security from the exactions of over-exploitative farmers. Children and women—at least outside peak harvesting—spent most of their time there, but the men were absent for long periods.[69] The population figures for the stations cannot be treated as a true census, except during such holidays as Christmas and Easter, but rather represent those who were registered as belonging to the station.

There were some alternatives. A few farmers did hire out living space to labourers who were working elsewhere.[70] Presumably these landowners were prepared to flout any pressure from their fellows in exchange for the rent they received and, no doubt, for an assured supply of labour for themselves. Refugees were also to be found in the villages and small towns of the Cape, and even in Cape Town which grew considerably in the years immediately after emancipation. However, places such as Stellenbosch, Paarl, Swellendam or George could not provide regular employment for the hundreds of ex-slaves who came to live there. Seasonal employment on the

67 Isaac Bissieux to Directors, 22 nov. 1830, *Journal des Missions Evangeliques*, 6 (1831), p. 67. It may be significant that this report came from Wellington, the location of the short episode in post-emancipation share-cropping mentioned above.

68 Marincowitz, 'Rural Production and Labour', p. 41.

69 Master and Servant: Addenda contains an occupational census of the mission stations in 1848.

70 Master and Servant: Addenda, p. 191.

surrounding farms was, therefore, the only way to make a living. There was even a regular exodus from Cape Town for the wine and wheat harvests. The towns provided more freedom than the mission stations, though the living conditions were probably inferior.[71]

It was here that the serendipity of the Cape's labour situation after emancipation was to be found. The mission stations and, to a lesser extent, the towns of the colony were much hated by the farmers. They were seen as repositories of idleness. One farmer noted that they 'have been called "reservoirs of labour" but they are more like stagnant pools, engendering pestilential vapours and requiring immediate purification.'[72] However, at least in economic terms, this does not seem to have been an accurate assessment. Grain, wine and wool production all have sharp peaks in their labour requirements, for pruning, harvesting, shearing and so forth. In the Cape, these did not coincide. For example, the timing of the wheat harvest varied in the different regions of the Cape, as can be expected given the country's great distances and high relief. As a result, it is at least arguable that the most efficient use of labour under such circumstances would have been the combination of a small number of tied labourers on each farm, coupled to a large pool of men and women who travelled round the countryside and worked where they were needed at any given moment. Under slavery, this was difficult to organize, even though the Khoisan might be employed as casual labourers and farmers frequently hired each other's slaves for peak periods.[73] With emancipation, this was achievable. The mission inhabitants played the role of travelling labourers, while those held in place by the contracts of the Masters and Servants Ordinance formed the fixed core of labourers on each farm. As a result it was possible for the farmers to compensate for any shortfall in labour caused by the withdrawal of many women and children from the labour force. What labour there was, was used more efficiently.

CONCLUSION

It might seem, then, as though the Cape Colony was about the only case where the economic predictions of the abolitionists actually came true, and where freedom raised all-round productivity. Clearly, this would be overstating the matter considerably. The restrictive legislation, such as the Masters and Servants Ordinance, and a welter of restrictive practices kept a high

71 On Cape Town, see in particular S. Judges, 'Poverty, Living Conditions and Social Relations: Aspects of Life in Cape Town in the 1830s' (MA thesis, University of Cape Town, 1977).

72 Master and Servant, pp. 74–5, cited in Marincowitz, 'Rural Production and Labour', p. 85. This sort of reaction was a clear psychological residue of slavery. The former slaveowners could not countenance their labourers not being directly under their own control.

73 Worden, *Slavery in Dutch South Africa*, pp. 87–8.

proportion of the erstwhile slaves and Khoisan in bondage. It was not for nothing that Dr John Philip spent the rest of his life campaigning against the dilution of both Ordinance 50 and the emancipation of slaves. After the establishment of the Cape Parliament in 1854, which entrenched the power of Cape gentry, the Masters and Servants Ordinance was strengthened, to tie those labourers who were held on the farms ever closer to the landowners.[74]

This was not a maintenance of the pre-emancipation patterns of labour organization. Rather, the Cape's post-emancipation trajectory created a new division of labour, a process analogous to, though very different from, what happened in the cotton belt of the United States. What the post-emancipation settlement clearly did do was divide the Cape's rural working class into those who were tied to the farms and those who had at least one foot in the relative freedom of the mission stations or country towns, which gave them the possibility of social mobility denied to their fellows. There may not have been much difference between the two groups in terms of the standard of living they enjoyed in the years immediately after emancipation. Those who remained on the farms, even if they changed employer, at least knew what to expect, and were guaranteed a minimum of subsistence. Those who went to the towns risked abject poverty, while those on the mission stations had to submit to a form of discipline which, although it differed from that experienced under slavery, was perhaps no less restricting for some, notably in its enforced sobriety. However, in the long term, the two groups came to grow apart, both in economic terms and matters of culture. The inhabitants of the mission stations, the country towns[75] and Cape Town had the chance to acquire education and to work their way up out of their status as agricultural labourers—or at least their descendants did. Symbolically the first school for the training of ex-slaves, Khoi and, indeed, African teachers was opened in Genadendal in 1838.[76] The products of this and other such institutions became among the most typical examples of the 'Cape coloured' élite. In contrast, those who remained as farm labourers had few, if any, opportunities to escape from the cycle of bondage, debt peonage and alcohol addiction, so characteristic of Cape rural life.[77] The results of this bifurcation are still evident today.

74 Marincowitz, 'Rural Labour and Production', pp. 125–9.

75 The diaries of the Rhenish missionaries in Stellenbosch, Worcester and Tulbagh, published in the *Jahresbericht der Rhenische Missionsgesellschaft* show them to have worked mostly as schoolteachers.

76 *Dictionary of South African Biography*, vol. 4 (Durban, 1981), p. 207.

77 See, for example, P. Scully, 'Criminality and Conflict in Rural Stellenbosch, 1870–1900', *Journal of African History*, 30 (1989), pp. 289–301; *idem*, 'Liquor and Labour in Stellenbosch District, 1870–1900' in C. Ambler and J. Crush (eds.), *Liquor and Labour in Southern Africa* (Athens, Ohio, 1992), pp. 56–77; and numerous studies on twentieth-century rural Cape labour.