The origins of capitalist agriculture in the Cape Colony: a survey

Ross, R.J.

The Origins of Capitalist Agriculture in the Cape Colony: A Survey

R. Ross

Introduction

On the eve of the mineral discoveries that were to transform the political economy of Southern Africa, the majority of those parts of the rural areas dominated by settlers were unmistakably capitalist in character.[1] On the one hand agricultural and pastoral production throughout the Cape Colony and, to a lesser extent, in Natal and the southern Orange Free State was largely geared to the market, and indeed to export trade. Merchant firms and country banks were established throughout the territory, and a cycle of boom and slump was developing. The fact that diamonds were discovered in the middle of the most serious depression the country had yet known has tended, it seems, to distort historians' views of the true nature of preindustrial colonial society.[2] Merchant capital is, admittedly, often compatible with non-capitalist forms of production and was well able to work with the African smallholders of the eastern Cape.[3] But, on the other hand, over the greater part of the Cape Colony, and in the wool-raising areas of the southern Orange Free State,[4] the majority of the labourers were already thoroughly alienated from any independent access to the means of production. In other words, they were proletarianized. The district magistrates, required by the British Colonial Office to provide monthly wage rates for the annual Blue Book, found no difficulty in doing so, although they generally commented that part of the remuneration was in kind and that the African labourers who were beginning to come into the eastern parts of the colony (and, in Colesberg, also 'hottentot herdsmen') generally received grazing rights for their stock, and might therefore be described as labour-tenants.[5]

Moreover the colony was almost entirely agricultural. According to the census of 1865, out of a total working population of 155 939 only 13 186 (8,5 per cent) were employed in manufacturing and 6 887 (4,4

per cent) in commerce as opposed to 74 574 (47,8 per cent) in agriculture. Many of the manufacturers, especially outside Cape Town, in fact provided services for the farming communities, as waggonbuilders, brickmakers etc.; or, as distillers, millers and wool-washers, they processed agricultural products.[6]

It may seem difficult to rhyme such a description of Cape society with, for instance, Morris's claim that in the late nineteenth century capitalist mining was introduced 'into an environment which, apart from the ports of Cape Town and Durban, was predominantly feudal and subsistence orientated'.[7] Such a formulation may hold for the Transvaal and the northern Orange Free State, which were the backwaters of colonial South Africa before 1870. Elsewhere, however, and notably in parts of the eastern Cape and in Natal, tenancy could be combined with considerable levels of commercialization.[8] Moreover, from the point of view of the contemporary colonial economy, and of settler society, the Cape was totally dominant. In the mid-1860s the white population of Southern Africa was about a quarter of a million, of whom 180 000, or just under three quarters, lived in the Cape Colony.[9] While not all of those of European descent who lived within the Cape would have been unequivocably within the orbit of capitalist production, many of those living in the Free State and Natal *would* have been. And if all those who were fully incorporated in the colonial economy, including proletarianized so-called 'coloured' labourers, were taken into account, then the population who lived within a capitalist environment in the Cape Colony would be considerably higher.

The contrast with the situation half a century later remains. By then the mineral revolution based on diamonds and gold had created a market for grain in the South African interior incomparably greater than any that had previously existed, while the coming of the railways had made it possible for farmers on the highveld to take full advantage of this development. Indeed, as much recent work has made clear, the mineral revolution of the Transvaal was accompanied by an agricultural revolution there, which was perhaps not as speedy but which was equally far-reaching in the consequences which it had for social relations. The swift rise and short heyday of African share-croppers in some highveld districts formed an integral phase in the transition to more strictly capitalist forms of agriculture.[10] But two points should be made with regard to this revolution. First, although it contains the most dramatic episodes, it is certainly not the whole story

of South African agriculture in this period. In the absence of detailed research, one must conclude that in those areas of the country where quasi-capitalist relations of production had already been established, and even in some of those, such as East Griqualand,[11] where they were being established, the economic revolution of the north had relatively little effect. Agricultural production was certainly slowly intensified, to the disadvantage of the white *bywoners* (or sharecroppers), but 'coloured' and African farm labourers continued to work under much the same deplorable conditions as before. Secondly, the pattern of relationships that eventually came into existence in the north bore many similarities to those further south. With few exceptions the South African countryside as a whole, outside the African reserves, became what it had long been in the Cape, namely a land not of plantations, not of smallholders, but of large owner-operated farms worked by a harshly exploited black labour force. This social landscape did not spring up overnight. It was only established after a long struggle within the white political process and, more importantly, against the African tenantries, and these struggles significantly affected the eventual form of capitalist agriculture on the highveld. But in the course of this struggle the capitalizing farmers had a model towards which they were steering, namely the model of the settler farm as it later came to be found throughout British colonial Africa from the Cape to the White Highlands of Kenya.[12] Since this model was so widely applied, it is easy to take it as a given, as a natural form of colonial exploitation, but it was not. As close as Mozambique and Malawi, very different methods of exploitation were employed,[13] as indeed they were in other areas colonized from Britain, whether in the form of plantations, as in Malaya, the Caribbean or the southern United States, or in the much smaller family farm of New England, New Zealand, or parts of Australia. The South African white agricultural system is a specific historical construction which was developed in the Cape Colony during the first two centuries of European colonial presence and was then extended further and further north. In this paper, I hope to chart and to explain this development.

Markets

The development of agriculture in the Cape Colony was a relatively slow process in comparison to that in many of the other colonies

established by Europeans at about the same time. The Dutch East India Company (VOC) had founded the settlement in the hope that it would supply the provisions needed by its ships on their voyages between Europe and the East, but it took several decades before the colony was even able to feed itself. Thereafter, once the appropriate farming methods for the region had been discovered, agricultural progress was steady, but there was no export-led boom analogous to those of seventeenth century Barbados, eighteenth century Saint Dominique or nineteenth century Alabama.

The most important reasons for this derive from the effects of geography on the Cape settlers' ability to develop markets. The so-called Mediterranean climate of the south-west Cape made it suitable for the production of agricultural commodities which were also grown in Europe and, as experiments with the introduction of cotton and indigo proved,[14] only of those crops. This seemingly trite fact had considerable economic consequences. If Cape goods were to be imported into Europe, which was by far the greatest market for agricultural produce throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, then they would have to compete directly with, for instance, wheat and wine cultivated in Europe itself. Given the high cost of transoceanic transport, this was unlikely to be profitable. There were moments, for instance in the 1770s, when the directors of the Dutch East India Company decided that Cape grain could be sold for a profit in Europe, and a few shipments were sent.[15] In general though, exports of Cape agricultural products to Europe were likely to be successful only when protected by tariff barriers, as was the case with the wine sent to Britain in the 1820s,[16] or when, as with wool shipments throughout the nineteenth century, the increase in European consumer demand was so great that European producers could not meet it, so that international imports became competitive.

The Cape Colony then, did not become a major exporter of agricultural produce to Europe, at least until well into the nineteenth century. This did not mean that there were no outlets for the wine, wheat and meat of the Cape farmers. The very equivalence between the Cape and Europe as agricultural producers meant that, conversely, the Cape could find markets in the tropics, particularly among communities of European descent where wheaten bread was a preferred commodity.[17] Later, outlets for wine could also be found in the southern hemisphere colonies, notably in Australia.[18] But to a very large extent the strategic position of the Cape determined the markets

from which the colony's agriculture could profit. In the first place, this included the ships that put into the harbours of Table and False Bays. These formed the most visible market for agriculture and historians have often used the number of ships in port as the prime, indeed the only, indicator of the economic conjuncture.[19] However, the indications would seem to be that the indirect effects of the Cape's geographical location were more important than the direct ones. First, the multiplier effects of the shipping greatly increased the size of Cape Town and thus of the urban market, as numerous trading establishments, lodging houses, and inns were set up to serve the requirements of the ships' crews. Secondly, the Cape's strategic position and the inherent bureaucracy of the VOC meant that a swollen establishment was maintained in Cape Town: the number of Company employees had increased to over three thousand by the last decades of the eighteenth century. All in all, it has been established that at least a third of the non-Khoisan population of the colony was resident in Cape Town before 1795.[20] Thereafter, this proportion declined, though the development of other urban centres and agricultural specialization ensured the survival of the internal market.[21] As a result, expansion of production was generally steady, rather than spectacular, as, with the exception of the wine boom of 1815 – 1825, it was determined more by the general economic growth of the colony than by any sudden openings on the world market.

More than anything else, though, it was the Cape's position as the 'master link of connection between the western and eastern world' which allowed its agriculture to find markets and its economy to grow.[22]. Even though they bemoaned the cost involved, both the Dutch and the British realized that they had to defend the Cape of Good Hope as a crucial part of their global imperial systems.[23] As a consequence, large sums of money were continually sent to South Africa to maintain the garrisons of the Cape. In the nineteenth century, this money, which reached a million pounds in 1852, was largely responsible for maintaining the colony's balance of payments in something like equilibrium.[24]

Territorial Expansion and the Market

The claim that Cape agriculture was largely dependent on the internal market does not necessarily entail arguing that all farmers, everywhere

and throughout the colony's history, were dependent on that market and were fully incorporated into its orbit. But, to an unfortunate extent, the historiography of early colonial South Africa has been dominated by discussion of those farmers whose ties to that market seem to have been weakest. Once again, there has been a strong tendency to assume that what was, in contemporary terms, peripheral and marginal should be considered typical and central. The core areas of the colony, in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, were the wine and wheat districts of the south west Cape. It was here that the basic patterns of class rule and labour relations were established. These farmers were specialized operators producing for the internal and overseas market. This can be demonstrated simply by pointing out that almost all these farmers possessed slaves, most of whom would have been purchased and all of whom would have been saleable.[25] It would not have been possible for this labour force to have been accumulated unless the farmers either had sufficient cash in hand or could raise sufficient loans (and satisfy their creditors that the loans could be repaid) to pay for slaves. (One might add that the colony itself had to have sufficient foreign exchange to reimburse the slave traders in the first place.) In the circumstances of the Cape, all slave-owners, and thus virtually all arable farmers, were necessarily tied to the market.

Indeed, the major argument with regard to these farmers has been not that they did not want the market, but that the market did not want them. It is a widely held view that 'overproduction of agricultural produce . . . continued to plague the Cape farmer throughout the eighteenth century'.[26] There are good reasons to believe that this is mistaken. It would seem axiomatic that in such a situation the price of produce would be driven down to such an extent that profits would be minimal and expansion out of the question, at least until demand sufficient to absorb the supply arose. 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.[27] Prices remained stable — it is difficult in the late twentieth century to remember that this was their normal condition — and did not fall to the extent that a drastic overproduction model would predict.[28] At least from the 1780s, a grain shortage was a more usual condition than a glut.[29] Furthermore, as Worden has shown, slave prices increased considerably over the course of the century, and the rate of return on investment would

appear to have been satisfactory, though by no means spectacular.[30]

Once settlement had crossed the mountains of the south west Cape, which formed the boundary of arable farming because of difficulties of transport across the passes to market, the matter may appear rather less clear cut. From around 1720 until deep into the nineteenth century, the great majority of farmers living to the north and east of the Breë River drew the great proportion of their income, in cash or in subsistence, from their flocks of sheep and herds of cattle. Since the rainfall of the Cape diminishes sharply away from the southern coast, the availability of pasture and water meant that the stock population (and hence the human population) could nowhere be dense, and the farmers were often forced to be transhumant.[31] It was against this ecological background that so-called trekboer society developed.

