

RURAL PRODUCTION AND LABOUR IN THE WESTERN CAPE, 1838 TO
1888, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE WHEAT GROWING DISTRICTS

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ABSTRACT

'RURAL PRODUCTION AND LABOUR IN THE WESTERN CAPE, 1838 TO 1888, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE WHEAT PRODUCING DISTRICTS'

This thesis deals with aspects of the history of the rural western Cape between 1838 and 1888. In particular, it investigates the people and processes that were involved in producing wheat from emancipation until industrialization, mechanization and urbanization began to have an impact on the rural areas. The thesis focuses on a substantial part of the social and economic history of the western Cape after slavery, and this has been a neglected area in the historiography of nineteenth-century South Africa.

Chapter one outlines some characteristics of wheat production and the labour force and situates these in the broader political economy of the Colony. It then describes the responses of the ex-slaves to emancipation. The chapter chronicles the growing tensions between ex-slaves who sought to reduce their dependency on farm wages and farmers who sought measures to ensure their proletarianization. These tensions culminated in the years 1848 to 1853 when the Colony hovered on the brink of civil war.

Chapter two shows how farmers and labourers fared during periods of economic expansion, during the 1850s, and the depression of the 1860s. It also investigates changes in labour and land laws and the effects of these upon agrarian property and labour relations.

Chapter three covers the period 1867 to 1880. It examines the privatization of particular mission stations and illustrates the importance of the missions as labour reservoirs. The chapter traces the development of the first commercial farmers' political organizations and links the emergence of exclusive provisions for farm workers in the Masters and Servants Laws with the political mobilization of agrarian capital. The chapter demonstrates the growing ability of regular farm workers to shift into casual labouring tenancies, and of casual workers to reduce dependency upon farm wages, as economic developments of the 1870s presented agrarian labour with a range of alternatives to farm work.

The final chapter examines some of the economic, social and ideological ingredients of the transition from Farmers' Protection Societies to Afrikaner Bond. It explains the inability of farmers to compete on international markets as commodity producers or as purchasers of labour power. Included here, is an analysis of what were likely to have been the largest number of labourers in any single industry in the Colony, the grain harvesters. The thesis closes with a discussion on race and class in the western Cape.

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ABBREVIATIONS

<u>C.A.</u>	<u>Cape Argus</u>
C.C.R.	Civil Commissioners' Reports
C.F.S.	Children's Friend Society
<u>C.M.</u>	<u>Cape Monitor</u>
<u>C.M.A.</u>	<u>Cape Mercantile Advertiser</u>
<u>C.P.P.</u>	<u>Cape Parliamentary Papers</u>
<u>C.S.</u> later <u>S.M.</u>	<u>Cape Standard</u> later <u>Standard and Mail</u>
<u>C.T.M.</u>	<u>Cape Town Mail</u>
C.W.M.	Church of the World Mission
F.P.A.	Farmers' Protection Association (Boere Beskermings Vereeniging)
<u>H.V.</u>	<u>Het Volksblad</u>
I.C.S.	Institute of Commonwealth Studies
<u>J.A.H.</u>	<u>Journal of African History</u>
<u>J.S.A.S.</u>	<u>Journal of Southern African Studies</u>
L.M.S.	London Missionary Society
M.L.A.	Member of the Legislative Assembly
M.M.S.	Methodist Mission Society
M.P.A.	Moravian Periodical Accounts
<u>R.O.A.P.E.</u>	<u>Review of African Political Economy</u>
R.M.S.	Rhenish Mission Society
R.S.C.	Report of a Select Committee
<u>S.A.A.M.</u>	<u>South African Advertiser and Mail</u>
<u>S.A.C.A.</u>	<u>South African Commercial Advertiser</u>
<u>S.M.G.</u>	<u>(Cape of Good Hope and Port Natal) Shipping and Merchant Gazette</u>
S.O.A.S.	School of Oriental and African Studies
<u>Stat. Reg.</u>	<u>Statistical Registers</u>
(U).S.P.G.	(United) Society for the Propagation of the Gospel
<u>Z.A.</u>	<u>Zuid Afrikaan</u>

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

The rural western Cape, during the second half of the nineteenth century, is a neglected field in South African historiography. This omission is, perhaps, most clearly reflected in the recent comparative studies¹ which depend largely upon the available secondary literature. Characteristically, the traditional and general accounts of nineteenth-century Cape history focus on five themes: slavery; the Great Trek; the eastern frontier; Afrikaner nationalism; and mining. They deal scantily with agrarian society and economy in the western regions between 1838 and 1888.² The exceptions comprise several narrowly-focused studies of particular missions, regions or groups of people in the colony. Their usefulness is, however, limited: they tend to regard the subject matter in isolation from the broader political economy of the Cape; they are largely narrative, and frequently anecdotal; finally, little attempt is made to integrate official, unofficial and mission sources.³

There is now a body of more recent work on South Africa during the nineteenth century which has made considerable advances on the traditions in scope, depth and method of Afrikaner and Liberal

-
1. See for example, G.M. Frederickson, White Supremacy: A Comparative Study in American and South African History, Oxford, 1981.
 2. Examples are: T.R.H. Davenport, 'The Consolidation of a New Society. The Cape Colony', M. Wilson and L. Thompson, Oxford History of South Africa; P.L. Scholtz, 'The Cape Colony, 1853-1902', in C.F.J. Muller, ed., Five Hundred Years. A History of South Africa, Pretoria, 1969.
 3. Again, these criticisms are true of both Afrikaner and Liberal historians. For example: theses submitted to Afrikaner Universities such as P.L. Scholtz, 'Die Historiese Ontwikkeling van die Onder-Olifantsrivier', 1660-1902, D. Phil, University of South Africa, 1964; and liberal responses to the Afrikaner interpretation of Cape history such as J.S. Marais, The Cape Coloured People 1652-1937, Johannesburg, 1957.

historians.¹ Most useful, for the purposes of this study, are the contributions of recent accounts towards an understanding of: Cape society during slavery; agrarian history of areas outside of the western Cape; and of various aspects of Cape economy, politics and ideology during the second half of the nineteenth century.² These provide useful background, comparative and incidental material. However, none addresses itself directly to the rural areas of the post-emancipation western Cape. That is the concern of this thesis.

There are several reasons why this thesis concentrates on the wheat growing districts of the western Cape. The inclusion of viticulture and/or pastoralism would have burdened this study with economic data and empirical detail on labour processes and thus limited the investigation of agrarian social relations and politics. The focus on wheat also derives from the centrality of wheat production to the rural economy and society. Wheat was the starch staple food for groups as disparate as members of rural convict-labour gangs and the urban merchant elite, as well as a large proportion of the intermediate population in the region. Wheat was also the most valuable agricultural commodity on western-Cape markets. It featured significantly, and often prominently, as a source of income for a large proportion of western-Cape agriculturists scattered throughout all but the pastoral interior region. Local conditions and contemporary technology were largely unsuited to mechanization or even the usage of scythes or multi-furrowed ploughs. Consequently, large numbers of casual and

1. Notably, S. Marks and A. Atmore, eds., Economy and Society in Pre-Industrial South Africa, U.K., 1980.

2. Historians who have done most to advance the study of South African agrarian history during the nineteenth century are: S. Trapido and P. Delius for the Transvaal; C. Bundy, W. Beinart and T. Kirk for the eastern Cape and Transkei; and T. Keegan for the Orange Free State.

regular workers, probably more than in any other single industry, were involved in producing wheat.

At one level, this is an examination of how a labour-intensive staple-food industry operated without slaves or mechanized harvesters. Important in this respect are the statistics on production, wages and population, and the details of farm technology. However, this thesis is not only about wheat farming. Recent work on the social history of industrializing Britain has illustrated the inadequacies of the traditional economic histories. It is impossible to explain agrarian change in terms of technological innovation and quantitative methods alone. But, neither can these be safely ignored. 'Quantitative history' and 'People's history' need not be conflicting historical methods.¹ A more accurate impression of the rural western Cape emerges from integrating the economic and statistical with other perspectives and historical evidence.

This study situates wheat production in the context of the developing world economy. Particularly important is its relation to the international grain trade and the American and Australian wheat industries. But, despite their significance, the inequalities in the world capitalist system, of which the western Cape formed part, are not the focus of this analysis. Frederick Cooper and John Lonsdale have recently exposed the limitations of 'dependency-, world-system- and third-world theories'.² Indeed, a reconstruction of western-Cape agrarian

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1. Cf., R. Floud, 'Quantitative History and People's History: Two Methods in Conflict?', History Workshop, 17, 1984.
 2. F. Cooper, 'Africa and the World Economy', African Studies Review, Vol. XXIV, June-Sept., 1981; J. Lonsdale, 'State and Social processes in Africa: a historiographical survey', African Studies Review, Vol. XXIV, June-Sept., 1981.

history within these theoretical frameworks, may well have misplaced its central focus and neglected vital processes of local class formation. While unequal advantages which international merchants had in competing with local wheat, wine or pastoral farmers were integral to merchant profits, the inequality with which farmers and labourers entered negotiations on the labour market was similarly integral to the profits of farmers.

This thesis will, like the recent studies of postemancipation coastal Kenya and South Carolina, constantly shift its focus between agrarian production and broader social and political concerns.¹ In the western Cape these included: the developments among the labouring classes; the political mobilization of agrarian capital; changing patterns of land distribution and usage; and the locus of coastal merchants in the Cape's political economy.

The thesis is concerned to develop the theme of wheat production in ways that deepen our understanding of agrarian society and economy. Indeed, an investigation of rural industry in isolation from its broader social, political and ideological context would be as severely flawed as a study of, say, Cape ideology or politics that failed to take into account the economic base. In a sense, then, wheat production provides a theme into, and around, which are woven the various strands that fill a wider tapestry of the rural western Cape in these years.

A wide body of comparative and theoretical material has suggested

1. E. Foner, Nothing But Freedom: Emancipation and its Legacy, London, 1983; F. Cooper, From Slaves to Squatters: Plantation Labour and Agriculture in Zanzibar and Coastal Kenya, 1890-1925, New Haven 1980.

perspectives and posed questions that present useful approaches to the primary material on the western Cape. There is, for example, a growing literature on postemancipation societies in the Caribbean, American South and east coast of Africa.¹ These reveal the complexity of slaves' responses to emancipation under different conditions. They also suggest the inadequacies of studies that are based solely upon primary source material which reflects the official and commercial-farmer viewpoint. This thesis identifies the shortcomings of existing accounts of what happened as a result of emancipating slaves in the western Cape. Primary and secondary material on the twenty-six mission stations in the arable western Cape, where many ex-slaves settled, have yielded valuable new material. This, construed together with an in-depth examination of the wheat industry, and the source material upon which traditional accounts are based, facilitate a fuller and more accurate impression of the rural western Cape after slavery.

The regulation of access to land is another theme in this thesis which draws from recent theoretical and comparative work. Most informative were the current debates on the relation between law and society; insights of British and American social historians into the workings of the law in societies undergoing capitalist development; new work on British historical geography; and Martin Legassick's seminal article on the South African frontier.² These inform the perspective adopted in

-
1. For example: P. Fraser, 'The Fictive Peasantry: Caribbean Rural Groups in the Nineteenth Century', in S. Craig, Contemporary Caribbean, Trinidad, 1981; D. Hall, 'The Flight from the Estates Reconsidered', Journal of Caribbean History, 1978; R.L. Ransom and R. Sutch, One Kind of Freedom. The Economic Consequences of Emancipation, Cambridge, 1977.
 2. For the debate referred to see various contributions to the Journal of Law and Society since 1977. Examples of other work referred to are: E.P. Thompson, Whigs and Hunters, New York, 1975; E. Genovese, Roll Jordan Roll. The World the Slaves Made, New York, 1974; R.A. Butlin, The Transformation of Rural England, 1580-1800, Oxford, 1982; M. Legassick, 'The Frontier Tradition in South African Historiography', in Marks and Atmore, Economy and Society.

this thesis on the land question in the Cape. It is as misleading to regard conflicts over land as having a geographical frontline as it is to speculate about a point during the nineteenth century by which the dispossession and proletarianization of the Khoisan or 'coloureds' was complete.¹ Struggles over public² and mission land continued in the western Cape throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century.

This study investigates the balance and shifts in complex social forces which explain why some occupants of mission and public land were dispossessed while others were able to retain their hold on the land.

Finally, this study has benefitted from new ways of perceiving the relation of nationalism to capitalist expansion. Tom Nairn, Benedict Anderson and John Breuilly have investigated nationalism in societies undergoing economic change.³ With the help of such insights, and the empirical evidence on wheat farmers, this analysis of Afrikaner nationalism traces its origins, and later linkages, to agrarian capital. Political mobilization was also related to the new political arena which 'Responsible Government' created in 1872 when it became possible for agrarian capital to capture control over the state via the ballot box. These aspects of nineteenth-century Afrikaner nationalism are relatively neglected. Historians have generally sought to

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1. No systematic research underpins the numerous speculations about such dispossession being complete by the early, mid- or late nineteenth century. Historians who have considered conflicts over land often present these in the context of frontier skirmishes between settler-colonists and indigenous tribes. See for example, T. Strauss, War Along the Orange: The Koranna and the Northern Border Wars of 1868-9 and 1878-9, Cape Town, 1979.
 2. 'Public land' includes: 'crown land'; 'waste land'; 'government land' and mission lands held on 'tickets of occupation' from the government.
 3. T. Nairn, 'The Modern Janus', in his Break up of Britain, U.K., 1977; B. Anderson, Imagined Communities: Reflections Origin and Spread of Nationalism, London, 1983; J. Breuilly, Nationalism and the State, Manchester, 1982.

explain the phenomenon in terms of ethnic mobilization alone, or they have concentrated on the Bond. They pay insufficient attention to its origins in the Farmers' Protection movement and to the continuity in commercial-farmer hegemony in the late 1870s and 1880s.

A premise of many Liberal and Afrikaner historians is that a neat racial hierarchy existed in postemancipation rural society.¹ Perceptions of social life in the past become skewed when viewed through such a lens. As a result, depictions of western-Cape history are, at times, inaccurate and oversimplified. Rather than promote an understanding of the rich and complex processes of agrarian social change, they serve to perpetuate the myth that modern racial divisions in South Africa are an historically given, natural and immutable fact in the country's history rather than a human creation that has been actively promoted and shaped over time.

This thesis strives to avoid racial terminology. Evidence in the primary sources provides little grounds for assuming the viability of terms which Afrikaner and Liberal historians often readily accept. For example, the population censuses indicate considerable confusion and inconsistency, both in the official mind and among the public at large, as to who fitted where among the changing categories of: 'Hottentot', 'Other', 'Mixed and Other', 'All Other', 'Coloured' and 'Kafir'. Terms such as 'Coloureds' or 'Whites' appear in the text of this thesis in quotations from, or paraphrases of, the sources. They are also used in contexts where the use of such terms seemed the best way to capture the spirit of a contemporary situation. Generally though, the

1. See for example, A. Appel, 'Die Distrik Oudtshoorn tot die Tagtigerjare van die 19de Eeu -- 'n Sosio-Historiese Studie', Ph.D., University of Port Elizabeth, 1979; Marais, Cape Coloured People.

terms employed to describe groups of people have been selected for their precision and accuracy and those commonly used in this study are: commercial farmers; sharecroppers; small farmers; Khoisan; ex-slaves; Xhosa; or various types of labourers and tenants.

There is a rich historical literature on peasants in diverse regions of the world and a widespread assumption that western-Cape mission inhabitants were a peasantry.¹ However, the concept is frequently abused and requires careful application. A majority of mission households depended for the greater proportion of their incomes on wages. Indeed, this thesis argues that the continued existence of the missions depended upon their function as labour reservoirs. A broad and dynamic meaning of the term peasants can obscure rural realities. Rural western-Cape society does not readily fit the picture of a peasantry in the process of differentiation into rich, middle and poor peasants. This can blur the dialectic between race and class, and blandly override important differences between the tenantry on private farms, residents of missions and squatters on public land.

Far more useful, for understanding the underclasses of the rural western Cape, are the distinctions so effectively employed by Frank Snowdon in his analysis of late nineteenth-century Italian society.² He distinguishes between established commercial farmers and regular resident farm workers, and demarcates 'intermediate strata' which consist of peasants in the tight and useful sense of the term; various types of casual labourers; and small farmers. For the

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1. See for example, M. Morris, 'The State and the Development of Capitalist relations in the South African Countryside: A Process of Class Struggle'. Ph.D., Sussex, 1979. A.J. Purkis, 'The Politics, Capital and Labour of Railway Building in the Cape Colony, 1870-1885; Ph.D., Oxford, 1978.
 2. F. Snowdon, 'Social Origins of Agrarian Fascism in Italy', Archives Europeenes de Sociologie, 13, 1972.

purposes of this thesis, then, peasants are members of households which were largely subsistence oriented and depended more on agriculture than on wage labour for their reproduction. This includes some tenants, squatters or sharecroppers.¹ Casual labourers differed from peasants in so far as they were dependent on wages for the greater proportion of their incomes. Small farmers were marginal commercial farmers.

Static abstractions which demarcate slave, feudal and capitalist stages of development also inadequately reveal the contours of rural society in the western Cape. As D. Harvey recently pointed out in his study of capitalism:

... in actual historical situations we will certainly find several modes of production intertwined or articulated with each other even though one mode may be clearly dominant. Residual elements of past modes, the seeds of future modes and imported elements from some contemporaneously existing mode may all be found within a particular social formation. (2)

The Cape formed part of the world capitalist system during the slave era.³ In a sense, neither slavery, nor the partial self-sufficiency of casual labourers thereafter, were residuals of pre-capitalist modes. Both were integral to agrarian capitalization at the Cape.

It is not the intention of this study to stress complexity in order to reduce agrarian society to an aggregate of individuals. It attempts, rather, to capture contemporary processes of social

-
1. J. Saul and R. Woods in T. Shanin, ed., Peasants and Peasant Societies, London, 1971, p. 104-106; T. Shanin, The Awkward Class; Political Sociology of the Peasantry in a Developing Society. Russia 1910-1925, Oxford, 1972, passim; C. Bundy, The Rise and Fall of the South African Peasantry, London, 1979, passim; Cooper, Slaves to Squatters, passim.
 2. D. Harvey, Limits to Capital, Oxford, 1982, p. 26.
 3. R. Ross, 'The Cape of Good Hope and the World Economy, 1652-1835', I.C.S., S.S.A., March, 1985.

structuration.¹ Throughout, this thesis seeks to establish what Philip Abrahms and Eric Hobsbawm have termed the mutual interrogation of concept and evidence, of theory and narrative.² In doing so, rather than dichotomize, it investigates the dialectic between human agency and structure, base and superstructure, and vertical and horizontal interconnections.

The arguments in this thesis developed out of the primary-source material as much as they did from theoretical formulation. Two bodies of primary material constitute its principle sources. The first of these is the voluminous series of printed and manuscript papers of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope. Although material has been gleaned for other periods, areas and themes in Cape history, this study systematically exploits this source for evidence on agriculture between 1838 and 1888 for the first time.

Official primary material on wheat production is dispersed in a wide variety of documents. Frequent and extremely detailed official reports were limited to rural produce, such as wine and wool, in which merchants and farmers, and their parliamentary representatives, shared an interest to stimulate production for export purposes. Wheat was not an important export commodity and information on wheat and the wheat growing districts is less concentrated and scattered about documents ranging from Colonial Office reports on freed slaves from captured slave-ships, to local petitions and reports on roads, squatters and rural crime.

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1. The term 'structuration' is used in the sense in which A. Giddens applies it in his Constitution of Society, Cambridge, 1984, *passim*.
 2. E.J. Hobsbawm, 'The Revival of Narrative: Some Comments', Past and Present, 86, 1980; P. Abrahms, Historical Sociology, U.K., 1982.

The other main source comprises predominantly manuscript material which is derived from the archives of four Mission Societies.¹ These controlled the sixteen rural missions where an average of 77 percent of the mission population resided. These missions were geographically well situated, scattered throughout the arable and principal wheat-growing regions of the western Cape. This thesis synthesizes material from the western Cape missions and integrates this material with developments in the broader political economy. The mission archives have thus been put to use outside of the parochial bounds to which they have hitherto been limited.

Despite their biases, prejudices and limitations, rich and regular commentary on rural localities appear in, for example, the annual reports of the Civil Commissioners, who were often also the Resident magistrates; wage and harvest statistics; evidence presented to the commissions of inquiry into labour and land; and the annual reports, correspondence and diaries that emanated from the various mission stations. Contemporary travellers' accounts, farm diaries, agricultural textbooks, almanacs, settlers' guides and local newspapers also yielded valuable 'raw material'.

Material that is located in the Cape Town archives, and was known to be relevant, provided another useful source. However, I was unable to go to South Africa and conduct comprehensive and systematic research in the local archives. A study of the rural western Cape after slavery which exhausts the material in the Cape Town archives has still to be written.

1. The London Missionary Society; the United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel; the Methodist Mission Society; and the Moravian Mission Society.

Chapter One of this thesis provides some background details on wheat production and rural society and then investigates the aftermath of emancipation between 1838 and 1853. It challenges the traditional allegation of a sudden exodus of slaves from farms and argues that the ex-slaves' response to the new options which emancipation presented was complex, regionally diverse and protracted. The chapter charts the unprecedented growth of the casual labour-force comprised of mission inhabitants, squatters on public land, labour-tenants and sharecroppers on farmers' land, and the growing village proletariat. They fulfilled a vital function in the western Cape's agrarian economy, notably as seasonal workers.

A conflict of interests developed between ex-slaves, seeking to reduce wage-dependency and develop autonomy as independent cultivators, and agrarian employers faced with falling wheat prices and labour scarcity. The chapter goes on to investigate official immigration and labour policies, and relates these to the differing perceptions within the ruling class as to how best to resolve the farm-labour scarcity. A gradual shift towards coercive legal interventions in the 'free labour market' culminated in the Squatters Bill. This Bill precipitated a crisis between 1848 and 1853. The final section of the chapter chronicles and explains the events which brought the colony to the brink of civil war.

Chapter Two deals with the period 1853 to 1867. The first section provides information on the localities of commercial wheat production; the markets they served; and some features of small, middling and large wheat farms. It investigates the social and economic factors that hindered mechanization and compares these with conditions in parts of Australia, America and Britain. The relative weakness of

commercial farmers' representation in the Legislature enabled merchant interests to block calls for tariffs on wheat imports and make lucrative inroads into the local market. While imports eroded wheat prices, scarcity increased labour costs. Attention is focused on the composition of the agricultural labour force; the conditions of farm work; the role of immigrants; and casual labour.

Commercial-farmers effectively agitated for more coercive labour legislation when the new constitution came into effect in 1854. This chapter analyses the 1856 Masters and Servants Act, as well as the unofficial measures farmers took to secure a cheap and regular labour supply. The focus then shifts to the responses and initiatives of the rural underclasses.¹ Three aspects are paid particular attention: attitudes to the 1854 constitution; opposition to military conscription in 1856; and the relatively undramatic, but nonetheless important and often effective, variety of tactics that regular and casual workers adopted in their everyday struggle for a livelihood.

Section C of Chapter Two analyses the changes that occurred in western-Cape property relations as a result of expanding wool farming, copper production and credit facilities. It argues that exclusive land titles rapidly eroded rights to commonage and diminished the public domain. Certain aspects of this process receive fuller treatment: the powers over title distribution that devolved upon Divisional Councils; the areas, extent and beneficiaries of public-land alienation; the squeeze on squatters and mission inhabitants and their responses. The chapter ends with an investigation into the consequences of the drought and depression, during the 1860s, for farmers and labourers.

1. These include: regular resident labourers; casual labourers; and the various types of labouring and sharecropping tenants.

The first part of Chapter Three investigates the issues involved in the controversy surrounding the privatization of mission lands in general, and the granting of freeholds to the occupants of London Missionary Society institutions in particular. It outlines the balance of social forces that first prevented, and then facilitated, the privatization of certain missions. This demonstrates the importance of the rural missions to the economy as reservoirs of labour. It also provides insights into the views of the occupants on privatisation.

The chapter then monitors the effects, on the rural western Cape, of the infrastructural expansion in the Cape economy and the development of the diamond fields during the 1870s. It argues that the markets these created for western-Cape labour power were far more significant than those created for western-Cape grain. This strengthened the position of rural labourers who exploited rising wage-levels and sources of income independent of farmers. Detailed evidence of the production costs and profit margins on several wheat farms, and the growing ability of farm workers to shift from regular wage work to casual labouring tenancies, provide the background to the reaction of agrarian employers.

Chapter Three also investigates the developing political power of agrarian capital. It traces the first Farmers' Protection movement to wheat farmers seeking tariff protection from imports, and shows their political limitations in relation to merchant importers. The chapter then goes on to examine the mix of 'Afrikanerist' and class perceptions that informed the commercial farmers' movement as it developed in response to the 1872 constitutional changes. It locates the three Masters and Servants Acts of the 1870s in the context of the

growing political influence of agrarian capital. These Acts imposed a racial dimension on regular farm-work and marked an important phase in the process whereby rural worker came increasingly to mean 'coloured'. This process had its origins in the racial stratification of slave society but assumed new, and in some respects, exacerbated, dimensions as wage-labour relations intensified and expanded over the fifty-year period 1838-1888. Despite attempts after 1838 to expand the farm labour force with immigrant workers from the U.K. and Europe, by the late 1870s, regular farm work was, both in practice and law, virtually the exclusive preserve of ex-slaves, Khoisan and their descendants.

An investigation of the non-resident casual labour force completes the picture of agrarian relations during the 1870s. This section focuses on casual labourers' attempts to minimise farm-labour dependency and on farmers' attempts to tighten controls over access to alternative sources of income.

Finally, chapter four considers the 1880s. It describes how the general economic slump, labour scarcity, falling wheat, wine, wool and feather prices, together with the Anglo-Boer skirmishes in the Transvaal, infused the concept 'Afrikaner' with new meaning. All of these, it is argued, served to universalize and concretize the ideology and organization of what remained in essence a capitalist farmers' movement. The Afrikaner Bond came close to controlling the Cape Legislature during the 1880s. But the transition from Farmers' Protection Movement to Afrikaner Bond forged alliances across considerable, and potentially fractious, ethnic, class and regional divides. Among these were the interests of English and Afrikaner commercial farmers, estate owners and white tenants and viticulturists, pastor-

alists and agriculturists.

In spite of the Bond's power, wheat farmers were unable to secure the tariffs or railway subsidies they required to monopolise the Cape markets. Data on transport costs, price-, production- and import-levels, illustrate the value of the Cape wheat market for international dealers and local producers. Merchants retained a competitive edge over wheat farmers who were unable to elicit support from export-oriented pastoralists and agriculturists who benefitted from free trade, and others who were concerned that free trade should keep bread prices down.

It was not only as commodity-producers that wheat farmers were unable to compete on international markets: they had little success as purchasers of labour power on regional and international markets. Section C of this chapter explains this failure in the light of the experiences of the Bergdamara, San, Xhosa and 'Delagoa Bay' immigrants that worked on western-Cape farms.

The thesis concludes with an analysis of the approximately 50,000 harvesters that worked the western Cape grain farms in peak season by the 1880s. Among the aspects of the harvest which are drawn out for fuller treatment are: the regional variations in the composition and contribution of regular and casual labourers; the origins, movement and ways of life and work of the thousands of casual harvesters; the harvesters' methods of promoting and defending their interests; the quantities and effects of payment in liquor and the attitudes of farmers, officials, workers and missionaries to these; and the question of proletarianizing poor whites to alleviate the labour shortage.

CHAPTER 1

LABOUR FORMATION AND WHEAT PRODUCTION AFTER SLAVERY.

THE WESTERN CAPE 1838 TO 1853.

A. Background

During the 1840s and 1850s, some 40 percent of the approximately 200,000 acres of cultivated land in the western Cape¹ was planted with wheat. Wheat cultivation was limited to localities with sufficient water supply.² Winter rains were vital to agriculture throughout the region. The rain bearing, north-west winds shed most rain on the south-west coastal belt³ where the colony's richest wheatlands were situated. These were in the parts of Cape, Stellenbosch and Zwellendam Divisions where over 50 percent of the annual rainfall of between ten and twenty-eight inches fell during the crucial growing months from May to September.⁴ Here producers could expect a reasonable prospect of returns in four out of five years without irrigation .

In areas of scantier or less seasonal rainfall such as George, Worcester, Beaufort and Clanwilliam Divisions, wheat growing tended to coincide with the lower reaches of the better-watered mountain

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1. During the period 1838 to 1848, the western region of the Cape Colony consisted of the Cape, Clanwilliam, Worcester, Zwellendam, Stellenbosch, George and Beaufort Divisions. In 1848, Malmesbury and Caledon Divisions were created. Paarl Division was established in 1849. See Maps 1 and 2 and Table 1.
 2. The notable exception to this rule is the narrow coastal strip in George Division, east of Mossel Bay, and south of the Lange-Kloof and Outeniqua Mountains. Here rainfall was in excess of the requirements of wheat cultivation and liable to cause rust.
 3. Rainfall distribution is based on averages of observations, in J. Noble, History, Productions and Resources of the Cape of Good Hope, Official Handbook, Cape Town, 1886, passim.
 4. See Table 1 and Map 2; C.M. Knowles, The Development of the British Overseas Empire, Vol. 3, London, 1936, passim; D.J. van Zyl, 'Die Geskiedenis van Graanbou aan die Kaap, 1795-1826; p. 144/5; A.R.E. Burton, The Cape Colony for the Settler. Its Urban and Rural Industries, their Development and Extension, Cape Town, 1903, passim.

MAP 1

SKETCH MAP OF THE MAIN TOWNS, VILLAGES, RIVERS, MOUNTAIN RANGES AND WHEAT PRODUCING AREAS OF THE WESTERN CAPE,

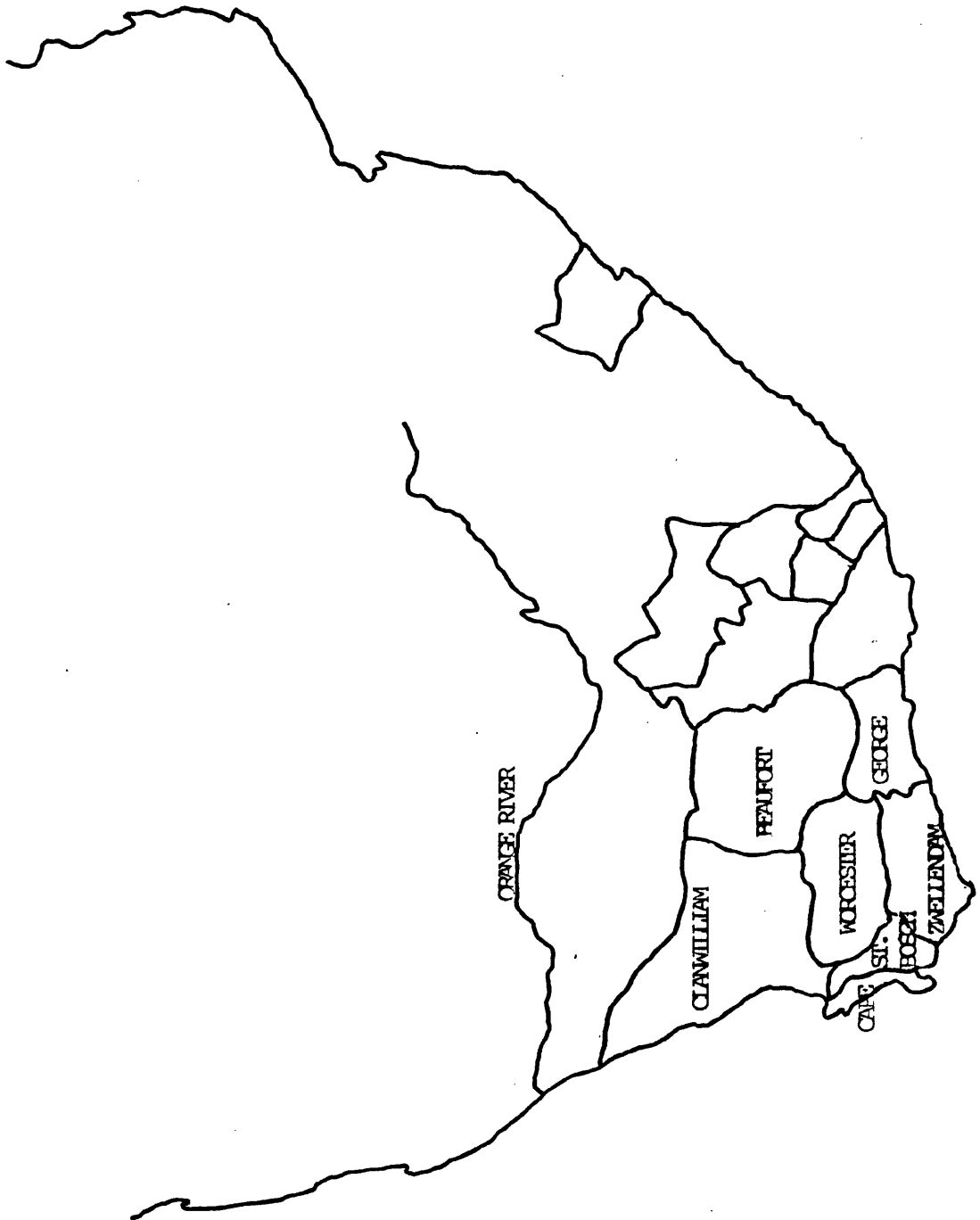
1838-1853



Each • represents a thousand bushels of wheat. See Table 1.

THE WESTERN CAPE DIVISIONS AND OTHER COLONIAL BOUNDARIES

1848



1. Based on L.T. Reichel, Missions Atlas Der Bruder Unitat, Herrnhut, 1860, p. 39; Stat Regs., 1892/3, Map Supplement.

TABLE 1

WESTERN-CAPE WHEAT PRODUCTION IN 1838: DIVISIONS, QUANTITY PRODUCED (BUSHEL), PRICE PER BUSHEL (PENNY), VALUE, ACREAGE, RATIO WHEAT: ACRE, POPULATION AND RATIO WHEAT BUSHEL: PERSON

Division	Quantity	Price	Value £	Acreage	Ratio wheat bushels/ acre	Population	Ratio wheat bushels/ person
Cape (excl. C.T.)	127,800	84	48,990	17,000	7.5	13,090	9.7
Stellenb	88,560	120	44,280	14,760	6	13,916	6.3
Zwellend	95,080	72	28,524	12,000	7.9	16,930	5.6
TOTAL	311,440		121,794	43,760	7.1	43,936	7
Worcestr	48,408	96	19,363	32,272	1.5	8,665	5.5
George	32,070	72	9,621	4,600	6.9	11,185	2.8
Clanwill	8,873	67	2,477	?	?	8,601	1.1
Beaufort	2,400	156	1,560	2,100	1.1	5,945	.4
TOTAL W. CAPE (incl. C.T.)	403,191		154,815	82,732(?)	4.1	98,338	4.1

Based on CO.53.75/6., Stat. Regs. for 1838/9. The official statistics on wheat production, population and wages are useful in so far as they create a general impression. It is unlikely that Clanwilliam's harvest amounted to 8,873 bushels in 1838 and 29,800 in 1839. The population figures are based on 'persons having a fixed abode' and do not take into account the 'great number' of people in Worcester, Zwellendam and Clanwilliam who were 'scattered' or 'leading a wandering life'. For the sake of uniformity and clarity the table presents all data on wheat in terms of bushels; a pattern adopted throughout this study. Calculations are based on the assumptions which were widely used at the Cape at that time: 1 bushel = approx. 60 lb.; 3 bushels = 1 muid, bag or sack; 8 bushels = 1 quarter; 30 bushels = 1 wagon-load or ton. S.A.C.A., Feb. 20, 1839; The Emigrant's Guide to South Africa, London, 1891, p.22/3.

slopes or the rivers and streams that flowed from the numerous mountain ranges.¹ Substantial quantities of wheat were cultivated in George and Worcester Divisions along river valleys, on the plains located between mountain ranges, and on the lower reaches of the mountains. Wheat farming was largely peripheral to the thirstlands of Clanwilliam and northern Worcester Divisions. Notable exceptions were the pockets of wheat cultivation along the banks of the Olifants River, and in the Kamiesberg and Bokkeveld Mountains.

Many of the arable river valleys were exceptionally fertile.² There were occasions when the alluvial deposits from the Olifants River in Clanwilliam Division yielded up to a hundred fold on each bushel of wheat sown. But this occurred in exceptional years only, and irrigated or 'dry' wheat cultivation generally suffered to a greater or lesser extent from periodic drought which reduced rivers to streams and streams to sandy beds. The most consistent yields from 'dry' cultivation came from 'the rich black and clay soil' that characterised the valleys of the Olifants River and its tributaries in George Division, or what later became Oudtshoorn Division.³ The 'shaley loams' of the Cape and Stellenbosch Divisions were the most fertile soil in the areas of 'wet' farming, where wheat cultivation depended on the winter rains. The highest consistent yields from 'dry' and 'wet' farming averaged from ten to fifteen bushels of wheat from each sown. For most of the nineteenth century, western-Cape wheat farms produced an average of seven or eight bushels per acre.⁴

1. R. Wallace, Agriculture in South Africa, London, 1901, p. 146.

2. Such as those of the Breede, Hex, both the Olifants Rivers, the Gamtoos Flats, the Grobbelaars and Wynands Rivers, and their tributaries. Irons, Settlers' Guide, 47, 50; F. Blersch, Handbook of Agriculture for South Africa, Cape Town, 1906, p. 156; C.O.53. 97., C.C.R., 1860; G29-60; S.A.A.M., Apr. 7, 1866.

3. Ibid.

4. Burton, The Cape Colony, 93-7; Pollock and Agnew, A Historical Geography of South Africa, London, 1963, p. 104.

In 1838, Cape Town's population of 20,016¹ was the most important market in the western Cape. By then, according to local press reports, six thousand wagon loads consisting of 150,000 bushels of wheat, valued at £66,000, 13,000 leaguers of wine, valued at £48,000, and other goods of less value, were 'annually dragged through the sands to Cape Town'.² The shifting sands of the wind-swept Cape flats presented a major obstacle as regards road access to the market at Cape Town. In 1838 the route via Tulbagh or Fransche Hoek pass connected the numerous fertile valleys of Worcester Division in the vicinity of Tulbagh and the Hex and Breede Rivers with Malmesbury, Paarl and Stellenbosch. Sir Lowry's Pass was in operation and it was possible to transport produce from the Caledon area, across the Hottentots Holland Mountains, to Somerset and Stellenbosch.³ Producers in Zwellendam and Worcester Divisions had to cross substantial mountains to reach the Cape Town market, but they were in much the same position as those producers in Stellenbosch and Cape Divisions as regards the Cape flats. No easy access existed between Stellenbosch, Paarl and Malmesbury on the one hand, and Cape Town on the other.

... nine-tenths of the best land in the colony, cut off from the capital and removed further from markets, estimating distance by difficulty of passage ... corn can be brought from Poland to the Cape with less labour than from some of the finest corn districts in this colony though the distance is not more than 150 miles as the crow flies. (4)

The general upward trend in the price of wheat on the Cape Town market in 1838 was checked for a time in June and July. It fell from

1. C.O.53.75., Stat. Reg., 1838.

2. Ibid; S.A.C.A., Jan. 17, Mar. 21, Dec. 1, 1838.

3. Maps 1 and 7.

4. S.A.C.A., Jan. 20, 1838.

over 9s.6d. per bushel to under 7s. as a result of the

... considerable imports pouring into Table Bay of wheat and flour, not only from England but also from the unusual importation of wheat from Mauritius. In addition to this, large quantities of wheat are reported to be still collected in the corn districts and in Town, the heretofore high prices having put a bar to the usual exports ... (1)

Official figures for 1838 indicate that wheat and flour exports from the Cape amounted to nearly £20,000. However, it is likely that a substantial proportion of this consisted of re-exported produce that came from merchant stocks of previously imported wheat and flour. Imports were more lucrative to grain dealers than wheat and flour exports. In 1838, these had a real value of some £8,000 and ranked an insignificant fifth in importance as an export commodity after wool worth £60,000; wine worth £40,000; hides and skins worth £33,000; and beef and pork worth £10,000.² By 1838 then, the Cape Town market was a centre of competition for local commercial farmers and for merchants participating in the local and international grain trade.

A limited, but developing, coastal trade existed. Merchant brigs and cutters called at Port Beaufort and Zwellendam Division, and Mossel Bay and Knysna in George Division on the east coast.³ Mossel Bay was a small village that comprised some ten houses. People from the surrounding area transported produce by wagon to Mossel Bay. They dealt with a local trader or a merchant on a visiting vessel, selling their produce and purchasing the commodities they required.⁴ It is possible that wheat was shipped from Port Beaufort and Mossel

1. S.A.C.A., June 30, 1838; The Mediator, July 24, 1838.

2. C.O.53.75., Stat. Reg., 1838; B.J. van de Sandt, Cape of Good Hope Almanac, Cape Town, 1854.

3. Backhouse, Visit to South Africa, 123, 130; P. Storrar, Portrait of Plettenberg Bay, Cape Town, 1978; A.P. Buirski, 'The Barrys and the Overberg', M.A., University of Stellenbosch, 1952.

4. Backhouse, Visit to South Africa, 123.

Bay to Cape Town where prices were higher, or to Knysna where roads were undeveloped and conditions were not suited to wheat cultivation. On the west coast of Clanwilliam Division, ships called at Saldanha, Lamberts, St. Helena, and Hondeklip Bays, and occasionally anchored off the mouth of the Olifants River. Merchants on board these vessels traded with local inhabitants from as far afield as Clanwilliam village and the Kamiesberg.¹

There was considerable variation in the scale and organization of commercial wheat-producing farms. Roughly ten thousand farmers are likely to have produced some wheat. A small proportion of these constituted a landowning class, which organized wheat cultivation as a cash crop on a fairly extensive scale and were considerable employers of labour.² Official statistics indicate that commercial wheat farmers realized £47,916 on the Cape Town market in 1838.³ In the same year, however, 63 percent of the wheat produced throughout the western Cape was consumed in the rural areas, where just under 80 percent of the population, or some 78,000 people, lived.⁴ A large sector of wheat production was organized around rural village and town markets, and for the consumption of the producers and their

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1. Backhouse, Visit to South Africa, 588, 593-604; M.M.S., Box 306, No. 59, Lily Fountain, 1839; D.J. Van Zyl, 'Die Geskiedenis van Graanou aan die Kaap, 1795-1826', M.A., University of Stellenbosch, 1967; J.M. Smalberger, Aspects of the History of Copper Mining in Namaqualand 1846-1931, Cape Town, 1975.
 2. R. Ross, 'The Rise of the Cape Gentry', I.C.S., S.S.A., 1980/1, p. 2; N. Worden, 'Rural Slavery in the western districts of the Cape Colony during the 18th century', D.Phil., Cambridge, 1982, passim.
 3. This figure is based on 7s.8d per bushel which is the official average price of wheat on the Cape Town market for 1838. C.O.53.75., Stat. Reg., 1838. It is not possible to establish how much of this accrued to middlemen, although it appeared to be common practice among commercial wheat farmers to arrange the transport and marketing of their own produce.
 4. Table 1.

dependents. Wheat was a staple food and probably the most important commodity, in terms of overall value, on local markets.¹ Most of the market-oriented wheat farms were concentrated in the Cape and Stellenbosch Divisions and in Zwellendam Division west of the Breede River and south of the Zondereinde Mountains. There were, for example, 'larger farming establishments' or 'estates' on the undulating downs near Caledon, along the Zondereinde River, and near Zwellendam.² 'Extensively cultivated' farms were situated in the vicinity of Riebeeks Kasteel, Koeberg, Tygerberg and about the Zwartland.³

There is evidence that similar farms were scattered about other parts of the western Cape. Extensively cultivated farms were situated along the Olifants River in George Division.⁴ In predominantly pastoral Beaufort Division, the Field Cornet of Ratelfontein in the Nieuwveld Mountains owned six farms and had a 'horse-mill capable of grinding twenty-four bushels of wheat in a day'. Extensive wheat-lands were cultivated on farms situated in the vicinity of Piquetberg, Twenty-Four Rivers, and the Kamiesberg in Clanwilliam Division, and

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1. Pockets of local demand were centered on villages and towns such as Stellenbosch, Paarl, Caledon, Zwellendam, George, Tulbagh, Worcester, Clanwilliam, Beaufort, and Malmesbury. Emphasis on the fact that wine was a more important export commodity than wheat is misleading. In 1853, £76,000 of wine and brandy were produced in the Cape Colony, and in 1840 their value was £93,000. The value of grain produced during the same years was £160,000 and £240,000. In 1838, the western Cape produced £53,859 worth of wine and £128,796 of wheat. C.O.53.75., Stat. Reg., 1838; D.J. van Zyl, 'Die Geskiedenis van Wynbou en Wynhandel in die Kaapkolonie, 1795-1860', Ph.D., Stellenbosch, 1973, p. 545,6.
 2. Backhouse, Visit to South Africa, 100, 103.
 3. Ibid, p. 618; D.C. Joubert, 'Die Slawe opstand van 1808 in die Koe, Tygerberg en Swartland Distrikte', M.A., University of South Africa, 1946, passim.
 4. C.W.M. Box 16, Folder 1, Jacket A, Pacaltsdorp, March, 1838.

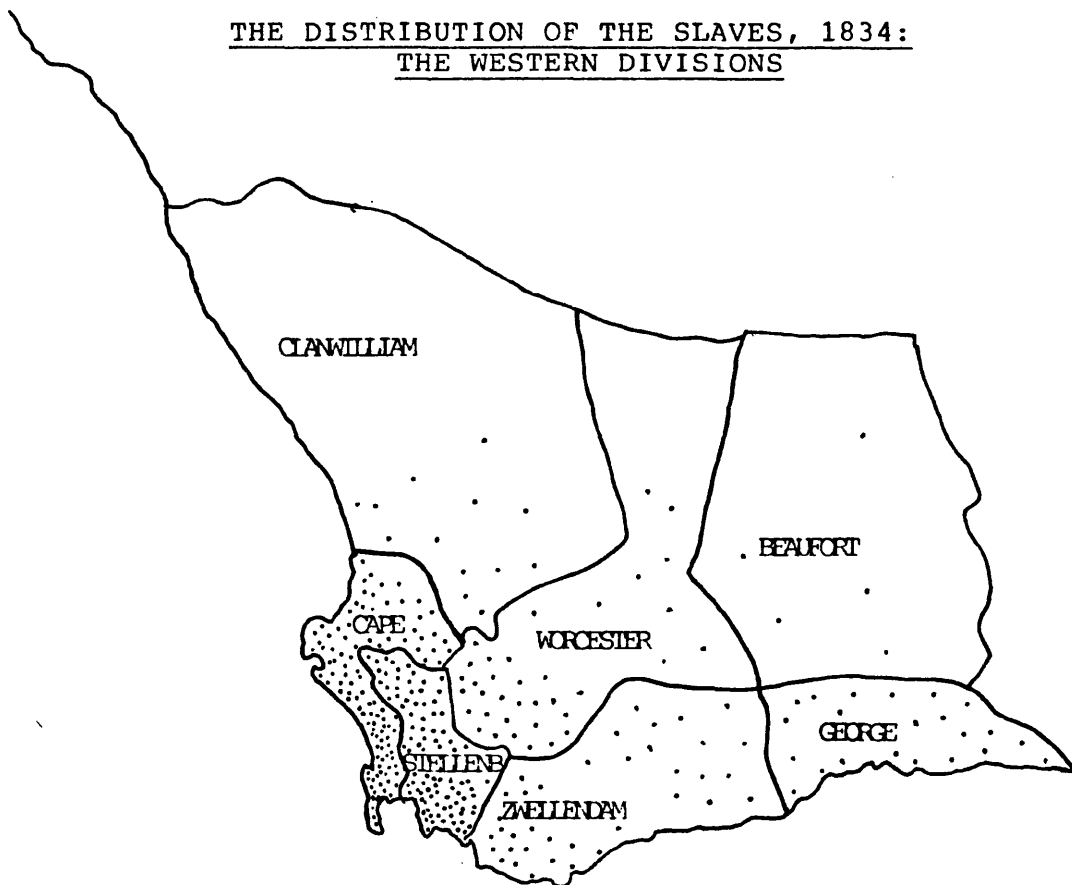
in areas surrounding Tulbagh and Worcester in Stellenbosch and Worcester Divisions.¹

In 1838, apprenticed, ex-slave labourers who resided on the farms provided the bulk of agricultural labour. The owner-operated commercial farms had been primarily dependent upon slave labour up to 1834. In 1834 slavery was abolished. Thirty-nine thousand slaves, the great majority of whom lived and worked on the commercial wheat and wine farms of the western Cape, became the apprentices of their former owners.² Slaves taken from vessels that were engaged in illegal slave trading by British authorities, supplemented the apprenticed resident labour force. In the 1830s the Children's Friend Society in Britain implemented a policy of sending pauper children in their care to the Cape. Between 1834 and 1838, 'freed slaves' and immigrated children probably added up to 1,500 apprenticed domestic and farm labourers to commercial wheat and wine farmers.³

It is likely that Dutch, Khoisan and British inhabitants, and the descendents of parents from one or more of these backgrounds, formed only a small part of the resident agricultural workforce on the wheat farms. British labour was limited to immigrated children. Relatively few Khoisan worked on farms in the wheat-growing districts. Ordinance

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1. Backhouse, Visit to South Africa, 501, 502, 521, 605-619.
 2. See Map 3; Joubert, 'Slawe Opstand'; In 1830, 74 percent of the 33,583 slaves in the Cape lived and worked in the western Divisions. E.C.W. Hengherr, 'Emancipation and After: a study of Cape slavery and the issues arising from it, 1830-1843', M.A., University of Cape Town, 1853; Newton King, 'Cape Labour Market, 1807-1828', in Marks and Atmore, Economy and Society, *passim*; J.S. Marais, The Cape Coloured People, 1652-1937, Johannesburg, 1957, p. 2; J. Sales, Mission Stations and the Coloured Communities of the Eastern Cape 1800-1852, Cape Town, 1975, p. 4.
 3. C.O.48.207., Report on the Children's Friend Society, *passim*.

THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE SLAVES, 1834:
THE WESTERN DIVISIONS



KEY: Each dot represents one hundred slaves.

<u>DIVISION</u>	<u>NUMBER OF SLAVES</u>
Clanwilliam	1,309
Cape Town and Division	12,217
Stellenbosch	9,450
Worcester	3,612
Zwellendam	3,732
Beaufort	589
George	2,368
<u>TOTAL FOR THE WESTERN CAPE</u>	<u>33,277</u>
<u>TOTAL FOR THE CAPE COLONY</u>	<u>39,021</u>

Derived from Liebenberg, 'Vrystelling', *passim*.

50 of 1828 had abolished many of the restrictions that the Caledon Code imposed on Khoisan labour in 1809 and, as a result, '... by the end of 1832, almost every district of the Cape reported a decrease in the numbers of "Hottentots" who remained in the colony to work for them'.¹ The emigration of a number of Dutch settler-farmers from the colony coincided with Ordinance 50 and the abolition act of 1834. Dutch farmers who depended on cheap apprenticed labour must certainly have considered the insecurity of their position under developing 'free' labour market conditions. Marginal Dutch settler-farmers may also have feared proletarianization; the 'Burghers' objected to 'work in the service of somebody else'.² One alternative for Dutch settlers generally was emigration. By 1839 'large numbers' had left, and some were still moving from parts of the western Cape.³ In short, in 1838 the agricultural labourers who resided on farms were predominantly ex-slaves and generally apprenticed rather than 'free'.

Many people were neither apprenticed regular labourers nor established commercial farmers. They formed intermediate strata of small farmers, peasants, and casual labourers who were engaged in small-scale

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1. A. Edge, 'Emancipation of the Slaves at the Cape of Good Hope 1820-1834', M.A., London, 1981, p. 19; Newton King, 'Cape Labour Market', in Marks and Atmore, Economy and Society, passim; Marais, Cape Coloured People, 179-185; B.J. Liebenberg, 'Die Vrystelling van de Slawe in die Kaapkolonie en die implikasies daarvan', M.A., University of the Orange Free State, 1960, *passim*.
 2. P.J. van der Merwe, Die Trekboer in die Geskiedenis van die Kaap Kolonie, Cape Town, 1938, p. 186-191. H. Giliomee goes so far as to say that the Great Trek could be regarded as a 'first concerted attempt to deal with the poor white problem'. A. Du Toit and H. Giliomee, Afrikaner Political Thought, 1780 to 1850, Cape Town, 1983, p. 302. 'Burghers' were the descendents of Dutch settlers.
 3. Writing of the Roggeveld near Calvinia in 1838, Backhouse noted that 'many boors were still leaving this country and proceeding toward Natal ... today I caught the painful remark of an artless individual that plenty of slaves were to be had in Natal'. Backhouse, Visit to South Africa, 507 and *passim*.

agrarian production. They had access to some land upon which they relied to meet a proportion of their needs. 'Small farms', 'very poor farms', and cottages with patches of cultivated land were scattered throughout the western Divisions.¹ A resident described small-scale cultivation in the Olifants River valley in George Division as follows:

although the farms as usual are generally from two to four miles apart and there are extensive tracts of land apparently doomed to perpetual barrenness belonging to each of them, still as the small spots under cultivation are so extremely prolific producing wine, fruit, tobacco and corn in abundance, every farm supports a number of families. (2)

Backhouse described parts of eastern Zwellendam and southern Worcester in a similar vein.³

Subsistence-oriented producers who lived on the missions had fruit and vegetable gardens, allotments for cultivating grain, and common grazing-lands. But the degree to which they depended on seasonal farm-wages to supplement incomes, varied a great deal. After three years of harvest failure, some people at Zuurbraak were,

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1. Backhouse, Visit to South Africa, passim; C.W.M., Box 16, Folder 2, Jacket B, Dyzals Kraal, Nov. 1838; C.W.M., Box 16, Folder 1, Jacket A, Pacaltsdorp, Mar. 1838; M.M.S., Box 306, 23, Stellenbosch, Aug. 1838; L.C. Duly, British land policy at the Cape 1795-1844. A Study of Administrative Procedures in the Empire, Durham N.C., 1968, passim and especially p. XIV, XV, 179-182; J.W. Raum, The Development of the Coloured Community at Genadendal under the influence of the Unitas Fratrum 1792-1892, M.A., Cape Town, 1953, p. 100, 101.
 2. C.W.M., Box 16, Folder 1, Jacket A, Pacaltsdorp, Mar. 1838. Some were relatives and some were:
 - ... Hottentots or free persons .. [who] live independently, maintaining themselves by cultivating a piece of ground, the use of which is allowed them by the farmers as a compensation for their occasional services.
 C.W.M., Box 16, Folder 2, Jacket B, Dyzals Kraal, Nov. 1838.
 3. F.C. de Villiers owned a farm in the Breede River valley, '... where there were about forty white persons and a much larger number of coloured ...'. Backhouse, Visit to South Africa, 115-137, 612, 613.

... necessitated to be much from home to earn their living, more so than in former years, and others together with their wives and children have taken refuge to farmers that live at a distance of fifty or seventy miles from here(1)

The plight of the mission proletariat and poor tenants on farms contrasted with, for example, that of the Olifants valley peasantry, who cultivated pieces of land they rented from farmers and were 'in very comfortable circumstances'. Similarly, a group of Groenekloof and Genadendal mission peasants cultivated 'considerable pieces of corn land' and extensive 'garden-ground' and lived in 'neat, comfortable cottages, well built and thatched'.²

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1. C.W.M., Box 16, Folder 2, Jacket D, Caledon, Dec. 1838.
 2. C.W.M., Box 16, Folder 2, Jacket C, Komaggas, Annual Report, Aug. 1838; C.W.M., Box 16, Folder 1, Jacket A, Pacaltsdorp, March, 1838; Backhouse, Visit to South Africa, 619; Raum, 'Genadendal', passim; C.W.M., Box 16, Folder 2, Jacket B, Dyzals Kraal, 1838.

B. Emancipation and the ex-slaves' response 1838-1848.

The first day of December is fast approaching. We will ere long see our servants, for whom we have paid handfulls of money, and received hardly any, manumitted and being set on a free footing. That our feelings will be hurt on that day, when we come to think on the losses we have sustained and that those who used to serve us will scorn us, no one will deny: therefore ... if the government would prohibit the true friends of the manumitted slaves from marching on that day with their banners and flags through the streets of Cape Town and keep the day as quiet as possible it would prevent a great deal of mischief, which otherwise must surely take place .. if no proper steps are taken ...

'We'll have cause to remember
The first day of December'. (1)

The apprehensions of slave owners about the final emancipation of their apprentices were not confined to Cape Town. Throughout the rural western Cape employers opposed emancipation and feared its consequences.² Approximately 25,000 of the Cape's 39,000 slaves worked on the commercial farms of the arable western Cape. In 1838, they completed the four-year apprenticeships they were obliged to serve after 1834 when slavery was abolished.³ Their emancipation directly affected the interests of large- and small-scale commercial wheat farmers who depended on them. Many farmers feared that the removal of those legal constraints, which bound their labourers to them, would present the opportunity for the apprenticed ex-slaves to

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1. The Mediator, Nov. 9, 1838. An Ordinance dated 5th Jan., 1838, terminated, without qualification, all adult slaves' apprenticeships from Dec. 1st, 1838.
 2. C.W.M., Box 16, Folder 4, Jacket C, Pacaltsdorp, Annual Report, 1839, Box 16, Folder 1, Jacket A, Sept., 1838, Box 16, Folder 2, Jacket D, Pacaltsdorp, Nov. 1838, Box 16, Folder 4, Jacket D, Paarl, 1839; Backhouse, Visit to South Africa, 507, 608; Liebenberg, 'Vrystelling', Hengherr, 'Emancipation', Ware Afrikaan, 29 Nov., 1838; The Mediator, Jan. 2, 1838; Z.A. 1838, passim.
 3. The total number of apprentices in the colony was 35,843. Of these, 5,702 lived in Cape Town, and 14,410 lived in the Cape and Stellenbosch Divisions. S.A.C.A., Nov. 28. 1838.

abandon their former owner-employers in unacceptably large numbers.¹

How justified were these apprehensions? Within a year of the abolition of slavery, overall acreage under wheat in the western Divisions had fallen by 16 percent, from 82,732 acres to 69,744 acres. Wheat production had fallen by 27 percent, from 403,191 bushels to 293,165 bushels. While production fell, western-Cape wheat prices rose by 30 percent.² Traditional accounts tend to take these, and the statistics which indicate improved production after 1843, at face value as evidence of a massive short-lived flight from the farms. When ex-slaves left farms production fell and when they returned it improved.³

A considerable number of ex-slaves did leave their former owners after 1838 and there is little doubt that this affected production. However it was the growing casual labour force, improved trade and better seasons rather than ex-slaves that were responsible for increased production after 1843. Furthermore, the movement from, and resistance to, regular resident farm work continued throughout the 1840s. The postemancipation labour crisis culminated in the years 1848 to 1852 and was not limited to the period 1838 to 1843.

Insights that arise from recent studies of other postemancipation societies provide useful theoretical perspectives from which to

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1. The fact that farmers were so certain that slaves would leave them shows an awareness, on the part of the slave owners, of slave discontent with the conditions of slavery, and further calls into question the notion that Cape slavery was particularly moderate. For details of slavery at the Cape, and the debate surrounding the alleged moderacy thereof, see Worden, 'Rural slavery', *passim*.
 2. C.O.53.75/6., Stat. Regs., 1838/9.
 3. G.M. Theal, History of South Africa Since 1795, Vol. II, London, 1915, p. 77/8. For examples of this interpretation see especially Liebenberg, 'Vrystelling'; but also van Zyl, 'Wynbou', 17-21; and Hengherr, 'Emancipation', 78.

approach the western-Cape source-material.¹ Peter Fraser has recently pointed out the pitfalls of overemphasizing the scale of labour withdrawal by ex-slaves after emancipation.² Such overemphasis could reflect the bias of those who sought to justify coercive labour regulations, or the bias of those who overstate the apparently 'free' nature of the society that followed the abolition of slavery. Yet, societies are not static entities. Eric Foner reminds us:

The historian ... ought to be suspicious of any model that views continuity rather than change as the essence of historical experience, while ignoring the active participation of the former slaves themselves in shaping the legacy of emancipation. (3)

In the case of the western Cape, there were factors which exacerbated the effects of emancipation. These affected the price and quantity of wheat produced in the western Cape after 1838. Much of the area entered the third year of drought in 1839.⁴ Outbreaks of smallpox, dysentery, measles and typhoid laid up numbers of the labouring poor and seriously disrupted trade in the Cape, Zwellendam, Stellenbosch and George Divisions.⁵ By 1839, compensation payments to ex slave-owners resulted in generally inflated prices, including that of wheat.⁶ In the same year, soaring wheat prices on Mark Lane in London, harvest failures in Australia and poor harvests in England, the U.S.A. and Canada eliminated the possibility of imports reducing

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1. P. Fraser, 'The Fictive Peasantry: Caribbean Rural Groups in the Nineteenth Century', in S. Craig, ed., Contemporary Caribbean; A Sociological Reader, Trinidad, 1981; Cooper, Slaves to Squatters; Foner, Nothing but Freedom; H. Gutman, The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750-1925, New York, 1976.
 2. Fraser, 'Fictive Peasantry'.
 3. Foner, Nothing but Freedom, 37.
 4. S.A.C.A., Jan. 26, 1839; C.W.M., Box 16, Folder 4, Jacket D, Caledon, 1839, Jacket C, Pacaltsdorp, 1839, Jacket A, Komaggas, 1839; M.M.M., Box 306, No. 6, Wynberg, Jan., 1840.
 5. S.A.C.A., Mar. 30, 1839, Mar. 4, 1840; C.W.M., Box 16, Folder 3, Jacket C, Paarl, April, 1839, Folder 4, Jacket C, Pacaltsdorp, 1839, Jacket D, Caledon, 1839.
 6. M.P.A., Survey of the missions in South Africa, 1838. The issue of compensation and its effects is dealt with in some detail in: Hengherr, 'Emancipation', Liebenberg, 'Vrystelling', *passim*.

the price of breadstuffs at the Cape.¹ Disease killed nearly ten thousand horses in the colony in 1839 and seriously disrupted agricultural production and marketing.² These factors, by themselves, partially explain the sudden fluctuation in prices and production. Similarly, the drought, disease and international wheat shortage had abated by 1842, and this provides part of the explanation for the recovery of wheat cultivation and trade after 1841.³

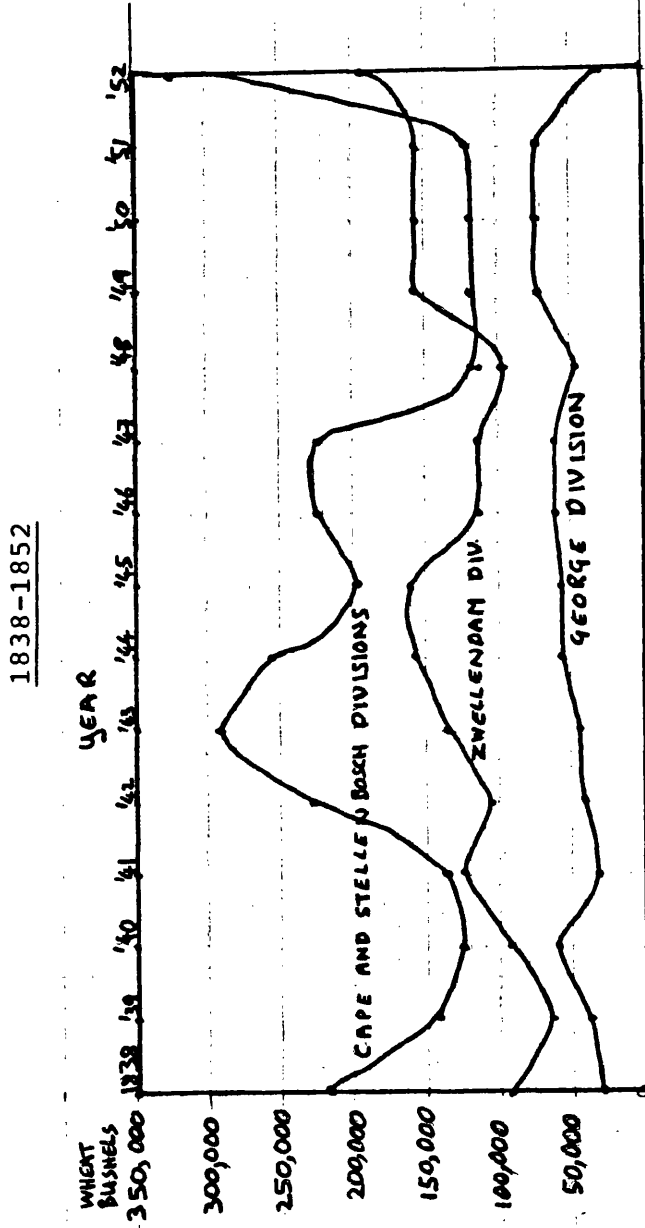
Despite these factors, however, it is significant that the greatest drop in wheat production occurred in the main wheat-growing divisions which were the core areas of commercial farming and the most heavily dependent on apprenticed resident labourers.⁴ During the post-harvest month of January, the supply of wheat to the Cape Town market dropped by 50 percent between 1838 and 1839. The highest price of wheat on the Cape Town market in January 1838 was just over 10s. per bushel; it rose to 16s.8d. a bushel in January 1839.⁵

An early harvest meant that most of the labour-intensive reaping was over by the day of emancipation on December 1st, 1838. It is unclear whether it was the employers of apprentices or the effects of nature which compelled the early harvest. In either event, it was reported soon after, 'the farmers are deficient in hands'.⁶ The situation remained largely unchanged throughout 1839 and 1840.

1. S.A.C.A., Jan. 23, 1839. Australia suffered a harvest failure in 1838, and imported more wheat and flour than it exported until 1843. E. Dunsdorfs, The Australian wheat growing industry, 1788-1948, Melbourne, 1956, p. 52-9.
2. S.A.C.A., Nov. 27, 1839; M.P.A., letter, Feb. 1839, Genadendal.
3. See Fig. 1 for details; S.A.C.A., Jan. 26, 1839.
4. See Fig. 1, Table 1, Map 3.
5. S.A.C.A., Jan. 26, 1839.
6. Ibid; Meditator, Dec. 4, 1838.

FIGURE 1

PRODUCTION TRENDS IN THE MAJOR WHEAT-PRODUCING DIVISIONS OF THE WESTERN CAPE



Cape and Stellenbosch Divisions' statistics include those of the newly established Malmesbury Division from 1849. Similarly, Zwellessdam included Caledon Division's statistics from 1848. The Cape/Stellenbosch data for 1849, 1850, 1851 and the George Division figures for 1852 do not seem likely. Discernable trends do, however, emerge from the figures. Based on Stat. Regs., 1838-1852.

Farmers of all sorts, wine, corn and cattle farmers, in most if not all the western districts of the colony find their operations checked by the disappearance of their ordinary labourers. It has become difficult to secure even domestic servants. (I)

Wheat prices reached an 'alarming' 16s.3d. per bushel at Cape Town when in London wheat sold for 10s. a bushel.² By the end of 1839, wheat production in Cape Division had dropped by 36 percent, in Zwellendam Division by 33 percent, in Stellenbosch Division by 29 percent and in Worcester Division by 20 percent.³

Those Divisions where commercial wheat farming was least developed were least affected.⁴ Details of regional variations in wheat-price fluctuations reveal that prices in George Division reached their highest in 1843. George Division did not experience the sudden escalation in wheat prices after emancipation in 1838, which characterised the commercial wheat-growing heartlands of the western Cape. George and Beaufort Divisions registered almost uninterrupted growth in wheat production from 1838 to 1843. Zwellendam Division had recovered 1838 levels, in terms of acreage cultivated with wheat and bushels harvested, by 1840.⁵

There is a great deal of evidence to suggest that a shortage of labour for ploughing, harvesting, threshing, sowing and transporting wheat developed steadily after 1838. Its effects were most apparent in areas of established commercial agriculture.⁶ However, state-

1. S.A.C.A., Feb. 20, 1839.

2. S.A.C.A., Mar. 6, 30, 1839.

3. C.O.53.75/76., Stat. Reg., 1838/9.

4. Table 1.

5. C.O.53.75 to 80., Stat. Regs., 1838 to 1840; see also Fig. 1.

6. Z.A., Jan. 13, 1840; S.A.C.A., Jan. 22, 1840;

S.A.C.A., Nov. 27, 1841; C.O.48.245., Despatch 71, July 23, 1844; C.O.48.261., Desp. 62, Mar. 10, 1846; C.W.M., Box 23, Folder 6, Jacket C, Cape Town, Oct., 1848; C.O.48.287., Vol. 5, Oct. 26, 1848; C.O.48.294., Desp. 48, Feb. 14, 1849.

ments of farmers who were often embittered about, and primarily concerned with, labour loss, provide evidence of the fact but tell little of its form. The following statement of a rural missionary, who was well situated to monitor the movement of ex-slaves from farms, suggests the complex pattern of responses to emancipation.

It was confidently asserted by those who are accustomed to eat their bread in the sweat of their neighbour's brow, that six thousand apprentices had found shelter in Genadendal; and the absurd statement was actually believed. The fact is, that labourers are now more equally distributed over the country than before, and the poorer farmers, who could not afford to buy slaves, are now supplied with workmen and that more easily than the former slaveholders, against whom there are old grudges and prejudices in the breasts of the former bondsmen ... There are, however, not a few of the late apprentices who remain in the employ of their former masters, at least in our neighbourhood. (1)

At a rough estimate, taking into account natural population growth, around seven thousand ex-slaves, out of the 25,000 who were emancipated in the western Cape, moved off the farms in the decade after emancipation. Of these, approximately six thousand settled, in more or less equal proportions of about 3,000, at rural missions and villages. A further thousand, or so, settled on public land.² There were marked regional differences in the movements of ex-slaves.

Emancipation presented apprenticed labourers with a number of options. In the Olifants River valley in George Division, not all the apprentices withdrew from the farms immediately after December 1st, 1838.³ Drought prevailed in George Division at the time, and this militated against an easy movement to even partially independent

1. M.P.A., letter, Feb., 1839, Genadendal.

2. This includes 'crown', 'waste', 'unappropriated' and 'government' land.

3. 'From what I hear the generality of the liberated apprentices intend remaining with their old masters, at least, they will do so during harvest time, which lasts until the end of the year.' C.W.M., Box 16, Folder 2, Jacket B, Dyzals Kraal, Nov., 1838.

peasant production.¹ Nevertheless, despite the drought and high commodity prices, a substantial number of ex-apprentices in the district did withdraw from the farms they had previously been tied to, '... the most of whom had no possessions of any kind and went out from their bondage-state empty handed'.²

Many sought to establish themselves on mission land at Dyzals Kraal and Pacaltsdorp.³ The number of mission peasants gradually increased. The population of Pacaltsdorp grew from 690 in 1839, to 745 in 1840 and over 800 in 1841. In 1840/1 the community was quite able to support itself from the twenty-five acres of cultivated land and seventy-five acres of gardens. In bad years, such as 1842, 1843 and 1845, when vegetable and grain crops failed, members of the poorer households resorted to wage-labour to supplement incomes. They worked the timber forests in the forests of George Division, did transport work, and engaged as domestic servants or road-construction workers.⁴ A number of the ex-apprentices formed a village proletariat at George Town.⁵

There was an established tenantry on private land in George Division

1. C.W.M., Box 16, Folder 4, Jacket C, Pacaltsdorp, 1839.

2. Ibid.

3. '... the general desire to reside here is so great ... [if] every application for admission had been received the population at this station would probably have been greater than that of any other within the colony.' C.W.M., Box 16, Folder 4, Jacket D, Dyzals Kraal, 1839, Jacket C, Pacaltsdorp, 1839.

4. C.W.M., Box 16, Folder 4, Jacket C, Pacaltsdorp, 1839, Box 17, Folder 3, Jacket B, Pacaltsdorp, 1840, Box 18, Folder 2, Jacket A, Pacaltsdorp, Sept., 1841, Box 18, Folder 2, Jacket C, Pacaltsdorp, 1841, Folder 5, Jacket A, Pacaltsdorp, 1842, Folder 1, Jacket C, Report on Salaries, Mar. 1840, Box 21, Jacket A, Pacaltsdorp, Feb., 1845.

5. 'All the town is surrounded with huts inhabited by these poor creatures...'. C.W.M., Box 19, Folder 2, Jacket D, Dec., 1843.

at the time of emancipation.¹ It appears that the greater proportion of those who remained in the Olifants River valley and in the surrounding mountains and 'kloofs',² became labour-tenants. Fifteen-hundred people in the Matjies Drift area:

... reside scattered about among the Dutch farmers, by far the smaller part being actually hired servants, the rest obtain their subsistence by cultivating pieces of ground which the farmers allow them to have for their occasional services. (3)

By the end of 1839 in the Dyzals Kraal area it was:

common practice in these parts for farmers to compensate their servants by giving them plots of ground to till for their own profit.

Forty 'coloured persons' resided on one farm, and on the Field Cornet's farm there were 'thirty-five coloured and nine white adults'. On the farm 'Avontuur', in the Longkloof Mountains at the east end of the Olifants River valley, thirty families,

had full possession of the corn lands, gardens, etc.; they have sown a considerable quantity of corn and are preparing to plant the gardens. Mr. Watermeyer is very liberal in assisting them, they gave him assistance in ploughing his grounds and he lent them oxen and ploughs for theirs. (4)

By 1842 some tenants were in a position to pay their rents in money or in kind and held leases for stipulated and agreed periods. In good years they produced and marketed surpluses.⁵

In Zwellendam Division, the cumulative effects of three successive

1. The tradition of tenancy developed in the eastern Overberg and George Division as a result of farmers' dependency on Khoisan rather than slave labour. A. Appel, 'Distrik Oudtshoorn tot die Tagtiger jare van die 19de Eeu 'n Sosio-historiese Studie', Ph.D., University of Port Elizabeth, 1979; Map 3.
2. 'Kloofs' were small valleys or ravines. This arealater became Oudtshoorn Division.
3. C.W.M., Box 19, Folder 3, Jacket C, Matjies Drift, Nov. 1843, Box 20, Folder 3, Jacket D, Matjies Drift, 1844.
4. C.W.M., Box 16, Folder 4, Jacket D, Dyzals Kraal, 1839.
5. C.W.M., Box 18, Folder 2, Jacket B, Cape Town, Dec., 1841, Jacket C, Longkloof, 1842, Box 19, Folder 3, Jacket D, Pacaltsdorp, 1843. Mr. Watermeyer received £1.10s. a year, or 25 percent of the harvest of an agreed amount of wheat sown by each of the thirty-two tenant-families on his farm, Avontuur. C.W.M., Box 19, Folder 1, Jacket D, Longkloof, May, 1843.

harvest failures generated a labour surplus during the months after emancipation in the vicinity of the Zuurbraak institution.¹ A large sector of the ex-apprentices simply became wage-labourers on monthly contracts with their former owners.² Others sought land on local mission institutions. In 1839, 139 ex-slaves settled at Zuurbraak and by 1840 the population was 1,023. Their number rose steadily until 1845.³ Most remained labourers who had access to allotments. They depended on casual farm work, especially during peak periods, for wages that constituted the greater part of their incomes.⁴ Only a small minority were peasants; they derived most of their incomes as cultivators of wheat and other crops and graziers on their mission holdings and on the land they rented or purchased from farmers.⁵

The population at Genadendal increased from 1,719 in 1838 to 2,617 in 1843. More wanted to settle, but poor harvests and livestock disease at Genadendal, and the high cost of living that prevailed generally, left most ex-slaves little option: 'the apprentices ... begin their career of freedom under very trying circumstances ... by far the greater number cannot for the present remove hitherto.'⁶ Withdrawal from a farm to a mission usually meant that resident regular farm-workers became casual labourers. Poor seasons hampered attempts to establish the autonomous cultivation that casual labourers on missions partially depended on. A report on approximately 450 ex-slaves who

1. C.W.M., Box 16, Folder 3, Jacket C, Caledon, Mar. 1839.

2. Raum, 'Genadendal', 147; C.W.M., Box 16, Folder 4, Jacket D, Caledon, 1839, Folder 2, Jacket D, Nov., 1840; C.W.M., Box 17, Folder 1, Jacket C, Cape Town, Report on Salaries, Mar., 1840.

3. 1,074 by 1841, 1,237 in 1842 and 1,425 in 1845. C.W.M., Box 19, Folder 3, Jacket C, Caledon, 1843, Box 17, Folder 3, Jacket A, Caledon, 1840, Box 20, Folder 3, Jacket C, Caledon, 1844.

4. C.W.M., Box 18, Folder 5, Jacket A, Zuurbraak, 1842.

5. C.W.M., Box 19, Folder 1, Jacket C, Caledon, 1843; Backhouse, Visit to South Africa, 98/9.

6. M.P.A., letter, Feb., 1839, Genadendal.

moved to Genadendal between December 1838 and February 1839 stated:

the majority of the apprentices are again dispersed in the neighbourhood; and employed in their usual agricultural labours; and it is evident they must remain so for the greater part of the year. (1)

The situation at Zoar and Elim was similar. Both had gradually increasing populations of around five hundred people by the end of 1839.²

The social restructuring that occurred in Zwellendam Division after emancipation differed, in some respects, from that of George Division. The capitalization of agriculture was further advanced in parts of western Zwellendam. Here, the drift into labour-tenancy was less widespread. Mission institutions carried larger populations, were faster growing, more productive, and there were more of them. The wage-labouring sector was larger and more clearly defined.

In 1838, there were 14,410 apprentices outside of Cape Town in the Cape and Stellenbosch Divisions. A few of them began to drift off the farms well before December 1st, 1838. They 'purchased their freedom' before the date of emancipation and rented lodgings in one of the villages.³ Others waited until after December 1st before they sought new employers or landlords. Some ex-slaves entered tenancy agreements with wealthier farmers, who had the land to spare, and offered them patches of land in return for periodic service and low rents.⁴ But

1. M.P.A., letter, 18 Jan., 1839, Genadendal.

2. M.P.A., letter, 21 Nov., 1838, Elim. 'The inhabitants of this place belong for the most part to the class of day labourers and many of them go to a distance of several hours, or even a day's journey to obtain employment'. M.P.A., letter, July, 1842, Elim.

