FOCUS: Labour and the Agrarian Question

The following three papers submitted by trade unions and that by Jeremy Krikler were given at a workshop on the Agrarian Question held at the University of the Witwatersrand during May 1987.

Unionising the Farms

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If we talk about organising farm workers into a union, we do not envisage starting another talking shop. There have already been a number of farm workers organisations established where discussion takes place and resolutions are adopted but in practical terms the organisations are powerless to effectively change the situation of farm workers. No doubt more such "unions" are to be established. The union we want is a real union, which will be effective first of all in changing the situation.

We have no blueprint for successfully organising farm workers, which is why we welcome debate on what is involved. We also welcome debate so that there can be greater awareness of the enormous problems there will be in starting a Farm Workers Union.

It is of great importance that there should be the widest possible support for the establishement of an effective Farm Workers Union, bearing in mind that the organisations, people and resources which a union might normally draw on for support are concentrated in cities and have little to do with the rural areas.

It is also necessary to say that much of what follows is based on limited experience and observation, and needs to be more carefully evaluated. We would welcome criticism and comment.

What is it like for workers on farms?

It is generally known that the situation of farm workers is bad. Comparing the situation of farm workers with other sections of the working class such as workers in industry (manufacturing), shops and offices and mines, the position can be summed up as follows:

- Wages are low. Moreover wages are not simply reckoned in money, but also in kind. This refers to "benefits" which workers commonly get such as food rations, housing, "dop" (wine). In some cases workers may have the right to grow crops for themselves, or to keep animals. It is often very difficult to put a money value on such benefits.

- There are no minimum basic conditions of employment which apply to farm workers. There are no set hours of work, per day or per week. There is no set annual leave, sick leave or public holidays. At best there are certain standards which have been got by custom, such as that Sunday is generally not a work day, or that certain public holidays are observed. However these standards have been set by the farmers on their own.

- There is no control over health and safety hazards on farms. For example, it is likely that there is widespread use of hazardous pesticides without proper safeguards for workers using them.

- There is no restriction on the age at which a person may work and child labour is common.

- The only law protecting workers at the workplace which does apply to farm workers is the Workmens Compensation Act. However, here too workers are largely dependent on the farmer to get their benefits.

- Housing is a condition of employment, in that workers with a very few exceptions have to live on the farms where they work. If they are dismissed they have at the same time to vacate their houses.

It is obviously not enough to describe the difference between farm workers and other workers simply in terms of their wages and conditions of work. Wages and conditions of work are so bad that one

may wonder why farm workers put up with their situation. The reason they do so more often than not is that they have no choice. We need to understand why workers are in a situation of no choice, and see what can be done about it. If workers had a choice, it would be to leave the farms and find alternative employment. Or to stay on the farms and become organised. Up until the present both choices are extremely limited.

Some of the factors which limit the freedom of movement of farm workers are:

* There are a number of government controls which have made it difficult for farm workers to leave the farms, and look for alternative employment. In the past the government relied mainly on the pass laws, nowadays it relies mainly on other measures e.g. availability of housing. In many areas the only housing available is on farms.

* Workers have so little cash that it is impossible to move. Many are in debt to the farmer, and are not able to leave unless the farmer agrees to transfer his debt with them.

Some of the factors which make organisatin difficult for farm workers to contemplate as an option:

* Fear of victimisation, where losing your job means losing your house.
* The isolation of being on private property in the rural areas. There are few if any allies or resources that workers can draw on, and even to get to or contact someone in a nearby town can be a major problem.
* The workforce on farms is relatively small and dispersed. The smaller any workforce is, the more difficult it will be for workers to organise themselves.
* There is no legal recognition of the organisatin of farm workers, and little or no legal recourse if workers are unfairly dismissed or victimised.
* There is no widely known example of the success of organisation, such as a victory workers have won through organisation.

Different kinds of farms

In describing what it is like for farm workers on the farm, we have also to take into account that there are differences in the

situation of farm workers on different kinds of farms, and in different areas. These differences are also important.

It is useful to distinguish, from a union point of view, the following kinds of farms, and farming operations:

Small, medium and large farms

What would probably be regarded as a typical South African farm is of the "boer op sy plaas" type, where there is the farmer and his family and a handful of male workers and their families living on one farm. In this situation the wages and conditions of work are likely to be the least favourable, and the employment relationship is most personal. The opportunities to organise the workers are very limited.

In fact small farms of this kind are no longer typical, although in certain regions, for historical reasons, they may be more common than elsewhere. Increasingly farmers have got into debt and been forced to sell-out to bigger farmers. In the process small farmers have been consolidated in medium and large farms. Obviously the larger the farm the larger the total workforce required. There will probably be one or more farm managers, and the employment relationship becomes more formal. Also, the larger the farm, the more favourable the wages and conditions of work are likely to be, and the better the opportunities for organisation.

More or less labour-intensive farming operations

To give a clear description of what we mean by farms such as small, medium and large, is not possible without considering also what type of farming operation it is. For example, some kinds of farming operations are more labour-intensive, and require a much larger workforce, than others. Fruit farms are generally labour-intensive, for example, while maize and wheat farming operations are more mechanised, and vast farms can operate with a very small workforce.

It follows that labour-intensive farming operations offer better opportunities for organisation than the more mechanised operations.

Privately owned and company owned farms

As small farmers have been forced to sell-out, companies have increasingly been buying up farming land. There are a number of reasons why companies might do this. For example, it may be a tax dodge, or an investment. Or it may be that the company intends to integrate the farming operation with its other business.

Other things being equal, the prospects of organising company owned farms are likely to be better than privately owned farms, both because a company is less likely to be threatened by its workers being unionised and because there is a chance of the company's workers in its other subsidiaries supporting the farm workers. This is particularly so where the company's farming operation is integrated into its total operation, which is what is usually termed agribusiness.

Farm factories

It is probaby true to say that the larger and more mechanised the farm, the more closely it is likely to resemble a factory in its methods and practices. A stage is then reached when production is taking place on the farm in a manner no different from production in a factory. A typical example of this would be a packing factory situated on a farm, which is producing (and competing with) the same product as a factory in the industrial area.

It is not always clear at what stage a farm becomes a factory. In law a farmig operation has been defined to include any operation which processes its own produce, e.g. Rainbow Chickens factories would be regarded as part of farming operation because the chickens slaughtered and processed are supplied only by the company's own farms. (It is not clear whether this definition still holds in law.)