At the time, the rulers of the colony looked askance at the trekboers. To one official they 'lived as animals on the *veld* with the animals',[32] and a rich colonist expressed the fear that the inhabitants of the Camdebo, near modern Graaff-Reinet, 'will become a completely savage nation'.[33] To many twentieth century historians these interior trekboers appeared, misleadingly, to be responsible for the character of modern Afrikaners. To some, this was a matter for reprobation, to others one for rejoicing.[34] But the stereotype which sees the frontier farmers of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century as indigent, nomadic and devoid of links to the market — or even of any economic rationality — does not stand up to detailed historical investigation. Rather the expansion of colonial farmers into the Cape interior was in general in response to correctly perceived economic opportunities, within the framework of a land tenure system which precluded subdivision,[35] of an expanding population and of a kinship structure which stressed the importance of the economic independence of every young married pair.[36]

For some who acquired farms on the fringes of white settlement, this is quite clear. A number of those who were granted grazing rights were owners of arable farms in the south west, who used their new ranches to run draft oxen for their ploughs and wagons. In 1731, all the grazing land that had been acquired to the east of the Gourits River near Mossel Bay, then the most distant settlement, was owned by men with other agricultural property further west. They included, in Johannes Cruijwagen, probably the richest burgher of the time.[37] In the 1770s, to give another example, Jacob van Reenen, who was the colony's major butcher, had farms spread as far as the Hantam in the north and the mouth of the Gamtoos in the east, both on the margins of settlement.[38]

For these few, then, the establishment of frontier farms was a way of balancing their agricultural portfolio. In the great majority of cases, though, the people of the frontier were there because they were unable, as Guelke argues, to compete for valuable farms closer to the market.[39] Guelke's work, which mainly relates to the eighteenth century, has been the major recent contribution to the study of the trekboers. His basic point is that at a certain stage of European colonization, the availability of 'free' land — 'free' in that it did not have to 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 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'. Indeed, frontier farmers 'retained liberal (individualistic) commercial outlooks', and were thoroughly prepared to exploit such market opportunities as were offered.[40] 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 for increased market orientation. Guelke argues that the degree of commercialization before 1779 was not sufficient to bring the full switch-over from subsistence pastoralism. He may well be right in regard to some regions but there are clear indications of specialized butter production in the Swellendam area by this date, among a number of similar developments.[41] Moreover, for the great sweep of what were later to be the Cape midlands, from the Sneeuberg south to Algoa Bay, and probably also for the northern borderlands of the Bokkevelden and the Roggeveld,[42] this was the latest date at which such a characterization would be accurate — less than two decades, it should be remembered, after the colonial conquest and settlement of the eastern districts.[43] Both then and later, the interior farmers were engaged in almost desperate efforts to conjure a cash income out of everything that would allow their basic capital — their flocks and herds — to build up,[44] and from at least that date, their flocks themselves were the object of commercial transactions. The speed of the transformation in successive

districts is remarkable. After 1770, the interest of the major butchers in the Graaff-Reinet sheep flocks, and conversely of the frontier farmer in the development of the Cape Town market, is very evident. By then, the Cape butchers were complaining that they could not get the supplies of meat they required because the Graaff-Reinet farmers found it more profitable to sell soap and butter, given the current prices.[45] In other, more technical, terms a price cross-elasticity of supply was operating. Whatever the reason for their initial settlement, the pastoralists were being drawn, willingly, into the orbit of commercial capitalism, and it is at least an arguable hypothesis that the brutality which characterized labour relations in the area at the time was a consequence of the transformation.[46] However that may be, thereafter it was only on the desert fringes of the north-west Cape, if there, that subsistence farmers were still to be found.

The Intensification of Commerce

The fact that the great majority of farmers were in some sense commercialized by around 1800 should not be taken to imply a high density of mercantile activity. In the almost totally agrarian society of the Cape, it is paradoxically easiest to judge the level of commercialization by the development of small country towns which came to serve as district centres. It is true that in 1800 there were no more than four such centres,[47] none much greater than a European village. Barrow, who visited them all, wrote approvingly of Stellenbosch and Paarl, both neat if dispersed settlements, with 70 and 30 houses respectively. Lichtenstein, who was in Swellendam a few years later, described it as containing a fair number of handicraft workers and traders, who catered mainly to those on the road. Concerning Graaff-Reinet, the only significant town settlement away from the south-west, Barrow was most scathing:

> It consists of an assemblage of mud huts, placed at some distance from each other, in two lines, forming a kind of street. . . . The village is chiefly inhabited by mechanics and such as hold some petty employment under the landdrost. Its appearance is more miserable than that of the poorest village in England. The necessities of life are with difficulty procured in it; for though there be plenty of land, few are industrious enough to cultivate it. No milk, no butter, no cheese, no vegetables of any kind are to be had on any terms. There is no butcher, no chandler, no grocer, no baker. Everyone must provide for himself as best he can. They have neither wine nor beer; and the chief beverage of the inhabitants is the water of the Sunday River which in the summer season is strongly impregnated with salt.[48]

It is not a picture of a thriving market centre. However, the absence of towns did not mean an absence of commercialization. Throughout the South African interior, trading relations began not with settled traders but with travelling pedlars, the smouses, and with butchers' agents. Only after a period of time, of varied length, did the volume of trade rise to the point at which it became viable for permanent stores to be opened. In the areas of white settlement, though not, for instance, in the Transkei, this coincided with the foundation of the country *dorps*, generally signalled by the establishment of a Dutch Reformed Church. It was a process that repeated itself throughout the colony as the nineteenth century wore on. In one district after the other, small towns were founded as local agriculture there became sufficiently profitable and market-orientated to attract merchants and craftsmen on a permanent basis. In 1865, Graaff-Reinet, where Barrow could buy no bread, had eleven bakers, as well as 26 boot and shoemakers, 35 blacksmiths, and 108 'merchants, wholesale and retail dealers'. Indeed, by this time there were over four thousand such individuals in the colony, less than a quarter of whom lived in Cape Town. The great majority were scattered through the 37 settlements described in the census as 'municipalities' or 'villages', which formed the nodes of an extensive commercial network.[49]

The most spectacular cause of this intensification was the development of wool production, first along the southern coast and later throughout the Eastern Province. From the 1840s onwards, wool came to dominate the colony's exports and a large proportion of European capital invested in South African agriculture went into the establishment of wool farms.[50] Nevertheless the importance of wool for the economic development of the colony should not be exaggerated. It is at least arguable that the sale of meat, hides, skins and draught oxen remained a considerably larger source of income for even the pastoralists than did the sale of wool. There were areas of the Cape, notably in the western Karoo, where farmers generally concentrated on the production of meat and therefore saw little reason to convert their flocks from the old hairy Cape sheep,[51] which maintained condition much better than the merino when being driven as they

could literally live off their fat. Moreover, the improvement of transportation, both coastal shipping and newly built roads across the mountain passes, encouraged the spread of market orientated agriculture, as opposed to pastoralism, in many areas where this had previously been impossible. Thus the early nineteenth century saw the great expansion of wheat production in the rolling hills along both the south and west coasts,[52] while further inland it became possible to introduce new cash crops on a wide scale, notably dried fruit in the Breë River valley and tobacco in the Little Karoo.[53] The agricultural history of the colony during the nineteenth century, which is only known in the broadest outlines, is therefore basically the story of a steady intensification on the basis of the widespread, if low level, commercialization achieved by the end of the VOC period.

Capital Formation, Stratification and Credit

Much of the dynamic of early Cape history derives from the distinctions of wealth within the white community, and specifically among the actual or potential farm-owners. From the very moment at which the first Europeans received land grants from the Dutch East India Company, the farming community was internally differentiated. With time, significant levels of economic stratification developed.[54]

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. In the interior of the country during the phase of pastoralist subsistence the myth may have had some substance. At that stage there may well have been a relatively high level of equality — albeit an equality of poverty[55] — but this disappeared with the effective penetration of merchant capital and market dependence into any given region. Before the ending of this generally short phase, local 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. Despite the enormous number of studies on the Great Trek, there is as yet no satisfactory study of the background of the trekkers, but it would seem as though a large majority of those who settled north of the Orange River were those who had lost out in the increasingly keen competition for land in the more valuable areas further south.[56] There would 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 commercialized 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. A considerable number of recent studies have demonstrated the existence of a powerful and affluent elite, consisting above all of wine-growers in the region of Stellenbosch and Drakenstein and wheat farmers on the Tijgerberg and in the southern Swartland. This stratum of Cape society came into existence around 1700 and were the major beneficiaries of Willem Adriaan van der Stel's fall from grace as governor in 1707 as the result of his attempts to monopolize Cape economic life.[57] From then on they formed the sole elite of Cape rural society for well over a century — until it became possible for farmers based in other regions to achieve an equivalent level of wealth and political influence at both local and colony-wide level.

Such an argument must direct attention to the sources of agricultural capital in the preindustrial Cape, although once again any discussion of this subject must still be very fragmentary. The most common, if least spectacular, method of acquiring capital was by direct accumulation within agricultural enterprise. The initial establishment of arable farming in the late seventeenth century was not accompanied by any large capital investments, except possibly a grant, via the Dutch East India Company, from the poor fund of the defunct Dutch colony on Taiwan.[58] But once a family was established, it was often able to expand its operations to a large extent by reinvesting the profits of its activities. Given the partible system of inheritance in force at the Cape,[59] this in general meant a multiplication of farming units rather than the expansion in scale of any particular units. This has been documented to a certain extent with regard to the wine farmers. By the early nineteenth century over two-fifths of the colony's vines were owned by patrilineal descendants of men who had been in the wine business nearly a century earlier.[60] This measure underestimates the degree of continuity, since, in theory at least, there was no male bias in the passage of wealth from one generation to the next, so that many women would have received substantial legacies. As the wine-growing elite was a relatively endogenous group, the inheritances of both husband and wife could be used to build up

the new estate.[61]

It is not clear how far this pattern was also found in other sectors of Cape agriculture, although the persistence of some families in the wheat sector would seem to show that it was also operating there.[62] Nor is it known to what extent individuals who had received starting capital as the result of an inheritance deriving from agricultural enterprise in the south west were able to use this to set up, not necessarily as farmers, further inland. Piet Retief is an example of a man who did, but no research has yet been undertaken which would show how typical he was.[63] Indeed, it would be possible to see in the history of white settlement a recurring three-stage pattern, in which the initial settlers were bought out by individuals or companies who in their turn held the land as a speculation until they could sell to those whites who would actually engage in capitalist agriculture, financed either from external sources or from earlier agricultural activities. It is not clear what proportion of the original settlers were able to maintain their position in subsequent stages.