3. S.A.C.A., Nov. 28, 1838; C.W.M., Box 16, Folder 1, Jacket D, Paarl, 1838, Box 26, Folder 3, Jacket A, Paarl, 1851; Hengherr, 'Emancipation', 49.

4. C.W.M., Box 16, Folder 4, Jacket D, Paarl, 1839; C.O.48.213., Desp. 85, 1841.

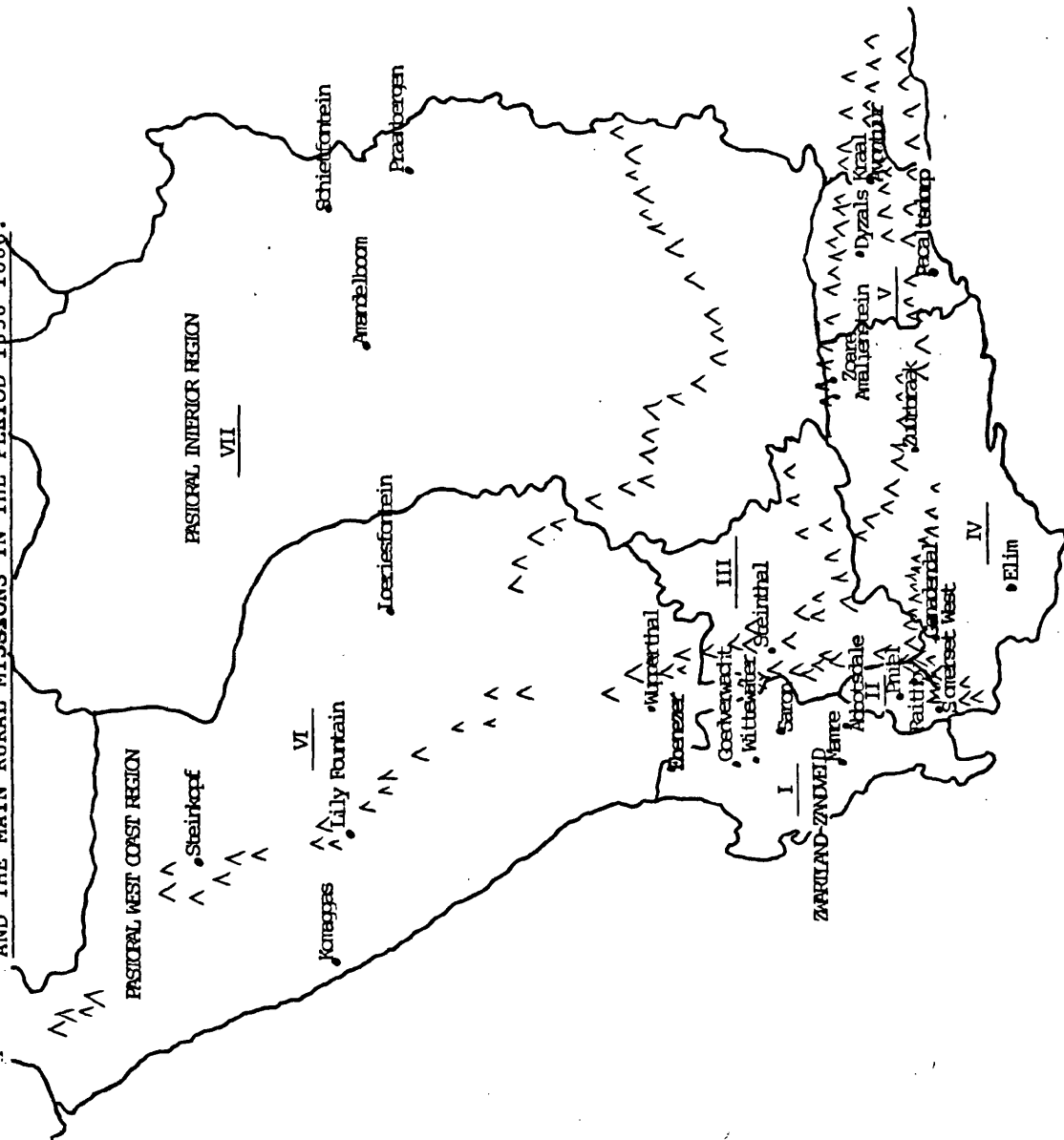
the most apparent movement of ex-slaves in these Divisions was to urban locations. Many moved to towns and villages such as Cape Town, Wynberg, Plumstead, Rondebosch, Simons Town, Paarl, Stellenbosch, and Somerset. Here they rented rooms and cottages from local proprietors, or erected temporary accommodation on mission-owned plots of land.¹ A sector of these people remained an important source of casual labour for the commercial wheat farmers. Wine farmers in the Paarl and Stellenbosch areas had traditionally hired out their slaves and apprentices to the Zwartland wheat farmers during harvests. After emancipation, teams of harvesters from Paarl and Stellenbosch continued to operate in the Zwartland.²

Again, some apprentices sought mission land. In 1838 Groenekloof was the only mission station in these Divisions. Its population increased from 1,000 in 1839 to 1,200 in 1844.³ More significant was the establishment, between 1841 and 1846, of four new mission institutions that were spaced intermittently and strategically along the perimeter of the western-Cape's commercial farming heartlands. About a thousand ex-slaves settled at Pniel near Groot Drakenstein, at

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1. L. Von Rhoden, Geschichte der Rheinischen Missions Gesellschaft, Barmen, 1888; M.M.M., Box 306, No. 23, 24, 57, Stellenbosch, Aug., 1838, Feb., 1839, and Sept., 1839; Backhouse, Visit to South Africa, 86; S.A.C.A., Feb. 20, 1839. Six hundred moved to Paarl by 1840, where rent for a room was around 8s. per month. C.W.M., Box 17, Folder 3, Jacket C, Paarl, 1840. Officially, Stellenbosch had a population of 1,500 in 1840 and 5,000 in 1843. Von Rhoden estimated that 5,000 ex-slaves settled as day-labourers and craftsmen at Stellenbosch within a few years of emancipation. M.M.S., No. 19, Wynberg, May, 1844; Backhouse, Visit to South Africa, 62; van Zyl, 'Wynbou', 18-20; S. Judges, 'Poverty, living conditions and social relations - Aspects of life in Cape Town in the 1830s', M.A., University of Cape Town, 1977, p. 74-84; Hengherr, 'Emancipation', 79/80.
 2. C.W.M., Box 19, Folder 3, Jacket C, Paarl, 1843; C.W.M., Box 18, Folder 3, Jacket C, Paarl, Feb., 1841.
 3. Backhouse, Visit to South Africa, 619; S.A.C.A., Nov. 12, 1845.

MAP 4

SKETCH MAP OF THE WESTERN CAPE INDICATING THE REGIONS, DIVISIONS, MOUNTAIN RANGES AND THE MAIN RURAL MISSIONS IN THE PERIOD 1838-1888.



Key

REGION	DIVISIONS AND MISSIONS
<u>I</u> Zwartland-Zandveld:	Divisions - Malmesbury Piquetberg Missions - Ebenezer Goedverwacht Wittewater Saron, Mamre Abbotsdale
<u>II</u> Cape-Wine:	Divisions - Stellenbosch Paarl Missions - Pniel, Raithby Somerset West
<u>III</u> Central:	Divisions - Ceres, Tulbagh Worcester Missions - Steinthal
<u>IV</u> Overberg:	Divisions - Caledon Bredasdorp Robertson Zwellendam Riversdale Ladismith Missions - Elim, Zoare Genadendal Zuurbraak Amalienstein
<u>V</u> Midlands:	Divisions - George, Knysna Mossel Bay Oudtshoorn Missions - Dyzals Kraal Pacaltsdorp Avontuur
<u>VI</u> Pastoral West Coast	Divisions - Namaqualand Calvinia Clanwilliam Missions - Steinkopf Komaggas Lily Fountain Loeriesfontein
<u>VII</u> Pastoral Interior	Divisions - Fraserberg, Prince Albert, Carnarvon Victoria West Beaufort West Missions - Amandelboom Schietfontein Praambergen

Steinthal near Tulbagh, at Saron at Twenty-Four Rivers, and at Goedverwacht near Piquetberg. Mission societies held freehold titles to the farms upon which the new settlements developed. Goedverwacht was the notable exception.

A farmer named Burgers bequeathed Goedverwacht to his slaves Maniesa and her five children on condition that they remained in his service after emancipation. Burgers died in 1842. His will stipulated that the farm should remain the property of his six slaves for the duration of their lives. Despite Burgers' own children's attempts to contest the will at law, Goedverwacht remained in ex-slave hands. To the chagrin of Burger's family, one of Maniesa's children, Christina, lived until 1888 when she died at the age of ninety-three. By this time Burger's descendants appear to have lost interest in the farm, as the Moravian Society was able to purchase it for £750 from Maniesa's grandchildren without any difficulty.¹

Patterns of wage-dependency soon emerged among the mission inhabitants of the Cape and Stellenbosch Divisions as they did elsewhere in the western Cape. Indebtedness to surrounding farmers began to appear during the periods of unemployment that occurred between ploughing and harvest-seasons, and, more acutely, during the periodic droughts that eroded subsistence incomes from allotments.²

Residents worked, built, and, to a large extent, paid for the mission stations of the western Cape. The mission population more than

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1. S.A.C.A., Nov. 19, 1845; Marais, Cape Coloured People, 185-192; Backhouse, Visit to South Africa, 610; M.M.S., Box 307, No. 35; M.P.A., 'The past and future of Goedverwacht', 1882, and the Goedverwacht and Witte-water Annual Report of 1889.
 2. M.P.A., Extracts from the Diary of Groenekloof for 1844.

doubled in the decade after emancipation despite the hostility from commercial farmers and the colonial government.¹ However, the objections to the expansion of mission population after 1838 were not limited to elements of the ruling class. The descendants of the traditional Khoisan occupants formed the Louis Party at Ebenezer and the Old Party at Zuurbraak to articulate their resentment at the added burden that emancipated slaves placed upon limited land and water resources on their missions after 1838. These were Parties of landowners whose interests were threatened. They contested the missionaries' authority to admit what they called ex-slave bywoners, or squatters, onto their land. Both Parties distanced themselves from the mission establishments on the grounds that they had fundamentally breached the terms of their original invitations to work at the Khoisan settlements.² Such antagonism towards newcomers after 1838 was absent from those mission stations that were the freehold properties of the mission Societies, or where missions had traditionally supplied farm-labour and the inhabitants had developed strong ties of family and friendship with local farm-labourers.³

The degree of proletarianisation which resulted from emancipation in the commercial farming districts, contrasted with the situation in the predominantly pastoral Clanwilliam Division. In 1839, a series of harvest failures in the Kamiesberg had forced most people off the mission institutions of Komaggas and Lily Fountain into a nomadic pastoralism, supplemented with hunting inland, and fishing along the

1. Marais, Cape Coloured People, 247.

2. For further details of the rift in the mission communities at these stations, and the outcome of the opposition to the missionaries, see chapter 3.

3. For example, see evidence of long-standing bonds of friendship and family between Genadendalers and former slaves in M.P.A., letter of 18 Jan., 1839, Genadendal, letter of 26 Nov., 1838, Elim; M.P.A., 'Recollections of the old Hottentot sister, Beentje Robyntje, as narrated by herself', 1849.

coast.¹ In 1840 the population of the missions did increase. However, this occurred because rains fell and residents returned to cultivate their wheatlands.² Similarly, it was not the ex-slaves who increased Wupperthal's population from 168 in 1838 to 300 by 1845.³ A trickle of ex-slaves did move into the Karee and Praam Mountains of Beaufort Division,⁴ but there is no evidence to suggest that there was a significant movement of ex-slaves from the arable Divisions of the western Cape to the expansive tracts of public land in the pastoral regions.

The ability to rely increasingly on pastoralism during the dry season and periodic droughts was a precondition of survival for the mission occupants and squatters on public land in these areas. Their dependence on wage incomes was minimal. Instead, they had developed the skills and resources that were necessary for viable transhumance. Emancipation was relatively meaningless to farm-labourers who were unwilling, or unable, to adopt the form of nomadic pastoralism which prevailed in the arid regions. Many remained immobilised. Other factors compounded the difficulties of those who wished to leave their former owners in areas where commercial farming and competition for labour was less intense. As one observer pointed out:

The Boors are so connected that it is not easy for one who has not been satisfied with his old master to obtain employment with another; and it is difficult for one travelling on such an errand to obtain food ... The Hottentots in the district through which we lately

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1. C.W.M., Box 16, Folder 4, Jacket A, Komaggas, 1838; M.M.S., Box 309, No. 1, Lily Fountain, Feb., 1841; Backhouse, Visit to South Africa, 535-8; C.W.M., Box 21, Folder 4, Jacket A, Komaggas, 1845.
 2. 'During this summer we have had more people at Lily Fountain than I have ever seen ... about five hundred ...' M.M.S., Box 306, No. 13, Lily Fountain, April, 1840.
 3. See Table 2.
 4. Marais, Cape Coloured People, 85.

TABLE 2

DETAILS OF THE MAIN RURAL MISSION STATIONS WHICH HAD
RESIDENT POPULATIONS IN REGIONS OF THE WESTERN CAPE
THAT CONTAINED SIGNIFICANT AGRICULTURAL AREAS¹

Mission Station	Apprx date Estab	Miss Soc	Tenure by 'Tickets of Occupation'	Officly Recogn Khoisan Captncy	Privatly Owned	Approx Popul 1838	Approx Popul 1850
Mamre ²	1808	Mor	Yes	Klapmuts	-	1,000	1,300
Pniel	1843	BMS	-	-	-	-	258
Goedv-wacht	1843	Mor	-	-	Yes	-	274
Saron	1846	RMS	-	-	Yes	-	450
Raithby	1840s	MMS	-	-	Yes	-	88
Somset	1840s	MMS	-	-	Yes	-	272
West Abbtsdale	1854	USPG	-	-	Yes	-	-
Witte-water	1859	Mor	-	Yes ³	Yes	-	-
Hermon	1840s	RMS	-	-	Yes	-	25
Pella	1869	Mor	-	-	Yes	-	-
<u>CAPE-WINE-ZWARTLAND-ZANDVELD</u>						<u>1,000</u>	<u>2,667</u>
Zuurbraak ⁴	1812	LMS	Yes	Hans Moses	-	855	1,528
Genaden-dal ⁵	1792	Mor	Yes	Yes ⁶	-	1,719	3,000
Zoar ⁸		BMS ⁷	-	-	Yes	350	846
Elim ⁹	1824	Mor	Yes	-	-	435	1,241
Amalns-stein		BMS	-	-	Yes		
<u>OVERBERG REGION</u>						<u>3,359</u>	<u>6,615</u>
Steinthal	1840	RMS	-	Yes	-	-	300
<u>CENTRAL REGION</u>						<u>-</u>	<u>300</u>
Ezeljacht	1850s	USPG	-	-	Yes	-	-
Pacalt-dorp	1814	LMS	Yes	Yes ¹⁰	-	690	745
Dyzals	1819	LMS	-	-	Yes	91	99
Kraal Avon-tuur ¹²	1840s	LMS	-	-	Yes	100	257
<u>MIDLANDS REGION</u>						<u>881</u>	<u>1,101</u>
Komaggas	1810	LMS ¹³	-	Kurib	-		
Lily Fount	1816	MMS	Yes	Yes ¹⁴	-		700
Ebenezer Stein ¹⁵	1831	RMS	Yes	Kees Louis		241	375
Kopf Concdia ¹⁶							
Wupperthal	1830	RMS	-	-	Yes	163	350
<u>PASTORAL WEST-COAST REGION</u>						<u>?404</u>	<u>?1,425</u>
<u>TOTAL WESTERN CAPE¹⁷</u>						<u>?5,644</u>	<u>?12,108</u>

TABLE 2

FOOTNOTES

1. The Pastoral Interior Region is excluded.
2. Known as Groenekloof up to 1853.
3. Identity of Captain uncertain.
4. Including the occupied Slang River settlement and outstation.
5. Including the occupied outstations of Berea (estab. 1865); Twistwyk (estab. 1854); and Kopjeskasteel (?).
6. Identity of original Khoisan Captain uncertain.
7. and the D.R.C. for part of the period 1838-1888.
8. Including Houtkloof.
9. D.R.C. for part of the period 1838-1888.
10. Identity of original Captain uncertain.
11. Including the Matjes River settlement.
12. Moved in the 1850s to the Kammanasie Valley.
13. In 1840 it was transferred to the R.M.S. There is likely to have been a community here before then.
14. Identity uncertain.
15. and Richtersveld.
16. Although Wupperthal was, strictly-speaking, in the Pastoral Interior, it was the only mission in the region that did supply casual labour for agriculture in the Upper-Olifants River area. It is more usefully grouped here than with the Pastoral Interior as a whole, where agriculture and wheat production were peripheral to pastoralism.
17. Excluding the Pastoral Interior Region and its missions at Amandelboom, Schietfontein, the Praambergen and Loeriesfontein.

Data drawn from: CO.53.- series of Stat. Reqs. 1838-1888; Elphick, Kraal and Castle, passim; Census 1865, 1875 and 1892; and from very numerous scattered references in the Moravian, United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, Methodist and London missionary correspondence, reports and diaries that are located in their respective archives. For the Rhenish statistics see L. von Rohden, Geschichte der Rheinischen Missions Gesellschaft, Barmen, 1888, passim.

passed ... were generally, far ... from being in enjoyment of that measure of freedom which was designed for them ... (1)

Scant evidence exists about the people who lived on public lands in the arable western Cape during the second half of the nineteenth century. Census statistics of the 1840s and 1850s reveal little. They only accounted for people with 'fixed abodes', thereby ignoring those who occupied pondocks or shacks. Furthermore, it is likely that many of those who occupied public land outside of the mission stations wished to remain unnoticed, for fear of official action against them.² Thus, while it is possible to glean from mission archives that the mission population increased from some 5,644 to over 12,000 between 1838 and 1850, we have no way of similarly monitoring the drift of ex-slaves onto public lands. The following description of those who peopled the public lands after emancipation is necessarily impressionistic.

Scattered about the Cape, Wine, Zwartland, Zandveld region were settlements of people who combined a variety of activities such as casual labour, subsistence cultivation, herding, fishing or gathering veldkos.³ On the wind-swept and sandy Cape flats that surrounded Cape Town:

it is well known that in that extensive tract of country there were numerous ever-shifting parties and locations of Liberated [sic] Africans and other coloured people who have moved from town to escape the restraints of artificial society ... (4)

1. Backhouse, Visit to South Africa, p. 518.

2. An observer said of the Zuiverfontein settlement in the Cedar Mountains:

I ... could not but wonder at their choice of a situation ... It might indeed almost appear as if they had sought out this retreat in order to live undisturbed in their sins.

M.P.A., Genadendal, letter, Oct., 1845.

3. Wild food gathered from the fields.

4. C.T.M., Mar. 9, 1850.

The mountains near Stellenbosch were inhabited, albeit sparsely, and a group of 250 adults lived in the Paarde Mountains not far from Malmesbury.¹ This group remained in the Paarde Mountains until 1850 when they purchased a nearby farm, from pooled resources, for £1,000. In 1838, the ageing Khoisan leader Captain Klapmuts and a 'little colony' still lived at Loweskloof valley, some ten miles from Groenekloof, from whence they had moved in 1808 when the mission was established there.² About three hundred people, many of whom were ex-slaves, had settled in glens such as Zuiverfontein in the Cedar Mountains of Clanwilliam Division:

many others squat in the mountains around ... They will tend their cattle and cultivate grain; but they will content themselves with the most miserable huts, inasmuch as they dread removal. (3)

Casual labourers, subsistence cultivators, herders and fishing folk were settled on crown lands in the Saldanha Bay area; along the coast from Lambert's Bay to the Olifants River mouth; in the Piquet Mountains near Picaner's Kloof; the Olifants River Mountains; and in large numbers on the plains of the Warm- and the mountains of the Cold-Bokkeveld.⁴

A report on the squatters that were settled in, and on the peripheries of, the Zwartland and Zandveld explained:

they prefer settling on Government lands to working for farmers as labourers and residing on farmers' places ... it enables them besides earning wages during the season of labour to provide,

1. M.M.S., Box 308, No. 8, Stellenbosch, May 4, 1846; CO.48.324., Desp. 27, Feb. 12, 1852, Evidence to Legislative Council re proposed squatters ordinance.
3. Ibid, p. 8-10; M.P.A., Report, Groenekloof, Jan. 16, 1839.
4. CO.48.324., Desp. 27, Feb. 12, 1852, Evidence to Legislative Council re proposed squatters ordinance, p. 8-10; M.P.A., Genadendal, Diary, Dec. 1845, Groenekloof, Diary, 1843, which indicate that most of those at Zuiverfontein were emancipated slaves.

by means of their wives and children at home, for the more abundant support of their families during the winter season. (1)

The Central region had similar settlements. A growing number of squatters were settled in the mountains of the fertile region around Tulbagh and Worcester. At Heiveld, in the Schurfde Mountains, seventeen 'persons', probably women and children, cultivated the land on a small scale, while 'most of the able-bodied men work on farms'. Eleven people lived at Swanepoel's Poort; a group of about twenty at Kliphuis Ravine; twenty-one at Balies Gat, and so on.²

In the Overberg region squatters were intermittently located between Somerset West beach and the Government grounds near Elim, particularly in the Zondereinde Mountains, Hottentots Holland Mountains and the mouth of the Bot River. These settlements constituted a semi-circle on the peripheries of the commercial wheat-farming area in the vicinity of Caledon. Some were connected with the Zuurbraak, Genadendal, or Elim missions. Access to public land was advantageous for petty cultivators and herders struggling to minimise their dependence on wage-labour during difficult times:

the stock of cattle held by the inhabitants of the mission institutions has become greater than the land attached to these can support; so that in seasons of drought the cattle are driven out into the adjacent mountains, and find a temporary subsistence in the hidden recesses. (3)

1. CO.48.324., Desp. 27, Feb. 12, 1852, p. 10/11.

2. Ibid.,^{passim} "The report was made in November and the men are likely to have operated as a harvest-gang itinerating among the wheat farms. Resident Magistrate Piers, who submitted a report on this area, was convinced that in time, the Bokkeveld 'will, in my opinion find scarce a vacant patch without its coloured occupant', Ibid, p. 40/1.

3. Ibid, p. 42/3.

It is significant that small-scale cultivation of government land was less widespread in areas such as the Midland region where there appears to have been readier access to private land in various forms of tenancy. In the southern foothills of the Swartberg, running parallel with the Olifants River in George Division, there was, 'a tract of country called Congo, very densely populated by coloured people, where sin and misery are still reigning ...'. It is probable that these people were tenants on private land as was common practice in the Olifants River valley at the time.¹

'Unappropriated' land was generally marginal; this explains why public land did not attract more ex-slaves. The majority of those who lived on public land in, or on the peripheries of, the commercial farming regions combined small-scale cultivation, with seasonal wage labour. Seasonal labour was in demand, 'between the months of April and June for riding dung. Between the months June and August for ploughing. Between November and January for reaping and tramping'. The peak period was the harvest, but it was possible for squatters to fall back on occasional labour on the wheat and wine farms at day-wage rates for nearly eight months in the year. It was possible for an ex-slave to settle on public land, act as small-scale cultivator, petty pastoralist, transport rider, day-labourer, harvest gang-worker, woodcutter, fish catcher, and perhaps trader in leather-work or wagon repairer.²

The numbers of people who settled on public land in the commercial wheat-growing areas, and on the peripheries of these areas, increased after emancipation throughout the 1840s.³ Some ex-slaves became

1. C.W.M., Box 21, Folder 4, Jacket A, Pacaltsdorp, 1845, Box 23, Folder 3, Jacket C, Avontuur, 1847.

2. CO.48.324., Desp. 27, Feb. 12, 1852, p. 17-22.

3. Ibid, *passim*.

squatters on public land when their applications to reside at missions were unsuccessful. The inhabitants of settlements sometimes appealed to mission societies for a missionary; a ploy that could transform insecure squatter settlements into mission stations. Certain settlements in these areas were neither new nor confined to ex-apprentices. The Cypher Fontein settlement had existed from 'time immemorial'. There were cases of 'white squatters in the Cypher Fontein area' and 'Dutch squatters' in the Cedar Mountains. The settlement at Kliphuis Ravine in the Tulbagh area had existed for ten years and consisted of:

three white persons, a man and two women who lived in huts and cultivated gardens of about an acre of land ... [and] three or four coloured families living in temporary kind of huts.

This settlement consisted of twenty-one people who possessed twenty cattle and a hundred sheep and goats.¹ The casual workers and peasants on public land in, and around, the commercial wheat-growing areas were settled on land generally unsuited to commercial agriculture, and the limited sales of crown lands to individuals were unlikely to have affected them in this period.

Speculative statements concerning a point during the nineteenth century by which Khoisan, ex-slaves or coloureds were rendered a landless proletariat² fail to grasp the importance of the expansion and consolidation of the various forms of tenancy on private land that occurred during the 1840s. In 1843 Napier reported:

the labouring population are however gradually becoming a resident peasantry and many of the proprietors of the land

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1. Ibid;^{proof} see R. Ross, Cape of Torments. Slavery and Resistance in South Africa, London, 1983, for some historical precedents to squatting.
 2. Statements to this effect by W. Macmillan, M. Simons, J. Marais, T. Davenport, S. van der Horst, T. Kirk and A. Purkis are dealt with more fully in Chapter Two.

are beginning to perceive the advantage of attaching them to the soil by encouraging them to build huts, and to cultivate small pieces of land for their own benefit. (1).

By 1848 there were proprietors scattered about the commercial wheat-farming areas '... who hire out land on their farms to people of colour, and erect dwellings thereon of which there are already villages...'.² A group consisting of about 280 families of peasants, sharecroppers and labouring tenants on farms in the vicinity of Dyzals Kraal in George Division had accumulated more wealth than the better-off of the surrounding mission institutions.³ Peasants at Avontuur kept up annual payments of rents amounting to £45 in 1845 and 1846, despite reports of poor wheat harvests throughout the Division and the absence of those levied to serve on the eastern frontier.⁴ Pressure on grazing and arable land on the missions in the Caledon area forced a growing number of the mission peasantry to graze cattle on rented private land, or to cultivate, and reside on, rented private land.⁵

Labourers also continued to drift from the farms to the villages during the 1840s. Established villages, such as Stellenbosch, Somerset and Paarl, continued to grow.⁶ New villages developed. The 'new village of Oudtshoorn' was established on the Olifants River. It was well-situated among the many farms of the valley.⁷ At the village of George:

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1. CO.48.229., Desp. 55, Apr., 18, 1843, Annual Report on the Colony.
 2. CO.48.288., Desp. 215, Dec. 21, 1848, Memorial from farmers in the Koeberg, Paarl, Tygerberg, Zwartland, Cape, Stellenbosch, Caledon, Somerset, Winterberg, Robertson, Clanwilliam, Riebeeck's Kasteel.
 3. C.W.M., Box 24, Folder 1, Jacket C, Cape Town, Jan. 11, 1849.
 4. C.W.M., Box 21, Folder 4, Jacket B, Avontuur, 1845, Box 23, Folder 3, Jacket C, Avontuur, 1847, Box 26, Folder 3, Jacket B, Avontuur 1851,
 5. C.W.M., Box 21, Folder 2, Jacket B, Caledon, 1845, Box 22, Folder 2, Jacket E, Caledon, 1846, Box 23, Folder 3, Jacket C, Caledon, 1847.
 6. For example: in 1846 at Stellenbosch village where, 'Coloured people are rapidly increasing ...' M.M.S., Box 308, No. 29, Stellenbosch, Nov. 9, 1846.
 7. C.W.M., Box 24, Folder 2, Jacket A, Dyzals Kraal, Mar. 13, 1849.

... about two miles from this there is a small hamlet consisting, with the exception of two white persons, of twenty-six families of coloured people and the number is gradually increasing from the different parts of this district. They are attracted to this part by the favourable terms on which they can obtain pieces of ground to live on. (1)

By 1850 two hundred people, 'chiefly Mahometans', had established a fishing hamlet near Somerset at the Strand.²

Pressure on existing, and demands to extend, mission land were characteristic of the 1840s.³ Pacaltsdorp's population was self-sufficient during good years and clearly unable to accommodate any more.⁴ At Somerset the missionary complained, '... having no more ground for gardens at the valley, I have this day purchased a place about five miles from it, where some of the coloured people may locate'. Genadendal had a population of over three thousand in 1846.⁵ Two-thirds of Zuurbraak's continually growing population of 1,518 were permanently resident on the institution in 1846. Zuurbraak had a population of 1,671 in 1847.⁶ The newly-created institutions of Steinthal and Saron grew quickly after 1845.⁷

By 1850 there were six and a half thousand peasants and proletarians located on the institutions in the Overberg region and nearly three thousand in the Cape, Wine, Zwartland and Zandveld region. Further-

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1. C.W.M., Folder 2, Jacket D, George, Apr., 1850. By 1831 there were over thirty families at 'Watsonsdorp'. C.W.M., Box 26, Folder 1, Jacket B, George Town, Apr. 24, 1851.
 2. M.M.S., Box 308, No. 6, Somerset, Apr. 8, 1850.
 3. For details see Table 2.
 4. C.W.M., Box 21, Folder 2, Jacket B, Paarl, Apr. 4, 1845. The population was 745 in 1845.
 5. M.M.S., Box 308, No. 7, Stellenbosch, Feb. 12, 1845, No. 1, Stellenbosch, Jan. 2, 1846; CO.48.261., Desp. 6, Mar. 10, 1846.
 6. C.W.M., Box 22, Folder 2, Jacket E, Caledon, 1846, Box 23, Folder 3, Jacket C, Caledon, 1847.
 7. C.W.M., Box 23, Folder 3, Tulbagh, 1847.

more all were increasing steadily.¹ A rough estimation of what this meant, in terms of the broader Cape society, is that a total mission population in the arable western Cape on the eve of emancipation of approximately six thousand people rose to about twelve thousand by 1850. The latter represented nearly 20 percent of the coloured population and about 8 percent of the total western-Cape population.²

Monthly wage patterns during the period 1838 to 1845 give some indication of the relative strengths and weaknesses of the positions from which sellers and purchasers of labour-power entered the developing 'free labour market'.³ The average monthly wage paid to farm labourers throughout the rural districts in 1838 was £1.6s. Domestic workers received £1.2s. Wage-labour was relatively expensive at a time when employers relied, for the most part, on apprenticed ex-slaves. It is significant that the sudden, and very sizeable, increase in the numbers of 'free labourers' caused by emancipation did not have the effect of forcing wages down. Between 1838 and 1840, average monthly wages actually increased. Most marked were the rising farm wages that characterised the main commercial-farming areas. 1841 was a turning point.⁴ Regular agricultural workers' wages were cut by 67 percent in 1842, and were 45 percent of their original 1839 level in 1844 and 1845.

Labour shortages largely account for the high wages between 1838 and

1. C.W.M., Box 24, Folder 1, Jacket C, Cape Town, Jan. 11, 1849; Table 2; Map 4.

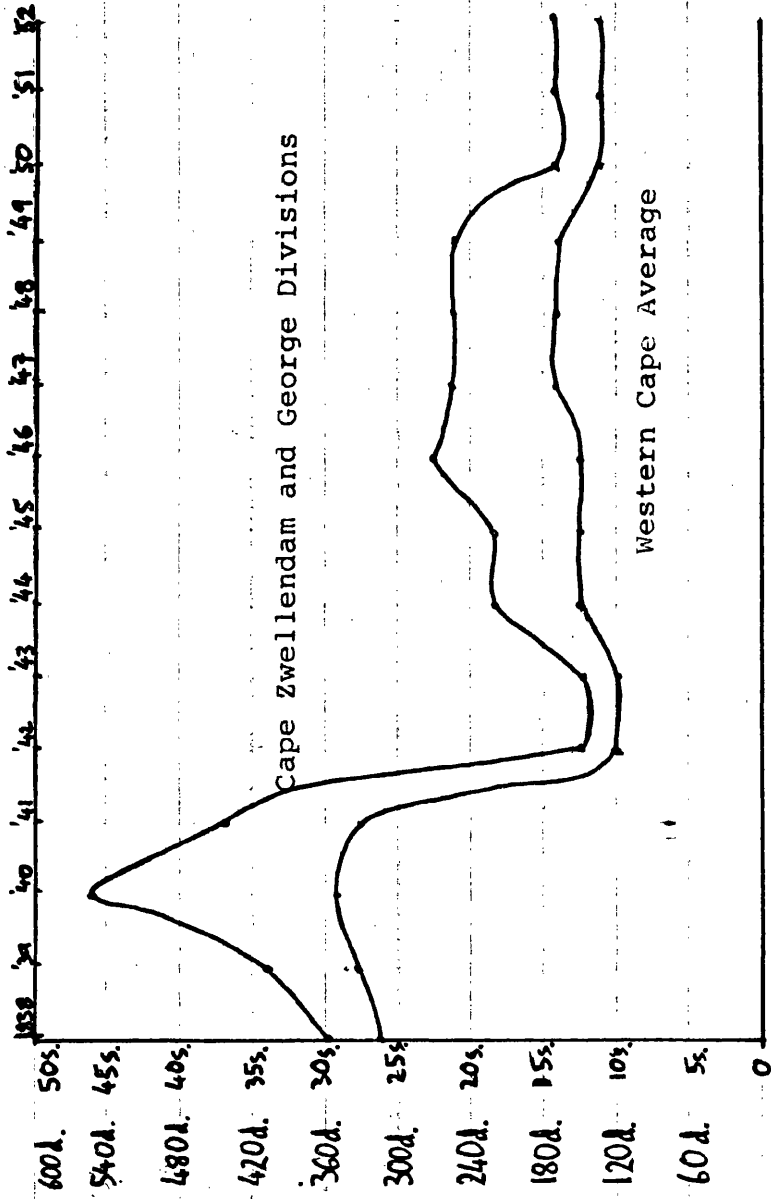
2. These figures are estimates that are derived from often dubious mission and official statistics. They do, nonetheless, serve to create an impression of the scales we are dealing with. Table 2.

3. See Fig. 2.

4. Ibid.

FIGURE 2

AVERAGE MONTHLY WAGES OF FARM LABOURERS FOR THE YEARS 1838-1852 IN THE CAPE, ZWELLEDAM AND GEORGE DIVISIONS, AND FOR THE WESTERN CAPE AS A WHOLE



Stat. Regs., 1838-53. No racial wage distinctions appear in figures relating to the western Cape, although this was the case for Eastern Cape Divisions. Racially structured wage tables first appear after 1853 for the western Divisions when 'white' and 'coloured' wages appear separately.

1841, as do a combination of drought, smallpox and labour scarcity explain the concurrent decreases in production. However, during the years 1842, 1843 and 1844, when wheat production and hence also the demand for labour, was substantially increased, wages plunged drastically. In these years, good seasons and the re-established trading links between towns and countryside after the smallpox epidemic, stimulated production. But regular farm wages also fell sharply, not because ex-slaves returned to regular farm work, but because a fundamental shift to better paid day-work had taken place in the rural western Cape.

Wage statistics of the 1840s reveal little about the casual labour force. Furthermore, monthly cash wages tended to be higher in Divisions such as the Cape, Stellenbosch, and Zwellendam, where commercial agriculture was most advanced. Whereas the payment of wages in cash was common in these Divisions, this was not the case in Worcester, Clanwilliam, Beaufort and parts of George Divisions. Here a variety of commodities and rights supplemented, or were in lieu of, cash wages. These do not appear in wage statistics.¹

A sector of the agricultural work-force received wages well below the monthly wage averages quoted in the Statistical Registers for the various districts. An inestimable number of the children of ex-slaves were excluded from emancipation in 1838. It is unlikely that they

1. C.W.M., Box 17, Folder 1, Jacket C, Cape Town, Report on Salaries, March, 1840.

Shelter, an allotment, food, family rations, clothes, tea, sugar, wine, and grazing for a specific number of livestock were examples of commodities or rights that were given in lieu of, or supplementary to, a cash wage. 'Thus almost every district has its own peculiar custom in regard to the payment of the agricultural population'. C.O.48.229., Desp. 55, Annual Report on the Colony, April, 18, 1843.

received payment in excess of board and lodging. In theory, children that were sent from England and were apprenticed to agrarian employers, received around 5s. per week. Few actually did so.¹ Workers on annual contracts, such as the indentured labourers who had been freed from vessels engaged in the slave-trade, received 72s. a year, with board and lodging in 1840.² Finally, harvest and garden failures could compel increasing numbers of casual labourers and peasants onto local labour markets, and force wages down.³

The fact that day-wages only begin to appear in official statistics from the early 1850s, is further evidence of their growing importance in the rural economy. After 1838 many ex-slaves had moved from resident apprenticeships into various forms of tenancy on farms, onto the missions, and into villages and towns. They constituted a stratum of the rural proletariat who depended on casual day-wage incomes and who often derived varying degrees of autonomy as subsistence

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1. Between 1835 and 1838, 1,253 slave children were apprenticed in terms of the Ordinance of Jan. 5, 1835. The Ordinance stated that any person under sixteen years of age who had been abandoned, deserted, or who was orphaned or destitute, already in the service of an employer was to remain apprenticed to the same after 1838. If such children were 'found', the finder was liable to deliver them to the nearest police, Clerk of the Peace, Field Cornet, or assistant Field Cornet, '... and shall when a suitable opportunity is found, be apprenticed to some fit and proper person until his eighteenth or, if a female, until her sixteenth year'. Meditator, Sept. 4, 1838. It is likely that many children were bonded legally and illegally to employers. S.A.C.A., 3 Jan., 1838; Hengherr, 'Emancipation', Liebenberg, 'Vrystelling', *passim*; Government Gazette, Dec. 28, 1838. CO.48.207., Report on the Children's Friend Society, Feb. 24, 1840, *passim*.
 2. C.W.M., Box 17, Folder 1, Jacket C, Cape Town, Report on Salaries, Mar., 1840, Box 19, Folder 1, Jacket D, George Town, Dec. 20, 1843.
 3. During the 1839/40 period of drought, monthly wages were 7s.6d. in the vicinity of Zuurbraak and 3s. near Zoar. C.W.M., Box 17, Folder 1, Jacket C, Cape Town, Report on Salaries, Mar., 1840, Box 19, Folder 1, Jacket D, George Town, Dec., 1843; Backhouse, Visit to South Africa, 115.

cultivators. In 1839, a day's work, in Paarl village, earned a labourer between 9d. and 12d. with food.¹ Seasonal demand for farm labourers pushed this up. Wheat farmers in the Cape, George, Zwelldam and Stellenbosch Divisions generally paid 1s.6d. a day, with food and drink, during peak periods of ploughing, sowing, threshing and harvesting.² They were also under pressure to pay more:

The farmers have resolved to give no more than 1s.6d. per day to the harvest labourer and the harvest labourer has resolved to work for nothing less than 3s. per day. (3)

Day-wages tended to be higher in areas of greater commercialisation.⁴

Rising day-wages reflected the strengthening bargaining position of casual workers relative to that of regular resident farm labourers whose wages, in the 1850s, barely recovered half their 1838 level. Day- and monthly workers were able to select a place of employment. They avoided those farms where working conditions were unattractive or wages were low:

When the farmer is receiving 300Rds. a load, [about 15s. a bushel] he is able to compete in the labour market with purchasers of any other class in the colony. And cases .. many everywhere, have been reported to us of labour obtained to any extent by farmers the moment they offered what are now considered fair wages ... good places or situations will be sought and retained and bad places will be avoided or deserted ... the question is no longer between wages and the whip but between one and two or between two and three shillings a day for his work. (5)

In general, emancipation presented ex-slaves of the rural western

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1. C.W.M., Box 16, Folder 4, Jacket D, Paarl, 1839.
 2. C.W.M., Box 17, Folder 1, Jacket C, Cape Town, Report on Salaries, Mar., 1840.
 3. S.A.C.A., Nov. 27, 1839.
 4. Day-workers on the brick-fields of Wynberg and Cape Town, and on the roads of Cape Division earned 2s. per day. In the Kamiesberg, harvest-labour received 9d. a day with food. C.W.M., Box 17, Folder 1, Jacket C, Cape Town, Report on Salaries, Mar., 1840; M.M.S., Box 306, No. 59; Corresp. re Lily Fountain, 1839; S.A.C.A., Feb. 20, Aug. 17, 1839.
 5. S.A.C.A., Mar. 23, Nov. 30, 1839, Jan. 4, 1840.

Cape with a wider range of options in their struggle for a livelihood. These could enable them to establish greater control over their incomes, leisure-time and conditions of work. However, a great deal depended on their particular circumstances. A stratum of ex-slaves had no choice other than to remain as regular labourers with their former owners or new employers. There were ex-slaves who had relatives and friends in the missions, villages or settlements on public land that were able, and willing, to take them into their households: some had sufficient resources to hire land or accommodation; others could secure a place on a mission, or knew of some suitable public land to settle. They had viable alternatives to resident farm work.

Many who left farms joined existing households on the missions or in the villages. Others established their own. Reports of high marriage-rates among ex-slaves in rural areas suggest that many took advantage of changing marriage laws to register their marriages legally. Many ex-slave women domestic workers transferred their labour from employers' households to domestic units over which they exercised a degree of decision-making autonomy about production and consumption. Women who were part of relatively independent households did occasional day-wage work as seasonal farm labourers or washerwomen, but they rarely engaged as regular domestic workers after emancipation. Increasingly, this became the work of single women and girls.¹ The movement of ex-slaves from farms continued, albeit at a slower rate, throughout the 1840s.² There is little

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1. M.P.A., Goedverwacht, Oct., 1852, Letter, July, 1842, Elim, letters, Jan., Apr., Genadendal, 1840; S.A.C.A., Jan., 27, 1838. Dec., 1st., see for example, The Meditator, Dec. 4, 1838; CO.48.243., Desp. 71, July 22, 1844. Cf. Gutman, The Black Family; J.I. Guyer, 'Household and Community in African Studies', African Studies Review, Vol. 24, June 1981.
 2. See for example: M.P.A., letter, Mar., 1841, Genadendal, letters, June, 1847, Genadendal.

evidence beyond that of farmers who depended on regular cheap labour, to support allegations that ex-slaves were 'lazy'.¹ On the contrary, there was a widespread desire among ex-slaves for access to means of production, as there was for education. Ex-slaves usually worked their holdings conscientiously when they could secure them, and often went to great lengths to ensure that their children learned to read and write.²

By 1849 a farmer remarked:

A great number are squatted [on] grounds, belonging to the Government, and private individuals: a mode of life so congenial to them that a limited supply of food, with irregular intervals of labour for themselves, is preferred to ample rations and fair wages under a master. (3)

The continued movement of ex-slaves from the wheat farms after emancipation suggests that they rejected the conditions of slavery and the terms of regular resident labour during early 'freedom'. There was a widespread aversion among the newly-emancipated to anything that resembled bonded labour. Even monthly contracts were unpopular. Agrarian employers were going to have to coerce ex-slaves to prevent them working for themselves. A struggle emerged between farmers and ex-slaves after 1838: it was about the latter's dependent status, and it affected the level of exaction that could be imposed upon them. Forms of forced labour were likely to develop, 'where slavery ended before independent access to means of production for potential labourers had ceased'.⁴ This basic tension in agrarian society developed steadily throughout the decade after emancipation and reached a crisis in the years 1848 and 1852.⁵

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1. See for example: Theal, History of South Africa, passim; Liebenberg, 'Vrystelling'; Hengherr, 'Emancipation', *passim*.
 2. Both were prerequisites for land-usage and residence rights on the missions. Mission sources abound with evidence of ex-slaves' concern about, and sacrifices for, their children's schooling.
 3. C.P.P., Documents re Masters and Servants Ordinance, 1849, p. 68.
 4. M. Legassick, 'Frontier tradition', in Marks and Atmore, Economy and Society, 51.
 5. See below, this chapter.

C. Coercion and immigration: attempts to increase labour supply.

Increases in the shortages, and hence the costs, of labour after emancipation were problems common to all employers. However, not all employers were entirely agreed upon the best strategy to deal with the labour withdrawals. A body of opinion, that was widespread among commercial and capitalising farmers, emphasised the importance of conserving local and traditional sources of labour, and stressed the need for strict controls and state intervention to retain the emancipated, or 'free persons of colour', as the main body of the work-force on the farms. The commercial farmers' mouthpiece, the Zuid Afrikaan newspaper, propagated this view. Members of the wealthy wheat- and wool-farming von Breda family vocalised these views in the Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council for much of the 1840s.¹

The other main body of opinion was grounded in the firm belief that, 'like all other commodities, labour must be suffered to rise and fall according to the relation of demand and supply ... coercion direct or indirect is wholly out of the question'.² Merchant interests dominated the Cape parliament. They tended to emphasise the advantages of the 'free labour market', and stressed the value of labour imports and immigration as a means of increasing the supply of labour without coercion. Merchants derived profits from the circulation rather than the production of commodities and did not employ labour on the scale

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1. 'The number of vagrants in this Colony would render immigration unnecessary'. Z.A., Jan. 13, 1840. C.O.48.213, Governor Sir George Napier's letter on immigration, Mar., 1841. Napier was opposed to importing agricultural labour from Britain to the Cape. CO.48.213., Desp. 85, Aug. 26, 1841.
 2. S.A.C.A., Oct. 17, 1840.

of the pre-mechanised agriculture. A large peasantry presented more favourable market opportunities than a coerced and underpaid workforce. The South African Commercial Advertiser, which aired the views of the merchant interests, pointed out that, 'the emancipated have become producers and consumers of goods that pass through the hands of the merchants to ... ten times the amount ... under the system of slavery.'¹ The South African Commercial Advertiser was the main liberal newspaper at the Cape. These views also found support from the missionaries and Legislative Council members such as the substantial Cape Town merchant J.B. Ebden. His family was well-connected in the church, army, and landed aristocracy in Britain.² Liberal views also received a sympathetic hearing from the Whig reformist, Lord John Russell, at the Colonial Office in London. He strove to create a 'free market in labour' in the colonies where slavery had been abolished.

These then, were the main strands in the ruling-class ideology. Both were well represented in the Cape of Good Hope Agricultural Society and the Cape Legislature. Both found expression in policies that were applied simultaneously, and reflected differences of emphasis rather than essence. Some members of the Legislature promoted both policies on different occasions. Thus, while there were areas of conflicting interests and ideology, there were also areas where interests overlapped.

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1. S.A.C.A., Feb. 22, 1845. The Cape liberal press carried numerous articles promoting and commenting on labour imports from England, Ireland, Scotland, Europe, St. Helena, and Africa during the 1840s. For examples of the different views on labour of the Z.A. and the S.A.C.A., see S.A.C.A. July 22, 1840. Cape liberalism is dealt with in S. Trapido, 'The Friends of the Natives', in Marks and Atmore, Economy and Society.
 2. T.E. Kirk, 'Self government and self defence in South Africa: The interrelations between British and Cape politics, 1846-1854', D.Phil., Oxford, 1973, p. 45-7.

During the months that followed emancipation, the laws regulating the supply of labour in general, and agricultural labour in particular, underwent a great deal of discussion in the Cape Legislative Council. By July of 1839, the Governor and the Legislative Council had unanimously adopted, promulgated, and published for execution in the Colony, an Ordinance for 'Amending and Consolidating the Laws regulating the relative rights and duties of Masters, Servants and Apprentices.'¹ This Ordinance, and its amended version of 1841, were unconstitutionally implemented until March 1841, when the Colonial Supreme Court found that it required ratification by the Privy Council in Britain.² In June of 1840, the Cape Governor, Sir George Napier, submitted a draft of the 1839 Ordinance to Russell at the Colonial Office for British governmental sanction and allowance.³

The 1839 Masters and Servants Ordinance imposed a racial dimension upon the definition of the Master and Servant. As the Governor explained to the Colonial Office:

The emancipated apprentices fall under the provision of that Ordinance, [i.e. Ordinance 50 of 1829] as being free persons of colour lawfully residing in this Colony, and thus a measure which professedly applied to the free aboriginal inhabitants became applicable to a different race altogether differently situated. It was obviously inadvisable in framing a general law for regulating the relations between Master and Servant to subject persons of European descent to these protective [sic]

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1. Government Gazette, July, 1839.
 2. S.A.C.A., Jan. 22, 1840; CO.48.207., Desp. 7, Jan. 30, 1840. The proposed Ordinance impinged upon Ordinance 50 of 1829, which by Imperial regulation could not be altered or set aside by any subsequent local Ordinance without sanction of an Order-in-Council of the British Government. Ibid; CO.48.213., Letter of the Supreme Court, Mar. 18, 1841.
 3. CO.48.207., Desp., 7, Jan. 30, 1840. The Colonial Office asked for an explanation why the Ordinance of 1839 had been allowed to take effect, and was then suspended. CO.48.213., Desp. 26, Mar., 1841. Napier's explanation was: 'much inconvenience had long been suffered from the want of some legislative enactment upon the subject...' Ibid. C.O.48.213., Letter of the Supreme Court, Mar. 18, 1841.

regulations which had been devised expressly and avowedly for the advantage of a distinct and formerly oppressed class and hence the apparent necessity for making distinct provisions for the two distinct races, and thus keeping up by legislative enactment, the acknowledgement of a still existing difference in the eye of the law between White and Coloured races ... an enactment as shall, without the slightest degree endangering the recently acquired liberty of the coloured classes on the one hand, or unjustly affecting the European races on the other, at once place the labouring population of the colony on one uniform footing. (1)

Ordinance 50 of 1829 and the abolition of slavery in 1838 had released predominantly Khoisan and slave labourers from earlier forms of bondage and thrust them onto the 'free' labour market. The 1839 Masters and Servants Ordinance was intended to subject these 'people of colour',² who were becoming part of the proletariat, to more draconian labour regulations than European labourers or artisans in the Colony. Napier argued that without such a distinction, European agricultural labour would be loath to come to the colony. The Ordinance presented a veritable hazard for 'persons of colour' unfamiliar with the details of the law: long-term contracts were possible; monthly contracts could be renewed; children could be defined destitute and tied for long terms of service; 'misconduct'

1. CO.48.207., Desp. 7, Jan. 30, 1840.

2. 'Persons of Colour' '... to be construed and understood to mean all persons who at any time previous to December 1838 were in a state of slaves or of apprenticed labourers, as also of Hottentots, and other persons of colour mentioned, and with respect to whom provision was made in Ordinance 50 ... not ... any ... with respect to whom provision was made by Ordinance 49 ... nor any woman of colour who has been or shall be lawfully married to any European, or person of or reported to be of pure European descent, nor any procreated in lawful wedlock between persons either of whom is a European, or of European descent.'
CO.48.207., Draft of the Ordinance on Masters and Servants, July 10, 1839, Desp. 7, Jan. 30, 1840.

was extremely broadly defined and supported with penal sanction.¹

The Colonial Office refused to sanction the proposed Ordinance on various grounds. Free trade and immigration were integral to the views of the Secretary of State for Colonies, Lord John Russell, on how best to retain and expand the Empire.² He clearly did not want these principles to be diluted by coercive interventions in the workings of the 'free labour market' at the Cape. Russell objected to any distinction being made between 'European, African and Hottentot' labourers. He explained further:

Her Majesty's Government consider a contract for three years without a power of giving notice of its cessation to the labourer before the expiration of the period of three years has akin^{to} the faulty and degrading system of compulsory labour.

The Colonial Office were also unhappy about the administration of the proposed law being in the hands of the Resident Magistrates and not the 'stipendiary Magistrates appointed for the express purpose', because 'Masters and Magistrates are much the same'. Resident Magistrates were not only the paid officials of local

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1. Ibid. Other important clauses of the proposed Ordinance were: written contracts for up to three years of service for 'persons of colour'; one month of service in the absence of a written contract; automatic renewal of contracts in the event of notice not being given fourteen days before expiration of service or in the event of the employee not leaving on the day of expiration of service; a ten-hour work-day from April 1st to September 30th, and twelve hours during the period October 1st to March 31st; 'misconduct' very widely defined as including: 'disobedience of any order to perform service', 'neglect, negligent service, desertion, absence, late-coming, early-leaving, insolence to the master or any of his family, abrasive language, violence, habitual filthiness of person or dress, dishonesty, drunkenness, indecency, debauchery, fornication, becoming pregnant if unmarried or by any other than the husband', and so on. Penalties for misconduct were a month's hard labour, fine of up to £20, imprisonment and termination of contract. Ibid.
 2. Kirk, 'British and Cape Politics', 7-36.

government, but were also 'resident colonists engaged partly in the public service and partly in their own private pursuits whether commercial or agricultural'. Russell regarded that provision of the Ordinance which required fourteen days notice of intention to end an oral contract, and which notice fell void if the servant did not actually leave on the exact day, '... likely to degenerate into a restraint from which ignorant people will never be able to rescue themselves'; he thought that the list of offences for which Magistrates could punish summarily was 'objectionable', because the offences were, 'too vague and general'.¹

Napier's response to the several criticisms of the proposed Ordinance reflected the tremendous pressure that he was under in the Legislative Council. He remained silent on the question of race and labour, but argued the case in favour of the proposals, assured the Colonial Office that its recommendations would be embodied in a new Ordinance, and, hoping that the Ordinance might surreptitiously take effect, asked that the requisite Order in Council be forwarded as soon as possible.² Russell, however, insisted on examining the amended Ordinance before ^{Napier} submitted anything to Council.³

The Masters and Servants Ordinance, 'as amended and passed in the Legislative Council upon the 1st day of March 1841', did not embody the overt racial elements of its predecessor of 1839. Oral contracts could not be binding for more than three months, whereas in the

1. CO.48.207., Desp. 536, Oct. 14, 1840; CO.48.213., Desp. 22, Mar. 16, 1841, for Russell's views in this, and the preceding paragraph.

2. Ibid; CO.48.213., Desp. 26, Mar. 26, 1841.

3. CO.48.213., Letter of Russell to Napier, July 21, 1841.

original Ordinance of 1839, a monthly oral contract could go on renewing itself for up to a year. Ex-slaves and apprentices could be bound by written contracts for a maximum period of only one year, as opposed to the original proposal of three years. Apart from the concessions on the racial distinction and the duration of contracts, the bulk of the provisions in the original Ordinance were left intact in the amended version.¹ Two important aspects of the law remained unchanged: the nature of its administrators; and the fact that a civil-law contract regulating the relations between buyers and sellers of the commodity labour on the 'free labour market', was placed firmly in the realm of criminal law. This was because of the penal sanctions attached to so broad and vague a concept of misconduct.²

Russell was clearly unwilling to associate himself with the sanction of the partially amended Ordinance which was despatched to him in April of 1841. A year later, Napier enquired,

whether there is a probability that the Masters and Servants Ordinance as amended by the Legislative Council in obedience to the instructions of Lord J. Russell is likely to receive Her Majesty's gracious sanction and approval by way of an Order in Council? (3)

When the Order in Council finally did reach the Cape, it carried the sanctioning signature of Russell's successor Stanley. Russell had, however, arranged that the sanction be conditional upon a report to be submitted to the Colonial Office on the effects of the application

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1. CO.48.213., Desp. 25, Apr. 25, 1841; C.P.P., Documents re Masters and Servants Ordinance, 1849, *passim*.
 2. The following were criminal acts in terms of the law: 'refusals or neglect to perform work, negligent work, damage to master's property through negligence, violence, insolence, scandalous immorality, drunkenness, gross misconduct', and so on. Penalties were: one month's wages, or imprisonment with/out hard labour for fourteen days. *Ibid*.
 3. CO.48.217., Desp. of Napier, May 17, 1842.

of the Masters and Servants Act during a three-year trial period, ending December 1845. On the basis of this, a decision would be reached as to whether or not the Order-in-Council should be extended.¹

Russell's attempts to check the draconian Cape Masters and Servants Act were shortlived under Sir Robert Peel's Conservative administration after 1841. In power was a Party that fell apart on the issue of free trade and the repeal of the Corn Laws. It is unlikely that many Conservatives, including the Protectionist Lord Stanley at the Colonial Office, were particularly concerned to secure the 'free' labour market at the Cape.

After one year in operation, an official report to the Colonial Office stated that the Masters and Servants Ordinance had resulted in:

both parties becoming more aware that their relative positions in society demanded on both sides mutual concessions and the aid thus given the law towards securing, for a specified time, and under proper agreements, the services of the labouring population will ... have a very beneficial influence in securing the Master from the caprice of the Servant ... (2)

Stanley regarded the Ordinance as something of a nuisance, and his renewal of it in 1845 was indifferent and automatic.³ An Order-in-Council extended the Ordinance, until June 1846, and the Colonial Office called for the outstanding report on the effects of the Ordinance. In October 1845, the new Governor, Sir Peregrine Maitland,

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1. The Order-in-Council which gave effect to the Masters and Servants Ordinance in December 1842, 'was substantially Lord John Russell's. But it has a date which will apparently make your Lordship [Stanley] responsible for it'. Ibid; CO.48.243., Desp. 97, Aug. 30, 1844.
 2. CO.48.229., Desp. 55, Apr. 18, 1843.
 3. Stanley initialled his footnote which commented on the renewal notice of the Order-in-Council for the Masters and Servants Ordinance, due to expire on December 1st, 1845, as follows: 'I suppose it should be renewed for a year or two longer and that the wanting report should be called for. If it should prove satisfactory the law might be made permanent'. CO.48.243., Desp. 97, Aug. 30, 1844.

submitted a report which consisted of one sentence and new Orders-in-Council, of January and July 1846, rendered the Masters and Servants Ordinance of 1841 permanent and without further limitations. The emancipated at the Cape were subject to a more stringent labour code than was applicable to the emancipated in the West Indies or Mauritius.¹

The Cape Government was not slow to develop the apparatus with which to effect the law at the local level. In 1838 the government issued 'a booklet of instructions' to each Field Cornet which served to define their duties and powers. They were 'subordinate Magistrates', had powers of arrest for criminal offences, and were charged with the organization of the civil militia. They had a duty to act against 'vagrancy and squatting', and to record the details of employment contracts and apprenticeships, 'of any Hottentot or any other free persons of colour in employment'. The instructions to Field Cornets were issued in the months preceding emancipation in December 1838, and were directly related to emancipation, and the effects thereof on the relations between employers and employees. Field Cornets were widely regarded as interested parties who were incapable of impartial administration of land or labour regulations. Despite this, however, the Masters and Servants Ordinances of 1839 and 1841 both stipulated that others, besides the magistrates, were authorised to attest to written contracts of service.²

In 1834 the government appointed four full-time, paid 'special

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1. CO.48.253., Desp. 144, Oct. 17, 1845. See also C.P.P., Documents re Masters and Servants Ordinance, 1849, *passim*.
 2. CO.48.218., Desp. 49, March, 1842; M.M.S., Lily Fountain, 1841; Kirk, 'British and Cape Politics', 42.

justices' to 'take charge of the affairs of ex-slaves' during their apprenticeships from December 1834 to December 1838. In 1838, their services were retained in the form of Resident Magistrates situated at courts created at Wynberg, Paarl, Malmesbury, and Caledon because,

vagabondism and depredation pass unpunished in thousands of instances, [and] because the loss thereby occasioned to the distant farmers is less dreaded by them than the delay, the risk and the expense of bringing the culprits to justice. (1)

Special Justices became permanent Resident Magistrates, and Resident Magistrates were appointed to posts vacated by Special Justices on retirement.²

The significance of this is that the difference in principle between stipendiary Special Justices and Resident Magistrates, who the Colonial Office had warned were 'much the same' as 'masters', was ignored.³ The evidence suggests that there was a good deal of truth in the allegation that, 'Masters and Magistrates are much the same'.⁴ In effect, the full-time paid Magistrate who was employed in the main commercial-farming regions helped to retain a stratum of ex-slaves on the commercial farms, as regular resident labourers, during the period of transition to the 'free labour market'. The Masters and Servants Act and its administration extended legal sanction to the relations between employers and regular labourers. In doing so, the magistrates assisted commercial farmers through a crisis which, otherwise, would have marginalized a number of them.

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1. CO.48.207., Desp. 50, July 13, 1840.
 2. For example, W.H. von Breda became Resident Magistrate of Paarl in 1846. He replaced a Mr. Piers the 'late Special Justice'. CO.48,263., Desp. 164, Sept. 23, 1846.
 3. CO.48.207., Desp. 536, Oct. 14th; CO.48.213., Desp. 22, Mar. 16, 1841.
 4. For example: M.M.S., Box 307, No. 2, Wynberg, Jan. 29, 1844. Resident Magistrate Barnes of Riversdale possessed farmlands to the value of £5,000. He leased his farms on ten-year contracts at £365 per annum, and in 1850 his tenants owed him £606.10s. CO.48.319., Desp. 191, Nov. 16, 1851.

Labour-policy after emancipation was not solely concerned with the formation of a wage-labouring class from local sources. The colonial authorities also arranged for the Children's Friend Society in England to send children to the Cape as apprenticed labourers.¹ The Children's Friend Society for the Prevention of Vagrancy was an evangelical organisation that offered to relieve the pressures which increasing numbers of pauper children and juvenile offenders exerted on London's workhouses and police during the 1830s. This was a decade when, 'at least in London, philanthropists and policy-makers were most fearful that distress among the working-class would lead to disorder'.² Emigration was the Children's Friend Society's solution. But the emigration of children to the colonies differed from the private and voluntary emigrations that characterised nineteenth-century Britain in three important respects: most of the children were sent to the Cape, and other colonies, before they had reached the age of consent; they were apprenticed soon after they arrived; and their apprenticeships invariably involved far longer periods of service than the contracts of voluntary immigrants.

Cape employers, however, welcomed the availability of a cheap source of labour at a time when they were uneasy about the transition from

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1. CO.48.207., Children's Friend Society (henceforth C.F.S.), Feb. 24, 1840. '... the demand for labourers and servants of every description greatly exceeds supply ... To meet this demand ... the C.F.S. in England have, during the last three years, introduced a number of youths of both sexes whom they settled in the country as apprentices under the usual indentures until the period of their coming of age, the master paying the costs of transport'. S.A.C.A., April 7, 1838; Cf. J. Collingwood, 'Juvenile Delinquency and Emigration: The Parkhurst Experiment in Australia', I.C.S., C.C.S.H., November, 1983; Cf. J. Parr, Labouring Children; British Immigrant Apprentices to Canada, 1869-1924, Montreal, 1980; Cf. R.A. Parker, 'The Migration of Unaccompanied Children to Canada, 1867-1917', I.C.S., C.C.S.H., 1979.
 2. Parr, Labouring Children, 27. Most of the children that were sent to the Cape were from: 'Peckham, London, Marylebone, Paddington, Chelsea, St. James, Holborn, Islington'. CO.48.207, Report on the C.F.S., 1840, p. 18-24.

slave to wage labour. Local demand for child apprentices exceeded supply for the duration of the scheme.¹ Between 1830 and 1841, most of the over seven hundred children that were sent to the Cape, were employed as apprenticed farm-servants in the Cape, Stellenbosch, and Zwellendam Divisions.² Commercial wheat-farmers employed a number of these apprentices.³ Although they worked, slept, ate, and generally merged with the farm work-force,⁴ these youths were legally 'destitute' and therefore not emancipated from their apprenticeships in December 1838:

... during their apprenticeships, the situation of the Juvenile Emigrants was in some respects, worse than that of slaves and hardly so good as that of Hottentots before the passing of the 50th Ordinance. (5)

It was, however, for a more limited term. They were apprenticed up to the age of nineteen, at 20s. a year. Their apprenticeships entailed longer periods of service than, at about two-thirds of the cost of, hired labourers.⁶

Reports of ill-treatment and allegations that English children were

1. E. Bradlow, 'The Children's Friend Society at the Cape of Good Hope', *Victorian Studies*, Vol. 27, No. 2, 1984; *S.A.C.A.*, Apr. 7, July 11, 1838. '... applications for apprentices had been made to the Society from Canada and the Cape of Good Hope to an extent which they were unable to meet'. *S.A.C.A.*, July 11, 1838.
2. CO.48.20., Report on the C.F.S., Feb. 24, 1840; Bradlow, 'Children's Friend Society', passim.
3. For example, M. von Breda of Caledon, W. Duckitt of Groenekloof and P. Lochner of the Zwartland. Von Breda had six boys. CO.48.20., Report on the C.F.S., Feb. 24, 1840, p. 15.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 11, 24, on the condition of apprentices in the Malmesbury and Caledon areas.
5. Backhouse, *Visit to South Africa*, 624.
6. CO.48.20., Report on C.F.S., Feb. 24, 1840. For example, Patrick Supple was bound to an apprenticeship in Cape Division from December 1838 to May 1847. CO.48.229., Desp. 88, May 31, 1843. Besides the £9 towards passage expenses, employers paid an average of 20s. a year. For the relative costs of apprentices and hired labourers see, Bradlow, 'Children's Friend Society', 163.

being used to take the place of slaves at the Cape raised a public outcry in England. Members of London's 'lower orders' seemed particularly outraged. They dubbed the committee-members of the Children's Friend Society, 'slave-dealers', and pelted them with stones on the streets of London.¹ At the 1841 annual general meeting of the Children's Friend Society, the subscribers declared:

confident that they had affected much good, the committee can now only regret that this misrepresentation has created a prejudice against which it would be in vain to strive and which has compelled them to close their asylums. (2)

Commercial farmers and other employers were able to draw from a second, and more important, source of labour after emancipation. In 1840 a press report stated that,

while colonists were looking around for a supply of labourers, a new source has suddenly been opened by the capture of vessels engaged in the slave trade on the eastern coast of Africa. (3)

The British navy escorted some of the slave-ships that were captured off the east African coast to Cape Town and Simons Town. The Collector of Customs advertised the availability of apprentices, and indentured these freed slaves to applicants on payment of £1.⁴

The distribution having commenced, great numbers of persons from more distant parts repaired to Simons Town in hopes to share in it, where they arrived just as the ship was emptied on the Resident's hands ... thus fully six hundred became scattered over this part of the colony. (5)

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1. S.A.C.A., Sept. 12, July 25, 1838; S.A.C.A., Mar. 9, 1839, Sept. 2, 1840; CO.48.207., Report on the C.F.S., Feb. 24, 1840; Bradlow, 'Children's Friend Society', passim.
 2. S.A.C.A., Sept. 11, 1841.
 3. S.A.C.A., Jan. 4, 1840.
 4. De Ware Afrikaan, Mar. 24, 1840.
 5. CO.48.207., Desp. 17. Feb. 10, 1840.

Sixteen captured slave-ships delivered over 1,200 apprentices during 1839 and 1840.¹ Governor Napier reported that,

... the inhabitants were so anxious to procure a supply of labour of this description, that a deputation waited upon me and after discussing several projects ... a scheme was decided upon whereby the government would pay the costs of a vessel to fetch the ex-slaves from St. Helena, and farmers would pay the Government on procuring their services. (2)

The systematic transfer of ex-slaves at St. Helena to apprenticeships in the colony began in 1841. The Cape government paid £7,000 to transport 1,300 people to the Cape by January 1842.³ During the period November 1843 to August 1844, 1,503 ex-slaves were landed and distributed as apprentices at the colony. This source of labour gradually diminished in the late 1840s.

A large proportion of the ex-slaves were juveniles. They were likely to have been subject to the same long-term and low-waged apprenticeships as those arranged by the Children's Friend Society for children from England.⁴ Many adult apprenticeships were contracted before the 1842 Masters and Servants Act was passed which reduced the maximum period of service in written contracts to one year. It is likely that a great many served one-year apprenticeships, and more, at very low wages:

... many of those whose term of apprenticeship has expired have entered into engagements on their own accounts for such wages as to persons of their simple and primitive habits are an absolute wealth. (5)

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1. S.A.C.A., Dec. 19, 1840; CO.48.217., Desp. 8, Jan. 1842.
 2. *Ibid.* Prior to 1841 a number of freed-slaves that were taken from traders operating off the west coast of Africa were taken to St. Helena where they remained at British expense.
 3. CO.48.217., Desp. 12, Jan. 1842. The cost of transport was £2.18s.2d. per person payable by the applicants for apprentices.
 4. For example, of the 225 males that were taken from the Mutine and the Helena in June of 1845, 83 were over nineteen years of age, 102 were between twelve and eighteen years old. CO.48.253., Desp. 141, Oct. 15, 1845.
 5. CO.48.217., Desp. 12, Jan. 1842.

During the years immediately after emancipation, juvenile and ex-slave apprenticed labour helped stabilise a cheap labour-force for farmers. Most imported apprentices were employed by commercial farmers in the western Cape, and in particular, in the Malmesbury, Koeberg, Wagon-makers Valley, Paarl, and Stellenbosch areas.¹

Within the last few years there has been a considerable importation of labour into this Colony. First of Juvenile Emigrants and recently of liberated Africans. Both classes have been brought in successive detachments ... the numerous applications for them show that the Colonists consider them well suited for their wants ... the greatest accession in point of numbers has been made at this end of the Colony, by the dispensing of the liberated Africans in number no less than 4,254. (2)

The drought in the western districts was largely over by 1842, and commercial wheat-farming experienced a period of increased production and expanded acreage during the years 1842, 1843, and 1844. By 1844 the western-Cape wheat industry had surpassed 1839 levels of production, despite adverse weather conditions in parts of the western districts in that year.³ The regular labour required to expand production in the early postemancipation years was derived from various sources: apprenticed freed-slaves and immigrated children were shipped in; the Masters and Servants Laws linked a stratum of local ex-slaves, who were unable or unwilling to leave farms, more securely to employers. In important respects regular farm work remained bonded labour. This, together with the growing importance of the casual-labour force to the rural economy explains the fall of wage levels after 1841.⁴ However, freed slaves and immigrated children were a limited source of labour. As their numbers diminished the colonial government viewed

1. S.A.C.A., June 22, 1842.

2. Ibid; S.A.C.A., Jan. 28, 1846.

3. See Figure 1.

4. See Figure 2.

adult immigrant labourers from Britain as an increasingly viable alternative.

Governor Napier resisted calls to import adult labour from England and Ireland on the grounds that the labour shortage that followed emancipation was a temporary phenomenon.¹ In 1841 he argued that the increase of tenants on farms and the falling numbers of criminal convictions suggested the formation of a settled labouring class.² It is unlikely that others in the Legislative Council would have agreed with the notion that labour was stabilizing on the farms. Those in the Legislative Council who were most sympathetic to farming interests, opposed imports of British labour other than juveniles, because they regarded the ex-slave, Khoisan and Cape Nguni as less expensive and more malleable sources of labour. It was the substantial merchants, such as J.B. Ebdon, who pressed for labour imports from Europe and particularly Britain, as a solution to the farm labour shortage.³ In February of 1842, when Ebdon moved in Council that the Colonial Government should bear the costs of passage money for imported British farm-workers, his resolutions were rejected by the majority of Council, '... chiefly on this ground ... that the quiet Dutch and vivacious English servant could not with comfort [sic] stand in the relation of master and servant.'⁴

However, labour-immigration policies changed after 1845. Imports of pauper children and freed-slaves were replaced with the systematic

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1. An example of a call to import labour: '... in our colonies the chief complaint at present is the scarcity of labourers. In Great Britain and Ireland on the contrary the chief cause of discontent is the excessive numbers of this class ...' S.A.C.A., Mar. 6, 1839.
 2. CO.48.21., Desp. 85, Aug. 26, 1841.
 3. For details of the personal backgrounds of J.B. Ebdon and other merchants see, Kirk, 'British and Cape Politics', 45-7.
 4. S.A.C.A., April 6, 1842.

importation of adult male labour from Britain. By 1845, the quantity of imported juvenile and freed-slave apprentices was dropping, and attempts to prevent ex-apprentices from leaving farms met only with partial success. In 1845 a committee of the Legislative Council under the chairmanship of J. Montagu considered a scheme of the Land and Emigration Commission for the systematic importation of labourers from Britain. The Committee recommended that, 'a thousand statute adults be imported under this scheme into the Colony from the U.K. in six vessels to sail at intervals of two months, each ship containing about 160...'.¹ Shortly thereafter the Legislature voted £10,000 to finance the scheme.²

The British Government readily consented to the scheme as a means of relieving the growing tensions within the British agrarian political economy, on the condition that they were not required to pay.³ Her Majesty's Land and Emigration Commissioners advertised the days and places of embarkation and details of the types of labourers who would qualify for a free passage. The Cape Government contracted with John Marshall and Co. to convey a certain number of labourers of a definite description to Cape Town for a given sum.⁴

1. S.A.C.A., May 10, 1845.

2. S.A.C.A., Jan. 28, 1846.

3. In May of 1845, Russell moved in the British parliament that:
... a systematic plan of colonization would partially relieve those of the country, where the deficiency of employment has been most injurious to the labourers in husbandry.
CO.48.253., Desp. 85, May 13, 1845.

4. S.A.C.A., Jan. 28, 1846;

A free passage will be granted under the authority of Her Majesty's Land and Emigration Commissioners to ... agricultural labourers, shepherds, domestic and farm servants ... also to female unmarried domestic and farm servants ... single men of the classes required.

They were required to submit proof of employment in at least one of these categories and a medical certificate. Ibid; S.A.C.A., May 10, 1845.

Four ships transported English workers to the Cape during 1846. Nearly all disembarked at Cape Town and were indentured out to applicant employers in Cape Town and the western Divisions on annual contracts.¹ Labour imports from Britain continued throughout the remainder of the 1840s. The majority were employed in the western Divisions and some disembarked at Mossel Bay. After 1848, increasing numbers appear to have gone to Port Elizabeth.² The policy of only introducing members of the British working class was strictly adhered to.³

In 1849, the Governor, Sir Harry Smith announced that the Legislature had unanimously voted £16,000 for the purpose of emigration from the U.K. He was, no doubt, aware of the mounting unemployment and unrest in rural England and Ireland, and was at pains to point out the advantages of such expense.

The sum may appear large, unless due attention be paid to the wants of the colony and the particular advantages which it may be expected to derive from an extensive system of emigration ... the emigrants most likely to find employment here are agricultural labourers, shepherds and herdsmen. (4)

Smith wanted the number of imported labourers stepped up to one ship every six weeks from England with about 'two hundred statutory adults

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1. CO.48.261., Desp. No. 121, July 13, 1846; CO.48.263., Desp. 164, Sept. 23, 1846; CO.48.252., Desp. 85, May 13, 1845; S.A.C.A., Jan. 28, 1846; CO.48.286., Desp. 118, July 29, 1847.
 2. CO.48.284., Desp. 36, Mar. 13, 1848. CO.48.285., Desp. 103, June 1848.
 3. 'Persons intending to buy land in this colony or to invest a small capital in trade there, are not eligible for a free passage ...' CO.48.294., No. 48, Feb. 14, 1849. The case of the brothers A. and B. Flint give some indication of how this policy was carried out in practice. They were:
 - ... single men, shipped as agricultural labourers. In our examination we felt convinced by their appearance and unsatisfactory answers that they were not of the class represented, nor with any other classes falling within the letter or the spirit of the bounty regulations. They were obviously of a superior grade in society ... recommend that the bounty be disallowed in respect of these two young men.
 - CO.48.285., Desp. 103, June, 1848.
 4. CO.48.286., No. 126, July 29, 1848.

on each'. He wanted an emigration agent to take charge of a 'more extensive and convenient depot', where arriving labourers would be accommodated until 'provided with locations'. The majority of the labourers would be engaged in the western Divisions

... one ship in three might be sent to Algoa Bay ... This plan would afford much greater facilities than now exist for engaging the emigrants as servants in the country districts, as either the government or private agents might be empowered to select and engage such of the emigrants as might be best fitted for agricultural or pastoral pursuits; and as these are the employments for which the emigrants are principally selected, this condition is not without its force. (1)

The British Government perceived an opportunity in Smith's proposals to substitute exports of labour with exports of convicts. Colonial Secretary Sir George Grey envisaged:

dispersing those who have come under sentence of the law as widely as possible from each other and placing them where there is such a demand for labour as to ensure their employment are objects of the greatest importance. (2)

The considerable resistance to, and far-reaching consequences of, the policy of transporting convicts to the colony have been well documented elsewhere.³ Employers at the Cape did not want convicts: they wanted labourers;⁴ in the mind of the British ruling class there was little distinction.

Part of the tremendous reaction throughout the colony against convict labour was the realization, among those familiar with the conditions

1. Ibid.

2. CO.48.284., Desp. 8, Jan. 5, 1849.

3. For example: Kirk, 'British and Cape Politics', chapter 7; S. Trapido, 'White conflict and non-white participation in the politics of the Cape of Good Hope, 1853-1910', Ph.D., London, 1970, *passim*.

4. That although your Petitioners are in great distress and difficulty from the want of labour, and have been recently interdicted by Earl Grey from supplying this want from England, at their own expense, they reject the alternative which His Lordship now desires to force on their acceptance.

CO.48.295., No. 72, Apr. 23, 1849.

in the rural areas at the time, of the implications of such a policy for stability. During the 1840s there was a developing contradiction between the interests of farmers and landowners, who attempted to procure a constant and cheap supply of labour on the farms, and the interests of labourers and peasants, who resisted proletarianisation and secured for themselves a degree of autonomy on government, private and mission land.

This formed the background to the widespread fears that escalating criminality would fundamentally upset the status quo in the thinly-policed western rural districts. Such fears were a basic theme in the articulated opposition to the convicts. A memorial from Wellington pointed out:

... the lower classes, who bad as they may be, are hitherto unacquainted with the refinement of crime to which such company will inittate them;

another memorial to the Colonial Office stated:

from the vast extent of this colony ... the impossibility of maintaining an efficient police force ... the introduction of men from Great Britain and Ireland capable of committing crimes so heinous as to justify the higher penalty of transport would be inexpressibly dangerous to life and property.

Moravian missionaries warned:

such an influx of criminals ... scattering the seeds of deepest infamy throughout a colony unprotected by rural police, and under the impending circumstances ... should have the most deplorable effect ... imbued with the vices and bad habits of the dangerous classes of the population of Europe.