From a union point of view factories such as those of Rainbow Chickens belong to the food industry. However it is not clear what the situation should be where factories are actually situated on the farms. The issue is even more critical where factories on farms are competing with factories in industrial areas. If workers in such factories or farms are unionised as part of the food industry, it may be easier to bring their wages in line. At the same time a farm worker's union would be deprived of its best potential.

Agribusiness

We have termed as agribusiness where a company's farming operation is part and parcel of its total business. Typical examples of this are broiler farms which supply poultry factories, or plantations which supply factories with sugar, tea, cotton, fruit, as the case may be.

There are also farmers co-operatives engaged in production, such as SASKO (milling and baking), LKB (canning), Sentrallwes (milling), SAD (dried fruit), Stellenbosch Farmers Winery (wine), NCD (dairy). This is also agribusiness of a special kind. The farms are an integral part of the factories they supply, but the difference is that the owners of the farms are the shareholders of the co-ops, and to that extent the co-ops are controlled from the bottom up rather than from the top down. (We would very much like someone to research to what extent this is really true.)

Farms in an agribusiness set up lend themselves to organisation. However a similar issue arises as in the case of farm factories. Should the farms be organised as part of the food industry or as farms?

Strategies in organising farm workers

Apart from the problems faced by the workers themselves, there are a number of problems relating to how farm workers can be organised. Below are the problems, and the strategies devised to cope with them.

1. What kind of union for farm workers?

Farm workers could either join an existing union in an industry closely connected to farming (food, paper and wood) or join a union set up exclusively for farm workers. There are problems either way.

The attraction for farm workers of joining an existing industrial union, e.g. the food union, is to join an organisation which is already strong. There are certain kinds of farms which could conveniently be included in a food union. However, the problem is that a union organising industrial workers is not set up to deal with the specific problems of farm workers.

- unionising the farms -

To set up a union for farm workers is also a problem. How can a new union, without resourcss or experience, begin to tackle the problems of organising farm workers? The question of legal recognition here is also crucial. A union with resources and experience might be able to make progress with or without legal recognition. However a new union in a sector which has never been unionised has little hope of doing so.

FAWU, by establising a Farm Workers Project, has left open the question as to what kind of organisation farm workers will eventually have. Rather this is a question to be settled by the workers themselves, once sufficient numbers have been organised. By organising workers under the umbrella of FAWU we hope to offer the benefits of an established organisation. At the same time by establishing a separate project, which will be separately financed, we hope to deal with the particular situation on the farms.

How the union will be structured

The detailed structures of the union will have to be worked out in time. However in order to take account of the fact that farm workers are dispersed over such a wide area, there would have to be at least 5 levels of representation:

At the farm: Members would be represented at the farm by stewards (farmstewards) elected by the members themselves.

At local level: Representation at the local level, covering the local farming area, would be by stewards from different farms in the area. In the case of large farms the area of the farm might be large enough to cover the local area. Meetings at this level should be within walking distance of all the farms in the area, so that it is possible to organise meetings easily and at short notice.

Branches: Branches would be centred in the towns which are based on the farming and other activities of that area. In most cases these town are fairly easy to identify: it is where the workers go to shop, where the farmers bank their money, and so on. Each local area would be represented at this level.

Regions: Regions would cover the main geographic regions of the country e.g. W Cape, Natal, etc. Each branch within the region

would be represented at the regional level.

Nationally: The regions would represent workers at a national level.

In short, if the structure of the union is to adequately cater for the situation of farm workers, there will have to be a great many locals and branches established. At the outset it should be clear that these will not be equivalent to the structures of other unions, where a branch implies an office and office facilities, with full-time persons manning it. Such structures will also have to function with a minimum of direction from a higher level.

2. Where to start

The problem in organising a Farm Workers Union is where to start. If one is successful from the start, there will be quicker progress.

It is our understanding that there is no likelihood of an organisation of farm workers getting off the ground in isolation from the organisation of other workers. It is the food industry more than any other which is closely linked to farming, and it is therefore in areas where the food industry is well organised and its links with farming are closest that we have the best chance of unionising farms. It also follows that in areas where there has been little unionisation, and especially in areas where there are industrial workers which have not been organised, it is not realistic to expect unionisation of farms. This is important for unions in South Africa for a variety of reasons tend to be concentrated in the main centres, and are only recently becoming established in outlying areas.

Looking at different kinds of farms, we have identified large farms, company owned farms of farm factories, and especially those forming part of an agribusiness operation as starting points.

3. How to negotiate

Presently there are company-owned farms which are prepared to formally recognise unions and to negotiate demands on wages and conditions of work. In the case of the one company they are prepared to recognise the union and to negotiate in respect of farms nationally. However, recognition to this extent will remain an ex-

ception, unless the government allows the legal recognition of unions for farmworkers. Given the growth of the conservative party particularly in the farming areas of the Transvaal this is most unlikely. This means that it would be unwise to base our negotiating strategy on our getting formal recognition. Instead we shall have to be prepared to negotiate by other means.

The following kinds of negotiations are possibilities:

* Negotiations with individual farms: This is practical in the case of farms which are prepared to negotiate and in the case of larger farms. It is not likely in the case of small or medium farms.
* Negotiations at a local area level or branch level. In fact wages and conditions of work are being determined to an extent at these levels by farmers. Farmers are in contact with one another both directly and through organisations such as co-operatives and agricultural unions. It is possible that negotiations could take place with farmers collectively or through such bodies.
* Negotiations at a higher level would concern demands relating to farm workers as a whole, such as for the introduction of legislation to provide minimum basic conditions. It is difficult to see bodies like the South African Agricultural Union negotiating with a farmworkers union at such a level in the foreseeable future, and what is more likely to take place is campaigns, drawing attention to the workers' basic demands.

4. Our weapons

Clearly no union is going to make headway with its demands unless it has weapons to back it up, and defend the organisation against attack.

In the early stages while the first farms are being organised, the workers' biggest fears is victimisation. The example of 19 workers in Delmas who were dismissed merely for filling in forms, evicted from their houses, and the next day arrested for trespass for trying to go home, shows us that this fear is well-founded. The only safeguard there is at present is where the farm is linked to a factory or company which is unionised, where the bosses face repercussions from organised workers.