What is plain though, is that there were few agricultural enterprises which could grow very large without some source of external finance.[64] Many of the largest agricultural holdings were based on fortunes acquired outside of farming. Martin Melck, the wealthiest burgher at the Cape during the third quarter of the eighteenth century, grew rich on the contract he held for the supply of building materials to the Company and the franchise he bought, for many years, for the sale of wine in Cape Town as well as from the farms he acquired through an advantageous marriage.[65] The Van Reenen fortune was initially acquired through activities in the meat market, and was indeed extended more by international commerce and large-scale butchering than by agriculture, while the family's farms were if anything subsidiary units in a vertically integrated business.[66] Moreover, capital accumulated by the Van Reenens was almost certainly the most important foundation stone in the largest land holding accumulated in the colony, namely the 176 000 acres, stretching away from Cape Agulhas, that was owned by Reitz, Breda Joubert and Company in 1838. Both Michel van Breda and Jan Frederick Reitz were sons-in-law of Dirk Gysbert van Reenen, although they also had fortunes of their own. They built up the largest merino sheep business in the colony along the southern Cape strandveld.[67]

In general, though, money gained from commerce was invested in agriculture in a less direct way, namely by the provision of credit. In

the eighteenth century, farmers generally required credit for the purchase of imported slaves. Even after the ending of the slave trade, the rapid increase in wine production during the 1810s and 1820s was financed to a considerable extent on the basis of borrowed money, as can be seen both by the many bankruptcies when the boom burst and by the heavy mortgages on those estates which survived to the date of slave emancipation.[68] In addition, as a British merchant explained in the 1820s, the system of inheritance tended to expand the market for credit. George Thompson wrote:

> If, as is very frequently the case, there is a large family of children, and several of them are still minor, the whole property must be exposed to public sale, in order that it may be realized in money to effect its division into, perhaps, eight or ten equal shares. By this means the family farm either falls into new hands, or, if purchased back by one of the heirs, it is now reoccupied either with funds inadequate to its full cultivation, or upon capital borrowed at the rate of six, or perhaps eight per cent interest; which presses as a dead weight upon the new possessor, probably for half his lifetime. The rest of the sons either purchase farms on credit, and enter upon them in the same embarrassed state; or, if they cannot effect this, they migrate to the frontier districts and become graziers.[69]

To meet this demand, credit was available, deriving from the profits of trade. During the eighteenth century, the rule that forbade Dutch East India Company officials from owning farms did not preclude them from loaning farmers money, and indeed the difficulties of transferring money out of the colony and of supervising distant investments made this an attractive proposition. One very rich official had £25 000 out on loan to 33 different individuals at his death and there were many others with similar, if more modest, sums out against interest.[70] Until the 1790s, the provision of credit was largely in private hands. Thereafter, the establishment of a government-owned bank and then, from the 1830s, of numerous country banks meant that institutions came to play an increasingly important role in this sphere.[71] By 1860, the twenty-three Cape banks had a total circulating capital of £374 584, backed by a paid-up capital of £82 212.[72] Despite this, or perhaps, given the nature of financial institutions, because of it, the Cape Town merchants and financiers, by now largely of British origin, remained in a very powerful position, even with regard to Eastern Province wool farming. Indeed, part of the impetus behind eastern Cape separatism derived from an attempt to escape the

financial control of Cape Town.[73]

By the 1840s the Cape Town financiers were not so much advancing their own money as acting as agents for the British capital that was being invested in the wool industry of the Cape midlands. Very considerable sums of money were put into this sector, both directly into production and through the various merchant houses and traders.[74] Indeed, the sector was heavily overcapitalized, as the result of continual land speculation. When, in 1860, money became more expensive, and wool prices dropped, the result was a financial crash that shook the Cape midlands — and also the Swellendam district — to the core.[75]

In the Cape, as elsewhere, intensification of agriculture cost money. This money could be acquired as the profits of previous farming, or via the credit market, but in both cases a considerable basis was necessary before a man could establish himself as a farmer. No potential creditor would advance capital to someone who was otherwise entirely without resources. The consequences of this for social stratification within the colony were considerable. As has been pointed out above, those who went to the frontier, to conquer new areas, did so in part because they were too poor to compete for better farms in the south west. Some of these men and women were able to build up reasonable businesses for themselves as stock farmers, but many necessarily remained very poor. For so long as free land was available to this group, it could continue to expand, so that the tradition which stressed the right of every *boereseun* to a farm of his own could develop and could be transferred into the Republics after the Great Trek. Indeed, among the complex set of causes of that event was the desire to acquire the means for the life-style that they had been brought up to expect.[76] This is not to devalue the role of political discontent among the frontier farmers, although its significance has often been overplayed,[77] nor can it explain the participation of many of the Trek's leaders.[78] Nevertheless, there is a definite sense in which the Trek, and trekking in general, was a prophylactic against a populist revolt.[79]

All the same, as W. K. Hancock wrote in a somewhat different context, 'they did not all trek'.[80] Certainly until the 1860s, there were areas of the Cape in which young farmers could hope to stake out farms and, later, acquire recognition from the government. But land shortage, an increasingly vigorous land policy on the part of the government and pressure from the established landowners made this

less and less frequent.[81] In addition, the increased commercialization of agriculture placed many of those who had previously been able to acquire an independent living from the land within the colony in considerable danger of bankruptcy during the cyclical depressions which were a feature of Cape economic life from the 1860s on.[82]

It would, however, be a grave error to consider all the colony's white men, or even those who spoke Dutch, as potentially independent agriculturalists. On the one hand, there were always those who were artisans or merchants, and an increasing number who moved into the professions. On the other hand, even in the eighteenth century, economic independence was not open to a large number of whites. If the mass of Company employees and British soldiers are left out of account, there were still always a large number of men in the colony who relied on others for their support. In an occupational census made in 1732, it was found that 15 per cent of the colony's freeburghers were 'poor, indigent or decrepit'[83] and there is no reason to believe that this proportion ever decreased. What is not clear is how many of these were in fact employees on the wine and wheat estates or, further inland, on the stock farms. Many of the large farms had one or more whites in service. In the eighteenth century these were often Company servants, hired out for a period of years, but there were also those who were born in the country or who had broken all links with the VOC. While a number of them acted as travelling schoolmasters,[84] the majority were employed as bailiffs and overseers, where they were in the front line of the struggle between the slaves and the master class.[85] A few were able to make it into the higher ranks of the colonial population, but most remained poor and left no descendants.[86] In the nineteenth century there were a number of organized ventures to bring European labourers to work in the colony. Indeed, the whole 1820 settlement movement was in many ways a (failed) attempt at this, and later schemes included a shipment of Dutch orphans in 1858.[87] At the same time there was a continual trickle of men out of the British armed forces into the lower ranks of Cape society. Even in the countryside, they were occasionally able to find positions from which they could advance, but many remained as poverty-stricken labourers,[88] while to the function of overseer was now increasingly added that of the white labour tenant, or *bywoner*, particularly in the poorest regions of the colony.[89]

Land

So far this chapter has tended to fall into the pattern of far too much of the historiography of South Africa by considering the activities of the white colonists to the exclusion of both the indigenous inhabitants of the country and the imported labourers, who, in this period, were almost exclusively slaves. When two of the basic factors of production, land and labour, are considered, this becomes impossible. It is clear that a necessary condition for the establishment of colonial agriculture was the generally forcible dispossession of the African population from the land. This has been a constant theme in the historiography of the Cape since the time of Dr John Philip. In 1828 he claimed that in the century and a half of Dutch rule,

> the hottentots had been despoiled of their own 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 slave with whom they now associated.[90]

Those who survived became the 'bushmen', who, despoiled of their 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.[91] The result was the appointment of Donald Moodie, a former protector of slaves, to conduct serious research into the yet unordered Cape archives. He published a volume 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.*[92] 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. It was Moodie who first developed the argument[93] that the disintegration of Khoikhoi society had to be ascribed to the effects of newly imported diseases, notably of smallpox, 'compared to [which] the effects of war was evidently altogether trivial'.[94]

In general terms, Philip's views are closer to the truth 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, or systematically smash all peasant agricultural communities, as in parts of the Moluccas.[95] But it was due to the 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'.[96] The European conquest of the Cape Colony, and later of the rest of South Africa, was a violent process.

The process of dispossession of the Khoisan herders who inhabited the southern and western Cape was considerably swifter, more complete and, for the Europeans, easier than was to be the case later during the confrontation with the Xhosa of the east. The reasons for this lie in the precolonial social structure of the Khoisan.[97] 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, the larger groups could only continue the downwards 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. Guerilla style 'Bushman' wars, in which the colony's adversaries were largely dispossessed Khoikhoi, were to typify the eighteenth century history of resistance. From the Griqua attacks on the northern border of the colony in 1701 to the last !Kora attacks from the Orange River bush in 1879,[98] the same pattern repeated itself regularly. As European farmers drove 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 labourers for the whites was made impossible.

Within this framework, the process of Khoisan resistance to the invading whites becomes intelligible. The so-called 'Bushmen' raids against the expanding colonists may have been 'primary' resistance of hunter-gatherers in defence of their hunting grounds and their sources

of *veldkos* (wild plant food)[99] and thus of their 'traditional' livelihood. But they also become the struggle of the dispossessed against what, without stretching the concept too far, might be considered their proletarianization. The attacks were frequently the work of stock keepers who had lost their sheep and cattle; on occasions the raiders were guided by those in service of the white farmers.[100] This becomes clear from the recent work on the Khoikhoi rebellion of 1799 – 1801 in the eastern Cape.[101] The circumstances were rather different from those which had operated earlier and further west, but two points which emerge must also be valid for the previous incursions. First, the various phases in the struggle between the colonists and the Khoisan — from localized violence on the farms to open warfare and banditry — were logical continuations one of the other. Both features are also discernible 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. Indeed, this point is strengthened by the recognition of the fact that, well before 1800, there are signs of millenarian movements among the Khoisan which, though of very small extent, presage one important facet of the later reactions of South Africa's dispossessed.[102]

By the 1790s the conflict between colonists and Khoisan had become part of a much wider confrontation, that between colonists and Xhosa.[103] From the beginning this was a conflict about land; in its later phases also about labour. The steady drive eastward of the official border of the colony from the Bushmans River to the Fish, to the Keiskamma, and finally to the Kei, was justified in terms of military security but was certainly caused in part by the colonists' desire for ever more farms. In the early phases of the conflict, in the 1770s and 1780s, the struggle had been about the rich grazing grounds of the upper Fish river, in the area known to the colonists as the Agter Bruintjes Hoogten, which was then the most important cattle breeding district in the east of the colony.[104] Thereafter, the locus of conflict moved south until 1812, to the rich summer grazing of the Zuurveld. Later, as the wool industry became established, hunger for sheep farms was a prime motive. In the middle of the 1835 war, T. H. Bowker, a leading settler who was later, as magistrate of the Kat River settlement, to play a large role in provoking the rebellion that led to its expropriation, wrote of Queen Adelaide Province that

'the appearance of the country is very fine. It will make excellent sheep farms . . . far too good for such a race of runaways as the Kaffirs'.[105] Over 400 requests for land grants in the province (approximately the modern Ciskei) were made before Lord Glenelg rescinded its annexation. Meanwhile, 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.[106] Nevertheless, it cannot be coincidental that the most expansionist of the British governors, Sir Harry Smith, was a close associate of this group, and that his actions, both on the eastern frontier and in the Orange Free State, resulted directly in a considerable extension of their activities. They were not the only ones to benefit from the pressure of British troops. As was mentioned above, the colony's financial stability depended on the subventions from the imperial treasury for the British forces in South Africa. Since the forces involved were largely used against the Xhosa on the eastern frontier and were therefore far more numerous than they would have been had they merely to protect the naval base of Simonstown, it could be said that the colony was partly kept in business by its eastward expansion.