Muslim leaders argued that,

the mixture of degraded Englishmen, suffering for their crimes, with the labouring population whether agricultural labourers or mechanics, would cause a breach between them and their employers, and would disturb the whole system of industry throughout the colony.

A petition from Kamiesberg warned:

... the thinly scattered state as well as the mixed nature of its population ... runaway convicts and other clever men would

create incalculable mischief ... [for] want of a police establishment in the rural districts. (1)

The missionaries at Genadendal were subsequently,

somewhat relieved by the information that the convicts whose introduction has been contemplated are not, as we originally supposed, of the lowest class of criminals, but chiefly political offenders, who were implicated in the Irish insurrection of last year [1848]. (2)

But this was an exceptional view. The possibility of a sophisticated militancy being injected into the struggle in the rural western Cape generally aggravated local apprehensions as people discovered that the convicts in question were, 'not as was represented at the Cape, the refuse of English gaols, but consisted chiefly of political offenders'.³ They were for the most part the rebellious of agrarian Ireland.⁴ A precedent had already been set for Irish immigrant involvement in an earlier uprising. In 1808, two Irish seamen, James Hooper and Michael Kelly, a Mauritian named Louis, who was a slave craftsman in Cape Town, and the slave, 'Abraham of the Cape', mobilised several hundred slaves to rebel and march on Cape Town. Hooper and Kelly helped to undermine ideas about the immutability of slave society. They described life in non-slave societies such as Britain and advocated that slaves fight for their freedom.⁵

In Ireland the number sentenced to transportation in 1846 was 647 and in 1848, 2,733.⁶ Among the latter was John Mitchel. He was a founder and leader of the United Irishman movement which, by 1848, 'was making progress stimulating the just disaffection of the people to

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1. Quotations from: CO.48.288., No. 211, Dec. 19, 1848; CO.48.286., Desp. 94, Mar. 24, 1849; S.A.C.A., Nov. 21, 1849.
 2. M.P.A., Groenekloof, May 1849.
 3. Handbook to South Africa, London, 1891, p. 53.
 4. J. Mitchel, Jail Journal, Dublin, 1913, passim.
 5. Joubert, 'Slawe-opstand'; Ross, Cape of Torments, ch. 8.
 6. Ibid; CO.48.288., No. 211, Dec. 19, 1848; CO.48.286., Desp. 94, Mar. 24, 1849; S.A.C.A., Nov. 21, 1849.

the point of insurrection'.¹ Mitchel encouraged the Irish to keep a firm grip on their landholdings', and advocated a policy of 'passive resistance reinforced at strategic points by aggressive action'.² The ideology of the Irish insurrection was potentially explosive during the crisis of the years 1848 to 1853, when the Cape drew close to civil war.³

Mitchel was aboard the convict ship, Neptune, as it lay at anchor off Cape Town stranded between the British government's instructions and colonial opposition. Ironically, the diaries that Mitchel wrote while on board, reveal that he was a racially-prejudiced man whose sympathies lay more with what he perceived to be the Dutch colonists' stand against British imperialism, rather than with the disaffected underclasses. But this was not public knowledge, while the agrarian unrest in Ireland was. The Colonial Secretary, Sir George Grey, commented in the British parliament on the magistracy's increasing tendency to sentence to transportation: 'the parishes throw their burden on the counties, the counties upon the nation and the nation is forging schemes to throw it upon the colonies'.⁴ Local newspapers carried regular reports in English and Dutch on the struggle in rural Ireland throughout the 1840s.⁵

Grey's attempts to placate colonist opinion about the convict ship, Neptune, reveal an ignorance of local conditions in the colony:

a considerable number of Irish convicts, most of whom appeared to have been convicted of agrarian offences, and whose conduct in Bermuda was represented to have been harmless and satisfactory

1. Mitchel, Jail Journal, preface.

2. Ibid.

3. See below.

4. S.A.C.A., Aug. 15, June 30, July 18, 1849.

5. S.A.C.A., Jan. 10, 1838, Feb. 17, 1849 are random examples.

... I was unwilling to lose so favourable an opportunity of trying the experiment whether the Cape might not with advantage receive a supply of labour of this description. (1)

For many colonists the Neptune was filled with 'felonous agrarian rebels from Great Britain and Ireland bearing down on the colony ... the colony may well have to stand firm on the defensive. They have their hands full at home'.²

Vociferous opposition to the convict scheme emanated from the influential smattering of British administrators and army officers who had retired to the rural western Cape. They very often became commercial farmers, Justices of the Peace or Magistrates. As W. Shaw, retired Major of the Madras army and Justice of the Peace for Caledon, explained:

The recent determination of Lord Grey to send Irish rebels, and others found guilty of political offences to the Cape, is a heavy blow and great discouragement to British subjects residing in this colony. Those political offenders are not fit persons to bring into a colony like this, where society is so mixed and so full of inflammable materials ... sowing seeds of crimes and vices the most horrible amongst a coloured population proven from their idle habits and improvidence to follow examples and go wrong. (3)

The Colonial Office was compelled to reverse its policy on the convicts bound for the Cape.

The convict issue did not disrupt the 'stream of immigration'.

Governor Smith was convinced that supplies of British labour contributed significantly towards a solution to the agricultural

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1. S.A.C.A., June 20, 1849, report on despatch 288 of Grey to Smith, Mar. 19, 1849.
 2. S.A.C.A., Aug. 15, July 18, 1849.
 3. C.P.P., Documents re Masters and Servants Ordinance, 1849, p. 118; see also evidence of J. Rainier, J.P. in Caledon, and late Captain in Her Majesty's 98th Regiment who said, 'leaders of the Irish sedition, ... men far more dangerous in this colony than the common criminals'.

labour shortage.¹ During the period 1848 to 1859, the colonial government subsidised systematic labour importation from Britain with £36,000.²

A redefinition of the agrarian western-Cape's working class took place during the decade after emancipation in 1838. The government assisted employers to procure cheap labour on the international and local labour markets. It also took steps to assist employers to retain labourers on the farms. Ex-slaves did most of the agricultural work in the western Cape. However, British labourers formed a small and, on some well-established commercial farms, important component of the agrarian work-force. This contrasted with the period of slavery when whites did very little field-work on farms.³

1. CO.48.306., Desp. 99, June 20, 1850; CO.48.287, Oct. 26, 1848.

2. CO.48.313., Desp. 37, Feb. 24, 1851.

3. M.M.S., Box 308, No. 1, Jan. 2, 1846; C.P.P., Unnumbered report on granting land in freehold to Hottentots, 1854, p. 15; C.P.P., Documents re Masters and Servants Ordinance, 1849, p. 71-6. For evidence on the nature of the labour force during slavery see Elphick, Kraal and Castle; R. Elphick and H. Giliomee, Eds., The Shaping of South African Society 1652 to 1820, Cape Town, 1979; Worden, 'Rural Slavery', *passim*.

D. Crisis 1848 to 1853: the legacy of emancipation

Poor wheat harvests and high prices in Canada, the U.S.A., Germany, England and Australia in 1839 and 1840 limited wheat and flour exports to the Cape and contributed towards the high prices that prevailed at the Cape. After 1842, wheat farmers faced increased foreign competition. Before then, the 10 percent ad valorem tariff on all imports of wheat and flour offered a degree of protection to local producers from foreign competition. At the highest Cape Town price of 8s. per bushel, the 10 percent tariff amounted to about 10d. per bushel. In 1842 tariffs on wheat and flour from the U.K. and its 'possessions' were reduced to 5 percent ad valorem. The tariff on foreign wheat was raised to 12 percent and that on foreign flour was fixed at 3s. per 196 lb. barrel.¹ Wheat and flour was imported from India, Mauritius, Europe, and increasingly from Australia. Growing amounts of American flour also appeared on the Cape Town market after 1845. Low wheat and flour prices reflected these increased imports after 1842.² There is evidence of growing dissatisfaction among

1. S.M.G., Mar. 13, 1846.

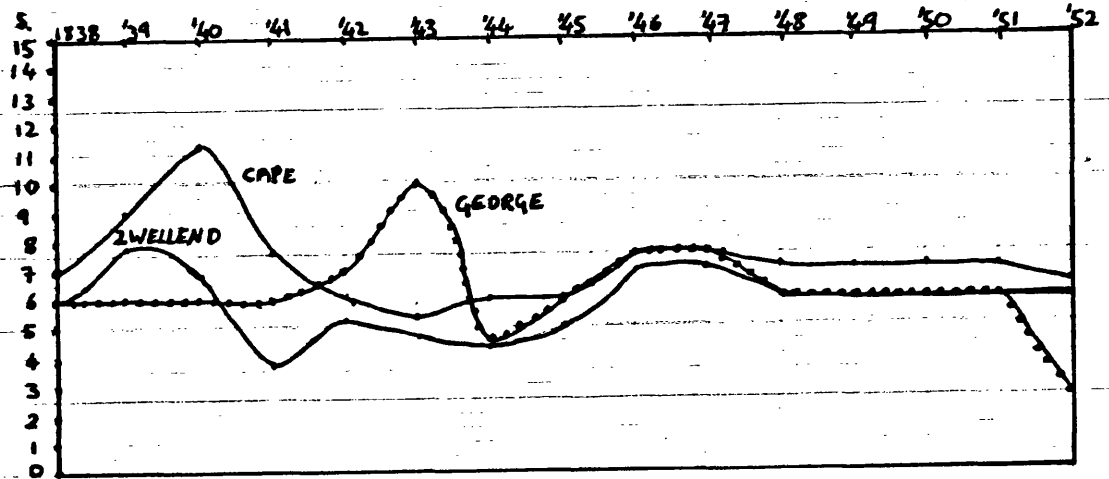
2. See Figure 3. It is not possible to build up an accurate picture of wheat and flour imports during the 1840s. The number of steam and sailing vessels that called at the Cape tended to increase throughout the decade. However, many of the cargoes are described as 'sundries' and therefore quantities of breadstuffs were unspecified. S.M.G. 1838-50; S.A.C.A., Mar. 21, 1849. The Cape imported £50,000 of wheat and flour in 1848. S.A.C.A., Jan. 13, 1849. In 1850 local and imported breadstuff prices on the Cape Town market were:

Cape flour	19s.-20s.	per 100 lb.	
Australian flour	20s.	per 100 lb. barrel	5 percent duty paid
American flour	37s.6d.	per 196 lb. barrel	3s. duty paid
Cape Wheat	6s.-9s.	per bushel	
Australian wheat	8s.	per bushel	5 percent duty paid

C.T.M., Aug. 23, 1851. In 1842 international wheat prices per bushel were: Hamburg 5s.; Rostock 5s.4d.; New York 4s.9d.; London 6s.6d.; Cape Town 7s.6d. S.A.C.A., Oct. 28, 1843; CO.53.78., Stat. Reg., 1843.

FIGURE 3

WHEAT PRICE FLUCTUATIONS IN THE MAJOR WHEAT-PRODUCING DIVISIONS OF THE WESTERN CAPE 1838 - 1852



Cape Division includes Stellenbosch Division's statistics from 1838 to 1852; the newly-established Malmesbury Division's statistics from 1848; and those of Paarl Division from 1849. Zwelendam's statistics include those of Caledon from 1848. The data for the years 1848 to 1851 are mere repetitions. It is likely that prices were falling during these years. Stat. Regs., 1838-1852.

farmers about the low wheat prices which prevailed. They demanded higher tariff protection.¹

During the three-year slump that occurred in the Cape wheat industry after emancipation, an annual average of 331,516 bushels of wheat were harvested from 66,520 acres of wheatlands. At an average price of just under 11s. per bushel, the annual average value of wheat harvests during this period was £150,563. The annual average wheat harvest during the period 1845 to 1849 was 413,455 bushels from 70,579 acres of wheatlands. The annual average price dropped to 6s. in the years 1845 to 1849 and reduced the value of the wheat harvests to £103,363 each year. This was not only less than that realized during the years 1839 to 1841, but also below the pre-emancipation figure of £131,037.²

All the commercial farmers in the traditional wheat-producing areas were adversely affected and some were not able to cope after emancipation. Commenting on the problems of farmers in September 1848, the editor of the Zuid Afrikaan declared, 'a crisis, it would seem, has arrived'.³ It is true that regular farm-wages slumped after 1841.⁴ These, however, do not reflect the rising labour costs of the developing numbers of labour tenants, mission inhabitants and squatters who supplied vital seasonal labour. The degree of autonomy that western Cape proletarians were able to derive from combining subsistence agriculture with casual labour, resulted in periodic shortages of labour and high day-wage rates of between 15d. and 3s.⁵ Emancipation

1. S.A.C.A., Aug. 4, 1850, Jan. 13, 1849.

2. Based on CO.53.75-86, Stat. Regs., 1838-1841 and 1845-49. Largely due to imports from Australia. S.A.C.A., June 13, 1849.

3. Z.A., Sept. 28, 1848.

4. See Figure 2.

5. On day wages see C.P.P., Documents re Masters and Servants Ordinance, 1849, passim.

had, according to some farmers, created a situation where, 'servants are lords over their masters and hold them in perpetual fear, thus inverting the natural order of things'.¹

Some commercial farmers who formerly relied on slaves were unable to meet the costs of labour on the developing 'free labour market'. A memorial of 135 corn-farmers and landed proprietors complained that:

since the emancipation of their slaves, [the petitioners] have retrograded very much ... [as result of the] general want of necessary field labourers and cattle herds which is not procurable except at extortionate daily wages by which the labourers are enabled to occupy themselves for a few days in the service of the farmers and then take themselves off to their habitations where with the money they have received they can provide themselves for one month with provisions ... (2)

There is a good deal of evidence which suggests that continued wheat-production involved greater dependence upon farmers' family labour.³

Frederick Cooper points out that,

the slave owner can respond to incentives by forcing more work out of slaves or to contraction by relying on the inward looking nature of the plantation; the peasant can shield himself from the market by his own subsistence production; but the capitalist cannot hide, nor can the landless worker. (4)

The combined pressures of low commodity prices and commercializing property and labour relations induced some farmers to emigrate from the western Divisions of the Cape. Increased competition for public grazing-land and shareholdings on private lands; rising purchase and rental prices; and labour shortages were among the factors which induced marginalised commercial farmers to leave Zwellendam Division.

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1. Ibid,^{p.153,} evidence of G. Eveleigh, Riversdale, and passim for other similar comments about 'the natural order'.
 2. CO.48.288., No. 215, Dec. 21, 1848, Memorial of 135 corn-farmers, inhabitants, landed proprietors, and others from Koeberg, Tygerberg, Zwartland, Cape, Stellenbosch, Somerset, Drakenstein, Winterberg, Clanwilliam, Riebeek's Kasteel, Paarl.
 3. On the widespread reliance on family labour, see for example, *ibid*, memorial of 143 farmers of Somerset Division and CO.48.299., Corresp., Oct. 1849, Blue Book, 1847/8.
 4. Cooper, 'Africa and the World Economy', p. 11.

Eight 'large families' left the district in 1848:

... for the purpose of emigrating across the northern boundary of the Colony ... the difficulty of obtaining lands here and the higher prices at which they are sold, joined to the difficulty of procuring servants ...

were among the reasons they gave for leaving the area. The Civil Commissioner of Zwellendam reported in 1850 that more people intended to leave.¹

Generally, marginal and established commercial wheat-farmers in the western districts were growing increasingly impatient and dissatisfied with the government. They demanded the implementation of measures to effect the immediate and thorough proletarianisation of the ex-slave labour-force that had settled on mission, private and public land. Foremost among the measures they sought to achieve this end was a vagrancy law. And to implement it effectively they called for increased powers to be granted to Justices of the Peace and Field Cornets:

to visit such places where it is presumed that dwellings are erected by the working class to enquire if the occupants carry on an industry or honest trade. (2).

Other demands included: more stringent Masters and Servants Laws with heavier penalties for breaches; Justices of the Peace to have powers of jurisdiction over disputes between Masters and Servants; the sale of all mission lands; a variety of curbs on worker mobility; taxes on dwellings on farms; and a law to enforce labour obligations as debt repayments.³ These demands were articulated most clearly, and at the highest level, in January 1849. A deputation of farmers

1. CO.48.276., No. 177, Nov. 12, 1847; S.A.C.A., Dec. 20, 1850; CO.48.252., Desp. 83, May, 1845; CO.48.261., No. 64, Mar. 13, 1846; CO.48.286., No. 106, June 26, 1848.
 2. CO.48.288., No. 215, Dec. 21, 1848, Memo. of the corn farmers; C.P.P., Documents re Masters and Servants Ordinance, 1849, *passim*.
 3. *Ibid.*

met with Governor Sir Harry Smith to submit a petition and, 'to plead the case of the declining wheat production in the Zwartland, Koeberg, and Stellenbosch regions over the last eighteen years'.¹

Marginal and established commercial wheat farmers demanded that ex-slaves be proletarianised and they often articulated their demands in racial terms. Racial prejudices that existed before emancipation developed a new function and meaning as capitalist labour relations expanded. A racial definition of the agricultural work-force was actively promoted during the decade after emancipation.²

Smith's views accorded with those of the farmers to the extent that all agreed, 'the great want of this colony is a steady supply of labour'. Smith, however, thought that systematic imports of labour from the U.K. and the increased presence of the local administration would solve the labour-supply problem.

Until they are forced into it by emulation with the European immigrant labourers, the Native population will never in any great degree contribute to supplying the deficiency. Their wants are so few and so easily satisfied, and they are so well aware of the advantage they possess in enjoying a monopoly in the labour market, that there is little hope of making them useful and steady labourers unless they are forced into exertion by the necessity of competing with others brought up in the habits of industry. (3)

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1. The deputation submitted a petition signed by 'six hundred corn and wine farmers'. The central demands were related to labour: 'Petitioners have suffered considerably for want of proper judicial protection and adequate laws to secure them against the dishonesty of the coloured classes, since their emancipation who have become generally so idle, dishonest and unsettled in habits'; S.A.C.A., Jan. 13, 1849; see also C.P.P., Documents re Masters and Servants Ordinance, 1849, *passim*.
 2. The proposed Masters and Servants Ordinance of 1839 is an example. Capitalism frequently supports the creation of new distinctions in old guises. Pre-capitalist prejudices, cultures and institutions are revolutionised only in the sense that they are given new functions and meanings rather than being destroyed. This is true of prejudices like racism, sexism and tribalism... Harvey, Limits to Capital, 416.
 3. CO.48.287., Unno., Oct. 26, 1848; CO.48.286., No. 40, March 15, 1848.

In 1848 the Legislative Council member J. Montagu declared that, '... to improve the labour of this Colony was in his opinion the greatest desideratum'. He proposed that landholders cut labour costs by inducing families off the mission institutions with offers to rent pieces of land on their farms. Farmers would then be able to tap their tenants' labour systematically:

the farmers should pursue a different course ... hold out to them the proper inducements to establish themselves as the permanent and not the casual labourers of the lands they worked upon ... far more satisfactory than the present desultory, unsatisfactory mode of procuring their labour, for which it was notorious, they paid enormous prices. (1)

But commercial farmers were often concerned to limit the degree of access that peasants and casual labourers had to independent means of subsistence. Montagu's policy was especially unpopular among the capitalizing and marginal commercial farmers who generally did not possess enough land for such tenants. They were opposed to developing peasant cultivation on private, or on mission land, on grounds that labour tended to accumulate on particular farms. Furthermore, they argued that labourers remained a peasantry who spent only a fraction of their time as labourers, and, when they did so, their labour was largely confined to their landlords' fields.

A commentary on Montagu's policy in the farmers' mouthpiece, the Zuid Afrikaan, stated:

... he is quite wrong if he imagines that this system of allowing a number of idle vagabonds to squat down on certain farms, will be the means of preventing vagrancy, insolence, disobedience and a run on the mission institutions, ... It does secure a certain

1. Z.A., Sept. 28, 1848.

amount of labour to the landlord it is true ... a curse to the neighbouring farmers which become the prey to the rapacity of these squatters, for whom it is a dire impossibility to maintain their families by the produce of one day's labour in the week which they give to their landlord. (1)

In April of 1849, representatives of farming interests in parliament, such as H. Cloete, argued in favour of government action to satisfy 'a great complaint of indiscriminate squatting on government as well as private property...'²

Demands for the abolition of the mission institutions intensified towards the end of the late 1840s.³ As one influential commercial farmer saw it:

The missionary institutions have been called 'reservoirs of labour' but they are more like stagnant pools, engendering pestilential vapours and requiring immediate purification. (4)

In 1838 about twenty-five thousand slaves were emancipated in the arable areas of the rural western Cape. Some indication of the proportion of those that subsequently settled on western-Cape missions arises from the fact that as we have already seen the total mission population in the region rose from under six thousand in 1838 to over twelve thousand in 1850. There was, therefore, some truth, and a good deal of exaggeration, in the farmers' allegations. It is not

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1. Z.A., Sept. 28, 1848. See also CO.48.288., No. 215, Dec. 21, 1848, Corn farmers' Memo.
 2. Such arguments were often based on evidence of increased squatting that was presented to parliament in the 1849 Select Committee Report on the Masters and Servants Ordinance of 1846. See for example, C.T.M., 9 March, 1850.
 3. ...unless some check be put upon the present evil of accumulating large bodies of labourers at the institutions, many of whom performed but little labour during the year as compared with labourers resident on farms, he feared the most destructive consequences to the agricultural interests ... (cheering).
Z.A., Sept. 28, 1848; C.W.M., Box 23, Jacket C, Cape Town, Oct. 16, 1848; C.P.P., Documents re Masters and Servants Ordinance, 1849, passim, but especially evidence of T.B. Bayley.
 4. Ibid, 74-5.

surprising to come across missionary reports such as the following:

opposition has been extensively revived and actively employed in an universal attempt to suppress all missionary operations and establishments within the limits of the Colony ... unfounded charges against missionary institutions are generally published in some of the Colony's newspapers and memorials from various parts of the Colony addressed to the government representing the mission institutions as the cause of the scarcity and consequent high price of labour. (1)

Between 1846 and 1849, the Select Commission of Inquiry into the effects of the 1846 Masters and Servants Acts investigated in great detail,² the extent to which the missions and private tenancies contributed to agricultural development. The Commission reported in 1849 and severely criticised Zuurbraak and certain other mission institutions. But it did not recommend that the government interfere with the rights of the mission inhabitants to their allotments.³ Settlements on private and mission lands provided labour to those commercial farmers with landholdings that were capable of supporting tenants and to those fortunate enough, or wealthy enough, to hold land in the vicinity of such settlements.⁴ Those who suffered most acutely from the labour shortages were the farmers who did not have access to casual labour on mission land or private land, and who had

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1. C.W.M., Box 24, Folder 2, Jacket D, Caledon, 1849. See also M.P.A., Letter, Genadendal, Feb. 1849, Groenekloof, May, 1849.
 2. S.A.C.A., Jan. 13, 1849. The Committee called upon local Magistrates, Civil Commissioners, Field Cornets and Justices of the Peace to submit details on the mission inhabitants such as: numbers, ages, education, means of subsistence, quantity of land cultivated; it also compiled information from interviews, that consisted of seventeen questions, with each resident family on every western-Cape institution. C.W.M., Box 24, Folder 2, Jacket D, Dysals Dorp, 1849, Box 25, Folder 5, Jacket A, Cape Town; M.P.A., Letter, Genadendal, Feb., 1849.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Raum, 'Genadendal', passim: he points out that land values were higher nearer to the mission institutions because of the proximity to labour. C.P.P., Documents re Masters and Servants Ordinance, 1849, C.W.M., Box 2, Folder 2, Jacket A, Cape Town, Mar. 13, 1849; CO.48.306., Desp. 133, Sept. 12, 1850; CO.48.320., Unnumbered, Dec. 27, 1851.

formerly depended on slave-labour.

The government was not indifferent to farmers' demands for the more thorough proletarianization of peasants and labourers, but its options were limited. The 1849 Commission of Inquiry into the Masters and Servants Ordinance recommended coercive measures such as compulsory labour contracts for a minimum of one year, a vagrancy law and pass restrictions. Despite these recommendations, the Legislative Council members did not press for an amendment to the Masters and Servants law, because they regarded a stricter version of the 1846 Masters and Servants law unlikely to receive imperial sanction.¹ It is also likely that no steps were taken to effect a Vagrancy law because of suspicions at the time that the '... home government will not allow the vagrant law'.²

Farmers' discontent became organized around an attempt to remove squatters from public land. In 1851 an anti-squatting measure was finally put before the Legislative Council which threatened thousands of rural poor and was seen by many as the central stage in an attack on the mission institutions. Despite near unanimity on the part of the ruling class, however, the clear evidence of massive rural discontent which resulted, and which coincided with the unrest on the Eastern frontier, forced the State to withdraw the measure.

The Legislature introduced a Bill on 10th October 1851, 'to prevent

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1. CO.48.312., Desp. 13, Jan. 21, 1851; CO.48.324., Desp. 27, Feb. 12, 1852. Blue Books, 1846-53, Enclosure No. 4, Legislative Council, Sept. 10, 1851.
 2. C.W.M., Folder 2, Jacket A, Cape Town, Mar. 28, 1849. The British Government rejected the 1834 Vagrancy Law on the grounds that it violated Ordinance 50.

the practice of squatting upon government lands'. A key provision of this Ordinance empowered Civil Commissioners and Magistrates to grant or revoke written permission to any person, 'to place, erect, put up, have, or occupy any dwelling-place upon any land or ground the property of the Queen'. The Ordinance did not describe the persons eligible for such permission, or for what reasons such permission might be revocable.¹ The Bill was aimed at eliminating the autonomy of squatters, peasants, and casual labourers on public land. Technically, the Bill also threatened the land-tenure of the nearly nine thousand people who occupied landholdings on mission institutions that were established on land held by 'tickets of occupation' that the government granted to various Mission Societies.² It is significant that Governor Smith stated, on the same day as the Bill was proposed, that:

I propose by proclamation, to establish Resident Magistrates Courts at mission institutions, the Magistrates presiding at which shall have, within the limits of their institutions, all powers and jurisdiction of other Resident Magistrates.

Some people regarded these measures as facilitating a major initiative to abolish the missions.³

The passage of this Act was delayed when four of the seven-member Legislative Council resigned over the convict issue, virtually incapacitating it for several months after October 1850.⁴ The farmers were impatient and resolute that their demands should be met. Many armed themselves. On the 10th of November 1851, the date of the second

1. CO.48.324., Desp. 27, Feb. 12, 1852.

2. For details see Table 2; CO.48.306., Desp. 133, Sept. 12, 1850; CO.48.320., Unnumbered, Dec. 27, 1851.

3. C.P.P., Legislative Council, Sept. 10, 1850, in Blue Books, 1826-53. There is every reason to believe that a strong effort will be made to abolish the mission institutions altogether ...

C.W.M., Box 26, Folder 1, Jacket C, Pacaltsdorp, 1851.

4. CO.48.307., Desp. 141, Oct. 2, 1850.

reading of the Squatters Bill in Council, 'many of the farmers in these districts were induced by misrepresentations to sign protests ... and to proceed in deputations to Cape Town for the purpose of presenting them in numbers ...'¹ On the same day, the Legislative Council assented in principle to the Squatters Bill and voted for its second reading.

The farmers' demonstrations and petitions in support of the Bill contrasted with the growing concern about reports of the degree of opposition that the Squatters Bill was generating among workers and peasants in the rural areas. The Legislative Council referred the Bill to a Commission of Inquiry into the '... panic amongst the farmers and the alleged hostile intentions towards them by coloured people in reference to this bill'. This committee met on November 12th and found the evidence 'alarming' and worthy of another commission to investigate further the situation in the 'disturbed districts'. This committee based much of its evidence on interviews with local Field Cornets and failed to address the central issue. It concluded in December 1851 that 'there is scarcely any difference of opinion among the colonists generally, both in the eastern and western districts as to the absolute necessity of the measure...'² This, however, was not in question. The committee ignored the evidence of discontent from below.

There is evidence of increasing dissatisfaction among the rural workers and peasants in the western districts after 1845. Missionaries appear to have reached a highpoint in their esteem in the late 1830s. The role

1. CO.48.324., Desp. 27, Feb. 12, 1852.

2. CO.48.327., Desp. 27, Feb. 12, 1852.

that the missionaries played in securing their emancipation from the government won them support. Furthermore, the missionaries controlled access to sought-after allotments. These factors partially explain their popularity at the time. It did not last. In the mid-1840s there were numerous reports of disillusion, among certain missionaries, with the lack of 'progress' of some of the inhabitants at the institutions. By 1851 there were reports of open hostility towards the missionaries at some institutions.¹

Similarly, in 1849 there was widespread and growing disaffection throughout the eastern districts of the colony with proposals for dispossession and proletarianisation.² A rumour which prevailed in the eastern districts, '... that the government is in contemplation to reduce them to a state of slavery', was, 'very industriously circulated by certain designing Hottentots ...'.³ The Magistrate of Albany issued an official public notice to assure people that slavery had been abolished forever.⁴ Ex-slaves demonstrated in Cape Town and Green Point on October 15th 1849.⁵ Reports of 'disturbances and rumours of approaching danger' in the colony and along its borders

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1. C.W.M., Box 21, Folder 4, Jacket B, Caledon, 1845. C.W.M., Box 26, Folder 3, Jacket B, Zuurbraak, 1851. M.P.A., Genadendal, Diary, 1844. See also, Kruger, The Pear Tree Blossoms; Raum, 'Genadendal'; M.P.A., Genadendal, Sept., 1850; M.M.S., Box 308, No. 3, Jan. 27, 1849, Lilyfountain.
 2. ... unremitting attacks on the conduct and character of those classes ... it was perfectly well known that the grand object of the whole was to revive the system of Passes, to crush the Mission Institutions and to reduce the coloured population to a kind of slavery. S.A.C.A., Mar. 24, 1849; Kirk, 'British and Cape Politics', 230-40.
 3. C.T.M., Mar. 24, 1849. Albany, Uitenhage, Port Elizabeth and Grahamstown are mentioned as places where 'alarm' and 'excitement' were apparent.
 4. Ibid.
 5. The apprenticeships of a number of freed slaves from Mozambique expired on the 15th of October, 1849. It appears from incomplete evidence that they were joined by a number of the local ex-slaves in a demonstration on the day at Cape Town and Green Point. S.A.C.A., Oct. 16, 1850.

continued throughout 1849 and 1850.

In December of 1850, a rural police unit was established in the eastern Division of Victoria amidst reports of land disputes and 'outrages'. Some months earlier, in 1850, a rural police unit was deployed on the Cape flats in Cape Division to:

... hold in check the numerous shifting parties and locations of Liberated Africans and other Coloured people who have moved from town.

There were calls for similar units under local-government control to be established throughout the rural areas to effect a '... local check on the restlessness of the unemployed classes'. In December of 1850, disturbances broke out near East London. Violent confrontations occurred in the Colesburg district, when 120 armed men under four Field Cornets engaged with, 'the many loose Bushmen who have so long defied the farmers and continued until now to squat on private property'.¹

In September 1850 a demonstration was held in Cape Town on the 'Parade'.

... some persons by means of advertisements and placards and personal applications collected a large crowd of people in front of the Commercial Exchange, to take into consideration the distress of the working classes and to provide a remedy. (2).

In November 1850 the inhabitants and missionaries warned the government of the dangers inherent in granting legislative power to those interests, 'as represented in the Blue Book, documents of the Order-in-Council concerning master and servant, and the desire for a vagrant law'. They pointed out that they had refrained from gathering the

1. Paragraph based on: Ibid; CO.48.306, Desp. 107, July 17; CO.48.307., Desp. 154, Oct. 14, 1850; CO.48.307., Desp. 161, Oct. 21, 1850; CO.48.408., Desp. 187, Dec. 5, 1850; CO.48.315., Desp. 91, May 1851; C.T.M., Mar. 9, 1850.
2. S.A.C.A., Oct. 16, 1850.

signatures of 'six or seven thousand of their members' in the Cape,
for fear of:

instilling feelings of hatred against the farmers as their oppressors
or excite suspicions against the future Legislature, disobedience
towards magistrates ... (1)

In December 1850 a 'general rising' began in British Kaffraria. The government declared martial law on the frontier districts and Sir Harry Smith set off for the eastern Cape with a substantial proportion of the military force that was normally stationed in Cape Town.² At the same time, farmers began to abandon farms on a significant scale in parts of the eastern districts.³ On December 25th 1850 'the sky was red at night with the flames of burning farms of the European settlers'.⁴ A Moravian missionary reported:

In the course of a few short weeks, our three settlements to the Eastward of the Great Fish River, Mamre, Goshen and Shiloh, have been abandoned to the insurgent Caffirs ... the last-named -- the oldest, largest and most flourishing -- has been reduced to a heap of ruins. (5)

The Kat River rebellion erupted in January of 1851, and the mission at Enon was deserted in February 1852.⁶ By February of 1851 it was clear that:

... not only many of the Kat River Hottentots, but also others are joining in, or in the eastern districts are going to join the Caffres. (7)

In a letter that appealed to the government to investigate the

1. C.P.P., Memo. from Genadendal, Nov. 5, 1850; CO.48.312., Desp. 13. Jan. 21, 1851.
2. CO.48.308., Desp. 187, Dec. 5, 1850.
3. C.T.M., Dec. 14, 1850; M.P.A., Letters, Feb., Mar., Apr., May, June, July, Sept., 1851, Genadendal.
4. M.P.A., Vol. 30, Shiloh.
5. M.P.A., Shiloh, 1850-1.
6. T. Kirk, 'The Cape economy and the expropriation of the Kat River settlement 1846-1853', in Marks and Atmore, Economy and Society, 226-242; M.P.A., Genadendal, Letters of 1851, Jan. 22, 1852, Feb. 23, 1852.
7. M.P.A., Genadendal, Letters of 1851, Feb. 1851.

situation in the western Cape, a trader at Napier village in Caledon reported:

... a general spirit of dissatisfaction, which shows itself as existing amongst the Hottentots of Genadendal and Elim and this place just returned from commando, or expressing itself in various manners too numerous for me now to enumerate, but none so forcible as the general desire they evince of purchasing gunpowder. We have however in all cases decidedly refused to supply them ... threatening language has been used towards farmers and others. We are generally in a state of great alarm but I think we ought to keep it as secret as possible ... prevention is better than cure. (1)

J. Montagu, the Secretary to the Government, requested Commissioner J. Owen to investigate.² Owen visited Caledon and Zwellendam Divisions in mid-1851. He argued in his report that, 'the various sinister reports [that] had been circulated and had created alarm amongst the farmers and inhabitants of their neighbourhood were entirely unfounded'. It is possible that Owen wished to calm the situation by playing down the possibility of a rebellion in the western Cape. It is more likely, however, that he misjudged the situation and that the farmers had a better understanding of local conditions. According to Owen the idea of a rebellion had,

merely arisen from the not unnatural idea amongst the credulous Dutch that they are likely to follow the example of their Brethren on the Frontier and in consequence of some expressions of theirs, probably when they were intoxicated ... and their buying of a few pounds of powder, set down as an immediate forerunner of overt acts of aggression. (3)

Owen did point out that there was growing support among the mission inhabitants for the right to retain access to land in the eastern and western Divisions.⁴

1. CO.48.320., Unno., July 29, 1851; M.P.A., Groenekloof, Nov., 1851.

2. CO.48.317., Desp. 161, 1851.

3. CO.48.324., Desp. 27, Feb. 12, 1852; CO.48.317., Desp. 161., 1851.

4. Ibid.

By June of 1851, 'most of the people at Theopolis institution in the eastern districts had joined the rebel party' and taken up arms against the government. The Civil Commissioner of Uitenhage issued warnings that rebels and defectors from the Cape Mounted Rifles were moving westwards into the area.¹

In October 1851, a 'considerable body of levies' from Clanwilliam Division disembarked at Cape Town after their terms of service on the frontier had expired. These armed men arrived at a time of intense debate leading up to the second reading of the Squatters Ordinance, the farmers' demonstrations of the 10th of November 1851, and at a time when farmers were arming themselves. In order to reach their homes, the levies passed through the Cape, Malmesbury and Koeberg Divisions, while resident and seasonal labourers worked at the harvest. As they proceeded, the levies reported to the harvesters, 'that the farmers had gone to Cape Town to sign a paper to make slaves of them again'.²

The western districts hovered on the brink of civil war.³ Women and children on farms in the D'Urban area gathered at a particular farm, while twenty-five armed men patrolled the district at night. On the 24th of October 1851, Field Cornet B.J. Duminy of Koeberg circulated a written warning to his 'fellow burghers'.⁴ He warned them of the impending rebellion that was due to take place during the harvest; advised them to arm, arrange guards, and disarm the harvest workers; to disallow the customary shots to be fired at workers'

1. C.W.M., Box 26, Folder 2, Jacket A, Pacaltsdorp, June 21, 1851;
C.W.M., Box 26, Folder 4, Jacket B, June 2, 1851.

2. CO.48.324., Desp. 27, Feb. 12, 1852.

3. Ibid.

4. Fellow citizens.

harvest-home festivities; and to congregate at his farm if shots were heard or hostilities began. 'Be on your guard; we are surrounded by enemies quite as bad as the Kafirs.'¹ The Resident Magistrate of Worcester instructed Field Cornets in the Division to arm the inhabitants.² Farmers in the vicinity of St. Helena Bay gathered on particular farms to arrange their defence.³ Field Cornet P. Lochner's farm was the central point to which a 'great number of families resorted' from different parts of Malmesbury Division. Nearly two hundred people remained there while nightly guard patrols circulated among the farms. Farmers organised armed patrols for the farms in the Tygerberg area.⁴ Many farms in Clanwilliam Division were abandoned, while farmers collected in force.

The coloured labourers in the midst of the harvest were in many instances dismissed from their work and armed Europeans were employed in their place at higher wages.

A number of families abandoned their houses at night and took to camping out at a different spot each night.⁵

There is evidence of extensive planning and organization for an uprising throughout the commercial wheat-farming districts. Field Cornets throughout the western Divisions proclaimed £1,000 rewards for information leading to the conviction of 'leaders or principles'.⁶ The right to retain access to land emerged as the central issue and had widespread support among the peasants and workers that lived on mission and government land.⁷

1. CO.48.324., Desp. 27, Feb. 12, 1852, Appendix IV, p. 30-1.

2. Ibid., Appendix XIV, p. 44-5.

3. Ibid., Appendix XXX, p. 82-3.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid., Appendix XVII, p. 47.

7. '... the squatters ordinance is ... the principal cause of the Hottentot rebellion'. C.W.M., Box 26, Folder 3, Jacket B, George Town, Dec. 25, 1851; CO.48.324., Desp. 27, Feb. 12, 1852, Appendix XVII, p. 47.

Many in the western districts were conscious of the issues at stake in the struggles further east.¹ Johannes Titus was at Kat River during the early 1850s. He took part in the rebel attack on Fort Armstrong, was captured by the authorities, released, and returned home to his family at Zuurbraak in the western Cape. Once there, he joined up with the Old Party, which elicited growing support from the disaffected inhabitants as the outrage with the Squatters Bill gained momentum. Titus apparently endeavoured to:

spread sedition amongst the people here [Zuurbraak] by representing to them that the Rebels under Uithaalder and others were fighting for the liberties of their nation -- that it was only owing to their resistance that the Hottentots in the western Districts were not already enslaved or under Vagrant Laws; that the people of Kat River had already driven away their missionary ... since they were sufficiently advanced to take care of their own interests ... that the people of other institutions ... had either already joined Uithaalder or were preparing to join him, and that he had come for the purpose of instructing people here to act their part in the revolution -- and advised them to collect and take good care of whatever powder and lead they had or could get as a time would come when they might want it. (2)

Contacts between peasants and workers on the western Cape missions and those of the eastern Cape and frontier districts developed in the late 1840s and early 1850s. Since 1847 the Colonial Secretary, Montagu, had collaborated with the Moravian Agent at the Cape, a Mr. Juritz, to establish government-aided mission stations, or 'frontier colonies of Hottentots' in the newly annexed district between the Keiskamma and

1. Domestic worker, Elsie April said:

... I had two sons on the frontier who served in the levies. One has returned and one is still there ... they had written to me that a great many of the Cape Corps had gone over to the Kafirs, and also some people from the mission institutions.

Elsie worked in the Caledon area on a farm. Ibid, Enclosure 9, Jan. 20, 1852.

2. C.W.M., Box 28, Folder 2, Jacket A, Zuurbraak, Mar. 1, 1853.

the Kei Rivers.¹ Two hundred people from Genadendal, Elim and Mamre agreed to the initial plan and others followed.² The government also began to draft a number of inhabitants from western-Cape missions to serve in the Cape Corps.³ By 1851, hundreds of workers and peasants from western-Cape missions served as levies in Kaffraria and in that year a further one thousand men from Genadendal, Elim, and Mamre left for the frontier.

There is considerable evidence of collusion between rebels and eastern Cape mission inhabitants both before, and during, the 1851/2 war. The majority at each of the missions joined the rebel cause as the hostilities progressed. Ex-slave Hermanus Matroos, also known as Ngxukumeshe, was a landholder and rebel leader at Kat River settlement. He had close ties with Xhosa leaders and died alongside other rebels in an attack on Fort Beaufort in 1851.⁴ Khoisan, Xhosa and ex-slave rebels aimed their hostility at colonial officials, settler-farmers, and Mfengu collaborators.⁵ Official figures indicate that by March of 1851, forty-six soldiers of the Cape Corps, 'mostly Hottentots' from the western Cape, and twenty of the levies from Albany Division had

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1. For example, in 1848, 51 people from Genadendal, 44 from Elim and two families from Mamre left for the Beka Valley mission that was later named Mamre. The Government gave them three thousand acres of land and contributed £100 per annum for the first 'few years' towards maintenance. M.P.A., Genadendal, letters, May, Apr., 1848.
 2. M.P.A., Genadendal, letter, Feb. 28, 1847, letters, Mar., Apr., 1847, Diary for 1846.
 3. M.P.A., Groenekloof, Diary for 1846.
 4. According to R. Ross, he had a 'very important position within Xhosa society. His heir was one of the four main councillors of the Ngqika chiefs, a position that was essentially hereditary, not appointive'. Ross also shows that there were longstanding links between runaway slaves and Xhosa society. R. Ross, Cape of Torments, 87-8; Wilmot and Chase, History, refer to Hermanus as a 'GonnaKafir Chief', p. 443.
 5. See for example M.P.A., Genadendal, Letters, Feb.-July, 1851, passim, Shiloh, Feb. 6, 1852, 'History of Shiloh', 1876; Wilmot and Chase, History, 443-460; C.P.P., R.S.C., on the causes of the rebellion, 1854; A Handbook to South Africa, London, 1891, p. 57-60.

deserted. The situation was probably more serious as the Governor, soon thereafter, 'ordered the whole Cape Corps to be disarmed'.¹

William Uithaalder emerged as a leader of those who went over to the rebel cause. He was a pensioner from the Cape Rifles who:

Had conceived the idea of an independent Hottentot nation with himself at its head. Thousands rallied to him ... 'we must teach these English that we are strong and can defend our rights, then they will begin to respect us', was a sentiment on almost every Hottentots lips. (2)

Uithaalder's group seems to have joined up with Xhosa rebels under the leadership of Mapasa. By June of 1851 there were reports that:

The great number of intelligent Hottentots now serving with the Caffres increase the difficulties by which the government is surrounded; they prolong the war and render it more bloody. (3)

Many levies, however, did not defect. Perhaps the majority of those from the western-Cape missions returned home as soon as they could. From July 1851 the western-Cape levies began to return to their missions.⁴ Levies who had 'discussed the taking away of the land', and the implications of the proposed Squatters Ordinance, with rebels in the eastern region, spread their views when they returned home to the western districts.⁵ The following report provides some insights

1. M.P.A., Genadendal, letter, June , 1851; Raum, 'Genadendal', 71; M.P.A., 'Shiloh', 1876. It appears that some local levies such as those from Theopolis were disarmed, but those from the western Cape continued to come to the frontier areas. For evidence on rebel casualties in 1852, see M.P.A., Genadendal, Apr. 26, May 26, June 24, 1852. Wilmot and Chase, History, 448, say:

Many of the Hottentot levies passing through Uitenhage to the front were very insubordinate and used seditious language. In an instance ... a very mutinous party, who for fear of their bad example, the authorities sent back.

2. M.P.A., 'Shiloh', 1876.

3. M.P.A., Genadendal, Letters, Feb.-Sept., 1851. See also, M.P.A., 'Shiloh', 1876.

4. M.P.A., Elim, Aug. 20, 1851, Groenekloof, Aug. 23, Nov. 30, 1851.

5. CO.48.324., Desp. 27, Feb. 12, 1852, Append., IX, p. 37-8, and passim.

into the rebel ideology of the eastern Cape, some of which is likely to have informed attitudes in the western Divisions:

Perhaps they believed the lying prophet Umlangeni, that the time was arrived for chasing the Whites into the sea; or, possibly the foolish report that the English designed, by the vagrant law, to enslave them once again ... Such rumours were spread, before the outbreak of the war ... (1)

Meetings were held in many parts of the commercial-farming districts of the western Cape. By November 1851 the area experienced 'great uneasiness'.² There was widespread discussion about the form the rebellion would take and how people ought to respond:

... at Saron ... the common topic of conversation was on the intended outbreak of blacks ... their institution is to join the people at Groenekloof. (3)

Men from Genadendal circulated, with other itinerant casual labourers, among the harvest workers on the farms in Worcester and Piquetberg. They spread the word that, '... it was the intention of the people to rise'.⁴ Two armed men circulated about the farms at D'Urban.⁵ Two men from Groenekloof held meetings in the vicinity of Paarl and '... incited the people in the area'.⁶

The general view was that regular, resident farm-labourers would unite in rebellion with the casual workers drawn from the missions, rural villages or squatter-settlements on public land. The uprising was to take place during the harvest when regular and casual workers were deployed in harvest-gangs throughout the commercial wheat-growing area. In the 1851/2 season, the labour-force that harvested farms

1. M.P.A., Shiloh, Aug. 21, 1851.

2. M.P.A., Groenekloof, Aug. 23, Nov. 30, 1851.

3. CO.48.324., Desp. 27, Feb. 12, 1852, Append. IX, p. 32-3 and passim.

4. Ibid, and Append. XVI, p. 46.

5. Ibid, Evidence of P.B. Borchers, Civil Commissioner and Resident Magistrate, Cape Division, p. 25-6.

6. Ibid, XVIII, p. 47-9.

in the Zwartland district of Malmesbury Division alone, involved nearly four thousand people.¹

It is possible that some immigrant British labourers were also involved with the predominantly ex-slave and indigenous people's movement. During the late 1840s and early 1850s, perhaps one or two thousand of these were scattered about the rural western Cape, and were likely to have done some harvest day-work. They had either been immigrated as children to the Cape during the 1830s or were adult Irish and English immigrants of the 1840s. A number of the child immigrants of the 1830s were assimilated into ex-slave and mission communities in the western Cape. The propertied classes had also displayed considerable anxiety at the prospect of having convicted Irish rebels settle in the Cape countryside in 1849. There is little evidence to suggest that poorer Dutch had any sympathy for the rebellious underclasses. Ties of kinship and friendship with commercial farmers appear to have bound them to the status quo. Their earlier experiences of a slave society must, to some extent also, have moulded race attitudes among poorer Dutch and engendered feelings of superiority and precluded the formation of non-racial class alliances among the rural poor.

The date for the mobilization of the rural labourers in 1850 and 1851 is unclear. Local officials considered three possibilities the most likely: when the harvest commenced on the 15th of November; on the anniversary of emancipation from slavery on the 1st of December; or at the end of the harvest in late December or early January.² One of the

1. Ibid, Evidence of B.R. Daneel.
 2. CO.48.324., Desp. 27, Feb. 12, 1852, Append. XIII, p. 43, Append. XVII, p. 47.

first targets was to be the convict station at Baine's Kloof where a number of the Kat River rebels, and others captured in the eastern Cape, were imprisoned.¹ Among those convicted for treason, some serving life sentences, were friends and relatives of people who resided in the western districts. A man named January had visited harvest workers on farms in the vicinity of Baine's Kloof, 'for the purpose of inviting the coloured people to unite with him in executing his criminal plans.'² A deputation of thirty landholders, to Resident Magistrate J.M. Hill of Piquetberg, named David Rozenberg from Genadendal as another rebel leader involved with 'that part of the plan to attempt to liberate the convicts of Baine's Kloof'.³

A second phase in the rebellion was planned for Zwellendam and Caledon Divisions for January 1852; the wheat harvest was generally a few weeks later in these Divisions than the Cape-Zwartland where the rebellion would, by now, have been well under way. A vague outline of the planned uprising in Zwellendam Division emerges from conflicting evidence. Parties operating from Zuurbraak, Zoar, Genadendal and Elim were to attack, simultaneously, the villages of Zwellendam, Riversdale, Caledon, and Bredasdorp respectively. Rumours of an impending uprising in this area began to circulate in January. Farmers in Zwellendam and Caledon Divisions, who were familiar with the local situation, organised armed patrols and gathered their families on particular farms.⁴

There is evidence that mission inhabitants prepared for armed struggle.

1. Ibid, Append. XV, p. 45-6; Append. XII, p. 44. C.W.M., Box 26, Folder 3, Jacket A, Paarl, Oct. 14, 1851.

2. CO.48.324., Desp. 27, Feb. 12, 1852, Append, XII, p. 44.

3. Ibid, Append. XV, p. 45-6.

4. Ibid, Enclosure I, p. 4-5, Enclosure 5, p. 6-7, Enclosure 8, p. 8-9.

Two wagons carrying powder and lead, '... the property of the Hottentots at Groenekloof', were seized by farmers in the Zwartland as they were being conveyed to Groenekloof. Farmers apparently handed the confiscated ammunition to the local authorities.¹ People at Elim purchased arms and ammunition.² A report from the Tygerberg area stated:

... the coloured people have possessed themselves of arms and ammunition to some extent ... parties of them go out occasionally for ball practice. This I have seen myself within the last eight to ten days, and during a residence of thirteen years in this Colony I have never seen it before and the language used on these occasions indicates hostile intentions and bad feelings. (3)

It was quite usual for mission inhabitants to possess firearms and it is likely that many people throughout the western Cape were armed. Some workers and peasants in Clanwilliam Division appear not to have possessed firearms. Instead they, '... were going about armed, some with their scythe blades fastened to straight sticks for their defence.'⁴

The heightened tensions which prevailed in the western districts in late 1851 and early 1852 were essentially confined to the commercial wheat-growing areas. Governor Harry Smith's very detailed report on the situation in the western Cape barely mentions George where the tenants and workers were for the most part settled on private land. Besides some evidence of people moving to George Town to escape the proposed Squatters Ordinance in 1851,⁵ the evidence of dissatisfaction was limited to comments expressing suspicion and condemnation of proposals to extend freehold tenure to mission allotments. Mission

1. Ibid, Append. V, p. 34.

2. Ibid, Append. XXXI, p. 83-5.

3. Ibid, Append. XVII, p. 47.

4. Ibid.

5. C.W.M., Box 26, Folder 3, Jacket B, George Town, Dec. 25, 1851; G. Leith, A Metrical Outline of Cape History and Chronology, Cape Town, 1894, p. 23; Wilmot and Chase, History, 306.

inhabitants rejected such proposals as a strategy that aimed, ultimately, at dispossessing the majority of those on the missions.

There were reports of disaffection in the Kamiesberg area:

... evil influences are at work ... which are calculated to unsettle the minds of the people, and which call into exercise on the part of the missionaries, great caution and prudence in order to control the minds of the natives ...

The evidence suggests that this disaffection was related to the struggles across the Orange River which involved people under the leadership of Jonker Afrikander. There is no evidence that the Kamiesberg peasantry were mobilizing in opposition to the Squatters Bill.¹

By the end of 1851, the 'hostile designs and feelings of the coloured population' had intensified and created a 'panic' among farmers in the western districts. In an attempt to defuse the situation, the Legislative Council reversed its unanimous endorsement of the Squatters Bill of the 10th of October 1851. The Council declared the Squatters Bill withdrawn on the grounds that:

... both parties requiring a total rest from strife and contention until their feelings of mutual hostility have had time to wear off ... the farmers as a class have upon this occasion exhibited absolute fear of the Coloured people and that the latter have in a similar ratio gained confidence in their numbers and in their power. (2)

It seemed to the Legislature under the circumstances,

... so absolutely essential to remove as completely as possible, any subject affecting or supposed to affect the coloured people or which could afford a pretext to designing parties for agitating them, that it was deemed imperative not merely to delay or postpone the measure but absolutely to withdraw it,

1. Quote from .M.M.S., Box 308, W. Moister, Aug. 30, 1852. Paragraph based on C.W.M., Box 26, Folder 3, Jacket B, Zuurbraak, 1851, Box 27, Folder 4, Jacket C, George Town, 1852; CO.48.324, Desp. 27, Feb., 1852, passim.
2. CO.48.320., Unno., Dec. 27, 1851.

without reference to its merits, in order to tranquilize the minds of both parties ... to pass a Bill now would be received by the coloured people as an act of oppression and by the farmers as a triumph and would thus tend to permanent estrangement. (1)

This view was endorsed by the Colonial Office, and is confirmed by other reports.

The Squatters Ordinance is but a vagrant law, the dread of which I consider to be the principal cause of the Hottentot Rebellion ... at the present moment it would be as suicidal to the class of men who clamour for it, as it be ruinous to its intended victims. (2).

The withdrawal of the Squatters Bill removed what a substantial sector of workers and peasants in the western Cape perceived to be an imminent and serious threat to the relatively independent lifestyles they had created after emancipation. The most burning issue was removed. Disaffection subsided and the harvesters' revolt failed to materialise.

High wheat-prices cushioned the commercial wheat-farmers from the worst effects of the slump in production that followed immediately after emancipation. After 1845 it became quite clear that commercial wheat cultivation in the western Cape could not depend solely on 'the free labour market'. Emancipation advanced proletarianization in so far as labour was 'freed' to enter a market in labour-power; but it was not yet 'freed' from all alternative means of survival. To a very large extent, rural social relations in the western districts were deadlocked and, in some respects, they resembled the coastal grain belt of Kenya after emancipation: '... owners lacked the labour while squatters lacked the security to improve the land.'³ In the

1. Ibid.

2. C.W.M., Box 26, Fold. 3, Jack. B, Dec. 25, 1851.

3. F. Cooper, From Slaves to Squatters, 175.

western Cape, as in other parts of the world, 'The expansion of capitalism in fact hinge[d] on the introduction on a very large scale of unfree forms of labour ...'¹

However, at a time when a colonial military force of between eight and ten thousand men, including the bulk of those normally stationed in the western Cape, were engaged in the eastern districts,² the colonial government was not able to launch an assault on the partial autonomy of casual labourers and render them more dependent on wage labour. To achieve that would have required the systematic forceful eviction of people from public land. The colonial state was incapable of doing so in 1851. Indeed, conditions at the Cape were, in important respects, analogous to those which gave rise to successful peasant rebellions elsewhere. Widespread internal discontent, a mass mobilizing political leadership and a war on its borders which fundamentally weakened the State, constituted a challenge which threatened Cape society with revolutionary transformation.³ As John Lonsdale and Bruce Berman have shown with regard to the Colonial state in Kenya,

... [the state's] relative autonomy may become eroded to the point where it acts, and is seen to act, as the direct instrument of the dominant class or of some of its fractions. The resolution of such a crisis, if it is not to be by violence, must, then, entail the restoration of relative autonomy within the changed context the state cannot be the obedient servant of capital, only the protector of capitalist social relations - and these are relations of conflict. (4)

In a sense, by withdrawing the Squatters Bill in 1851, the Legislature restored the relative autonomy of the Cape state.

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1. P. Corrigan, 'Feudal Relics or Capitalist Monuments? Notes on the Sociology of Unfree Labour', Sociology, Vol. II, 1977, p. 441-2.
 2. Figures derived from Wilmot and Chase, History, 454; Handbook to South Africa, London, 1891, p. 57-9.
 3. Cf. T. Skocpol, States and Social Revolutions, Cambridge, 1979; E. Wolf, Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century, New York, 1969.
 4. J. Lonsdale and B. Berman, 'Coping with the Contradictions: The Development of the Colonial State in Kenya, 1895-1914'; J.A.H., 20, 1979, p. 490.

CHAPTER 2

PEOPLE AND PROCESSES IN AGRARIAN PRODUCTION, 1853-1867

A. Farmers, labourers and wheat production during the 1850s and 1860s

During the 1850s capitalist agriculture expanded and intensified throughout the western Cape. Wheat production in the western Cape grew from around half a million bushels per annum during the years 1845 to 1849, to an annual average of over a million bushels in the period 1853 to 1867.¹ However, capitalist relations of production developed unevenly in various regions of the western Cape and contracted sharply during the depression of the 1860s.

Discernible marketing patterns and concentrations of commercial wheat-farms had emerged. Farms in the Cape-Zwartland-Zandveld and southern Overberg regions, which supplied Cape Town's 26,000² inhabitants with wheat and flour, formed the 'granary of the colony'. The Midland farms, and particularly those of Oudtshoorn Division, supplied bread-stuffs to the growing populace on the developing sheepwalks of the pastoral interior. Smaller pockets of commercial wheat-farming in the Bosjesveld near Robertson village, the Tulbagh basin, Hex River Valley and the Cold Bokkeveld supplied the Overberg interior, the Central region and also sent relatively small amounts to Cape Town and the pastoral interior. Finally, some Kamiesberg farms produced wheat for villages, such as Hondeklip Bay and Springbokfontein, that developed along with copper-mining in Namaqualand in the 1850s.³

The census of 1865 registers about seven thousand wheat farmers in

1. See Tables 3 and 4.

2. Cape Town's population ranged from 23,000 to 29,000 during the 1850s and 1860s.

3. See Maps 5, 6, 7.

TABLE 3

**ANNUAL AVERAGE WHEAT PRODUCTION, PRICES, VALUES AND
ACREAGES FOR THE DIVISIONS, REGIONS AND WESTERN CAPE
1838-1853 (1)**

Division/ Region	(bushels) Ann. Ave. Production	(£) Ann. Ave. Value	(d.) Ann. Ave. Prices	Acres
Cape ²	102,448	37,564	88	11,270
Malmesb ²	71,615	23,872	80	22,720
CAPE-				
ZWARTLAND				
ZANDVLD	174,063	61,436	84	33,990
George	50,134	18,800	90	5,329
MIDLANDS				
REGION	50,134	18,000	90	5,329
Zwellend	100,582	29,336	70	10,593
Caledon	82,294	24,688	72	5,460
OVERBERG				
REGION	182,876	54,024	71	16,053
Worcestr	45,507	15,169	80	10,603
CENTRAL				
REGION	45,507	15,169	80	10,603
Clanwill	37,492	11,716	75	4,183
PASTORAL				
W-COAST				
REGION ²	37,492	11,716	75	4,813
Stellenb ²	59,708	23,883	96	13,154
Paarl	11,456	3,532	74	3,497
CAPE-				
WINE				
REGION	71,164	27,415	85	16,651
Beaufrt	11,219	4,802	102	2,491
PASTORAL				
INTERIOR				
REGION	11,219	4,802	102	2,491
WESTERN				
CAPE	472,535	193,362	84	89,300

1. Based on Stat. Regs., 1838-1852.

2. Stellenbosch and Cape Divisions' figures are high relative to those of Malmesbury during this period. The decrease in Stellenbosch and Cape Divisions' production figures and increase of those of Malmesbury Division are largely due to the fact that substantial wheatlands in the former became part of the latter after 1852 when Divisional boundaries were rearranged.

TABLE 4

ANNUAL AVERAGE WHEAT PRODUCTION, PRICES, VALUES AND
ACREAGES FOR THE DIVISIONS, REGIONS AND WESTERN CAPE
AS A WHOLE DURING THE PERIOD 1853-1867 (1)

Division/ Region	Ann.Ave. Production (bushels)	Ann.Ave. Value (£)	Ann.Ave. Prices (d.)	Acres
Malmesb	213,574	80,268	90	18,500
Piquetb*	14,394	4,954	83	7,593
Cape	59,792	24,739	79	5,430
CAPE-				
ZWARTLAND				
ZANDVELD	287,760	100,716	84	31,523
Stellenb	9,398	4,307	110	779
Paarl	31,655	12,134	92	2,469
CAPE-W				
REGION	41,052	16,441	101	3,248
Caledon	91,793	35,187	92	7,020
Bredsdrp*	17,603	7,481	102	1,138
Robtsn*	38,853	14,246	88	2,411
Zwelldam	66,416	33,208	120	4,663
Rivsdale	40,928	20,208	143	1,451
OVERBERG				
REGION	255,593	116,082	109	16,683
Oudtshrn*	172,085	90,345	126	3,701
George	74,884	3,137	96	5,364
Moss Bay*	16,700	7,863	113	1,806
MIDLANDS				
REGION	263,629	101,345	112	10,871
Worcestr	66,242	26,497	96	4,485
Tulbagh*	37,312	15,858	102	2,542
CENTRAL				
REGION	103,554	42,355	99	7,027
Clarwill	59,190	23,676	96	4,892
Calvinia*	30,217	20,648	164	1,016
Namland*	47,077	24,519	125	3,313
PASTORAL				
WEST-				
COAST				
REGION	136,484	68,843	128	9,221
Prince				
Albert*	16,074	8,640	129	1,187
Frasbrg*	13,106	12,094	223	503
Beauf W.	10,509	5,561	127	665
Vict W*	13,964	12,393	213	497
PASTORAL				
INTERIOR				
REGION	53,563	38,688	173	2,843
WESTERN				
CAPE				
TOTAL	1,141,635	484,470	115	81,416

1. Based on Stat. Regs., 1853-1867. The * indicates those Divisions which were formed during this period and which had formerly been incorporated in neighbouring Divisions, for the most part, in the same Region. For the geographical location of the Divisions and Regions see Map 5 and Map 6.

MAP 5

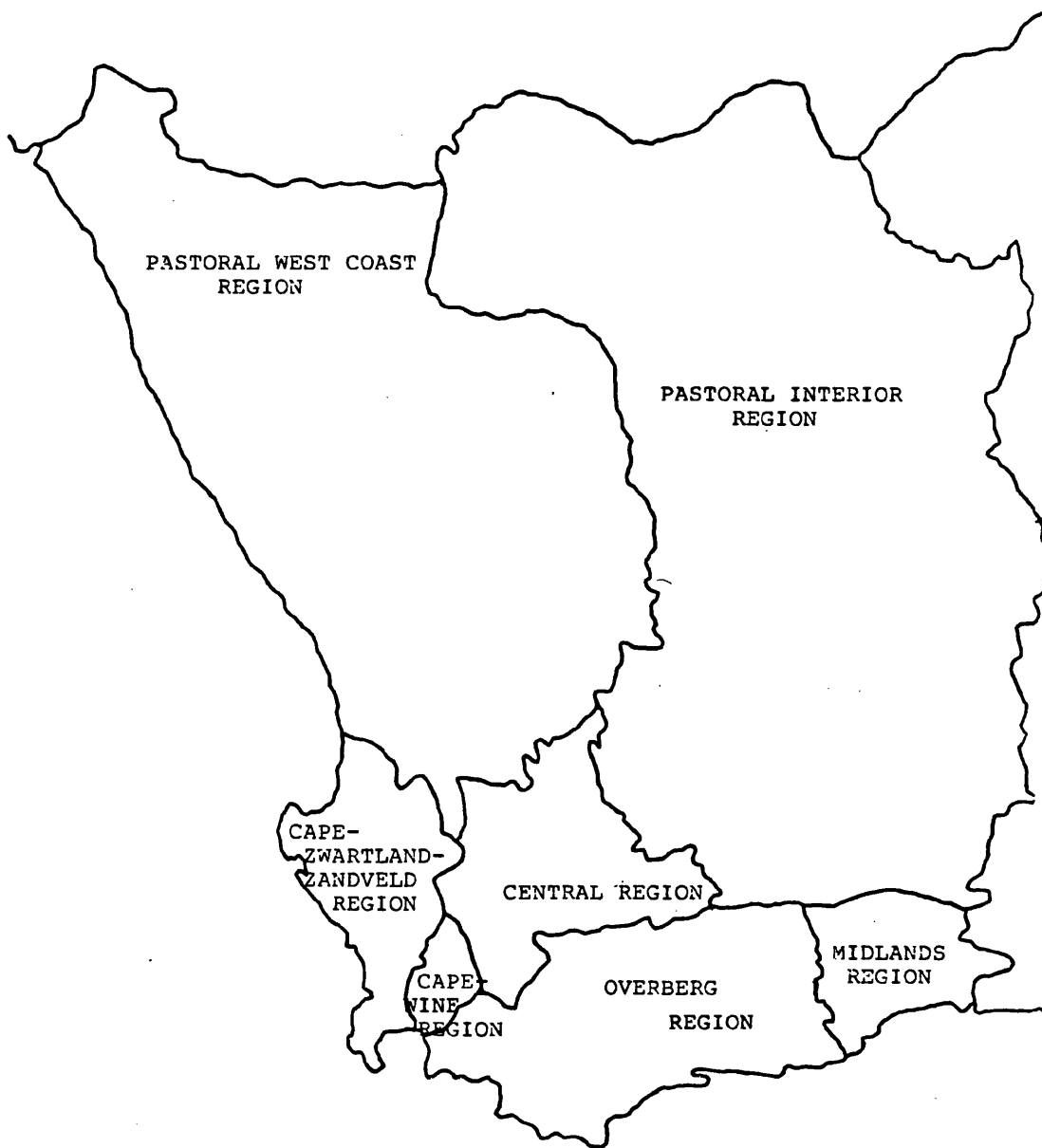
WESTERN-CAPE DIVISIONAL BOUNDARIES 1853-1867



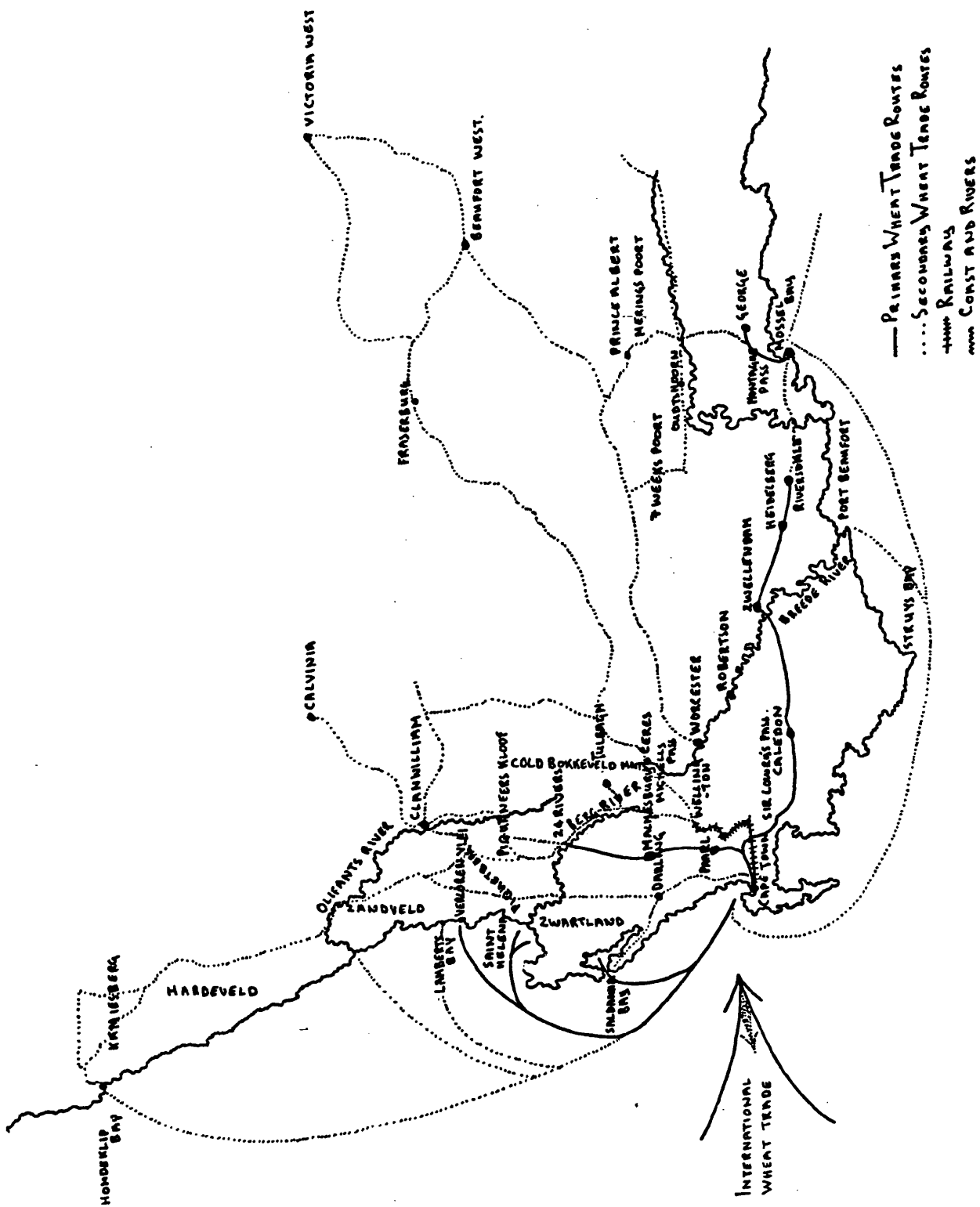
Based on Stat. Regs., 1853-1867

MAP 6

REGIONS OF THE WESTERN CAPE 1853-1867



MAP 7
 WESTERN CAPE WHEAT TRADE ROUTES 1853-1867



Information on rural village markets, trading posts and road communications based on: C.P.P., Enclosures on the north-western Districts, 1863, Vol. 2; M.M.S., Box 310, Stellenbosch, Jan., 1865; C.O.53.93., C.C.R., 1856; M.M.S., Box 310, Cape Town, Jan., 1858, Robertson, June., 1859, May 1861; C.O.53.100., C.C.R., 1863; S.A.A.M., Sept. 9, 1865; S.A.C.A., Nov. 6, 1862, Jan. 20, 1855; Z.A., Oct. 5, 1863; U.S.P.G., Caledon, 1865; S.A.A.M., Apr. 8, 1865; CO.53.100., C.C.R., 1863; Appel, 'Oudtshoorn', passim; CO.53.98/101/102., C.C.R., 1861/4/5; Scholtz, 'Onder Olifants', passim; G39-64; G37-65; S.A.C.A., May 13, 1856; G20-61; S.A.C.A., Sept. 15, 1853; CO.53.103., C.C.R., 1866; U.S.P.G., Worcester, Jan., 1866; Irons, Settlers Guide; CO.53.97/9., C.C.R., 1860/2.; C.A., Mar., 28, 1863; S.A.C.A., Feb. 25, 1864; A1-67; A10-67; C.P.P., Road report, 1853, 1855; C.P.P., R.S.C., Malmesbury Road, 1857; A19-65; G21-61; C.P.P., Corresp. re roads, 1859, Vol.2; U.S.P.G., Malmesbury, Feb., 1857; S.A.C.A., Mar. 14, 1854; S.A.C.A., Jan. 17, 1846; S.A.C.A., Feb. 9, 1854; M.M.S., Box 310, Nisbett Bath, Dec., 1859; M.M.S., Box 309, Norap, May, 1857, Lily Fountain, June, 1857; C.P.P., Irrigation report, 1862, Vol. 3; U.S.P.G., Ceres, Sept., 1862; G1-61; CO.53.96., C.C.R., 1859; M.M.S., Box 309, Dec., 1857; A20-58; A10-67; A82-61; CO.48.229., Desp. 195, Oct., 1849; A11-58; S.A.A.M., Feb. 10, 1866; S.A.C.A., Dec. 17, 1853; S.A.C.A., Apr. 5, 1855; C.P.P., Meirings Poort, 1856; C.A., Jan. 16, 1862.

Information on the coastal trade based on: S.A.C.A., Dec. 9, 1842; S.A.C.A., Mar. 14, 1846; S.A.C.A., Aug. 14, 1844, Feb. 22, 1845, Dec. 19, 1840; C.W.M., Box 23, Fold. 3, Jack. C, Zuurbraak, 1847; C.T.M., Aug. 23, 1851; S.A.C.A., May 21, 1864; CO.48.278., Desp. 212, Dec. 1847; Shipping Lists, passim; M.M.S., Norap, May, 1857, Cape Town, Feb. 1856; G37-65; A7-65; S.A.C.A., July 20, 1864, Feb. 19, 1863, Aug. 20, 1863; C.A., Apr. 14, 1866, July 23, 1864; A97-61; CO.53.98/99., C.C.R., 1861/2; Irons, Settlers Guide, passim; A99-61; C.P.P., Fletcher report on the Olifants River, May, 1860; A97-61; Scholtz, 'Onder Olifants', passim; S.A.C.A., Apr. 5, 1855; CO.53.97., C.C.R., 1860; CO.53.100/101., C.C.R., 1863/4; S.A.C.A., July, 29, 1863; S.A.A.M., Jan. 31, 1866; G1-61. At their peak, wheat exports from the Berg River mouth and Elands Bay to Cape Town reached 57,000 bushels valued at £17,416 in 1862. S.A.C.A., Sept. 13, 1853, Feb. 19, Aug. 20, 1863; Z.A., Dec. 7, 1863; S.A.C.A., June 1, 1864; C.M., Mar. 11, 1854; A82-61; S.A.C.A., Dec. 17, 1853, Sept. 16, 1854; A1-67; S.A.C.A., July 20, 1864, Dec. 19, 1840, June 3, 1843; CO.53.104., C.C.R., 1867.

For details of the exports from the colony see Table 6.

the western Cape.¹ However, it is not possible to state exactly the number of big, middle, or small wheat-farmers in each Division. Table Five illustrates some of the features of farms in the commercial wheat-farming heartlands and of farms that were characteristic of parts of the Overberg or Midlands. The table gives some idea of the farms of 'the ordinary middle class boers'. They, together with 'poor farmers', constituted the majority of western-Cape farmers. A report in 1860 defined 'small farmers' as the average young married couple who possessed a cottage and piece of land, or had an inherited share in a farm. They might own a small flock of sheep, span of oxen, a wagon, and a few simple agricultural implements. With the help of other relatives on the farm, and perhaps one or two day-labourers at peak periods, they ploughed a 'piece of ground' and sowed about eight bushels of wheat. Unable to market surpluses and capitalise, such farmers 'after some futile struggles ... settle down into the dull and hopeless apathy of Boer life ... a condition of squalid idleness'.²

There is also evidence of a stratum of 'rich farmers'. They were established commercial farmers who owned estates that, in some cases, consisted of over ten thousand acres and were valued at as many pounds. These big farmers often employed fifteen to twenty regular farm workers and their estates usually produced around three thousand bushels of wheat or more annually. Wheat crops such as these were worth over a thousand pounds.³ These farmers formed a minority of western Cape wheat-farmers. They were most numerous in the Cape-

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1. Census, 1865. This refers to 'corn farmers'; a term which generally meant wheat farmers. Farms were diversified at the time and it is unlikely that numbers of farmers based upon crops or stock reflected with accuracy the actual situation.
 2. C.M., Aug. 12, 1854; C.S., Aug. 11, 1866; CO.53.97., C.C.R., 1860, Caledon; Z.A., Jan. 26, 1866.
 3. Calculated at the annual average wheat price for 1853-67.

TABLE 5

SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF FARMS IN MALMESBURY AND ROBERTSON DIVISIONS DURING THE PERIOD 1853 -1867 (1 and 2)

<u>MALMESBURY DIVISION FARMS</u>		<u>ROBERTSON DIVISION FARMS</u>
No. of Properties outside of towns	380	245
No. of Wheat farmers	778	475
Wine farmers	46	118
Stock farmers	113	48
Agric. Labs ⁵	2,273	622
Ann. Acreage		
Wheat	18,500	2,411
Ann. Ave. Wheat Harvest (bush)	213,574	38,853
Ann. Ave. Wheat Harvest (£)	80,268	14,246
Ann. Ave. Wheat Price (d.)	90	87

Ave. Value of Farms ³ (£)	1,059			1102	
Ave. No. of 'Farmers' per property ⁴	2 to 3			3	
Ave. No. of Agric. labs/property	6			2 to 3	
Ave. Size of properties ³	2,708			1,968	
Area cultivated (acre)	94	Ann. Ave. Produced	Ann. Ave. Value	47	Ann. Ave. Produced Ann. Ave. Value
Ave. Wheat acreage	48.6	562 bush	£ 210	47	158 bush £60
Vines "	1	256 gals	£8.10s.	1.7	770gals £24
Barley "	3.2	232 bush	£39	4.1	90 bush £25.7s.
Rye "	9.1				
Oats "	27.1				
Maize "	.12			.4	3.7 bush 15s.
Beans	.42			2.4	10.4 bush £1.16s.
Tobacco"	.02			.19	40 lb £25
Ave. Value Agric. Produce		@ £350			@ £175
Head of Livestock ⁶	393			377	
Ann. Ave. Reg Wage Bill		£52			£22
Ave. Harvest Wage Bill		£16			£3

1. These figures are compiled from the averages of data for the years 1853-1867 that are drawn from various official sources. Official statistics were often inaccurate and incomplete. The model of the farms in the Table do not reflect the considerable variation in size of farms in each Division. CO.53.98., C.C.R., 1861, Malmesbury, Robertson; Stat. Regs., 1853-67; Census, 1850, CO.53.88.; Census 1860,

TABLE 5

FOOTNOTES CONTINUED.