Strike action at individual farms is only a possibility on large

farms, company-owned farms, farm-factories or farms linked to agri-business. Even there it is a risky business until the union is established. Once the union is established, the possibility of the withdrawal of labour on an area basis is a potent threat. Action of this kind is likely to minimise the threat of victimisation. It is probably only when such actions take place or are threatened that farmers will discover the benefits of negotiation.

5. Private property

The fact that farms are private property is an obstacle to organisation which farmers will use without hesitation. One of the demands which will have to be made in whatever forum it is possible to do so is for access to farms, by stewards and officials. At the same time this emphasises the importance of structures at the farm and local area level, which depend on the farmworkers themselves. It should be possible for these structures to operate without exposing the union to trespass charges.

Organising Farm Workers

Phillip Masia
Orange Vaal General Workers Union

Orange-Vaal General Workers Union (OVGWU) will try to share some of our experiences of organising farmworkers. I will speak firstly on how we found ourselves organising farmworkers in the union. Then I will try to tell you how we responded to that challenge, and what types of farms we are organising. Then I will talk about the expectations of farmworkers and the problem we face in trying to meet these. In our union we have been holding workshops to try to get farmworkers to tell us exactly the problems they are facing and how they would like a way forward to be mapped from there.

In 1982 the union coincidentally met with farmworkers whilst organising civil engineering workers in the Vaal area. This came about through the influence of organised workers on unorganised workers irrespective of which sector they come from. It was because of this influence by civil engineering workers that we were

introduced through them to the farmworkers. After we met, after a few meetings we responded by saying that there was nothing much which we could do for them - but as part of the class, that is the working class in the country they can carry their struggle forward to recognition. From our side, that is from the side of the office we said that what we could do is to try to inform them of weapons which they could use, and to try to come up with the structure of the trade union. Needless to say this was too much of a challenge, and we wanted to keep our backsides up that we have accepted the challenge. Why do I say it was too much of a challenge, because when we started looking for weapons or information about how to carry that struggle, after organisation, we found that we were running into one dead-end after another.

So this is going to be a record, a record of one defeat after another defeat. At the end of the day maybe we can come up with some solutions to these problems.

OUR RESPONSE

The first organisation fortunately was in what we call Agribusiness. These are the people that we met who are wage earners and who are allowed to live with their families on the farms in matchbox type of housing. The employer here is Anglo-American. Now his (Anglo's) reaction was the human reaction, ridiculing our organisation when it started, later trying to repress it. When we started to challenge this they started to respect the organisation, but not entirely. With this group of workers we came to meet and organise workers on other farms owned by the same corporation.

The reaction of the corporation was to move in, as they tried with industrial trade unions, trying to substitute trade unions with their own internal machinery. Immediately they came in with personnel departments and said that they were going to establish works committees and so on. We fought, we said that we were going to establish independent shop-steward structures. But there is uneven development within the same corporation and with the same workers. Those who approached us at first were told to form their own organisation, they were not joining our organisation as yet, but then later as the other groups came in they started joining the organisation immediately so we are not as strong as the first base. We are making some progress in Agribusiness and with some of the poultry farms. Needless to say however there is the question of private property. You can't enter when you want to and you

are faced with things like trespass charges. With private farms this is where there is no movement at all, it is very difficult, it is inaccessible. The farmer is always there, or his son is there, or a nephew, to stop you from coming into the farm. This is our challenge and this is where we haven't moved an inch. We are trying all sorts of ways to reach the workers on private farms. You cannot go and wait at the gate of the farm for them to knock off, or talk to them in a township elsewhere. You will actually have to take the workers out of the farm in order to talk to them.

EXPECTATIONS OF FARMWORKERS

When we look at the expectations of farmworkers we find that they are the same as the expectations of anybody today - influenced by technology and so on. They want proper mattresses not straw ones, they want Television and radios, and to be included in social security benefits, unemployment benefits. They want better wages and better schooling for their children, they want what anybody wants in an advanced society.

PROBLEMS WE FACE

So the problems we are facing relate mostly to that of dismissal. You can talk to them,you can convince them and tell them about organisation but at the end of the day they will ask you that one question. "Tell us what happens if we get dismissed, what can the union do?" and you know that to be honest there is nothing much that you can do. We are having a similar situation with the Rand Water Board which also runs parks. In January about nine workers were retrenched and were to be evicted. The only way you can go to court is by saying to the court that we want the proper notice. Now the proper notice is one calendar month and still there will be the eviction. So at the end of the road you know its a defeat. You can always play for time, but dismissals will occur. That is the main thing. Other problems that we face are distance, the distance that one must travel from one farm to another or from the office to the farm. There is also the question of access, where one faces trespass charges each time.

WORKSHOPS

So what we did in the face of all these defeats, forgetting about our success, is that at some stage the union said it would try to

bring in as many people as possible together with the farm and rural workers. These workshops were to try to get the workers to tell us about their problems and to formulate a farmworkers organisation. So the union has been running this series of workshops where we have invited groups with the relevant interest to the struggle of farm and rural workers, particularly how to link the struggle of farmworkers on the white farms and the rural workers. From the rural workers that where you get the migrant stream, they may come only during harvest time, they are constantly coming and going. Our problem is how to link the two, the union does not always have the energy to work with the migrant stream.

At our first workshop we looked at the problem of farmworkers and rural workers as told by themselves. At the end we were able to divide these into six categories. We ended up with problems related to health care; poor health care, bad facilities, bad nutrition, poor sanitation and so on. Other problems included the children; education, lack of transport to schools, control over education, unemployment, right to remain on the farms, etc. Then there were conditions of work, housing, wages, casual workers, rents, position of women on the farms. We have also looked at questions of publicity, information and more research. In our series of workshops we have tackled each category. At the moment however we feel that we have been having one workshop after another, not having evaluation or taking the experiences and lessons gained from these to put it into concrete organisational practice.

The Five Million Unprotected Workers

Mahlomola Skhosana
National Council of Trade Unions

Introduction

Since 1924 black farmworkers and their families have been effectively excluded from the regimes labour reforms. Farmworkers are almost forgotten workers of South Africa. The last 20 years have seen farmworkers' wages deteriorating and the workers have suffered from the declining purchasing power of their wages. Depending on which part of the country you are, wages range from R32 to R130 per month. During harvest season farmers use scab labour from various human dumping grounds, so called "homelands", and pay people in kind instead of cash. A whole village maybe paid in tomatoes during picking season. Slave labour in a form of prison labour is also extensively used by farmers.