The struggle for the land did not end with the conquest of a particular district, even if the original African inhabitants were then expelled. In many areas, large tracts of ground remained unalienated to European farmers for decades.[107] In some cases, this was purely a consequence of the inefficiency of the Colonial Surveyor's department, so that the so-called squatters were in fact colonial farmers who had staked out their claims but had yet to receive official recognition. But there were areas — the south-east of Graaff-Reinet district being perhaps the clearest example — where large communities of squatters, Xhosa, Khoi, and white, were able to exist for a considerable length of time despite the protests of the dominant local whites. The colonial state simply did not have the power to expel all those who were considered undesirable until, in the case of Graaff-Reinet, the 1860s. Even after an area had been divided between colonial farms, the new owners often found that the income to be derived from collecting rent from African tenants and the unrest to be expected from their expulsion meant that a full transfer to more strictly capitalist relations of production had to be long delayed.[108] In the western Cape, where fertile land had long been in short supply, such instances were rare and

marginal, and the few communities on Crown Lands were on occasion absolutely destitute.[109] In the heartland of the colony, colonial agriculture was too well established by the mid-nineteenth century for it to be otherwise. In the east, by contrast, the establishment of capitalist farming was not complete, though at the same date or a decade later it was nevertheless well advanced. Capitalist farmers and their allies were dominant, and well able to win any battles that they collectively thought to be vital.

Labour

The first two centuries of colonial agriculture, like the third, saw a steady process of proletarianization of the African population within effective colonial boundaries. However, even before this had taken on in any more than marginal forms, the great majority of the Cape labourers were thoroughly alienated from the means of production and held in their position of subservience by force. This was because from the beginning of agricultural enterprise in the Cape they were very largely slaves, brought to the Cape from all the shores of the Indian Ocean, from Natal to New Guinea, with the largest numbers probably coming from Mozambique, Madagascar, the Indian subcontinent and East Indonesia.[110] Totally dependent on agricultural labour for their subsistence, they were also held in subservience by bonds that were even stronger than those of the market, namely the legal bonds of slavery. In the eighteenth century, approximately half 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 more Khoisan labour, are excluded, this figure rises to 90 per cent.[111] There were few if any New World colonies where land ownership and slave ownership were so concurrent.

In the past, Cape slavery had an image of 'mildness'.[112] The reason for this was probably the fact that the slave economy of the Cape differed considerably from those of the New World. Genovese and Fox-Genovese have written of a pattern common throughout the western hemisphere in which:

> First, the slave holding countries — those in which slavery dominated the economies — exhibited stunning levels of profitability and prolonged periods of economic growth. Second, in every case the boom rested on the export sector and approximated reliance on a single crop. And third, in each case, the end of the boom left in its wake an economic wreck.[113]

At the Cape, this pattern did not occur. Growth was gradual. The wine boom of the 1820s came closest to those of the New World, but was of an altogether different scale, and moreover occurred after the imports of slaves had ended.[114] Profitability was not exceptional, though apparently satisfactory.[115] The massive holdings, the impersonality and the regimentation of, say, the West Indian sugar estates, did not develop. As a result the defence of slave holders everywhere — couched in the language of some variety of paternalism or other — was more credible at the Cape than in other parts of the British Empire. Slavery at the Cape was definitely a face-to-face institution, so that paternalism was a possibility, and historians were able to accept the premises of a past ruling class.

That the slave-holders' justification could be believed does not mean that it should be. Elsewhere, I have written that 'a mild slave regime is a contradiction in terms'.[116] It would certainly seem that the absence of a slave community, in affective terms, at the Cape probably resulted from the small scale of slave holdings. Moreover, as has recently been abundantly demonstrated,[117] the system of labour control known as Cape slavery, far from being benevolent paternalism, was harsh, brutal and bloody. From the point of view of the masters, it had to be so, since slave resistance to oppression was continual if unorganized and individualistic. The initial accumulation of capital in the agricultural sector of the Cape Colony, therefore, was only possible because of the systematic, government-sanctioned use of force on the labourers who worked the wine and wheat farms of the south west of the colony. Nevertheless, this process was continually shaped by the struggle of the slaves against their oppression. The development of the agricultural structures and the processes of class struggle cannot be divorced from each other.

Away from the the south west Cape, capital accumulation came largely through the forcible incorporation of the Khoikhoi into the labour process on the farms. This force was of two kinds. The first variety was a continuation of their conquest, namely their alienation from the means of production. Khoikhoi with 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,[118] as the more highly capitalized farmers there were able to use slave labour and thus were 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. There the Khoikhoi had no alternative to selling their labour power in order to survive. To Macmillan this was 'forced service and virtual slavery',[119] a formulation on which Marais pours rather unjustified scorn.[120] But it was not so much the proletarianization of the Khoikhoi which Macmillan, and indeed Marais, criticized, but rather the legislative measures of 1809 and 1812. These laws, which first introduced a pass system for the Khoikhoi and demanded the registration of contracts and, secondly, reestablished the practice of 'apprenticing' Khoisan children, had the effect of immobilizing Khoikhoi labour.[121] With their bargaining power diminished through these measures, and further reduced by such practices as the payment of the Khoikhoi in stock, which could not be moved off the farm,[122] large numbers of Khoikhoi were fully tied to a particular farm. 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.[123] 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 first learnt how to exploit the environment of the South African interior.[124]

The first important piece of legislation on which the proletarianization 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.[125] 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 are not convincing.[126] 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 records of Graaff-Reinet.[127] 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 as to the maltreatment of the Khoikhoi die away in the course of the following decade. 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.[129]

Emancipations

Until the 1820s and 1830s, a large proportion of the colony's labourers were held in their position by legal bonds of slavery, or by the provisions of the Khoi codes of 1809 and 1812, which did allow escape (for instance via the mission stations) for a minority of Khoi, but which effectively ensured the imposition of thralldom on the majority. Between 1828 and 1838, however, the legal disabilities on slaves and Khoi were removed. In the long term though, the position of a large proportion of these labourers did not change to any great extent. In the aftermath of Ordinance 50 of 1828, which abolished any legal distinction between the Khoi and other free persons, and of the Emancipation of slaves, which became effective in 1838,[130] the class relations in the countryside remained more or less constant. In a sense, these two most important humanitarian decrees in the colony's history were non-events. The question of why a complete change in the legal status of the labourers — and thus theoretically in the attitude of the colonial authorities towards the *status quo* — should have led to so little alteration in the actual relations of production is one of the most important, and least studied, in South African history. The possible amelioration of labour repression following the proclamations, and the subsequent hardening of control through the

middle of the century, represent the crucial moments at which other methods of labour control were substituted for the legal institution of slavery, or the blatant brutality of early Graaff-Reinet. In the current state of research, any explanation of this course of events must be tentative, and even a description must be hedged by the realization that there were indubitably wide regional variations in the patterns of class rule, of which little or nothing is known.

Part of the explanation may lie in the fact that the impetus for these measures lay largely outside the colony, and certainly outside the basic relationship they effected. They were an imposition from the centre of the British Empire.[131] As such they derived from the change observable in the late eighteenth century in the British ruling class's vision of the proper relations between master and servant.[132] 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 by moral compulsion and the hard facts of economics rather than legal bonds of slavery.[133] This was not only the vision of materialist utilitarians but was also thought by evangelical Christians to provide the only social basis for salvation. Ideas about 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 was tied in to the changing social relations of Britain during the Industrial Revolution. Translated into South African terms, it resulted in the application of a number of measures designed for other colonies: the abolition of the slave trade; the promulgation of various measures for the amelioration of slavery, in imitation of the Trinidad Ordinance of 1823; and eventually the abolition of slavery itself.[134] 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 discourses, to impress on the British government the necessity of abolishing the judicial disabilities of the Khoisan by Ordinance 50 of 1828.[135] As these legal adjustments did not develop out of the configuration of class forces at the Cape itself, their translation into South African conditions was bound to be problematic.

Legal provisions, however, may or may not create a genuine shift in the structure of social relationships. Whether or not they do so depends, in addition of course to their actual content, on the power that those who benefited under the old order were still able to wield and the extent to which governmental officials were really willing and able to have the changes implemented. In the case of the emancipation, the old order reestablished itself in the longer run, though in a changed form and only after a period of struggle between the farmers and those who were not prepared to work for them, at least not under the conditions which the farmers were prepared to offer.

In the terms of the contemporary ruling class of the Cape, this struggle was about 'vagrancy'. It is a phase of South African history which has been little studied, and what follows must be regarded as no more than a preliminary account. Nevertheless, it was the major theme of the Cape's labour history in the 1830s and 1840s, and in many ways has the same significance as twentieth century conflicts over tenancy.[136] It was certainly a 'problem' of very considerable dimensions. In 1838 W. B. Boyce, a Wesleyan missionary, reckoned that of the fifty thousand 'free coloureds' and 'Hottentots' in the colony, eight to ten thousand

> are wandering over the country, having no *regular* employment, occasionally compelled by hunger or induced by the desire of obtaining intoxicating liquor, to work for a few days, but chiefly living without any *visible* means of subsistence, on waste lands, and in the neighbourhood of towns and villages. The flocks and herds of the farmers are the main support of this mass of idleness and vice.[137]

Boyce's figures do not need to be considered accurate to allow the conclusion that a large proportion of the poorer members of Cape society had managed to escape from the clutches of the colonial labour process. Later that year, with the ending of 'apprenticeship', or the period of forced labour for ex-slaves following their emancipation, this number would have increased. In this at least, moreover, Boyce was articulating the general vision of the landowners and officials from the governor down.[138] They could not take direct legislative action to eradicate the plague, since the Colonial Office in London, under prompting from the humanitarians, vetoed a vagrancy ordinance as being contrary to the provision of Ordinance 50.[139] No hindrances might be placed upon the right of the Khoikhoi and, after 1838, the ex-slaves to move around the colony as they wished.

Certainly, the two decades after 1828 were a period of very considerable mobility among the agricultural labour force. All the locations which could possibly have received those labourers seem to have done so. At one end of the colony, the years after the end of

apprenticeship saw a considerable migration into Cape Town, with many of those who came to town being forced to live in great poverty and squalor.[140] It seems unlikely that they were attracted by the income or the standard of living they could expect in the town. Rather they came to escape the bonds of farm labour, just as, at the same time, Cape Town's domestic servants moved out of the houses in which they had been slaves to the newly built slums where they were free of supervision.[141] Simultaneously there was a large influx into the small towns of the western Cape; the populations of Paarl, Worcester, Tulbagh, and Stellenbosch are known to have increased considerably during this period, and indeed in Stellenbosch the 'coloured' population is said to have increased from 2 000 to 7 000.[142] Once again, the figures, which derive from Rhenish missionaries, do not have to be confirmed for the basic point to be accepted.