- CO.53.97.; Census, 1865, G20-66.
2. Malmesbury Division's statistics reflect something of the characteristics of farms in a commercial wheat-growing area. The Civil Commissioner of Robertson Division reported in 1861 that his Division 'had many of the characteristics of the localities watered by the Olifants River' in Oudtshoorn Division; thus the Table serves to throw some light on farms in that Division as well. CO.53.98., C.C.R., 1861, Robertson.
 3. The relatively low value of the larger, less fertile, properties in parts of the Division, explains why Malmesbury farms, on average, appear larger and less valuable than those of Robertson Division.
 4. Cape inheritance laws distributed estates equally among the deceased's children. As a result, it was common for there to be two or more co-owners of an undivided property.
 5. 'Labourers' refers to regular resident wage labourers. It was general practice for wheat farmers to double their labour-force during wheat harvests. Extra hands were hired on a casual basis.
 6. Includes the average number of asses, horses, mules, draught oxen, cows, sheep, goats.
 7. Average monthly wages for the years 1851-1860 were 14s.6d.. Day wages were around 1s.6d.. Wage statistics during the 1860s' drought were most uncertain. Wage-requirements calculated on the basis of 2.4 worker-days rather than 4.8 worker-days required to reap, bind and gather in one acre of wheat in England using the same technology on land that yielded twice the number of bushels. Collins, Sickle to Combine, p. 42-43.

Zwartland-Zandveld region.¹ Others were scattered intermittently about the Overberg, Midlands, and Central regions,² or were the isolated exception in the pastoral west-coast region.³

Production on western-Cape wheat farms was diversified rather than specialized. Most farms produced a variety of grains, fruit, vegetables, dairy products, poultry and meat.⁴ A higher degree of crop-specialization occurred on farms in areas such as Malmesbury Division, that were situated nearer to the Cape Town market, than on the wheat-producing farms further afield in, for example, Robertson Division where a higher degree of self-sufficiency prevailed on farms.⁵

But even in the Cape-Zwartland-Zandveld and wine-growing regions, commercial farmers readily exploited other cash crops. In 1855 the quantity of wine that was produced in Malmesbury Division greatly increased as a result of 'the high market price which has been ruling for the last two or three years, having induced parties to turn their attention more to this branch of industry'.⁶ Conversely, some wine farmers in the Cape-wine region had diversified by 1867. They did so

1. The terms 'ordinary middle class boers', 'poor farmers', and 'rich farmers' appear in documents such as: C.P.P., Corresp. re emigration, 1859; C.P.P., R.S.C., Education, 1863.
2. W. Irons, Settlers Guide, 49-55; CO.53.104., C.C.R., 1867; C.W.M., Box 34, Jack. D, Hopedale, 1867; S.A.A.M., Apr. 7, Aug. 27, Mar. 24, 1866; C.S., Nov. 29, 1866; S.A.C.A., Jan. 24, Mar. 9, 1864, Jan. 7, 1862; S.A.A.M., Nov. 1, 1867; P.J. Hannon, 'Address', Journal of the Institute of Bankers in S.A., Vol. 4, No. 5, Cape Town, 1907; C.P.P., Irrigation Report, 1862.
3. CO.53.96., C.C.Rs. 1860, *passim* ; C.A., Mar. 28, 1863; S.A.C.A., Feb. 7, 1862.
4. W. Irons, Settlers Guide, 190/1.
5. See Table 4. The 1865 Census lists all 1,107 'farmers' in Oudtshoorn Division as 'corn farmers' and all 262 'farmers' in Mossel Bay as 'stock farmers'. Farms in these Divisions were a good deal more diversified; they produced significant amounts of oats, wheat, beans, maize, pumpkins, tobacco, wine, brandy, raisins, wool, hides and butter. G20-66; CO.53.97 to 101., C.C.R., 1860 to 1864.
6. CO.53.92., C.C.R., Malmesbury, 1855; Cape wine exports quadrupled during the period 1853-1867. W. Irons, Settlers Guide, 44, 132.

in response to the ravages of vine disease and plummeting exports that followed the Anglo-French free-trade agreement which ended forty years of preferential tariffs for Cape wines on the British market.¹ Seasonal demand for the labour required to produce wheat and wine, which were the western Cape's two most important cash crops, did not coincide.

It was common practice among wine farmers to allow a certain proportion of their servants to enter the service of the corn farmers, to assist in the harvest ... these two brands of agriculture might advantageously be prosecuted at once, and, in some instances, I find this to be done to a considerable extent. (2)

During the 1850s, many wheat farmers owned substantial and growing flocks and herds. Some of these, particularly the transhumant pastoralists of the Cold Bokkeveld in the Central region, and those farmers situated in the drier parts of the Overberg and Midlands regions, paid increasing attention to wool production during the 1850s and 1860s.³

The local press and the Cape of Good Hope Agricultural Society advocated mechanization to wheat farmers throughout the 1850s and 1860s. They presented agricultural machinery as the best means to boost production and overcome labour problems.⁴ Imports of agricultural machinery to

1. M.M.S., Box 310, 1865; The Select Committee on the wine trade reported that between 1859 and 1865, wine exports to England fell from £153,379 to £5,213; that no alternative markets existed; that prices declined by 50 percent; and that by 1865, production was limited to colonial consumption. S.A.A.M., Sept. 30, 1865; Z.A., May 6, 1867; van Zyl, 'Wynbou', 369-376.
2. C.P.P., Vol. 2, 1859, p. 94. For other evidence of wheat and wine cultivation on the same farm, or on different farms in the same area, see also: Irons, Settlers Guide, passim; C.P.P., Vol. 2, 1862, petition from inhabitants of Somerset West and adjoining areas.
3. CO.53.94-104., C.C.R., 1863-1867, passim; S.A.A.M., Apr. 26, 1867; C.S., May 16, 1867; S.A.C.A., Feb. 24, 1864; Irons, Settlers Guide, passim.
4. See for example S.A.C.A., Apr. 29, 1854, July 7, 1853, Dec. 5, 7, 1864.

the Cape did experience a 'sudden spurt' in 1859 when their value reached £23,966.¹ But, even in this peak year of the period 1853 to 1867, only a 'fair sprinkling' of western-Cape farmers purchased agricultural machines.²

Costs and unfavourable farming conditions hindered agricultural mechanization. The high capital outlay limited mechanization to the small stratum of wealthy farmers in the western Cape. Grain farmers needed around one hundred pounds to acquire the latest imported ploughing, reaping and threshing machines and the extra eight horses to work them. Reaping machines cost around thirty-five pounds at the time, yet they only cut the grain. Farmers in the commercial wheat-farming heartlands of Malmesbury paid, on average, about sixteen pounds a year in day wages to have their grain crops reaped, bound and gathered manually. The only implements required for this were sickles that cost around 10s. per dozen. Furthermore, imported machinery, such as ploughs and reapers, regularly broke down on the stoney, hard and uneven land. Expensive spares and a shortage of technicians hindered maintenance and repairs.³

The advantages of the reaping machines were less spectacular than their crude cutting rate would imply. Reapers of the 1850s and 1860s could cut forty times as much wheat as a man using a sickle and ten times

1. C.A., Sept. 4, Mar. 1, 1862.

2. Ibid; Irons, Settlers Guide, 125 -9; CO.53.94 to 97., C.C.R., 1857 to 1860, *passim*.

3. S.A.A.M., Nov. 1, 1867; Irons, Settlers' Guide, 125/6; Noble, History, Productions and Resources, 226; C.A., Sept. 4, 1862; CO.53.95., C.C.R., Zwellendam, 1858; Collins, Sickle to Combine, *passim*; S.A.C.A., Aug. 16, 1853; CO.53.100., C.C.R., Worcester, 1863.

that of a man using a scythe.¹ But reaping machines generally required a driver, a person to deliver the cut grain from the machine, two rakers, and two teams of four horses to operate for a full day. Farmers also had to employ the same number of binders and bundle-makers as they would for a manually cut crop.²

The scythe proved to be a useful technological intermediary between sickles and reapers in the U.K. They cost about 15s. each, a figure that was within the range of most farmers in the western Cape. Unfortunately scythes were not suited to wheat harvests under Cape conditions. The slashing strokes of the scythe knocked ripe grains off the stalks. Hot Cape summers ripened and dried the wheat rapidly and this, together with the strong south-east winds that prevailed, exacerbated the problem of wastage.³ The same dry, warm, and frequently windy conditions also militated against the more widespread use of machine-threshers. The climate was favourable for using horses and mules to tramp out the grain on hard floors outdoors, and then using the wind to winnow the chaff from the grain.

Despite exaggerated reports to the contrary,⁴ and with the exception of established commercial farms, western-Cape wheat production experienced few technological advances. It remained labour-intensive. Most wheat producers retained traditional implements and practices such as the 'old Cape plough', the sickle, 'tramping out the corn', and

1. Collins, Sickle to Combine, 9.

2. S.A.A.M., Oct. 10, 1866, Jan. 7, 1867; C.S., Oct. 23, 1886, Nov. 27, 1886.

3. S.A.A.M., Nov. 1, 1867; Z.A., Oct. 28, 1867, Oct. 26, 29, 1853; Noble, History, Productions and Resources, 226; S.A.C.A., Dec. 17, 1853, Feb. 4, 1854.

4. Such as: CO.53.97/98., C.C.R., 1860/1, *passim*.

winnowing by means of the wind.¹

Conditions in the western Cape can be contrasted with those of other countries where harvest machines were socially and economically more viable. Wheat farmers quickly adopted mechanized reapers in countries where harvest-labour shortages were critical, the terrain was suitable, and a high demand for the crop was sustained. The wheat harvest of the American Prairie states was mechanized by 1860. By 1867, machines also harvested 89 percent of Australian wheat. Farmers of the southern, ex-slave states of the U.S.A. were far slower to mechanize grain harvests than those of the great plains and in the west. Similarly, mechanization of the grain harvest proceeded far more quickly in the labour-scarce north of Britain than the labour-flush countries of the midlands and south. In 1867, only one quarter of British grain was machine cut.²

Farmers in the western Cape could draw labour from an ex-slave, labouring population and, as such, had more in common with farmers in the labour-flush southern U.S.A. or English midlands than those of Australia and the Prairie states. However the western-Cape labour supply fluctuated. Imported machinery was more popular in the western Cape during the late 1850s and early 1860s when agricultural labour was scarcer than in the mid-1860s when labour was abundant and cheap in most parts.³

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1. Irons, Settlers Guide, 125-9; S.A.C.A., Mar. 9, 1864; M.P.A., Groenekloof diary, 1838; CO.53.94-101., C.C.R., 1857-1864; U.S.P.G., Malmesbury, 1860; S.A.A.M., Aug. 2, 1865; S.A.A.M., Oct. 10, 1866, Oct. 22, 1866, Feb. 24, 1866; C.S., Oct. 23, 1866; Z.A., Aug. 16, 1863; S.A.C.A., June 22, 1864.
 2. Collins, Sickle to Combine, 7, 35, 46; Dunsdorfs, The Australian wheat growing industry, 149-50; Encyclopedia Britannica, London, 1974, p. 337/125; P.T. Dodlinger, The Book of Wheat: An Economic History and Practical Manual of the Wheat Industry, New York, 1908, *passim*.
 3. C.S., Nov. 27, 1886, Oct. 23, 1866; Noble, History, Productions, and Resources, 226; Collins, From Sickle to Combine, *passim*.

Western-Cape topography and poor roads presented major difficulties for access to markets and hindered capitalisation among middle and small wheat farmers.¹ Ready access to markets was, in itself, no guarantee of profit for commercial wheat farmers in the western Cape. Rural village-markets were limited in number and small. Hence, they were easily oversupplied and subject to endless price fluctuations. Cape wheat could not compete on the massive grain markets of industrial Britain and Europe.² Indeed, relatively cheap American and Australian wheat and flour frequently made substantial inroads into the Cape grain market and caused local prices to fall significantly. There was little room on the Cape Town market for a large, locally-produced, wheat surplus at prices that were always remunerative to western-Cape farmers.³ Simultaneous international and local wheat shortages could drive Cape prices up, but these were rare occasions.⁴

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1. C.P.P., Petition, Clanwilliam and Calvinia, May, 1862; Scholtz, 'Onder Olifants', 130; Irons, Settlers Guide, 56, 125; S.A.A.M., June 4, 1866; Map 7; U.S.P.G., Malmesbury, Feb., 1857; S.A.C.A., Mar. 14, 1854, June 14, 1846, Feb. 9, 1854, Mar. 31, 1855, Apr. 5, 1855; M.M.S., Box 310, Nisbett Bath, Dec., 1859; Scholtz, 'Onder Olifants', 100-6; C.P.P., Corresp. re roads, 1859-1865, passim; C.P.P., Petitions, Clanwilliam, Calvinia, May, 1862; CO.53.96-101., C.C.R., 1859-64, passim; U.S.P.G., Ceres, Sept. 1862; Appel, 'Oudtshoorn', 297-311.
 2. Britain imported over fifty million bushels of wheat between 1851 and 1853. S.A.C.A., Apr. 14, 1865.
 3. See Tables 6 and 7. For example, good harvests caused cereal prices to fall by 100 percent at Bredasdorp after three years of shortage. CO.53.104., C.C.R., 1867; S.A.C.A., Mar. 9, 1864; Z.A., Jan. 7, 1864. On the massive increases in Australian and American wheat exports in the 1850s and 1860s, see for example: Dunsdorfs, Australian Wheat Industry; F.A. Shanon, The Farmers' Last Frontier, Agriculture 1860-1897, Vol. 5, Economic History of the U.S.A., New York, 1945; S.A.C.A., Dec. 22, 29, 1853; M.M.S., Cape Town, Dec. 1852; S.M.G., 1840-1855; S.A.A.M., July 19, 1865; S.A.A.M., Jan. 18, 1867, Apr. 7, 1866. S.A.C.A., Apr. 14, 1855. On the 1863 price falls: S.A.C.A., Sept. 3, 10, 1863, C.A., June 16, 1863; C.T.M., May 2, 1851.
 4. Between 1838 and 1867 there were only three occasions when this happened: in 1866 when Indian and Australian harvests failed, the Spanish blockaded Valparaiso, and shortages occurred in England; in 1853/4; and in 1839/40. S.A.A.M., Jan. 6, 1866; Z.A., Jan. 15, 1866; S.A.C.A., Mar. 14, 1854, Jan. 23, 1839; Dunsdorfs, Australian Wheat Industry, 52-9.

TABLE 6

QUANTITIES OF WHEAT AND FLOUR IMPORTS, AMOUNTS REGISTERED FOR HOME CONSUMPTION AND THE VALUE OF WHEAT AND FLOUR IMPORTS 1857-1867 (1)

Year	Wheat Imports bushels	Home-Consumpt bushels	Flour Imports 196 lb. Barrels	Home-Consumpt 196 lb. Barrels	Wheat Imports Value £	Flour Imports Value £	Total Value £
1857	47,136	38,872	56,853	38,616	12,714	97,164	109,878
1858	19,792	24,688			5,721		
1859	17,344	17,344	17,323	15,652	5,306	25,851	31,157
1860	60,584	50,280	53,758	37,278	13,788	73,132	86,920
1861	25,800	36,088	31,169	28,639	5,466	39,499	44,915
1862	81,856	79,224	74,947	70,578	16,856	97,303	114,159
1863	261,264	221,192	98,593	74,646	63,399	129,032	192,431
1864	11,912	40,328	65,067	56,002	3,171	85,067	88,238
1865	6,784	7,336	59,443	49,705	1,562	48,571	50,133
1866	209,280	193,320	91,344	2,419	52,931	102,060	154,991

(1) Based on Stat. Regs., 1838-1867. Figures for 1838-1856 are incomplete, inaccurate and frequently conflict.

TABLE 7

WHEAT AND FLOUR EXPORTS: QUANTITIES AND VALUES 1838-1867¹

Year	Bushels Wheat	Barrels Flour 196 lb	Value Wheat £	Value Flour £	Value Total £
1838	21,156	4,079	9,897	9,616	19,513
1839	6,288	2,707	4,743	9,760	14,413
1840	4,878	1,291	2,585	3,897	6,482
1841	2,112	2,031	832	4,813	5,645
1842	3,351	4,343	1,115	10,890	12,045
1843	9,768	3,825	3,275	7,325	10,582
1844	1,776	3,973	568	7,582	8,150
1845	384	2,965	130	5,771	5,901
1846	720	3,849	240	7,900	8,140
1847	162	2,101	54	4,713	4,767
1848	216	4,662	71	9,320	9,391
1849	2	4,464	1	8,191	8,192
1850	54	6,662	18	10,906	10,924
1851	825	7,237	351	13,040	13,391
1852	1,575	6,061	562	12,305	12,867
1853	561	13,243	250	29,783	30,033
1854	561	13,143	250	29,783	30,033
1855	2,391	6,692	1,219	14,957	16,176
1856	3,681	3,987	1,709	8,878	10,587
1857	152	4,515	118	11,428	11,546
1858	3,008	4,193	1,350	9,326	10,676
1859	4,672	10,686	2,103	24,891	26,994
1860	32	7,801	23	20,102	20,125
1861	2,832	11,083	1,151	24,713	25,864
1862	648	13,012	306	30,397	30,703
1863	10,904	17,623	5,314	37,190	42,504
1864	16,688	17,296	6,703	35,111	41,814
1865	4,136	17,985	1,428	28,245	29,673
1866	32	15,881	8	26,346	26,354
1867	2	1,830	3	3,379	3,382
<hr/>					
Annual Average Exports 1838-1852					
	3,551	4,015	1,631	8,396	10,027
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Annual Average Exports 1853-1867					
	3,353	10,591	1,462	22,302	23,674

1. Based on Stat. Regs., 1838-1867. It is very likely that a substantial proportion of these exports were, in fact, re-exports of imported stocks that merchants accumulated in bonded warehouses at Cape Town. This is to some extent borne out by Table 6 which indicates that the annual average home consumption of wheat and flour imports, during the period 1857-1867, was well below total imports. This was case even in years of local crop failures.

Tariffs on wheat imports offered little protection to western-Cape wheat farmers.¹ Those who represented commercial-farming interests in parliament failed to sustain an effective campaign for protection. A rare occasion arose in August of 1865 when H.W. Gird and eleven other farmers' representatives in the Legislative Assembly proposed a motion in favour of protection. They wanted the 5 percent ad valorem tariff on wheat and 3s. tariff per 196 lb. barrel of flour increased to a blanket 7s. duty on every three bushels of wheat and barrel of flour. This would have guaranteed wheat farmers' incomes, but it outraged the merchant importers. F.W. Silberbauer, a leading Cape Town merchant and grain dealer, successfully led the opposition to the proposals. He faced little difficulty. Merchant interests were better represented in government than the commercial farmers. In 1859, the fifteen-member Legislative Council comprised eight merchants, five agriculturists and a retired civil servant. The House of Assembly had forty-six members: two were physicians; two were barristers; four were newspaper editors or owners; four were retired civil servants or 'private gentlemen'; twenty were merchants, traders or general agents; and fourteen were agriculturists.² The non-farmers generally voted with the merchants.

The scarcity of labour during the decade after 1853 presented difficulties for both aspirant and established commercial farmers throughout the western Cape. The Cape Monitor reported: 'the fact is that the demand for labourers is much greater than supply'.³ F. and W. Duckitt of Malmesbury, R. Hare of Paarl, and others who constituted the small

1. S.A.C.A., Mar. 6, 1839, June 1, 1842; S.M.G., Mar. 13, 1846; S.A.A.M., Dec. 15, 1866; S.A.C.A., Aug. 4, 1850.

2. Paragraph based on S.A.A.M., Aug. 12, 1865; S.A.C.A., Sept. 3, 1863, June 22, 1864.

3. C.M., Mar. 26, 1856; C.P.P., Petition, Worcester, July, 1860; CO.53.94., C.C.R., 1857, Paarl.

group of well-established commercial farmers could generally afford to employ fifteen or more regular resident farm labourers.¹ They were also likely to have had the land to lease to casual labourers on condition that they provided seasonal labour. The tied tenants, together with the regular farm workers and hired day-labourers from missions and villages, formed the estates' work-force during harvests.

Most farmers in the commercial wheat-farming heartlands employed about six regular resident workers. In the Overberg and Midlands, farmers generally probably only had two or three workers in their constant employ.² It was common for farmers to double the size of their work-force during harvests. At peak periods, farmers supplemented regular resident labour with temporary day-workers. Those least able to afford wages suffered most from the labour shortage.³ Some middling and small farmers relied increasingly on members of their families to do the regular farm work. During the 1850s, complaints about the increasing amounts of domestic, pastoral, and field labour that farmers' families had to provide, emanated from all over the western Cape. In 1855 a delegation of farmers from Clanwilliam, Calvinia and Worcester Divisions protested:

From year to year we see our farms retrograde, our sources of existence and welfare reduced and going to ruin, and [we] are inevitably necessitated to employ our sons as labourers and herds and our wives and daughters to perform the meanest field and domestic services. (4)

In contrast to the 'rich farmers', it was normal practice for the 'ordinary middle class boers' throughout Malmesbury, Zwellendam, and

1. Irons, *Settlers Guide*, 43; C.P.P., Corresp. re emigration, Vol. 2, , Report of Dr. Way, p. 93-8; H.J. Duckitt, *Hilda's Diary of a Cape Housekeeper*, London, 1902, passim.

2. Table 5; Irons, *Settlers Guide*, 42.

3. Ibid, 56; CO.53.97., C.C.R., 1860, Robertson.

4. C.M., Apr. 25, 1855; see also S.A.C.A., Apr. 7, 1855; CO.53.97., C.C.R., 1860, Robertson.

Calvinia to retain their children as labourers on their farms.¹

Similarly, farmers who were unable to afford day wages, or did not have the land for tenants, were the least able to secure casual labourers during peak seasons. There were reports that farmers in this predicament increasingly adopted the practice of 'mutually assisting each other to prevent losses to which they would otherwise have been exposed if the crops had not been reaped or cut down at the proper time.'² Some farmers simply emigrated from the western Cape to the interior. Among these were a group from Namaqualand. Here, the development of copper mining after 1853 presented farm workers with alternative sources of income.³ Farmers had difficulty in retaining workers at pre-copper-boom wage levels. Some left:

A great number of the boers unable to adapt themselves to the new system have broken up their establishments ... left alone deserted by their own servants they could not satisfy their wants. (4)

Evidence of a farm-labour scarcity during the 1850s prompts questions about the composition of, and developments among, the agrarian under-classes of the western Cape. By the early 1860s, there were around twenty-three thousand 'agricultural workers' in the western Cape. Of these, approximately three thousand, or nearly 13 percent, were 'European'. Only 10 percent, or 1,416 out of 13,712, farmers in the western Cape were 'coloured'.⁵ Official statistics such as these

1. C.P.P., R.S.C., Education, 1863, Vol. 3, p. 4; S.A.C.A., Apr. 7, Mar. 27, 1855; CO.53.94., C.C.R., Zwellendam, 1857.
2. CO.53.93., C.C.R., 1857, Worcester.
3. Smallberger, Copper Mining, passim.
4. C.M., Sept. 29, 1855. For similar cases of migration see for example, G29-60, wherein Commissioner P. Fletcher pointed out that 'our migratory population to the interior both trekboeren and aborigines are steadily and rapidly increasing in numbers', p.46|7.
5. Census, 1865.

create some impression of the size and racial composition of the agrarian work-force, but reveal nothing of its more subtle, yet vital contours: the characteristics of the regular farm-workers and the casual farm-labourers, tenants or peasants that resided at private farms, missions, rural villages, and on public land. It is not possible to understand how the agrarian economy reproduced itself without investigating the constituent parts of its work-force which are lost in bland racial categorization.

Regular resident farm-workers were at the bottom of the agrarian social hierarchy in the western Cape. They lived on commercial farms and were probably the smallest, but most thoroughly proletarianised, sector of the agricultural work-force. The majority were ex-slaves and their descendants. Some regular resident farm-workers were immigrants from the U.K. and Europe. Their wages and working conditions appear to have been better than most.

By 1860, some eight thousand British immigrant workers and several hundred German workers had arrived at the colony. Some were employed on western-Cape wheat farms. They tended to be concentrated on the large estates.¹ Wealthy farmers seemed as disposed to using European labourers as they were to using ex-slaves or Africans on their estates. On one such wheat farm in Paarl Division 'the number of servants retained for constant work is about fifteen. Of these, five are Englishmen'.² An official report on immigrant agricultural

1. U.S.P.G., Lower Paarl, Riversdale, 1860; C.A., Jan. 19, 1860; Z.A., Apr. 7, 1864; M.M.S., Box 310, Robertson, Feb. 1860; S.A.C.A., Aug. 19, 1854; C.M., Mar. 26, Apr. 26, 1856; C.P.P., Corresp. re immigration, 1859, Vol. 2, Report of Dr. Wau, p. 93-8.

2. Irons, Settlers Guide, 42.

labourers in the late 1850s explained that it was common for an agricultural labourer from England to,

associate with the coloured classes, marry a coloured woman, or live with one unmarried, and with few exceptions, he would follow the course of those [immigrated juveniles of the 1830s] who preceded him ... (1)

Between 1859 and 1861, 'many German immigrants' settled in Malmesbury Division. Farmers had paid their passages from Germany and they were bound to remain with their employees until this amount was refunded.

Some were,

very happy in their new position; but others are not so, because they are so completely dependant on those who have engaged their services, and who, in some instances, take an undue advantage of them. (2)

Some impression of the demands that were made upon regular resident farm workers emerges from the following observation:

With regard to agricultural labourers ... it is here understood to mean a man who makes himself generally useful on a farm, assisting in sowing, reaping, gardening, irrigation, takes care of horses, oxen or cows, sometimes tends a flock of sheep ... a willing and obedient servant in any capacity. (3)

In return for their steady, cheerful, reliable, and total services, employers generally provided regular labourers with food, wine, lodging and a monthly wage.⁴ Monthly wages were 16s. for most farm labourers who, after 1853, were officially dubbed coloured. The best paid regular farm labourers were whites. They received around

1. C.P.P., Corresp. re immigration, 1859, Vol. 2, Report, Dr. Way, p. 95.

2. M.P.A., Mamre Diary, 1861.

3. Irons, Settlers Guide, 66.

4. Daily rations included: a staple starch of wheaten meal or coarse wheaten bread, potatoes, maize, barley meal or barley bread; their staple source of protein was salted dried fish that farmers purchased for around 1s. per hundred; a smattering of fruit, vegetables, mutton or beef. Ibid, passim; CO.53.96/98/100/103/104., C.C.R., 1858/59/60/63/66/67^{passim}; M.M.S., Box 310, Robertson, Feb. 1860; C.P.P., Corresp. re immigration, 1859, Vol. 2, Report, Dr. Way, p. 93-8.

£1.7s. per month during the 1850s. Higher wages were needed to induce immigrants from Britain to western-Cape farms and, once there, to discourage them from exploiting alternative opportunities in Cape Town or in the eastern Cape.¹ They were also often skilled and used more frequently as mechanics, artisans and overseers.

By contrast, the lowest paid regular resident farm labourers were children. The view that child-apprentices came closest to bearing 'the traditional badge of slavery' was common among rural labourers.² By the 1850s, these were not immigrated pauper-children; they were the children of local parentage whom western-Cape magistrates had declared 'destitute' and apprenticed out to local farmers. They generally received board and lodging only, although, by 1866, there is evidence that bigger children on the wheat estates were paid 5s. a month.³

A sector of the adult regular labour-force also received wages that were often as low as 5s. a month in 1857. They left Kaffraria, Tembuland and Pondoland as a result of the cattle-killing disaster. 'They came at a time of famine and would naturally get the very lowest wages'.⁴ It appears that few Cape Mfengu refugees remained on the western-Cape farms at this wage-level. The overwhelming majority worked in the eastern Cape and, of the small number who remained in the western Cape, most were, by the 1860s, engaged in dock-, road-, or railway construction in the public sector.

1. Table 8 and its footnote on terminology.

2. CO.53.104., C.C.R., Mossel Bay, 1867.

3. S.P.G., Malmesbury, Feb., Nov., 1866; Irons, Settlers Guide, 39/40.

4. C1-62; Between 1857 and 1859 approximately thirty thousand people 'were admitted throughout the whole colony even as far as Cape Town ... [they were] principally distributed amongst the farmers'. Most were employed in the eastern Cape. *Ibid*, p.9.

TABLE 8

ANNUAL AVERAGE MONTHLY WAGES PAID TO COLOURED AND WHITE
RESIDENT REGULAR AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS 1853 to 1867 (1)

Divisions/ Regions	1853 to 1859		1860 to 1867		1866	
	Coloured	White	Coloured	White	Coloured	White
Malmesb	210d.	222d.	210d.	366d.	120d.	-
Piquetb	144	-	146	-	90	-
Cape	220	424	250	394	180	324
CAPE- ZWARTLND						
ZANDVELD	191	323	202	380	130	324
Stelleb	226	291	214	214	180	180
Paarl	204	263	270	420	240	360
CAPE- WINE						
REGION	215	277	242	317	210	270
Caledon	257	280	223	252	180	240
Bredsdrp	180	180	240	240	240	240
Robtsn	180	-	210	369	120	-
Zwelldm	214	347	230	255	240	240
Rivsdale	192	-	280	423	120	240
OVERBERG						
REGION	205	269	237	308	180	240
Oudtshrn	-	-	240	384	240	384
George	214	265	180	345	90	-
Moss Bay	-	-	300	-	120	-
MIDLANDS						
REGION	214	265	240	365	150	384
Worcestr	265	522	231	386	180	360
Tulbagh	240	240	171	240	120	-
CENTRAL						
REGION	252	381	201	313	150	360
Clanwill	89	162	107	-	90	-
Calvinia	72	-	95	-	120	-
Namland	90	-	232	-	102	-
PASTORAL						
W.COAST						
REGION	84	162	145	-	104	-
Prince						
Albert	240	-	197	288	120	180
Frasbrg	-	-	184	270	120	180
Beauf. W.	240	588	205	360	180	240
Vict W	-	-	300	300	480	-
PASTORAL						
INTERIOR						
REGION	240	588	222	305	225	200
WESTERN						
CAPE	200	323	213	331	164	296
	16s.7d.	£1.7s.	18s.9d.	£1.7s.6d.	13s.6d.	£1.4s.6d.

TABLE 8

FOOTNOTES

1. The figures for Prince Albert are unlikely. In 1858 Irons reported monthly wages in the area to be 72d. per month with food. Irons, Settlers' Guide, 64. The table is based on Stat. Regs., 1853-1867. Wages are calculated in pence for the sake of uniformity. It was general practice among employers to provide regular labourers with board and lodging. Racially structured wage levels first appeared in official reports on western-Cape labour in 1853 when wages in George Division first appeared under the headings 'European farm servants' and 'Coloured farm servants'. From 1854 all wages are listed under 'Coloureds' and 'Whites'. The use of such terminology is vague, inaccurate and can be misleading for readers conscious of apartheid South Africa. 'White' labourers were predominantly the approximately 10,000 immigrants who came to the Cape from the U.K., between 1838 and 1867, on government sponsored immigration schemes. 'Coloured' labourers appears to have included Cape Nguni; ex-slaves; freed slaves from captured slave ships; Khoisan; people of mixed racial descent; and the descendants of one or more of these. It is worth noting that wages appear stable for most of the 1850s; at their lowest in years of drought such as 1860/1/5/6/; and at their highest when seasons were good such as 1863/4.

Day-workers provided vital labour for the labour-intensive stages in wheat production. Most important were ploughing and harvesting. The advantage of engaging seasonal labour, for the commercial wheat farmers, was that they did not need to retain a large number of resident regular workers during periods when less labour was required:

the labour required is confined to two short seasons of the year and during the interval the labouring class, if such a class existed, could hardly find subsistence without dispersing widely or congregating on fertile spots to raise food on their own account. (1)

Seasonal day wages were the only farm wages that compared favourably with labourers' earnings in other sectors such as the public road-works, or urban employers, such as the private brick-works in Cape Town. Day wages for adult males in the wheat-producing regions were between 1s.6d. and 2s.² Day wages were less racially differentiated than regular monthly farm wages. Indeed, gender and age influenced harvest-wage levels to a greater degree than race. This seems to have been true of much casual work. Women who worked as day-labourers on farms in the Midlands were paid 1s. a day and children earned from 6d. to 1s. per day.³

Day-workers also received rations of food and wine. The increasing devastation⁴ of alcohol addiction in the rural western Cape by 1867 was certainly exacerbated by, and may well have originated as a result of, the rations that regular and casual farm labourers earned as part of their wage. A report from Robertson Division explained:

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1. S.A.C.A., Jan. 6, 1855.
 2. Table 9.
 3. Stat. Regs., 1853-67.
 4. See below, chapter 4, D.

TABLE 9

ANNUAL AVERAGE DAY-WAGES PAID TO COLOURED AND WHITE
FARM LABOURERS (1)

Divisions/ Regions	1853 to 1859		1860 to 1867	
	Coloured	White	Coloured	White
Malmesb	21d.	23d.	16d.	21d.
Piquetb	12	21	12	12
Cape	21	24	22	27
CAPE- ZWARTLND				
ZANDVELD	18	20	17	20
Stellenb	17	19	16	16
Paarl	16	18	18	24
CAPE- WINE				
REGION	17	19	17	20
Caledon	18	18	11	11
Bredsdrp	18	18	17	17
Robtsn	12	12	14	14
Zwelldam	20	20	17	17
Rivsdale	36	36	22	24
OVERBERG				
REGION	21	21	16	17
Oudtshrn	24	24	26	31
George	17	25	23	29
Moss Bay	24	24	27	26
MIDLANDS				
REGION	22	24	25	29
Worcestr	19	22	17	19
Tulbagh	18	18	23	42
CENTRAL				
REGION	19	20	20	32
Clanwill	19	20	16	18
Calvinia	18	18	20	18
Namland	18	18	17	30
PASTORAL				
W.COAST				
REGION	18	19	18	22
Prince				
Albert	18	18	20	22
Frasbrg	-	-	16	16
Beauf W	24	30	14	24
Vict W	24	30	26	18
PASTORAL				
INTERIOR				
REGION	22	26	19	20
WESTERN				
CAPE	20	21	19	23
	1s.8d.	1s.9d.	1s.7d.	1s.11d.

1. Based on Stat. Regs., 1853 - 1867.

The people acquire a taste for wine as soon as they are able to work, for it is dealt out to them with their daily rations and during harvest they are supplied with it as often as six to eight times a day. (1)

Official estimates in 1857 reveal that daily rations of 'a bottle or more' wine for regular resident workers and 'about two bottles' for day-workers was general practice in the western Cape.² The bulk of Cape Wine was 'ordinary wine'. The amount of wine that was consumed locally increased four-fold to about 84 percent in the course of the 1850s. A great deal of this was sold to farmers, mostly grain farmers, for workers' consumption. The domestic market had to absorb an even greater proportion of Cape wines in the 1860s: wine production increased, as the industry recovered from vine disease, at the same time as the export trade collapsed, when Cape wines lost their preferential-tariff support on the British market.³ A staple in the labourer's diet was salted bokkoms, or dried fish; this, and the hours of heavy physical harvest-labour during the summer heat made for thirsty work. In 1866, the Civil Commissioner of Caledon explained that the practice of paying day-labourers up to two bottles of wine per day as part of the wage had 'existed for upwards of sixty years.'⁴ Nonetheless, the 'tot' system did spread very substantially as the external market and local wine prices collapsed during the 1860s.

The bulk of those who did casual farm work, during the 1850s and 1860s, were residents on missions or tenants on private farms. A smaller number lived in rural villages, or fishing hamlets or

1. M.M.S., Box 310, Robertson, Feb., 1860.

2. C.P.P., Corresp. re immigration, 1859, Vol. 2, Report of Dr. Wass, p. 94/5.

3. Van Zyl points out the importance of the market, for wine-farmers, in the wheat-producing areas and among the 'lower-class whites and non-whites'. 'Wynbou', 241-250.

4. CO.53.97., C.C.R., 1860, Caledon.

squatted on public land.¹ In contrast with the twofold increase in their numbers between 1838 and 1850, the population of the western Cape missions only grew by about two thousand during the 1850s. What is significant, though, is that mission populations in all regions remained more or less static, with the notable exception of the commercial wheat-farming heartlands in the Cape-Wine-Zwartland region. Here the mission population almost doubled. By 1860 then, about eleven thousand, of a total mission population of about fourteen thousand, resided in the commercial wheat-growing regions of the Cape-Wine-Zwartland-Zandveld and Overberg regions.² They formed the casual-labour reservoirs for commercial agriculture in these regions.³

Located on farms throughout the rural western Cape was a growing number of tied tenants who were variously termed - labour tenants, squatters, bywoners or sharecroppers. Characteristically, they allocated to their landlords a portion of their labour, or the fruits of their labour, in return for the right to use a dwelling and some land.

In Cape Division,

a strong quorum of the coloured population squatted on different farms and properties, more particularly in the districts of Constantia, Newlands, and Wynberg, [where each household had] several acres of arable land ... provided with pondoks [shacks] where they lived gratis [sic] in exchange for two or three days labour per week. (4)

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1. At villages such as Robertson, Lady Grey, Newmanville, and Montagu. M.M.S., Cape Town, June, 1857; at Diep River near Wynberg, M.M.S., Box 310, Wynberg, June, 1860; at Oudtshoorn, CO.53.97., C.C.R., *passim*, 1860; at Paarl, Ceres, D'Urban, Worcester, Riversdale, Zwellendam, Stellenbosch, Somerset West, George Town; Irons, Settlers Guide, 39/40. There were over twenty rural missions in the western Cape by 1860. On their importance as seasonal labour sources see for example: C.P.P., Corresp. re immigration, 1859, Report of Dr. Wau, p.94/5.
 2. Tables 2, 8, and 10.
 3. CO.53.97., C.C.R., 1860, Caledon; C.P.P., R.S.C., Lands in Freehold to Hottentots, evidence of F. Duckitt, 1854; M.P.A., Enon, June, 13, 1852.
 4. S.A.C.A., Aug. 19, 1854; S.A.A.M., Oct. 3, 1866; CO.53.103/4., C.C.R., 1866/7, Appendices on squatting, *passim*.

TABLE 10

POPULATION TRENDS ON THE MAIN RURAL MISSION STATIONS
WHICH HAD RESIDENT POPULATIONS IN 1850, 1860 AND 1888¹

Mission/ Region	Approx Pop. 1850	Approx Pop. 1860	Approx Pop. 1888
Mamre	1,300	1,500	2,000
Pniel	258	258	702
Goedwacht	274	460	714
Saron	450	1,000	1,400
Raithby	88	88	88
Som West	272	272	272
Abbotsdale	-	360	350
Wittewater	-	158	297
Hermon	25	25	25
Pella	-	-	500
CAPE-WINE- ZWARTLAND			
ZANDVELD	2,677	4,121	6,348
Zuurbraak	1,528	1,537	1,093
Genadendal	3,000	3,100	3,050
Zoar	846	846	861
Elim	1,241	1,372	1,592
Amalienstn	?	?	951
OVERBERG	6,615	6,855	7,547
Steinthal	300	300	300
CENTRAL REGION	300	300	300
Ezeljacht	-	60	128
DyzalsKraal	99	400	1,300
Pacaltsdorp	745	563	226
Avontuur	267	257	
MIDLANDS REGION	1,101	1,280	1,654
Komaggas	?		
LilyFoutn	700	700	
Ebenezer	375	375	4,773
Steinkopf	?		
Cncordia	?		
Wupperthal	350	350	800
PASTORAL W COAST REGION	1,425	1,425	5,573
TOTAL WESTERN CAPE	(?)12,108	(?)13,981	21,422

1. For sources see Table 2 footnotes. Figures exclude the missions of the pastoral interior region.

Tenants' labour commitments varied. Some paid rents and were obliged to work only during peak-seasonal periods. By 1859 there were increasing reports of a,

class of men called 'Bywoners' who farm a place, not for wages, but for some remunerative privilege, such as the right to plough for themselves so many morgen of ground, and a right to run so many head of cattle, or a certain share in the increase of stock under their charge. (1)

Bywoners were mostly the descendants of settler-farmers whose land-holdings became increasingly unviable. This was generally because farms were subdivided into ever-decreasing portions among the children of each successive generation in compliance with Cape inheritance laws.² Some farms were so subdivided, or carried so many relatives, each with a share in the farm, that some 'farmers' simply had to leave. They often became bywoners. However, the number of bywoners in the western Cape remained relatively small up to the 1860s: it was still possible for marginalised farmers to emigrate into the pastoral regions or beyond the colony's borders; the inheritance laws had only begun to marginalise significant numbers of farmers.

From 1853 to 1860, wheat production in Oudtshoorn Division was second only to that of Malmesbury Division despite the fact that there were only about fifteen hundred mission occupants in the Midlands.³ It is likely that farmers in the Midlands depended largely on tied tenants and, to a smaller extent, bywoners for seasonal labour. The western-Cape tenantry also seemed to be particularly concentrated on farms in the eastern Overberg and parts of the Central region.⁴

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1. CO.53.96., C.C.R., 1859, *Zwellingen*.
 2. CO.53.97/103/4., C.C.R., *Western Divisions*, *passim*, 1860/66/67; *Z.A.*, Jan. 26, 1866; A21-67., Registrar of Deeds Report, *passim*.
 3. Tables 2 and 10.
 4. CO.53.97/104., C.C.R., *Western Divs.*, *passim*, 1860/7; C.W.M., Box 32, Fold. 5, Jack. E, *Dysselsdorp*, 1862; *Z.A.*, June 6, 1864; *C.M.*, Aug. 12, 1854; *C.S.*, Aug. 11, 1866; C3-62., R.S.C., *Irrigation*, p. 26-32.

B. Coercion and resistance: patterning the relations of production.

Emancipatory legislation, such as Ordinance 50 of 1828, the abolition of slavery in 1834, and the abolition of ex-slaves' apprenticeships in 1838, swept aside substantial controls on labour supply. Ideological justification for these measures originated in the doctrine of laissez-faire and a belief in unfettered market relations. This may have been suited to the conditions of early industrial Britain, but it was wholly inappropriate to the western Cape. Here, capital accumulation, among wheat farmers and others, depended upon state intervention in the labour market to increase the participation of the existing population in agricultural production.

Farmers in the western Cape demanded coercive legislation. They wanted an amended and stricter version of the 1841 Masters and Servants Law and a Squatters Ordinance, to secure a cheap supply of workers and offset the labour-loss they suffered as a result of emancipation. Workers and peasants, however, generally regarded these laws as measures for their re-enslavement. As we have seen, this conflict of perceived interests developed into the crisis of the years 1848 to 1853. The likelihood of an imperial veto prevented the government of the day from tampering with the 1841 Masters and Servants Ordinance. Similarly, the possibility of insurrection compelled the Cape government to withdraw the Squatters Bill of 1851. Farmers remained dissatisfied.

Almost immediately after the newly-constituted parliament met in 1854,

J. C. Molteno warned:

deep and general dissatisfaction ... [among farmers had] only been kept down, and the evils patiently born ... by the general feeling that, during the transition state the legislature of the

colony was in, no action could reasonably be expected on the part of Government. (1)

In 1855, a Parliamentary Select Committee investigated the Masters and Servants Ordinance. It endorsed the farmers' demands for amendments to the Act.²

The 1853 constitution provided the colonial ruling class with greater legislative autonomy. Furthermore, commercial-farming interests were better represented in the legislature after 1853. The 'commercial middle class' had assumed power at the Cape.³ Among them were those wealthy commercial farmers who represented a number of the rural western-Cape constituencies in the House of Assembly. A group of these men, namely: F. Duckitt and H. Loedolff, Members for Malmesbury; A.J. Tancred for the Longkloof area; J.H. Wicht for Clanwilliam; and D.G. van Breda of the Legislative Council, all rallied to the support of J.C. Molteno. Molteno was the Member of the Legislative Assembly for Beaufort West Division and the first Prime Minister of the colony under Responsible Government in 1873. This group of parliamentarians ushered the new Masters and Servants Act, No. 15 of 1856, through the legislature.⁴ They did so in the context of agitation by local Field Cornets, Civil Commissioners, and numerous petitions, appeals and resolutions passed at public meetings by farmers.⁵

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1. S.A.C.A., July 18, 1854. In 1849, Government questionnaires to rural inhabitants about the 1846 Masters and Servants Law, showed that most employers felt that, 'the old Ordinance was too tender to the servant and partly responsible for their labour troubles'. Marais, Cape Coloured People, 205.
 2. S.A.C.A., Feb. 20, 1855.
 3. Kirk, 'British and Cape Politics', 490-511. In 1859, the Legislative Council had 15 members, five were agriculturists. The House of Assembly had 46 members, fourteen were agriculturists. C.M.A., Feb. 21, 1859.
 4. Marais, Cape Coloured People, 205; S.A.C.A., Mar. 18, Apr. 22, 1856, June 29, 1854.
 5. See for example CO.53.93., C.C.R. ^{Parly} 1856; S.A.C.A., Apr. 5, Mar. 31, Feb. 17, Jan. 23, 1855, June 29, 1854, Apr. 22, 1856.

The 1856 Masters and Servants Act did not re-introduce the racially exclusive definition of servants that characterised the 1839 Masters and Servants Act. The Act did, however, represent a return from the provisions of the 1841 Masters and Servants law to the harsher measures embodied in the 1839 Masters and Servants law, which the Colonial Office refused to sanction on grounds that it ran contrary to the '[laissez-faire] spirit of Ordinance 50'.¹ In one important respect the 1856 law even went beyond the 1839 proposals. It provided for a five-year limit on written contracts between masters and servants. This contrasts with the three-year limit provided for in the 1839 law and the one-year limit provided for in the 1841 law. Significantly, the Colonial Office had rejected the three-year proposal of 1839, along with other similarly coercive interventions in the labour market, as 'akin to the faulty and degrading system of compulsory labour'.²

The law expanded those legal provisions which bound child labour to employers. It increased the age limit for apprenticed males to eighteen years of age from the sixteen-year age limit provided for in the 1841 law. In 1856, it became possible for masters to retain children against the demands of parents or guardians. To do so, masters had simply to show magistrates that it was for the benefit of the child to remain with the employer. This contrasts with the 1841 law that stipulated that illegally detained children should automatically be returned to parental or guardian custody if they could be found. Furthermore, the penalty for unlawful detention of child apprentices was reduced, in 1856, to a maximum fine of 20s. and not less than 5s., from the already lenient 20s. fine laid down by the 1841 law. Fines

1. See above chapter 1.

2. Ibid. Macmillan, Cape Colour Question, 225.

for the unlawful detention of child apprentices were payable to the parents or guardians and, if destitute, to the magistrate, in terms of provisions in the 1841 law. The 1856 law, however, made these fines payable to a public-treasury fund to reimburse farmers and other employers for all expenses incurred for the maintenance of destitute children up to the age of apprenticeship! The 1856 law embodied several other provisions that introduced stricter regulation of the relations between masters and servants.¹

The penal aspects of the law are worth consideration. The number of punishable offences that servants could commit as 'misconduct' increased from eight clauses in 1841 to twenty-eight in 1856. In 1856, 'misconduct' rendered servants liable for one month's imprisonment with/without hard-labour for : first convictions; six weeks' hard labour for second offences; and two months' with solitary confinement and with/without spare diet for 'aggravated' cases. Furthermore, the 1856 law provided that:

in order to save time and expense, servants are required to attend before a magistrate on written orders of their masters without a summons to the effect.

Finally, the 1856 law provided for criminal action, at public expense, for servants' breaches of the masters and servants contract, but provided for civil action, at private expense, for masters' breaches of the contract between masters and servants.²

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1. For example: non-resident labourers were bound to remain in the service of an employer who moved up to ten miles from his/her residence. The 1841 Law provided for a two-mile limit in such cases. The 1856 Law embodied a new provision whereby servants were bound to undertake 'journeys' with livestock if ordered to do so by employers. The 1856 Law abolished the 1841 provision which entitled servants to claim damages of three times the sum of any deductions from wages.
 2. Macmillan, Cape Coloured Question, 255; Irons, Settlers Guide, 229/30; Marais, Cape Coloured People, 205-7; C.M.A., Feb. 6, 1869; C. Bundy, 'The Abolition of the Masters and Servants Act', South African Labour Bulletin, 1979, Vol. 2.

The 1856 law advanced coercive state intervention in the 'free-labour market' on behalf of western-Cape employers. In 1866, after ten years' observation of the workings of the 1856 law, the Civil Commissioner of Mossel Bay reported:

the Act may be necessary, but it appears rather one-sided. In ninety cases out of one hundred it may be seen in all summary courts: the servant goes into the dock and the master into the witness box, and then it is oath against statement and no other witness. (1)

The degree to which the masters and servants law of 1856 satisfied demands for more effective and stricter laws to bind servants is further evidenced by the fact that the 1856 law was still in force² a hundred years later. The Governor admitted in 1856 that, 'the summary jurisdiction now exercised by individual magistrates is greater than that exercised by any other British officers occupying like positions.'³ There is evidence that magistrates favoured employers in disputes governed by a law that was, in any event, biased in favour of the employer.⁴

The Masters and Servants law was not only designed to retain a discipl-

1. CO.53.100., C.C.R., Mossel Bay, 1866; Marais, Cape Coloured People, 207.
2. Although it was construed with several amendments. See below, chapter 3, E.
3. A1-66, Governor's Speech, 1866, p.6.
4. The case of the reaper, Samuel Beer, in 1866 is a clear example of biased jurisdiction. Magistrate Hofmeyer of the Riversdale circuit court jailed Beer for three weeks, with hard labour, and without remuneration for harvest work already done. He did so despite the evidence of three employers that Beer's employer, a Mr van Zyl, had assaulted him first for cutting too slowly. No right of appeal to the Supreme court against Magistrates' sentences existed in cases where sentences involved punishments of less than one month. C.A., Apr. 5, 1862; S.A.A.M., Mar. 17, 1866. In Dec. 1856, the Caledon Magistrate began to hold a periodical court at Genadendal. Some indication of Magistrate Haw's sympathies arises from the fact that he fined A. Duminy of Genadendal £1, 'because he sold wheat without a licence'. Duminy's wife quite correctly, queried this decision and found that no such licence was required. It seems that Haw was concerned to limit Genadendalers' access to markets. S.A.C.A., Oct. 26, 1864; M.P.A., Dec., 1856, Genadendal. For a similar case at Hondeklip Bay see, M.M.S., Box 309, Lily Fountain, June, 1857.

lined work force in the service of employers: it legalized the apprenticeships of child-captives who were taken in armed raids on communities that were settled on public land in the pastoral interior; the apprenticeships of children who were declared 'destitute' by local officials throughout the western Cape; and the apprenticeships of juvenile ex-slaves who were released from captured slave ships.¹ In 1864, the slave-ship, *Rapide*, delivered 187 ex-slaves to the western Cape: 'mostly juveniles ... [they were] apprenticed to respectable colonists under the normal conditions'.²

Opposition to the Masters and Servants Law of 1856 developed within the ruling class. It originated from Cape merchant interests who were represented in parliament by F.W. Silberbauer, S. Solomon, J. Barry, and others. They argued that the law was an offensive piece of 'class legislation', which gave 'advantage to the strong as against the weak, and the rich as against the poor'.³ They echoed views expressed in the early 1840s: that coerced labour was impermissible; and that imported labourers would increase labour-supply, suffice to meet employers' demand, and cause a drop in local wage rates. Their arguments rested upon the premise that purchasers and sellers of labour

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1. Editions of the Z.A. in 1855 and 1867 reveal the workings of the Masters and Servants Law as regards 'destitute' children. Abdul Jack, for example, 'a boy of colour about 15 years of age ... has been brought to the gaol of Malmesbury ... in a state of destitution'. The Resident Magistrate of Bredasdorp reported that, 'a boy of about the age of nine years calling himself William Harrison Look, has been brought up to me, by a Mr P.L. de Bruyn of Holdrift, at Kars River, district of Bredasdorp, who found him ... the boy is said to have been wandering in the neighbourhood'. Jack's parents lived at Waterkant at Cape Town and Look lived with his mother's sister at Bredasdorp. The authorities' press statements concerning the two boys reads: 'the relatives who may be interested in the boys are requested to communicate with the respective magistrates within six weeks, after which time, if not provided for, and taken care of, they will be apprenticed'. C.M., Mar. 11, 1854.
 2. S.A.C.A., Jan. 23, Feb. 20, 1864.
 3. C.M.A., Feb., 1869.

met at the market from positions of total equality. This was patently false, but ideologically integral to Cape liberalism and notions of 'free enterprise'.

A contemporary report in the Cape Monitor stated their case as follows:

The movement to amend the law is purely that of masters -- ... the employer feels the present law too lax -- he wants labour more than he can get it ... the fact is that the demand for labour is much greater than supply, and whilst this exists, no Masters and Servants law can make the relationship satisfactory as between employer and the employed.

The article supported the Governor's view that immigration and increased supply were the proper solution.¹

Concurrent with official attempts to secure a cheap and regular supply of labour on farms, were farmers' unofficial measures to secure farm labour. Debt peonage was one of these. The Civil Commissioner of Calvinia reported:

the Hottentots borrow off the masters and bind themselves to serve for the debt; and a system of servitude, very much resembling hopeless slavery, is perpetuated ... thus the Hottentots prefer ... squatting. (2)

There were similar reports from Malmesbury Division. Farmers advanced money to labourers, 'many months before harvest-time', this practice resulted in widespread indebtedness: '... labourers in general are almost always in debt'.³ Indebtedness bound regular resident labourers to their employers for ever-increasing periods of service and tied casual labourers to farms for periods of seasonal labour.

1. C.M., Mar. 19, 26, 1856; A7-56., Appendix B, page 3, in which the Governor's views were most clearly expressed: 'how largely might the production of grain and wine, at this end of the colony be increased with a better supply of labour ... introduce a few thousand individuals, many other thousands would follow in their wake and prejudices against English immigrants would subside.'
2. CO.53.95., C.C.R., 1858, Calvinia.
3. CO.53.97., C.C.R., Malmesbury, 1860; for other incidents of debt peonage see M.M.S., Box 309, Cape Town, Feb., 1855; C.A., Mar. 18, 1866; C.W.M., Box 33, Fold. 1, Jack. C, Zuurbraak, 1863; U.S.P.G., D'Urban, 1859; M.P.A., Aug. 1858, Mamre.

Perhaps the most brutal of the unofficial measures to secure farm labourers were the western-Cape farmers' armed raids on the occupants of public land. There is evidence that groups of transhumant pastoralists who held and cultivated land in the Hantam, Bokkeveld, and Roggeveld of Clanwilliam, Calvinia, Tulbagh, and Worcester Divisions, mounted these commando raids during the 1850s and 1860s. They did so, not only because they 'coveted the land' in the northern pastoral region, but also to acquire labour. For example, in 1856 and 1857, at the 'Boschduif Massacre', 'little children who were found alive ... were taken by the farmers'. In similar raids, 'only a few little children escaped and they were distributed among the people comprising the commando'. Such occurrences are likely to have been commonplace during the numerous 'commando raids', 'hunting parties', and 'shoot parties' that were mounted against the increasing number of Khoisan who were dispossessed as a result of expanding commercial wool-farming in the pastoral western Cape.¹

The rural underclasses were aware of the extent to which the policies of central government influenced their lives. Some perceived the dangers of the 1853 constitution: it devolved greater political power onto a local ruling class which included a strong lobby of commercial farmers. Genadendalers were 'filled with apprehension',² A report from Paarl explained:

one idea which was widespread among the coloured classes and not confined to this locality was that the Queen's government was about to cease .. that an attempt was being made to reduce them to slavery and to register themselves as voters for the coming parliament would be the first link in the binding chain, and an act of their own. (3)

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1. Based on C.P.P., Enclosures re north-western districts, 1863, Vol. 2; cf., P. Delius and S. Trapido, 'Inboekselings and Oorlams. The creation and transformation of a servile class', J.S.A.S., Vol. 8, No. 2, 1982. See also, C.S., Jan. 9, 1868.
 2. Raum, 'Genadendal', 72.
 3. C.W.M., Box 28, Fold. 4, Jack. A, Paarl, 1854.

The Old Party at Zuurbraak rejected the 1853 constitution and called for a boycott of the 1854 parliamentary elections. 'The Old Party will not vote and they are doing their utmost to dissuade others from voting.'¹ An advocate of the constitution complained that the public

meetings he held to promote the constitution ended in confusion when

a number of bad characters among the coloured people headed by an Englishman rushed in ... to oppose me, this created ... an uncomfortable feeling for a time. (2)

Opposition to the constitution was not channelled into organizations that were able to challenge its implementation seriously, however. Furthermore, the twenty-five pound property-qualification was low enough to induce many to vote. The enfranchised of Genadendal and Elim, for example, voted with a view to returning liberal representatives of commercial interests to parliament. This, they hoped, would effectively thwart the belligerent legislative initiatives of commercial-farming interests. Coercive interventions in the labour market were among those issues which were objectionable to both liberals, who supported the 'free market', and mission occupants, who were liable to be proletarianized by force.³

The rural underclasses could not, and did not, only rely on the parliamentary liberals to oppose measures they considered contrary to their interests. The Burgher Force Ordinance of 1855 was a measure

1. C.W.M., Box 28, Fold. 2, Jack. A, Zuurbraak, Mar. 1853; C.W.M., Box 30, Fold. 2, Jack. A, Zuurbraak, June, Jack. B, Zuurbraak, 1856; C.W.M., Box 31, Fold. 2, Jack. B, Zuurbraak, 1858; C.W.M., Box 29, Fold. 1, Jack. C, Cape Town, Feb., 1854.
2. C.W.M., Box 28, Fold. 4, Jack. A, Paarl, 1854.
3. Trapido, 'Cape Politics'. On the support of Genadendalers for F.W. Silberbauer, M.P. for Caledon, see for example, M.P.A., Genadendal, Diary, 1861. Farmer-sponsored initiatives which they might have hoped to thwart were: coercive labour legislation; denial of access to land, education and the vote. 'The Dutch dislike[d] the £25 franchise because it rendered their late slaves and negro apprentices their equals at the hustings'. C.A., May 25, 1853.

which, when applied, simultaneously affected a number of people in any particular locality. The Ordinance was intended to forge civil militia out of local inhabitants to defend each Division against external attack or internal disorder. It proved to be a potential source of considerable opposition. In January 1856, the George Divisional Council posted the lists it had compiled of those people in the Division who were liable for military conscription. Three thousand people demonstrated against the military call-up outside of the public offices in George Town.

On the evening of the 22nd instant [January, 1856] the coloured people were to be seen lying in camps or grounds in the commonage just out and on the north side of the town where they remained until daybreak when they were seen in large parties wending their way to the court house ... Of the coloured people I may say that everyone of them in this large district appeared at the divisional court this day ... (1)

A similar demonstration developed into 'a riot' at the Stellenbosch court.²

It appears that the protesters were under the impression that they were being summoned to participate in a military mobilization for which they perceived no need and about which they were likely to have held suspicions. When the Magistrates at both towns read the Burgher Force Act through to the protesters, it became clear that the Ordinance was not a general levy. The crowds moved off quite peacefully. It is significant that the type of blanket levy, which the Burgher Force Ordinance made possible, was not implemented in the western Divisions during the second half of the nineteenth century.

The western Cape was, during the years 1856 to 1867, not the scene of a dramatic struggle which involved rebellion, strike and public protest.

1. S.A.C.A., Feb. 2, 1856.

2. S.A.C.A., Jan. 22, 1856.

Much of the struggle was quiet and continuous. The opposition to coercive labour legislation, exploitation, and the hostility to coloured civil rights often took place at the farms and in rural villages. Although diffuse it was, in some instances, effective.

Generally, 'little liberality [was] exhibited between employers and employed' in the rural western Cape.¹ Labour withdrawals were the main weapon of regular and casual farm workers. It was not unusual for farm workers to 'leave at once if one angry word is spoken'.² More often, workers simply avoided those agrarian employers who under-paid or made excessive demands. Labour boycotts and withdrawals could be devastating for particularly unpopular employers. In 1855, there were certain farms where:

whole crops [were] destroyed in consequence of the labourers staying away on the most frivolous pretences when they are most wanted ... the present labourers know that the farmers cannot do without them. (3)

Labourers also frequently did not appear at work for farmers who had bound them to seasonal-labour obligations by means of debt peonage.⁴ Every harvest season opened with a spate of prosecutions in rural Magistrates' Courts for non-payment of debts.⁵ It was time-consuming and difficult for farmers to regain their losses. Furthermore, successful prosecutions carried the risk of earning the farmer a bad reputation among labourers.

Although day labourers were among the rural poor who depended upon

1. CO.53.93., C.C.R., 1856, Paarl.

2. Irons, Settlers Guide, 53.

3. S.A.C.A., Mar. 27, 1855.

4. M.P.A., Mamre, extracts from diary between July and Dec., 1860.

5. CO.53.97., C.C.R.,^{M₁ 1855} 1860; M.M.S., Box 309, Lily Fountain, June, 1857; C.M., Apr. 18, 1855.

wage incomes, they were not dependent on any single employer. They therefore retained a degree of choice and mobility which, combined with the high seasonal demand for their services, placed them in a relatively strong bargaining position. These advantages were, to some extent, lost to those casual labourers whose occasional services formed part of tenancy agreements.

Regular resident farm workers did not enjoy the same degree of autonomy as casual workers. They also fell within the jurisdiction of the Masters and Servants Law. As a result, they were the least able to resist what they perceived to be exploitation, without falling foul of the penal aspects of the law. This contributed to the prevailing reluctance to engage as regular farm-workers and a preference for casual day-work: 'the labourers prefer this description of service to a permanent monthly engagement however comfortable'.¹ Long-term service on farms carried the stigma of slavery: '... the Coloured people look upon apprenticeship or "inboeking" their children ... as the traditional badge of slavery'.² Furthermore, the Masters and Servants Law was difficult to administer effectively; desertions were frequent, and 'misconduct' often went unpunished.

Immigrants who worked on western-Cape farms were among those who withdrew from regular farm work relatively easily. By 1855, wheat and wine farmers had successfully agitated for a law that made five-year contracts, entered into abroad, legally binding at the Cape.³ Between 1856 and 1867, approximately two thousand British immigrants, predominantly farm labourers, had, at Government expense, been trans-

1. CO.53.97., C.C.R., Robertson, Oudtshoorn, 1860.

2. CO.53.104., C.C.R., Mossel Bay, 1867.

3. S.A.C.A., Feb. 25, 1854, Mar. 8, Feb. 20, Jan. 6, 1855.

ported to the rural western Cape.¹ While most of the approximately thirty thousand Nguni immigrants entered employment in the eastern Cape after the cattle-killing episode of 1857, a number did engage as farm workers in the western Cape.² Despite their inflow, however, immigrants did not prove to be reliable regular farm workers.

Commercial farmers in Malmesbury and Worcester Divisions complained that British and German immigrant farm workers, 'so soon became independent' small farmers themselves, or emigrated. There is little evidence that labourers bound themselves contractually to farmers in the western Cape before leaving Britain and they were therefore able to avoid the pitfalls of the Masters and Servants Act.³ Many immigrants would only engage in short and 'precarious' contracts, or avoided farm work altogether and remained in Cape Town. They were reluctant to enter contracts which would place them within the realm of the Masters and Servants penal code; and were unwilling to subject themselves to the 'prejudices attending to the position of servant traditional from slavery'.⁴ The Zuid Afrikaan explained in 1865 that immigrant labourers

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1. A total of 5,492 immigrants arrived at the western Cape during the years 1856 to 1861. Almost one half of these were concentrated in Cape Town. The rest permeated into virtually every area of the rural western Cape. The 'class of immigrants' were: 'first agricultural labourers of all descriptions, shepherds, mechanics, and secondly such other immigrants as will promote the filling up of the country in the Western and Eastern Divisions'. S.A.C.A., May 1, Mar. 18, 1856; G29-61., Immigration Board Report, p. 1-14; U.S.P.G., Lower Paarl, Riversdale, 1860; C.A., Jan. 19, 1860; Z.A., Apr. 7, 1864; M.M.S., Box 310, Robertson, Feb., 1860; G31-61., Immigration Statements, *passim*.
 2. On eastern-Cape employment see for example: S. Dubow, Land, Labour and Merchant Capital: the experience of the Graaf Reinet District in the pre-industrial rural economy of the Cape, 1852-72, University of Cape Town, 1982, *passim*.
 3. Irons, Settlers Guide, 59, 67, 126;
S.A.C.A., July 6, June 29, 1863; C.M., Aug. 12, 1854. About a hundred immigrants emigrated from Cape Town to New Zealand in 1864; the overwhelming majority remained. S.A.C.A., July 22, Aug. 20, Feb. 20, 1864; C.A., Oct. 20, 1864; C.P.P., Worcester Petition, July, 1860; U.S.P.G., Malmesbury, Oct., 1859; C.A., 1861, *passim*.
 4. U.S.P.G., Stellenbosch, 1860, p. 46/7.

were 'accustomed to such wages and diet as private individuals cannot afford'.¹ There was a fairly widespread view that pay and working conditions, on western Cape farms, were unacceptable to immigrants: the Xhosa refused to eat 'stinking fish'; furthermore,

the work of the sickle in this country is, ... very severe and persons of experience are of the opinion that European labourers could not supply the place of the native in this respect. With their children grown up in this colony it would probably be different. (2)

Some of the immigrant farm labourers, who served their apprenticeships or contracts, assimilated with local labourers and joined, or set up their own, households on mission stations or public land. Others became urban artisans or casual workers. A few left for Australia or New Zealand. Reports in 1857 and 1861 on the English children, who were apprenticed to western-Cape farmers in the 1830s, reveal that many had 'almost forgotten their language ... they are mostly associated with the coloured classes.' Some British observers were perturbed by this.

I have received abundant evidence, both from the boers to whom they were apprenticed, and others who watched their career, that with few exceptions, they turned out badly; mixed up with the coloured population, they have become degraded in character and social position, and more dissipated than their associates. (3)

Other workers who took up resident regular farm-work during this period withdrew from farms as soon as their contracts ended. A report from George stated that the,

... Kafirs, and Fingoes and Mantatees ... all find employment. Their stay however, is but short. After remaining a few months

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1. Z.A., Mar. 2, 1865; See also C.P.P., Worcester petition, July, 1860.
 2. C.P.P., Corresp. re immigration, Report of Dr Way, p.95.
 3. U.S.P.G., Zwellendam, Mar., 1862; C.P.P., R.S.C., Lands in freeholds to Hottentots, 1854; Irons, Settlers Guide, 45,59; C.P.P., Corresp. re immigration, 1859.

with the farmers, at the expiration of their engagements, they apply for passes back ... (1)

Similar reports emanated from Mossel Bay and by 1864 nearly all the 'Mantatee and Basutoland Kafirs' who were scattered about Paarl and Malmesbury Divisions 'have returned with their gains'.² Some of these took jobs in the public sector on the dock-, rail- and roadworks. Others settled on public land, a few on mission land. Most left the western Cape altogether.

Those workers who remained on western-Cape farms did so for a variety of reasons. No doubt, fear of the penal sanctions embodied in labour law, or the consequences of failing to pay off debts, played a part in dissuading some workers from deserting. Many of those who remained as regular workers probably saw little alternative in their struggle for existence. It is possible that there were farm labourers who were reconciled with their lot.

However, potential conflict was integral to long-term work agreements with farmers, 'who still retain much of the old notions and customs of slave times in their treatment of servants'.³ There is evidence of instances where antagonism between employer and employee deteriorated into violence. Farmers assaulted labourers and vice versa.⁴ In her recent penetrating study of arson in late nineteenth century rural Germany, Regina Schulte found that most arsonists were farm hands or maids, and that their chief motive was revenge.⁵ Incidents of arson

1. CO.53.96., C.C.R., 1859, *Oudtshoorn*.

2. CO.53.100., C.C.R., Mossel Bay, and western Divs. , *passim*, 1863.

3. U.S.P.G., Stellenbosch, 1860.

4. See for example, *C.M.A.*, Feb. 12, 1859; *S.A.C.A.*, Jan. 6, 1855; *M.M.S.*, Box 310, *Robertson*, Feb., 1860.

5. R. Schulte, 'Arson in rural Germany in the late nineteenth century', conference paper, 'Domination as Social Practice', Hamburg, Oct. 1983.

at the western Cape were analogous. A sense of injustice or humiliation occasionally compelled labourers to take revenge. Every occasion on which a farmhouse burnt down did not entail arson. But incidents did occur which suggest that labourers attempted to redress the balance, by revenge, in situations where the law made no provision for legal redress. J. Human, the member of the Legislative Assembly for Buffelsjachts River in Zwellendam Division, had his house burnt down for the third time in 1864. Similarly, Betje, 'a young Kafir girl about fourteen years of age', was indicted for arson: 'at Ratel River ... she set fire to the house of M.L.A. Michael van Breda'. In 1866, a fire destroyed the entire farmhouse and outbuildings of a Mr Mc Dougal near Groeneberg in Malmesbury Division. The man responsible for the fire was a 'fellow who, injudiciously for some misdemeanour or other, was last week flogged on the farm'.¹

The relative isolation of resident farm-workers, their total dependence on wage incomes, and lack of autonomous sources of income and support, made it difficult for them to act politically other than in an individual, spasmodic, and defensive capacity. For all farm-workers, however, the most effective form of struggle, and indeed the most prevalent, was to minimise dependence on regular wage labour, or avoid it altogether if possible. Before the 1870s, these depended largely on the extent to which they could secure access to land and the viability of small-scale production.

1. C.A., Sept. 10, 1861, Feb. 18, 1864; For other arson attacks see C.S., Mar. 26, 1867.

C. Proletarians, privatisers and property rights: land regulations and social structuring.

... scarcity of labour is not owing to scarcity of hands, but to the difficulty of getting the hands to work. The principle cause of this is I believe, the facility with which the native can squat comfortably on Government ground, where he can exercise his predominating prosperity, whether it be industriously cultivating his garden, tending his flock or what is not uncommon, living at the expense of the farmer. (1)

Most accounts of changing landholding patterns in the western Cape treat the process as an inevitable outcome of a unilinear trend of progress or improvement. The influence of the market eroded what are presented as inefficient agrarian arrangements. The assumptions about changes in the distribution and usage of land, and the laws that regulated the changes, are often implicit and covert. The main-springs of changing property relations are left for the reader to deduce from the empirical evidence presented.² L.C. Duly's in-depth examination of the legal instruments for the systematic colonisation of the Cape largely disregards the effects upon, and responses of, the Cape Nguni, Khoisan, emancipated slaves, and their descendants. The author does so on the grounds that this omission reflected the

Road Surveys, p.46.

1. Gl-61, 'Native' includes Khoisan and ex-slaves in this context.
2. For an analogous critique see R.A. Butlin who looks at the different approaches to historical Geography in his book, The Transformation of Rural England, 1580-1800, Oxford, 1982. Examples of the type of account of nineteenth-century landholding in the Cape referred to are: De Kock, Economic History; Scholtz, 'Onder-Olifants'; Appel, 'Oudtshoorn'; van Zyl, 'Wynbou'; Marais, Cape Coloured People; Macmillan, 'The Problem of the Coloured People, 1792-1842', in E.A. Walker, ed., Cambridge History of the British Empire, Vol. 8, Cambridge, 1963, and The Cape Colour Question, A Historical Survey, London, 1927; one notable exception is Mnguni, psdm., Three Hundred Years, Cape Town, 1952. S. Dubow, Land, Labour and Merchant Capital and Kirk, 'Kat River', in Marks and Atmore, Economy and Society, both present new insights into the Cape land question.

nature of colonial land policy.¹ Historians who have considered conflicts over land during the nineteenth century, often present these in the context of frontier skirmishes between settler-colonisers and indigenous tribes.² Furthermore, historians have proposed a confusing array of arbitrary dates in their speculations about a point during the nineteenth century by which the dispossession and proletarianization of the 'coloureds' or Khoisan was finally complete.³

Yet changing property relations were an integral feature of, and not incidental to, the economic and social fabric of agrarian society. Cape land laws never ceased in their proletarianizing and dispossessing functions during the nineteenth century. In general, they facilitated a continuing⁴ assault on the rights to usage and commonality in

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1. 'The emancipation of the slaves, the granting of civil rights to the Hottentots and the Cape Coloured, and the protection of the Bantu were projects considered outside of the context of land policy ...' L.C. Duly, British Land Policy at the Cape, 1795-1844. A Study of Administrative Procedures in the Empire, Durham, 1968, p. 186.
 2. See for example T. Strauss, War along the Orange: The Korana and the Northern Border Wars of 1868-1869 and 1878-1879, Cape Town, 1979.
 3. Macmillan, Cape Colour Question, 27, 235; he says that the 'whole race' of 'Hottentots' were a landless proletariat by the 1820s. M. Simons, 'Organised Coloured Political Movements', in H.W. van der Merwe and C.J. Groenewald, Occupational and Social Change among the Coloured People in South Africa, Cape Town, 1976, p. 207, infers that the majority of 'Browns' were landless workers by 1890. Marais, Cape Coloured People, p. 8, says that 'Hottentots' were landless by 1800. Davenport, Afrikaner Bond, p. 35, and van der Horst, Native Labour, both suggest that 'Coloured landlessness' was complete by 1900. Kirk, 'British and Cape Politics', 297, and Purkis, 'Cape Railway Building', both say that most of the land was alienated by the late 1840s.
 4. See S. Marks, 'Khoisan Resistance to the Dutch in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries', J.A.H., xxiii, I, 1972, and Elphick, Kraal and Castle, for details of the process in the preceding period.

the public domain.¹ The effects of this were, at times, just as important in the 'old colony' or western Cape, as they were on the frontier zones of the northern or eastern Cape. In a sense, it is misleading to regard conflicts over land as having a frontline. There were occasions when Khoisan, Cape Nguni, and emancipated slaves exercised a decisive influence on colonial land policy. Finally, the laws that regulated landholding were themselves the product of a continuing interplay of social forces.²

Access to land was a focal point of the struggles that occurred in postemancipation societies.³ At the Cape, these struggles reached a climax as the parliamentary representatives of commercial farming interests attempted to legislate against squatters in 1851. The Squatters Bill of 1851 called into question the land rights of a large but unknown number of people in the western Cape who occupied

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1. Dubious official statistics create some impression of the extent of the public land in question.

TOTAL AREA OF THE COLONY		UNDISPOSED LAND	
1841-	87m. acres (136,000 sq. miles)	50m. acres	(78,000 sq. m.)(57%)
1855-117m.	" (183,000 " ")	70m. "	(109,000 " ")(60%)
1870-120m.	" (188,000 " ")	60m. "	(94,000 " ")(50%)

(excluding Kaffraria)

Western-Cape missions that were situated on public land consisted of about 519,000 acres (810 sq. miles) of land. The first fairly accurate evidence of the distribution of public land appears in the Surveyor General's figures of 'undisposed crown lands', in 1870, for several western-Cape Divisions.

Paarl	36 sq. miles	Fraserberg	9,923 sq. miles
Piquetberg	132 " "	Bredasdorp	142 " "
Malmesbury	36 " "	Caledon	430 " "
Clanwilliam	817 " "	Robertson	496 " "
Beaufort W.	662 " "	Zwellendam	272 " "
Tulbagh	1,654 " "	Worcester	2,646 " "
Victoria W.	2,977 " "	<u>TOTAL =</u>	<u>20,223 square miles</u> , excl-

uding Divisions for which figures are not available, namely, Cape, Stellenbosch, George, Knysna, Oudtshoorn and Namaqualand. *Stat. Rep.*, 1870.

2. For more details of the relationship between law and society in the western-Cape during this period, see J. Marincowitz, 'Proletarians Privatisers and Public Property Rights: Mission Land Regulations in the Western Cape between Emancipation and Industrialization', Paper, African History Seminar, S.O.A.S., Jan., 1985.
3. See for example, Foner, Nothing but Freedom; Cooper, From Slaves to Squatters; Craig, Contemporary Caribbean.

government land without exclusive title; among these were nearly nine thousand people who resided at those missions that were held 'on tickets of occupation'.¹ The 1851 Bill resulted in opposition from a very wide spectrum of people. Among them were: regular and casual farm labourers; harvest workers and peasants in the western Cape; rebel Nguni in the eastern Cape and frontier; and defecting levies and inhabitants from missions in both regions. In the early 1850s, the land issue formed an important and common element in both the Khoisan-ex-slave 'Hottentot Rebellion' and the Cape Nguni 'Eighth Kafir War'.² The crisis developed into the 'bloodiest page in the whole history of the Cape Colony'.³ For a time, elements of primary resistance to colonial rule, proto-nationalism and resistance to proletarianization threatened to engulf the entire colony in civil war. The Cape Legislature reversed its previous, unanimous support for the notorious Squatters Bill, to defuse the escalating crisis.⁴

Farmers and landholders throughout the western Cape continued to demand government action against 'squatters' after 1853.⁵ Soon after self-government, official attention focused, once more, on rights of access to public property. Official attempts to limit workers' and peasants' autonomy on public land continued. However, different means were employed. Divisional Councils, armed with Crown- and Mission Land Ordinances, facilitated locally-directed, piecemeal actions. What had changed was the centrally-directed, blanket action against squatters. This had provoked an outrage on a scale sufficient to

1. Table 2.

2. L. Marquard, The Story of South Africa, London, 1954, 164.

3. Handbook to South Africa, London, 1981, p. 57-9.

4. Above, chapter 1.

5. See for example, the petitions from Piquetberg in 1855, S.A.C.A., Apr. 7, 1855; petition from Tulbagh in 1856, S.A.C.A., Jan. 1, 1856; the appeals from Prince Albert Division in 1855, S.A.C.A., Feb. 17, 1855.

compel the government to retreat on its 1851 Squatters Bill. Policy was now more subtle.