Education

The education of farmworkers children is at the mercy of farmers. Schools are built on their property and are seldom properly staffed, furnished or equipped. Needless to say that most of these schools do not go beyond standard six. Part of the running cost of the schools, like hiring and paying teachers salaries, is said to be the responsibility of the Department of Education and Training. With all DET's shortcomings the end results are shortage of almost everything in these schools.

Trade union rights

It is a well known fact that there is strong hostility from farmers especially their union, the South African Agricultural Union (SAAU) against farmworkers being unionised. They argue that such a union will harm the agricultural sector. In fact they are saying such a union will stop us from exploiting workers and escape with it.

The effective exclusion of farmworkers from the Labour Relations Act does not prohibit the formation of trade unions by farmworkers. Farmworkers have been recently brought within the scope of the Workmen's Compensation Act No.30 of 1941. This is the first attempt to grant them access to compensation from the regime.

However the WCA limits their common law right to sue their employers for damages against daily exposure to extremely dangerous toxic substances. The regulations under the Hazardous Substances Act No.15 of 1973 are simply inadequate and not enforced at all due to lack of proper monitoring system.

Training

With the increased mechanisation in the agricultural sector, workers are exposed to serious hazards in that these machines are heavy to operate and the accidents they cause are severe and often fatal.

Most farmers do not offer their workers adequate training for fear that workers would leave them, the end results are fatal accidents that occur.

The main kinds and dangerous machines are:

- Soil tillage machine
- Planting machine
- Cultivating machine
- Harvesting machine
- Sorting and packaging machines

There are three types of hazards faced by farmworkers:

1. Traumatic injuries
   Such as cuts turns electrocution fractures and amputation caused by contact with moving parts of machines and collision with machines.

2. Organic injuries
   Caused by noise and vibration from machines.

3.. Health impairment
   Organic injuries caused by noise and vibration are not easy

to diagnose and may be incurable. The high level of vibration encountered on certain agricultural machines may cause fatigue pains on the body and loss of sensation on the hands.

Exposure to toxic substances

The refusal of farmers to provide workers with adequate personal protective clothing and equipment such as respirators and barrier cream, leaves workers openly exposed to extremely dangerous toxic substances like pesticides, insecticides, fungicides, dipping chemicals, fertilizers and fuel. Inhalation or skin contact with these chemicals may result in serious skin injuries and incurable diseases like cancer of the lungs with no compensation from the employer.

Housing

Employment is linked to accommodation. Farmers provide housing which is far below standard and there is no monitoring system by housing inspectors of these dwellings. Loss of employment means automatic loss of accommodation.

Influx control

While the regime claims that it has relaxed influx control regulations in reality farmworkers cannot move freely to sell their labour in industrialised centres if and when they choose to leave a farm. They are expected to go to the human dumping grounds and reside there or be recruited by companies so that they can come as migrant workers in urban areas. Depending from which human dumping ground they come from, if they come from the so called "independent one" they are subject to repatriation under the Aliens Act if found in urban areas.

Problems of a Transition to a Socialist Agriculture in South Africa*

Jeremy Krikler

Any serious consideration of the possible path to a socialist agriculture in South Africa would have to fulfill three tasks.

First, a clear historical theorisation of the rural world would have to be provided - a theorisation which delineated the essential "lines of force for transformation" bequeathed by the country's history.[1]

Second, a survey of the basic agrarian elements and struggles of contemporary South Africa and their likely (future) trajectory would be required. On the one hand, the size and composition of the agrarian work-force, the degree and nature of its organisation as well as a typology of its struggles (and their weaknesses) would demand exposition. On the other hand, a socio-economic - and, indeed, political - map of the rural ruling class would be needed: what is its size? how is its capital concentrated? what are the linkages between it and the industrial bourgeoisie? what coercive and administrative resources are in the hands of this class over and above the state resources to which it has access? how is the economy which it commands being transformed? and how does capitalist agriculture in South Africa relate to the wider world capitalist economy? Each of these questions would merit sustained scrutiny by those seeking a transition to socialism in South Africa.

Third - and finally - on the basis of the above, and with reference to the historical experience of countries which have attempted to make a socialist transition, such a study would sketch the essential features of such a transformation in rural South Africa.

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*Text of a talk delivered at the Workshop on "The South African Agrarian Question: Past, Present and Future", at Wits University, May 1987.

In other words, then, the discovery and elucidation of the primary prerequisites for a transition to a socialist agriculture in South Africa is a task of considerable magnitude and complexity. Only a concerted collective intellectual endeavour will accomplish it. The present paper can do no more than provide some preliminary observations on the question and furnish some elements for discussion.

1. Agriculture : The weak link in South African capitalism.

The present economic recession in South Africa afflicts the *agricultural sector more severely than any other.*[2] So precarious is this sector that significant shifts elsewhere in the national economy actually threaten to retard, or even snuff out, some of the existing productive forces deployed within it: mere increases in electricity tariffs in 1986, for example, raised fears that Natal and Eastern Transvaal farmers "heavily dependent on electricity-fuelled irrigation" might be forced "to shut down their pumps";[3] the upward-adjustment of interest-rates during the 1980s, meanwhile, has proved sufficient to plunge significant sections of the agrarian capitalist class into crisis.[4] And a crisis even partially provoked by such a phenomenon points to the inability of many farmers to generate sufficient capital on their own to maintain and expand their enterprises. Indeed, the latter fact is now openly acknowledged by representatives of agrarian capital.[5] Subject to the vagaries of the finance market like no other 'fraction' of capital in South Africa, the "creditworthiness" (or unworthiness) of thousands of farmers has become a key factor in deciding whether or not they will continue to plant at all.[6]

The most dramatic index of the depth of the crisis besetting farmers is, of course, their national debt which, in 1986, vigorously breached the eleven billion rand barrier and led organised commerce to warn the President's Economic Council that a farming collapse might have "a damaging effect" not only on the rural economy but on the very "banking system itself".[7] Those agricultural capitalists most heavily-indebted to finance institutions have probably passed the point at which they could have retrieved their positions independently: the national farming debt now exceeds gross agricultural income, is ten times the sum of total annual profits and is concentrated, obviously, amongst those *farmers whose operations contribute least to those profits.*[8] The prospect for a large number of farmers must now be bankruptcy and

the absorption of their lands in the process of creeping monopolisation which has been underway in South African agriculture for almost four decades and which, since 1950, has halved the number of farm owners in the country.[9]