At the other extreme, there were those who moved beyond the colony's boundaries to the Griquas in Transorangia,[143] the 'Nieuwland' in the Caledon River valley[144] or to the aptly named 'Freemansland' in modern Maclear district.[145] The opening of the Kat River area to Khoikhoi settlement in 1829 brought groups trekking from all over the eastern part of the colony, often under considerable difficulty.[146] This was the most complete method of escape and, at least in the short run, probably the most successful.

In addition they moved to mission stations. Almost throughout the Cape Colony, the mission institutions took in large numbers of extra inhabitants in these decades, so that the overcrowding which was general by the 1850s was already a fact. The timing of the moves to the mission stations varied. Ordinance 50 itself seems not to have had an immediate effect, even if it did mean that a number of Khoikhoi were able to extract themselves from more or less forced labour for the farmers. Rather it was the announcement of a Vagrancy Act which drove the Khoikhoi to the mission stations. In 1833 for instance, there were some 1 204 people on the roll at Bethelsdorp; by October 1834 this total had almost doubled, to 2 300. This pattern was repeated throughout the eastern Cape.[147]In the west, where there were fewer Khoi, neither Ordinance 50 nor the threat of a Vagrancy Act caused a great influx, but the emancipation of slaves did have this effect. For example, the total registration on the three Moravian stations of Genadendaal, Elim (near Bredasdorp) and Groenkloof rose from 2 587 in 1837 to 3 998 in 1840, an increase of 64 per cent.[149]

Those who came to the mission stations, and probably also those who travelled round the country as 'vagrants', did so because they were afraid of a 'contract for life'.[150] They knew, also, that the reimposition of a pass system might lead to abuses, such as when a farmer, on being presented with a valid pass from Genadendaal, tore it up and then took the Khoi to the magistrate in the hope of having him convicted for having no pass and then assigned to his captor as a labourer.[151] In the long run, though, it proved impossible for the great majority of the Khoikhoi and ex-slaves to escape proletarianization. Even if Boyce's figures are no exaggeration, this still meant that 80 per cent of the free 'coloureds' and Khoikhoi had some visible means of support in 1838. While the free 'coloureds' were probably concentrated in Cape Town, the Khoikhoi were mainly to be found in the rural areas, and therefore in farm labour. The mission stations could, after all, have taken only a small proportion of these people, and there are indications that Khoikhoi and 'Bastards' were being squeezed out of independent occupations during the early part of the nineteenth century.[152] Moreover, the farmers had been able to develop a considerable arsenal of techniques for holding their labourers under control, and these they could maintain after the emancipations. A refusal to allow labourers to leave with the stock they had been paid as wages, debt bondage — often established with the help of the magistrates' courts — and alcohol addiction were perhaps the most widespread of these, now that the various forms of apprenticeship had become illegal.[153]

This is not to say that the farmers did not experience temporary inconveniences, especially after the ending of apprenticeship on 1 December 1838. The timing was unfortunate for them as it occurred in the middle of the wheat harvest. *De Zuid-Afrikaan*, the newspaper which acted as spokesman for the farming community, published this editorial on 3 May 1839:

> It is now a fact, which is no longer open to any doubt, that the greatest number of farmers have been deserted by those late apprentices, and are unprovided with hands for agricultural labour. The effect of this scarcity upon the agricultural produce of the colony must be apparent. Already a good quantity of the crops and fruits of the late season has been allowed to dry and rot on the field, for want of means to collect or thrash. The ploughing season is approaching, and the corn farmers, being inadequately provided with hands (a great part of them hardly with any) contemplate with sorrow and regret the comparatively insignificant quantity they will be able to sow, and the still less quantity produceable

for the market and consumption.[154]

Just how much of this was exaggeration is uncertain, but the statistics of agricultural production do show a sharp decline from 1838 to 1841. Thereafter though, the figures show a return to the level of the 1830s, and indeed swiftly increase above that level.[155] If the statistics are to be trusted (and I believe that those for at least some districts are, at least as rough indications) then the disruption caused by emancipation to the production of the principal slave-worked crops was no more than a temporary hiccough. The farmers, so it would seem, had reestablished control.

This had been achieved in part by the implementation of legislation. The Masters and Servants Ordinance of 1841 gave employers a degree of power over their labourers that they had not had since before Ordinance 50. Contracts might now be for three years (though only one year was allowed for ex-slaves) and the levels of work and wages had to be fully specified. Breach of contract was made a criminal offence, but against this the labourers' right of complaint was guaranteed. The farmers complained, as employers always will, that the measures were not stringent enough, and indeed one of the first acts of the Cape parliament after it had been instituted in 1854 was to strengthen the employers' position in the new Masters and Servants Act of 1856. Nevertheless, the indications are that from 1841 the employers' control over those in their service was once again considerable.[156]

Discipline and deference amongst those who were working had to be combined, from the farmers' point of view, with a sufficiency of labourers in the first place. In time, almost all of those who were on the road had to capitulate and be reabsorbed into the colonial process. Their problem, in essence, was that there was very little land in the more hospitable parts of the colony on which they could settle. Where they did manage to find a small plot, they were likely to be driven off by the magistrate. Open land still existed into the 1870s (though probably not much longer) in parts of the Cape midlands and the north west Cape, but in the southern and south west Cape 'squatting' on crown land was an option for only a few families.[157] This was a consequence of a deliberate policy. In 1837, the governor broached the question of making 'small grants of land to Hottentots whose industry and good conduct has enabled them to acquire a certain amount of property in cattle and sheep'.[158] This move in the direction of an

independent Khoi peasantry was rebuffed in London. Any move away from a capitalist system of agriculture was not desired. Lord Glenelg, the colonial secretary of the day, has had the reputation of being the most opposed to settler interests of all those who held that office, but even Robert Godlonton could not have faulted his position on this question. In reply to Napier's suggestion, Glenelg wrote:

> I am much disposed to question the expedience of the policy of settling Hottentots on lands of their own . . . . The most desirable result would be that they would be induced to work for wages as free labourers. Whatever tends to counteract that object seems to me inadvisable, with a view of the interests of all classes.[159]

No-one in any position of power or influence within the Cape Colony doubted that the place of the Khoikhoi and the ex-slaves could only be as 'free men who depend on employment for food and on character for employment'.[160] There might be certain adjustments made on the margins of class, but any radical moves, which might have led to the establishment of a smallholder class analogous to the later eastern Cape peasantry, were crushed. The basic lines of social relationships throughout the settled portions of the Cape were not affected.

The mission stations did nothing to achieve this end either. Those men who had taken up residence there were generally unable to escape the requirements of wage labour. The stations were too small for their inhabitants, swollen in number as they now were, to gain a living from their gardens, nor did it prove possible for them to function as centres of a rural artisanate. Rather they became reservoirs of labour, as men were either engaged on a semi-permanent basis while maintaining a residence in the mission institution or were hired for a short period, notably during harvest. Before emancipation slaves had been rented by one owner to another to cover their various peak labour periods, and Khoi had been brought in for a few weeks' work during harvest.[161] Thereafter, the mission stations fulfilled this role as the rubber in the elasticity of labour utilization. One farmer commented of the Groenkloof mission, which bordered on the rich corn farms of the Swartland, that it was 'a village where labourers may be obtained, and also returned when they have done working with the proprietors of the estates; it is considered a convenience on that account. . . . I think the institution, generally speaking, is a labour market'.[162] Other potential employers complained that the mission stations locked up

labour in idleness — and they may certainly have given women and young children a chance to escape from the farmers' dictates — but the occupational data on mission inhabitants collected in 1848 makes it quite clear that on all the institutions in the western Cape and on most of those in the east, the great majority of men worked for the neighbouring farmers for at least part of the year, and eventually became essential to their operations.[163] It would seem that within a decade of the freeing of the slaves, an agricultural proletariat, lowly paid and oppressed,[164] had been recreated in the Cape Colony, but, given the current state of research, the precise conditions under which they worked still remain unknown.

Conclusion

A quarter of a century ago, in the paper that was quoted above, W. K. Hancock wrote:

> It would be wrong to begin the study of economic growth [in South Africa] either with Barny [*sic*] 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 cultural 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.[165]

His comments have rarely been heeded since, but he was basically right, even though the vocabulary of South African history has changed somewhat since then. Well before the great transformation brought about by diamonds and gold, a previous slow process of transformation had occurred, as the colonizers of the country had, by the use of force, established over at least the southern half of the modern country the agricultural system 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 preindustrial relations of production, which were at least quasi-capitalist in the sense that labour was largely alienated from the means of production. This was related to comparatively high

levels of commercialization in the colony's agriculture. If these developments are not taken into account, then the basis and nature of social and economic trends in the South African countryside during the twentieth century can at best be partially 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, had begun long before then. Moreover, many of the specific forms of later agrarian structures had already developed, notably the harsh exploitation of a predominantly black labour force and the existence of a broadly based landholding class, as opposed for instance to a small number of very large landowners. As the context of agrarian life changed after about 1870, this foundation could be built upon.

Notes

This paper bears a relationship to, and is a development of, my 'The first two centuries of agriculture in the Cape Colony: a historiographical review' in Martin Fransman and Adrian Graves (eds.), *Southern African Studies: Retrospect and Prospect* (Edinburgh, 1983).

1. See the characterizations which can be distilled from the annual Cape of Good Hope, *Statistical Blue Book of the Colony* (hereafter *CBB*). For the basis on which this publication series was compiled, see Harry Hamant, 'The documentation of colonial rule in Africa', *Africa Research and Documentation*, XXVII (1981), pp.8-14.
2. For example, D. Hobart Houghton, 'Economic development, 1865 – 1965' in M. Wilson and L. M. Thompson (eds.), *The Oxford History of South Africa*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1968 – 1971), II, pp.1-10.
3. On the basic point see Elizabeth Fox-Genovese and Eugene D. Genovese, *Fruits of Merchant Capital: Slavery and Bourgeois Property in the Rise and Expansion of Capitalism* (Oxford and New York, 1983), notably chapter 1; Geoffrey Kay, *Development and Underdevelopment* (London, 1979); on the eastern Cape, see Colin Bundy, *The Rise and Fall of the South African Peasantry* (London, 1979); Stanley Trapido, '"The friends of the natives": merchants, peasants and the political and ideological structure of liberalism at the Cape, 1854 – 1910' in Shula Marks and Anthony Atmore (eds.),

Economy and Society in Pre-Industrial South Africa (London, 1980).