Public-land policies of the 1840s stipulated that lands could only be sold at an upset price of 2s. per acre, in freehold title, at public auctions. This changed after 1853. A series of land-laws¹ provided for their alienation by means of freeholds, quitrents, leaseholds and licenses. Parliament introduced these changes because so little public land was sold between 1844 and 1853. Those concerned to hasten the processes whereby exclusive titles rendered tracts of public land the property of individuals, formed an influential body in parliament: farmers who suffered from labour shortages were often eager to proletarianize 'squatters' on public land; aspirant landholders who could not afford freeholds perceived, in these regulations, cheaper ways to attain title to land; and government officials were often keen to commercialize public-land resources as a policy of economic development and source of revenue.²

After 1853 there arose two specific points of departure from previous government policy regarding rights of access to 'unappropriated Crown Lands'. The first concerned the alienation of public property by leaseholds and licences. This brought land titles within the means of a far greater number of the western Cape's inhabitants. Crown-land regulations provided for sales: 'subject to an annual quitrent on the land and at a reserved price which should be for every lot sold, the cost of inspection, survey and title deeds'. In cases where the land

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1. The important laws in these respects were: Government Notice, 357 of 1856; Act 5 of 1855; the Apportionment of Quitrent Act of 1856; the 1860 and 1864 Crown Lands Acts; the 1867 and 1868 Squatters and Grazing Licences Acts.
 2. Based on: S.A.C.A., Jan. 20, 1855, Apr. 21, 1855, Sept. 16, 1854; Duly, Land Policy, 182; C.P.P., R.S.C., Crown Land Sales, July, 1854, passim; A55-60., Return on granting Looriesfontein to the Bastards, passim; CO.53.94., C.C.R., 1860, Appendices on Squatting, Western Divs., passim.

had been occupied over a period of time, they were to be granted to the occupiers in freehold at charges of ten years back-pay in quit-rents plus expenses of survey, inspection and title; or alternatively leased to occupants for 'a moderate quitrent'. In cases where the proof of ownership was lost, or the land in question lay adjacent to private property, the 'original occupiers' or contiguous proprietor, respectively, could secure freehold or leasehold tenures, at a price not less than the cost of survey, inspection and title. By 1868, tenure by freehold, leasehold or licence was a prerequisite for legal occupation of all land. In effect, rural dwellers were divided into farmer-landholders or illegal squatters.¹

Legislation that regulated access to 'unappropriated Crown Lands' after 1853 featured a second major innovation. Unprecedented control over the alienation of public property devolved upon local authorities. An official report on Crown lands in 1854 suggested that a 'board', which the Civil Commissioner should preside over, be appointed in each Division. Each board would inspect the 'unappropriated Crown Lands', in their Division. They would assess their value in terms of such criteria as suitability for agriculture, stock and closeness to markets. They would also subdivide the land into farms; assess quit-rents; arrange the surveys; structure the credit arrangements over a period of years; and sell or lease the public land. The boards would decide potentially contentious issues such as who the 'original occupiers' were, or which contiguous proprietor would be entitled to land adjacent to several proprietors.²

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1. Ibid; C.M.A., Apr. 30, 1859; S.A.C.A., May 6, 1863, Apr. 2, July 25, 1864; C.P.P., Act regulating disposal of Crown Land, No. 2, 1860; C.A., June 16, 1863.
 2. S.A.C.A., Jan. 20, 1855, Apr. 21, 1855, Sept. 16, 1854; Duly, Land Policy, 182-4; C.P.P., R.S.C., Crown Lands Sales, July, 1854, passim; A55-60., Return on Granting Looresfontein to the Bastards, passim.

Act 5 of 1855 implemented these recommendations. It provided for the election of members to the first Cape Divisional Council and defined its rights over public land. By the end of 1856, Divisional Councils were established at Paarl, Clanwilliam, Caledon, Worcester, Beaufort West and Malmesbury Divisions. Others followed.¹ The Councils enjoyed substantial local powers. For example: they controlled local taxes for Divisional roads; granted liquor licences; and controlled the local militia.²

The local bureaucracy derived substantial benefits from their control over public land. By 1863, public-land sales effectively placed £40,000 at the disposal of the Divisional Councils. Besides their authority to decide the value of the public lands to be sold, Councillors also decided how many inspectors were required to survey the lands, who were to inspect, and what their salary should be.

One civil commissioner for his bosom share in such expenses received in the course of a few months, more than the amount of a whole year's salary ... such preliminary expenses ... amounted to one quarter of the purchase money of lands sold under the Act. (3)

The Commission of Inquiry into crown lands found that some Divisional Councils had leased public lands illegally: 'the proceeds of the rents appropriated by the Council for its own uses'.⁴

Higher franchise qualifications ensured that Divisional Councils were strongholds of the rural propertied class. Commercial farmers were particularly influential on all Divisional Councils, with the

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1. C.M., Oct. 10, 1855; C.P.P., Revenue and Expenditure of Divisional Councils, 1856-62, 1863. Divisional Councils were established in Calvinia, Robertson, and Riversdale in 1858, in Piquetberg in 1859, in Namaqualand in 1861, and Fraserberg in 1862.
 2. C.M., Apr. 18, 1855; G.W. Eybers, ed, Select Constitutional Documents Illustrating South African History 1795-1910, London, 1918, p. 76-96.
 3. S.A.C.A., Apr. 11, June 25, 1864.
 4. Ibid.

exception of Namaqualand which was dominated by the copper-mining interests. Initially the prerequisite for the right to elect, or to be elected to, the Divisional Councils was leasehold or freehold title to property valued at £25. Farmers were outraged at the very real possibility of being excluded from representation:

... a Division like Caledon, which is entirely under the elective control of the coloured population and missionary interests, is likely to be favoured with a Divisional Council consisting wholly and exclusively of Hottentots from Genadendal and Elim ... If we are to have Hottentot Justices of the Peace in the guise of Divisional Councillors, let the farmers, at all events, clearly understand what they have to expect. (1)

By 1865, no person could be a member of a Divisional Council unless,

he shall be registered in the land register of this colony as the owner of immoveable property which ... shall be valued for assessment for road purposes as an amount of not less than £500. (2)

It is significant, and unusual, that this local government franchise qualification exceeded, by far, that of central government. The property qualification for the Cape Parliament remained at £25 and effectively entrenched merchant control over that body.³ Most rural coloureds and many of the poorer, white farmers were excluded from Divisional Councils after 1865.

One effect of the government's crown-lands policy was to stimulate demand for public property throughout the western Cape.⁴ Public-land values rose and 'Crown Land sales' increased in value from £28,296 in 1859 to £54,000 in 1860 and £87,294 in 1861. The most extensive inroads were made in the pastoral-interior region in Divisions such as Beaufort, Victoria West and Fraserberg, and in the pastoral West-Coast

1. C.M., Apr. 18, 1855.

2. See Act 5 of 1865; A55-60, *Return on Granting Looriesfontein to Bastards*, p.10.

3. Trapido, 'Cape Politics', *passim*.

4. C.P.P., Revenue estimates, 1860; C.P.P., Revenue and Expenditure for 1861, 1862. On increasing land values see for example: CO.53. 96/7., C.C.R.^{passim} 1859/60. Between 1854 and 1862 well over a million acres of crown lands in the western Cape were alienated.

Division of Namaqualand.¹

Commercial wool farming expanded rapidly in the pastoral interior 'upon lands which a few years ago, were unoccupied'. The value of wool exports from the Cape expanded nearly four-fold, during the years 1853 to 1867, in response to growing demand on the world market. Mechanised woollen mills in Britain generated an unprecedented demand for wool; the Empire replaced the continent as the main supplier of raw wool. Between 1862 and 1869 exports of wool accounted for three-quarters of the Cape's exports.² Speculators soon perceived the potential value of the public thirstlands as sheepwalks.

One such speculator was J.C. Molteno. He was an active proponent of the Masters and Servants Law, a member of the Legislative Assembly and Divisional Council for Beaufort Division during the 1860s, and Prime Minister of the Cape in the 1870s. In the early 1860s, Molteno emerged as one of several speculators who dealt profitably in the developing property market. They earned themselves the title of the 'land jobbers party'. They secured freeholds to large tracts of public property at very low prices and, in some instances, at no charge

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1. For example: at the first sale of public land in Victoria Division in 1859, nineteen farms of between ten- and seventeen thousand acres were sold for £20,240. CO.53.97., C.C.R., Vict. West, 1860. In Dec. 1864, 115 pieces of crown land were leased for £1,883 on one year leases. By 1861 the Civil Commissioner of Tulbagh had instituted a system whereby migrating landholders from the Cold Bokkeveld purchased annual licenses for £1 per year for a seasonal grazing farm of about £10,000 acres. In 1861, 63 of these farms were hired each year. CO.53.98., C.C.R., Tulbagh, 1861.
2. Stat. Regs., 1853-1867. The exact figures were £501,135 in 1853 and £1,927,628 in 1867; Cf., T. Kemp, Historical Patterns of Industrialization, U.K., 1978.

at all.¹

The great drawback to the prosperity of this colony is that too much of our land has passed from the Crown into the hands of a few individuals -- individuals who hold without occupying and look to the market and not to cultivation for their profits and return for capital invested. (2)

The Treasurer General and acting Colonial Secretary complained that 'the Government was being systematically plundered of its crown lands'.³ Legislative Council member M. Porter pointed out that speculators denied marginal farmers access to land:

Long credits, in addition to other facilities, was the best way for enabling emigrants and industrious but poor men to get possession of lands for cultivation. (4)

Poorer farmers, who eagerly sought title to public land expressed opposition to sales on a scale that threatened to exclude them.⁵

Furthermore many farmers needed labour; the mere acquisition of titles to tracts of land did not evict squatters or force them onto the labour market.⁶ These problems with the distribution of titles to public land resulted in the replacement of the 1860 Land Act with that of 1864: a shift which lowered the threshold of title-acquisition to include marginal farmers more easily.⁷

1. S.A.C.A., July 15, 1863; Z.A., Jan. 11, 1864; C.A., June 30, 1863; 'a member of the government complained the other day in the House of Assembly that some hundreds of thousands of acres of crown lands had been sold in one district for three pence to five pence per acre.' S.A.C.A., Apr. 11, 1864. After a long delay a commission of inquiry finally reported in 1863 that certain farms such as that of J.C. Molteno were surveyed inaccurately, 'which so largely benefitted the claimants at what justly appeared to be at the expense of Government Crown Lands'.
2. C.A., June 16, 1863; S.A.C.A., Jan. 17, Feb. 12, 1863, Apr. 11, 1864.
3. S.A.C.A., Apr. 11, June 25, 1864.
4. CO.53.97., C.C.R., 1860, *passim*; *Ibid.*
5. See for example A52-60, Memo. re Trekvelde in Roggeveld, Bokkeveld, Hantam.
6. By 1860 Civil Commissioners in Beaufort and Prince Albert Divisions were calling for a law to prevent squatting on private property. CO.53.97., C.C.R., Beaufort, Prince Albert, 1860.
7. C.A., June 16, 1863; S.A.C.A., Apr. 11, 1864, May 6, 1863, July 25, 1864; Duly, Land Policy, 182-202; CO.53.104., C.C.R., Western Divs., *passim*, 1867; C.S., May 23, 1867.

Copper mining fuelled the commercialization of property-relations in Namaqualand. It began in 1852. J. King, of the company Phillips and King, 'purchased from a family of Bastards named Cloete, a small portion of their estate'.¹ The company then invested £12,000 in nearly 200,000 acres of land. By 1861, Phillips and King had become the Cape Copper Mining Company: it owned virtually all the land between Springbokfontein and Hondeklip Bay with the exception of one farm. Even the jail and Magistrate's court were properties that the company leased to the government.²

The expansion and intensification of commercialized property relations was less spectacular, and took different forms, in arable areas of the western Cape. These regions also experienced a property boom in all but the drought years of the period 1853 to 1867. The increased facility with which farmers could raise credit stimulated demand; property prices rose rapidly during the 1850s.³ In the seventeen-year period 1836 to 1853, local entrepreneurs, using locally-generated capital, established thirty-one district banks in the Cape Colony. By 1860, representatives of international commercial and financial interests had argued effectively in parliament, and via their public mouthpiece the South African Commercial Advertiser, for a 'free trade in money' at the Cape. The government abolished the fixed interest rate of 6 percent on ^{the} grounds that capital would flow into the colony and develop its resources. In 1861, the first imperial bank, the London and South Africa Bank, began to operate at the Cape. The Standard Bank followed in 1862. By 1863, agricultural and commercial banks existed at

1. C.M.A., Feb. 21, 1859.

2. CO.53.96/7., C.C.R., 1859/60, Namaqualand; A 97-61, and A 103-61, Corresp. re Na-land Magistry.

3. CO.53.92/5/7., C.C.R.^{ASB} 1856/8/60; Irons, Settlers Guide, 44; C.M.A., Feb. 21, 1859; S.A.C.A., July 28, 1853, Jan. 18, 1855.

Malmesbury, Caledon, Worcester, Zwellendam and George. Several finance companies also invested in mortgages.¹

The extent of the indebtedness which arose among Western-Cape agriculturists as a result of the new credit facilities is described, albeit somewhat exaggeratedly, in a Cape Town newspaper of 1863:

The public companies and offices, the private capitalists, in a word, all bodies and individuals who have money to invest are the mortgagees or receiver, of the rents of the colonial farmers ... Between these two classes -- between rent receivers saddled with no risks and no responsibilities and rent payers upon whom fall every burden and every loss -- 'our landed interest', dwindles into an impalpable shadow ... the bulk of the land being occupied by an impoverished class of cultivators who pay rack rent to an absentee and irresponsible class of recipients. (2)

In the arable regions of the western Cape, such as the Cape-Wine-Zwartland-Zandveld, most of the land was already privately owned and no massive inroads into public land occurred. This contrasted with the developing sheepwalks and copper-fields of the pastoral regions. Here, the market in private property boomed during the 1850s and, in so far as sales of public property were affected, these often assumed forms of engrossment of already existing farms.

The bias in favour of 'original occupiers', contained in public-land legislation, presented farmers with opportunities for engrossing their properties. Some farmers purchased titles to land adjacent to their properties; others simply took possession. On the Cape flats

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1. Such as The Association, Board of Executors, and South African Irrigation and Investment Company. S.A.C.A., Jan. 17, 21, Feb. 12, 1863; G.J. Hupkes, 'Historiese Ekonomiese Skets van die groei van die Stellenbosche Distriktsbank, 1882-1952', M.Comm., Univ. of Stellenbosch, 1956, p. 12; J.A. Henry, The first hundred years of the Standard Bank, London, 1963; E.H.D. Arndt, Banking and Currency Development in South Africa, 1652-1927, Cape Town, 1928; G.T. Amphlett, History of the Standard Bank of South Africa Ltd., 1862-1913, Glasgow, 1914.
 2. S.A.C.A., Apr. 4, 1863.

in Cape Division, for example, the absence of detailed land-surveys had created a situation by 1863 where:

no one knows what roads or vleys [marshes] are private or public property, and the result is, in more instances than one, that individual proprietors, appropriate to themselves water, and take the liberty of closing roads, merely on their own responsibility.(1)

In parts of Clanwilliam, and the mountains of Caledon Division, farmers simply treated public land as their private property.

Property dealers from Cape Town did occasionally speculate in public land in the arable regions. In 1864, for example, a meeting of Cape Town's municipal wardmasters and commissioners had to be delayed, 'on account of the unavoidable absence of many of the leading inhabitants who were attending, or on their way to attend, the various sales in the neighbourhood of Cape Town or Ceres.'²

The expansion and intensification of commercial property relations during the period 1853 to 1867 influenced processes of social differentiation in the rural western Cape, where squatting on public lands was an integral feature of agrarian society. The squatters were predominantly Khoisan and ex-slaves; some landless Dutch and Cape Nguni; some transhumant Dutch landholders who squatted seasonally; and the descendants of one or more of these. Because they often lived on the peripheries of colonial society and legality, it is difficult to establish their exact numbers, and hence, precisely, to chart the rate of their dispossession. It is likely that few would have felt secure enough to tell the census-takers, or other officials, about their domestic arrangements, and many, no doubt, kept to themselves.

1. S.A.C.A., Mar. 7, 1863.

2. S.A.C.A., Feb. 22, 1864.

Although precision is impossible, the sources create the impression that squatting was widespread on public land, notably in the numerous mountains and mountain ranges that criss-crossed the western Cape, the Cape flats, the Knysna-George forestlands which were 'a perfect refuge for the destitute ... white and black squatters,'¹ sea-, lagoon-, and river fronts, land between private holdings, and the thirstlands.² The spread of exclusive property rights began to squeeze increasing numbers of squatters off their lands throughout the western Cape. This was part of the process of social super- and sub-ordination in the countryside.

On some occasions, farmers initiated their dispossession by engrossment. By 1860 in parts of Clanwilliam Division:

Many farmers have applied for the waste land adjoining their farms with the sole object of ... depriving the squatters of their places of rendezvous ... compelling them to seek a more ... honest livelihood. (3)

Another practice appears to have become fairly widespread in the western Cape:

... parties more intimately acquainted with the Crown Lands than the authorities pick out some special favoured well-watered spots, apply for them, get them as a matter of course, and thereby render all surrounding Government Lands practically worthless except to themselves. (4)

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1. C.P.P., Crown Forests Reports, 1861, 1862.
 2. For evidence of squatting in the Cape-Wine-Zwartland region see for example: CO.53.94/6., C.C.R.^{passim} 1857/9; M.M.S., Box 310, Elseys River, 1859. For similar evidence in the Midlands and Overberg see for example: CO.53.94-104., C.C.R.^{passim} 1857-1867; C.S., May 16, Apr. 30, 1867; S.A.A.M., Oct. 3, 1866. For the Central Region see for example: S.A.C.A., Jan. 1, 1856; CO.53.94/97., C.C.R.^{passim} 1857/60. For evidence on the pastoral interior: S.A.C.A., Apr. 7, 1855; CO.53.95-97., C.C.R.^{passim} 1858-60; C.P.P., Report on Amandelboom and Schietfontein, 1856, 1859; C.P.P., Report on Looriesfontein, June 1860; S.A.C.A., Apr. 5, 1855; CO.53.100-104., C.C.R.^{passim} 1863-67. On the pastoral west coast see: CO.53.94-104, C.C.R.^{passim} 1857-67.
 3. CO.53.97., C.C.R., Clanwilliam, Append. on Squatting, 1860.
 4. S.A.C.A., Mar. 7, 1863.

The active promotion of a racially-defined rural work force began, to some extent, to find expression in the manner in which local authorities influenced title-allocation of public land resources. The capital outlay that was required to secure leaseholds or licences,¹ placed public-land resources within the means of a large sector of white and coloured squatters. However, commercial farmers generally controlled Divisional Councils in the western Cape, and, hence, the allocation of titles to public lands. They were well placed to secure exclusive rights to land they sought. Furthermore, commercial farmers were generally concerned to mould a cheap, stable, agrarian work-force out of the local rural underclasses. Divisional Councils could inhibit the development of peasant and proletarian autonomy by denying them titles to public land. Thus, land-tenure patterns that characterised the western Cape before emancipation were perpetuated thereafter. Few ex-slaves or Khoisan could afford freeholds during the 1840s. When land titles did become cheaper thereafter, Divisional Councils withheld secure tenure.

A result of the ascendancy of Divisional Councils as centres of local power was, therefore, the growing ability of whites, and particularly commercial farmers, to secure title to public property and the denial of public-land access to Khoisan, ex-slave, Cape Nguni and people of mixed descent.² In other words, the transition from squatter to farmer was far easier for whites than for any other squatters. A report on the Olifants River area in 1860 was at pains to point out that 'farmers' who were concerned about eviction on account of insecure

1. There were costs of survey, inspection, and title, but the rents themselves were often low and, in many instances, not paid.

CO.53.97., C.C.R., 1860, Prince Albert

2. See, for example, CO.53.97., C.C.R., Namaqualand, 1860; A55-60., Return on granting Looriesfontein to Bastards, p.3; A52-60., memo. re Trekvelde, passim; A46-60., R.S.C., Trekvelde, passim; CO.53.100., C.C.R., Worcester, 1863.

tenure, did so without grounds:

they ['farmers' or, more accurately, squatters] will soon understand the relation they bear to the colony at large and learn that they are governed, not by foreign lands and masters, but by their own representatives. (1)

There is evidence that Divisional Councils manipulated public-land rents in favour of commercial farmers. The Civil Commissioner of Calvinia explained:

I see no reason why the Bastards should pay more than the rich boers, whose maximum quitrent on places twice and thrice the extent of the place in question amounts to £5.

The three-hundred Loeriesfontein 'Bastards' referred to, faced the antagonism of Field Cornet Nieuwoudt, who fixed the rents, and the overwhelming majority of the Calvinia Divisional Council. The latter were elected representatives of local landholders who increasingly used the disputed lands of the Onder Bokkeveld for seasonal grazing.²

Farmers often perceived the public-land laws to be a means to dispossess and proletarianize squatters. The remarks of the Field Cornet of the Cold Bokkeveld Ward in Worcester Division, who was well-placed to comment in this respect, are revealing:

This ward is surrounded by large mountains, rich in water with amazing caverns and extensive ravines; these are the dwellings of the squatters, where they lay by hundreds in families of three to four, mostly Hottentots ... [squattening] must be remedied, if not, farming will go to the wall. (3)

Civil Commissioners, such as those of Malmesbury or Paarl, sometimes stated in their annual reports that squatting was not tolerated in their Divisions. It is likely that local farmers or police often forcefully evicted squatters from public land. But these remained

1. G29-60, Fletcher Report on Lower Olifants, p. 48.

2. C.P.P., J.L. Truter's statement in the return on Loeriesfontein, 1860.

3. Z.A., June 6, 1864.

local and piecemeal actions. Central government consistently avoided taking uniform action against squatting. The reason for this, the Governor explained to parliament in 1864, was that 'their [squatters] arrest and detention in gaol would entail too great an expense'.¹

The western-Cape's enclosure movement had less to do with demarcation of land by hedges, fences, walls and ditches, during this period, than it did with the appropriation by individuals of common rights; 'the legal and proprietorial aspects of enclosure'.² Thus, common rights were removed although the land often remained open in a physical sense. Beacons demarcated farmlands. The enforcement of boundaries and policing of common land appears, in practice, very largely to have been carried out by local farmers and Field Cornets. Struggles arose between those who sought to expropriate rights over common land and those who wanted to preserve those rights.

Commercial property relations had not penetrated some parts of the western Cape by the 1860s; squatters in the Cedarberg, Bokkeveld Mountains and Tradouw were left in relative peace. In other areas, squatters developed a transhumant cycle in response to that of farmers. Farmers in the Cold Bokkeveld were agriculturists for much of the year, but they also periodically sent their livestock to graze the Karoo plains over which they increasingly secured exclusive title. 'Hundreds of mostly Hottentot squatters',³ who lived in settlements in the Cold Bokkeveld Mountains, co-ordinated their transhumance so as not to clash with that of the farmers:

1. Al-64, *Governor's Speech*, p. 617.

2. As defined by Butlin, *Transformation of rural England*, 47, with regard to a not altogether dissimilar process. *S.A.C.A.*, Apr. 1, 1863.

3. CO.53.103., C.C.R., Worcester, 1866. CO.53.100., C.C.R., George, Append. on Squatting, 1863.

as soon as it becomes known that the farmers have departed from the Karoo, Hottentots are in the habit of repairing to and making use of these legplekken [licensed grazing-farms] during the remaining portion of the year ... it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to resort to any measures calculated to put an end to squatting. (1)

Squatters in areas such as the Twenty-Four Rivers Mountains of Piquetberg Division were able to resist dispossession because they occupied land on the border of Piquetberg and Clanwilliam Divisions.

In 1867, local officials complained that it was,

impossible to remove the squatters ... for should they be disturbed in one Division, in ten minutes they transfer themselves to one of the others, there to squat until they are again disturbed. (2)

Despite persistent attempts to disband them, the western-Cape missions were occupied to capacity by the 1850s.³ Divisional Councils blocked attempts by missions to expand mission land-holdings on public land.⁴ Thus, extra land only became available to mission occupants when Mission Societies purchased farms, but funds were limited and land-holders were often reluctant to sell to missionaries. For a variety of reasons, however, occupants were able to withstand attempts to privatise their mission lands until the 1870s.⁵

The most intense struggles over land occurred in the northern areas of the pastoral west-coast and the interior. Here, the privatisation of land culminated in bloody and complex conflicts. These, however, are beyond the scope of this study and have received attention else-

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1. CO.53.103., C.C.R., Worcester, 1866.
 2. CO.53.104., C.C.R., 1867 | Piquetberg, Append. Squatting. It is possible that 'nests of squatters ... on government ground near Tooverwaters Poort within Oudtshoorn Division' chose that area for similar reasons. It was on the border between Oudtshoorn and George Divisions. CO.53. 100., C.C.R., George, Appendix on Squatting, 1863.
 3. M.P.A., Mamre, letter, Aug. 1860.
 4. U.S.P.G., Malmesbury, 1860, Mossel Bay, 1860; A8-61, *Corresp. re Land Applications*, passim.
 5. Below, chapter 3.

where.¹

In the 1860s drought added considerably to the pressures that changing property relations exerted upon peasants and proletarians. Many proved unable to subsist on marginal land or small allotments. As a result, the labour-scarce rural economy entered a period of severe unemployment.

1. See for example, Strauss, War along the Orange.

D. Drought and depression in the 1860s.

The period of steady, if uneven, economic growth that occurred in the rural western Cape between 1854 and 1861, contrasted sharply with the period 1861 to 1867. Between 1859 and 1860, the entire western Cape experienced a debilitating drought. Rains began to fail during the late 1850s in the pastoral-interior region. By 1860, drought conditions had spread to most of the Overberg and Cape-Zwartland regions. Despite the temporary relief of scattered rains in 1863, the drought intensified during 1864. By 1865, it had grave consequences for the agrarian population. Several factors exacerbated the consequences of the drought: a local and international slump in trade and commerce; the devastations of vine disease; the collapse of the British wine market and slump in the American wool market; and a sudden contraction in credit. In short, the development of capitalist relations in the western-Cape countryside, which had accelerated during the 1850s, slowed and, in some instances, contracted during the 1860s, when the Cape Colony suffered its worst depression of the nineteenth century.¹

The drought affected all farmers adversely. The big commercial farmers generally had reserves of capital and commodities. They could draw on these and cushion themselves from the worst effects of collapsing production and trade. Few, however, were in a position to do so. Large numbers of middling farmers were marginalised, and poorer small farmers were generally impoverished as a result of the relentless

1. Immelman, Chamber of Commerce, 173; de Kock, Economic History; D.M. Goodfellow, A Modern Economic History of South Africa, London, 1931; Arndt, Banking ; Bock, Foreign trade; Henry, Standard Bank.

harvest failures.

During the 1850s most wheat farmers in the western Cape depended on loans. Short-term loans were generally smaller amounts which included advances such as purchases on credit from local traders.¹ Farmers without a reserve of capital often mortgaged out their crops before they harvested them.² Long-term loans were more substantial. By 1863, most fixed property in the western Cape was heavily mortgaged. A member pointed out to the Cape parliament in 1855 that, 'some fifty years ago the landed property upon average was mortgaged from 10 to 20 percent, it is now encumbered for 50 to 100 percent.'³

The bulk of the mortgages were for two-thirds of the value of the property at a cost of 6 percent interest. Six percent of two-thirds of a farm's value was 4 percent of its whole value. This placed most landed proprietors in the western Cape in much the same predicament as many tenant farmers in England who paid 4 percent of the value of their holdings in annual rents.⁴ In addition, western-Cape mortgagees had to pay interest to the day and their ownership depended upon such payments. Few could accumulate capital reserves:

As proprietor he has to pay up to the appointed day and to the last farthing the annual rent. Such a class cannot be called the 'landed interest' in any true sense of the term. (5)

In the early 1860s, many farmers felt threatened by, and protested against, the 'free money-market' which local and British investors sought to create at the Cape. Parliament repealed the Usury Bill in

1. See for example, Buirski, 'Barrys and the Overberg', *passim*.

2. C.A., Aug. 18, 1860.

3. S.A.C.A., Jan. 13, May 5, 1855.

4. S.A.C.A., Apr. 1, 4, 1863.

5. Ibid.

1862, and in doing so, removed the 6 percent ceiling on interest rates.

This warning from Riversdale typified the outcry that followed:

an increase in the interest rates will have the effect of reducing the colony into two classes -- the very rich and the very poor leaving the middle class without the means of obtaining money. (1)

Interest rates increased, in some cases even doubled, after 1862; this rendered the viability of many farms increasingly precarious.² An annual interest rate of 8 percent represented approximately 24 percent of the annual value of all agricultural produce on an average Malmesbury farm and about 50 percent of that of the average farm in Robertson Division.³

The drought and depression in trade resulted in diminishing harvests and stricter credit terms. Many farmers found it increasingly difficult to meet their commitments and failures started to occur. By 1864, a spate of insolvencies had taken place. Civil Commissioners reported that a principal cause for this was the inability of farmers to pay for land.⁴ A report in 1864 claimed that indebtedness among farmers was so serious that:

in many instances the very stock and produce of our farmers is no longer their own, all has been pledged for debts they are incapable of paying -- for interest has run up to a frightful amount -- and to enable them to provide the current necessities of life. (5)

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1. C.P.P., Petition on increased interest rate, ^{Riversdale,} May, 1860. For evidence of the widespread nature of the farmers' outcry in the western Cape see C.A., Apr. 5, May 27, 1862. C.P.P., Petitions from Montagu, Clanwilliam, Wellington, Riversdale, Stellenbosch, Paarl, Bredasdorp, and Caledon, 1860; C.A., May 15, Aug. 30, 1862. In 1861 two hundred farmers demonstrated against higher interest rates. C.P.P., statement of petitions, 1862. By 1862, sixteen petitions calling for a Usury Bill to fix interest rates, had emanated from the western Divisions.
 2. C.A., May 15, 1862; S.A.C.A., Sept. 3, 5, 1863; CO.53.101., C.C.R., 1864, western Divs., *passim*.
 3. Eight percent seems to have been a fairly general rate of interest after 1862. See also data on farms in these areas in Table 5.
 4. CO.53.101., C.C.R., 1864, western Divs., *passim*.
 5. Z.A., May 2, 1864.

Worcester Division experienced 'almost general insolvency among both English and Dutch. Few indeed, if any, have been left unaffected'. The situation in other areas, such as the Overberg and Midlands was similar.¹ When the rains finally began to fall in parts of the western Cape in 1866, many farmers were unable to sow; they had used their seed wheat for domestic consumption in order to stave off starvation.²

A number of marginalised small farmers emigrated from the western Cape. In Paarl Division:

hundreds of families have ... broken down ... and those who were the life and support of the household have crossed the border for the Transvaal and Free State ... to districts within the colony ... and in Natal and British Kaffraria. (3)

In 1865 approximately fifty people left Oudtshoorn Division for the Free State.⁴ Others left Worcester, Fraserberg and Namaqualand Divisions.⁵ In Calvinia, the 'cry of trekking ... [was] becoming louder every day'. In Riversdale:

there was much chance of a general exodus. The previous week thirty to forty wagons with families left from here and the neighbourhood. On Tuesday of this week nine more wagons left. In the beginning of the next month some more families will leave ... only a couple of rich or stupid boers or egotists and paupers will be left ... (6)

A traveller through George and Mossel Bay Divisions reported in 1862:

we passed farmers on the trek to the Free State in greater numbers than we could have believed would move ... They would not have left the colony if they could have lived in it, but they cannot, and with their wives and little ones and what property they could scrape together, they are off to cultivate the soil on the other side of the Orange River.

1. U.S.P.G., Worcester, Jan., 1865; C.W.M., Box 34, Fold. 2, Jack. A, Oudtshoorn, 1866; C.P.P., Report on the Drought, Zwellendam, June, 1860; CO.53.97/100/102., C.C.R., 1860/63/65, Western Divs., passim; C.W.M., Reports, 1862/3/4/5, passim; S.A.A.M., Feb. 7, 1866, Jan. 31, 1866.
2. C.S., Feb. 3, Apr. 17, 1866; S.A.A.M., Jan. 31, 1866.
3. C.A., Jan. 19, 1864.
4. CO.53.103., C.C.R., 1866, Oudtshoorn.
5. C.A., Mar. 27, 1866; Z.A., Mar. 5, 1866; CO.53.102., C.C.R., 1865, passim.
6. Z.A., Mar. 26, 1866; C.M.A., Feb. 23, 1859.

One group consisted of 'at least twelve wagons outspanned all bound for the Free State, and carrying off between them something like a hundred and twenty people'.¹ It is possible that many left to escape their debts, to avoid proletarianization or to settle in areas, such as the southern Free State, where rains had fallen and the Griquas were rapidly being dispossessed.² The Civil Commissioner of Mossel Bay explained that if a 'boer',

has insufficient pasturage, or none, he either treks or trespasses. Neither he nor any of his family will work for wages, for he would then be brought under the Masters and Servants Act and he regards wages as the traditional badge of slavery ... (3)

The Cape inheritance law had created a group of farmers with meagre shares in farms which proved quite inadequate during the drought. Furthermore, public lands were increasingly commercialized and colonial land resources were growing scarcer. The options open to many farmers were narrowing. In 1865, the Civil Commissioner of Mossel Bay said that all but a few farms in some wards in his Division were:

unfortunately occupied by a host of proprietors in undivided shares ... Some of them are beggars, but cannot sell their shares, except to others, who are too poor to purchase. (4)

In 1865, a Commission of Inquiry investigated the Inheritance Law and its effects. Merchants and a few commercial farmers argued against the Inheritance Law on grounds that:

it prevented such concentrations of wealth that would ... create a better class of people ... the redistributive tendencies ... seemed to perpetuate idleness and poverty and filth ... From this and from no other cause we have so many poor white squatters, living in idleness from hand to mouth -- who ... might be useful members of society. (5)

1. C.A., Mar. 1, 1862.

2. R. Ross, Adam Kok's Griquas. A study in the development of stratification in South Africa, Cambridge, 1976, p. 94-100.

3. CO.53.104., C.C.R., 1867, Mossel Bay.

4. CO.53.102., C.C.R., 1865, Mossel Bay.

5. G15-65, R.S.C., Inheritance Law, p. XXIX and *passim*.

However, the colonial Inheritance Law rendered a birth certificate of a farmer's child a virtual title to land. Divisional Councils in the western Cape articulated the general view among farmers and their opinion prevailed in the findings of the 1856 commission.¹ They warned that it would be unwise, and even 'dangerous', to tamper with the Inheritance Law. While supporting coercive measures to create a racially-constituted work force, they opposed measures that threatened to alienate poor farmers.² Commercial farmers were, no doubt, aware of the need to keep alive the traditional bonds of family and friendship with poorer whites. When insurrection loomed in the western Cape in 1848 and 1853, most poor whites, and probably all poorer white small farmers and their sons, rallied with wealthier farmers against other sectors of the agrarian poor. Poor whites were, after all, descendants of 'respectable landowners'; without their support at times of crisis, and daily routine work on farms, commercial farmers were an isolated, vastly outnumbered, and vulnerable minority in the countryside.

Small farmers remained vulnerable. Inheritance laws guaranteed landholdings. But, as the generations turned over, they also broke holdings up into smaller parcels or concentrated increasing numbers of shareholders on farms which remained physically undivided. It is likely that the drought compelled a sector of the poor farmers to sell their smallholdings or shares in farms. A few emigrated from the colony, but most remained. The number of bywoners increased as landless poor whites became sharecroppers and shareherders on wealthier

1. The only Divisional Council in the western Cape which held a contrary view on the inheritance laws was Mossel Bay.

2. G15-65, R.S.C., *Inheritance Law*, p. L.V., and *passim*.

farmers' properties. By 1865, there were farms in the western Cape that were occupied by between fifteen and fifty families; farms occupied by eight to ten families were 'common'; and farms occupied by 'as many as four or five families, one sees daily'.¹

By the 1860s, then, the drought, overworked soils, continued subdivision and commercialization of private farms and public property contributed to the emergence of significant numbers of landless and marginalised poor whites in the Overberg and Midlands regions of the rural western Cape for the first time. As Colin Bundy has shown, 'poor whiteism' was not a phenomenon of the 1890s as traditional historiography would have us believe.²

Crop failures seriously undermined the ability of farmers to hire labour. Reports from Paarl Division in 1864 pointed out that the:

scarcity of money among employers continues to render employment scarce and ill-paid, [and that] thousands of children have been withdrawn from private schools in general at this end of the colony through the poverty of their parents. (3)

It is likely that large commercial farmers laid off some regular workers. They certainly required fewer casual labourers for the seasonal work. During the 1860s, lack of money became common among

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1. G15-65., R.S.C., Inheritance Law, p.195; See also Scholtz, 'Onder Olifants', passim; U.S.P.G., Clanwilliam, 1861; S.A.A.M., 1866, passim.
 2. C. Bundy, 'Vagabond Hollanders and Runaway Englishmen: White Poverty in the Cape before Poor Whiteism', I.C.S., S.S.A., Feb., 1983. See also, W.M. Macmillan, Complex South Africa. An Economic Footnote to History, London, 1930 and The South African Agrarian Problem and its Historical Development, Johannesburg, 1919; de Kock, Economic History.
 3. U.S.P.G., Paarl, June, 1864; C.A., Jan. 19, 1864. For evidence of a similar situation in Clanwilliam and Calvinia see S.A.C.A., Apr. 2, 1864; CO.53.100., C.C.R., 1863, Clanwilliam, Calvinia.

middling and small farmers in the Overberg and Cape-Wine-Zwartland-Zandveld regions. It became general practice for all but the large commercial farmers to rely wholly upon family labour or neighbourly mutual-assistance arrangements to do the diminished amount of farm-work.¹ A report from Malmesbury Division in 1865 illustrates the situation:

some of the poor farmers are without bread or seedwheat ... many of the farmers having nothing to sell, in consequence of the failure of their crops, and have neither the money to pay or the food to give their labourers. (2)

Many, besides regular farm workers, were unable to sell their labour. Agrarian employment opportunities contracted at the same time as the drought eroded the degree of economic autonomy that casual labourers derived from small-scale cultivation. Crop failures compelled increasing numbers of peasants and proletarians into greater wage-labour dependency. In 1864, a local newspaper reported, 'from want of systematic management our labour market like all other markets is alternatively in a state of famine or glut'.³

By 1860, a large majority of households on the missions, in the villages, or in squatter settlements depended on casual-wage incomes.⁴

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1. C.W.M., Box 33, Fold. 6, Jack. C, 1865, Jack. D, 1865; CO.53.102., C.C.R., 1865, *western Divs, passim*.
 2. CO.53.102., Malmesbury, 1865.
 3. S.A.C.A., Jan. 27, 1864; for evidence of an abundance of labour see for example, CO.53.102., C.C.R., 1865, on the situation in Malmesbury.
 4. C.P.P., R.S.C., Granting Land in Freehold to Hottentots, 1854, *passim*; C.W.M., Box 30, Fold. 4, Jack. C, Pacaltsdorp, 1857; C.W.M., Box 28, Fold. 4, Jack. A, Zuurbraak, 1854; C.W.M., Box 30, Fold. 2, Jack. B, Pacaltsdorp, 1856; C.W.M., Box 29, Fold. 4, Jack. B, Pacaltsdorp, Oct. 1855; M.P.A., Elim Diary, 1866; M.M.S., Box 309, Stellenbosch, May, 1854; Raum, 'Genadendal' ^{*passim*} M.M.S., Box 309, Somerset West, Mar., 1855, Box 310, Som. West., Dec., 1861.

Some squatters in the Cedarberg did not earn cash incomes; each year they 'procure[d] a little wheat by reaping in harvest time, somewhat like the Irish peasantry'. U.S.P.G., Clanwilliam, 1861.

Harvest earnings were particularly important: 'the means of subsisting for the whole year are earned almost entirely during the two or three harvest months.'¹ This report from D'Urban in 1864 illustrates the consequences of simultaneous loss of income from wages and subsistence production:

the financial straits of the colony in general appear to be telling with deplorable effect upon the condition of the labouring classes -- our people, many of whom have been in moderately comfortable circumstances are now scattered about up and down the country offering to work without wages, asking only to be fed. (2)

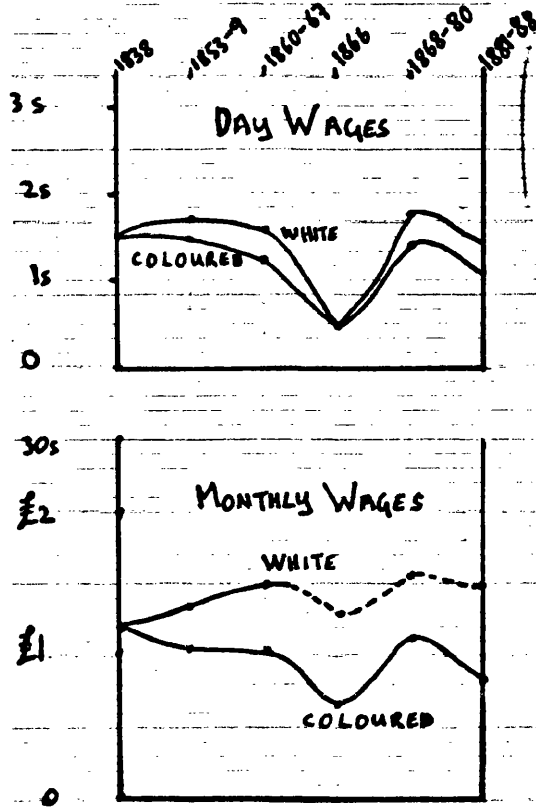
By the mid-1860s, monthly- and daily farm wages in the western Cape had fallen to their lowest levels of the entire fifty-year period from 1838 to 1888.³ Day wages of 6d. per day were common for both white and coloured labourers, and the practice of working for food only became increasingly widespread.

Yields from subsistence-oriented agriculture diminished rapidly at the same time as wages dried up. Incomes shrank, but food prices soared. This rendered a growing proportion of mission inhabitants destitute.⁴ There is also evidence of acute suffering among squatters on public land.⁵ Immigration petered out amidst escalating unemployment, immiseration, and protests on the part of immigrant workers about

1. M.P.A., Goedverwacht, Wittewater, Diary, 1863 and 1864.
2. U.S.P.G., Letter, G. Lawrence, D'Urban, 1863/4, W.J. Taylor, Riversdale, June, 1864.
3. See Figure 4 for trends in wages from 1838 to 1888. For details of wages in 1866, see Table 8.
4. C.W.M., Box 30, Fold. 2, Jack. B, Pacaltsdorp, 1856, Box 31, Fold. 2, Jack. B, Zuurbraak, 1858, Box 31, Fold. 4, Jack. D, Pacaltsdorp, 1859, Box 32, Fold. 4, Jack. B, Zuurbraak, Oct., 1861, Box 32, Fold. 4, Jack. C, Pacaltsdorp, Oct., 1861, Box 32, Fold. 4, Jack C, Zuurbraak, Oct. 1861; M.M.S., Box 310, Robertson, June, 1862; C.W.M., Box 33, Fold. 1, Jack. C, Zuurbraak, Mar., 1863; M.M.S., Box 310, Cape Town, Sept., Robertson, May, 1864; S.A.A.M., Oct. 9, Nov. 22, 1865; CO.53.101/102., C.C.R. 1864/5; C.W.M., Box 34, Fold. 2, Jack. A, Pacaltsdorp, July, 1866.
5. See for example, U.S.P.G., Cold Bokkeveld, Dec., 1866.

FIGURE 4

AVERAGE MONTHLY AND DAY FARM-WAGES DURING THE PERIOD
1838-1888 FOR MALMESBURY, CALEDON AND OUDTSHOORN
DIVISIONS



----- No white wages in Malmesbury,
although there were white wages
in Caledon and Oudtshoorn
Divisions.

Malmesbury, Caledon and Oudtshoorn Divisions formed part of Cape, Zwellendam and George Divisions for the period 1838 to 1852. Oudtshoorn Division remained part of George Division until 1850. Racially structured wage statistics were introduced into the western-Cape figures in 1853 when coloured wages appear in George Division for the first time. Racial wage distinctions did exist in eastern-Cape before 1853. Based on Stat. Regs., 1838-1888.

having been lured to the western Cape under false pretences of high wages and ready employment.¹ One observer described their predicament:

Fearful are the wrecks of English people in this land ... a mere labourer has little chance of success, and the treatment he receives is most degrading. They wander truly vagabonds from village to village ... society has no place nor care for them. (2)

By 1862, many of the rural poor were heavily in debt to neighbouring farmers. The problem spiralled: debts had to be paid in labour; seasonal farm work yielded little return for labourers working off their debts; they were compelled to borrow more.

The Hottentots are but too frequently in the habit of contracting debts with the neighbouring farmers, which they have to discharge by doing fieldwork, so that many of them return from the harvest empty-handed ... When their store is exhausted, they are obliged to apply to the farmers, not only for the corn which they have to demand in lieu of wages for harvest work, but also to get a quantity in advance, by which means they place themselves in a very dependent position. (3)

Farmers also manipulated the terms of trade on the labour market so as to benefit themselves and reduce the value of wages. In Malmesbury Division, for example, during good seasons when wheat prices were low, farmers often paid casual workers in wheat. When seasons failed, however, some would only pay wages in cash; this was detrimental to employees who then had to purchase grain and other commodities at famine-price levels.⁴ In cases where labourers strove to work off debts,

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1. C.A., Sept. 22, 1860; C.A., Aug. 6, 22, 1861. By 1861 there were reports of immigrants returning to Cape Town's immigration depot 'in a half famished and entirely disappointed state' from Paarl Division and other rural areas. U.S.P.G., Zwellendam, Mar., Ceres, Sept. 1862; U.S.P.G., Clanwilliam, 1861.
 2. U.S.P.G., Zwellendam, Mar., 1862; S.A.C.A., Jan. 25, 1864.
 3. M.P.A., Mamre, Oct., 1862, Mamre, Diary, 1862.
 4. M.P.A., Goedverwacht and Wittewater, Diary, 1863.

farmers availed themselves of the position the natives [referring here to mission occupants] found themselves in, to lower the rate of wages, so that it was impossible for them to save anything for the proposed end. (1)

The predicament of labourers deteriorated as the drought intensified. Farmers had less to advance to them. Yields from their gardens diminished. Those who had cattle could not use them as they became too weak to plough sowing lands. 'The result of this decrease in provisions is the almost universal impoverishment of the labouring class'.² At no other point in the fifty-year period from 1838 to 1888 was the casual work-force so vulnerable or so dependent upon farmers. To a large extent, then, the success of peasants and labourers in securing autonomy during the two decades following emancipation were substantially reversed by the drought. It was only when economic changes in the 1870s generated new demands for labour, and good seasons improved yields of petty cultivators, that sectors of the rural poor could establish a degree of independence from farm-wage incomes once again.

1. M.P.A., Elim, Diary, July, Dec., 1866.

2. M.P.A., Mamre, Diary, 1862, Goedverwacht and Wittewater, Diary, 1862.

CHAPTER 3

AGRARIAN CONFIGURATIONS IN AN INDUSTRIALIZING COLONY.

CAPITALIST WHEAT FARMERS AND

LABOURING UNDERCLASSES, 1867-1880

A. General background, 1867-1870.

Beginning in 1867 the rural western Cape in general experienced a gradual, and in many instances painful, recovery from the commercial crisis and drought which devastated the region during the mid-1860s. Seasonal rains began to fall more regularly and the drought receded from most regions in the western Cape. Agricultural and pastoral conditions improved. The bankruptcy rate among commercial farmers decreased¹ and immiseration of, and poverty among, small farmers and the labouring poor became less intense. Incidents of rural crime also became less frequent.² The recovery was, however, qualified significantly for all sectors of western-Cape rural society and it was not before the 1870s that commercial conditions improved, largely because of the development of the Kimberley diamond mines.

There are no accurate and detailed harvest statistics for the years 1867 to 1870 but it is possible to detect some of the general economic trends on western-Cape commercial farms at the time.³ It emerges from the census statistics that the 1873/4 wheat harvest was only marginally larger than that of a decade earlier when climatic conditions were sufficiently similar to warrant such a comparison. While annual harvests hovered at a little over a million bushels for the western Cape as a whole in 1863/4 and 1873/4, regional variation in wheat-

1. C.S., 2 Jan., 1869; CO.53.105., Stat. Reg. 1868.

2. CO.53.104/5/6/7, C.C.R., 1867/8/9/70, *western Divs., passim.*

3. Wheat production figures in the Statistical Register for 1865 are simply repeated each year for each western-Cape Division in all the Statistical Registers up to 1875.

4. Census 1865 and 1875. These were probably based on the harvest returns of the preceding years. The 1863/4 wheat harvest was the only good year during what was otherwise a period of protracted drought.

production patterns had increased.¹ However, many western-Cape commercial farmers responded to changes in market conditions by increasingly specialising in products which were most remunerative and required least inputs of capital and labour under the conditions in their particular localities. Malmesbury Divisions's wheat farmers almost doubled their 1863/4 output and produced 37 percent of the total western-Cape harvest by 1873/4 as compared with 21 percent a decade earlier. The wine farmers in Stellenbosch and Paarl Divisions whose farms were suited to wheat cultivation responded to the depressed liquor trade by increasing wheat production by 43 percent in these Divisions.² Similarly while farmers in Caledon continued to produce more wheat, this was not the case for the other Overberg Divisions which were further from the Cape Town market and where many farmers concentrated on sheep and ostriches in order to exploit the lucrative wool and feather markets. Thus, wool production in Robertson Division increased by 82 percent during the decade and the situation was not dissimilar in Oudtshoorn Division which produced substantially less wheat, but was the leading feather-producing region in the colony.³ Wheat production tended to decrease in pastorally suitable areas as

1. Comparative regional wheat harvests in 1865 and 1875.

Region	1865 (Bushels)	1875 (Bushels)
Cape-Zwartland	347,501	564,758
Midlands	224,278	170,709
Overberg	209,724	208,125
Wine region	46,447	66,271
Central	66,632	44,771
Pastoral west coast	120,485	18,068
Pastoral interior	53,562	44,898
WESTERN CAPE TOTAL	1,068,629	1,117,600

Drought in Namaqualand and Calvinia in 1875 deflates the figures for the pastoral west coast in that year. Census 1865 and 1875.

2. Census 1865 and 1875. On the low brandy and wine prices see C.S., 11, 13, Jan., 1869; CO.53.105, C.C.R., Paarl, 1868; Appel, 'Oudtshoorn', 233-5; Immelman, Chamber of Commerce, 238.
3. Ibid.

wool-bearing merino sheep continued to replace the fat-tailed Cape sheep and commercial farming continued to expand and replace traditional subsistence-oriented pastoralism in all but the remotest pastoral districts.¹ In agricultural and pastoral Divisions such as Piquetberg and Calvinia wheat production continued to increase in specific localities such as Twenty Four Rivers and the Ruggens, at the same time as wool production escalated in the divisions as a whole.² The evidence suggests, then, that sectors of western-Cape farming were becoming more specialized as capitalist relations of production expanded and intensified.

Before 1870, there was no dramatic overall increase in the quantity of wheat produced in the western Cape. Furthermore, while improved seasons increased farmers' harvests their profits did not grow in proportion. The annual average price of nearly £1.15s. per bushel at the height of the drought in 1865, plummeted to between 3s. and 6s.6d. per bushel in 1868/9.³ Low prices were likely to have discouraged commercial wheat production in marginal areas where factors such as distance from markets, low rainfall, poor soil or expensive labour could prove prohibitive. Western-Cape wheat farmers suffered from a contradiction that was common to many agrarian economies undergoing capitalist expansion. Scarcity drives prices up; farmers respond; prices plummet as a result of surplus. Hence, also a demand for state intervention in price control.⁴ Wheat farmers were aggrieved at low prices in those areas where production increased substantially. In

1. Such as Namaqualand. Census 1865, 1875.

2. CO.53.105., C.C.R., 1868, Piquetberg.

3. Based on figures for all western-Cape Divisions in 1865 and 1868. Census, 1865; Z.A., Feb. 24, 1868; C.S., Mar. 13, 1869.

4. Cf. E.J. Hobsbawm, The Age of Capital 1848-1875, London, 1975; Kemp, Industrialization.

1868 Malmesbury wheat farmers reported the best harvests in both quality and quantity for ten years, but at the close of 1868, the same farmers declared at public meetings that 5s. per bushel would only just cover production costs and demanded a 'fair price'. Wheat prices in Malmesbury hovered around 5s. from 1869 to 1872.¹ In general, then, commercial recovery for wheat farmers was somewhat thwarted.

While the economic recovery, that took place during the closing years of the 1860s had its limitations for commercial wheat farmers it is doubtful whether many of the western-Cape's labouring classes would have perceived these to have been years of recovery at all. The drought of the mid-1860s compelled commercial farmers to lay off many regular workers and seriously undermined the degree to which casual labourers and peasants could depend on incomes from sources other than farm wages. The resultant unemployment among rural labourers subsided in general, but lingered on in pockets, for several years after the drought.² Unusually cold and wet winters in 1868 and 1869, in parts of the western Cape, came at a time when the capacity of sectors of the poor to resist infection was weakened as a result of nutritional deficiencies during the years of drought. Throughout 1868 and 1869, there were reports of 'fevers' of various kinds that laid up numbers of agricultural day-workers in mission stations and rural villages during the peak wage-earning periods of ploughing and harvest.³ Unemployment and underemployment were also severe in localities where workers were wholly or partially dependent on viti-

1. Z.A., Nov./Dec., 1868, passim; CO.53.105 to 109., Stat. Regs., 1868 to 1872.

2. For example, C.W.M., Box 35, Fold. 4, Jack. A; for Stellenbosch see M.M.S., Box 311, Stellenbosch, July, 1869.

3. S.P.G., Paarl, 1868/9; Z.A., Oct. 15, 1868; C.W.M., Box. 35, Fold. 4, Jack. A, Oudtshoorn, 1868; M.M.S., Box 311, Stellenbosch, July, 1869; M.P.A., Elim, Diary, 1869.

culture for wage incomes.¹ Farmers were turning to more profitable, and less labour-intensive, sheep and ostrich farming in parts of the Zandvelt, Central, Overberg and Midlands regions. Demand for labour during peak wage-earning periods of ploughing and harvesting is likely to have declined in these areas.²

There is very little evidence of increased agricultural mechanisation before 1870.³ More hands were required to cultivate and reap the improved harvests after the drought and particularly in areas of extended wheat cultivation, but even in these areas wages did not recover during the years 1868 and 1869. In fact, for what they are worth, official statistics indicate declining wage-levels in the western Cape generally, and in the major wheat-producing localities in particular, in comparison with annual average wage-levels of the 1850s and 1860s.⁴ Commercial wheat farmers were mindful of their interests at a time of high unemployment; racially based wage levels seemed to exacerbate the plight of at least one group of rural labourers. In some localities farmers refused to employ 'Europeans, many of whom are known to be tramping through the country penniless and

1. M.M.S., Som. West., March, 1868. Ravages of oidium added to the problems of a wine farming industry already depressed by the slump in trade.

2. In Oudtshoorn Division 73,565 fewer bushels of wheat were reaped in 1875 than in 1865 as a result of the expansion of ostrich farming. Census 1875.

3. CO.53.104/5/6, C.C.R., 1867/8/9, *Western Div., passim.*

4. Farm Workers' Wages 1868/9

<u>Western Cape in General</u>	<u>Caledon, Malmesbury, Oudtshoorn</u>
<u>Day Workers</u>	<u>Day Workers</u>
Coloured (1s.3d.) 15d.	(1s.3d.) 15d.
White (1s.5d.) 17d.	(1s.8d.) 20d.
<u>Monthly Workers</u>	<u>Monthly Workers</u>
Coloured (13s.) 157d.	(15s.6d.) 186d.
White (19s.) 230d.	(27s.) 324d.

Based on CO.53.105/6, Stat. Regs. 1868/9. These figures are borne out by comments on wages in the Civil Commissioners' reports. *Ibid.* For comparison with earlier wages see Tables 8 and 9.

nearly starving, eking out an existence by mere charity, although willing to work'.¹

In general then, it was not until the 1870s that the development of the diamond fields, massive state investment in public works, and expanded commercial farming presented the rural underclasses with new options. This changed their position in relation to agricultural employers. Low wheat prices undermined farmers' profits at a time of abundant labour supply. Ironically, when prices rose during the 1870s, farmers faced increasing difficulties in attracting sufficient labour to produce large and profitable surpluses.

1. CO.53.105., C.C.R., 1868, Piquetberg.

B. 'Stagnant pools of idleness' or 'useful reservoirs of labour':
controversies over the rural missions.

Views differed on the functions of the mission institutions in Cape society after slavery. In the 1840s, these differences were clearly reflected in the debate surrounding the Moravian application to take over the former leper institution, Hemel and Aarde, in Zwellendam Division which had been moved to Robben Island.¹

One body of opinion favoured selling off the missions to the occupants in freeholds and represented a variety of interests. Some merchants saw a potential market in a more secure and better-established peasantry. They were primarily concerned with the circulation rather than the production of commodities; buyers and independent producers were of more interest to them than an impoverished proletariat. The Surveyor General was also eager to privatise the mission-lands in accordance with the official policy of commercialising public land as a means to stimulate economic growth. Liberals in parliament had the support of some missionaries who argued that the institutions perpetuated the racial divisions and inequalities of the slave era. They argued further that the missions were overcrowded and that, under such circumstances, mission occupants were unable to realise their potential either as landholding commodity producers or as farm labourers. It was with the latter that local commercial farming interests were most concerned. Some farmers and local officials supported the idea of privatising the missions because a number of

1. Governor Maitland sought advice on the desirability of any further grants of land to mission societies. He suggested that the issue be seen in the context of '... the religious, moral and economic effects of institutions combining mission labours with agricultural pursuits'. CO.48.261., Desp. 62, Mar. 10, 1846.

their inhabitants were likely to be made landless labourers. The missions were unable to provide efficient agricultural labour because of the autonomy that independent production afforded the occupants, and because of the considerable time that residents spent travelling to and from the institutions and farms.¹ Thus, granting freeholds to mission inhabitants meant different things to different people.

A groundswell of antagonism towards the mission stations arose among commercial farmers after emancipation. Most vociferous were those farmers whom the mission-proletariat avoided on account of their reputations for low pay or bad working conditions. Similarly outspoken were farmers that lived too far away from, and had no easy access to, the casual labourers on the missions. They blamed their labour shortages on the existence of the mission stations which, they alleged, facilitated the drift of labour from the farms by providing a 'listless, indolent, pauper sort of independence'. They demanded the immediate closure of all mission institutions and the dispersion of the occupants as labourers and tenants among the farmers. Missions were an impediment to regular and cheap labour.

Moravians prevent the coloured people from settling elsewhere and form a stagnant pool of idleness, out of that running stream which might irrigate and fertilize a large tract of country.²

In this view there was no conception of a future for the mission inhabitants other than as regular farm labourers. J.B. Bayley, a commercial farmer and unofficial member of the Legislative Assembly, argued along these lines on numerous occasions, in the Legislature

1. This view was proposed by missionary D. Robertson of Zwellendam, the Surveyor General, Civil Commissioner Michel, Mr. Reitz the Justice of the Peace for Zwellendam and others. Ibid, passim.

2. CO.48.261, Desp.62, Mar. 10, 1846, Statement, J.B. Bayley.

and elsewhere, after 1845.¹

However, many farmers, including some influential farmers, perceived a useful function for the mission stations composed, as they were, of households that depended heavily on wage incomes. In their view, 'the great and general dissatisfaction among that class whose labourers flocked in considerable numbers' to the mission institutions in 1838, had considerably died down. 'The state of things has however changed for the better', and missions had developed into 'useful reservoirs of labour from which employers could draw when it was most needed.' At such times 'the majority of the able-bodied men are absent from the institutions engaged with the farmers. The women and children also engage in harvest work...'. Furthermore, the education provided on the missions 'had improved the general state of manners, habits and morals of that class to be better servants...'. In their opinion, the mission institutions in the commercial farming districts should be retained.²

The dilemma of the commercial farmers is illuminated by David Harvey's recent analysis of the role of the family in subsidising the reproduction costs of labour:

... to the extent that workers can support themselves, the value of labour power is diminished and the rate of capital accumulation

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1. J.B. Bayley employed eight labourers from Genadendal and was convinced that a grant of Hemel and Aarde to the Moravians would, '... tend to the embarrassment of the landed proprietors' because of labour losses and from the additions of the liberated Negroes who resort to them almost invariably as soon as apprenticeships expire'. Ibid, C.P.P.⁽¹⁴⁾ Documents on the Masters and Servants Ordinance, Evidence H.D. Jencken of Sir Lowry's Pass, for evidence of labour shortage on farms that were situated at a distance from mission stations.
 2. See for example, the opinions of Major Barnes, Resident Magistrate at Caledon, or T.B. Bayley, J.P. of Caledon among others. CO.48. 261., Desp. 62, Mar. 10, 1846; C.P.P., Documents re Masters and Servants Ordinance, 1849, p. 71-6; Macmillan, Cape Colour Question, 276.

is increased. It is in the self interests of capitalists from this standpoint to force the costs of reproduction of labour power back into the framework of family life. This then implies that the workers must have at least limited access to their own means of production. But if workers can in part take care of their own reproductive needs, they have less need to participate as wage labourers and will certainly be more resilient when it comes to strikes and other forms of labour struggle. (1)

The Executive rejected the Moravian appeal for a free government grant of Hemel and Aarde, but reached no finality on how to deal with the continually growing mission population.

A somewhat extraordinary affinity of interests developed between the mission peasants and workers on the one hand, and the commercial farmers who employed them on the other. The main opposition to eroding the autonomy of those who occupied the mission lands, came from sectors of western-Cape society whose interests conflicted in many other areas of daily life and work. One group who wanted the missions retained intact were the occupants. Mission inhabitants regarded the 1851 Squatters Bill as a threat to their access to land; they were an important component in the surge of opposition that forced the Legislature to abandon the Bill. In the mid-1850s commercial farmers who relied upon the casual labour of mission residents opposed attempts to tamper with the missions. The House of Assembly referred a motion in favour of the subdivision of mission land² to a commission of inquiry. The evidence of people such as H. Vigne, 'an agriculturist and employer of sixteen labourers from Genadendal in the Caledon area', and of F. Duckitt, a leading

1. Harvey, Limits to Capital, 162.

2. The missions in question here are those held in trust by various mission societies on 'tickets of occupation' and ultimately remained the responsibility of central government. For a list of which these were, and details of population, location, etc. see Tables 2 and 10.

commercial wheat farmer who employed a 'great number' of labourers from Mamre, prevailed upon the commissioners. F. Duckitt's outline of the value of the Mamre mission station illustrates the kind of reasoning that lay behind the commission's recommendations against selling off the mission lands in freehold tenures:

it is a village where labourers may be obtained, and who return when they have done working with the proprietors of the estate; it is considered a convenience on that account.

Land sales in individual freehold tenure would benefit only very few, and even those,

would through accumulation of debt be obliged to sell their plots, which under the present tenure, never can be touched ... To the neighbourhood I would say, it would be a great disadvantage. For the country at large, it would be the cause of disseminating labour, but the institution, generally speaking, is a labour market. (1)

As a resident of Genadendal succinctly put it: 'if you have your erfes [freeholds], any farmer may sell you up and recover his debts.'²

In the 1870s there was no significant commercial farmer opposition to the policy of granting L.M.S. lands in freehold.³ This can largely be explained by the geographical location of L.M.S. institutions in the western Cape and the changing nature of labour requirements within the localities of the institutions in question since the 1840s and 1850s. The three major L.M.S. institutions in the rural western Cape, Zuurbraak, Pacaltsdorp and Dyzals Kraal, were all located outside of Malmesbury, Caledon, and parts of Cape, Stellenbosch and Paarl Divisions, where the scale of, and specialization in, commercial wheat production increased during the period from 1864 to 1875.⁴

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1. C.P.P., R.S.C., Lands in freehold to Hottentots, 1854, p 23-5.
 2. C.M., Apr. 11, 1855; Cf. J. Peires, 'The Legend of Fenner-Solomon', Seminar Paper, African History Seminar, S.O.A.S., 1985.
 3. There is a marked absence of farmers' opposition in for example, A4-72.
 4. See above, chapter 2; CO.53.102 to 122., Stat. Regs., 1865 to 1875; Census 1865 to 1875.

Wheat production in Malmesbury and Caledon Divisions increased by 204,513 bushels or 66 percent during the decade 1864 to 1875, while that of Zwellendam, George, and Oudtshoorn Divisions decreased by 54,285 bushels or 23 percent. More significant, perhaps, was the fact that the amount of land cultivated with wheat in the latter Divisions decreased by 11,214 acres or 48 percent.¹ The L.M.S. institutions were not, therefore, situated in those areas where demand for ploughing and harvest labour is likely to have increased²: the opposite was likely to have been the case.

There is no evidence to suggest that in the 1870s, commercial wheat farmers perceived the granting of freeholds to the inhabitants of Zuurbraak, Pacaltsdorp and Dyzals Kraal as a threat to their efforts to expand production. This contrasts with the views they held during the 1840s and 1850s on Mamre and Genadendal which were located in the wheat-growing heartlands or, indeed, Zuurbraak, Pacaltsdorp and Dyzals Kraal which were in Divisions where the scale of wheat cultivation had been substantially greater and was expanding.³ Zuurbraak, Pacaltsdorp and Dyzals Kraal were located in Divisions where by the 1870s, commercial farmers had increasingly turned to sheep and ostrich farming rather than wheat cultivation.⁴ The demand now was for more resident

1. Census 1865 and 1875.

2. The only other privatisation of mission lands occurred in the pastoral areas at Amandelboom, Schietfontein and Ebenezer. In the case of Ebenezer, the Surveyor General simply withdrew the 1844 government grant of the important grazing lands at Else Erasmus Kloof in 1871. Scholtz, 'Onder Olifants', 201-5; Marais, Coloured People, 85-8, 249; E. Strassburger, The Rhenish Mission Society in South Africa, 1830-1950, p. 54.

3. See above chapters 1 and 2 passim; Tables 11 and 12. Census statistics for 1865 and 1875 are probably the most accurate indicators of production trends and it is worth noting from these that between 1865 and 1875 the number of morgen (i.e. 2.1 acres) of wheat under cultivation in Oudtshoorn, George and Zwellendam decreased by 1,100 (30%), 2,005 (55%) and 2,235 (60%) respectively.

4. Census statistics for 1865 and 1875 indicate substantial overall increases in numbers of livestock in these areas.

TABLE 11

ANNUAL AVERAGE WHEAT PRODUCTION, PRICES, VALUES AND
ACREAGE FOR THE DIVISIONS, REGIONS AND WESTERN CAPE
AS A WHOLE DURING THE PERIOD 1853 TO 1867 (1)

Division/ Region	Production Bushels	Value £	Price d.	Acreege
Malmesb	213,574	80,268	90	18,500
Piquetb*	14,394	4,954	83	7,593
Cape	59,792	24,739	79	5,430
CAPE-				
ZWARTLND				
ZANDVELD				
REGION	287,760	100,706	84	31,523
Stellenb	9,398	4,307	110	779
Paarl	31,655	12,134	92	2,469
CAPE-				
WINE				
REGION	41,052	16,441	101	3,248
Caledon	91,793	35,187	92	7,020
Bredsdrrp*	17,603	7,481	102	1,138
Robtson*	38,853	14,246	88	2,411
Zwelldam	66,416	33,208	120	4,663
Rivsdale	40,928	20,208	143	1,451
OVERBERG				
REGION	255,593	116,082	109	16,683
Oudtshrn*	172,085	90,345	126	3,701
George	74,844	3,137	96	5,364
Moss Bay*	16,700	7,836	113	1,806
MIDLANDS				
REGION	263,629	101,345	112	10,871
Worcestr	66,242	26,497	96	4,485
Tulbagh*	37,312	15,858	102	2,542
CENTRAL				
REGION	103,554	42,355	99	7,027
Clanwill	59,190	23,676	96	4,892
Calvinia*	30,217	20,648	164	1,016
Namland*	47,077	24,519	125	3,313
PASTORAL				
WEST-				
COAST				
REGION	136,484	68,843	128	9,221
Prince				
Albert*	16,074	8,640	129	1,178
Frasberg	13,016	12,094	223	503
Beauf W	10,509	5,561	127	665
Vict W*	13,964	12,393	213	497
PASTORAL				
INTERIOR				
REGION	53,563	38,688	173	2,843

1. Based on Stat. Regs., 1853-1867. The * indicates those Divisions which were formed during this period and which had formerly been incorporated in neighbouring Divisions, for the most part, in the same Region.

TABLE 12

WHEAT PRODUCTION, PRICES, VALUES AND ACREAGE FOR THE DIVISIONS, REGIONS AND WESTERN CAPE AS A WHOLE IN 1875¹

Division/ Region	Production Bushels	Value ²	Ann.Ave. Price (d.) 1868-1890	Value ³ 1875	Price 1875	Acreege 1875
Malmesb	415,271	148,805	86 86	138,424	80	52,274
Piquethb	58,219	21,347	88 88	27,654	114	10,209
Cape	91,238	33,453	88 88	41,057	108	8,976
CAPE- ZWARTLND ZANDVLD REGION	564,728	203,605	87 87	207,135	101	71,459
Stellenb	17,847	6,023	81 81	7,585	102	3,081
Paarl	48,424	16,747	83 83	14,527	72	5,539
CAPE- WINE REGION	66,271	22,770	82	22,112	87	8,620
Caledon	97,614	33,351	82	32,538	80	6,647
Bredsdrrp	14,815	5,988	97	5,926	96	2,093
Robtson	30,393	12,664	100	20,262	160	1,827
Zwelldam	26,421	9,798	89	13,211	120	2,384
Rivsdale	38,880	15,876	98	19,440	120	2,711
OVERBERG REGION	208,123	77,677	93	91,377	115	15,662
Oudtshrn	98,519	36,945	90	49,260	120	5,460
George	54,574	21,830	96	20,465	90	3,381
Moss Bay	17,616	5,725	78	6,166	84	1,599
MIDLANDS REGION	170,709	64,500	88	75,891	98	10,440
Worcestr	16,559	6,900	100	8,693	126	2,082
Tulbagh	28,212	11,872	101	19,748	168	4,747
CENTRAL REGION	44,771	18,772	101	28,441	147	6,829
Clanwill	11,869	5,242	106	5,539	112	5,279
Calvinia	4,993	3,682	177	6,865	330	1,316
Namland	1,206	583	116	905	180	9,885
PASTORAL WEST- COAST REGION	18,086	9,507	133	13,309	207	16,480
Prince						
Albert	17,407	10,372	143	13,635	188	956
Frasberg	305	282	222	381	300	736
Beauf W	9,187	5,933	155	8,039	210	523
Vict W	11,124	9,131	197	8,899	192	3,312
PASTORAL INTERIOR REGION	38,023	25,718	179	30,954	223	5,527
WESTERN CAPE	1,110,695	422,549	109	469,219	140	135,017

TABLE 12

FOOTNOTES

1. Based on the Census of 1875 which is the only detailed assessment taken in any one year during the period 1860 to 1880. Stat. Regs. during these years simply base annual wheat statistics on the census figures of 1865 and 1875. The only exception to this are the wheat prices which appear annually in the Stat. Regs. and are more accurate. The values of wheat production are based on the average price for the years 1868 to 1880. Stat. Regs., 1868-1880; Census, 1865, 1875.
 2. Based on annual average prices for 1868 to 1880, but only for 1875 production figures.
 3. Ibid.
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regular herders and relatively fewer casual agricultural labourers, and there was little outcry on the part of commercial farmers for the retention of the mission stations which were more suited to the rhythms of the agricultural cycle and its fluctuating demands for seasonal labour.

On the contrary, the granting of freeholds to the L.M.S. inhabitants was widely expected to result in the desired dispossession and proletarianization of a proportion of the mission inhabitants.¹ It is not surprising to find that contemporary reports on the rapid expansion of merino sheep farming in Zwellendam often remarked on Zuurbraak's continuing existence as a 'hotbed of indolence and vice ... a half civilized community of near 2000 souls.'² Furthermore, dispossession of mission inhabitants in areas of developing pastoral farming had at least one precedent at Kat River in the eastern Cape during the 1850s.³

The L.M.S. decision to withdraw from Cape missions was not made suddenly in the 1870s. Nor is it possible to explain the L.M.S. policy decision on ^{the} grounds that emancipation from slavery and legal equality had rendered useless institutions which were suited to social conditions of the slave era. Why then had the L.M.S. waited forty years since Ordinance 50 and twenty-four years since slave emancipation?⁴

1. C.W.M., Box 35, Fold. 3, Jack. B, Cape Town, 1868.

2. CO.53.108, C.C.R., 1871, Zwellendam.

3. Kirk, in Marks and Atmore, Economy and Society.

4. The argument about legal equality rendering mission stations useless was frequently used by L.M.S. officials to justify their action.

See for example J. MacKenzie, The London Missionary Society in South Africa: a Retrospective Sketch, London, 1888, *passim*;

A38-71, R.S.C., on L.M.S. Institutions, p. 4.

R. Lovett explains that the L.M.S. Directorate initiated steps in 1868 to grant mission lands to occupants in freeholds because of the 'renewed attention' that mission stations were receiving at that time from local critics and because of the increased dependency of missions on the L.M.S. funds during the drought of the mid-1860s.¹ In fact, these contingencies provided the moment rather than the cause for the implementation of the policy of complete withdrawal which was initiated shortly after and, to some extent at least, as a result of the crisis of the early 1850s. In 1856 '... the work of withdrawing financial support was carefully and systematically carried out by the Directors'.² According to the missionary William Thompson, before the parliamentary select committee on the Mission Lands Bill in 1872, the primary reason for their withdrawal was the difficulty the L.M.S. experienced in maintaining order and enforcing their regulations. Overt and widespread disaffection among mission peasants and workers in the late 1840s and early 1850s had lingered on in covert forms.³

While the L.M.S. decision to grant freeholds to inhabitants met with a degree of approval among the dominant class, it failed to take into account the views of the mission peasants and workers themselves. In 1868 a commission consisting of three L.M.S. missionaries and one member of parliament, Saul Solomon, 'the friend of the natives', visited the six L.M.S. stations to sound the opinions of some 4,300

1. Lovett, London Missionary Society, 573-5.

2. *Ibid.*, 576-8. The financial dependency of the L.M.S. stations is overstated. In the case of Pacaltsdorp for example, which was one of the poorer L.M.S. stations in the western Cape, the total L.M.S. outlay for 20 years up to 1873 was £745. The only costs borne by the Society were part of the purchase price for Hans Moes Kraal and the missionary's salary. C.W.M., Box 36, Fold. 2, Jack. B., Atkinson, 1870.

3. A4-72, R.S.C. Missionary Institutions Bill, Evid. W. Thompson, p.3 and *passim*.

inhabitants, 2,330 of whom lived in the western Cape.¹ After public meetings at each of the stations the commissioners claimed that all but Zuurbraak and Bethelsdorp were in favour of the plan. On the basis of this consent, the commissioners recommended definite proposals to the Governor, Sir Philip Wodehouse,² The structure of these consultations was, however, wholly inadequate as a means of gauging public opinion. One of the L.M.S. commissioners introduced the idea of freehold transferrals to 'the people of the station', another 'read the instructions', and a third commissioner then asked those present whether they were in favour of the plan or not. All this generally took place in a meeting. Furthermore, Thompson's introductions of the issue to the gatherings were in certain respects manipulative to the point of falsification. For example by mentioning the fact that similar meetings had already been held at the eastern stations he gave the impression that the people there had endorsed the plan. Similarly by stressing the insecurity of tenure by government grant he gave the impression that the sudden need for freeholds originated as a result of government policy rather than that of the L.M.S.³ The commission went to the stations in 1868 to advocate and announce the freehold policy and not to sound public opinion in any meaningful way.

What transpired at the public meetings between the commissioners and mission peasants and workers hardly constituted grounds for claims that the populace consented to the freehold plan. Thus, the meeting

R.S.C. L.M.S. Institutions, *passim*.

1. A38-71, Conservative commercial farmers and their mouthpiece, the Z.A., regularly dubbed Saul Solomon the 'friend of the natives', on account of his liberal views on issues such as a 'free labour market' and hence his opposition to coercive laws aimed to secure a steady labour supply.
2. C.W.M., Box 35, Fold. 2, Jack. B, Hankey, 1868.
3. C.W.M., Box 35, Fold. 3, Jack. B, Cape Town, 1868.

at Dyzals Kraal developed into a debate about who should get what and why. Exceedingly complex issues such as land and water rights at both Dyzals Kraal and Matjies River as well as privileges of the old and sick were at stake. Samuel Bessie expressed his surprise 'to hear that both the Government and the Society withdrew their protection from them as a race'. Ian Damon felt that the people would only consent to dividing up the station 'when their grandchildren desired it'. Christian Meyer expressed views of the inhabitants in the 1840s and 1850s when he warned that freeholds and indebtedness generally resulted in dispossession. It is possible that John Damon spoke for most when he subtly threw the L.M.S. question about approval back at the commissioners: '... the feeling of the Majority was to leave it in the hands of the Society...'. He also pointed out the serious difficulties involved in distributing the community's resources in this manner.

The outcome of the meeting at Zuurbraak was more definite. Andries Kivido represented the Old Party as official local Khoisan leader. He 'seemed to attach great dignity to a staff headed with brass which the former chief of the Hottentots residing on that ground had received from the Government seventy or more years ago'.¹ He produced and presented to the commission the original Government ticket of occupation which granted Hans Moses and family indefinite rights to occupy their traditional kraal, Zuurbraak.² Kivido made it clear that

1. This is very likely to have been one of the original staffs which were issued by the Cape government as token of recognition of Khoisan chiefs. Elphick, Kraal and Castle, *passim*.
2. A copy of the original ticket states:

This serves as proof that the Hottentot Captain Hans Moses and his accompanying family, are, by order of the Governor General, permitted to remain settled, at his traditional kraal of Zuurbraak, without anybody, whoever it may be, molesting, or, more importantly, driving them from there.

Zwellendam, 3rd March, 1808, A. Faure, Landdrost.

C.W.M., Box 35, Fold. 3, Jack. B, Cape Town, 1868.

the Old Party would not negotiate with the L.M.S. on the question of land that rightfully belonged to them and with that, 'he and certain following rose and left the room'. The very small minority that remained at the meeting indicates the extent of popular dissatisfaction with the L.M.S. proposals. This was all the more significant when viewed in the context of the Old Party tactic of boycotts as a method of resistance, a very remarkable and persistent political tactic in 'coloured politics'. Frans Albertus was one of those who remained. He was 'a man of character and substance' and said that most people wanted things to be left as they were. He explained:

They were a poor community and the Boers all around were just waiting to see whether they should get their property in Erven. Had they been proprietors during the recent drought and famine he did not think one fourth of the people would still be in possession. (1)

Floris Zwart posed the vital question: 'if they rejected the proposal, [would] the Society withdraw its trust?' She received an affirmative answer.² There was a substantial body of opinion among the inhabitants of Pacaltsdorp, Dyzals Kraal and Zuurbraak which ranged from lack of enthusiasm to open opposition towards the privatization of mission land in 1868.