It is all too easy to ascribe the present agricultural crisis merely to the severe drought that has parched South Africa since the early-80s. Such an ascription, however, begs several questions. Why has the impact of so general a drought been differential, bringing some agrarian sectors (above all, maize) to the very edge of catastrophe, leaving others formally vulnerable to drought (such as sugar) able to survive its exigencies with profits and actually allowing still others (wool, citrus, deciduous fruit) to prosper?[10] How is it that maize farmers have so limited a control over natural forces that, in October 1986, agricultural authorities warned that just one more "long, hot, dry summer" might be sufficient to "decimate the maize industry"?[11] Clearly, the present crisis in South African agriculture (more particularly, in its giant maize sector), whilst exacerbated by the drought, has a profounder (structural) causation and has been maturing for some time.

In fact, the present problems of South African commercial agriculture are the upshot of so deep an historical process that they are unlikely to be solved definitvely within a capitalist framework at all. The absence of any truly autochthonous and general movement towards agrarian cpaitalism in the country's history has marked the South African rural world deeply. Whilst no more than cursory comments on the peculiar genesis of capitalism in the South African countryside can be offered here, and a fuller investigation of it will be attempted in another place,[12] certain 'grand facts' of history impress themselves immediately. Many of the decisive transformations by which labourers on South African farms became proletarians were wrought not by the organic development of indigenous agriculture, but by the external agency of an imperialist power. The abolition of slavery and the creation of an incipiently 'free' labour market at the Cape were executed <u>from above</u>, by Britain in the 1830s;[13] again, it was an external force - the British Army coupled with a crops of imperialist administrators - which broke the fundamentally <u>pre-bourgeois</u> state power of the Boer Republics and erected in its stead a state order that permitted and encouraged the development of capitalist property relations and fostered a scientific agriculture.[14]

Unlike, say England, where agrarian capitalism preceded and encouraged its industrial counterpart[15], in South Africa it was industrial capitalism - only firmly implanting itself in the country in the late-nineteenth century - which furnished the markets, much of the infrastructure, the state revenues and, indeed, often the capital itself for the capitalist transformation of much of the rural world.[16] The hesitant, tortured path of this transformation - constantly spurred on and subsidised by successive governments - has been confirmed by the most modern scholarship. The agriculture of the inter-war years, concludes Helen Bradford is the most fundamental contribution to South African agrarian historiography in recent years, was _generally_ not marked by 'capitalist production but by primitive accumulation - a view which historians who do not share Bradford's (Marxist) methodology nevertheless concur with.[17] The long, state directed campaign against labour tenancy (often orchestrated amidst the din of resisting _farmers_), beginning in the early-twentieth century and reaching its term only in the 1970s, is perhaps the most cogent proof of the hesitancy of the landlords' transition to an economic order based on wage labour.

Propped up and spurred on, capitalism in South African agriculture (above all in its key maize sector) cannot but bear the marks of the 'artificiality' of its genesis. The immense and rising farmers' debt of today - immune, it appears, to every state palliative, whether massive subsidies (half a billion rand in 1985 alone) or governmental reduction in interest rates[18] - is a malady whose ultimate source lies not in drought or usury but in the silent, unreachable depths of a history upon which, in the last analysis, South African agrarian capitalism rests. So trapped by this history are some landowners, that the present economic recession has induced in them a backward-slippage into apparently pre-capitalist production relations with forms of labour tenancy rising yet again in the countryside[19] - vivid symbol of the backwardness of agriculture, the laggard of South African capitalism.

If agriculture, however, is the primary locus of backwardness in the 'combined and uneven development of capitalism' in South Africa, then it itself evinces an 'uneven development'. That wine (and deciduous fruit), wool and sugar are its most profitable flagships is no accident; it is precisely these (unindebted) sectors which had the earliest (least aided) launch into agrarian cpaitalism in South Africa, little wonder then that they developed an autonomous vigour.[20] Maize, the largest single sector in agriclulture[21] - was launched much later, tugged out by a state

without which it would be drifting still further into debt. There is nothing capricious in the fact that the present agrarian debt maze is, above all, a maize debt.

When all due allowance is made for growing monopolisation and the fusion of agrarian and industrial capital in such farming-divisions as sugar, it is the general backwardness of South African farming which impresses. Fully half of South Africa's commercial farmers account for a mere 10% of agricultural production, their own representatives berating them for an inefficiency born of "bad management".[22] And it is precisely at the very centre of development of the agrarian economy that rural capitalists are weakest. For, as G A Cohen has demonstrated in a fundamental work, "the development of productively useful science" lies at the heart of the development of the productive forces generally.[23] Where, on South African agricultural enterprises, research is closely linked to production, yields can surpass sectoral averages fourfold and more.[24] Sugar, timber and deciduous fruit - some of the most advanced sectors in agriculture in South Africa - display the benefits of a certain emphasis on research and technological innovation[25] but South African agriculture, generally, does not. A mere 0,8% of the country's gross agricultural production is devoted to research, more than three times lower than the percentage so devoted in "many" other countries, almost twice as low as the average in "the developed countries" and, in fact, almost 20% lower than the equivalent figure in "less developed countries".[26] The vacuum of inputs at the very heart of the agricultural economy is the product of a class historically dependent upon subsidies rather than science for its profit.

2. The Implications of the Weak link for the Labour Movement and for Socialism

a. The labour movement

For the labour movement , the "weak link" status of agriculture within South African capitalism constitutes an obstacle. A sector which generates less profits than any other is bound to be hostile to the organisation of a workforce which would then press for higher remuneration. Of particular importance in this regard is Marx's demonstration that it is only "variable capital" (i.e. that portion of the outlay of an entrepreneur which, as wages, purchases labour power) that is capable of generating profits.

"Constant capital", which is spent upon means of production other than labour-power; provides essential conditions for the creation of surplus-value: in itself, it does not and cannot produce profit.[27] Indeed, the commodities it purchases (in the case of the South African farmer: fertilisers, machinery and the like) lie inert, mere expensive outlays, until labour-power sets them in motion, producing commodities which incarnate profit because only some of the labour power objectified in them is paid for in wages.