4. Tim Keegan, 'The restructuring of agrarian class relations in a colonial economy: the Orange River Colony, 1902 – 1910', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 5 (1979), p.239. It is one of the minor peculiarities of southern African history that farming in the Free State took on a capitalist character in the dryer pastoral south and west earlier than in the better watered arable north and east. This was a consequence of the ecological limits of sheep farming and the absence of a large African population in the south.
5. *CBB, 1853*, p.448.
6. These figures are taken from Cape parliamentary papers, *Census of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope, 1865*, G.20 – 1866. The balance was largely made up by 'other labourers' (13,9%) and by domestic servants (19,4%).
7. Mike Morris, 'The development of capitalism in South African agriculture: class struggle in the countryside', *Economy and Society*, 5 (1976), p.313.
8. Bundy, *Rise and Fall*, pp.52-53, 79-80; Saul Dubow, *Land, Labour and Merchant Capital: The experience of the Graaff-Reinet district in the pre-industrial rural economy of the Cape, 1852 – 1872* (Cape Town, 1982), chapter 3; Henry Slater, 'The changing pattern of economic relationships in rural Natal, 1838 – 1914', in Marks and Atmore (eds.), *Economy and Society*.
9. Hobart Houghton, 'Economic development', 1, pp.6-7.
10. See Tim Keegan, 'The sharecropping economy of the South African highveld in the early twentieth century', *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 10 (1983); Keegan, 'The sharecropping economy, African class formation and the 1913 Natives Land Act in the highveld maize belt', in Shula Marks and Richard Rathbone (eds.), *Industrialization and Social Change in South Africa* (London, 1983); Ted Matsetela, 'The life story of Nkgoma Mma-Pooe: aspects of sharecropping and proletarianization in the northern Orange Free State, 1890 – 1930', in *ibid*; and various chapters in this volume. For an example of a man who by his own skill and by regularly moving districts was able to survive as a sharecropper until deep into the twentieth century, see Malete Nkadimeng and Georgina Relly, 'Kas Maine: the story of a black South African agriculturalist', in Belinda Bozzoli (ed.), *Town and Countryside in the Transvaal: capitalist penetration and popular response* (Johannesburg, 1983).
11. See the chapter by William Beinart below.
12. M.P.K. Sorrenson, *Origins of European Settlement in Kenya* (Nairobi, 1976).
13. Leroy Vail and Landeg White, *Capitalism and Colonialism in Mozambique: A Study of Quelimane District* (London, 1980); Leroy Vail, 'The political economy of east-central Africa', in David Birmingham and Phyllis M. Martin (eds.), *History of Central Africa* 2 vols. (London and New York, 1983), II, pp.218-224, 238-243.
14. Resolution of the Council of Policy, 20 July 1756, Algemeen Rijksarchief, The Hague, VOC 4202, f. 353. In this resolution references are given to previous failures, in letters to the *Heren XVII* of 22 May 1720, 28 April 1727, and 25 February 1728.
15. See Pieter van Duin and Robert Ross, *The Economy of the Cape Colony in the Eighteenth Century*, Intercontinenta No. 5 (Leiden, 1985).
16. D. J. van Zyl, *Kaapse Wyn en Brandewyn, 1795 – 1866* (Cape Town, 1966), chapters 9 and 10.
17. Van Duin and Ross, *Economy of the Cape Colony*.
18. Van Zyl, *Kaapse Wyn en Brandewyn*, p.165.
19. Notably by S. D. Neumark, *Economic Influences on the South African Frontier, 1652 – 1836* (Stanford, 1957).
20. Robert Ross, 'The occupations of slaves in eighteenth century Cape Town', *Studies in the History of Cape Town* II (1980), p.14.
21. See below.
22. Macartney to Dundas, 10 July 1797, in G. McC. Theal (ed.), *Records of the Cape Colony* 36 vols (London, 1896, 1905), II, p.114.
23. On the Dutch, see A. L. Geyer, *Das Wirtschaftliche System de Niederlandische OstIndischen Kompanie am Kap der Guten Hoffnung* (Munich, 1923); G. J. Schutte, 'Company and colonists at the Cape', in Richard Elphick and Herman Giliomee (eds.), *The Shaping of South African Society, 1652 – 1820* (London, 1979); on the British: G. S. Graham, *Great Britain and the Ocean, 1810 – 1850: A study of maritime enterprise* (Oxford, 1967); J. S. Galbraith, *Reluctant Empire: British policy on the South African frontier, 1834 – 1854* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1963), chapter 2.
24. See Robert Ross, 'The relative importance of exports and the internal market for the agriculture of the Cape Colony, 1770 – 1855', paper presented to the conference on the quantification and structure of the import and export trade of Africa, St. Augustin, Bonn, 1983. A million pounds may seem relatively little in the late twentieth century, but it was between 1,5 and 2 per cent of the total British government budget.
25. Nigel Worden, 'Rural slavery in the western districts of Cape Colony during the eighteenth century', Ph.D thesis, University of Cambridge (1982), p.159, for the proportion of rural slaves born outside the colony (and thus purchased), and chapter 4 generally for the slave market.
26. Leonard Guelke, 'The early European settlement of South Africa', Ph.D thesis, University of Toronto (1974), p.262; cf. T.R.H. Davenport, 'The consolidation of a new society: the Cape Colony', in Wilson and

Thompson (eds.), *Oxford History* I, p.289; Schutte, 'The structure of European domination at the Cape, 1652–1820', in Elphick and Giliomee (eds.), *Shaping*, p.368.

27. Van Duin and Ross, *Economy of the Cape Colony*, chapters 3 and 4.
28. Guelke, 'Early European settlement', p.264.
29. Van Duin and Ross (eds.), *Economy of the Cape Colony*, chapter 4; D. J. van Zyl, 'Die geskiedenis van graanbou aan die Kaap, 1795–1826', *Archives Year Book for South African History* (1968, I).
30. Worden, 'Rural Slavery', chapter 4.
31. See the classic study by P. J. van der Merwe, *Trek: Studies oor die Mobiliteit van die Pioniersbevolking aan die Kaap* (Cape Town, 1945).
32. G. J. Schutte (ed.), *Briefwisseling van Hendrik Swellengrebel Jr. oor Kaapse Sake, 1778–1792* (Cape Town, 1982), p.100.
33. Cited in P. J. van der Merwe, *Die Trekboer in die Geskiedenis van die Kaapkolonie (1657–1792)* (Cape Town, 1938), p.244.
34. Martin Legassick, 'The frontier tradition in South African historiography', in Marks and Atmore (eds.), *Economy and Society.*
35. Leonard Guelke, 'Land tenure and settlement at the Cape, 1652–1812', unpublished paper (1983); Lesley G. Duly, *British Land Policy at the Cape, 1975–1844: a study in the administrative procedures in the Empire* (Durham, North Carolina, 1968).
36. These latter two factors are not independent of each other. See Robert Ross, 'Capitalism, expansion and incorporation in South Africa' in Howard Lamar and L. M. Thompson (eds.), *The Frontier in History: North America and Southern Africa Compared* (New Haven and London, 1981), pp.218–222.
37. Leonard Guelke and Robert Shell, 'An early colonial landed gentry: land and wealth in the Cape Colony, 1682–1731', *Journal of Historical Geography*, IX (1983), p.272; André Appel, 'Die distrik Oudtshoorn tot die tagtigerjare van die 19e eeu: 'n sosio-historiese studie', Ph.D thesis, University of Port Elizabeth (1982), p.12.
38. G. Wagenaar, 'Johannes Gijsbertus van Reenen — sy aandeel in die Kaapse geskiedenis tot 1806', M.A. thesis, University of Pretoria (1976), p.12; for a description of the former farm, transformed a generation later into a flourishing grain and fruit growing enterprise, see G. McC. Theal (ed.), *Belangrijke Historische Dokumenten Verzameld in die Kaap Kolonie en Elders*, 3 vols. (Cape Town, 1896–1911), III, p.380; and for one of the latter, W. Blommaert and J. A. Wiid (eds.), *Die Journaal van Dirk Gysbert van Reenen* (Cape Town, 1937), p.57.
39. Leonard Guelke, 'Frontier settlement in early Dutch South Africa', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, LXVI (1976), p.42. Guelke's work began as a long polemic against Neumark's *Economic Influences*. While this latter work was most valuable in demystifying the history of the trekboers and arguing for the economic rationality of their action (although in many ways P. J. van der Merwe had already done the same for those who took the trouble to read Afrikaans), Neumark's specific arguments are often implausible, notably his belief that stock farming provided a better return on capital than arable farming, and was thus preferable, even though a mass of evidence demonstrates that the trekboer had a lower standard of living than the gentry of the south west. Moreover, it should be borne in mind that Neumark's empirical data should be treated with the utmost caution.

40. Leonard Guelke, 'Comment in reply' to William Norton, 'Frontier agriculture — subsistence or commercial?', both in *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, LXVII (1977), p.466.
41. Neumark, *Economic Influences*, pp.58-9; cf. Ross, 'Capitalism, expansion and incorporation', pp.216-17.
42. For instance, the inspection trip of the *Commissie van Veeteelt* in 1804 describes a population that to all appearances had been settled and commercialized for at least a generation. See Theal (ed.), *Belangrijke Historische Dokumenten*, III, p.335f. See also P. J. van der Merwe, *Trek*, pp.122-39.
43. A.J.H. van der Walt, *Die Ausdehnung der Kolonie am Kap der Guten Hoffnung* (Berlin, 1928), pp.74-5.
44. It is in this context, rather against his own intention, that the data provided by Neumark, *Economic Influences*, pp.58-94, on soap, wax and tallow production takes on its meaning.
45. Kathleen M. Jeffreys (ed.), *Kaapse Archiefstukken Lopende over het Jaar 1782* (Cape Town, 1931), p.191; cf. Wagenaar, 'Johannes Gijsbertus van Reenen', p.70.
46. Susan Newton-King, 'Some thoughts on the political economy of Graaff-Reinet in the late eighteenth century', unpublished paper (1980) and *idem*, 'Background to the Khoikhoi rebellion of 1799–1803', *Collected Seminar Papers of the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, London. The societies of Southern Africa in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries* (hereafter *SSA*) 10 (1981).
47. This excludes the mission village of Genadendaal, which was then the largest settlement in the colony outside of Cape Town.
48. John Barrow, *An Account of Travels into the Interior of Southern Africa*, 2 vols. (London, 1801), I, pp.112-14, II, pp.349–353, 363; H. Lichtenstein, *Travels in Southern Africa in the Years 1803, 1804, 1805 and 1806*, translated by A. Plumptre, 2 vols. (Cape Town, 1828, 1930), I, p.200.
49. *Census, 1865, passim.* It should be noted that this list excludes the mission stations which, although often with a larger population than the

small towns, fulfilled a very different economic function within the colony.