A closer look at some of the details of the proposals for particular stations partially reveals the reasons for the resistance to the freehold policy. At Dyzals Kraal, for example, the freehold proposals entrenched the privileges of a few while the access of many villagers to gardens and cornfields remained at least as limited as it had been under the mission regime. In the late 1830s, when Dyzals Kraal was still a grazing farm attached to Pacaltsdorp, seven families settled around the small springs on the hillside. By 1870, a village

1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

community of 560 had developed according to an official estimate. The freehold proposals endorsed the resident missionary practice of recognising the rights of the original seven families to the water sources and gave these families irrigation rights, but limited the water-usage rights of others in the village to household and animal drinking water purposes only. The distribution pattern of cultivable land along the Olifants River was similar. Those who had helped construct the water furrow along the banks of the Olifants River each got an allotment. 'The others who declined to join making the water-course have since that time wished to become landholders but have been refused'.¹ Similarly, Pacaltsdorpers who could afford the repayments would secure freeholds on that portion of the station which the L.M.S. owned.²

Freehold proposals for Zuurbraak were a far cry from considering Old Party claims to proprietorship over all Zuurbraak or even recognising its existence by negotiating directly with Old Party representatives. Instead, the proposals dealt a crushing blow to the Old Party land claims. The envisaged consolidation of the scattered groups of dwellings into one village location, coupled with the non-recognition of inherited land rights originating from the title of Captain Hans Moses 'met syne byhebbende familie'³ dated 1808, effectively limited Old Party claims to 'much fewer' than twenty-eight allotments in 1868.⁴ Rights to commonage at all three stations were to be defined

1. A38-71, R.S.C., L.M.S. Institutions, p.8/9.

2. Ibid, 9.

3. 'with his accompanying family'.

4. Ibid, 9-10. Zuurbraak's population was approximately 1,200 at the time. It should be noted that there were almost certainly a large number of Old Party supporters and sympathisers who did not live scattered about the station and who did not claim to be descendants of Hans Moses.

and tied to the freeholds. All important grazing rights therefore depended upon ownership of an allotment.

A proportion of people at each of the three stations no doubt had numerous other specific reasons to be wary of the freeholds policy than can be gleaned from the available sources. At a more general level, the intent of the L.M.S. Directors is most unambiguously stated in Thompson's explanation to the 1872 Parliamentary Select Committee on the Missions Bill:

... the industrious and provident would be encouraged to acquire fixed property [and] those of an opposite character would no longer be upheld by the present artificial state of things, and would eventually be dispersed. Meanwhile, the dead level would be broken by the gradual formation of a class socially superior, and this is desirable ... the effects of the proposed change may be expected to be beneficial, not merely to the inhabitants of the institutions themselves, but to those persons by whom they are surrounded. (1)

Opposition to the policy indicates that many inhabitants were alive to the dangers of further proletarianization² that lay behind the offers of freeholds. There were however advantages in the policy for some, and this provides part of the explanation for jumbled reports such as the following.

... some of them were in favour of the change, and others took the opposite view. Since then the people of Pacaltsdorp, who have frequently had the subject before them, appear to be undecided, but are, upon the whole, opposed to the measure. (3)

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1. A4-72, R.S.C. Missionary Institutions Bill, Evid. W. Thompson.
 2. Such as a shift from casual and seasonal wage labour roles to those of full-time, resident regular workers. It is interesting that Cape Moravian officials 'considered it wrong that the L.M.S. undertook the step against the wishes of the majority of the inhabitants ...'. Kruger, Pear Tree Blossoms, 284.
 3. A4-72, R.S.C., Missionary Institutions Bill, Evid. W. Thompson.

The effects of the freehold policy on the ground¹ gave cause for concern among many and presented opportunities for some of the inhabitants at each of the three stations. During the period from 1867 to 1873, the private interests of a few inhabitants conflicted with common interests as much as they were likely to have done during the 1840s and 1850s. Earlier attempts to privatise mission land, and the resistance thereto, had however been tied up with proposals to eliminate squatting. This elicited opposition from a broad spectrum of workers, peasants, rebels and defecting mission levies on the eastern frontier, harvest labourers, and squatters on government land.² The 1872 freehold proposals affected fewer people and did not evoke anything like as formidable an opposition among peasants and workers because it took place at a very different historical conjuncture from that of the mid-nineteenth century crisis in the colony.³

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1. The situation at Zuurbraak is a case in point. The station had a population of about 2,000 in the early 1870s. Government Notice number 479 of 1875 listed the title holders decided upon after the final government surveys were completed. There were 320 village lots, 191 garden lots and 142 plough lots. Many held titles to single village lots only. Many had title to a garden lot. A few did rather better. One got title to 2 garden lots, 5 got titles to 3 garden lots and 3 got titles to 4 garden lots. The plough lots were similarly divided with most getting title to a single lot, one got 2 plough lots and 4 got title to 3 plough lots each. The pattern at Pacaltsdorp and Dyzals Kraal was similar. C.W.M., Box 38, Fold. 1, Jack. D, Cape Town, 1875, Box 38, Fold. 4, Jack. D, Cape Town, 1876. It is very likely that some received no titles at all. Talk of 'forfeited erven' at Zuurbraak probably refers to the core Old Party members who were most unlikely to have received any titles. A30-76, *passim*.
 2. See above chapter 1.
 3. A similarly changed historical conjuncture occurred in the wider context of Southern African societies as a whole after 1870. S. Marks and A. Atmore, 'The Imperial Factor in South Africa in the Nineteenth Century: Towards a Reassessment', Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History, 3, 1, 1974.

C. For sellers of wheat and flour or sellers of labour power?
Agrarian responses to developments on the diamond fields and
related public works during the 1870s.

There is no simple direct link between the development of commercial wheat production and that of food markets on the diamond fields during the 1870s. The general economic consequences of South Africa's 'mineral revolution' which began on the diamond fields in 1867 and inaugurated a decade of 'boom' conditions in the colony based essentially on massively increased trade, government revenues, and foreign investment, are well documented.¹ The evidence does not, however, permit one to blandly pass off the escalating wheat production in the early 1870s and rising wheat prices throughout the decade as merely another 'multiplier' effect or 'spin off' which developed in response to demand generated by increased population, greater purchasing power and wider markets on the diamond fields.² Commercial wheat farmers did, no doubt, benefit from the generally improved economic climate, but other factors were also important. Exceptionally good seasons prevailed consistently throughout every arable area in the western Cape from 1870 to 1873.³ Wheat harvests were abundant,

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1. De Kock, Economic History; C.W. De Kiewiet, A History of South Africa, Oxford, 1957; C.G.W. Schoeman, Structural Changes and Business Cycles in South Africa, 1806-1936, London, 1938; D.M. Goodfellow, A Modern Economic History of South Africa, London, 1931; R.C. Turrell, 'Capital, Class and Monopoly: The Kimberley Diamond Fields, 1871-1889', Ph.D., S.O.A.S., 1982; A.W.O. Bock, 'The Foreign Trade of South Africa since 1867. A Historical and Critical Analysis', D.Comm., Stellenbosch (no date); J.J. van Helten, 'Australia and South Africa: Comparative Perspectives on Economic Growth and Development, 1850-1900', I.C.S., 1983; W.R. Laubscher, 'Diamantontwenteling in die Kaapkolonie 1867-1889', M.A., Stellenbosch, 1954; M.H. De Kock, The Economic Development of South Africa, London, 1936.
 2. For this kind of generalisation see for example, De Kock, Economic History, 108-111, Economic Development, 48.
 3. Based on CO.53.107 to 110., C.C.R.^{passim} and Stat. Regs., 1870 to 1873.

imports of wheat and flour were negligible,¹ and prices remained low. As the decade progressed, however, reports of vital seasonal rain failures emanated from an increasing number of Divisions. The fact that fewer Divisions produced wheat surpluses, or enough to meet their own requirements, contributed significantly to the rise in wheat and flour prices that occurred as the decade progressed.²

A quickening in the wheat trade to the interior from parts of the Central, Midlands and Overberg regions, which appeared during years of exceptional harvests, was shortlived. In 1870, the Civil Commissioner of Riversdale reported that 'many of our [Riversdale] farmers are taking the product of their harvests to the Diamond fields'.³ Farmers carted wheat and meal from Robertson, Oudtshoorn and George Divisions across the Swartberg range as well as from the arable foothills of the Swartberg in Prince Albert Division. They sold where the best prices could be secured at villages situated along main routes to the interior such as Beaufort West, Victoria West, and Hope Town, or bartered their surpluses in exchange for those of the pastoral farmers.⁴ Such reports dwindle by 1874 and no qualitative shift to commercial wheat production geared to Kimberley markets took place during the 1870s even in those arable Divisions nearest to the diamond fields which were largely precluded from profitable access to the Cape Town market by poor roads, mountain ranges, and distance. During the 1870s, the western-Cape wheat-trade pattern of the 1850s

1. No wheat was imported in 1870 and 1871 and about 1,000 196 lb. barrels of flour were imported. Factors influencing international grain markets, such as the Franco Prussian war, probably contributed to the slowing up of wheat supplies to the Cape from America and Europe. War disrupted agriculture, affected shipping and required armies which needed feeding.

2. Based on C.C.R. and Stat. Regs. 1870-1880, CO.53.107-118.

3. CO.53.107., C.C.R., 1870, Riversdale.

4. See for example, CO.53.108, C.C.R., 1871, Midlands Divs., *passim*.

and 1860s¹, with Cape Town as its centre of gravity for marketable surpluses, remained largely intact. There is little evidence that the mule trains and waggons carried much wheat and flour among the goods they transported from whatever point the Cape Town-Worcester Extension railway to the interior had reached during the course of its construction.² Thlaping sorghum cultivation, Basuto grain farming and eastern Cape agriculture were all far more important to diamond-field food markets than western-Cape wheat farmers during the first decade of South Africa's mining revolution.³

Of greater significance to those engaged in the production of western-Cape wheat surpluses were the markets that the diamond fields created for labour power rather than for food surpluses. During the 1870s new options emerged for western-Cape farm labourers on the diamond fields and related public works which altered 'the terms of the struggle for an existence' in the rural western Cape.⁴

Press correspondents first draw attention to classes of people moving from the Zwartland and Midlands to the diamond fields during the spring of 1870.⁵ One observer noted, 'no less than thirteen parties

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1. See above chapter 2.
 2. See for example, CO.53.112, C.C.R., Tulbagh, 1875; Laubscher, 'Diamantomwenteling', 75-6.
 3. J. Kimble, 'Labour migration in Basutoland c1870-1885', in Marks and Rathbone, Industrialization and Social Change; K. Shillington, 'The impact of the diamond discoveries on the Kimberley hinterland: class formation, colonialism and resistance among the Thlaping of Griqualand West in the 1870s', in *Ibid*; Bundy, South African Peasantry, 203-4; F. Boyle, To the Cape for Diamonds, London, 1983; C.A., Mar. 14, 1881, claimed that disruptions during the Basuto war raised the cost of grain supplies to the diamond fields by £40,000 per month in 1881.
 4. I use Philip Abram's phrase in an attempt to apply to the Cape his sense of combining both structural conditions with people's actions in the process of industrialization. P. Abrams, Historical Sociology, U.K., 1982, p. 34.
 5. S.M., 13, 17, Sept., 1870; S.T. van der Horst, Native Labour in South Africa, Oxford, 1942, also mentions what she terms 'Hottentots' leaving the western Cape for the diamond fields from the early 1870s.

besides a number of persons on foot' en route to the diamond fields on the road from Darling to Wellington. Some, 'who were only provided with a bundle of fish, an old musket and a blanket and possibly with a few shillings in their pockets, had undertaken to walk 700 miles'.¹

Rural unemployment, which had plagued those dependent upon wage incomes since the early 1860s, disappeared from the western Cape after 1870. Some farmers in Piquetberg, Tulbagh and Worcester Divisions who hired hands to cultivate and reap the bumper harvests of 1870, 1871 and 1872 experienced difficulties in obtaining sufficient labourers from as early as 1870. Civil Commissioners in these areas attributed farm-labour shortages to the fact that many had left for the diamond fields.²

From 1873 agricultural employers throughout the arable areas of the western Cape, including those who had at first been cushioned by the labour reserves at Genadendal and Groenkloof, were unable to secure sufficient labour. After 1873, rural labourers had the added option of better-paid jobs at a range of public works in which the newly formed Responsible Government invested a very substantial proportion of the colony's unprecedented revenues.³ In January 1867, the Elim Diary mentions the influence of the railway works:

1. S.M., 13 Sept., 1870.

2. CO.53.107/8/9, C.C.R.s., 1870/1/2, Piquetberg, Tulbagh, Worcester Divisions.

3. A Handbook to South Africa, London, 1891, p. 64. Notably the railways but also roads, bridges, passes, telegraphs and dockworks. There is evidence of farm labourers leaving western-Cape farms to work on the railways and diamond fields. See for example the reports of the Civil Commissioners. CO.53.107 to 118., C.C.R., *passim*, 1870-1880. The precise numbers remain unclear. Some indicators are the fact that one-sixth of the diamond-fields labour force came from the Cape and Natal colonies in the early 1870s and the fact that by 1890 there were over 20,000 'Malays', 'Hottentots', and 'Mixed and Other' in Kimberley; Turrell, 'Kimberley: labour and compounds, 1871-1888', Marks and Rathbone, Industrialization and Social Change, p. 45; Census, 1892. The largest of the public works in the western Cape was the Western Cape Railway which employed about 3,000 in 1875, two thirds of whom were 'blacks', a term which in this context includes 'Coloureds'. Purkis, 'Railway building', 388.

This mode of earning good wages, half a crown a day and their food, is just now very popular, and gives employment to about a hundred of our men. (1)

New alternatives had emerged for agricultural labourers in the western Cape and, clearly, a significant number responded.

The bulk of those who left the rural western Cape to work on the diamond fields and related public works seemed to be the wage dependent, regular resident agricultural labourers and casual workers from farms, rural villages and the missions.² There is little evidence of people leaving parts of the western Cape, such as Calvinia Division, where commercialization of land and labour were least advanced and public land offered opportunities for small-scale pastoralism.³ Some of those who left for the diamond fields were 'English people', such as those from the Overberg, who faced a fairly widespread reluctance on the part of farmers to employ them.⁴ Reports of large commercial farmers selling up and moving to the diamond fields are very occasional,⁵ but there is evidence that numbers of small-farmers were leaving areas such as the Overberg where, for reasons outlined below,⁶ their presence was particularly marked. A report from Caledon provides some insight into their motives but exaggerates their numbers. It talks of an

... exodus to that 'land of promise' the Diamond Fields, of nearly all [sic] the able bodied young men in the district endeavouring to

1. M.P.A., Elim Diary, 1876.

2. A number of individuals and families had for example moved from the squalid cottages and rooms of Lower Paarl and a surplus of accommodation occurred in Lower Paarl for the first time since emancipation. S.P.G., Paarl, Sept., 1871.

3. CO.53.107 to 110, C.C.Rs., 1870 to 1873, *pastoral Divs, passim*.

4. For examples see S.P.G., Reports, 1870/1, *passim*. Largely because they were more expensive. They were unlikely to have had either the allotments and community support that many local casual workers had, or the inclination to accept resident regular agricultural work on the terms farmers offered.

5. See for example, S.M., 6 Feb., 1872. A Dr Morkel advertised his valuable cattle and grain farm, Rambouillet, 'the proprietor having resolved upon proceeding to the diamond fields'.

6. See below chapter 3, D.

seek fortunes, in the hope that should luck attend them, they may be able to settle down in the course of a few years as wealthy farmers in the district where they have been born and bred ... such being the height of their ambition. (1)

A number of the rural artisanate also responded to the demand for skilled labour at the diamond fields and related public works.² The bulk of the evidence of people leaving the rural western Cape for the diamond fields and public works during the 1870s comes from the labour-intensive agricultural Divisions, and most were labourers.

Wages provided a strong incentive to leave farms and take jobs on the diamond fields and public works. The 'stream of men beginning to pour in from the mission stations' to the Western Railway works in 1873, did so on the basis of a day-wage increase from 1s.6d. to 2s. plus rations.³ By 1875 wages were 3s. per day plus rations.⁴ Farmers were paying between 1s. and 3s. with food during the 1870s when local and central government offered 3s. a day to 4s. a day on public works.⁵ In 1873, a press report stated that 'Kaffirs get at the Fields 10 shillings per day and food'.⁶ Turrell estimates a more likely figure of labourers' wages at the diamond fields as averaging between 10s. and 30s. without food per week in the 1870s.⁷ Again, this contrasts with the 13s. to £1 per month which regular resident workers earned in most western-Cape areas during the same period.⁸ While wages in all

1. CO.53.108., C.C.R., Caledon, 1871; S.P.G., Bredasdorp, Sept., 1873.

2. S.P.G., Zwellendam, Sept., 1873.

3. Purkis, 'Railway Building', 362.

4. Ibid, p. 374.

5. A26-79^{passim}; CO.53.107 to 118., Stat. Regs., 1870 to 1880; C.A., 24 May, 3 June, 1873.

6. Ibid.

7. Turrell, in Marks and Rathbone, Industrialization and Social Change, 50. This applies to the 1870s. Laubscher, 'Diamantomwenteling', 182-6.

8. Ibid; CO.53.107 to 118., Stat. Regs., 1870-1880.

sectors tended to rise steadily from 1869 to 1880,¹ the potential earnings in occupations other than agriculture provided western-Cape farm labourers with access to sources of income that were independent of farmers. This had important consequences for farmers and farm labourers.

1. G47-77, carries a statement to the effect that in 1878, 'There has been a great and general rise in wages during the past few years variously stated at from 30 to 100 percent.' G.47-77, Immigration Report, p. 2.

D. Work and wages on wheat farms.

Some noticeable shifts took place in the nature of resident regular farm work as employers and employees sought generally to adapt themselves as best they could to the changing circumstances of the 1870s, and particularly as employers sought to reduce seasonal wage costs and employees to entrench the relative benefits of seasonal day work on farms. Seasonal wages amounted to some 23 to 33 percent of the value of wheat crops.¹ A farmer increasingly had to provide family accommodation and access to some arable and/or grazing land to secure labour. There were regional variations in the terms of such arrangements between farmers and those engaged in farm work. Racial attitudes and types of farm work also influenced labour arrangements. What follows is an analysis of how farmers and labourers lived and worked on a number of wheat farms in different parts of the western Cape during the 1870s.

In parts of the Overberg region where census statistics show a majority of 'Whites and Europeans', where village and mission populations were relatively small, and where Cape inheritance laws had steadily increased the number of small farmers, a system of small-holdings had developed. Characteristically, these farmers had a bit of a subdivided farm or had a share along with other relatives in a 'maatschappy plaats'.² Many had been unable to sustain themselves or their families from these holdings during the drought of the mid-1860s. A number were impoverished. It is likely that some small farmers sold relatively small land holdings to rapidly expanding, commercial sheep

1. Calculations based on C.A., 16 March, 1876; Collins, Sickle to Combine, 9; CO.53.112., Stat. Reg., 1875; A26-79²⁵¹¹ Noble, Handbook, 1875; S.M., 19 Apr. 1870, 31 Dec., 1872; H.V., Apr., 30, 1881. L.M.S., Lily Fountain, Jan., 1880.

2. Communal farm.

and ostrich farmers. For a variety of reasons, then, land loss among a sector of small farmers and their re-emergence as 'shepherds' and sharecroppers¹ on the farms of capitalizing and capitalist agriculturists and pastoralists, became increasingly apparent between 1867 and 1880.²

Relations between farmers, shepherds and agricultural workers were complex on Overberg farms. A. Van der Byl, of the farm Nachtwagt in Bredasdorp Division, was an established grain and wool farmer who engaged thirty-two men on a regular basis and took on more during harvest and shearing sessions. Van der Byl said that eight of his shepherds were 'Afrikaners ... once respectable farmers ... white men ...'.³ In return for the care of six hundred sheep, he gave each shepherd a house to lodge his family, rights to sow nine bushels of wheat, six of barley and six of oats, as well as grazing rights for fifty goats and a span of transport cattle if they had a wagon. They were entitled to the full £50 or £60 van Byl estimated they earned from what they cultivated each year as well as any income they derived from transport services. Van der Byl also gave them food consisting of two sheep and two bushels of flour and a wage of £1 each month.⁴ It is likely that these 'shepherds' were kin, or family friends, of van der Byl: they were not labourers; neither were they 'supervisors' on Nachtwagt. Most concentrated either on cultivating their land, or on transport work in the district, while their children did most of the actual shepherding.

1. On the whole, I have avoided the term 'bywoners' because it covered so wide a spectrum of relationships between tenant/labourer and landlord/employer as to be meaningless to detailed analysis of western-Cape agrarian relationships at this time.

2. A26-79, p. 16/17.

3. Ibid, 16.

4. Ibid.

Van der Byl described the other eight shepherds as 'coloured', or 'Bastards'. They cared for the same number of sheep and received the same monthly food and wage. However, their arrangement with van der Byl differed from that of the other shepherds in several fundamental ways. They lived in 'cottages' rather than 'houses', had no grazing rights, had vegetable gardens or 'ground for wives to dig' rather than sowing lands, and worked as day-labourers during the periods of harvest and shearing.

The agricultural labourers on Nachtwagt were also 'coloured', and received cottages, vegetable plots, and a monthly wage of £1 with food consisting of two sheep and two bushels of flour per month. Shepherds and agricultural labourers who did seasonal day-work received 2s. a day during harvest as well as food and two 'glasses' of wine on five occasions per day, which amounted to two bottles. The same applied to shearing day work, except that wages were around 3s. per day, as more skills were required.¹ Racially structured hierarchies of work and privilege were not absent from commercial farms in the Overberg.

Most Overberg farmers were, however, not in a position to provide housing and land on the scale of van der Byl; they faced acute difficulties in procuring any regular farm labour. They had to pay day-workers 1s.6d. per day with food out of season, and up to 4s. a day with food and wine during harvest. Aaron Paardewachter worked on farms in the Overberg around Genadendal, where his wife and family lived. He said that among those who were dissatisfied with what farmers offered were forty fellow Genadendalers; they took jobs on the Cape Town docks instead. Several others simply deserted from farm

1. Ibid, 16-20; G47-77, p10/11, *Immigration Report*.

engagements which paid badly and went off to work on the railway.¹

Commercial grain farmers had, therefore, to meet the high day-wage demands or provide housing, some land, and sufficient wage increases during peak periods to keep labourers on the farms.

Commercial farmers in other parts of the Overberg, who concentrated on wool and feather production rather than wheat, had somewhat different sets of arrangements regarding regular farm work. T. Moodie, M.L.A. for Zwellendam, had three farms in Zwellendam Division. He explained:

I have found that it does not pay to hire people to plough and sow, I let the arable land out in shares to people who do it with their own children. It answers their purpose because probably their children have nothing to do; and they consider that they can do it cheaper than I could do it by hiring labourers ... I cannot say it [this system of farming] is general; but a good many practice it ... we are far too removed from the markets to go largely into agriculture. (2)

It appears that Moodie employed regular waged shepherds on his farms and was able not only to cream off a proportion of what the sharecroppers produced, but also to call upon them for the extra labour required during peak periods. Moodie said 'some white people and some black' leased his land as sharecroppers. Moodie probably meant 'coloured'; a term that was more generally used than 'black' to describe people other than 'white' in the area; and which is confirmed by evidence that a number of mission peasants from Zuurbraak were 'ploughing on the shares in the area'.³ One of the sharecroppers had arrived on his farm in 1841 as a juvenile immigrant from England, who had remained ever since. But most were the descendants of small farmers, or had themselves been squeezed out by subdivisions, expanding commercial farmers, or drought.

1. A26-79, R.S.C. Supply of Labour Market, p.39 and passim.

2. Ibid, 43. Some contemporary reports which indicate a growing concern about illiteracy among small and poorer farmers also, sometimes, point out the extent to which their children were engaged in agriculture. See for example, C.A., 29 July, 1873.

3. A4-72., Evidence of T.A. Barry, M.L.A., Riversdale, passim.

In our part there are a good many poor farmers who live on the farms with their families, and help the owner of the farm; I mean the class called bywoners ... The farmers are anxious to get bywoners, who are generally the sons of poor farmers with very little stock of their own. They are generally assisted by the owner of the farm with stock to plough with ...

Work on Moodie's farm was carried out by sharecroppers and waged shepherds with both providing seasonal labour.¹

Regular farm workers in the Cape-Wine-Zwartland region asserted their preference for jobs on farms where their families were housed and they had access to some land, but conditions differed from those in much of the Overberg and this is reflected in the ways in which labourers and farmers structured their relations. These were also Divisions with the greatest concentrations of village and mission populations, the longest and most developed tradition of commercial wheat production, and the most thoroughly proletarianized wage sector in the western Cape. In contrast with Overberg Divisions of Zwellendam and Riversdale, the census reveals that Cape-Wine-Zwartland Divisions, such as Malmesbury and Paarl, had majorities of 'Hottentot and all other' persons over 'European or White' persons.² Small-farmer shepherding and share-

1. A26-79., p. 43-46.

2. See Census 1875. The census figures are suspect both with regard to accuracy of numbers and with regard to the racial classification of people. For what they are worth, population statistics are:

	'EUROPEAN OR WHITE'	'HOTTENTOT AND ALL OTHER'
Stellenbosch	3442	7107
Paarl	7312	10764
Malmesbury	7862	10234
Piquetberg*	4357	3882
Caledon	5366	5969
Bredasdorp	2017	2289
Robertson*	4512	3519
Zwellendam*	5028	4979
Riversdale*	6878	5843
Mossel Bay*	2664	2408
George	5229	6584
Oudtshoorn*	7925	7256

The evidence suggests a correlation between those Divisions marked* where 'European and White' populations exceeded 'Hottentot and all other' and those Divisions with the highest incidence of 'European and White' small farmers, shepherds and sharecroppers.

cropping seemed relatively insignificant and not nearly as widely practised as they were in parts of the Overberg. However, relations between regular workers and farmers in the Cape-Wine-Zwartland region, during the 1870s, developed in ways which were no less complex than those on Overberg farms and often also hinged on the availability of housing and land on farms.

Among the well-established and leading commercial farms of the Cape-Wine-Zwartland was that of P.L. van der Byl which stood out as something of a model as regards its labour arrangements. Van der Byl, M.L.C.,¹ owned an established wine and agricultural farm in Stellenbosch Division, on the banks of the Eerste River, and near the railway station. He employed an average of twenty-five labourers each day at 2s.6d. a day with wine, but not food. Van der Byl explained how he managed to secure this number of people without any difficulty:

I am entirely independent of the labour market, because I have 300 people on my place; and there is a school, a church and shops ... In fact I have a little location of my own ... I foresaw this difficulty and began this system 25 years ago.

Each family had a house and some ground and derived 'treble' their day-wage incomes by selling their own garden produce at markets which were easily accessible from the nearby railway station. Day-workers were not confined to employment with van der Byl. In 1879 about 150 people went from the farm each week to do relatively well-paid day-work on the docks at Cape Town.

Van der Byl charged a rental of 10s. per month for a house and allotment provided, 'it is understood by the occupants that they are to work for me'; otherwise he would charge 30s. a month. Generally,

1. Evidence on van der Byl's farm is based on A26-79, p. 36-8.

however, he did not rent to people who would not comply with the proviso to work when called on to do so at a fixed day-wage rate of 2s.6d. plus wine. In this way, he was able to secure a regular supply of day-labourers at below off-season rates throughout the year. Van der Byl's 10s.-a-month rental was, in fact, well below averages for the western Cape at the time.¹ Two of the tenant labourers had been his slaves, 'several' were freed slaves or Mozambican 'prize negroes', one of whom had worked on his farm since 1840. Two were indentured to him as juvenile English immigrants in 1838, a few he called 'Kafirs', and most were probably of heterogeneous descent. Van der Byl's relatively stable work-force took the form of a labour- and rent-paying tenantry and was regarded with some envy by other farmers in the region. Some began to institute a similar system.²

Examples of labour arrangements on commercial wheat farms in Paarl and Malmesbury reveal the conditions under which labour made itself scarce and, conversely, harvests became expensive for farmers in the 1870s. A definite distinction existed between the regular resident- and day-workers on Robert Hare's farm in Paarl Division. The former, eleven agricultural labourers and three shepherds, occupied cottages on the farm, and received 10s. to 30s. per month with food. The day-labourers rented cottages with gardens on the farm for between 7s. and 10s. per month. It is likely that they worked for Hare during peak periods for which they received 1s.6d. a day with food on three, and wine on six, occasions during each day. Hare complained about the scarcity

1. In 1871 average monthly rentals for labourers' cottages with gardens were 11s.3d. for the western Cape. This figure did not exclude those in the rural villages. 15s. was about average for Cape, Mossel Bay and Malmesbury Divisions. CO.53.108., Stat. Regs., 1871.
 2. A26-79, p. 36-8; C.A., 2 Oct., 1879.

of labour, but it was on the farms such as those of J.A. Lochner and J.B. Ecksteen that most desertions occurred during ploughing and harvest, and difficulties in procuring workers arose. Both Ecksteen and Lochner had only resident regular wage labourers living on their land; they earned £1 per month with food and lodging.

Ecksteen and Lochner had to pay 3s.6d. per day during the wheat harvest, as well as provide food and wine, to attract day-labourers from the villages, mission stations and surrounding farms. Lochner had four 'coloured' regular agricultural labourers and two 'Kafir' shepherds. He required ten men from mid-October to the end of December for reaping and threshing. Assuming that he employed four extra day labourers for these seventy-five days, Lochner's day-wages bill for a harvest season amounted to £52.10s. If one excludes their resident regular farm labourers, Ecksteen's day wage bill for reaping his wheat alone would have been about £157,¹ while Hare's wheat crop,² calculated as being exactly the same as that of Ecksteen, would have amounted to £67. Ironically, the more farmers tried to cut wages by increasing the number of regular resident wage workers, the more problems they had in procuring labour, and the more they were forced to rely on expensive seasonal day-workers. It was becoming necessary for farmers to provide, to some extent at least, for some sort of tenantry who would do casual farm work at peak periods on a day-wage basis.

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1. Necessarily rough calculations which serve to create an impression only, have been calculated on the following basis: He sowed 75 morgen of wheat, 170 of oats, 4 of barley and 10 of rye. His returns at fifteen-fold (Noble, Handbook, 1875⁴) were 3,375 bushels of wheat, 7,650 bushels of oats, 630 of barley and rye. Day-wage rates were 3s.6d. a day for reaping wheat and 2s.6d. for reaping the other. One adult reaper cut about one third of an acre per day or about 3.75 bushels. Therefore about 3,000 reaping days were required for this harvest, which valued at say 3s. a day amounted to £466 or £157.10 for wheat alone.
 2. It was in fact about 3,000 bushels in the late 1850s and hence not likely to have been all that different from Ecksteen's crop.

It is possible to identify certain trends in relations of production on western-Cape wheat farms during the period 1868 to 1880 without reducing rich complexities to simplistic generalization. One trend was a growing modification of the traditional practice¹ whereby farmers augmented regular wage-labour forces with non-resident seasonal labour. The noticeable divide between resident regular and casual workers was eroded as it became increasingly possible to be a day-worker with its relative advantages and reside on a farm.² The increased practice of introducing casual labourers who lived in rented cottages with plots of land on farms, represented a significant advance for those who struggled to make a living as rural labourers. Casual workers could assume tenancies on farms; the opportunities for regular resident wage workers to enter into better-paid and less rigidly controlled casual-labour engagements are likely to have increased.

High seasonal-wage bills compelled farmers to lease cottages and land to casual labourers. At the same time, they resisted the erosion of their cheap resident regular work-force by lobbying for measures such as draconian Masters and Servants laws³ and by attempting to reduce tenant casual labourers to resident regular workers by making tenancy conditional upon farm work. If tenants did not comply with a farmer's labour expectations he could, and in some cases did, expel them from

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1. This was customary practice on wheat farms during slavery and after. Worden, 'Rural Slavery',^{passim} above chapters 1 and 2.
 2. Working-hours on farms were from sunrise to sunset and even more during ploughing. Casual workers had more options and had more control over their daily affairs. The working day was shorter, more clearly defined and better paid at the dock-, railway- and roadworks. Day-workers generally only did farm work during the peak-wage, seasonal periods.
 3. Chapter 3, E, on the Masters and Servants Laws of the 1870s.

the farm. At Wyders River farm in Riversdale,

there was until a few years ago a Hottentot kraal or village, in which the half-breed descendants of the original inhabitants of these parts continue to live, but they became such an intolerable nuisance, too lazy to work and thieving in all directions that at length the owner of the property went over and drove them all off and set fire to their huts. Since then they have been scattered among the farmers and obliged to work for a living. (1)

The shortage of labour which resulted from the opening up of the diamond mines appears, at least in the short run, and before the major conquests of the late 1870s and early 1880s, to have improved the bargaining position of rural labourers. Labourers seemed better able to reject conditions they regarded as unacceptable under the prevailing circumstances; there were other options. J.A. Lochner, of Malmesbury Division, complained:

The want in our district is so great that I can hardly describe it. I do not know of a farm in the neighbourhood on which there are five coloured labourers. Most of the farmers have to leave their cattle unemployed in the ploughing season for want of hands. (2)

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1. S.P.G., Bredasdorp, Sept. 1873, Riversdale, Dec. 1874.
 2. A26-79²⁰⁻²¹. For evidence of people consciously avoiding certain farmers or deserting from particular farms see for example, R.M. Ballantyne, Six Months at the Cape, London, 1879, 182-4.

E. Protectionists and free traders, masters and servants:
mobilizing farmers 1867-1880.

Rising protectionist sentiments among western-Cape wheat farmers formed the basis for the political mobilization of agrarian capital during the years 1868 to 1871. However, wheat prices rose after 1871, and the outcry concerning low prices and calls for tariff protection subsided. Commercial wheat farmers increasingly turned their attention to the steadily rising costs of production in general, and seasonal wage levels in particular.¹ The ensuing examination of the forms of farmers' reaction to falling prices and rising costs investigates the ability of commercial wheat farmers to procure legislation, and provides insights into elements of commercial farmer consciousness and their locus in the broader structures of western-Cape society.

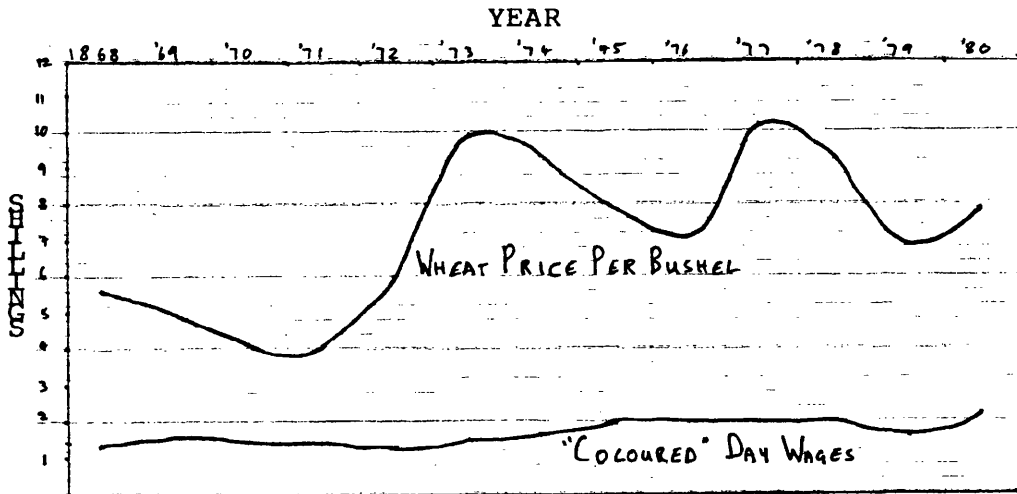
Independent political organizations among farmers developed during the late 1860s. At the time, Cape dealers once again demonstrated their ability to undercut Cape wheat farmers with imported grain.² What was new about the period after 1867 however, was the degree to which the resentment of local commercial wheat farmers began to crystallise and was articulated in forms of coherent argument, and emergent local political organisation. The predicament of wheat

1. See Figure 5.

2. In 1870, the average American export price of wheat was under half the average western-Cape wheat price of 109d. per bushel. Shannon, Agriculture 1860-1897, 417; Stat. Regs., 1870. For falling international wheat prices in the 1870s, which occurred largely as a result of increasing American and Australian wheat production, see: J.B. Laws and J.H. Gilbert, The depression of corn prices and the production of wheat in some of the chief exporting countries of the world, London, 1897; Z.A., Jan. 13, May, 5, 1871; C.A., Mar. 10, 1874; Immelman, Cape Town Chamber of Commerce, 193; CO.53.104/5/6., Stat. Regs., 1867/8/9; The Land of Good Hope, pseudonym, 'Agricultural Chemistry', Cape Quarterly Review, Vol. 1, 1881, p. 40.

FIGURE 5

WHEAT PRICES AND DAY WAGES IN MALMESBURY,
CALEDON AND OUDTSHOORN DIVISIONS 1868-1888



Based on Stat. Regs., for Malmesbury, Caledon and Oudtshoorn. Movements of wheat prices and day wages for the three largest wheat-producing Divisions provide part of the explanation for commercial wheat farmers' concern with low prices and protection up to 1872 and thereafter with costs and wages. Conditions on the farms varied a great deal and these wages can be regarded as below average. Three and a half shillings a day, excluding food and wine costs, was a widely quoted wheat harvester's wage during the late 1870s. See for example, the Civil Commissioners reports in the Stat. Regs. for these years; A26-79., S.C.R., Labour Supply, *passim*. Wine consumption of two bottles of wine per day was general during harvest and was worth between 4d. and 6d. Food was not likely to have been worth much more. S.P.G., Worcester, Dec., 1876.

farmers contrasts with that of wine farmers, whose long-standing and fundamental, but not all-embracing, alliance with the politically powerful Cape wine merchants, was based on a mutual interest in sales of local produce abroad. The overlap of interests between wine farmers and merchants found its echo in parliament and is confirmed by the numerous official and unofficial measures throughout the nineteenth century to promote wine production at home and sales abroad. The same can to some extent be said of wool, hide and skin merchants and farmers. Grain dealers however, were less concerned with selling Cape produce on international markets than they were with buying up wheat and flour at the lowest prices at markets around the world, accumulating substantial stocks of wheat and flour in warehouses at the docks at Cape Town and Port Elizabeth, and deriving profits from selling foreign wheat on Cape markets.¹

Cape wheat farmers and merchants competed in their bid to supply local markets. One farmer probably expressed the view of many who felt similarly aggrieved when he posed the question, '... which class appears to enjoy the greater share of the good things of this life - the producers or the importers?'² Their conflicting interests found expression in numerous parliamentary and press debates. Represent-

1. Merchants would for example have been aware of the failure of the Australian harvest in 1868/9 and that America reaped its biggest wheat harvest ever. Goods in bond in Cape Town in March 1869 included 355,544 barrels of flour and 2,181,390 bags of wheat. In May there were 339,472 barrels and 2,158,330 bags in bond. These figures fluctuated a great deal throughout each year. Z.A., 24 Feb., 1868; C.S., 9 Mar., 15 May, 1869.

Wheat exports in 1867/8/9 amounted to £3, £902, £66.

Flour exports in 1867/8/9 amounted to £5,162, £3,438, £9,005. 32,479 196 lb. barrels of imported flour were not entered for home consumption during these years and it is likely that these formed part of the flour exports. CO.53.104/5/6., Stat. Regs., 1867/8/9.

2. C.S., 26 Jan., 1869.

atives of the wheat farmers called for tariff protection to reduce imports of foreign grain. However, they could not prevail over the merchants who extolled the virtues of 'free trade', and who not only argued convincingly that 'free trade' meant cheaper bread for the public as a whole, but also appealed to, and elicited support from dominant members of the British and Cape ruling classes who were heavily influenced by liberal ideology.¹ A report on the 1868/9 harvest summed up the situation as follows:

The prices which have been procured of late can never repay the corn farmer for his trouble and outlay; but that is quite a secondary consideration with our legislators. Whether it pays the farmers or no, it matters but little; it is the merchant who is the consideration, and, of course, the merchant declares we can't have Protection: it would not do to risk it even. (2)

In January 1869, a meeting of nearly three hundred wheat farmers, including many 'influential men', took place at Malmesbury. This introduced a new dimension to the debate. Farmers resolved to set up a committee made up of fifty-four electors from the Division to,

... support to their utmost power, the cause of protection... keep a watchful eye upon the interests of the agriculturists ... take care that the registration of voters shall be properly executed ... enter into co-operation with committees of other districts ... to the same effect ... to nominate two members, and to propose them to the public as fit and proper persons to represent their district in parliament. (3)

Most vociferous in formulating the policies and proposing the motions adopted at the meeting were the leading commercial wheat farmers of

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1. Trapido, 'Friends of the Natives', Marks and Atmore, Economy and Society. On the predominance of merchants over farmers in parliament, see above chapter 2 and C.S., 13 Mar., 1869. The C.A. and S.A.C.A. generally supported free trade while the C.S. and Z.A. argued in favour of tariffs and protection. For arguments that free trade meant cheaper bread that were reminiscent of, and well-honed during, the campaign leading to the repeal of the British Corn Laws in 1846, see for example C.A., 1867/8/9 passim; C.S., 21 Jan., 1869.
 2. C.S., 13 Mar., 1869.
 3. Z.A., 16 Jan., 1869; C.S., 7 Jan., 1869.

Malmesbury, Stellenbosch and Paarl Divisions and their parliamentary representatives.¹ The minutes of the inaugural meeting of the 'Malmesbury Protection Committee' in January 1869 indicate the predominance on the committee of the Zwartland's, and indeed, the western Cape's, leading commercial wheat farmers.² The committee nominated candidates to stand for parliamentary elections in 1870, discussed with them their political views, and drew up a manifesto.³ Wheat farmers were well represented on Divisional Councils⁴ and, although they had enjoyed sympathetic representation in the House of Assembly before 1867,⁵ their lobby was neither clear nor co-ordinated in its policies and it was not organisationally structured upon local popular support. The most advanced fraction of the wheat farmers - those who most clearly perceived their interests and the needs of the wheat farmers in general - had set about the task of making commercial farmers in Malmesbury more conscious of their situation and destiny within the Cape political economy.

Farmers' meetings took place in other parts of the western Cape in 1870 and, although issues were different in areas of mixed agriculture and pastoralism, protection remained a priority where commercial wheat farmers were present.⁶ There were protectionists among

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1. Ibid. Such as W. Duckitt, J.N. Hamman, H.W. Gird, M. Bergh, E. Fairbairn, Dr. F.D. Biccard from Malmesbury Division and R. Hare, P. Myburgh and P. Haupt from Stellenbosch and Paarl Divisions.
 2. Such as W. Duckitt, J.N. Hamman of Kiezenbosch, F. Duckitt, P.L. van der Byl, J. Duckitt of Grootepost, A. Pickard of Wolvedans, J. Eaton of Drooge Vley, H. Becker, J.A. van Aarde of Uitkyk, etc. Z.A., 7 Jan., 1869.
 3. Ibid.
 4. For example, names such as Duckitt, Eaton, Visser, Louw, Bresler appear on the Malmesbury Divisional Council.
 5. H. Gird of Malmesbury had, for example, raised the issue of protection for wheat farmers on two occasions before 1868. C.S., 15 May, 1869.
 6. See for example the Robertson farmers meeting of March 1870. Z.A., March 10, 1870.

'De Boeren Kandidaten'¹ from agricultural districts throughout the western Cape in the 1870 election. The mobilization of Malmesbury wheat farmers constituted one element in the initial stages of a broader process whereby western-Cape commercial farmers were, in a sense, being transformed from a class in itself to a class for itself. It is significant that most authors on Afrikaner mobilization have not paid attention to the fact that, at this early stage, the Farmers' Protection movement was not associated with the growing assertions of 'Afrikanerdom' to the extent that the Farmers' Associations formed after 1878 were.² In an important sense then, mobilization of commercial farmers predated, albeit for a few years only, the steps towards 'the politicization of latent ethnic ties ... mostly made in the mid-1870s'.³

The Farmers' Protection movement of the period 1868 to 1871 mobilized commercial farmers along class lines to defend their interests by demanding tariff protection. The movement failed. Wheat prices rose after 1871 and export-oriented commercial farmers who were not keen protectionists did not support wheat farmers' demands for tariffs. However, despite its failure to secure tariffs, the Farmers' Protection movement was significant: it provided the class foundations upon which later assertions of Afrikaner ethnic identity ultimately rested.

1. Farmers' candidates.

2. Davenport, The Afrikaner Bond, passim. Davenport's book begins in 1880 and the first farmers' associations he deals with are established after 1878. It is worth noting that the Farmers' Protection movement had begun a decade earlier. See also, M.A.S. Grundlingh, 'The Parliament of the Cape of Good Hope with special reference to party politics, 1872 to 1910', D.Phil., Stellenbosch, 1945; G.J.A. Smit, 'Die Afrikaner Bond in sy wording in die Kaap Kolonie', M.A., Stellenbosch, 1931; No Sizwe, One Azania One Nation. The National Question in South Africa, London, 1979. H. Giliomee, 'Reinterpreting Afrikaner Nationalism, c1850-1900', I.C.S., S.S.A., Feb., 1983.

3. Giliomee, 'Reinterpreting Nationalism', p. 4.

It was really only after 1872 that a range of economic issues which adversely affected all sectors of commercial farmers, and political issues, which simultaneously engendered Afrikaner ethnic consciousness, provided the ingredients for a more broadly-based and powerful political movement. Farm-labour legislation illustrates this growing political influence.

It is significant that J.C. Molteno, M.L.A. for Beaufort West, who spearheaded the farmers' lobby and steered the 1856 Masters and Servants Act through the Cape parliament, should have been the Premier of the first Responsible Ministry from 1873 to 1878. His government enacted three further Masters and Servants laws.¹ The 1856 Masters and Servants law, enacted as it was shortly after Britain granted the Representative constitution to the Cape, introduced a degree of legal control over employees that was unprecedented since the abolition of slavery in 1838.² The law was a consequence of the Imperial government's strategy of extending legislative powers to the slightly broader amalgam of interests that Tony Kirk has referred to as the Cape's 'commercial middle class',³ and which included commercial farmers. Similarly one of the consequences of the greater political autonomy which the British government afforded in the form of 'Responsible' government to the Cape ruling classes after 1873 was an added dimension of coercive legislation for rural workers. These, together with the minor additions of the 1889 Masters and Servants Act,⁴

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1. The Masters and Servants Act 18 of 1873, Act 24 of 1874, Act 7 of 1875.
 2. See above chapter 2, for details of the 1856 Act.
 3. Based on Ibid; Kirk, 'British and Cape Politics', passim; Purkis, 'Railway Building', 27-32.
 4. For details of the 1889 Act see below chapter 4.

constituted a set of labour laws that were rather more comprehensive and far-reaching than 'the faulty and degrading system of compulsory labour' which the Colonial Office had refused to sanction in the shape of the 1839 Masters and Servants proposals fifty years earlier.¹

In contrast to the narrowly based wheat farmers' lobby for tariff protection in the period 1867 to 1872, demands for stricter controls over farm workers during the 1870s had the support of a broad spectrum of farmers, both agricultural and pastoral.² Commercial farmers found common cause in their bid to secure a steady and cheap labour supply during a decade of dwindling farm-labour availability. Changing patterns of rural crime also served to focus further attention on Masters and Servants provisions. Crimes against property which characterised periods of drought and unemployment subsided in the early 1870s and were surpassed in number by offences under the Masters and Servants Act in several Divisions.³ Farmers' representatives rallied to the support of Molteno and St. G. Boyes, M.L.A. for Clanwilliam and Namaqualand, who successfully navigated three Masters and Servants Acts through parliament in as many years.

The consolidation of farmers' influence contrasted with the absence of effective opposition to the three acts. Saul Solomon was the most outspoken critic. He represented merchant interests in parliament and

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1. On the 1839 Masters and Servants proposals see above chapter 1.
 2. C.C.Rs., 1870-3, CO.53.107-110, *Western Divisions, passim*.
 3. In Divisions such as Oudtshoorn Masters and Servants cases ranked among the most numerous offences along with drunkenness, breaches of the peace, assaults and thefts. The pattern of increased numbers of Masters and Servants cases after 1873 is indicated by the fact that more such cases were tried in the Cape during the 12 months after the 1873 law was enacted than in any single year under the 1856 Act. C.A., 6 June, 1874; CO.53.108 to 111., C.C.Rs., 1871 to 1874, *Western Divisions, passim*.

argued the liberal case that 'the invisible hand' of market forces would better control labour supply than legal coercion. He regarded civil-law suits as adequate to settle disputes arising from contracts between masters and servants, and rejected the provision in the Masters and Servants laws after 1856 which made a servant's infringement of the contract a criminal offence.¹ Liberal opposition to the proposed Act found its echo among the petitions, in the absence of any elected representatives, of rural workers. A petition from Genadendal in 1860 was a plea for relief from the severe clauses in the 1856 Act. Another, in 1870, expressed concern about the even harsher measures under consideration. These however, had little effect; the severe regulations passed into law.

Central to the debate concerning relations between masters and servants during the 1870s was the contentious proposal that relations between farmers and farm-labourers were 'special and peculiar', and required a set of proposals apart from those which concerned the affairs of masters and servants in general.² The 1873 Act distinguished between farm and other labourers and provided quite specific sets of regulations for each category. The Act amended some of the harshest provisions of the 1856 Law³ for all servants except: 'servants or apprentices under the age of sixteen years, or servants or apprentices engaged in agriculture or employed to work on farms'.

1. S.M., 20 Jan., 1874.

2. Controversy surrounded the introduction of such a law to parliament in 1869. Thereafter two select committees and numerous press reports debated the issue. C.A., July 1, 1873, July 18, 1874, 1875, passim; A5-72., R.S.C. Masters and Servants Act, 1872, passim.

3. For example: the validity of written service contracts was reduced from 5 years to 1 year and the option of a fine was introduced for first and second offences under 'misconduct'. H. Tennant, A Manual for the Guidance of Justices of the Peace, Cape Town, 1891, passim.

For them, the 1873 Act provided a wide range of controls and harsher penalties on top of practically all the provisions of the 1856 Act.¹

Act 28 of 1874 'To Amalgamate the laws re Masters and Servants and Apprentices' provided for Act 18 of 1873 and Act 15 of 1856 to be construed together, and appears to have achieved little more than entrenching, albeit more comprehensively and rationally, the regulations already enacted in 1873. The 1875 Masters and Servants and Apprentices Amendment Act added several new dimensions to the legal armoury of the rural employers. Most notable among these were provisions which gave masters the right to have a servant or apprentice arrested summarily on submission of a statement under oath, before a Magistrate of Justice of the Peace, to the effect that the apprehension of the employee was necessary to secure his/her appearance before the rural Magistrate. No previous warning to, or summons of, the employee was therefore necessary for a warrant for his/her arrest to be issued. Another clause provided for the summary arrest of deserting farm workers.² In theory at least, these three Masters and Servants Acts split the western-Cape work-force along a rural-urban divide, and subjected the latter to unprecedentedly draconian measures.

It is necessary to explore more precisely the kinds of factors which contributed to the development of commercial farmers' political

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1. For example: farm labourers were subject to a wider definition of 'misconduct' and the option of a fine which was £1 for the non-agricultural labourer's first offence was £2 for agricultural labourers. Ibid. For provisions in the 1856 Act see above chapter 2.
 2. Other provisions of the 1875 Act were: the right of officers in charge of public works to prosecute as 'masters'; accused servants were not compelled to enter the dock and could be detained in custody during the trial; etc. Based on: Tennant, Manual for Justices of the Peace, passim; A.R.E. Burton, The Cape Colony for the Settler. Its urban and rural industries, their development and extension, Cape Town, 1903, p. 17.

influence that enabled them to secure these Masters and Servants laws, before turning to an investigation of the implications of the laws themselves. Commercial farmers entered into a variety of arrangements with farm labourers; the specific details of relations between casual or regular workers and farmers, as well as degrees of labour scarcity, could differ markedly from farm to farm and in different regions.¹ There is, however, a general sense in which commercial farmers increasingly came to live and act together as a class during the 1870s. Family ties, social relationships, culture, ideology, and influence all informed this sense of commonality, although it is impossible to explore this fully here. They were, however, some of the elements in the broader process of agrarian class formation and mobilization which provide the historical context of the 1870s Masters and Servants Acts.

Large estate owners² were the most influential among commercial farmers and very often shared an intricate web of family ties, social links, and culture. Van der Byl, Myburgh, Duckitt, Cloete and Versveld were a few of the prominent family names. J.A. van der Byl, M.L.C., owned the sheep farm, Fairfield, in Caledon that was a 'perfect model of what a colonial country gentleman's estate should be'.³ His brothers A. van der Byl and P.L. van der Byl, M.L.C., and

1. See above chapter 3, D.

2. These were often viticulturists or pastoralists rather than wheat farmers. Some were engaged in mixed farming. Wheat farmers who were often termed 'estate owners', seemed to produce over 3,000 bushels of wheat per annum. This is, however, a fairly arbitrary minimum figure based on bits of scattered evidence rather than a systematic breakdown of western-Cape wheat farms' production/acreage figures; these, unlike for the wine farms, are simply not available for wheat. The use of these families as examples in this and the following four paragraphs is purely illustrative. There were, of course, others that could equally have been quoted as examples. These do, however, tie up to some extent with the examples of farms used in the preceding section on details of labour relations on Overberg and Cape-Wine-Zwartland farms.

3. C.A., May 1, 1873.

his brother in law P.A. Myburgh, M.L.A., owned substantial wheat and wine farms in the Cape-Wine region. Hilda Duckitt mentions the close ties between her family and that of P.A. Myburgh of the estate Elsenberg, which later became the government agricultural college. Hilda was the granddaughter of W. Duckitt. He had transformed Lord Charles Somerset's property in the Zwartland into the estate Grootepost which had been something of a model grain farm since the early 1800s. W. Duckitt, his sons, William and Fred, who incidentally also became substantial Zwartland farmers, and his daughter married into families such as the Versvelds and Cloetes who themselves belonged to the upper echelons of the western-Cape 'Dutch' gentry. Members of these and other wealthy estate-owning families engaged in horse-racing and seasonal game shoots on each others' farms; picknicked at the sea-side or the scenic parts of the Mamre mission station; entertained visiting English and French naval commanders and officers; lived in households staffed by domestic servants; and generally inhabited a culture made up of 'all the combined and best virtues and characteristics of the South African boer and English country gentleman...'.¹

The arrivals and departures of rural magistrates were celebrated with warm welcomes and farewells on the part of local notables. The welcome of C. Piers to the D'Urban magistracy is an example: on the day when the first court was due to be held the courtroom was filled

1. S.M., 20 Sept., 27 Nov., 1873; C.A., 12, 15, Sept., 27 Oct., 3 Nov., 24 Feb., 1874; Duckitt, Diary, *passim*. On the Cape Hunt Club with its membership of 'gentleman farmers', high army and administrative officials and leading Cape Town merchants; and hunts which involved running 'Reynard to earth', 'the chase' and 'Masters of the Fox Hounds', see: C.A., Jan. 12, 1884, July 7, 1885.

with

a considerable assemblage of gentlemen residing in the Koeberg, Tygerberg and the village of D'Urban, many of whom had left their farms at a busy time to unite in testifying to their satisfaction at the selection made by the Government for the part of Wynberg Magistrate and visiting Magistrate of D'Urban.

Mr Piers himself proposed one of the toasts on the occasion, 'To the agricultural interests of the district!'¹

Two noteworthy elements informed the world view of the commercial farmers. The first of these was the continuity in the established tradition of conservatism among western-Cape wealthy estate-owners. Farmers in the agrarian regions had depended most heavily on slaves and apprenticed labour up to 1838. They had expressed dissatisfaction with emancipatory legislation in 1828, 1834, and 1838 and, after the final abolition of slavery, they had actively struggled to promote, and were partially successful in securing, racist and coercive labour legislation to retain the status quo ante emancipation. A report on the trial of a reaping machine before two hundred farmers on the grain farm Everstoel near D'Urban indicates the continuing preoccupation of farmers with labour problems.

After the trial a large number of us partook of the hospitality of Mr and Mrs Schabort, whilst others formed picnic parties under the trees and the gossip chiefly was about the scarcity of labour and the impudence of the labourers who will not work under three and six pence a day, three meals and seven glasses of wine ... The labour question is of the highest importance... [it] must be grasped with a higher, more statesmanlike and comprehensive spirit. (2)

A report in Het Volksblad added nothing new to proposed solutions:

Unless we manage to convert the coloured races in our midst into industrious labourers, we shall not succeed in finding the true solution to the labour question in our colony ... our own natives

1. Z.A., 1 Aug., 1870.
2. S.M., 3 Dec., 1874.

... the Malay ... and such other coloured labour as is to be found in the older parts of the colony would do well enough were it not for their being satisfied with such profits as enable them to live on quietly and pleasantly. (1)

The second element which increasingly informed the commercial farmers' world view during the 1870s, was a developing sense of Afrikanerism. The politicization of ethnic ties around issues such as the alienation of Basutoland in 1868, the diamond fields in 1871, and the Transvaal in 1877 was all about the need of farmers to mobilize local political support in a bid to capture parliament through the ballot box at a time when government revenues and patronage increased massively.² The 1872 constitution created a new form of state and set new boundaries around the arena for political struggles. It suddenly became possible to capture real power and, therefore, worthwhile appealing to Afrikaner unity.

Appeals to Afrikaner unity took place in the context of intensifying social differentiation in the western-Cape countryside, so that in the Overberg, for example, behind their Afrikanerist and small-farmer identity, aspirations and consciousness, there skulked a shepherding and sharecropping metayage³ on the properties of relatively wealthy

1. H.V., 19 June, 1897.

2. Davenport, Afrikaner Bond, passim; Giliomee, 'Afrikaner Nationalism'; No Sizwe, One Azania; Grundlingh, 'Party Politics'. On the relevance of the language movement and the rise of the Gymnasium and Stellenbosch education establishment see for example, H.V., 28 June, 1879. Interests that could be promoted in the House of Assembly were, typically, government expenditure on roads, bridges, telegraphs, hospitals, education, courts, gaols, magistracies, irrigation and so on. Government expenditure increased from £268,000 in 1853 to £730,000 in 1860. Between 1873 and 1885, £20 million flowed from London into Cape Government securities. Purkis, 'Cape Railway Building', 452.

3. A term often used for example in the Stat. Regs. It covers the variety of forms of peasant-tenantry, or 'bywoning', in the Cape at this time.

commercial farmers. Indeed, part of the function of the ethnic revival and nationalist appeal was to mask these growing cleavages among Afrikaners. As Nairn suggests in regard to nationalism in general:

Mobilization had to be in terms of what was there ... all that there was, was the people and peculiarities of the region, its inherited ethnos, speech, folklore, skin colour and so on ... as capitalism spread and smashed the social formations surrounding it, these always tended to fall apart along the fault lines contained inside them. (1)

Race was one major 'fault line' in the western Cape. Benedict Anderson links the origins of racism to ideologies of class and shows how racism manifests itself within national boundaries and justifies domestic oppression and domination.² The rise of Afrikanerism also exacerbated class differentiation: the mobilization of one sector of the rural population across class lines and along ethnic lines, simultaneously, generated popular support for policies that increasingly repressed and dominated other sectors of the rural population along lines of class and race. Symbolic events such as 'the Dutch Flag' flying at the spot marked out for a reaping match at A.J. Laubscher's farm Klipheuvel in 1878 were not without significance.³

By the late 1870s astute middle-class newspapermen, clergymen, lawyers, educationists and leading commercial farmers, such as J.H. Hofmeyr and S.J. du Toit, had influenced the formulation of a programme: they appealed to wine farmers by opposing the 1878 Excise duty on Cape brandy; to wheat farmers by opposing any reduction of tariffs on imported wheat; and to Afrikaner farmers with

1. T. Nairn, 'Modern Janus', in his *Break up of Britain*, U.K., 1981, p. 353.
 2. B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, London, 1983, p. 129-40.
 3. *S.M.*, 31 Oct., 1878.

strong promises of protecting and promoting Afrikaner interests which became synonymous with Afrikaner farming interests. The South African Farmers' Protection Association became the umbrella body of branches that were revived, and set up, in the leading commercial wine- and wheat-growing Divisions of Paarl, Wellington, Stellenbosch, Tulbagh, Caledon and Malmesbury.¹ Many of the old familiar names, such as the Myburghs, which appeared on the committee lists from 1867 and 1872, reappear in the ward committees after 1877. New commercial farmers joined the movement. At Worcester the inaugural meeting 'was attended by 150 of the most influential inhabitants of the district.'² The Farmers' Protection movement which was born on the Zwartland wheat-farms a decade earlier was, by 1880, a small but growing general farmers' movement and the 'first Afrikaner political movement'.³

In a recent study A. Purkis indicates the substantial political influence commercial farmers had at local and central government levels. Divisional Councils were 'strongholds of the landed interest'.⁴ Substantial commercial farmers wielded considerable local influence in parliamentary elections and were well represented in the legislature, although much less so in the executive.⁵ The Farmers' Protection movement did much to institutionalise the practice

1. Based on Davenport, Afrikaner Bond, 1-18.

2. Based on C.A., 12, 14, Sept., 1878; For Zwellendam see C.A., 30 Oct., 1878.

3. For a discussion of the position of English-speaking farmers in this increasingly Afrikanerised movement, see below, chapter 4.

4. Purkis, 'Railway Building', p. 36.

5. Ibid.; Trapido, 'Politics', passim and 'Friends of the Natives', Marks and Atmore, Economy and Society. The Seven Circles Act of 1874 did increase rural areas' representation in the Legislative Council. The F.P.A. captured eight out of twelve seats in the Western and Midlands circles and controlled nine out of twenty-one seats in the Legislative Council in 1878. F.P.A. members or sponsored candidates held approximately one-third of the seats in the House of Assembly. Davenport, Afrikaner Bond, 72-6.

whereby parliamentary candidates or representatives met publicly with constituents to establish a programme. The practice had become customary in the rural western Cape by the late 1870s. It was not to the electorate so much as to the local elite that answerability increased.¹ Finally, it is worth noting that Premier Molteno enjoyed the support of influential agriculturalists in the Cape and he reciprocated in many ways.² It is significant that the Governor and Lady Frere, the Prime Minister and various other dignitaries attended along with about four hundred 'better off' farmers at a ploughing match at A. Loubser's wheat farm.³ The presence of top government officials at a ploughing match was unprecedented.⁴ In various small ways, and in increasingly important ways, farmers demonstrated a growing ability to articulate their interests. The Masters and Servants Acts were a clear indication of this growing ability.

The introduction into western-Cape labour legislation of a distinct category of farm workers' regulations confirmed in law the extent to which regular farm work had come to mean, both on the farms and in the official mind, workers who were neither British immigrants nor Afrikaners, i.e. 'European or White'. The acts covered the relations between resident regular farm workers and their employers. The relatively better-off and racially heterogeneous western-Cape casual

1. Forty percent of constituencies were uncontested in 1869. Purkis, 'Railway Building', 32. One derives a sense of the presence of powerful local elites from comments such as the following about Zwellendam Division:

Gradually a monopoly seized the control of almost everything -- social and public, commercial and municipal....

S.P.G., Zwellendam, Sept., 1878.

2. Purkis, 'Railway Building', ch. 4.

3. Laubser himself was another of those who 'maintained an establishment equal to that of any average gentleman-farmer in England'. C.A., 31 July, 1877.

4. Occasions when a Governor appeared at Cape of Good Hope Agricultural Society exhibitions where a far broader range of commercial and agricultural interests were represented, were themselves very rare.

farm labourers, day workers, sharecroppers, and tenants of all sorts had always been, and remained, outside of the jurisdiction of the Masters and Servants Laws until 1930.¹ While there were practically no British immigrants or Afrikaners engaged as resident regular farm workers on western-Cape farms by 1873, there was however a substantial body of 'European or White' people in urban areas who were engaged in regular wage-earning jobs. They were an important sector of the urban constituency which continued to form the power basis of liberal and merchant representation in parliament. Both urban workers and liberals had protested vehemently against the terms of the 1856 Masters and Servants Act during the 1860s.² These and other urban workers came to enjoy a relatively privileged position in 1873 vis-à-vis their rural counterparts; they were exempted from the harshest provisions of the 1856 and 1870s' Masters and Servants Acts.

The 1841 and 1856 Acts did not provide for any racial distinction, *per se*, among workers and, indeed, attempts to achieve such a distinction were categorically vetoed.³ The extent to which official policy was committed to a non-racial work force is demonstrated by the fact that from the period of emancipation to the drought-stricken 1860s, the Cape government spent tens of thousands of pounds on bringing

1. C. Bundy, 'The Abolition of the Masters and Servants Act', South African Labour Bulletin, Vol. 2, 1979, p. 39/40.

2. See for example the predominantly British immigrant Working Mens' Associations' public meetings and protests in Cape Town during the 1860s. Urban immigrants objected to certain provisions in the 1856 Masters and Servants Act. Liberal figures such as S. Solomon and J. Noble were outspoken supporters and organizers of several of these public protests. On the failure of the liberals to establish any firm support basis in the rural western Cape, see S. Trapido, 'Friends of the Natives', in Marks and Atmore, Economy and Society, 267-8.

3. See chapter 1.

thousands of immigrants, first juveniles and then adults, who were defined clearly and specifically as farm labourers from Britain to the western Cape in accordance with the liberal notion that increased supply would offset the farm labour shortage.¹ The point is that from the 1840s to the 1860s 'European or White' regular farm workers existed both in theory at the level of official labour policy and, albeit to a lesser and gradually diminishing extent, in the reality of western-Cape farms.

Government policies changed after 1872. The 1873 Masters and Servants Act drove a racial wedge between regular farm workers and the rest of the western Cape's labouring population in so far as the former constituted the lowest and only stratum in rural society no longer including 'European or Whites'. Once again, government immigration policies provide evidence of changing notions about who should be regular farm workers. The government continued to finance large-scale immigration after 1872, but no funds were made available to bring 'European or White' immigrants classified as farm labourers; those farm labourers who were brought into the Cape were all 'Black'.² This racial qualification compromised the traditionally liberal solution to labour scarcity of using immigrants to increase supply.

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1. There were of course other categories of immigrants, but farm workers remained an important, if declining sector.
 2. The government spent £301,784 on the immigration of 22,332 people between 1873 and 1883. All of these were British, German or French 'skilled labourers' or 'agricultural settlers' who had some capital. A small minority who settled in the western-Cape rural areas did so on government grants of not less than 20 acres per adult at a cost of ten annual instalments of 1s. per acre with government advances of implements and seed. In 1878/9, 406 Koranna, Bergdamara and 'Delagoa Bay Natives' were indentured as farm labourers. The Emigrants' Guide to South Africa, London, 1891, p. 29-33. A Handbook to South Africa, London, 1891, p. 73; A26-79., R.S.C., Supply of Labour Market, passim; Immigration Board reports for 1879/80, passim; General Directory and Guide Book to the Cape of Good Hope, Cape Town, 1883, passim.

Official policies after 1872, and the Masters and Servants Acts in particular, reflected another important phase in the process whereby worker came increasingly to mean 'coloured'.¹ This process had its origins in slave society but assumed new, and in some respects exacerbated, dimensions as wage relations expanded and intensified after 1838 in the rural western Cape.

1. In his article, 'The Abolition of the Masters and Servants Act', Colin Bundy is quite correct to emphasise the continuities in the conditions of farm work and the composition of the farm labour force during and after slavery. His assertions that the 1841 and 1856 Masters and Servants Acts entrenched racial domination at the same time as it did class domination because all servants were 'browns' and all masters were 'white' and that the 1873 Act was merely a qualitative step towards increased coercion, both fail in their blandness to grasp the complexities, struggles and sense of process involved in constituting the western Cape's labouring classes. S.A.L.B., 1979. S. van der Horst's treatment of the 1873/4/5 Masters and Servants laws is wholly inadequate. Her claim that all Cape Masters and Servants Acts did not differentiate between races is a generalization almost without meaning because it fails to penetrate and search out the implications of these laws. van der Horst, Native Labour, 37.

F. Non-resident farm labourers and neighbouring farmers.

... there are many coloured people, they tell me so outright, who will ride transport, work at a trade, or 'work for Government' -- do anything in preference to taking service with a farmer. (1)

Similar examples of widespread aversion to farm work abound in the sources.² Labouring sectors of the rural population adopted several strategies to give effect to their aversion by reducing their regular-wage dependency on farmers to casual day-wage agreements, or to put an end to farm-wage dependency altogether. The struggles over regular and casual day-work which took place on the farms were not dissimilar to those which took place between farmers and rural labourers resident in communities located on mission or government land. It is necessary to look briefly at developments within relatively autonomous communities, and the farmers' responses, to complete the picture of agrarian relations during the 1870s.

Diaries and reports from the Malmesbury missions of Mamre, Wittewater, Goedverwacht, and Abbotsdale provide glimpses of how Zwartland labourers tried to minimise farm-wage dependency during the 1870s. In 1872 virtually all the able-bodied adults and children of the 1,200 Mamre inhabitants were engaged as harvest labourers. An increasing number entered sharecropping engagements with, or cultivated land they leased from, surrounding farmers. Most continued to derive a substantial proportion of their annual incomes from day wages; very few were able to consolidate their economic autonomy as peasant producers independent of wage labour.³

1. C.A., 7 Oct., 1879. Argus report on western-Cape labour based on visits to a number of farms by correspondents.

2. Notably the mission and newspaper archives.

3. M.P.A., Mamre, Nov., 1872.

A series of good seasons after 1870 did, however, gradually result in a situation where, by 1874, at Mamre for example:

By degrees the people are beginning to find the advantage of cultivating their own plot of ground instead of buying corn at a high price from the farmers and subjecting themselves to ill-treatment.

Drought in 1875 hindered ploughing on the Zwartland missions and vegetable and fruit gardens were in poor shape. The resultant familiar pattern of increased wage dependency and proletarianization recurred. In 1875, however, when poor seasons eroded autonomy and many inhabitants had to leave Wittewater and Goedverwacht in search of wage incomes, they did not go to the surrounding farms in accordance with former practice. Many went to the railway works instead. The situation was similar at Mamre and Abbotsdale.¹

Tied up with attempts to reduce farm wage dependency, was the struggle against debt peonage. Some labourers accepted the money advanced by farmers but failed to present themselves to work off the debt.

J. Cupido of Mamre, for example, pleaded guilty to,

fraudulently obtaining £3 and 3 bushels of wheat from Mr Jacob van Reenen, £5 from Messrs Duckett, and £5 Mr Jordaan, under promises to enter the services of those respective gentlemen for the harvest season. (2)

More orthodox methods were largely responsible for the substantially decreased indebtedness to farmers by 1879. A report from Mamre stated: 'Most have paid their debts and are at liberty to choose their employers ...'. Good harvests in 1879 enabled Wittewater inhabitants to settle all their private debts, tax payments, and church contributions as well as retain a food surplus. This was a position that some

1. M.P.A., Wittewater, Goedverwacht, Diary, 1874; M.P.A., Ann. Report on S.A. missions, 1878; S.P.G., Malmesbury, Abbotsdale, Dec., 1876.
2. C.A., 7 Nov., 1876.

were determined to maintain. They

... seem[ed] more than hitherto resolved to make every effort to free themselves from the pecuniary bondage to the farmers, under which they have long suffered. (1)

A combination of improved seasons, greater opportunities for access to land on farms as sharecroppers and tenants, improved day-wage earnings, and expanding opportunities for casual labourers presented western-Cape rural labourers with changing circumstances which they rapidly manipulated to their best advantage.²

As the decade wore on it became increasingly clear that regulation of Masters and Servants relations was insufficient on its own to solve the western-Cape labour crisis. Indeed, as early as 1874 a press report pointed out that, 'The farmers are at the present time perfectly at the mercy of the labourers who name their conditions and will not work unless they are agreed to'.³ Farmers pressed for a range of other measures to ensure a farm work-force. In some cases they failed, such as in their demands that Justices of the Peace and Special Justices of the Peace be given Magisterial powers to implement the Masters and Servants Act and in their demand for large-scale labour imports from India, China, and areas in Southern Africa outside of

1. M.P.A., Wittewater, Diary, 1879.

2. The discussion is limited to the Zwartland missions for purposes of brevity and because they tie in with the preceding analysis of commercial wheat farms in the area. For evidence of similar conditions and responses in other areas see for example: C.A., 26 Aug., 1873; M.M.S., Lilyfontein, Jan., May, 1871; S.P.G., Malmesbury, Abbotsdale, Dec., 1876; M.M.S., Box 312, Cape Town, March, 1879.

3. S.M., 3 Dec., 1874. It is worth noting that statements like these take place in the context of rapidly expanding wheat production in Divisions such as Malmesbury where production had increased by thirty per cent between 1865 and 1872.

the western Cape itself.¹ There was, however, a variety of ways in which pressures were exerted on the rural population which compelled certain sectors to take up wage labour.

The government imposed increasingly heavy taxes on mission inhabitants' huts and houses by Act 9 of 1870 and doubled the lowest amount payable on a dwelling valued at under £100 to 10s. in 1878.² There is evidence that some people, such as the poorest at Zuurbraak and Genadendal, experienced difficulty in paying the house tax after 1870. In areas where demand for ploughing and harvest labour decreased, some inhabitants of the missions, such as those of Zuurbraak, were likely to have been compelled to seek regular farm work in order to meet tax demands.³ Indeed, it became increasingly possible for some people who took up regular farm work to meet taxation payments to become tied down by Masters and Servants provisions and lose land and housing rights at the missions as a result of absences exceeding those permitted in mission regulations. While there is evidence that some people who left missions to work on farms did not return, it is likely that house taxes increased the dependency of many others on day-wage labour. This seems to have been the case in areas where commercial agriculture required casual labour reservoirs; the occupants of Mamre and Genadendal, for example, would probably have been able to meet tax

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1. For evidence of western-Cape wheat farmers agitating for these measures, see for example: C.A., 5 June, 1877, 27, 30 June, 1874; H.V., 19 June, 1879; Ab6-79., Som. West petition re J.P. powers.
 2. H.V., 29 June, 1879. House tax laws of 1870 and 1878. The house taxes fell most heavily on the poorest sectors of society.
 3. Z.A., 6 June, 15 Sept., 1870; M.M.S., Stellenbosch, Box 311, June 1870; Genadendal house taxes amounted to £400 in 1878 and a number of residents struggled to pay. M.P.A., Genadendal, Sept., 1878.

commitments out of day-wage earnings.

One form in which the farmers' resentment of the fact that rural labourers were decreasingly dependent on farm work manifested itself, was in the tightening controls over access to alternative sources of income. Powerful vested interests prevented farmers from interfering overtly with the drift of rural labourers to the diamond fields or public works such as the railways. A squatting or vagrancy law was difficult to implement in agricultural Divisions heavily dependent as they were on a seasonal and casual work force. Farmers did do all they could, however, to deny or regulate more strictly rural labourers' independent access to mission and public land; they did so with a view to increasing the supply of regular and casual labourers.

It is in the context of the privatisation of tracts of public land and the L.M.S. missions¹ that observations such as the following in the Mamre diary assume their full significance.

We have occasionally to observe something of the old spirit of the boers towards the natives in their objections to missionary work. The movement towards helping the natives to the possession of their own ground is especially unpopular ... (2)

Some missionaries succumbed to pressures by introducing stricter regulations concerning land use. Rule 11 of the government-approved M.M.S. regulations of 1871 for Lilyfontein stated that, 'residents shall be encouraged to engage in the service of the neighbouring farmers', and imposed a forfeiture of cornlands if residents absented themselves for over two years.³ The U.S.P.G. adopted a more stringent

1. See above chapters 2 and 3.

2. M.P.A., Mamre letter, June 1874, Diary, 1874.

3. Govt. Notice, No. 248, 1871. This took place in the context of the development of commercial agriculture in response to the continued expansion of copper mining centres in Namaqualand. M.M.S., Box 311, Wynberg, Jan., 1870.

set of regulations for Abbotsdale in an attempt to make people take up wage work.¹ At Raithby, after 1867, the M.M.S. instituted a policy of infusing

fresh blood from the most respectable families to be obtained in the neighbourhood and weeding out of those who did not pay rents and arrears to, or live by the regulations ... (2)

The policy was not without its critics; as one missionary pointed out, 'our increasing stringency has exposed us to the reproach that we are now rent collectors'.³ The allegation was, in the light of the new sharecropping arrangements implemented at Raithby, not altogether untrue. The missionary began to supply seed and land, in return for which the tenants were expected to pay half their crop. The situation resembled that on a number of surrounding farms. It appears that by the mid-1870s, the L.M.S. and M.M.S. were concentrating their resources in the towns and other areas which they regarded as being more important than the rural western Cape. This also had its unfavourable implications for landholders on some missions and almost certainly contributed to an increased sense of suspicion, indifference or even hostility that certain missionaries experienced during the 1870s.⁴

Stricter controls over public property jeopardised independent incomes. The denial of access to strips of public land situated parallel to, and between, farms and beaches along the coasts of St Helena and

1. S.P.G., Malmesbury and Abbotsdale, Dec., 1876.

2. M.M.S., Box 311, Stellenbosch, June 1870.

3. The house tax collection fell ultimately on the missionary and exacerbated difficulties of rent collection. *Ibid.*

4. For evidence of M.M.S., and L.M.S. concentration on other parts of southern Africa, see Indexes to S.A., archive of C.W.M. for the 1870s and M.M.S. 1872/3/4, *passim*. An example of residents' land-loss as a result of C.W.M. unwillingness to finance rural western-Cape missions is the forced sale of half the Matjes River farm. C.W.M., Box 312, Cape Town, Mar., 1879. For the growing distrust of, and antagonism towards, the missionaries see for example: S.M., 6 Feb., 1875; M.M.S., Box 312, Cape Town, Mar., 1879; C.W.M., reports for the 1870s, *passim*.