In fact, capitalists - except those of the advanced monopoly species - have little control over the prices of the commodities they purchase with their constant capital.[28] And South African farmers, few of them commanding monopoly capital proper, appear to have no control over the cost of the essential foreign agricultural 'inputs' upon which they spend much of their own constant capital. Indeed, the steep rise of the prices of such inputs, attendant upon the fall of the rand in recent years, has in fact considerably worsened the conditions for the drawing of profits from agricultural enterprise.[29]

It is otherwise with variable capital. Wages are the one item in their ledgers over which farmers have most control. And it is a control they will jealously and ruthlessly guard given their profound lack of control over the prices of the items upon which they spend their constant capital. The escalation of those prices in recent years has, in fact, led some farmers to exert such pressure upon the the price of the commodity bought with their variable capital that money-wages have been erased from their account books altogether.[30]

Given these facts, then, most farmers must oppose strenuously organisations that seek to increase the price of labour-power. Just as the high profitability of the mines, and the monopoly character of mining capitalism (which allows mine-owners much greater control over the cost of the items they spend their constant capital upon), has been one of the conditions for the spectacular advance of the National Union of Miners in recent years, so the low profitability of the farms, and the non-monopoly nature of most agrarian enterprise, is a major reason for the present retarded development of unionisation in agriculture. The deliberate exclusion of those organising the agricultural proletariat from the legal machinery to which the unions of industrial workers have access is, therefore, not merely an expression of the weakness of that proletariat, but of the capitalists to whom they are subor-

dinated.

What does the above imply for agrarian unions? First and foremost, that the most profitable grounds for unionisation on farms are the fertile areas of capitalist agriculture - deciduous fruit, sugar, timber, wool, the most prosperous maize farms and the zones of agri-business. In fact, the present pattern of unionisation (sparse though it is) suggests that unions organising farm workers have been gravitationally pulled, as it were, to such regions: Paper, Wood and Allied has taken root amongst timber plantation workers, the Orange Vaal General Workers' Union amongst the workforce of the highveld estates of the Anglo American Corporation, FAWU on farms owned by canning and milling companies.[31]

Given the limited resources of the labour movement in this country, and the vast and fractured nature of the million-strong agricultural proletariat, the unions would be adopting the correct strategy in rooting themselves firmly in advanced capitalist agriculture before attempting implantation in its backward counterpart. The tendency of capitalism is, after all, towards monopoly, its leading sectors endlessly encroaching upon and absorbing its lagging ones. 'Industrial practices' entrenched by unions operating within advanced capitalist agriculture are thus likely to radiate outwards with it as its arc of control widens. Moreover, the unionisation of the less profitable farms will, as wages rise, either spur farmers into more modern techniques (historically, one of the results of unionisation)[32] or drive them still further into debt, perhaps even into bankruptcy. The land of those so driven is all too likely to be absorbed by profit-making commercial farming units which, if already themselves unionised, will find it difficult simply to rout union organisation in the 'rationalisation' of their new acquisitions that will no doubt follow. At present such rationalisations appear to involve mass redundancy on the one hand, and the intensification of labour amongst workers from the profit-making enterprise on the other, as they are compelled to perform the tasks which retrenched workers on the bankrupt estate no longer perform.[33]

Another key reason why the first wave of agrarian unionisation should break over the zones of advanced agriculture flows directly form the precarious position of the backward farmers. For the low profitability farmers, able to concede very little <u>economically</u> in any struggle with labour, are likely to be unremitting in their <u>political</u> campaign against it. Retarded capitalism - especially of

the patriarchal agrarian variety - is always reactionary. In South Africa, it remains one of the core regions of support for the politics of the ultra-right.[34] The first systematic attempt at unionising farm workers in South African history met with the organised violence of landowners.[35] Given the politics of the unprofitable farmers today, and the presence of the AWB's Brandwags (armed reaction forces) in rural areas[36], it is unfortunately likely that union activists would suffer a similar violence today. Only unions with a secure organisational base in advanced capitalist agriculture will have the resources and the strength necessary to mount concerted, successive organisational offensives on such unfavourable terrain. Nevertheless, a political campaign against the armed gangs that lurk on the edges, and sometimes at the centre, of the far-right will be a necessary complement to - indeed, precursor of - the unionisation of the most backward zones of agrarian capitalism in South Africa.

b. **Socialism**

With regard to the question of a socialist transition, the weakness of agrarian capitalism in South Africa possesses both advantages and disadvantages. Ideally, socialism is erected upon the technical and productive base of the most advanced capitalism. Lenin, in one of his forthright aphorisms, declared "monopoly capitalism", particularly when it was commanded by the state, to be "the fullest material preparation for socialism."[37] Precisely because monopoly capital has made so few strides in agriculture, unlike those it has made (with seven league boots) in mining, the South African agrarian world evinces much less "material preparation for socialism" than does its industrial world.

Although the process of "creeping monopolisation" alluded to earlier has halved the number of South African farm-owners over the last four decades, it is important to emphasise the creeping quality of that process as well as its incomplete nature. A relatively thin stratum of agrarian capitalists accounts for the bulk of South Africa's agricultural production but it, nevertheless, enjoys no corresponding control over the land itself. Today, more than 60 000 landowners command the 85 000 000 hectares of land reserved for white-ownership in South Africa. This level of monopolisation is not only far lower than that which exists in other sectors of the South African economy, it does not approach the plateau of control to be found in the topography of advanced agrarian ruling classes: in late-ninteenth century Britain, locus

of the most powerful class of rural capitalists in history, a mere 7 000 persons owned 80% of the private real estate in the UK - a percentage not much lower than that owned by the 60 000+ South African white landowners of today; in the 1870s, only 360 magnates owned a quarter of all England's land.[39] Beside such a concentration, the diffuse nature of landholding in South Africa more than a century later, must make those who stress monoply control of rural enterprise in this country pause to reflect. Agribusiness, in fact, comprehends no more than 10% of white-owned land in South Africa, the state controls less than 2% of it.[40]

Any attempt at a properly socialist transition in agriculture would have to take these facts into account. Given the precarious purchase upon profitability displayed by the contemporary rural economy, a reckless tampering with economies of scale will send the productivity of agrarian labour spinning downwards taking the possibilities of planned economy with it. Socialism is not posited upon the dissolution of capitalist monopolies but upon their expropiation and subjection to workers' control. Lenin's aphorism needs to be recalled here with particular force. Where the development of capitalism in South African agriculture has provided a "material preparation for socialism", socialists should respect, preserve and extend that materiality. To flout it would not be to enter the 'kingdom of freedom' but to flounder further (and needlessly) in the realm of necessity.