50. Tony Kirk, 'The Cape economy and the expropriation of the Kat River Settlement', in Marks and Atmore (eds.), *Economy and Society*; A.C.M. Webb, 'The agricultural development of the 1820 settlement down to 1846', M.A. thesis, Rhodes University (1975), chapter 5.
51. In 1855, it was only in the districts of Malmesbury (where there were relatively few sheep, probably mainly in the Sandveld north of the Piketberg), Worcester, Clanwilliam, and Beaufort West that 'African' sheep exceeded wooled sheep in number; *CBB*, 1855, p.510. For the rationale behind this, see *CBB* 1860, JJ 4, p.7. See also Ross, 'Relative importance'.
52. In the eighteenth century, wheat production in Swellendam was so small that the Dutch did not even bother to tax it. By 1815, though, it had risen to around 40 000 hectolitres. See Theal (ed.), *Records of the Cape Colony*, V, p.52. As regards the west coast, statistical data are lacking because of the composition of the districts, but for descriptions of the importance of coastal traffic, which began at the beginning of the century, see for example, Cape Parliamentary Papers, *Select Committee Report on the Berg River* (1858).
53. *CBB* 1859, JJ 5; Appel, 'Die distrik Oudtshoorn', chapters 13 and 16.
54. Guelke and Shell, 'Early colonial landed gentry'.
55. Guelke, 'Early European settlement'.
56. P. J. van der Merwe, *Die Noordwaartse Beweging van die Boere voor die Groot Trek 1770 – 1842* (The Hague, 1937).
57. On this, particularly Schutte, 'Company and colonists', pp.192-96.
58. *Realia: Register op de Generale Resolutien van het Kasteel Batavia, 1632 – 1805*, 3 vols. (Leiden, The Hague and Batavia, 1882 – 1886), I, p.209; cf. Guelke, 'Early European settlement'.
59. Robert Ross, 'The Roman Dutch law of inheritance, landed property and Afrikaner family structure', unpublished paper presented to the Conference on the History of the Family in Africa, School of Oriental and African Studies, London, 1981.
60. Robert Ross, 'The rise of the Cape gentry', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 9 (1983), p.297; the nature of this elite will be further elucidated in Mary Rayner's forthcoming thesis, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.
61. Ross, 'Roman Dutch law of inheritance'.
62. The best documented example of this would be the ancestors of J. C. Smuts. See W. K. Hancock, *Smuts*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1962 – 1968), I, pp.3-5; the Smuts family, though, had official connections before they settled in the Swartland.
63. J.L.M. Franken, *Piet Retief se Lewe in die Kolonie* (Cape Town and Pretoria, 1949).
64. The Cloetes of Constantia are probably an exception to this.
65. J.L.M. Franken, 'Martin Melck', *Tydscrift vir Wetenskap en Kuns*, IX (1938).
66. Wagenaar, 'Johannes Gijsbertus van Reenen'.
67. E. H. Burrows, *Overberg Outspan* (Cape Town, 1952), chapter 4.
68. On the level of mortgages on slave property, see Mary Rayner's forthcoming thesis, chapter 2.
69. George Thompson, in V. S. Forbes (ed.), *Travels and Adventures in Southern Africa*, 2 vols. (Cape Town, 1967 – 1968), II, p.94.
70. J.L.M. Franken, "n Kaapse huishoue in die 18e eeu uit Von Dessin se briefboek en memoriaal', *Archives Year Book for South African History* (1940), I, p.54.
71. E.H.J. Arndt, *Banking and Currency in South Africa, 1652 – 1927* (Cape Town, 1928); H.L.G. Swart, 'Developments in currency and banking at the Cape between 1782 and 1825, with an account of contemporary controversies', Ph.D thesis, University of Cape Town, 1953.
72. *CBB*, 1860, pp.2-3.
73. Basil A. Le Cordeur, *The Politics of Eastern Cape Separatism, 1820 – 1854* (Cape Town, 1981), pp.123-29.
74. Kirk, 'The Cape economy'.
75. Dubow, *Land, Labour and Merchant Capital* pp.18-30; Burrows, *Overberg Outspan*, pp.272-75.
76. On this process, see above all Van der Merwe, *Noordwaartse Beweging*, chapter 4, and pp.205 ff. and *idem, Trek*, chapters 4 and 5.
77. For a suitably sceptical view of this, see C.F.J. Muller, *Die Oorsprong van die Groot Trek* (Cape Town and Johannesburg, 1974), pp.143-46, 207-219; see also André du Toit and Herman Giliomee, *Afrikaner Political Thought. Analysis and Documents, Volume I, 1780 – 1850* (Cape Town and Johannesburg, 1983), pp.199-204.
78. These were largely richer farmers from the Tarka area (near modern Cradock), which had suffered very badly in the 1835 war. See G.D.J. Duvenage, *Van die Tarka na die Transgariep: Die emigrasie uit die noordoostgrensel van die Kaapkolonie, 1835 – 1840* (Cape Town, Johannesburg and Pretoria, 1981), *passim.*
79. A.M. Grundlingh, *Die 'Hendsoppers' en 'Joiners': Die rasionaal en verskynsel van verraad* (Pretoria, 1979), pp.232-36.
80. W. K. Hancock, 'Trek', *Economic History Review*, 2nd series, X (1957 – 58), p.339.
81. Duly, *British Land Policy*, pp.159-77; Dubow, *Land, Labour and Merchant Capital*, pp.74-82; the annual Blue Books give a list of those farms which were sold each year, and a careful analysis of these should give most valuable information on the process of alienation of

Crown lands.

82. See the paper by Bundy in this volume. The previous major depression, that in the later 1820s, seems to have been caused more by changes in the wine market than by basic cyclical problems, and certainly those of the eighteenth century were brought about by marketing changes, rather than by pressure from international capital flow. The minor economic depression of 1847 – 1848, in contrast, does seem to have been a partial precursor of later events, but it is significant that it could have been recouped by the large British expenditures during the subsequent frontier war.
83. Schutte, 'Company and colonists', p.189.
84. J.L.M. Franken, *Huisonderwys aan die Kaap, 1692 – 1732*, Annals of the University of Stellenbosch, Series B, XXIII (1934).
85. Robert Ross, *Cape of Torments; slavery and resistance in South Africa* (London, 1983), pp.30-32; Worden, 'Rural slavery', pp.289-92.
86. Herman Giliomee, 'The eastern frontier, 1770 – 1812', in Elphick and Giliomee (eds.), *Shaping*, p.336.
87. Susan Newton-King, 'The labour market of the Cape Colony, 1807 – 1828' in Marks and Atmore (eds.), *Economy and Society*; M. D. Nash, *Bailie's Party of 1820 Settlers: A Collective Experience in Emigration* (Cape Town and Rotterdam, 1982); A. F. Hattersley, *The Convict Crisis and the Growth of Unity: Resistance to Transportation in South Africa and Australia, 1842 – 1853* (Pietermaritzburg, 1965), p.27; Dubow, *Land, Labour and Merchant Capital*, pp.60-61.
88. See chapter by Bundy, below.
89. The origins of the bywoner phenomenon in the Cape have not been properly studied, but for some preliminary remarks, see Bundy, below; Dubow, *Land, Labour and Merchant Capital*, pp.54-57; Van der Merwe, *Trek*, pp.48-49.
90. John Philip, *Researches in South Africa*, 2 vols. (London, 1828), I, p.55.
91. Richard Elphick, *Khoikhoi and the Founding of White South Africa* (Johannesburg, 1985), p.235.
92. Reprinted Cape Town and Amsterdam, 1969.
93. Robert Ross, 'Smallpox at the Cape of Good Hope in the eighteenth century', in *African Historical Demography* (Edinburgh, 1977).
94. Cited in Elphick, *Khoikhoi*, p.236.
95. Willard A. Hanna, *Indonesian Banda: colonization and its aftermath in the Nutmeg islands* (Philadelphia, 1978); Gerrit Knaap, 'Some observations on a thriving dancing-party: the cultivation of and the competition for cloves in sixteenth and seventeenth century Ambon', paper presented to the fourth Indonesian-Dutch Historical Conference, Yogya, 1983.
96. C. C. Saunders, 'The Hundred Years War: some reflections on African resistance on the Cape-Xhosa frontier', in D. Chanaiwa (ed.), *Profiles of Self-Determination* (Northridge, California, 1976).
97. This account follows Elphick, *Khoikhoi*.
98. Robert Ross, 'The !Kora wars on the Orange River, 1830 – 1880', *Journal of African History* XVI (1975); Teresa Strauss, *War Along the Orange: the Korana and the northern border wars of 1868 – 9 and 1878 – 9* (Cape Town, 1979).
99. Richard Elphick, 'The Khoisan to c.1770', in Elphick and Giliomee (eds.), *Shaping*, p.26.
100. N. L. de la Caille, *Travels at the Cape, 1751 – 53*, translated and edited by R. Raven-Hart (Cape Town and Rotterdam, 1976), p.41.
101. Newton-King, 'Background'; Susan Newton-King and V. C. Malherbe, *The Khoikhoi Rebellion of the Eastern Cape, (1799 – 1803)* (Cape Town, 1981); V. C. Malherbe, 'David Stuurman: last chief of the Hottentots', *African Studies*, XXXIX (1980); *idem*, 'Hermanus and his sons: Khoi bandits and conspirators in the post-rebellion period (1803 – 1818), *African Studies*, XLII (1982).
102. Shula Marks, 'Khoisan resistance to the Dutch in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries', *Journal of African History*, XIII (1972), p.79.
103. J. B. Peires, *The House of Phalo: A history of the Xhosa people in the days of their independence* (Johannesburg, 1982); cf. J. S. Galbraith, *Reluctant Empire: British policy on the South African frontier* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1963).
104. Giliomee, 'Eastern frontier', pp.303-304.
105. Cited in Peires, *House of Phalo*, p.123; on Bowker, see Tony Kirk, 'Progress and decline in the Kat River settlement, 1829 – 1854', *Journal of African History*, XIV (1973) and *idem*, 'The Cape economy and the expropriation of the Kat River settlement'.
106. Peires, *House of Phalo*, p.123.
107. Dubow, *Land, Labour and Merchant Capital*, pp.64-82; see also regular sections on squatting in the Blue Book. This process could lead to the acquisition of enormous tracts of land by certain individuals, notably the 100 000 acres accumulated around Beaufort West by Sir John Molteno, later first Prime Minister of the colony. See P. A. Molteno, *The Life and Times of Sir John Molteno*, 2 vols. (London, 1900), I, pp.52-53, cited in Tony Kirk, 'Self-government and self-defence in South Africa: the interrelationships between British and Cape politics, 1846 – 1854', Ph.D thesis, Oxford University, 1972, p.296.
108. See above, footnote 8.
109. For instance, the magistrate of Tulbagh wrote in 1856 that the squatters on Crown lands 'are generally found in a state of destitution, with hardly any visible means of livelihood. In many instances children are found in the condition of complete nudity.' *CBB*, 1857, FF9. Such a statement

has to be treated with caution, but is certainly plausible, since the choice between destitution and farm labour was by no means an easy one. For further information, see below; Nigel Worden, 'Cape slave emancipation and rural labour in a comparative context', unpublished seminar paper, Centre for African Studies, University of Cape Town, 1983, and *Proceedings and Evidence given before the Committee of the Legislative Council respecting the Proposed Ordinance to Prevent the Practice of Squatting on Government Land* (Cape Town, 1852).