Saldanha Bays and to the mountain ranges in the Overberg, terminated the existence of several little fishing communities and reduced the grazing lands upon which a number of Overberg mission inhabitants and squatters depended.¹ One of the clearest examples of the extent to which certain communities suffered land losses emerges from evidence on 'Hottentots Kraal' in the Tradouw district of Zwelldam between 1873 and 1875.

The 'Hottentots Kraal' community consisted of some two- to three hundred subsistence-based agriculturists and pastoralists of 'Hottentot, Kafir, former slave, former apprentice, squatter, European, Bastard and Malabar' origin. They occupied approximately 16,800 acres of land by virtue of a grant made 'by the Dutch Government' to Captain Klaas Kees; the grant had been officially recognized on several occasions since then.² It was only really after the drought of the 1860s that increased sales of public land and intensified commercial farming began to penetrate the Tradouw Valley, tucked away as it was between the Langeberg and other mountains. 'Hottentots Kraal' was valued at £4,000 in the mid-1870s.³ The assault on the community began in 1873: the Civil Commissioner reported the existence of 'squatters' in the Tradouw Valley. In 1874 the Chief Constable of Zwelldam reported:

all the surrounding farmers complain bitterly of the conduct of the Hottentots at the Kraal. They were becoming more impudent every day, that [sic] they would not take to steady and industrious

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1. See A30-74 and A5-82, petitions from Malmesbury, St Helena, Saldanha; A10-82, R.S.C., Fishing Leases, passim. In 1872, in Caledon Div. alone, 23,697 morgen of Crown Land was leased in terms of Act 19 of 1864. The only big stretches of public land in Caledon Division were the mountains. For squatting and grazing on the Overberg public lands after 1838 see chapter 1 above.
 2. It appears that the actual grant certificate was lodged in the Zwelldam Public Offices which were destroyed by the great Zwelldam fire of 1865.
 3. CO.53.113, C.C.R., Zwelldam, 1876.

habits, although the farmers enticed them in every possible way to do so. (1)

The 'Klaas Kees nuisance' developed with the value of the land and the needs of farmers for regular farm workers. In the House of Assembly, J.X. Merriman, Commissioner for Crown Lands and Public Works and later the last Prime Minister of the Cape Colony, vehemently argued the case for the total dispossession of the inhabitants of 'Hottentots Kraal' in accordance with the wishes of the farmers and the local Zwellendam administration.² They demanded that the sixteen families, whom they identified as the 'true descendants' of Klaas Kees, be settled on 'forfeited lots'³ at Zuurbraak, and that 'Hottentots Kraal' be put up for sale by public auction as 'waste crown land' under Land Act 19 of 1864. Saul Solomon led the weak liberal opposition to such measures. 'Hottentots Kraal', like the L.M.S. institutions that were privatised, was located in an area of rapidly expanding pastoral farming; it suffered a similar fate.

The final outcome was a compromise between liberals and farming interests. In 1876, a Commission of Inquiry found that the community did indeed have legal rights to the land at 'Hottentots Kraal'; the 1873 Act regarding Zuurbraak's privatization made no provision for newcomers such as those from 'Hottentots Kraal'; and that the boundaries of 'Hottentots Kraal' were unclear. The Commission

1. A30-76, p.8.

2. The only contrary view held by any member of the local administration was that of Field Cornet Haasbroek who opposed the dispossession. His motives may have been influenced by the fact that his niece, Hester, had 'fled with' Absolum Soldaat a 'Hottentot labourer' and settled at 'Hottentots Kraal'. *Ibid*, *passim*.

3. These seem to have been those members of the Old Party who probably lost all their land when Zuurbraak was privatised.

recommended that each of the approximately twenty heads of families descended from Klaas Kees, or residents born at the location, should be granted an allotment with commonage rights. In effect they received title to about 7,350 acres, while two other pieces of 'Hottentots Kraal', consisting of 6,300 and 1,260 acres respectively, were placed at the disposal of Government for public lease.¹ At a stroke, the 'Hottentots Kraal' community lost over half their land and some were left with no title to any land at all.

New developments in western-Cape labour legislation occurred during the 1870s. Laws governing the lives of regular and casual workers both on and off the farms are best understood in the context of a process of social restructuring that was taking place in the rural western Cape during the 1870s. Two central themes which emerge during the 1870s are those relating to the ways in which rural labourers actively exploited new opportunities and reduced farm-wage dependencies, and how in turn, commercial farmers sought to secure a regular work force. Despite the apparent intensification of race and class differentiation during the 1870s, both farmers and labourers were locked together in struggles which shaped each other's development within an increasingly unitary and integrated capitalist agrarian society.

1. A30-76, *passim*.

CHAPTER 4

AGRARIAN CHANGE AND COMMERCIAL WHEAT PRODUCTION

IN THE WESTERN CAPE DURING THE 1880s

A. Introduction, 1880-1888.

The economic recession which gripped the rural western Cape for much of the period 1880 to 1888 was the result of local factors and world market conditions. Drought prevailed over much of the Cape from 1880 to 1885. The western-Cape wine industry remained depressed and speculation in diamond shares, ostrich feathers, and wool slumped early in the decade. Europe and America suffered economic depressions. A smallpox epidemic spread outwards from Cape Town in 1882 creating widespread apprehensions that seriously disrupted trade and communication between towns and countryside, and discouraged shipping from calling at Cape Town. Insolvency and crime rates increased. Imports dropped by forty percent between 1881 and 1885; this had an adverse effect on customs duties which provided a major source of government revenue. The late 1870s and early 1880s were years of intense conflict in the colony's northern pastoral and eastern frontier regions, a situation which, coupled with Zulu, Sekhekhune, Boer, Tembu and Basuto upheavals in other parts of southern Africa during this period, affected the Cape government's ability to raise loans on English money markets for public works. Generally then, this was a period when conditions were unfavourable for capital accumulation at the Cape.¹

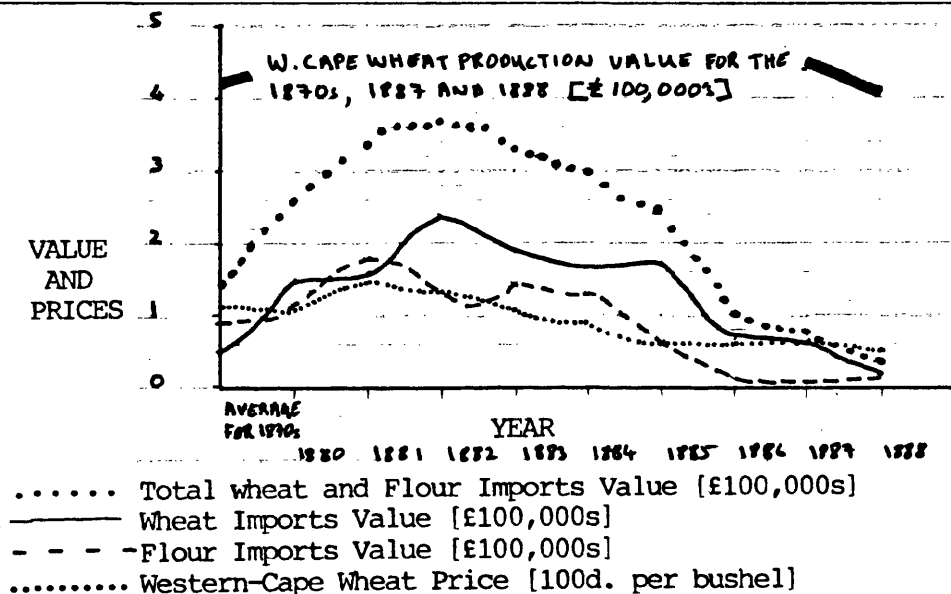
1881 to 1888 were years of low returns for commercial wheat farmers.

1. Based on: Immelman, Chamber of Commerce; Appel, 'Oudtshoorn', 288, 294; Cape General Directory and Guide, Cape Town, 1883; S.P.G., Paarl, Dec., 1867; C.A., July 8, 1882; Henry, Standard Bank; C.A., Jan. 11, March 12, 1883; M.M.S., Wynberg, Sept., 1882; M.P.A., Elim report, 1882; Smallberger, Copper mining; Strauss, Koranna wars; de Kock, Economic History; Schumann, 'Structural changes and Business cycles'; South Africa Handbook, London, 1891; CO.53.118/9., C.C.R., 1880/1; C.A., Jan. 14, 1882.
 Western Diss., passim,

There are no detailed harvest statistics for these years, but it appears that drought was the main factor which drove the average 1881 wheat price for the western Divisions up to their highest since 1868.¹ After 1881, however, wheat farmers suffered from a combination of declining production as a result of the intensifying drought and steadily falling prices as a result of substantially increased wheat and flour imports to the Cape from 1881 to 1885.

FIGURE 6

WHEAT AND FLOUR PRODUCTION, IMPORTS AND PRICE FLUCTUATION² IN THE 1870s AND THE PERIOD 1880-1888



Western-Cape wheat harvests did improve after 1885; farmers in many parts of the western Cape reverted to wheat as ostrich-feather prices collapsed.³ However improved harvests and increased production brought little relief to commercial wheat farmers. The average western-Cape wheat price dropped from approximately 12s. in 1881 to 5s. in 1885. Continuing local wheat surpluses resulted in wheat prices that hovered a little above 5s. per bushel up to 1887, and then fell to

1. CO.53.118-120., C.C.R., 1880-1882, *Western Divs.*, *passim*.

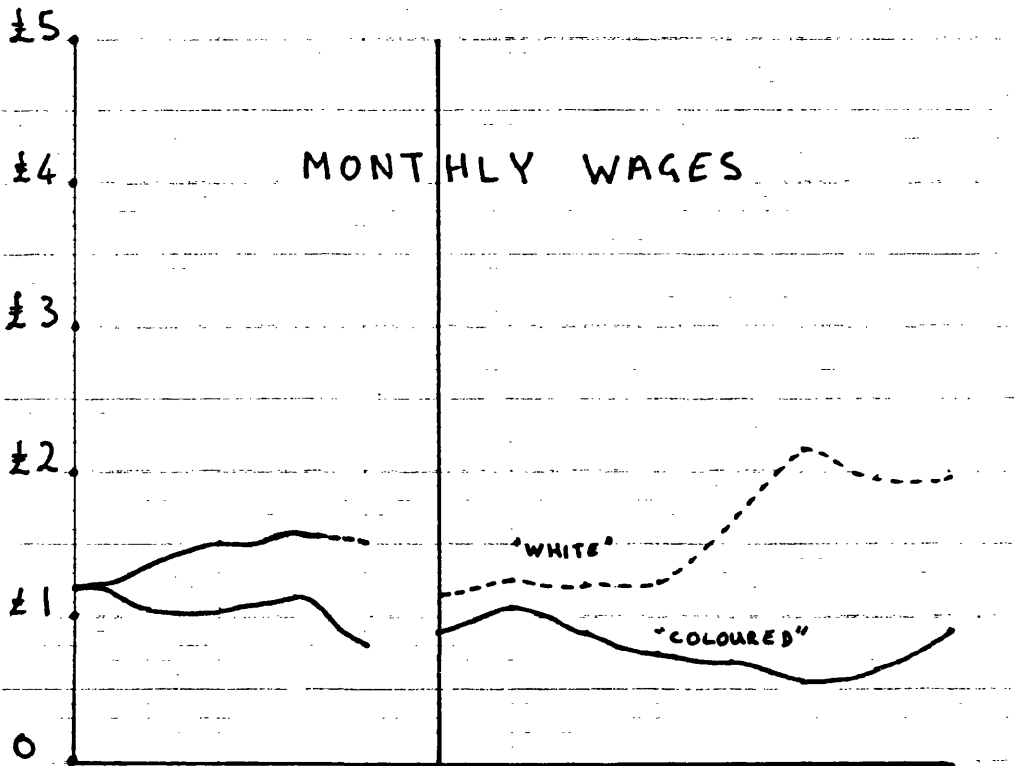
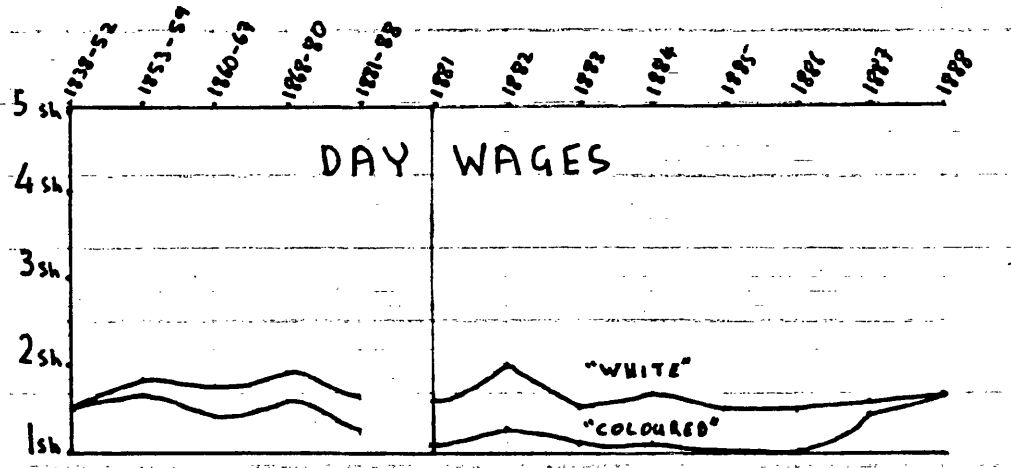
2. Based on census 1865, 1875, 1892; *Stat. Regs.* 1880 to 1888.

'Imports' indicate imports registered for local consumption.

3. Table 13; *C.A.*, Nov. 4, 10, April 11, 30, 1887.

FIGURE 7

PERIODIC AND ANNUAL WAGE AVERAGES IN MALMESBURY,
 OUDTSHOORN AND CALEDON DIVISIONS DURING THE PERIOD
 1838-1888



--- No white wages in Malmesbury, but white wages in Caledon and Oudtshoorn

Malmesbury, Caledon and Oudtshoorn Divisions formed part of Cape, Zwellendam and George Divisions respectively for the period 1838 to 1852. Oudtshoorn Division remained part of George Division until 1859. Stat. Regs., 1838-1888.

just under 5s. in 1888. Any recovery among commercial wheat farmers between 1885 and 1887 was substantially qualified by the low prices. To some extent, farmers were able to shift the burden of low returns onto casual and regular labourers; they forced day- and monthly wages down to levels unprecedented since emancipation,¹ but they could only do so for a brief period at the height of the drought and slump. Furthermore, farm-wage decreases had the consequence of heightened resistance to, and resultant scarcity of, farm labour. A decline in both the quantity and value of harvests exacerbated the prevailing adverse economic climate that affected all, and bankrupted some, commercial wheat farmers in the western Cape from 1881 to 1885.²

The patterns of increased wage dependency, proletarianization, and severely escalating unemployment among the rural underclasses, which characterised periods of prolonged drought and recession such as the 1860s, did not seem to recur on quite the same scale, or with the same intensity, in the years 1880 to 1888. There is little evidence to suggest that farmers laid off many regular farm workers who had, throughout the 1870s, been a most sought-after category of farm labour. Farmers did, however, employ fewer labourers when bad seasons affected ploughing and harvesting and day-labourers seemed less secure. Nonetheless complaints of both regular and seasonal farm-labour shortages continued to emanate from various parts of the western Cape throughout the 1880s. The years 1884, 1885, and 1886 were exceptions; rural unemployment among day-workers in particular did rise significantly

1. Figure 7.

2. Insolvency figures in Oudtshoorn and Malmesbury Division are revealing.

	1878	1879	1880	1881	1882	1883	1884	1885
Oudtsh. Div.	1	8	8	12	34	33	30	67
Malmes. Div.	16	4	20	27	72	40	33	30

Based on Stat. Regs. 1878-1885.

as result of cumulative years of drought, depression, and the temporary cessation of the western railway works.¹

However, when crops failed and stock perished or were too weak to plough as result of the drought on the missions in the Zwartland and Zandveld region, many inhabitants, who then depended more on wage incomes, rejected the low day-wages offered on farms in the region and opted instead to seek employment in Cape Town. In 1881, nearly three hundred workers from Moravian missions in the western Cape worked in Cape Town. Some of these lived in Hope Street, Keerom Street, Papendorp or Woodstock, Paardegang and the 'Mahommedan quarter'. Some lived in reasonable accommodation such as 'the neat looking house, where ... a girl from Genadendal was living with a white man' in Paardegang. However, most were crowded eight or more to a room such as that in Hope Street:

Rented by a woman who wished to secure as many under-tenants as possible ... a chamber so low ... that I could scarcely stand upright ... former inhabitants of Elim lying upon sacks on the floor. (2)

Full board was expensive: 'Malays' charged 1s. per day.

Similarly, three successive harvest failures eroded the autonomy of many Khamiesberg mission inhabitants by 1882. However, seasonal migrations with stock to the better-watered inland plains of 'Bushmanland' sustained their cattle. The evidence suggests that those who were compelled to earn wage incomes did so as transport contractors to the Cape Copper Company if they had cattle, or as day-labourers on

1. CO.53.119., C.C.R., Western Divs., passim, 1881; G51-82, Report on Viticulture, passim; A3-83., R.S.C., Colonial Agriculture, passim; A12-90., R.S.C. Labour, passim; G91-83, C.C.R., passim.
 2. M.P.A., Wittewater/Goedverwacht, Jan., 1881; Annual Report on South African missions, 1882, Elim report of 1882, Mamre report of 1882; M.P.A., Cape Town, 1883, 1886.

the company's mines if they did not.¹ By the 1880s, then, there were options available to workers and peasants that cushioned them to some extent from the exigencies of the farm-labour market at a time of drought.

Poverty and immiseration were, however, by no means absent from the rural areas during this period; these were accentuated by outbreaks of disease in places where living conditions were crowded or malnutrition lowered people's resistance thresholds to infection. Localised outbreaks of venereal diseases and typhoid occurred in parts of Clanwilliam, Ladismith and Oudtshoorn Divisions in 1881.² Several dockworkers in Cape Town went down with smallpox in June of 1882 and the disease soon ravaged the poorer and more densely populated quarters of Cape Town.³

It is likely that the disease spread with the growing mobility of workers between rural settlements and lodgings in Cape Town. Within weeks, smallpox appeared at Genadendal in the Overberg and Mamre in the Cape-Zwartland region. Fear of contagion manifested itself in a temporary drift of mission migrants back to the rural missions away from the epidemic in Cape Town, and in a widespread reluctance on the part of farmers to employ day-workers from rural villages and missions. As a result, during the 1882-3 season, a substantial sector of the rural proletariat were denied the harvest wages upon which they depended; pockets of destitute people appeared on several of the western-Cape missions.⁴ But even among the Genadendalers, whose

Namaqualand,

1. CO.53.119., C.C.R., 1881. M.M.S., Lily Fountain, Apr., 1882.

2. CO.53.119., C.C.R., 1881.

3. C.A., July 4, 5, 1882, Jan. 11, 1883.

4. *Ibid*; M.M.S., 1882, passim; M.P.A., Berea diary, 1882, Elim diary, 1882.

mission had suffered most from smallpox and whom 'the farmers [would] not have ... near their places',¹ some found relief in employment opportunities on the railway works. In doing so, they offset more widespread repercussions of the crisis.

Hardship lingered on for many from 1883 to 1885. However, the smallpox epidemic subsided and improved crop yields in particular localities in 1883/4 as well as real, and sometimes imagined, work options on road- and railway building, or in Cape Town, Kimberley and the Transvaal tempered the crisis in the rural western Cape.² A glimpse into everyday life at Wittewater mission, during the 1884-5 harvest season captures some of the strategies and attitudes employed by household members to cope with their increasingly difficult predicament.

For several weeks ... early every morning they might be seen with their sickles going forth to their work in all directions, many a woman carrying a little baby on her back, whilst two or three little ones by her side. A piece of dry bread taken with them formed their entire food for the day. Returning home in the evening they would carry on their head a large bundle of fuel with which to cook for themselves and the children a cup of coffee or soup of ground corn for the evening meal. They were often obliged to bring some sheaves with them from the field, and thresh them at home with a stick, their supply of corn being at an end. The next day they would grind this in their small iron hand-mills, and at once make the flour into loaves and bake them. They would then carry the fresh bread with them, and go forth again to continue their reaping. It was hard work indeed, and the health of many a woman broke down under it, though all are equally poor and have to struggle for a bare existence ... they are not the slaves of the white man... for it was their own bread they were thus earning. (3)

Distance from markets precluded sales of Wittewater's surpluses, other than of labour power, at a time when harvest wages fell to around 1s. per day, the railway works were suspended, unemployment

1. C.A., Nov. 7, 1882.

2. M.P.A., Report of Kuhn, 1883, Genadendal diary, 1883, Elim diary, 1883, Genadendal, 1885. C.A., Sept. 13, 1883.

3. M.P.A., Wittewater, Dec., 1884.

rose in Cape Town, and wage-incomes were essential to cash purchases of clothes and other household necessities. The girls and single women are likely to have sought domestic service in Cape Town where it was best paid, and women and children probably did some casual harvest work on nearby farms. But it was the men, whose day-wage earnings were higher than those of women and children, who nearly all engaged in the wage sector. Most were day-workers on farms and in towns. Men who were temporarily absent from Wittewater returned periodically to do seasonal work on their allotments and gardens or else sent money back to wives to engage labour to do it.¹ The women who managed the households depended largely on what wage-earning members of the households sent home. The women bore the responsibilities of child care, allotment and garden upkeep and general household reproduction. They also, very often, bore the brunt of structural unemployment in the rural western Cape.

1. M.P.A., Wittewater, Dec., 1884; G39-93., Evidence A.G. Hettasch, p.373.

B. From mobilization to nationalism: commercial wheat farmers, Afrikaner ethnicity, and the development of Farmers' Protection Associations into Afrikaner Bond.

During the late 1870s commercial farmers' aspirations were linked to the growing ethnic consciousness among Afrikaners and provided the ingredients for an increasingly powerful, but loose, array of forces: capitalist farming interests were most widely publicised in the Zuid Afrikaan; they were organized in the Farmers' Protection Association; they were well represented in the Divisional Councils and in Parliament; and the populist and Afrikanerist drive was, for the most part, propagated in the Patriot and orchestrated by the Genootskap van Regte Afrikaners.

The somewhat fluid, and as yet, largely uncoordinated composition of Afrikaner nationalist forces that characterised the boom years of the 1870s contrasts with the consolidation of the Farmers' Protection movement into the Afrikaner Bond that characterised the 1880s. In the 1870s, produce prices were often high and farm-labour shortages alone remained a common and consistent issue of farmer grievance. However, the 1880s was a period of general economic slump, labour scarcities and falling wheat-, wine-, wool- and feather prices. This, together with the Anglo-Boer skirmishes in the Transvaal, infused the concept 'Afrikaner' with a new meaning. All served further to universalize and concretize the ideology and organisation of what remained in essence a capitalist farmers' movement.

Tensions between capitalist farmers and Afrikaner organizations escalated during the early 1880s. Commercial farmers continued to

hold sway over Divisional Councils.¹ They also formulated the resolutions and proposed the motions directed at their parliamentary representatives or candidates at the public meetings of electors.² In 1881 the collapse of wheat, wool and wine prices³ and the Transvaal War of Independence precipitated a proliferation of Farmers' Protection Associations. These developed outside of their traditional strongholds, in the Cape, Stellenbosch, Paarl, Malmesbury, and Caledon areas of wheat and wine farming, in regions of pastoral and mixed farming.⁴ A report in 1882 commented that:

at the numerous farmers meetings ... being held in all parts of the colony, the farmers are told that they have too long allowed the towns and villages to tell them what to think and how to vote and that they must continue to organise themselves to make the voice of the country heard in parliament. (5)

Similarly, S.J. du Toit's attempts to construct an 'imagined community'⁶ of Afrikaners through the editorials of the Patriot, since 1875, planted key nationalist concepts in minds that provided fertile grounds after 1881.⁷ Sales of the Patriot soared.⁸ Du Toit's strategy of creating branches of the Afrikaner Bond as vehicles for Afrikaner nationalism found most support in those parts of the western Cape, such as the Overberg and Midlands regions, where census

1. H.V., July 5, 1884. In 1882 about 25 percent of Divisional Councilors were members of the local F.P.A. or Bond branches. Davenport, Bond, 7. Farmers outnumbered townsmen by 5 to 3 on Divisional Councils in the Cape. Ibid, 6.
2. See for example, C.A., Sept. 8, 1880.
3. Wool export values fell from £2,429,371 in 1880 to £1,426,108 in 1885. Stat. Regs., 1879-1888.
4. For example J.H. Hofmeyr and local dignitaries were actively engaged at establishing, streamlining, or securing resolutions at public meetings to establish F.P.A. branches at Beaufort West, Uniondale, Prince Albert, Oudtshoorn, George, Montague, Heidelberg and Robertson. C.A., Aug. 4, 8, 16, Sept. 22, 1881.
5. C.A., June 5, 1882.
6. Cf. Anderson, Imagined Communities.
7. CO.53.119., C.C.R., 1881. S.P.G., Paarl, Sept., 1882.
8. From 50 in 1876 to 3,700 in 1881. Davenport, Bond, 34.

statistics show a majority of 'whites'. These were areas where small farmers, mostly 'Afrikaner' shepherding, sharecropping and labouring tenants, constituted a substantial and growing stratum of the farm population. Many were largely dependent on wool and wheat and were often without the reserves to cushion the effects of drought and commodity price falls. Many were impoverished.

Key elements in early Bond policy that stressed issues such as Afrikaans as national language, cooperative shops, nationalized banks and national independence, seemed to appeal to capitalizing and small farmers located further down the social scale and a tenantry that faced impoverishment during the slump. By contrast, the established capitalist farmers of the Cape-Wine-Zwartland-Zandveld or Caledon areas were by no means well-disposed towards Afrikaans as an official language. They also seemed largely indifferent to proposals that went much beyond minor reforms of the colonial status quo with which they were basically comfortable, and which depended on imperial credit, markets and troops.¹ Indeed, attempts to establish Bond branches, based, as they were until 1882, upon S.J. Du Toit's programme, met with a good deal of resistance in areas with the longest and most developed tradition of commercial farming, with the most thoroughly proletarianized wage sector and with the least numerous 'White' small-farmer and sharecropping tenancies.² For a time in 1881/2 it

1. For illuminating comments on the relationship between language and class in the western Cape during the nineteenth century, see C.I. Hofmeyr, 'Building a Nation from Words. Afrikaans Language, Literature and "Ethnic Identity", 1902-1924', M.A., London Univ., S.O.A.S., 1983, p. 1-9. On Bond policies see Davenport, Bond, passim.

2. A report on the Wellington F.P.A. meeting in 1881 is illuminating: At the close of the ordinary business, Mr van Spk [sic] moved that the Association should be transformed into a local branch of the Afrikaner Bond. The proposal met with considerable disfavour by nearly the whole of the farmers present, many of whom refused to stay for its discussion.
C.A., Aug. 19, 1881.

appeared that Hofmeyr's rural middle classes and S.J. Du Toit's Afrikaner poor were growing apart.

However, commercial farmers were alive to the necessity of pandering to a broader, albeit poorer, constituency. Their support was a precondition for the success of a strategy that aimed to capture the state via the ballot box. One of the ways in which the Farmers' Protection Association of the late 1870s attempted to broaden the base of its support was by appealing to Afrikaner sentiments and equating these with the interests of farmers. Statements of opposition to the colonial government's Basuto war policy and support for the Transvaal independence struggles against the Imperial government characterized public, electoral, Farmers' Association, and Divisional Council meetings throughout the rural western Cape in 1880 and 1881; these were largely about Afrikaner mobilization.¹ It was only in the 1900s that the tensions in a party comprised of such diverse elements became acute.² By 1885, the Bond and Farmers' Protection movement formed a more coherent and powerful capitalist farmers' party. The ex-slave- and landholding class of the western Cape had assumed a new guise.

In 1882 J.H. Hofmeyr, with his solid commercial-farmer support in the Divisional Councils, the House of Assembly and the Farmers' Protection Associations throughout the western Cape, proved able, despite some opposition, to secure control over the official amalgamation of the Bond and the Farmers' Protection Association. The Farmers' Protection

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1. Examples of such meetings occurred at Malmesbury, Robertson, Paarl, Oudtshoorn, Troe Troe, Prince Albert, George, Fransche Hoek, Wynand's River and Kimberley. *C.A.*, Sept. 8, 1880, Jan. 11, 12, 25, Feb. 12, March 14, Aug. 4, 8, 16, 1881.
 2. For details of these developments see O'Meara, *Volkskapitalisme*, 22-35.

Association dissolved itself in May of 1882, but the hegemony of agrarian capital was secure in the newly-constituted Afrikaner Bond en Boeren Vereeniging (Afrikaner Union and Farmers' Association).¹ The Bond's dual strategy of promoting commercial-farmer demands as well as the broader, if sometimes tempered, assertions of Afrikaner ethnicity² effectively retained popular support for the Bond. This amalgam of wealthy and marginal farmers proved effective in the 1883/4 general election. The Bond came close to controlling the Cape legislature³ and, thereafter, Hofmeyr acted:

the part of King-maker by throwing the weight of his party behind a sympathetic outside candidate, thereby allowing such a person to attain the premiership and hold it with the help of Bond voters for as long as Afrikaner [and more specifically commercial farmer] interests were served. (4)

Local commercial farmers, who were for the most part of Dutch descent, were active and influential in mobilizing Afrikaners. The role of influential farmers of English descent is less clear. Some of them had been influential in the establishment of the Farmers' Protection movement at its inception in the period 1867 to 1872 and thereafter. Farmers of English descent also often had substantial family and social ties with 'Dutch' members of the western-Cape gentry. The Duckitts had little difficulty in endorsing a Divisional Council motion opposing the Sprigg ministry's Basuto war policy; it affected English and Dutch alike in so far as it threatened extensive military call-ups during peak labour seasons. More obviously Afrikaner

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1. At Paarl the newly-constituted united Bond and F.P.A. held meetings with two chairpersons, one from each of the two bodies.
 2. For example the demand for excise concessions and the official usage of Dutch rather than Afrikaans. C.A., June 26, July 4, 6, 1883. Section E below deals with the Bond's reluctance to proletarianize poor Afrikaners.
 3. The Bond won a majority of seats in the Legislative Council and nearly 50 percent of the seats in the House of Assembly in the 1883/4 general election. Davenport, Bond, 89/90.
 4. A. Wilmot, 'The Africander Party', in L. Creswicke, South Africa and its Future, Cape Town, 1903, p. 41.

protests may have posed greater difficulties: local notables, such as the Duckitts, probably did not attend the Malmesbury dinner where one hundred and twenty 'influential persons of the district' celebrated the restoration of the Transvaal's independence.

But even on the latter occasion, the English flag hung alongside those of the Transvaal and Holland against a wall that also sported a portrait of the Boer leader at the Majuba Hill Battle, General Joubert. T. Louw, M.L.A. for Malmesbury, proposed the health of the Gladstone Ministry which had replaced Lord Beaconsfield's annexationist government.¹ Political opinion among farmers of Dutch descent about the aims, methods and language of 'Afrikaner ethnicity' was itself extremely diverse.² Even at the height of the Transvaal struggles during the early 1880s there is no evidence that western-Cape commercial farmers were significantly divided into English and Afrikaner.

As the war fever subsided, the advantages of Cape protectionism against imports of Transvaal grain and brandy seemed to override those of pan-South African republicanism. Unlike their counterparts in the eastern Cape, who formed a greater proportion of farmers in, and whose interests were often peculiar to, the east, those relatively few English commercial farmers of the western Cape had little to lose and much to gain from subsuming themselves in a Bond under the style of J.H. Hofmeyr. Hofmeyr had, after all, refused to form a government in 1883 when the Bond held 33 out of 74 seats in the House

1. C.A., Aug. 22, 1881.

2. Afrikaner newspapers also illustrate the point. Located somewhere between the Volksblad which sympathized with British hegemonic aspirations and the Afrikaanse Patriot which openly opposed them, was the Zuid Afrikaan which incorporated elements of both.

of Assembly and 12 out of 22 in the Legislative Council because doing so threatened to inflate the English-Afrikaner race issue beyond its usefulness for the Bond that was, up to the 1890s, first and foremost a commercial farmers' party.¹ In sum, the Bond of the 1880s forged alliances across not inconsiderable and potentially fractious ethnic, class, and regional divides.

^{p.451-5}
1. See Purkis, 'Railway building'; Davenport, Bond, passim.

C. Manipulation of world and local markets in wheat and labour: customs, railway tariffs and immigration.

An established pattern of commercial-farmer agitation during periods of low wheat prices appeared once again as prices fell from about 12s. to under 5s. between 1881 and 1888. Farmers faced a combination of droughts and imports: droughts limited the quantity of wheat harvests; imports eroded their value.¹ Cape wheat farmers claimed that sales were unable to cover production costs if the price of wheat fell much below 7s. 6d. per bushel. When falling prices reached this level in 1883/4, as a result of imports of large quantities of Australian wheat, farmers became vociferous in their protectionist demands.²

Protectionist demands revived a latent conflict of interests between farmers and merchants. 'Free trade' meant low tariff barriers which set wheat merchants, who operated within the framework of world supply and demand, in 'equal competition' with wheat farmers who were confined by economic and climatic conditions that prevailed in the colony. Merchants exploited the farmers' dependence on local seasonal and market fluctuations; they imported wheat on a scale that

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1. Cape wheat (bushels) and flour (196 lb barrels) imports for the period 1880-1888 showing totals and imports for domestic consumption.

	1880	1881	1882	1883	1884	1885	1886	1887	1888
Flour Total	98,836	162,470	104,913	114,984	131,794	74,295	3,382	200,804	12,455
Flour D/C	110,327	162,470	104,913	111,533	126,849	67,459	12,451	1,065	
Wheat Total	322,864	695,710	949,149	686,547	717,439	706,530	367,427	325,978	137,303
Wheat D/C	662,720	695,710	949,149	686,547	690,733	901,503	367,427	325,217	13,807

Annual average wheat and flour imports for period 1881-1888 reveal striking contrasts with those of the years 1870-1880.

Total Annual Average Flour Imports 1881-88=100,637. 1870-80= 71,417
D/C " " " " " " = 74,899. " " = 65,958

Total Annual Average Wheat Imports 1881-88=537,260. 1870-80=227,249
D/C " " " " " " =554,390. " " =152,998

Based on Stat. Regs. 1870-1888; Figure 6.

2. A3-83., evidence P.A. Myburgh and J. Adam.

it paid them to do so, despite the fact that this could overstock local markets and cause price falls that adversely affected farmers. An influential farmer commented in 1883 that 'it is pretty well understood that the merchants about here keep a look out on the crops and before they come in have cargoes ready...'.¹

Merchants responded to a high local wheat price of 12s. per bushel, which resulted from the bad harvest in 1881, by increasing imports of wheat and flour by approximately £100,000 on the previous year's total. Farmers called for a higher protection threshold on wheat and flour imports, and particularly for a sliding scale of import tariffs to regulate the wheat and flour prices during times of poor harvests.² They argued that the numbers of rural unemployed swelled when both the value and quantity of harvests declined and unemployment was far more damaging to the labouring classes than higher-priced bread which was in any case secondary to meat and fish in the labourers' diet.³ However, these were superficial arguments: farmers were unlikely to have wanted tariffs to secure labourers' jobs, as they benefitted from the wage falls that accompanied unemployment. Wheaten flour or meal was a starch staple for most western-Cape labourers in the arable regions; it certainly was not secondary to any protein source, least of all meat.

The views of grain dealers conflicted with those of the producers. William Searle, the Chairman of the Cape Town Chamber of Commerce, argued in 1883 that Australian wheat cost about 5s. per bushel to

1. Evidence T.T. Heatlie in A3-83, p.30

2. See for example C.A., June 26, 1883.

3. A3-83., evidence R. Hare.

produce and that shipping,¹ and the cost of the 8d. per bushel duty, added 2s. 6d. to this. Thus, he argued, Cape wheat was sufficiently protected at 50 percent on production costs. If total costs to merchants selling Australian wheat at Cape Town was 7s. 6d. per bushel and the rest was 'fair and reasonable profit to the importer',² then, clear profits on wheat imports for home consumption totalled around £66,500 in 1881, and around £71,000 in 1882.³ The same profit margins soar to £93,148 and £106,555 if the more likely figure of 5s. per bushel is taken to cover merchants' costs for imported Australian wheat. Merchants found moral grounds to justify existing tariffs which left unhindered the accumulation of wealth from the lucrative wheat trade. They argued that moderate tariffs of 8d. per 100 lb of wheat, and 2s. 6d. per 100 lb of flour, meant moderate bread prices for the poorer classes.⁴

Struggles over tariff protection and price thresholds required by wheat farmers and merchants to compete on local markets were about the distribution of profits. Wheat farmers became embittered during poor seasons when low tariffs rendered merchants' profits inversely proportional to their losses. Furthermore, they were unable to procure protective legislation for as long as the broader forces of agrarian capital were unwilling to rally on an issue that so particularly concerned wheat farmers. Merchant interests predominated.

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1. Freight costs in 1880 were almost 2ld. per bushel from Australia to Cape Town. To this we should add 4d. per bushel for landing, agency costs, dock dues and haulage to Cape Town station of about 4d. per bushel, if Searle's figures are to begin to make sense.
 2. A3-83., evidence W. Searle, p.42-43.
 3. Based on wheat imports for domestic consumption and average western Cape wheat prices for the years 1881 and 1883. Stat. Regs. 1881, 1883.
 4. The tariff of 2s. 6d. per 100 lb of flour and 8d. per 100 lb of wheat were laid down by Act 1 of 1886/7.

Claims that farmers abandoned wheat production when the price fell much below 7s. 6d.¹ simply indicate that some farmers turned to the production of other commodities, such as oats, which they found more profitable than wheat at that level of return. They do not, as some farmers claimed, prove that 7s. 6d. was the base line for profitable commercial wheat production. A more reasonable estimate of farmers' total production and marketing costs would be between 5s. and 6s. per bushel.² Similarly, merchant claims that they required a local price of 7s. 6d. to cover costs seem exaggerated in the light of the fact that wheat and flour imports only plummeted when the wheat price dropped to between 5s. and 6s. in 1885/6.³

Protective tariffs were among the least of the concerns of wool, feather, and wine farmers, faced, as they were, with collapsed export markets for much of the 1880s. Protection, for a range of colonial products, was an issue in the 1883 election. But Bond members, such as M.L. Neethling of Stellenbosch, excluded higher tariffs for breadstuffs from their election campaigns. Farmers who depended on free trade for access to lucrative foreign markets were unlikely to support protection. Furthermore, despite the Bond's substantial electoral gains and subsequent pressure for increases in protection of local manufactures, merchant interests in parliament were able to resist tariff increases on the lucrative wheat and

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1. See for examples in various parts of the western Cape, A3-83, *passim*. The fact that western-Cape wheat production expanded after 1885 has to do with the collapse of feather prices and the resultant shift back to wheat production.
 2. Six shillings was the minimum price quoted at a meeting of Koeberg and D'Urbanville grain farmers in 1888. C.A., Feb. 1, 1888.
 3. Table 13; A3-83., evidence of J. Adams.

flour import trade.¹ Arguments about free trade and the bread price were far more convincing and had a wider appeal than the new-found fears about rural unemployment expressed by certain commercial wheat farmers.² Few Bondsmen took up the cudgels on wheat tariffs. In 1888 the Colonial Treasurer explained:

The great principle of free trade ... was to get cheap bread ... I hope that we all think that cheap bread is a good thing. I for one do not want to put a heavy burden on flour. This country does not at present grow enough to feed the people and we must depend on other countries. (3)

Commercial wheat farmers such as J.S. Marie of Windheuvél in Caledon, whose barns in July of 1885 still contained 'the largest portion of last year's harvest', viewed the protection issue from a somewhat different perspective to that of the Governor.⁴ J. Ecksteen farmed wheat on a large scale⁵ at Knolvallei in Paarl Division; he was one of several influential men who challenged the notion that free trade did in fact mean cheaper bread.

... what encouragement do we get? Our legislators say, 'we cannot protect you by putting a duty on breadstuffs, for we must protect the poor man'. Now I defy any man to point out where the poor man is protected. When formerly bread was sold at 30s. per muid was bread an ounce heavier than at the present time, when we sell wheat at 18s.? Where does the poor man come in now? If we are protected I will guarantee we can produce wheat sufficient to keep the colonial market well supplied. (6)

By 1884 a core of wheat-farmer representatives such as T. Louw, M.L.A.

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1. C.A., Dec. 4, 1883, Jan. to April, passim, 1884; Goodfellow, Economic History,^{passim} It is interesting to note that the import duties on flour in the Transvaal were 5s. per 100 lb, i.e. double those of the Cape which were 2s. 6d. per 100 lb.
 2. Such as R. Hare of Paarl Division. A3-83.
 3. G63-84, Financial Statement, p.13.
 4. C.A., July 9, 1885; The average price of wheat in Caledon was 5s. per bushel. Stat. Regs. 1885.
 5. His farm produced nearly 4,000 bushels of wheat annually. C.A., Nov. 23, 1886.
 6. Ibid; C.A., Nov. 10, 1887, Feb. 1, 1888.

for Malmesbury, rallied around J. de Waal, M.L.A. for Piquetberg, who proposed several motions in parliament for tariffs of 2s. per 100 lb of wheat and 5s. per 100 lb of flour. This, they felt, would ensure a price of between 6s. and 7s. per bushel for farmers. They failed to secure the votes for a parliamentary resolution in a clash with merchant representatives led by men such as M.L.A.s T. Upington, J. Wood, and P. Douglass who were dealers in grain and other commodities.¹

By 1888, substantially increased local production and the continued availability of cheap Australian and American wheat resulted in consistently low prices and intensified the agitation of wheat farmers for protection.² Significantly, the farmers did not use the Bond to influence government policy, even though 'most members of parliament already there are elected by means of the Bond'.³ They chose, rather, to hold an independent conference of wheat farmers and send a deputation of parliamentary representatives and leading wheat farmers from all the major wheat-producing regions of the western Cape to put their case directly to the Governor, rather than to rely on the big Bond meeting scheduled for March of 1888.⁴ The essence of Prime Minister G. Sprigg's friendly and positive response to the deputation was his referral of the entire issue back to parliament. By 1888 wheat farmers had generated a good deal of excitement over wheat tariffs, but they were unable as yet to mobilize sufficient votes in parliament to procure protective

1. C.A., Feb. 25, Apr. 21, 1886, Feb. 1, 1888.

2. C.A., Jan. 7, Feb. 1, Mar. 17, 1888. This took the form of parliamentary and press statements, public meetings and a deputation to Prime Minister G. Sprigg.

3. C.A., Feb. 1, 1888.

4. C.A., Jan. 7, Feb. 1, 1888.

legislation.¹

The relative isolation of commercial wheat farmers, and hence also their failure to secure tariffs on imports, contrasts with the wider support they received from merchant interests² and success they achieved in committing the colonial government to build a railway line into the prime commercial wheatlands of the western Cape. M.J. and T. Louw, M.L.A.s for, and commercial wheat farmers in, Malmesbury district, persuaded the government to finance the construction of the Malmesbury line. However, their success needs to be seen in the context of the broad alliance of viticulturists, pastoralists, agriculturalists, and merchants who rallied to the support of those parliamentary candidates in the 1873/4 election who endorsed J.C. Molteno's railway plan. Part of Molteno's electoral strategy for the western Cape entailed lines to Malmesbury and Beaufort West, and the abolition of the sub-guarantee levy on landholders to meet earlier railway-construction costs.³ Similarly, in 1879 eighteen M.L.A.s who were members of Farmers' Protection organizations supported Cape merchants in a bid to extend the railway beyond the Karoo to Kimberley.⁴

Farmers and merchants perceived the advantages of, and were generally agreed upon, the need for railways. However, the freight-rate structure soon emerged as a source of contention between wheat farmers, inland dealers, and Cape Town merchant importers. In 1880 farmers and merchants protested against increased railway rates on

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1. De Kiewiet points out that it was not until 1925 that truly protective tariffs were implemented. C.W. de Kiewiet, A History of South Africa, Oxford, 1957, p. 262.
 2. See for example, Immelman, Chamber of Commerce, 198-204.
 3. Purkis, 'Railway building', 127-174.
 4. Ibid, 242-4.

the western lines; these rendered local wheat uncompetitive on the Cape Town market and limited imported wheat to the Cape Town area.¹ The effects of the railway cost structure at important wheat terminals such as Wellington or Cape Town are illuminating.

By the 1880s, Wellington village and station had developed into a focal wheat-trade and transport link between surrounding Malmesbury and Piquetberg farmers and the Cape Town market. Insignificant quantities of wheat came from the further inland wheatlands of the Central region to Wellington en route to Cape Town or went from Wellington inland.² In 1880, the carriage rate of 10s. per ton, or 4d. per bushel, between Wellington and Cape Town was increased by a 'delivery charge' to about £1. 4s. 6d. per ton, or 10d. per bushel, on loads under two tons or 60 bushels. Small parcels of up to 100 lb, or less than one bushel, were subject to the higher rate of 1s. 11d. per bushel.³

During the good harvests of the late 1870s, Wellington grain dealers sent nearly 1,500 tons, or about 44,000 bushels, of Malmesbury and Piquetberg wheat to Cape Town. Dealers, such as J.H. Coaton, would probably have passed the new charges onto the farmers who sold to them. However, they suspected adverse effects as a result of the extra charge. The fact that 'farmers' loads are generally below two tons [60 bushels]'⁴ could 'cause the farmers to resort to wagon transport again', bypass local dealers, and sell direct on the Cape Town market. Wheat prices were often lower in towns situated near commercial wheat-growing districts than they were at Cape Town; the

1. C.V., June 8, 1880; A2-80, R.S.C. Railway Management, *passim*.

2. C.A., Apr. 28, 1880.

3. A2-80, R.S.C. Railway Management, *passim*.

4. *Ibid*, Evid. J.H. Coaton.

1880 Wellington wheat price of around 6s. 6d. per bushel left farmers with little leeway to absorb the 10d. per bushel freight cost to Cape Town. The Wellington-Cape Town wheat trade temporarily petered out.

The increased proportion of wheat over flour imports,¹ which characterized the 1880s, reflected the growing practice among Cape-Town based wheat dealers to mill the imported wheat locally before marketing it more profitably as meal or flour. J. Barry was one of the Cape Town wheat importer-millers. He found that local freight costs on flour and meal limited sales to Cape Town. It cost him 5d. more to transport a ton of flour 71 miles to Piquetberg Road station than it did to transport a ton of flour from Australia.² While Cape Town merchant-importers found it impossible to trade on inland markets, the inland producers, millers, and dealers were unable to compete with Australian wheat and flour on the Cape Town market.³

Adjustments to railway charges in 1882 included concessions⁴ both to farmers and to Cape Town importers. Grain and wine were conceded a third-class rating at 2d. per ton, per mile, that reduced the Wellington-Cape Town rate of 10d. per bushel to 4½d. per bushel. A further provision which reduced rates by 100 percent for four-ton lots was likely to have benefitted big commercial farmers in so far as it cut transport costs, but it also conflicted with their interests by making it easier for imported wheat to penetrate inland markets. Increasing amounts of imported wheat were railed to watermills at Worcester, ground into flour and sold locally or on other interior

1. See Figure 6.

2. A2-80, *passim*.

3. *Ibid*, *passim*.

4. Statistical data for this paragraph is drawn from A11-82, *passim*.

markets.¹ Cape Town importers sent increasing amounts of wheat and flour to Beaufort.²

The 1882 adjustments particularly disadvantaged small farmers such as those of Malmesbury Division; they generally marketed a wagon-load of 10 bags, or a ton, of wheat at a time to a local storekeeper, or agent of a Cape Town-based merchant, who in turn railed it to Cape Town.³

The 'privilege conceded to grain' meant that the rate for meal between Cape Town and Beaufort West, 339 miles away, for lots under four tons was 4s. 11½d. per 100 lb and 2s. 2½d. for lots above four tons. In effect, at a wheat price of say 7s. 6d. per bushel, those who dealt in less than £30 worth of wheat at a time were liable for double the rail rate paid by others; this clearly prejudiced small dealers and producers. As L. Weinjer, a Cape Town merchant, observed:

If you want to benefit the small farmer, and wish to give him the advantage of being able to send his stuff to market, and say you will carry one ton lots, [at the privileged rates] which is the usual farmer's wagon load in the West, I can see the use of it; but by sending four ton lots, you benefit the speculator and not the farmer ... the smaller farmers fall into the hands of the speculator, because they cannot go to the best market unless they have four tons. The man who buys up a little from each farmer has the pull. (4)

Nevertheless, the powerful merchant lobby in parliament, coupled with the inability of commercial wheat farmers to rally the broader farmers' movement in support of their demands for tariff protection and cheaper railway rates, retained the competitive edge for merchant importers over farmers on inland and Cape Town markets. The proposals of yet another commission in 1883 confirmed the advantages of the larger Cape

1. A3-83., Evidence T.T. Heatlie.

2. Ibid, Evidence W. Searle.

3. A18-88; Evid. E.M. Philip, p.23; G112-83, passim.

4. G112-83, Evid. C. Weiner, p.191.

Town importers.¹

By 1885, irate wheat farmers from Malmesbury had grown vociferous in their complaints² about the Cape railway-rate structure. They argued it effectively precluded them from the lucrative diamond-fields' market and forced them to sell at Cape Town where lack of protection from imports resulted in prices that barely covered costs.³ They demanded that grain rates on the eastern- and western-Cape railway systems be equalized because the lower rates on the eastern line facilitated penetration of the Kimberley market by Port Elizabeth-based merchant importers.⁴ By 1886 colonial grain and flour cost 2d. per ton per mile to rail and had a theoretical advantage of 1d. per ton, per mile, over imported breadstuffs on the line that reached Kimberley, by 1886, from Cape Town.⁵ In practice, however, Cape Town wheat importer-millers simply mixed local and imported flour and easily by-passed the regulations.⁶ Even so, they did not rail substantial quantities of flour to Kimberley. Transport costs to Kimberley on colonial wheat and flour amounted to around 5s. 6d. per bushel from Cape Town and around 4s. per bushel from Port Elizabeth which was itself supplied to a large extent with wheat and flour from Adelaide.⁷ Abundant local supplies of 'Basuto and Boer meal' sold at around 4s. per bushel at Kimberley for much of 1885. In important aspects then, the western-Cape commercial wheat farmers remained disadvantaged competitors on

1. G112-83, *passim*.

2. *C.A.*, Sept. 30, Nov. *passim*, Dec. 29, 1885, provide some examples.

3. *Ibid*.

4. *C.A.*, Dec. 29, 1885.

5. By 1883 railways from Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, and East London met at De Aar. de Kock, *Economic History*, 110.

6. A7-86, *Evidena*, C.B Elliott, p. 20; *C.A.*, Feb. 25, 1886.

7. The eastern Cape was also increasingly able to supply its own needs in breadstuffs. *C.A.*, May 25, Nov. 11, 1887. G24-87, and G31-88, *Railway Reports*, *passim*.

the major coastal and inland markets.

Demands for protection and subsidy infringed the principles of 'free trade' upon which the Cape economy was based under British rule.¹ In economic terms this meant that powerful merchant interests in parliament could effectively prevent tariffs or rail rates from interfering with the unfettered accumulation of merchant profits. Merchants carefully nurtured the £300,000 to £800,000 annual wheat and flour import trade as they did their export trade in wool, hides and feathers.²

There was, however, a commodity in which merchants had less direct interests and in which they appeared less resolute about free-trade principles; this was labour power. Integral to relations between merchant and agrarian capital during these years was merchant predominance on issues such as wheat protection and subsidy, on which farmers were not united as a class and in which merchants had direct interests, and the predominance of agrarian capital on issues of labour supply, on which farmers were united and in which merchants had no direct interest.

Immigration policies reflected the shifts in official labour policies which occurred during the 1870s and marked an important stage in the process whereby the regular farm worker came to be defined as 'coloured'.³ The following summary of immigration policy in 1883 indicates the extent to which immigration continued to accord with official social policy:

The immigration scheme at present in force provides for the

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1. Trapido, 'Friends of the Natives', in Marks and Atmore, Economy and Society.
 2. Estimates of Noble, History, Production and Resources, 223.
 3. Above, chapter 3.

introduction of agriculturists, who receive grants of crown land on easy terms; Government immigrants comprising railway servicemen and military recruits; aided immigrants being those engaged by Colonial employers who pay half the cost of their passage; domestic servants from St. Helena and labourers from the Extra-Colonial Native Territories of Walwich Bay and Delagoa Bay. (1)

Immigration laws per se failed to solve the farm-labour scarcity.

Farm-labour reserves at the Cape Town Native Depot depended largely on circumstances that prevailed among communities settled in various parts of southern Africa. During the 1880s wages and working conditions on western-Cape farms failed to attract workers in numbers sufficient to satisfy demand for regular farm labour.

In 1879 the government, 'desirous of meeting the necessities of the agricultural community', set about immigration schemes to answer 'the great and increasing demands of the agricultural and general labour market'. Between October 1879 and April 1883 the majority of the over three thousand Bergdamara from Walwich Bay and 'Delagoa Bay natives'² who passed through the Cape Town Native Depot entered into two- or three-year indentures at 15s. per month to western-Cape farmers.³ Several hundred Koranna, and Xhosa prisoners of war were similarly indentured out to farmers.⁴ G.H. Stevens, the contracting officer at the Native Depot reported in 1881 that:

The introduction of this sort of labour appears to have had a beneficial effect on the labour market, as before immigration was commenced many farmers had to keep their children from school to look after the flocks and herds; the position of employers of

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1. Directory and Guide, 1883, 370.
 2. G39-93, *Evid.*, G.H. Stevens, p. 60-8.
 3. *Ibid*, Evidence G.H. Stevens; P. Harries, 'Mozbickers: the immigration of an African community to the Western Cape, 1876-1882', in C. Saunders (ed), Studies in the History of Cape Town, Vol. 1, Cape Town, 1979; G71-80, Report on Native Immigration, passim; G56-81, Report of the Superintendent of Immigrants, Cape Town, passim.
 4. G39-93., Evidence G.H. Stevens;^{p. 60-8} Strauss, Koranna Wars, passim.

labour is now very much improved, as anyone requiring servants can be supplied on application at the Depot. (1)

However, dissatisfaction with pay and working conditions resulted in high desertion rates, widespread refusals to renew expired contracts, and a strong preference for Government service rather than farm work. The only exception were the Bergdamara immigrants who appeared less inclined to desert, 'gave very great satisfaction to their employers' and 'reaped as well as the Cape boys'.² It is likely that the Bergdamara migrants, who had been reduced to a 'miserable and starving existence in the mountains', were more dependent upon wage incomes even on such terms; they probably perceived the hardships on western-Cape farms to be less extreme than those they faced at home at the time.³ But even the number of Bergdamara immigrants dwindled when rumours began to circulate that all who went aboard ship at Walwich Bay were taken to sea, destroyed and would never return.⁴

After 1883, a combination of dissatisfaction over working conditions, smallpox outbreaks at Delagoa Bay, improved harvests and rains in, and colonial occupation of, German South West Africa, resulted in an empty Native Depot in Cape Town. Stevens was caught between the increasing numbers of applications from farmers for labourers and mounting discontent amongst the immigrant farm workers. Stevens, a successful professional labour-recruiter himself, was experienced in the problems of fitting immigrants into the mould of western-Cape farm work. He periodically earned a living from securing a flow of labourers from outside of the colony and was likely to have been sensitive to incidents

1. G56-81, Report of Superintendent of Immigration, p.1.

2. Ibid, passim; A12-90., Evid. L.Cloete, p. 23/4;
van der Horst, Native Labour, 97.

3. G56-81., Report of Superintendent of Immigration, Cape Town, G.H. Stevens, passim.

4. Ibid.

that threatened breakdowns in labour circulation. In 1883 he warned:

As matters now stand my office is almost daily besieged by natives coming to me with most pitiable tales of the injustice done them by their masters, or adverse conclusions of court cases, and I am unable to give them any satisfaction. All these tales I of course receive with a proper amount of caution, but ... it is not difficult to detect when they are not speaking the truth. (1)

Stevens tried to rescue the situation. On several occasions he appealed, to no avail, to the government for an officer similar to a 'Native Protector' to be posted at 'places such as Stellenbosch, Paarl, Malmesbury etc.'. The officer could act on behalf of immigrant workers, as they were prevented from giving evidence in court; they did not speak the language which rather prejudiced their case as, 'the magistrates are of course obliged to give judgement according to the evidence aduced [sic]'.²

A trickle of dispossessed 'Bushmen'³ who fled the turmoil and drought of the north-western Cape border region appeared to offer some respite: 'when it became known to the public that these people had arrived the applications simply poured in, principally however for single men and children'.⁴ The San refugees who had fled from the north-western Cape, 'because of the attitude of the white man towards them',⁵ appeared to have no illusions as to what was in store for them as regular farm workers in the western Cape where attitudes to them appeared little different.⁶ They all refused employment in any capacity other than as family units. Two of the three families who contracted themselves to local farmers deserted soon after, as did all

1. G58-84, Report of Immigration Agents for 1883, p.6.

2. Ibid.

3. C.A., March 8, 1884; Twelve men, fourteen women and sixteen children, 'Bushmen', arrived in 1884.

4. G21-85., Immigration Report for 1884, p.8.

5. Ibid.

6. The 'liberal' Cape Argus referred to them as 'the most degraded form of barbaric community'. C.A., March.8, 1884.

the others who remained at the Depot until Stevens ordered their food rations to be stopped in an attempt to compel them to engage as workers.¹

During the 1880s, government-employed, professional labour recruiters failed to induce Xhosa or Mfengu labour to work on western-Cape farms at wages of 15s. per month with board and lodgings.² Eastern-Cape farmers were jealous of their local labour supplies, and 'natives on the frontier' were unwilling to go as far afield from home as the western Cape when 'food was plentiful and existence easy'. Furthermore, western-Cape farmers were notorious for their ill-treatment of farm workers and the low wages they paid. A farmer from the Queenstown district explained to the 1892 Labour Commission:

Every employer of labour is known by some name or other amongst the natives, and they always find means to know all about him ... I do not think you will get a kaffir to come here [western Cape] at all to work on the farms. (3)

Finally Xhosa immigrant labourers rarely took up jobs that were far from home except as large groups organised under a headman. This did not suit western-Cape farmers who never wanted more than six immigrant labourers. The farm-labour shortage remained acute.⁴

The supply of regular workers was not the only way in which immigration could affect the availability of farm labour. The bulk of 'agricultural immigrants', or immigrant farmers, were, no doubt, intended primarily to increase the settler-population on frontier regions. It is possible, however, that the immigration schemes established in the U.K. and Europe which recruited railway workers

1. Ibid; G21-85, *Immigration Report for 1884*, *passim*.
 2. Based on C2-92., R.S.C., *Labour*, *passim*.
 3. C2-92., p. 50.
 4. C2-92, *passim*.

and the 'smaller class of working farmers' for the western Cape, were intended in part also to swell the ranks of western-Cape farm labour. Immigrant railwaymen forced local farm labourers doing better-paid railway work back into the farm-labour sector. 'Agricultural immigrants' enhanced their incomes as occasional day-workers and, in doing so, helped to increase scarce and expensive seasonal-labour supplies. It was, after all, customary in the Overberg, Midlands and Central regions, where most of the 'agricultural immigrants' who came to the western Cape settled, for marginalized small farmers and tenants to engage in seasonal work. Casual farm-work of this nature paid peak farm wages and fell beyond the jurisdiction of the most draconian of the Masters and Servants regulations.¹

The intentions of immigration policies were not, however, always clear to local farmers who, throughout the 1870s, perceived the newly-established immigrant smallholders as undesirable competitors for local resources. The expenditure of public funds on recruiting and transporting immigrant 'agriculturists' from Europe, ostensibly to intensify production by increasing the number of smallholders in agricultural areas, involved the allocation of 21 to 25 acre allotments of public land to each immigrant. This aroused considerable opposition from the time of its inception in 1878 to its termination in 1881.²

The case of the German settlers in Worcester illustrates some of the effects on, and responses of, commercial farmers to immigrants in an area of mixed farming. In 1878 fifty-two German families settled

1. C2-82, *passim*.

2. G5-79, *Immigration Report for 1878, passim*.

on public land which the government allocated to them at a nominal quitrent along the Jan du Toit's and Hex Rivers. Despite two initial crop failures on account of drought, which compelled some of the men to do day-wage work on the railways, all were self sufficient and capable of servicing their debts. Most appeared reasonably secure as small-scale wheat, wine, and fruit farmers; some were becoming wealthy.¹ The newcomers' intrusions into water and public grazing land resources roused a good deal of local resentment. Some local farmers were influential members on the Worcester Divisional Council.²

Matters came to a head when a number of the immigrants entered into sharecropping or labour-tenancy agreements with local 'coloureds' at a time of severe farm-labour shortage and widespread efforts on the part of farmers to commit casual day-labourers to regular farm-work.³

Field Cornet Wouter de Vos explained:

Hans Fransen, a German immigrant at the Hex River location, has this day, by virtue of special contract, sub-letted part of his ground, in extent 26 acres, granted to him by Government, to one Nicolas Mercur, a coloured man, for the sum of eight pounds sterling for the first two years, and twelve pounds sterling for the ensuing eight years, with a right of water; and also Joseph Wentzel, to one Joseph Antonie, under the same conditions ... Such liberties will only tend to encourage squatters, thieves, and other irregularities, and will be regarded as an injudicious act towards colonial and industrious subjects. (4)

In 1882 an official enquiry recommended, 'for the sake of peace and harmony in the neighbourhood', that the German immigrants be compensated from public funds and the lands be restored for the purposes of an outspan.⁵ Commercial farmers in Worcester Division were unwilling to accommodate immigrant smallholders in the locality

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1. A31-82,^{passim} Together the settlers boasted 72,000 vines, 2,805 fruit trees, 82 cattle, 41 sheep, 41 pigs and 77 goats.
 2. C1-82, R.S.C. Location of German Immigrants, *passim*.
 3. C2-81, R.S.C. German immigrant Locations, *passim*.
 4. C2-81, Appendix F.
 5. C1-82,^{passim} An outspan is public grazing land.

because the settlements brought with them new pressures on water, land, and labour resources which the local farmers found intolerable.

But it was not only the commercial farmers in the western Cape that found fault with the immigrant smallholders. There were apparent anomalies in official policy that provided cheap 25 acre plots¹ to immigrants at a time of growing land-hunger among small farmers, sharecroppers, shepherds and tenants of various other types, and evictions from mission and public land. Protest against the policy only received official attention in so far as it affected that sector of the rural poor who formed part of the Bond's constituency. In 1882 M.L. Neethling, M.L.C., objected to state-aided immigration on grounds that:

Our colonial poor farmers and their sons should also be encouraged in every possible way, and they should have preference over European immigrants, in the selection of lands. (2)

J.A. Burger, M.L.C., put it more succinctly: 'I am in favour of importing the right class of labour, but I object to the introduction of the scum of Europe just to increase our population'.³

The opposition of aspirant small farmers and established commercial farmers effectively blocked governmental attempts to introduce immigrant smallholders into the western Cape. According to an official immigration report, 'a desire having been expressed that a better and more moneyed class of agriculturists should be induced to go out, the Agent has endeavoured to accomplish something in this direction ...'.⁴ By 1886 the economic slump and completion of major

1. In terms of the Agricultural Immigrants Land Act of 1877. See also Noble, History, Productions and Resources, 220-2.

2. C2-82, p.18.

3. Ibid., W.C. Russel, A Voyage to the Cape, London, 1886, passim.

4. G41-82, Report Emigration Office, 1881, p.2.

railway works resulted in escalating unemployment among immigrant 'artisans and tradesmen' at Cape Town.¹ This, coupled with narrowing official definitions of the kind of immigrants required at the Cape, ended subsidized immigration of railway workers and 'agricultural immigrants'. T.E. Fuller, M.L.A. and spokesman on labour importation, explained:

In this particular part of the world the aboriginal does not disappear before the white man ... England must dismiss South Africa from her mind as a refuge and a province for her poor. It is the climate and the country of the black man ... not only a useful labourer but a valuable trade constituent. (2)

Attempts to solve the western-Cape labour problem, directly by importing regular farm-workers and indirectly by importing railway-workers and smallholders, had failed.

1. C.A., July 22, 23, Aug. 18, 1886, May 25, 1887.
2. W. Irons, Settlers Guide, 266.

D. The harvesters

Their inability to secure a constant supply of labourers at acceptable wage rates, from local, regional, or world markets, was an issue of common concern to agrarian employers in the western Cape during the 1880s. Farm-labour shortages increased steadily after the development of the diamond fields and related public works. The extent of the labour crisis and some of the broader processes of social and ideological configuration which gave rise to it only became clear, however, as the effects of the economic slump and drought subsided. More labour was needed, for example, to produce the substantially increased annual wheat crops, which jumped from around a million bushels from the 1850s to the 1870s to over a million and a half bushels by the late 1880s.¹ Petitions from Malmesbury, Paarl, Caledon and Cape Divisions concerning the dearth of farm labour goaded the Cape government to an unprecedentedly comprehensive series of inquiries into a wide range of questions concerning labour recruitment for, and distribution among, public, private, urban and rural employers.² These confirmed that those least able to compete for labour,³ and therefore also hardest hit by the labour shortage, were the farmers.

Western-Cape farmers wanted as much control over labour as possible at the least possible cost, and often hankered after the days when slaves and their children provided 'altogether a better generation of labourers'.⁴ Such sentiments conflicted with the distinct and

1. Tables 11, 12, 13.

2. Namely, Select Committee Reports on Labour: A12-90;C2-92;G39-93;G3-94.

3. Ibid, passim.

4. A12-90, p. 49-51, Evidence J.P. Theron; G39-93, Evidence E. Loubser, R.R. Bligh-Hopley and H.J. Human, p. 222-4, 414-6, 332-40.

TABLE 13

WHEAT PRODUCTION, PRICES AND VALUES FOR THE DIVISIONS,
REGIONS AND WESTERN CAPE AS A WHOLE IN 1887 and 1888 (1)

Division/ Region	Production Value		Price 1887/8 d.	Annual Averages	
	1887/8(2) Bushels	1887/8(3) £		Value(3) £	Price d.
				1881-1888	
Malmesb	409,774	102,444	60	136,591	80
Piquetb	100,338	25,085	60	34,700	83
Cape	157,243	43,242	66	53,725	82
CAPE- ZWARTLND ZANDVLD REGION	667,355	172,400	62	228,013	82
Stellenb	19,730	5,179	63	7,399	90
Paarl	85,996	23,649	66	29,740	83
CAPE- WINE REGION	105,726	28,194	64	37,445	85
Caledon	110,220	26,177	57	39,955	87
Bredsdrp	32,473	6,359	47	15,695	116
Robtson	32,500	8,125	60	12,865	95
Zwelldam	43,008	10,214	57	18,458	103
Rivsdale	33,236	4,985	36	14,125	102
OVERBERG REGION	251,437	53,430	51	105,813	101
Oudtshrn	133,896	22,874	41	42,958	77
George	56,136	10,526	45	19,180	82
Moss Bay	29,200	5,475	45	9,733	80
MIDLANDS REGION	219,232	40,193	44	73,077	80
Worcestr	24,586	7,068	69	9,015	88
Tulbagh	70,980	17,745	60	24,843	84
CENTRAL REGION	95,566	23,095	58	33,448	84
Clanwill	30,776	8,463	66	15,516	121
Calvinia	35,782 ⁴	-	-	28,520	198
Namland	85,075 ⁴	-	-	42,183	119
PASTORAL WEST- COAST REGION	151,633 ⁵	-	-	92,243 ⁵	146
Prince					
Albert	24,780	6,093	59	11,358	110
Frasberg	3,444	-	-	3,315	231
Beauf W	9,600	2,880	72	4,480	112
Vict W	-	-	-	-	-
PASTORAL INTERIOR REGION	37,824	-	-	23,798	151
WESTERN CAPE	1,528,773	375,823	59	662,468	104

TABLE 13

FOOTNOTES

1. Based on Stat. Regs., 1881-1888. Wheat prices are recorded for each year, but detailed production figures are only available for the years 1887 and 1888.
 2. Based on average prices for the years 1881 to 1888.
 3. Based on annual average prices for the years 1881 to 1888.
 4. Namaqualand's figure is probably substantially inflated and possibly as much as double the real figure. The amount entered is that of 1892 in the absence of any returns for 1887 or 1888.
 5. Inflated by the inaccurate figures for Namaqualand Division as explained in footnote 4.
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widespread disinclination among labourers to offer their services to farmers at all.¹ Farmers were, however, as incapable of achieving complete control over workers' lives as rural labourers were of terminating dependence upon farm wages. Western-Cape rural relations comprised, rather, a mix of resistance and accommodation as the protagonists drew from a repertoire of strategies and responses.² The labour requirements of commercial farmers and their methods of procuring sufficient labour varied according to the size, type and location of farm, while different categories of farm labour adopted various strategies to extract what they could from the farmers without forfeiting the control over their own lives which they considered reasonable and necessary.

The western-Cape wheat harvest is little understood, yet it was a major part of the social and economic life of the region. For a period of up to three months, it involved both the regular farm workers and a wider periphery of men, women and children who were employed by the day, the week, the month or the task. This extra labour-force was decisive at harvest time. It added very substantially to, and perhaps even doubled, the figure of 22,147 men, 'workers on farms', or regular farm labourers, which the 1891 census registered for the seven western-Cape Divisions that each produced, on average, over 85,000 bushels of wheat in 1887 and 1888.³ By the late 1880s, taking the western Cape as a whole, roughly fifty thousand people

1. A12-90, p.111; 439-43, p.206-213.

2. Cf. R. Cohen, 'Resistance and hidden forms of Consciousness', *Review of African Political Economy*, No. 19, Sept./Dec., 1980.

3. Census 1891; Table 13; The Divisions that produced over 85,000 bushels were Caledon, Cape, Malmesbury, Namaqualand, Oudtshoorn, Paarl and Piquetberg.

were involved in the harvest of a million and a half bushels of wheat.

There were probably more workers involved in the harvest than there were engaged in any other comparable contemporary industry in the western Cape and possibly in the colony as a whole.¹ Who, then, were the harvesters? Where did they come from and return to? Why? The western-Cape wheat harvester has remained a curiously anonymous figure.

For the nucleus of western-Cape 'regulars', harvesting was the best paid of the various stages in the production processes of the farm where they lived and worked. By the 1880s, regular farm labourers throughout the western Cape had been able to secure, as widespread practice and one which they regarded as their rightful due, a harvest wage that equalled the going day-rates paid to resident casual labourers doing harvest work as part of tenancy agreements. It was only slightly less than that paid to casual non-resident day-labourers. Earnings of 'Hottentots and the descendants of the old stock of slaves', or 'Cape boys', who provided the bulk of the western-Cape regular farm-labour force, rose sharply during harvests: they increased from a regular monthly wage of around 15s. to around 2s. a day.²

Farmers such as those of the Cape-Wine-Zwartland region were unable to attract regular farm labourers for anything less. Attempts to

1. Employment figures on the diamond fields are an obvious yardstick with which to estimate the relative importance of harvest employment. Between 1871 and 1875 around 50,000 'natives from the interior' came and left Kimberley each year. During the 1880s there were between 9,000 and 22,000 African workers on the Fields. R. Turrell, 'Kimberley: labour and compounds, 1871-1888', in Marks and Rathbone, Industrialization and Social Change.

2. See Figure 7; C2-92⁹⁰⁴¹; G39-93., Evid. O. Horack, p. 48-54.

deny the full harvest wage to immigrant 'Galekas, Delagoa Bay natives and Bergdamaras' was one reason for their extremely high desertion rate, and their reluctance to resume contracts on western-Cape wheat farms as regular workers.¹ J.D.J. Visser of Koeberg said of his regular farm workers:

as a matter of fact, the farmer pays £1 per month to these men practically only during two or three months during the year. From September they are paid by the day. As long as the harvest lasts they get 2s. or for wheat 2s. 6d. per day. For threshing they get 2s. and this runs on until March. The missions cannot supply sufficient labour ... (2)

Labour scarcity in the Cape-Wine-Zwartland and parts of the Overberg with the most developed tradition of commercial wheat production and most thoroughly proletarianized wage sector had, since emancipation, compelled a growing number of farmers to introduce a stratum of resident casual workers. Characteristically they rented cottages and plots of land from farmers, in exchange for periodic farm service at agreed day-wage rates although they earned the bulk of their incomes from a variety of casual engagements, supplemented with the produce from their rented plots. This practice had become entrenched as customary by the late 1880s; it significantly modified the traditional augmentation of resident labour forces with non-resident seasonal labour at harvest time. As we have seen, high seasonal-wage bills and uncertain labour supplies forced farmers to concede leased cottages, land and casual labour agreements.³

A feature which distinguished most of the Overberg and Midlands regions from the Cape-Wine-Zwartland and parts of the Overberg,

1. G39-93, *passim*.

2. G39-93., Evid. J.D.J. Visser, p. 56.

3. Above, chapter 3; G39-93, *passim*; A12-90., Appendices A, B, C, D, E, and evid. J.P. Ecksteen.

was the extent of their poor white population.¹ Several factors contributed to the formation and growth of this stratum of marginal small farmers, shepherds and sharecroppers: Cape inheritance laws reduced farms, with each generation, to ever decreasing shares and parts; droughts and economic slumps in the 1860s and 1880s marginalized many small farmers; finally, commercial estates engrossed public and private land during the wool and feather boom of the 1860s and 1870s. A Government surveyor in the Overberg explained:

For 45 years I have been busy cutting up their lands. I simply believe that a great deal of their misery has been brought about by the old system of cutting up the farms into sixteenths and thirtieths. The recipients hang on as long as they can to the sub-sections, from which they cannot derive support and become impoverished. I have seen brothers buy each other out. One has been more industrious, and he makes money and buys his brother out, who then becomes his shepherd. (2)

H.J. Human estimated that around five hundred impoverished whites lived in Caledon district, principally as tenants on farms along the arable stretches of the River Zonder End. Two such sharecropping parties gave about 200 of the 400 bushels of wheat they reaped

1.	'European or white'	'Malay, Hottentot, Fingo, Kafir, Bechuana, Mixed and Other'
Cape-Wine Zwartland-		
Zandveld	77,825	88,516
Overberg	26,899	25,825
Midlands	23,630	24,316
Central	9,438	14,804
Pastoral West Coast	<u>13,241</u>	<u>27,527</u>
	<u>151,033</u>	<u>180,988</u>

- 1875 and 1891 Census; G91-83, *passim*.
 2. G39-93., R.S.C., Labour, Evid. R.R. Bligh Hopley, p. 414-416.

annually to their landlord J.C. Beyers.¹ But their contribution to the Overberg harvest was not limited to production for household consumption and landlords' shares. In most cases sharecropping and shepherding tenants were bound to work for landlords periodically, and by the late 1880s, probably because of their increasing numbers, very often received the same day- and sometimes the same monthly wages as the coloured labourers.²

They serve the farmer at certain seasons for the right of staying on the farm. They ... work readily alongside the black man ... provided that you give them a separate place to sleep in and separate food. (3)

One farmer estimated that sharecroppers provided 30 percent of the labour on Zwellendam farms during the 1880s while another claimed that

A great deal of work in our district [Zwellendam] is performed by whites. I can give instances of farmers who finished their harvesting and all their farm labour with whites. I think there are more poor whites than coloured men at work on the farms. (4)

Nearly all Midland and Overberg farmers utilized either of the two main categories of tenant: sharecroppers who had periodic labour commitments to the landlord, or tenants who provided some casual labour but who cultivated for domestic consumption rather than 'for shares'.⁵ Some employed both categories of tenant and neither was racially exclusive.⁶ A.S. de Villiers of Dunghye Park boasted 'I can draw upon my "bywoners" black and white to get along'.⁷

1. G39-93., Evid. H.J. Human, J.C. Beyers, p.332-40, 344-9. The terms of western-Cape sharecropping varied, but most common were the practices whereby the landlord supplied seed, oxen and implements and took half the crop, or the landlord supplied nothing and received a third of the crop. Shepherding on a similar basis usually entailed payment of a certain proportion of the lambs born to the landlord.
2. G39-93., Evid. H.T. Heatlie, A.F. Marais and J.L.C. Knoblauch, p.388-400.
3. Ibid, Evid. H. Veale, p.368.
4. G39-93., Evid. D.G. Steyn, p.409.
5. G39-93., passim, and espec. Evid. H.T. Heatlie, A.F. Marais, H. Veale, J.L.C. Knoblauch, p.365-400.
6. S.P.G., Cape Town, 1883; G39-93., Evid. J. van Zyl, A.S. de Villiers, H.T. Heatlie, S. Abrahamse, p.374, 388-93, 417-9, 443-5.
7. G39-93., Evid. A.S. de Villiers, p.372.

There are no accurate statistics, but it appears that by the late 1880s the greatest concentrations of impoverished whites occurred in the Midlands; many were compelled to take up not only sharecropping but also day-work and labour tenancies.¹ Small farmers in Oudtshoorn Division experienced the traumas of boom and slump in the feather industry most acutely:

These people have been in the habit of farming on a small scale, but owing to ostrich farming having absorbed their lands they were forced to come to the village ... the farmers now require the land which the people formerly cultivated for ostrich camps. The poor people were shifted and drifted to the town. (2)

But Oudtshoorn and the other little Midland villages were unable to absorb many of them. When ostriches temporarily declined in importance, wealthy and capitalizing farmers sought cheap labour to expand commercial agriculture³ for interior and eastern-Cape markets rather than take on sharecroppers. Thus I. Meyer who farmed and lived in the George and Mossel Bay Divisions for sixty-four years, complained:

... The landowners are to blame for the [labour] scarcity, because they allow squatting on their farms. They are to a certain extent forced to resort to this course or they would have no labourers ... Every farm has such a place. You will see huts scattered here and there over the farm ... The farmer makes use of his squatters just for a day now and then. The custom is for the squatter to serve for one day in the week for the rent of his house ... They are both whites and blacks. The whites ... squat or remain on the farm as bywoners. (4)

Wealthier Midland farmers had more regular resident labourers, but nearly all farms had tenants of some sort. Often it was the small and capitalizing farmers of the Midlands Divisions of George and

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1. G3-94., ^{p45-7,} Evid. J.J.J. Fourie, Oudtshoorn, sharecropper and casual labourer. He estimated that about two hundred whites lived off odd jobs and sharecropping around Oudtshoorn village.
 2. G3-94., Evid. J. Warren, p48/9
 3. Wheat production increased substantially in Oudtshoorn Division during the 1880s.
 4. G3-94, p 9/10.