In one sense, however, the relative lack of monopolisation in South African agrarian capitalism presents an advantage for a transition to socialism. Any attempt at such a transition on the mines will, of course, be met by sabotage of the most sophisticated stamp: in the first instance, the mining conglomerates are likely to attempt, with computer-swiftness, a capital-flight of immense proportions. With their monopoly control of the industy and international connections, whether or not the mines themselves are occupied by workers, they could effectively withdraw the "circulating capital ... necessary to keep any industrial installation going at all"[41] and perhaps even cut off markets in the short term. These are problems which socialists have had to face and overcome, in other - though less monopoly-controlled - economies (by such measures as nationalising all finance institutions and the accounts held in them, save those of the small depositors - as did the Bolsheviks).

The composition of capital in South African agriculture simply

of the land, with workers in many cases providing for their own sustenance on farms (so different from the mines), with the rural enterprises principally directed at a local market, and with so many farmers in debt, the expropriation of the agrarian ruling class in South Africa would leave less opportunity to landowners to induce an economic collapse than that open to the mineowners. What would considerably enhance their opportunities, however, would be hesitation in implementing a socialist programme. Any gradual measures towards expropriation would lead landowners swiftly to run down their enterprises, perhaps in the hope of creating food shortages and thereby exerting pressure upon those wishing to expropriate them. The history of Salvador Allende's Chile, a regime resolute in its commitment to a gradual transition to socialism, clearly revealed the dangers of slow movement in this regard.

Allende's Unidad Popular was elected in 1970, Chilean society rapidly becoming "a whirlpool of political forces" as millions (including the hitherto-dormant "seasonally employed in agriculture") "mobilised in support of new demands", the Right - in its turn - counter-mobilising. Very rapidly, large private farmers ceased to invest in agrarian enterprise: in 1971/2 crop output fell by almost 10%; between 1971 and 1973 (the date of the *military coup*), *the production of wheat - perhaps the most important staple of all* - declined at an annual rate of almost 14%. There can be little doubt that this contributed to the severe economic crisis that was the back-cloth of the Pinochet coup: indeed, by the time of that coup, food imports were consuming a third of Chile's export earnings.[42]

This is not to say that severe economic difficulties will not attend a fully socialist transition in the countryside. They will. But those difficulties will be more an objective factor for transcendence than a subjective weapon in the hands of a ruling class seeking a return to the status quo ante. No illusions need be sown about the potentially tortured path that the transition to socialism in rural South Africa might take. Can that path be otherwise? The low level of monopolisation in agriculture, whilst making farmers economically weak, nevertheless multiplies the number of landowners and gives them a social weight that will be difficult to unbalance, let alone throw into the chronic disequilibrium necessary if socialism is to triumph. It will not be a handful of monopolists, but tens of thousands of landowners, with a history of political - indeed, military - organisation who will

handful of monopolists, but tens of thousands of landowners, with a history of political - indeed, military - organisation who will be resisting expropriation. The counter-weight to this social bloc would have to be extremely powerful: encompassing the broad mass of agrarian working people, mobilised on the basis of a socialist programme, the insurgent bloc would have to be capable of waging a class struggle that had been raised to its highest plane and that will, no doubt, assume lacerating forms. In this end-game situation, the countryside will be seized by a convulsive politico-economic transformation that would certainly dislocate the agrarian economy, It is precisely at this point that the level of unionisation in the countryside could be decisive in ensuring that economic dislocation was not radical enough to threaten food supplies. And this brings us logically to a brief consideration of the place of trade unions in the transition to socialism.

c. **Trade Unions and the Transition to Socialism**

By their objective position in capitalist society trade unions are precluded from leading a socialist revolution.[43] Put simply, unions are an expression of the conversion of labour-power into a commodity under capitalism. They seek to increase the price of labour-power and to improve the conditions under which it is employed. But socialism - seen by Marx "as the suppression of class society by the proletariat, and therewith the suppression of itself"[44] - aims precisely at the abolition of labour-power as a commodity. Constructed to defend that which socialism ultimately seeks to liquidate, unions, are not well-placed structurally to overthrow the capitalist state.

The key weapon in the hands of unions is forged (and limited) by their organic link to 'labour power as commodity'. For the strike, essentially, is a collective withdrawal of a commodity. Unions, typically make their power felt negatively - by absenting their members from the means of production they are employed to operate. And absence, even on the most massive scale, is incapable of superceding an existing social system. Such a project demands not withdrawal but what one writer has called "an aggressive over-participation in the system, which abolishes it and creates a new social order."[45]

The most powerful weapons in the trade union arsenal - general strike and mass occupation of workplace - are unable to breach the order of capital. No socialist revolution has ever been effected

by these methods. The failures of the 1905 general strike in Russia[46] and that in 1968 in France, respectively the most insurgent and the largest in history, revealed the inability of the mass-stoppage to overthrow a state order. (The difference between defeat and victory in 1905 and 1917 in Russia was, in many ways, the difference between an insurgent strike movement and an armed insurrection of the working class: significantly, in 1917 strikes never assumed the importance they had in 1905.[47]) Meanwhile, the failure of the most militant (and socialist-oriented) wave of factory occupations - that in Turin in 1919-20, in the heartland of Italian industrial capitalism - rapidly revealed the limits of occupations on their own as revolutionary weapons.