110. Ross, *Cape of Torments*, pp.13-14; Worden, 'Rural slavery', pp.141-162; James C. Armstrong, 'The slaves, 1652 – 1795', in Elphick and Giliomee (eds.), *Shaping*, pp.76-84.
111. Worden, 'Rural slavery', p.71.
112. I. E. Edwards, *Towards Emancipation: a study in South African slavery* (Cardiff, 1942), p.33.
113. Eugene D. Genovese and Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, 'The slave economies in political perspective', in *Fruits of Merchant Capital*, p.43.
114. Van Zyl, *Kaapse Wyn en Brandewyn*, chapters 9 and 10; Rayner's forthcoming thesis.
115. Worden, 'Rural slavery', chapter 4; Ross, 'Rise of the Cape gentry', pp.204-207.
116. Ross, *Cape of Torments*, p.1.
117. *Ibid., passim*; Nigel Worden, 'Violence, crime and slavery on Cape farmsteads in the eighteenth century', *Kronos* 5 (1982).
118. On these groups, see, most recently, 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', M. A. thesis, University of Cape Town, 1978, pp.26-27.
119. W. M. Macmillan, *The Cape Coloured Question* (London, 1927), p.133.
120. J. S. Marais, *The Cape Coloured People, 1651 – 1937* (London, 1939), p.123.
121. See Marais, *Cape Coloured People*, pp.116-119; 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.52-54.
122. Newton-King, 'Background', p.8; Van Arkel *et al.*, *Wijngaard*, p.57.
123. V. C. Malherbe, 'Diversification and mobility', *passim*; *idem*, 'The life and times of Cupido Kakkerlak', *Journal of African History*, xx (1979).
124. Van der Merwe, *Trekboer*, pp.145-46; Van Arkel *et al.*, *Wijngaard*, pp.59-60.
125. Herman Giliomee, 'Die administrasietydperk van Lord Caledon (1807 – 1811)', *Archives Year Book for South African History*, xxx (1966), pp.276-77.

126. For example, Giliomee, 'Eastern frontier', p.300, but cf. p.321 and Legassick, 'Frontier tradition', p.67.
127. Newton-King, 'Background', p.8; and personal communication.
128. Van Arkel *et al.*, *Wijngaard*, p.59.
129. It is to be hoped that the further work of Susan Newton-King will unravel some of these knots, but in the meantime see Van Arkel *et al.*, *Wijngaard*, pp.59-60.
130. Although the slaves were officially emancipated on 1 December 1834, there followed a four year period of 'apprenticeship' during which they were subject to much the same legal bonds as under slavery.
131. For a description of Cape protests against these measures, see Mary Rayner, 'Slaves, slave-owners and the British state: The Cape Colony, 1806 – 1834', *SSA*, xii (1981).
132. Among the most useful recent works on the ideological nature of British abolitionism and its relations to the industrial revolution are David B. Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution, 1770 – 1823* (Ithaca, New York, 1975); Howard Temperley, 'Capitalism, slavery and ideology', *Past and Present* LXXV (1977); and Frederick Cooper, *From Slaves to Squatters: plantation labour and agriculture in Zanzibar and coastal Kenya, 1890 – 1925* (New Haven and London, 1980), chapter 2. For an application to the Cape, see Rayner, 'Slaves, slave-owners and the British state' and her forthcoming thesis.
133. Men and women were, of course, forced to be free. In Britain, those who were unsuccessful in their enforced freedom were condemned to the workhouse by the new Poor Law of 1834 — see E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, 2nd edition (Harmondsworth, 1968), pp.295-96. Those who made too much use of their freedom were sent to the prisons — see Michael Ignatieff, *A Just Measure of Pain: the penitentiary in the industrial revolution, 1750 – 1850* (New York, 1978) and Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: the birth of the prison*, translated by A. Sheridan (London, 1979). The contemporality of the Poor Law, prison reform and the abolition of slavery is in no way coincidental.
134. For a survey, see Edwards, *Towards Emancipation*.
135. In this I part company with Susan Newton-King, 'The labour market of the Cape Colony, 1807 – 1828' in Marks and Atmore (eds.), *Economy and Society* who argues that Ordinance 50 was the 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 tends to support the old argument of Macmillan in *Cape Coloured Question* and Harry A. Gailey, 'John Philip's role in Hottentot emancipation', *Journal of African History*, III (1961), by showing why

the British rulers were ideologically predisposed to accept Philip's humanitarian arguments. In contrast, it seems unlikely that the 1820 settlers had enough political clout to force their economic demands through the Colonial Office in London, and Newton-King does not demonstrate that they did so.

136. It is also necessary to beware of colonial exaggerations: Macmillan, *Cape Coloured Question*, p.221.
137. W. C. Boyce, *Notes on South African Affairs from 1834 to 1838* (Grahamstown, 1838), p.119.
138. Napier, cited in Muller, *Oorsprong*, pp.190-91, and also the other spokesmen cited there and by Du Toit and Giliomee, *Afrikaner Political Thought*, pp.110-11. For the vision of the legal machine, see L. C. Duly, 'A revisit with the Cape's Hottentot Ordinance of 1828' in Marcelle Kooy (ed.), *Economics and Economic History: essays in honour of Professor H. M. Robertson* (London, 1972); A. Sachs, 'Enter the British legal machine: law and administration at the Cape, 1806–1910', *SSA*, I (1970), p.13; for earlier expressions, see Macmillan, *Cape Coloured Question*, chapter 16; Worden, 'Cape slave emancipation', p.4. (I have in this section leaned to a perhaps inordinate extent on this unpublished paper by Nigel Worden, which is by far the best work that I have read on the subject, and my thanks are due to him for letting me cite and quote from it); the extent to which the special position of the Cape, with its Khoikhoi, was the cause of the Colonial Office's rejection of the Cape Vagrancy Laws can be seen from the fact that a similar ordinance emanating from Jamaica was not disallowed. See W. A. Green, *British Slave Emancipation: the sugar colonies and the Great Experiment, 1830–1865* (London, 1976), p.174.
140. Shirley Judges, 'Poverty, living conditions and social relations: aspects of life in Cape Town in the 1830s', M.A. thesis, University of Cape Town, 1977.
141. See Robert Ross, 'Cape Town: synthesis in the dialectic of continents', in Robert Ross and Gerard J. Telkamp (eds.), *Colonial Cities* (The Hague, 1984); *Select Committee report on the Sanitary State of Cape Town* (Cape Town, 1857), pp.35-36.
142. Marais, *Cape Coloured People*, p.191.
143. Robert Ross, *Adam Kok's Griquas: a study in the development of stratification in South Africa* (Cambridge, 1976), chapters 3 and 4, in which the movement is alluded to but not truly understood.
144. Information on this group under the leadership of Carolus Baatje, which has never been fully studied, can be found in G. McC. Theal (ed.), *Basutoland Records*, 3 vols. (Cape Town, 1883), especially vol. 1, and in the archives of the Methodist Missionary Society.
145. Ross, *Adam Kok's Griquas*, pp.109, 165.

146. Kirk, 'Progress and decline', p.413.
147. An exception might be Wupperthal in the Cedarberg, but as it was only founded in 1839 and largely populated with Khoikhoi from the northern frontier districts, it is difficult to be sure what effects Ordinance 50 had on it. E. Strassberger, *The Rhenish Missionary Society in South Africa, 1830–1950* (Cape Town, 1969), pp.45-49.
148. Macmillan, *Cape Coloured Question*, p.238.
149. B. Krüger, *The Pear Tree Blossoms: a history of the Moravian mission stations in South Africa* (Genadendaal, 1966), p.196.
150. Cited in Macmillan, *Cape Coloured Question*, p.238. I do not know of any more extensive expression of their point of view. Despite the immense ruling class bias in the sources, I am sure that such statements could be found in missionary, magisterial or court records, and possibly in Cape folklore, an uninvestigated field.
151. Krüger, *Pear Tree Blossoms*, p.190.
152. Malherbe, 'Diversification and mobility'; Van Arkel *et al.*, *Wijngaard*, p.52.
153. Worden, 'Cape slave emancipation', pp.5, 9; Van Arkel *et al.*, *Wijngaard*, pp.53, 65-68.
154. Cited in Du Toit and Giliomee, *Afrikaner Political Thought*, p.74.
155. Information taken from the annual *Blue Books*. See also Van Arkel *et al.*, *Wijngaard*, p.63.
156. Worden, 'Cape slave emancipation', p.5.
157. *CBB*, 1857, FF9.
158. Napier to Glenelg, 7 November 1837, Cape Archives, G.H. 1/117, cited in Worden, 'Cape slave emancipation', p.8.
159. Glenelg to Napier, 9 November 1837 (?), Cape Archives, G.H. 1/117, cited in Worden, 'Cape slave emancipation', p.8.
160. Editorial, *South African Commercial Advertiser*, 21 November 1838, cited in Worden, 'Cape slave emancipation', p.1.
161. Worden, 'Rural slavery', p.101; Van Arkel *et al.*, *Wijngaard*, p.38.
162. *Select Committee Report on Granting Land in Freehold to Hottentots* (Cape Town, 1856), Q.213 and 214, cited in Worden, 'Cape slave emancipation'.
163. *Master and Servant; Addenda to Documents on the Working of the Order in Council of the 21st July 1846, including Memorials etc., Reports by the Resident Magistrates on the Missionary Institutions* (Cape Town, 1849).
164. Information on the wages is to be found in the annual *Blue Books*.
165. Hancock, 'Trek', pp.338-39 (italics in original). There is a considerable difference between these views of Hancock's and those cited by Beinart and Delius above in the introduction. The explanation for his change of position would seem to lie in the fact that, in the meantime, he had come

to learn much more about South African history in general, and about the history of the south west Cape gentry in particular, as a result of his research for the biography of Smuts.

Vagabond Hollanders and Runaway Englishmen: White Poverty in the Cape Before Poor Whiteism

C. Bundy

Introduction

Bonaparte Blenkins, the unscrupulous intruder in *The Story of an African Farm*, having concealed that he had been tramping the roads of the rural Cape and living by his wits, was invited to remain on Tant Sannie's farm as teacher to the two little girls. The grotesquely inappropriate appointment of the ill-educated, deceitful and sadistic Blenkins — which provides a chilling humour in the early chapters of the novel — was not merely gothic invention on the part of Olive Schreiner. Modern readers of the book may not realise how representative a figure Blenkins was, or how many similar appointments may have been made on the farms of poorer colonists in the nineteenth century Cape. The inadequacy of public education in the Cape during the first half-century of responsible government has been comprehensively described[1]; in particular, the children of Cape Dutch rural dwellers were conspicuously underschooled. For a variety of strong cultural, social and economic reasons, many colonists were unwilling or unable to send their children to the local 'third class school', and instead engaged itinerant teachers or *meesters* on their farms to inculcate the rudiments of literacy in their children.

Such employees were not highly regarded. The editor of the Burghersdorp newspaper remarked in 1865 that 'a very low class of persons' found employment as *meesters*; that a *meester* 'at a Boer's estimate is about the very lowest occupation an unfortunate wretch can apply himself to — he can go no lower . . . even the *smouse* meets