Oudtshoorn who were 'not able to pay the wages of labourers' who permitted 'squattling' on their land.¹ On one farm in Oudtshoorn, for example, there were

on one-eighth portions of the property not less than twelve families of whites squatting. These people are so poor that they cannot employ labour permanently. They have no less than ninety squatters on the farm, who agree to work two days in the month for the proprietors for a right to build a pondok [shack] in the veld. These squatters never have permanent work ... (2)

There is evidence that the labour-short, and more capitalized, Midlands farmers sought to proletarianize the 'squatters' on smaller farms by invoking the Location, Hut-tax and Vagrancy Acts but these attempts had met with little success by the late 1880s. All Midlands farmers drew a large proportion of harvest labour from the 'squatters'.

Itinerant casual workers were a vital source of harvest labour in the commercial wheat-farming heartlands of the Cape-Wine-Zwartland region and Caledon Division. They constituted an important part of the harvest work-force for both the smaller commercial farmers who did not have the land or water for tied tenants, and the large-scale capitalist farmers who invariably needed extra hands at harvest-time.

Casual labourers in these areas strove to sell their labour at the highest price; many were willing to itinerate between various locations and occupations to do so. Casual labourers are likely to have weighed up their options and devised strategies to escape the worst aspects of exploitation and maximise on opportunities. They may, for example, have taken into account wages and working conditions on copper, diamond and gold mines, in urban domestic

1. Ibid, Evid. T.H. Robertson, Z.S. Marais, J.H.F. Barnard, p.33-6, 47-50, 57-60.

2. Ibid, Evid. R. Gavin, p.84.

service, public service and service in urban manufactures.¹ Off-season farm-work paid only 9d. per day, but harvest wages on western-Cape wheat farms equalled those paid by Cape Town tramway or flour milling companies.² One Caledon farmer said of the seasonal returnees: 'some come from Cape Town with a watch in their pockets and wish to work by the hour'.³ A Zwartland farmer said that he knew of 'a good many, ... hundreds, who go to Cape Town for the higher wages ... most of them return from Cape Town during the harvest'.⁴

Up to a thousand western-Cape mission inhabitants took up railway maintenance and dock work for much of the year.⁵ They did so during the off-season months when casual earnings on farms dropped well below the 3s. to 4s. per day they earned in the public sector. However, many of these 'Cape boys' moved to western-Cape farms during the wine and wheat harvests between October and February to take advantage of peak farm wages. Day-wages had risen from 1s. 6d. to 2s., before alternative opportunities opened up on, and in the wake of, the developing diamond fields during the 1870s, to 2s. 6d. and 3s. per day with rations.⁶

Rural missions and villages were an important source of casual

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1. Raum, 'Genadendal'; ^{passim} Strassberger, Rhenish Missionary Society; ^{passim} G91-83., Report of the Resident Magistrate for Caledon and Bredasdorp; Directory and Guide Book, 1883; G39-93., Evid. J.L. Knoblauch, p. 393-8.
 2. G39-93., p. 373-80.
 3. G39-93, p. 333.
 4. Ibid, p. 207.
 5. See for example, M.P.A., Cape Town, 1885, Genadendal Diary, 1884/5; G39-93., Evid. J.S. van Reenen, A.G. Hettasch, Res. Miss. Genadendal, J. Absalom, p. 206-13, 373-83.
 6. A12-90., Evid. H.J. Pauling, Railway Engineer in Chief and A.R. McKenzie, Shipping and Loading Agent at the Cape Town Docks. G39-93., Evid. W. Cloete, Genadendal labourer who worked on the western railways for 16 years. A12-90., Evid. J. Visser and J.P. Ecksteen.

harvesters. Of the approximately twenty-two thousand inhabitants of western-Cape missions in the late 1880s, nine thousand or so resided at Saron, Elim, Genadendal, Abbotsdale, Raithby, Somerset West, Pniel, Wittewater, Goedverwacht, Mamre and its outstation, Pella.¹ These missions, together with the rural villages² such as D'Urban, Wellington or Paarl, supplied most of the non-resident and itinerating casual labourers for the Cape-Wine-Zwartland-Zandveld and Caledon Division harvests. They were thus essential in those areas which produced nearly half of the western Cape's wheat during the late 1880s.

Many itinerant harvesters were organised as bands or 'spanne'. They worked 'by the day' and elected a leader and spokesperson to negotiate the terms of their employment with farmers. These bands of harvesters characteristically began work on the wheat farms in the Cape-Wine-Zwartland-Zandveld region moving from west to east as the wheat ripened, ending the season in the Central, Overberg and Midlands regions where the harvest was usually a few weeks later.³ They generally worked several farms in any one season, sleeping rough 'in the chaff house, stable and all manner of places'⁴ as they proceeded. J. Noble described a typical band of harvest workers in the late 1880s:

Six reapers two binders, and two bundle makers form a team, and go round the country. They take a strip of eight yards and go at it with a will. At times there are as many as seven teams in a field, and each divided from the other by a furrow; these teams commence at five in the morning and continue until 6p.m. It would astonish the European labourer to witness their reaping contests. They go at it as merrily as possible ... never flag till all is reaped. The harvest home consists of allowing them

1. Table 10.

2. G39-93 passim.

3. Ibid, Evid. J. Absalom, Genadendal casual worker and harvester, p.380-3.

4. Ibid, Evid. D.P. de Villiers Graaf, owner of 4 farms near Piquetberg; Adolf Abram, 63 year-old Genadendaler, p.128-35, 380-3.

to have as much wine the vin-ordinaire [sic] of the country as they can hold. Fiddlers are not idle, powder is given them to enable them to carry out what is known in the vernacular as "shooting the corn off". The day after they are ready to engage to any who may require their services. (1)

There is evidence that women did sickle work during the harvests on the missions, but it appears that men did the cutting while boys often acted as leaders of draught animals and women and children did some binding and most of the bundle-making on the commercial wheat farms. The closure of mission schools for the duration of harvests was a well-established practice in most wheat-growing Divisions and, since fourteen was the general school-leaving age for boys and girls, school closures to some extent swelled the harvest labour market.²

Harvests concerned practically everybody on the missions. It appears that the married women and children worked on the farms nearer to their homes. By the late 1880s, however, the girls and single women had practically ceased to do harvest work. They were forced to take more regular work as domestic servants in Cape Town to supplement household incomes.³ Marginal farmers and impoverished whites also kept their children from school, if indeed they sent them to school at all, to help with their own harvests and augment family incomes by working as day harvest-workers for other farmers at the same wages as coloureds.⁴ In some cases up to a hundred harvesters were in the

1. Noble, History, Productions and Resources, 226/7.

2. G39-93., A.G. Hettasch. There were, for example, around four hundred children registered on Genadendal school books in the late 1880s, p. 373-80.

3. M.P.A., Wittewater, Dec., 1884. G39-93., Evid. J.J. van Reenen, F. Schroeder and A.G. Hettasch. Over four hundred Genadendal girls and single women worked in domestic service in Cape Town by the end of the 1880s, p. 206-16, 373-80.

4. Ibid, Evid. O. Horak, J.D.J. Visser and J.J. van Reenen, p. 48-59.

fields of the large wheat-growing estates of the region, but as a general rule farmers required twice their regular farm labour-force to cope with the harvest. On average this worked out at around twenty labourers per farm.¹

Itinerant and other non-resident casual labourers who were not bound to service by tenancy terms seemed to play a less significant role in the harvests of the Midlands and Overberg outside of Caledon. Farmers in the Bredasdorp and Zwellendam Divisions depended on harvesters from Elim and Zuurbraak mission stations, which had populations of around fifteen hundred and a thousand in the 1880s respectively.² In these Divisions, as in much of the Overberg and Midlands, however, sharecropping, shepherding and labouring tenancies were more substantial than in the commercial wheat-farming heartlands; they provided proportionately more of the casual seasonal labour. Furthermore, Zuurbraak had ceased to exist as a major farm-labour reservoir.³ The population had dwindled from two to one thousand after the L.M.S. privatisation schemes were implemented.

Varying and often not insignificant degrees of autonomy, mobility and solidarity born of a sense of common interest, characterised the different categories of harvest labourers. These, coupled with the dependence of farmers⁴ on their services at so vital a time, placed harvesters in a relatively strong position vis-à-vis their employers. Harvest wages were the highest earnings of agricultural workers and

1. G39-93^{passim}; M.P.A., Genadendal Diary, 1884/5.
 2. Based on Moravian reports for the 1880s such as M.P.A., Elim Diary, 1882; G39-93., Evid. H. Veale, J.G. Steyn and J.P. Russouw, p.365-71, 401-6.
 3. G39-93, Evid. Frans Wessels, resident at Zuurbraak for 50 years, p.406-8.
 4. Ibid.

attempts on the part of farmers to erode harvest wages were relatively unsuccessful.

Suppose there were two men cutting grain with a sickle, and the one man was twice as good as the other, you have to pay them the same wages, otherwise they will leave your employ. (1)

Similarly, farmers who skimmed on rations or drove harvesters relentlessly were ready targets for labour boycotts. A resident of Mamre pointed out that the converse was true of farmers who had better reputations.

The good ones do not come into prominence as they are always well supplied with labourers. I have experience of this in my neighbourhood. (2)

This view is confirmed by evidence from throughout the western Cape.³

The Masters and Servants Acts of the 1870s gave agrarian employers powers over farm labourers that exceeded those concerning any other group of workers in the colony.⁴ However, these Acts were substantially undermined by the difficulties in implementing them as well as by the steps that labourers took to ensure their immunity from them. There is evidence that farmers, particularly in the less well policed Overberg, Midland and pastoral regions, were reluctant to use the Masters and Servants laws. According to a Zwellendam farmer,

You dare not keep order among your men. If they commit an offence you may not punish them or they leave your service immediately with the prospect of choosing where they will next take service. The farmer cannot go on with things as they are. (5)

There was widespread reluctance among farm workers to enter into written

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1. C2-92., Evid. A.S. le Roex, p. 26-7.
 2. G39-93., Evid. W. Johannes, p. 241.
 3. Ibid, Evid. J.C. Pauw, J. Absalom, 64 year-old labourer of Genadendal, T. Heatlie, Adolf Claasen, a labourer at Barrydale, and Gideon Fortuin, a 62 year-old labourer of Oudtshoorn, p. 275-82, 380-93, 419.
 4. Above, chapter 3.
 5. G39-93., J.P.S. Joubert, p. 411.

contracts or even monthly engagements with farmers.¹ Day-labourers and tenants who had casual-labour obligations, and sharecroppers and shepherds who had both share- and labour commitments, were not 'real labourers' and did 'not fall under the Masters and Servants Act'.²

Similarly, farmers who interfered with the mobility of labourers or the independence of squatters by invoking the 1879 Vagrancy Act, with its catch-all ambiguities for those not being in possession of 'visible means of support',³ ran the risk of exacerbating their labour shortages. Some farmers understood this.

... it is dangerous to prosecute these people. If you do it, these men mark you, and where you formerly had a few men to work for you, you would have none at all. (4)

This particular warning was borne out in the case of the Bokkeveld farmer who, in order to secure regular labourers, initiated Divisional police removals of 'squatter' settlements on public land in the Bokkeveld Mountains; he subsequently suffered very severe harvest-labour shortages.⁵

Quite apart from the repercussions of invoking the Vagrancy Law, much of the rural western Cape was too thinly policed⁶ for the law to be administered systematically, and it often proved cumbersome and ineffective against the more mobile squatters. Even in the more densely settled and better-policed areas there were problems with

p436-43

1. G39-93., Evid.C.P. Klopper, W. Wessels; G3-94., Evid. I.E. Meyer, H. Raubenheimer, J.M. Heynes, J.H.F. Barnard, p 9-12, 29-33, 39-40, 47-50.
 2. G39-93, Evid. A.A. Cilliers, Attorney, Robertson, p. 439.
 3. For details of Act 23 of 1879 see Tennant, Justices of the Peace.
 4. G39-93., passim, and p. 27, C2-92.
 5. G39-93., Evid. P.B. van Rhyn, p. 28-34.
 6. G39-93., Evid. P.G. Wege, p. 173-4. See also evidence before A13-80, passim.

implementation.¹ According to the Robertson Attorney, A. Cilliers, 'if you find money in a man's pocket he is no vagrant, and he always keeps a penny in his pocket for such contingencies'.² The Constable at Genadendal said 'It is so difficult to find out whether a man is a vagrant or whether he is going to a farm for employment.'³

There was a range of possible tasks that required casual labourers in the villages and on the farms each day. It was not possible to regularize casual work in the western Cape by means of the Vagrancy Act while there was so great a demand for casual labour. Thus, the Act was used mainly against 'white tramps' and 'broken down Englishmen'.⁴ Economic slumps, such as that of the 1880s, had rendered numbers of the landless Afrikaners and unemployed immigrants destitute. It was they, rather than the semi-autonomous coloured casual labourers or regular farm workers, who were most affected by the Vagrancy Law in the western-Cape.

Wealthy Midlands farmers complained that they could not compel the 'squatters' into regular wage labour by using the Location Acts of 1876, 1878 and 1884. These defined communities of three, and later seven, adult males as illegal locations on farms unless they were regular farm labourers. Such moves would invariably have set dangerous precedents both for the wealthy Cape-Wine-Zwartland wheat farmers, who depended for harvest labour on their tenants who rented cottages and allotments and paid for these in part at least with varying

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1. Proceedings to remove settlements of 'squatters' by means of the Vagrancy Act involved a warning, a written notice to move within 3 weeks and finally a summons to appear before a magistrate.
 2. Ibid, Evid. A.A. Cilliers, p.438.
 3. Ibid, Evid. J.B. West, p.387.
 4. See for example evidence of T. Searle, in G39-94, p17-21.

stretches of periodic service, and for small or capitalizing Midland farmers who benefitted from sharecropping and labour tenancies. Both groups had a vested interest in their tenancies. It was difficult to prove that sharecroppers were not employed labourers.

Moreover, as we have seen, Midland sharecroppers and labouring tenants were racially heterogeneous and the Location Act apparently only applied to 'blacks' and not 'half-castes', 'coloureds' or 'whites'.¹ Try as he might, M.J. Jackson, Civil Commissioner of Knysna since 1880, was unable to implement the Location Act:

When the Native Locations Act was passed, I wished to put it in force in this Division ... I was met with the extraordinary difficulty that farms were divided into 160th parts and that every part had the right to keep two Kafirs [sic] ... Then again a farm was divided into 8,960 parts. Well it should be absurd to say that each holder of a part had the right to keep two Kafirs. This was my great difficulty. I was then instructed by the Secretary for Native Affairs that the Act was not intended for the western districts and was not to be enforced. When the amended act came out I again applied for authority to put it in force, but after a considerable correspondence the matter was dropped and it was not enforced. (2)

The inability to apply the Location Act meant that the onus of paying the £1. 10s. per hut fine, for allowing surplus labour to lie dormant on farms as 'squatters', passed from the landlord where it was most effective, to the squatters. The other method of discouraging Midland squatting was to tax the 'squatters' themselves by poll or hut taxes but there was widespread scepticism about the efficacy of such measures because the 'squatters' in fertile Oudtshoorn Division 'would simply pay it'.³

Given that the considerable array of coercive measures and increased

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1. Van der Horst, Native Labour, 110-14; A26-83^{passim}; G3-94., Evid. F.H. Robertson and H. Raubenheimer, p.24-36.
 2. G3-94., M.J. Jackson, C.C., Knysna since 1880, p.77-83.
 3. G3-94, p.88-91.

administrative apparatus¹ at the disposal of farmers was often more theoretical than practical, it is perhaps surprising that such a blatantly exploitative system of production was reproduced at all; to understand this it is necessary to contrast the inefficacy of the formal legal apparatus with the impact of informal agrarian practices.

Widespread debt peonage² and alcohol addiction seriously call into question the equality with which casual and regular sellers of labour power entered into negotiations with buyers on the 'free market'. Indebtedness to farmers could bind regular resident labourers to ever-increasing periods of service, in excess of that agreed upon in original contracts, for the repayment of loans of cash, food, drink or even for such things as stock losses or damage to farm implements caused by the alleged negligence of labourers.³ In 1885, a report about the workers on a farm near Genadendal stated:

They can get plenty of wine from their master but no money. If they ever wish to settle accounts, he makes it appear that they are in his debt. Thus they practically become his slaves. (4)

Regular farm labourers contracted most of their debts during off-season periods when wages were at their lowest. J. April, a Mamre resident, stated that regular farm workers who had families at Mamre were unable to live on 15s. per month. The food that regular

1. Such as the three Masters and Servants Laws of the 1870s. Act 16 of 1882 introduced twenty-seven Assistant Resident Magistrates with jurisdiction equal to that of Res. Mags. in civil and criminal cases to the western Cape. Act 30 of 1889 extended magisterial jurisdiction to all Special J.P.'s over Masters and Servants Act disputes. Tennant, Manual for J.P.'s; M.B. Robinson and J.S. Curlewis, The Resident Magistrate's Court Act, 1856, being Act No. 20 of 1856 with notes, Circular Instructions and Decisions thereon, Cape Town, 1888.
2. G39-93., Evid. O. Horak, Issuer of Processes and Spec. J.P., resident at D'Urban since 1854, E. Loubscher and J.L. Beyers, p. 43-54, 222-4, 344-1.
3. The Masters and Servants laws of the 1870s legalized such payments by service for a very wide range of misdemeanours.
4. M.P.A., Genadendal Dairy, 1884/5.

labourers received was often insufficient yet

the man cannot leave his farm because he is in debt to the farmer. The longer he stays the deeper he sinks and frequently has to put his children in the field too, to aid in clearing his liability. As soon as they are free, they go to Cape Town, if not they remain on the farm. (1)

Farmers also advanced money, food and drink to casual workers during off-season periods in order to bind them to spells of service, particularly for harvests.² The Resident Magistrate at Genadendal was well positioned to comment on casual-labour recruitment; approximately half the farmers' advances for harvest labourers came via the mission post office and his wife administered these advances in her capacity as postmistress. The harvest season began in October or November,

From about the fifteenth of September the money begins to come in. The foreman gets so much and he advances £1 to each of the men whom he engages ... These take the pound and spend it ... The men then go to another foreman and get money from him in the same fashion ... The men get into debt and the family is cast on the credit of the farmer for support ... (3)

The 1856 and 1873 Masters and Servants laws institutionalized various forms of debt peonage by legalizing advanced payments and rendering default for payment a breach of contract and criminal offence for farm workers.

Giving labourers liquor and loans could appear, at face value, as gratuitous gestures of benevolent employers concerned to add some conviviality to the tensions of exacting harvest work, or help tide a needy worker over hard times. Furthermore, as both appeared to originate from the free choice and initiative of the self-indulgent workers themselves,⁴ blame for any resultant long-term debt-peonage

1. G39-93., Evid. J. April, p. 239.

2. Ibid, Evid. J. West, J. April and J. Absalom, p. 239-40, 380-8.

3. Ibid, Evid. J.B. West, Constable, Genadendal, p. 387.

4. Many western-Cape farmers reported that harvest labour was not procurable without liquor payments.

or alcohol dependency could be ascribed to the personal failures and moral weaknesses of the labourers themselves. Indebtedness and alcohol dependence were very often mutually reinforcing.¹ Widespread indebtedness in the western-Cape countryside did not originate from individual choice, but rather from the structural underemployment that characterized the western-Cape agrarian economy and was most acute during off-season months. The reasons for excessive alcohol consumption or alcohol dependency raise a wide range of medical and social issues, many of which remain the subject of continuing debate.

The consumption level of alcohol was extremely high among western-Cape farm labourers.² Wine formed part of the farm labourer's wage in almost every wheat-producing district; it was quite usual for farmers to increase part payments of wages in the form of wine from around one bottle, or 1.136 litres, per day³ for regular farm work, to two bottles, or 2,272 litres, per day for harvest work. The equivalent in terms of modern 750 ml bottles of wine would be one-and-a-half bottles for regular work and three bottles for harvest work.⁴ Farmers not only saved the expense of bottles but also ensured the immediate consumption of wine rations by issuing the wine in 'glasses' or 'tumblers'. They did so twice daily during working hours in the case of regular workers. During harvest time, it was issued on five to eight occasions, beginning with the first 'dop' on empty stomachs

1. G39-93., Evid. J.B. West, p. 386-9.

2. D.J. van Zyl, 'Wynbou', *C.A.*, Sept. 21, Nov. 23, 1886; G39-93, *passim*; C2-92., p. 6, 7, 25; S.P.G., Kalk Bay, Dec. 1884; M.P.A., Genadendal Diary, 1884/5; M.M.S., Box 312, O'okiep, June 1881.

3. Although some, such as the Res. Mag. and C.C. of Robertson, claimed that taking wine 6 times a day amounted to 3 bottles, a bottle was generally taken to mean a quart and, hence, 4 bottles equalled a gallon. G39-93; *Emigrants Guide*, London, 1891. These quantities correlate with evidence dating back to 1848.

4. Calculations based on a standard present-day bottle of wine as 750 ml and the western-Cape 'bottle' as a quart or 1.136 litres.

before breakfast.¹ Boys generally left school at fourteen years of age to take up work, and those who engaged as farm labourers consumed half the amount of adult farm workers.² Alcohol consumption was no doubt considerably increased by the extra 'dops' of brandy during the winter ploughing season, of wine during the ploughing and threshing seasons and the 'shooting off the corn' or harvest-home celebrations. There were also readily available quantities of cheap liquor on sale to workers from wine farmers and retailers throughout the rural western Cape.³

Claims about the relative strength or weakness of Cape wine conflicted. Farmers generally stressed the harmless 'light' nature of the wine, but others disagreed.⁴ The alcohol content of the wines probably varied a great deal, but even if one makes the unlikely assumption that the rough concoctions doled out to western-Cape harvesters during the nineteenth century had considerably less than the 6 to 14 percent of alcohol contained in the rather more delicate modern table wines,⁵ there can be little doubt that the 'normal' quantities of alcohol consumed by regular and seasonal farm workers were, in the light of the findings of recent investigations on alcohol and alcoholism, 'dangerously high'. They were more than sufficient to render nineteenth-century western-Cape farm labour a 'high risk' occupation.⁶

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1. The significance of 'empty stomachs' is that a meal before a drink can delay the absorption of alcohol and reduce blood-alcohol levels by as much as 50 percent. Alcohol and Alcoholism. Report of a Special Committee of the Royal College of Psychiatrists, London, 1979, 25-30.
 2. G39-93, Evid. J. Absalom, p. 380-3.
 3. Farmers sold wine to Genadendalers in quantities less than the legal limit allowed for non-licensed retailers. G39-93., Evid. A.G. Hettasch, p. 373-80.
 4. See for example the statement of the C.C. and Res. Mag. of Robertson 'They get a kind of wine on the farm which creates a craving'. Ibid, p. 45/6.
 5. R. O'brein and M. Chafetz, Eds., The Encyclopedia of Alcoholism, London, 1983, p. 105.
 6. Alcohol and Alcoholism; M. Plant, Drinking Careers, London, 1979; J. Godard, 'Alcohol and Occupation', in *ibid.*

One recent report on alcoholism suggests, for example, that

an intake of four pints of beer a day, four doubles of spirits or one standard sized [750 ml] bottle of wine constitute reasonable guidelines for upper limit drinking. It is unwise to make a habit of drinking even at these levels ... (1)

Considerably less skill is required to cut wheat with a sickle than to control a motor vehicle, but it is possible to construct some idea of the degree to which harvesters were under the influence of alcohol from calculations based upon blood alcohol content charts used in a range of countries to assess degrees of intoxication among motor vehicle drivers. These take into account such variable factors as gender, weight to height ratios, bodily excretion of alcohol during periods of delay between drinks by means of oxidization by the liver, breath, urine and perspiration, and food consumption. A man of medium build weighing 150 lb who drank the harvest-labourer's share of 378.66 ml of the equivalent of modern table wine on six occasions during the course of a twelve-hour day would, beginning with over half a pint of wine on an empty stomach before breakfast, gradually become intoxicated to nearly four times the legal limit for drivers on any Canadian and most U.S.A. roads, and well over four times the amount permitted on the roads of European countries such as Sweden.² Colonial labourers probably weighed less than 150 lb.

The western Cape produced substantial and growing surpluses of wine for most of the second half of the nineteenth century and had no significant overseas market outlets after 1860. The region proved no exception to the seemingly obvious and recently proven, yet hotly contested, rule that the amount of harm that drinkers do to themselves

1. Alcohol and Alcoholism, 140.

2. Calculations based on Encyclopaedia of Alcoholism, 49-51.

and to others is linked to the level of alcohol consumed.¹ Cape wine surpluses were produced in, or near, wheat-producing districts, and were partly disposed of in the form of wages; this caused excessive alcohol consumption and created varying degrees of dependency on alcohol among an increasing number of western-Cape farm labourers. Some labourers admitted to being 'old drinkers'. Others complained of 'feeling bad' during off-seasons when wine consumption on farms dropped, or mentioned 'the craving for it' with which they had to cope. Some contemporary observers claimed that the high alcohol consumption levels during the harvest seasons seriously increased the incidences of alcohol dependency and addiction. A.G. Hettasch of Genadendal claimed that of the approximately six hundred adult males on the station, about one hundred and fifty had 'degenerated' as a result of drink, and estimated the ravages of alcohol dependence in Paarl and Stellenbosch villages to have been about the same. A law that limited the amount of wine that a farmer could legally give to a labourer to one bottle per day, would, he argued, 'reduce the craving for drink'; the system that prevailed on the farms 'makes the men drunkards'.²

Simply identifying widespread dependency on alcohol actually illustrates a relatively small aspect of the problem. Alcoholism or alcohol addiction is, and was, not as much a clear-cut disease as the end of a continuum of alcohol-related problems. The numbers of people dependent upon alcohol were by no means a few 'social derelicts', or even the most obvious casualties, but rather those ordinary working people who carried on with ostensibly normal lives and gradually became, or

1. Alcohol and Alcoholism, 23-27; Alcohol Related Disabilities, World Health Organization, Publication, 1977.

2. G39-93., Evid. P. Cupido, farm labourer, Caledon Div., Adolf Abram, Genadendal labourer, A.G. Hettasch, p. 373-83.

were in the process of becoming, accustomed to drinking heavily and regularly over a period of years, while remaining quite unaware of their growing dependency.¹ Alcohol addiction was not recognised as a social or medical problem and there were no epidemiological surveys. Nevertheless the scope of the alcohol-related problems was probably enormous; it included a range of physical diseases and mental disorders that engulfed family circles and social environment and transmitted handicaps to next generations.² Evidence today of alcoholism amongst Cape 'coloureds'³ illustrates a direct legacy of excessive alcohol usage among workers in the rural western Cape.

What then were the responses of the government, commercial farmers and labourers to this excessive alcohol usage and related problems? Part of the reason for the apparent social acceptance of widespread and excessive alcohol usage, the existence of 'an over-permissive drinking culture',⁴ and the lack of government measures to deal with alcohol-related problems, had to do with contemporary perceptions about alcohol use and misuse. Official policies reflected contemporary notions that disorders arising out of excess alcohol usage had more to do with self-indulgence than disease. As such, they were widely regarded as being the concern of the moral guardians of society, in particular the missionary and the policeman, rather than that of the doctor or legislator. Only fairly recently, and not at all universally,

1. Based on Alcohol and Alcoholism, 12.

2. G39-93., Evid. P. Cupido farm labourer in Caledon Div., A. Abram, Genadendal, labourer, A.G. Hettasch; Alcohol and Alcoholism, p. 373-83.

3. For example, Apartheid and Health, W.H.O., Geneva, 1983, p. 177-9; M.J. Fialkov, 'Alcohol and the Emergency Ward', South African Medical Journal, No. 51, 1977.

4. A term used by M. Plant in his Drinking Careers, 5-10, to indicate societies where excessive drinking and drunkenness are tolerated to a far greater extent than by 'permissive', 'ambivalent', or 'abstinent' cultures.

has 'the concept of alcoholism as an illness ... emerge[d] from the mythical and moralizing stance in which it has been trapped for centuries of prejudice and tradition'.¹ Whether, in fact, recent shifts in perceptions have alleviated the problem or introduced less repressive solutions is open to doubt.² However, the idea that a morally weak minority, rather than the sensible majority, succumbed to drinking problems engendered punitive attitudes to drinking problems that rendered drunken, disorderly conduct, drunkenness and assault major categories in western-Cape crime statistics.³

The absence of preventative action by the state left the way clear for Liquor Acts that facilitated a steady saturation of the rural populace with cheap wine and 'Cape smoke'.⁴ The Excise Law of 1882 introduced a tariff on liquor to tap a lucrative revenue source rather than curb consumption. Indeed the Act did not apply to farmers who distilled their own produce. The outcry that erupted about the Excise laws had provided a major political rallying point for mobilizing commercial farmers to the support of the Bond during the 1870s; the government would surely have taken this into account if any impetus had existed to discourage production.⁵

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1. *Ibid*, 106.
 2. Cf. M. Foucault, The Birth of the Clinic: An Archeology of Medical Perception, London, 1976.
 3. Stat. Regs. passim. Newspapers often carried reports of drunkenness and assaults during harvests. The violence was directed at employers on some occasions and on others it was inwardly directed among labourers themselves. For example, C.A., April 22, 1881.
 4. C.A., Sept. 21, 1886. The Liquor Act of 1885 endorsed the provisions of section 13 of Act 44 of 1855 and replaced the Liquor Act of 1833. The former Liquor Acts gave every farmer the right to sell wine and brandy anywhere without a license, except on their own farms, provided they sold in quantities not less than 8 gallons. Wine farmers regularly sold liquor to people in amounts under the legal limit; people clubbed together and purchased the legal quantity; farmers sold the legal amount in a pail to a group of people each of whom took and paid for an amount that was, of course, under the legal limit. C.A., Sept. 21, 1886; van Zyl, 'Wynbou', 203. G39-93., Evid. J.S. Cilliers, p. 428-12.
 5. Directory and Guide Book, 134.

Official perceptions that shifted all blame onto individuals and dealt only with drunkenness as a problem of social order while ignoring a range of alcohol-related problems, of which being drunk was only one, were useful for a society governed by the kind of commercial farmer-merchant alliance that ruled the Cape. Farmers and merchants remained, for the most part, favourably disposed towards the unhindered production and distribution of liquor between 1838 and 1888. Wine was an important commodity for a number of substantial merchants who were considerably aggrieved at the termination of preferential tariff ratings on, and consequent loss of, British markets in 1860; they dealt locally in the western Cape and increasingly with the pastoral-farming interior and copper and diamond fields.¹ A stratum of petty retailers, such as the town, village and roadside store- and canteen owners,² were similarly concerned about increased sales of liquor, as were viticulturists who were influential in the Bond and in parliament.

Not unlike agrarian employers in parts of England, western-Cape agrarian employers, such as the wheat farmers, found high levels of liquor consumption at the point of production profitable both as a wage form and as a means of social control.³ Most western-Cape wheat farmers produced their own wine or were able to purchase it cheaply enough to profit from its redistribution in the form of wages. Alcohol

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1. In the 1850s 84 percent of wine produced was consumed locally. Van Zyl, 'Wynbou', 240-50; Directory and Guide Book, 35.
 2. Many village shops and stores had a retail liquor licence.
 3. C. van Onselen, 'Randlords and Rotgut, 1886-1903', in his New Babylon, Johannesburg, 1982, illustrates the somewhat different attitudes of employers on the Transvaal gold fields. For insights into the quantities and effects of beer consumption during English harvests of the second half of the nineteenth century, see for example R. Jeffries, 'One of the new voters', in S.J. Looker, Ed., Jeffries England, London, 1937; and R. Jeffries, Toilers in the Field, London, 1892.

is, however, a drug with the potential to induce addiction of various degrees of severity. The need to consume wine in order to stave off headaches, nausea and the variety of mental and physical tensions that characteristically follow sudden reductions in alcohol consumption among both mildly and severely dependent drinkers, may well have provided an incentive to an inestimable number of day- and regular-labourers to return to farms in precisely those parts of the Cape most prone to, and during seasons of, acute farm-labour shortage.

P. Klopper outlined an advantage that farmers derived from the 'dop' system:

I can depend more upon the wine drinkers than upon coffee drinkers ... The general experience is that when you summon the wine drinking man to come to work, he comes at once, whereas the coffee drinker will consider and spend an hour over coffee before he enters work. When you remonstrate you are told that when coffee is hot it must be taken with caution. The wine drinker is better for the farmers' purposes ... (1)

The seasonally fluctuating demand for farm labour enhances rather than negates the plausibility of the role of alcohol dependency as a proletarianizing factor and means of social control. Mild dependencies can take months to manifest themselves in withdrawal symptoms while periods of excessive intake shifts the consumer towards a more serious dependence than before.² Farmers were, no doubt, aware of alcohol's capacity to impair judgement and decrease the ability of workers to solve problems³ such as those of organizing effective resistance. Wine consumption could blunt workers' appetites and reduce employers' costs in daily rations.⁴ Notions to the effect that wine added joviality to dull work and gave workers strength were not without their advantages for production levels in work, such as

1. G39-93., Evid.C.P. Klopper, p.435.

2. Medical evidence based upon Alcohol and Alcoholism, 44-7.

3. Ibid, 33-5.

4. CO.53.97., C.C.R., Caledon, 1860.

wheat harvesting, where the danger of injury and recklessness borne of alcohol excitation were more limited than in deep-level gold or diamond mining where alcohol restrictions came to be enforced.

Farmers did complain that alcohol caused labourers to perform less efficiently and miss work days. Seasonal farm work was done, however, very largely by day-labourers; wheat farmers were less prone to losses from absenteeism than employers wholly dependent upon regular work forces. On balance, it appears that both the widespread and excessive use of alcohol and the resultant gradual development of alcohol dependency in a number of labourers presented wheat farmers with a means to reduce wages and control workers that outweighed the not inconsiderable losses they incurred from loss of efficiency at work and absenteeism.

To attribute the ravages of alcohol addiction solely to the fact that wine producers, dealers and agrarian employers in the western Cape promoted, or tolerated, such high levels of alcohol consumption in, and outside of, the work place would relegate farm labourers to the role of passive recipients. This would limit the thrust of the analysis to questions about the morality of commercial wheat farmers, rather than moving on to a fuller comprehension of the dialectical processes involved in agrarian social relations.

The responses of labourers to the widespread availability of wine on farms varied. There were some wheat farms where, besides wages and food, the farmer gave nothing but coffee and still had enough men for the harvests. Others gave a choice between coffee and wine, or only wine. A minority of labourers abstained from alcohol altogether.¹

1. G39-93., Evid. A.G. Hettasch, ^{p333-40.} G3-94., Evid. Rev. E. Newton, p. 133-5.

Some harvesters felt that the wine assisted with the excessive and monotonous physical labour in the heat of the Cape summer without inflicting too much harm on themselves. Myths existed among workers that wine was a source of strength that enhanced physical performance and that labourers 'sweated it all out' in the course of the harvest day.¹ There were occasions when such myths became entangled with pressures exerted in a spirit of camaraderie by harvesters on a fellow worker to drink as they did.² Some workers felt compelled to drink because not to consume the wine ration would deny them part of their due wage. 'Should I leave off wine and receive nothing for it?'³ queried one harvester. Another explained:

[I have] become accustomed to it, and want it when I work ... I should accept the monetary value, but the farmer does not offer this alternative. He will hardly be prepared to give 3d. a day as a substitute. (4)

It is likely that Cupido, a farm labourer in the Overberg, spoke for many when he said that he never made any conscious decisions about drinking or abstaining. He first began harvest work at the age of sixteen; this was the time to which he traced the development of later cravings for alcohol.⁵ He, like most, had to contend from an early age with the intense monotony and exaction of sickle work; the intense thirst generated by the standard farm labourer's diet of salted dried fish and bread for at least two of the three daily meals; the long hours of physical exertion in the Cape mid-summer heat;⁶ the

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1. See for example G39-93., Evid. J. Absalom, 64 year-old Genadendal day-labourer, p. 380-3.
 2. A Genadendal shepherd who did harvest work for the first time was pressured into drinking by other workers in the field who assured him that the wine ration 'would give him strength'. Ibid, Evid. J. Absalom, p. 380-3.
 3. Ibid, Evid. P. Cupido, Genadendal labourer, p. 385.
 4. Ibid, Evid. J. Absalom, Genadendal labourer, p. 382.
 5. Ibid, Evid. P. Cupido, Genadendal labourer and J. Jonker the school-teacher at Genadendal, p. 384-6.
 6. For evidence that alcohol effectively cools the body see Plant, Drinking Careers, 2-5.

insecurities of itinerant casual work; the tensions generated by employers eager to have their harvests safely home; and the social pressures of fellow workers and employers to drink. In this context alcohol usage provided 'a form of psychological resistance but social quiescence'.¹ The statement of the Genadendal schoolteacher to the effect that the boys who went harvesting 'came to like it [wine] and contract a craving for drink when they become older',² is not surprising. Furthermore,

the fact that a man can still conduct his business on a daily alcohol intake that would incapacitate the ordinary drinker is not proof of some sort of special strength or immunity, but an important indicator of increasing dependence. (3)

Apparent labour scarcity seemed to explain rising day- and monthly wages during the late 1880s and caused a great deal of concern among farmers. In fact, average 'coloured' day- and monthly wages for the period 1881 to 1888 in the most important wheat-producing Divisions of the Cape-Wine-Zwartland, Overberg and Midlands regions actually fell below equivalent averages for any preceding period since 1838 including the drought-stricken 1860s.⁴ Wage declines during a period of alleged labour scarcity resulted from the growing numbers of sharecroppers, shepherds and labour tenants. The purchase and sale of their labour involved rights and obligations that were not reflected in wages. These influenced western-Cape average-wage levels. Wages were lowest where their numbers were largest.⁵

Commercial wheat farmers throughout the western Cape continued to

1. Cf. R. Cohen, 'Resistance and Hidden Forms of Consciousness', R.A.P.E., No. 19, Sept./Dec. 1980, p. 19.

2. G39-93., Evid. J. Jonker, p. 385.

3. Alcohol and Alcoholism, 43.

4. Figure 7.

5. In Oudtshoorn for example. See Stat. Regs. 1881-8.

agitate for more farm labour. In Caledon and the Cape-Wine-Zwartland Divisions, farmers faced most competition with other employers for labour. They demanded an immediate supply of four- to five thousand regular farm labourers. Some also began to mechanize the most labour-intensive stage of production, the harvest.

Not a great deal changed as regards the problematic technology of mechanizing western-Cape harvests during the 1880s.¹ J. Ecksteen of Knolvallei, an established commercial wheat farmer in Paarl Division, used five reaping machines during the 1886 harvest.² Each of these required a driver and a juvenile leader to manage the teams of four mules or horses; four binders to tie the bushels of wheat as they were thrown from the reapers and make them into sheaves; and threshing labour. He had a regular work-force of thirty labourers and a harvest labour-force of around sixty. Taking such factors as the cost of the most widely-used Johnstones or Woods self-delivery reapers at around £32, day-wage bills of 3s. for a driver, 1s. for a boy leader, 2s. 6d. for a binder, and other items such as rations, wear and tear and animal feed, John Noble estimated the costs of mechanized harvesting to be about 2s. 6d. per acre as opposed to 5s. 6d. per acre if cut by sickle.³ But, even if one takes Noble's estimate of a 3s. per acre advantage of mechanized over human reapers to be accurate, factors remained that hindered mechanization. It appears that the initial capital costs of harvest machines at around £32 in 1885, the considerable problem with breakages over rough ground and weight in sandy

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1. G71-96, G46-85, C2-82, ^{passim} 'The Land of Good Hope' (Pseudonym), 'Agricultural Chemistry. Essay on the study of Agricultural Chemistry with special reference to the wants of South Africa', Quarterly Review, Vol. 1, p. 18-39, 1881.
 2. C.A., Nov. 23, 1886.
 3. Noble, History Productions and Resources, 227.

soils, as well as the substantial casual-labour resources, all militated against widespread mechanization of western-Cape wheat harvests in the 1880s.

The 'machine breaking' that accompanied mechanization in nineteenth-century England¹ did not arise in the western Cape, where harvest labourers, like those of Australia and the U.S.A., were not similarly threatened. The extent to which western-Cape harvests were mechanized remained limited and concentrated in Malmesbury, Caledon, Paarl and Piquetberg Divisions. By the end of the decade, Malmesbury Division alone had over three hundred mechanical harvesters; only three other Divisions had between one- and two hundred such machines.²

Reaping machines did, no doubt, replace male sickle workers to some extent, and the self-binding reapers encroached on the gathering, binding and bundling work carried out very often by women and children. Ordinary and self-binding reapers help explain how the western Cape managed to increase overall wheat production during the labour-scarce 1880s.³ But the extent of mechanization remained limited.⁴ It was, after all, not until the late 1880s that self-binding reapers using string to tie bundles of wheat were able with some efficiency to do the work of the gatherers, binders and bundle-makers required for ordinary reaping machines. As so few self-binding reaping machines operated in the western Cape by the late 1880s, the casual harvest-labour force remained essential to commercial wheat farmers and many, such as J.B. Ecksteen of Paarl Division, went to great lengths to

1. For example, see Samuel, Ed., Village Life and Labour, 64, 5, 19.

2. Figures for 1891, based on Census, 1892.

3. J. Noble, Official Handbook to the Cape and South Africa, London, 1896. G39-93., Evid. J.L.C. Knoblauch, H.T. Heatlie, F. Schroeder, p.213-6, 328-98.

4. C.A., Nov. 4, 1887; see also Noble, Handbook, passim.

ensure a secure supply of casual workers.¹ Finally, mechanization in the Cape-Wine-Zwartland may have been hindered because the wealthy wheat farmers, who could afford to mechanize, probably also had the land upon which to settle a tied day-labouring tenantry who could supply relatively cheap harvest labour.

A very large proportion of western-Cape wheat, and particularly that of the Midlands and most of the Overberg, was cut by sickle, and gathered, bound and bundled by hand. The Midland Division of Oudtshoorn produced around 130,000 bushels of wheat annually in the late 1880s, an amount surpassed only by Malmesbury Division; yet it registered only eight ordinary, and no self-binding, reapers in the 1891 census.² Rather than mechanize, farmers in the Midlands and most Overberg Divisions appeared to grapple with the prospect of coercing an underemployed racially heterogeneous tenantry into greater wage-labouring roles. They did so in ways which illustrate why it was 'poor whites' rather than 'poor coloureds' or simply 'the poor' who became an issue of public concern. This prefigured subsequent state-subsidized rescue operations of many 'poor whites' from the ranks of the proletariat.

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1. C.A., Nov. 26, 1884. The first string self-binding reapers appeared in Cape Town in 1884. C.A., Nov. 13, 1882, on the problems of wire binders. C.A., Nov. 4, 1887. For J.B. Ecksteen's labour arrangements see chapter 4, above.
 2. 1887/8 Stat. Regs., and 1891 Census.

E. Impoverished whites and the dialectics of class and race.

An aspect of the labour shortage that emerged as being of some importance during the 1880s was the question of proletarianizing marginalised whites. They comprised a growing number of small farmers, sharecroppers, shepherds and labouring tenants situated, for the most part, in the Midlands and Overberg, but also scattered about other parts of the western Cape. J.X. Merriman, M.L.A., Treasurer of the Colony and Commissioner of Lands, Mines and Agriculture, put the problem quite succinctly:

Here are people saying that they are in want of labour yet there are hundreds of people almost starving because they will not work ... but if you put the law in force against them, you would have an outcry raised from end to end of the country that you are tyrannizing against the people, and unless you can first effect a change in sentiment ... you cannot do anything ... [missions such as Genadendal and Pniel] are simply reservoirs of labour. They are an absolute necessity ... if you have hundreds of white men squatting in idleness ... of course you have a scarcity of labour ... try and make your poor white people work ... (1)

The problems of proletarianizing 'squatters' had arisen, during the 1840s, as a possible solution to the labour problems of the western Cape. Occupants of public land and certain missions were able, at the particular historical conjuncture of the late 1840s and early 1850s, to resist their more thorough proletarianization by compelling the government to abandon its attempts to implement the explosive Squatters Bill of 1849. By the late 1880s, the composition of the 'squatters' had changed and included a considerable number of marginalized whites. A dilemma of central importance to the labour-policy formulators was whether they could proletarianize these squatters by coercive legislation.²

1. G39-93., Evid. J.X. Merriman, p. 146-7.

2. Such as extending provisions of the Masters and Servants Laws or implementing the Vagrancy, House and Hut Taxes, or Location Acts.

There is evidence that many commercial wheat farmers were not averse to employing poor whites as farm labourers, or to having them coerced to do regular farm work. The debate about, and increased agitation for, a flogging provision in the Masters and Servants Act symbolizes the extent to which commercial farmers were prepared to go to achieve a docile labour force.

- [Que.] You spoke of inflicting the lash under the Masters and Servants Act, and you also informed us that here were white labourers in this district, men of our own class [sic] and race; would you subject them to that indignity?
 [Ans.] There must be no distinction ... Why should the white not be punished with the same severity as the black? (1)

In some cases, manipulations of race perceptions verged on justifying the proletarianization of whites. Statements about inter-familial marriages on subdivided farms having already 'lowered the race very perceptibly', or that a 'certain class of whites ... [were] more like blacks than Afrikaners', were not uncommon. They suggest the extent to which employers and commercial farmers associated impoverished whites with the broader mass of the labouring poor.²

Furthermore, an element of conflict had entered the developing social distance between the wealthier middle-class farmers and their marginalized counterparts. An Oudtshoorn grain farmer complained of 'a class of whites whom you cannot trust'.³ J.J.J. Fourie, who was named as being one of this 'class', revealed the resultant converse of deteriorating commercial-farmer regard for poor whites:

they ['rich farmers'] backbite and endeavour to underwork you by unfair means ... They may perhaps agree to pay you £25 or £30 a year, but when you have not been there two months they will ...

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1. G3-94., 6-9. See also G39-93, evidence S.D. Fick, p. 340-4.
 2. G39-93., Evid. J.P. de Wet, A.A. Cilliers, p. 420-5, 438-40; G3-94., Evid. J.M. Heynes, W.F. Taylor, p. 6-9, 39-40.
 3. G3-94., Evid., J.D. van der Westhuizen, p. 115-7, Evid. J.P. Fourie, p. 114.

drive you away as if you were a Hottentot. For five years I lived with a man for a little tobacco ... perhaps all those farmers are rich men, and they would naturally wish to keep the poor down ... I am of the poor people and mix with them. They discuss these things with me. (1)

The development of western-Cape capitalism was increasingly skewed, however. Objectively, the relationships of the rural underclasses to the means of production did not correspond neatly with race. But neither did poor whites and coloureds simply merge into a united working class. The ways in which poor whites perceived themselves and how their landlords/employers and fellow labourers perceived them illustrate something of the sociological and ideological complexity that constituted 'poor whiteism'.

... they [poor whites] regard it as a disgrace to work for another farmer. Many farmers nevertheless, would be glad to give them separate rooms and allow them to dine at table. Of course there are many respectable persons among the class. I think they could not do better than engage their services by the month ... They prefer to be their own masters. [They occupy the land] ... of the farmers. One hires a farm and two or three occupy it. This occurs on my farm also. When I have spoken about it I am told that they assist one another. [Some on 'halves' and some not] ... they do not have any men but reap the harvests themselves ... No, no profit as far as I am aware ... It is true that when you get a white who does not mind working with the blacks, he assimilates with blacks in other ways. On the other hand the better class of black objects to working with the white man, because, he says, that gives him two masters ... (2)

It is not possible to ignore the implications for agrarian relations of the continuity in a conservative tradition that originated from slave- and landholding structures where race did largely correspond with class. A persistent theme, and one which contrasted with the advocacy of a 'free labour market' for capitalist agricultural development, was the traditional solution of western-Cape commercial farmers to farm labour problems; they consistently sought to conserve

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1. Ibid, Evid. J.J.J. Fourie, casual labourer and sharecropper of 22 years experience in Oudtshoorn Div, p.95/6.
 2. 639-93, P. Klopper, farmer, Vink River, p.436.

ex-slaves and apprentices as the agrarian labour-force after emancipation.

Poor whites were often able to exploit the paternalism and conservatism that influenced the perception of commercial farmers as to who were the rightful members of the regular farm-labouring class. In this way, they were often able to avoid regular resident wage-labour. C.F.J. Muller, a Dutch Reformed Church clergyman of fourteen years experience in George and Cape Town, outlined the relationship between marginalized whites and their employer/landlords.

Only a certain class would take service. They would much rather go into service with a respectable farmer. They like styling the farmer 'Oom' [uncle] and wife 'Tante' [Aunt]. As long as they can do that they know they are not regular servants, on a level with the native [coloured] ... They are accustomed to be recognised as the offspring of respectable farmers in their own district ... a poor man will go up to a respectable farmer and shake hands with him and call him 'Oom'. The farmer again will give him a decent room to sleep in and not make him feel that he is a servant. (1)

Impoverished whites could resort to a mode of resistance to proletarianization that was not available to other casual workers and peasants in the western Cape.

What gave such resounding echo to those factors which differentiated 'poor whites' from 'the poor', and magnified them out of proportion to the immediate needs of capitalist agricultural expansion, was the fact that the emergent Afrikaner Bond, the political party of western-Cape agrarian capital, was in the process of carving out a constituency. This included those whom some commercial farmers would gladly have seen doing regular farm work, namely the poor whites, a very large number of whom were Afrikaners.

1. G39-93., Evid. C.F.J. Muller, p.123 and *passim*.

Perceptions about 'poor whites' were changing.¹ Many wealthy farmers were likely to have wanted to retain the support of those white sharecroppers or shepherds whose allegiance and identity was more closely affiliated to their landlords than the coloured tenants or labourers. Without the support of this stratum, farmers were a good deal more isolated and vulnerable in the rural areas. Furthermore, the £25 property qualification was low enough to include a number of poor whites who, for example, may have held a share in an undivided farm. Regions which had concentrations of marginalized whites, such as the Midlands and Overberg, provided vital support to the Bond when it was based upon du Toit's programme in the early 1880s. Hofmeyr was unlikely to have wanted to jeopardise this by any uniform implementation of the Location Act or Masters and Servants' whipping provision.

An element in the process of consolidating Bond power, which depended on both Afrikaner commercial farmers and the Afrikaner poor, was the increased sense of urgency about the need to deny the remaining rural underclasses the franchise and education² to ensure their more rapid proletarianization. Thus, in anticipation of a disfranchising law, Neethling advised local Bondsmen:

Shall we have our volk ['coloured' labourers] registered? ... shall we leave them as they are or shall we have the known coloured people on the places registered? On the other side we know that they are not much to be relied upon ... it behoves us to be careful in this matter ... every local Bestuur [committee]

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1. C. Bundy points out that 'poor whites' had existed in the Cape since the 1860s, and that their discovery in the 1880s had to do with new ways of perceiving their poverty. C. Bundy, 'Vagabond Hollanders and Runaway Englishmen', I.C.S., S.S.A., Feb., 1983.
 2. In 1892 The Franchise and Ballot Act raised the property qualification from £25 to £75. Simons, 'Organized Coloured Political Movements', in van der Merwe and Groenwald, eds., Occupation and Social Change, 207/8; L.E. Neame, The History of Apartheid, London, 1962, p. 21. M.P.A., Genadendal Diary, 1883. G39-93, C2-92, S.P.G., Cape Town, W.J. Taylor, 1883.

must act according to circumstances, and those known as steady, reliable coloured men, they can safely have registered. But understand well; our eye must be on the coming election ... for if we get the majority in parliament one of the first laws that must be made must be the raising of the franchise.... (1)

Neethling's constituency, the Bond stronghold of Stellenbosch, had become a 'hotbed of anti-native feeling'.²

The extent to which Bond identification of race with class contributed to a more strident racism in broader Cape society is difficult to quantify. The evidence surrounding such issues as the smallpox epidemic of the 1880s as compared with that of the 1840s does, however, reveal an intensification of racially-informed perceptions which quite readily ascribed the origin and spread of the disease to 'coloured drivers' from Cape Town and particularly the 'Malays, Mahomedans and Dock Coolies'. Headlines such as 'Disinfecting a Malay', not at all out of place in the press of the early 1880s, did not, and would not have been likely to appear in the Argus of the 1840s.³ Racial attitudes hardened in the western Cape as the labour crisis, and pressures for proletarianization, intensified.

In sum, as one Midland farmer remarked somewhat tritely:

If a servant approaches a master he must show respect in his salutations and say 'dag bass', not 'how do you do' ... No, not slavery, but the line should be clearly defined. (4)

In fact, a clearer definition of 'the line' was in the process of being worked out during the daily struggles that took place in the rural western Cape. Commercial farmers were strengthened by a degree of organization and consciousness that enabled them to promote their

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1. C.A., April 16, 1884, quoting from Neethling's article in the Patriot.
 2. C.A., Nov. 5, 1880.
 3. Evidence based on: M.P.A., Mamre, Pella, Diary for 1882; C.A., July 4, 5, 12; July/Aug. passim, Nov. 7, 1882; A. Martin, Home Life on an Ostrich Farm, London, 1891.
 4. G3-94., J.M. Heynes, p. 39-40.

interests in important respects as a capitalist class. Farm workers, on the other hand, were stratified by the extensive diversity in their objective relations to the means of production and by the racially-informed perceptions that limited any sense of working-class struggle to patterns of atomised and mostly individual acts of resistance; while these were influential, they were not revolutionary.

CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION

Capital accumulation on wheat farms in the postemancipation western Cape, like that of South African agriculture generally,¹ depended on coerced labour, tariff protection and state subsidy. These, in turn, raise questions about the changing balance of social forces in the western Cape. To what extent could the agrarian underclasses resist proletarianization? What developments took place within, and between, the agrarian and merchant fractions of the ruling class? To answer these questions it has been necessary to go beyond the existing historical literature and integrate themes and primary source materials that are generally separated or neglected. This thesis has focused on three aspects of western Cape history: proletarianization, production and politics.

This investigation of the dynamics of proletarianization in the rural areas of the western Cape addresses a neglected field of study. The notion that the 'Cape coloured labouring class' developed in the second half of the nineteenth century² reveals remarkably little about western-Cape agrarian society. The terminology is inappropriate, the periodization is inaccurate³ and the implied homogeneity of the merger simply did not exist. The western Cape's labouring classes

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1. De Kiewiet, History of South Africa; S. Trapido, 'South Africa and the Historians', African Affairs, vol. 71, No. 285, 1972; C. Bundy, 'African Peasants and Economic Change in South Africa, 1870', Ph.D., Oxford, 1976.
 2. Macmillan, Cape Colour Question, 141; Elphick, Kraal and Castle, 35.
 3. I. Goldin, 'Coloured preference policies and the making of coloured political identity in the western Cape region of South Africa, with particular reference to the period 1948 to 1984', Ph.D., Oxford, 1984. Goldin argues effectively that elements of the 'coloured' urban artisan and trader strata, and government policies, promoted a 'coloured' identity in the early 1900s.

comprised ex-slaves, Khoisan, immigrants from Europe and Africa, marginalised Dutch settler-farmers and the descendants of one or more of these. They constituted strata in rural society which included resident regular workers, a variety of casual labourers, tenants and sharecroppers.

Rural labourers shared a widespread aversion for regular farm work and they very often sought to reduce or terminate their dependence upon farm wages. Some entered employment in the public and urban sectors of the economy, others combined various types of casual day-work with subsistence cultivation, and many immigrant labourers returned to homes outside of the colony. Despite the emancipation of approximately 25,000 slaves in 1838, and the importation of some 11,000 workers¹ thereafter, the number of regular farm workers in the western Cape remained at about 23,000 throughout the period 1838 to 1888.

While the number of resident farm labourers remained static, labour-intensive industries such as wheat production increased output three-fold. Casual workers provided the labour for such expansion. The agrarian work force swelled to its largest during harvests and, in the 1880s, it comprised some fifty thousand people of whom at least half were casual labourers. There was no shortage of labourers in Oudtshoorn Division for example:

... there are quite sufficient labourers in our district, if they are willing to work ... there is one mission station. Some have huts on the farms of white people ... [Que.] How do

1. Approximately 4,000 English and German immigrants; 4,000 freed slaves; and 3,000 Berg Damaras, 'Delagoa Bay natives', Xhosa and Mfengu immigrants.

the natives live there? [Ans.] That is the puzzle. There are a lot of people: a good many of them have gardens; some of them obtain grounds as a grant from the Government [sic], and others work on the farms ... They are a very poor class of people not like the native of the frontier. (1)

Some four thousand British and European farm workers immigrated to the western Cape between 1830 and 1870. However, unlike the West-Indian planters who offset postemancipation labour scarcities with imports of indentured labourers, western-Cape agrarian employers increasingly focused their attention on moulding frequently reluctant strata of the local populace into a more reliable source of labour. Draconian Masters and Servants laws, juvenile apprenticeships, labour tenancies, indebtedness and alcohol dependency bound thousands of people to regular farm work. Simultaneously, the failure of imported labour to expand farm-labour supply became increasingly apparent. A correlation between race and class developed in the sphere of regular resident farm work. By the 1870s, practically no whites engaged as regular workers on western-Cape farms. This situation on the farms was reflected in labour- and immigration laws: in the 1870s, three Masters and Servants regulations introduced two labour codes, the most draconian of which applied exclusively to farm workers; immigration laws simultaneously terminated imports of farm labourers from the U.K. and Europe, but not from Africa, for the first time.

Within a decade of emancipation, thousands of ex-slaves had developed a degree of autonomy as petty producers and mobility as casual labourers. Increasing scarcity and costs of labour alarmed farmers. Their representatives in the colonial legislature attempted to erode rural labourers' alternative means of subsistence and increase their

1. C2-92., Evid. P.J. Keyter, M.L.A. and farmer, Oudtshoorn Division, p. 43/s.

dependence upon farm work. Attitudes hardened during the 1840s: farmers pressurized government to pass a Squatters Bill which labourers generally believed was a law for their re-enslavement. The western Cape hovered on the brink of civil war. Popular opposition compelled the Legislature to withdraw the Bill in order to defuse the crisis.

However, most rural labourers remained at least partially dependent on farm-wage incomes. When subsistence cultivation and earnings from farm work dwindled simultaneously, as they did in the drought of the 1860s, many were impoverished. This changed in the 1870s. Industrialization presented agrarian labourers with work options in the public, mining and urban private sectors on sufficient scale to precipitate a second labour crisis for farmers. By the 1880s, improved technology and changing social costs of production began to induce farmers to mechanize their harvests. But mechanization was limited. There is no evidence of the rural unemployment and machine breaking that accompanied mechanization of harvests under different circumstances.

Attempts to control squatting, vagrancy and locations, and to privatise public land resources were intended to limit casual workers' mobility and autonomy. However, the systematic and effective application of these regulations would have transformed the casual-labouring strata into a regular work-force. This proved impracticable in areas such as the wheat-growing heartlands, where severely fluctuating seasonal demand made casual labour a vital component in the agrarian economy. Here, a combination of workers' resistance and farmers' needs for temporary workers precluded the regularization of casual labour. Consequently, in the arable western Cape, rural

missions survived, the village proletariat retained a degree of mobility and a stratum of farm labourers maintained their partial autonomy from employers and landlords as tenants or sharecroppers.

Proletarianization is analysed in the context of developments in the rural economy. So too is the formation of agrarian capital and farmers' political mobilization. The Legislature was not the instrument of commercial farming interests. Liberal principles and free-trade policies, that were dear to local and imperial merchant interests, occasionally precluded the coercive legal interventions in the 'free labour market' that farmers demanded. However, merchants and traders proved far less resolute in their defence of a 'free trade' in labour than in other commodities in which they had more direct trading interests. Cape liberalism had ceased to be a major check on coercive labour legislation by the 1870s.

Rising regular and seasonal wage bills inflated farmers' production costs while increasing annual imports of wheat and flour eroded prices and reduced returns. This was the context in which the Farmers' Protection movement was born: it sought tariff protection for local wheat. Commercial farmers mobilized along class lines in the late 1860s. However, the Farmers' Protection movement had a narrow base of support as tariff protection appealed to suppliers of domestic, rather than export, markets. In the late 1870s and 1880s a more general mobilization of agrarian capital took place in response to a range of economic and political factors. The Farmers' Protection movement expanded rapidly in the western Cape and representatives of commercial agriculturists, viticulturists and pastoralists secured hegemony over the Afrikaner Bond. The Bond was essentially a capitalist farmers' party, but its ethnic appeal elicited support

from middling, small and marginalized farmers.

Commercial farmers developed considerable political leverage with regard to issues, such as labour, on which they were generally united. However, tariffs did not appeal to viticulturists and pastoralists who benefited from the 'free trade' of their produce on world markets. Thus, merchant representatives, who dominated the Cape parliament up to the 1880s and remained extremely powerful thereafter, could thwart attempts to secure protection for locally produced wheat. They retained a lucrative share of the local grain market.

This study concentrates on the wheat growing districts. Wheat production was labour intensive, geographically widespread and central to the rural economy. However, further research into viticulture and pastoral farming is required to enhance our understanding of the rural economy as a whole. Similarly, by focusing on proletarianization, this study investigates an important aspect of the making of the rural working class in the western Cape. However, adequate treatment of this process would need to address the issue of religion more centrally than I have done. This also awaits further investigation.

The arguments in this thesis have been constructed out of a range of primary materials such as mission diaries, land surveys, harvest statistics and Farmers' Protection committee lists. This contrasts with the existing literature on the western Cape in the second half of the nineteenth century which disregards the details of labour formation and agrarian economy, and fails to illuminate the interconnections between matters political, ecclesiastical and economic. Yet, it is from these that a clearer picture of agrarian history

emerges.

Complex processes of social restructuring occurred in the rural western Cape between emancipation and industrialization. These sprang from the expansion and intensification of commercial farming, rapidly changing labour- and property relations, and the ways in which people arranged their lives and advanced their interests under such circumstances. Certain characteristics of slave society persisted, but important new social configurations emerged. Social cleavages and tensions also persisted and in important respects these intensified. At the same time, labourers, farmers and merchants were bound more firmly together in an increasingly unitary capitalist local and world economy.

Bibliography

The bibliography is arranged under the following headings:

1. MANUSCRIPT SOURCES

- a. Archives of the (United) Society for the Propagation of the Gospel
- b. Archives of the Methodist Missionary Society
- c. Archives of the Moravian Missionary Society
- d. Archives of the London Missionary Society
- e. Archives of the British Colonial Office

2. PRINTED PRIMARY SOURCES

- a. Official records
- b. Newspapers and periodicals
- c. Contemporary accounts

3. SECONDARY SOURCES

- a. Select books
- b. Select articles
- c. Unpublished theses and papers

1. MANUSCRIPT SOURCES1.a. Archives of the (United) Society for the Propagation of the Gospel

Tufton Street, London

The archive holds manuscripts from missionaries who resided at the western Cape which include annual returns, quarterly reports and miscellaneous correspondence. These are arranged according to their location of origin in bound volumes. The following material proved most useful for the purposes of this thesis.

Volume date/number	Location
1856	Swellendam, Malmesbury, Caledon
1857	Malmesbury, St. Helena, Clanwilliam, Stellenbosch, Paarl, Wellington
1859	Swellendam, Malmesbury, Clanwilliam, Stellenbosch, D'Urban, George, Paarl, Caledon, St. Helena
1860	Swellendam, Malmesbury, Stellenbosch, Paarl, Worcester, Clanwilliam, Oudtshoorn, Mossel Bay, Riversdale
1861.A.	Swellendam, Malmesbury, Clanwilliam, Wellington, D'Urban, Oudtshoorn, Robertson, St. Helena Bay, Mossel Bay, Riversdale
1862	Clanwilliam, Lower Paarl, Ceres, Paarl, D'Urban, Worcester, Oudtshoorn, Mossel Bay, Riversdale
1864	Swellendam, Malmesbury, Paarl, Lower Paarl, D'Urban, Oudtshoorn, Stellenbosch, Riversdale, Caledon
1865	Swellendam, Clanwilliam, Lower Paarl, Worcester, Malmesbury, Bredasdorp, Paarl, Tulbagh, Ceres, D'Urban, Worcester, Wellington, George
1866	Swellendam, Malmesbury, George, Oudtshoorn, Clanwilliam, Paarl, Somerset West, Balies Gat, Bokkeveld, Papendorp, Worcester, D'Urban, Mossel Bay, Riversdale
1867-9	Robertson, Paarl, D'Urban, Worcester, Oudtshoorn, Swellendam, Clanwilliam, Klein Drakenstein
1870-1.A.	Claremont, Riversdale, Oudtshoorn, Worcester, Ceres, Bredasdorp, Swellendam, Clanwilliam, Paarl
1873	Swellendam, Clanwilliam, Malmesbury, Paarl, Knysna, Bredasdorp, Robertson, D'Urban, Riversdale, Caledon
1874	Clanwilliam, Bredasdorp, Paarl, Worcester, Riversdale, Mossel Bay
1875	Robertson, Malmesbury, Paarl, Riversdale, Ceres, Worcester, Oudtshoorn, Knysna, Mossel Bay, George, Bredasdorp, Namaqualand, Zonnebloem College
1877.A.	Swellendam, Clanwilliam, Uniondale, Worcester, O'Kiep, Prince Albert
1878.A.	Swellendam, Claremont, Paarl, George, Worcester, Riversdale, Oudtshoorn, Worcester, Namaqualand, Knysna, Mossel Bay
1879.E.	Schoonberg (George), Swellendam, Paarl, O'Kiep
1880.A.	Kalk Bay, Swellendam
1881.E.	Kalk Bay, Swellendam, Malmesbury, Ceres
1882-6	Paarl, Swellendam, Clanwilliam, Cape Town, Uniondale, Kalk Bay, Bredasdorp, Worcester,

1.a. continued

1887-8 Mossel Bay, Caledon
Heidelberg, Swellendam, Paarl, Mossel Bay

1.b. Archives of the Methodist Missionary Society

Library of the School of Oriental and African Studies, London

The collection of manuscript material from missionaries who resided in the western Cape includes reports, journals, and miscellaneous correspondence. Valuable material for this thesis was gleaned from the following:

Box number	Location	Year
306	Stellenbosch, Lily Fountain, Wynberg, Cape Town, Khamiesberg	1837-40
307	Lily Fountain, Stellenbosch, Cape Town Namaqualand	1841-44
308	Lily Fountain, Stellenbosch, Wynberg, Somerset, Cape Town, Mowbray	1845-49
309	Kamiesberg	1854-57
310	Cape Town, Elsey's River, Robertson, Stellenbosch, Nisbet Bath, Wynberg, Riversdale, Somerset, Swellendam, Springbok, Lily Fountain	1858-67
311	Lily Fountain, Robertson, Somerset West, Wynberg, Stellenbosch, Bethel, Cape Town, Simons Town	1868-76
312	Cape Town, Stellenbosch, Koeberg, Lily Fountain, O'Kiep, Wynberg, Robertson	1878-85

1.c. Archives of the Moravian Missionary Society

Muswell Hill, London

The collection comprises printed and manuscript material which includes: extracts from missionaries' and mission diaries; reports; statistics; maps, historical sketches; commentaries on South Africa and particular missions; and miscellaneous correspondence. Much of this is bound in volumes, the Periodical Accounts. The material consulted originated from Genadendal, Elim, Groenekloof (Mamre), Shiloh, Mamre (on the Beka River), Goedverwacht, Wittewater, Enon, Clarkson, Cape Town and Berea. Evidence was also derived from:

Original documents of P.L. La Trobe, Secretary to the Unitas Fratrum, containing his 'Questions and the replies of Sir Benjamin D'Urban on the functions of the Unitas Fratrum stations at the Cape Colony', dated 1846.

'Recollections of the old Hottentot sister, Beentje Robyntyje as narrated by herself', 1849.

'Memoir of Wilhelmina Stompjes: Kafir Native assistant who died July 1863', Periodical Accounts, 1868.

l.c. continued

'Memoir of Rebecca Jochems: died Genadendal in 1850', Periodical Accounts, 1869.

l.d. Archives of the Congregational Council for World Mission which incorporates the archives of the London Missionary Society

Library of the School of Oriental and African Studies, London

Boxes contain a collection of manuscript material from missionaries who resided in the western Cape. This includes reports, commentaries, journals and miscellaneous correspondence.

Box number	Location	Years
16	Pacaltsdorp, Paarl, Dyzals Kraal, Komaggas	1838/9
17	Cape Town, Caledon, Zuurbraak, Komaggas Dyzals Kraal, Paarl, Pacaltsdorp	1840
18	Avontuur, Pacaltsdorp, Cape Town, Komaggas Paarl, Zuurbraak, Dyzals Kraal	1841/2
19	Longkloof, George Town, Pacaltsdorp, Caledon, Paarl, Matjes Drift	1843
20	George, Caledon, Avontuur, Matjies Drift, Komaggas, Tulbagh	1844
21	Paarl, Pacaltsdorp, Dyzals Kraal, Komaggas Avontuur, Caledon	1845
22	Pacaltsdorp, Caledon, Dyzals Kraal, Avontuur	1846
23	Avontuur, Pacaltsdorp, Zuurbraak, Caledon, Paarl, Dyzals Kraal, Tulbagh, Cape Town	1847/8
24	Cape Town, Dyzals Kraal, Longkloof, Caledon	1849
25	Pacaltsdorp, George, Paarl, Cape Town, Avontuur	1850
26	Pacaltsdorp, Avontuur, George Town, Cape Town, Paarl, Zuurbraak, Dyzals Kraal	1851
27	Cape Town, Pacaltsdorp, Avontuur, George Town, Tulbagh, Caledon	1852
28	Pacaltsdorp, Cape Town, Zuurbraak, Paarl, Dyzals Kraal, George	1853
29	Cape Town, George, Avontuur, Pacaltsdorp, Dyzals Kraal, Paarl	1854/5
30	Cape Town, Zuurbraak, Pacaltsdorp	1856/7
31	Pacaltsdorp, Paarl, Zuurbraak	1858/9/60
32	Zuurbraak, Pacaltsdorp	1861/2/3
33/4	Zuurbraak, Pacaltsdorp, Oudtshoorn, Paarl, Hopedale	1865/6/7
35	Cape Town, Oudtshoorn, Riversdale, Caledon, Pacaltsdorp, Zuurbraak, Hankey, Hopedale	1868/9
36	Cape Town, Paarl, Oudtshoorn, Zuurbraak	1870/1
37	Oudtshoorn, Cape Town	1872/3/4
38/9	Cape Town	1875/6/7/8
41	Oudtshoorn, Cape Town, George	1881
45	Wynberg, George Town, Dyzals Kraal, Pacaltsdorp	1885-8

l.e. Archives of the British Colonial Office

Kew, London

Colonial Office Papers relating to the Cape of Good Hope. Original correspondence comprises dispatches, reports, circulars, copies of ordinances and miscellaneous correspondence.

Series 48: volume 207 of 1840 (CO.48.207) to volume 517 of 1888 (CO.48.517). Particularly useful for the purposes of this thesis were volumes 207 of 1840 to volume 343 of 1853.

2. PRINTED PRIMARY SOURCES

2.a. Official Records

Cape of Good Hope, Blue Books of Statistics, 1838 to 1889

A collection of these is held at the Public Records Office, London. Series 53: volume 75 of 1838 (CO.53.75) to volume 124 of 1886 (CO.53.124). Bound into this series are the annual reports of the Civil Commissioners who were stationed in the various Divisions of the western Cape. These proved to be a rich source of information.

Statistical Register of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope, 1886-1889

Government Gazettes, 1838-1888

Census of the Cape of Good Hope, 1865 (G20-66)

Census of the Cape of Good Hope, 1875 (G42-75)

Census of the Cape of Good Hope, 1892 (G5-92)

Official printed material on the period 1838 to 1853 is derived from Sessional Papers of the Cape of Good Hope and the Imperial Blue Books of the Cape of Good Hope. Material consulted is located at the Cape of Good Hope Archive, Cape Town; the Public Records Office, London, series 51 (CO.51.47., 1838 - CO.53.90., 1853); and the Royal Commonwealth Society Library, London. This includes proceedings and debates of the Executive and Legislative Councils with annexures. Of particular value to this thesis were:

Documents on the working of the Order-in-Council of the 21st July 1846 - being chiefly replies to certain questions issued by the Legislative Council to Resident Magistrates, J.P.'s, Ministers of the Gospel and others. Documents re Masters and Servants Ordinance of 1846, South African Library, Cape Town.

Memorial of the Moravian Missionaries, Nov., 1850

Papers re the establishment of a Representative Assembly at the Cape, 1850

Memorial of farmers in Zwellendam District, Oct., 1851

Instructions sent to Commissioners to inquire into the state of alarm in the Western Districts of the Cape Colony, Nov., 1851

Report of Commissioners, inquiring into the state of alarm in the Colony Dec., 1851

Report of the Select Committee on the Kafir Tribes, 1851

Motion on the Coloured Classes and the constitutional proposals, 1852

2.a. continued

The scattered nature of the material on the wheat producing areas required a fairly careful reading of all the documents relevant to the western Cape in the Votes and Proceedings of the House of Assembly with Annexures, 1854-1888. Rather than list the three hundred or so items which were informative, I have limited the following to material which is quoted in this thesis.

Material which appeared annually or very regularly:

Annual addresses of the Governor at the opening session of parliament

Annual reports of the Chief Commissioner/Inspector of public works and roads

Annual reports and statements of the Surveyor General

Annual reports of the Superintendent-General of Education

Annual reports of the Prison Board

Annual reports of the Superintendent-General of Convicts

Annual revenue and expenditure returns

Annual reports of the Immigration Board, Superintendents and Agents

Other quoted material:

- G41-49 Report of the Colonial Botanist on official tour of the Western Districts
- A52-60 Memo. re Trekvelde in the Roggeveld, Bokkeveld and Hantam
- G29-60 P. Fletcher's surveys of the Olifants River
- A8-61 Correspondence re applications for land at St. Helena Bay and Riversdale
- G42-61 Report of the Western Province Agricultural Society
- G1-61 Report on surveys and inspections for new roads
- A64-61 Reports on George and Knysna Crown Forests
- A90-62 Memo re railway extension from D'Urban, Tygerberg and Koeberg
- A106,107-65 Petition of traders in Paarl Division
- A111-65 Correspondence re separation of Franschehoek and Groot Drakenstein from Paarl Division and its inclusion into Stellenbosch Division
- A2-66 Governor's statement on wine duties
- A13-67 Return of Crown Lands in Fraserberg Division

2.a. continued

- A30-74 Petition of St Helena and Saldanha Bay
- A30-76 Correspondence on the Hottentot Kraal location in Swellendam
- A66-79 Petition from Somerset West re extended powers of Special J.P.
- A2-80 Petition from Swellendam re railway construction
- A16-81 Report on the Bredasdorp boundary
- A5-82 Petition from Malmesbury, Saldanha and St. Helena Bays against fishing grants
- A31-82 Petition of German immigrants
- G51-82 Report on viticulture
- G91-83 Civil Commissioners', Resident Magistrates' and District Surgeons' reports
- G112-83 Railway rates report
- G46-85 Memo on agriculture by A. Fischer
- G24-87 Railways report
- G31-88 Railways report

Reports of select committees which are quoted in this study are:

- A7-56 R.S.C. Immigration
- A3-57 R.S.C. Complaints of labourers at Meiring's Poort
- A46-60 R.S.C. Trekvelde in the north-western Divisions
- G43-61 R.S.C. Vine Disease
- C1-62 R.S.C. Kafir Passes
- C3-62 R.S.C. Irrigation
- G15-65 R.S.C. Law of Inheritance for the Western Districts
- A18-71 R.S.C. Main Roads Bill
- A4-72 R.S.C. Missionary Institutions Bill
- A26-79 R.S.C. Supply of labour market
- A27-79 R.S.C. Labour supply
- A8-79 R.S.C. Irrigation Act
- A13-80 R.S.C. District Courts

2.a. continued

A2-80	<u>R.S.C. Railway Management</u>
C2-81	<u>R.S.C. German immigrant locations</u>
C1-82	<u>R.S.C. German immigrants location at Worcester</u>
C2-82	<u>R.S.C. Appointment of Minister of Agriculture</u>
A10-80	<u>R.S.C. Fishing leases</u>
A11-82	<u>Railway traffic rates</u>
A3-83	<u>R.S.C. Colonial agriculture</u>
A26-83	<u>R.S.C. Native Locations Act Amendment Bill</u>
A12-86	<u>R.S.C. Montagu Railway Bill</u>
A7-86	<u>R.S.C. Railway Management</u>
A18-88	<u>R.S.C. Piquetberg Road water supply</u>
A12-90	<u>R.S.C. Labour</u>
C2-92	<u>R.S.C. Labour</u>
G39-93	<u>R.S.C. Labour Vol. 1</u>
G3-94	<u>R.S.C. Labour Vol. 2</u>
G71-96	<u>R.S.C. Wheat growing and agriculture generally in Australia, New Zealand and Tasmania</u>

2.b. Newspapers and periodicals

Afrikaanse Patriot
Cape Argus
Cape Mercantile Advertiser
Cape Mercury
Cape Monitor
Cape Monthly Magazine
Cape of Good Hope Shipping List
Cape Post
Cape Standard
Cape Times Pictorial Advertiser
Cape Town Daily News and Advertiser
Cape Town Mail
Cape Town of Today
Commercial and Shipping Journal
Evening Star
Lantern
Meditator or Cape of Good Hope Impartial Observer
Moravian Mission Fields
Progress
South African Advertiser and Mail

2.b. continued

South African Commercial Advertiser
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