Yet, when all this is conceded, the crucial roles that can be played by trade unions at moments of revolutionary transition must be noted. There can be little doubt that the more organisationally-powerful the working class is at the moment of transition, the more ordered and less marked by privation the transition is likely to be. Thus, whilst Russian trade unions played no significant role in the October Revolution itself, they became a crucial organisational network for the Bolsheviks during the Civil War and in the Soviet attempt to build a planned economy.[48] Likewise, although trade unions played no role in the seizure of power during the Cuban Revolution of 1959, Cuba's relatively long history of organised labour and working-class struggle were important in laying the foundations for socialist transformation. At the moment of Castro's seizure of power, approximately half of the Cuban labour-force (much of it agricultural) was unionised. The giant Cuban Federation of Workers was, by this time, "dominated by an ideology of 'business unionism'". But "the organisational experience of the working class and its roles in the struggle over decades", nevertheless, "provided an important foundation for the reorganisation of the economy along socialist lines."[49]

To shift the focus back to South Africa, then, powerful trade unions in agriculture , as elsewhere in the economy, can play a crucial <u>infrastructral</u> role in the creation of a planned economy. More than this, as has already been noted, a high level of unionisation in the countryside might well be the central factor determining that agricultural production continues amidst the torments of the economic dislocation likely to attend the transitional period. In this regard, as important as the <u>level</u> of unionisation in the countryside will be its <u>pattern</u>. A 1983 es-

timate suggested that a mere 1% of South African agrarian enterprises generated 16% of farm income, that 6% of farm-units accounted for 40% of income and that 30% of farms produced fully three-quarters of commercial agriculture's income.[50] A later computation estimated 1% of the agrarian capitalist class to be responsible for half of the country's agricultural production.[51] Whatever the precision of these figures, they do suggest that even a relatively-low level of unionisation, provided it is concentrated on the most productive farms - and, importantly, on the farmers' coperatives and marketing boards which together overwhelmingly control agricultural inputs and outputs[52] - may be sufficient to ensure that the transition to socialism in South Africa is not plagued by that acute scarcity of foodstuffs which so blighted the socialist project in the USSR.

3.Problems of Expropriation and 'Peasantization'

a. Expropriation

The first and fundamental pre-requisite for a transition to socialism in the countryside is, of course, the expropriation of the existing possessing class. To leave that class's social existence intact would be to leave capitalist exploitation untouched. As more than one writer has pointed out, the abolition of the Land Act would in itself do little to alleviate land hunger in South Africa.[53] Its prime result could well be the provision of investment opportunities to groupings now denied them, such as the organised African bourgeoisie which has recently called for just such opportunities.[54] The lifting of racial fetters upon the acquisition of land, then, would in no way alter property, and therefore exploitative, relations in the rural world. Nevertheless, such an assertion is likely to be viewed as no more than a mere truism: perhaps the experience of another country will lend it force.

The abolition of the Southern Rhodesia Land Apportionment Act (actually struck from the statute book under the Muzorewa regime), and the agrarian reform undertaken by the Mugabe Government, have manifestly failed to alter the structure of property in the Zimbabewean countryside. Whilst no attempt at a socialist transition has been made in Zimbabwe (five years after independence, less *than 1% of the means of production had been nationalised*[55]), even the modest aims of the agrarian reform have been hampered by the regime's failure to expropriate, to any degree, capitalist

agriculture. Blocked from any large-scale acquisition of land by its insistence upon 'buying out' landowners, the ZANU-PF Government's initial target of settling over 160 000 peasant families by 1984 on "land bought...from...whites" has not nearly been approached. By mid-1985, only 30 000 families had been so settled. Today, more than seven years after independence, the number of resettled peasant families stands at 40 000 - less than 5% of the peasantry as a whole.[56]

The real significance of Zimbabwe's agrarian reform, of course, lies elsewhere. For, quite obviously, the state's agricultural infrastructure has been opened to the peasantry in a way unthinkable in Southern Rhodesia. Well-placed peasants now have access to markets, prices for their produce and actual finance in a way they never did before: in 1979, the Agricultural Finance Corporation lent a mere 3 000 peasants a paltry $1,5 million; in the 1984 agricltural season by contrast, the comparable figures were a fulsome $54 million to 90 000 peasants.[57] The results have been a quantum leap in peasant production: before independence, the largest maize crop ever marketed by the peasantry was a scanty 67 000 tons; in 1985, it brought more than twenty times that tonnage to market.[58] These figures, whilst a great advance on those registered under settler rule, are not the upshot of general peasant prosperity (differentiation proceeds apace in the class) and should not be considered to imply a solution of the agrarian question in Zimbabwe.

Indeed, it is precisely the countryside which has, since independence, witnessed the most militant and violent events in the country - at once, site of the largest strikes and location of continuing armed attacks upon landowners.[59] It is estimated that "communal lands" in Zimbabwe carry 400 000+ peasant families more than, economically-speaking, they should.[60] The resettlement programme has run its course; the vast commercial farming units remain intact. Awash with maize and yet malnutrition[61], it may take only the next severe drought to detonate the contradictions that have been building up around the massive agrarian capitalist enterprises that were never expropriated in Zimbabwe. For expropriation remains the precursor of any signifcant agrarian reform, let alone a socialist agriculture. In contemporary Nicaragua, only the Sandanista's confiscation of 'Somocista' properties, comprising one-fifth of the country's agricultural land, has enabled the Ortega Government to embark on a significant (though not socialist) programme of land reform.[62]

In the case of South Africa, no significant expropriation could be effected unless landowners were not compensated for the confiscation of their property. Capital assets held by farmers amount to *more than forty-three billion rand*[63]; *they pay their employees*, both waged and salaried, not much more than half a billion rand annually[64], drawing more than twice this sum in profits[65]. Compensation on this scale, clearly, would bind the working class to paying an indemnity to its present exploiters in perpetuity, in effect ensuring that capitalist exploitation continued by another route. Wages would be held down and the reinvestments required to replenish means of production would disappear into dividends paid in compensation for assets that workers had already 'bought' - by way of profits extracted from them over generations. Expropriation without compensation remains the only feasible first step towards socialism in rural, as in industrial, South Africa.

2. `Peasantization'

Expropriation without compensation - a major revolutionary act by any standard - need not be followed by the socialist project of converting farm-units into collectives under workers' control within the broader framework of a planned economy. Confiscated properties could instead be divided and distributed to the existing farm labour-force. Given the centrality of this scenario to some prescriptions for the South African agrarian future, it would be appropriate to rehearse some of the (socialist) arguments against it.

Socialism, fundamentally, requires the subjection of the economy to plan. The parcelling out of South Africa's white-owned agricultural land amongst those who work it is tantamount to converting approximately 65 000 farms into at least a million econmic units - for such is the size of the agricultural proletariat today.[66] All anarchically-pulling in the direction of their own individual interests, these units would rend beyond repair any attempt at a planned economy in South Africa. It was the market-dynamic of millions of peasant households (not, it should be noted, primarily "kulak" households) which threatened to shatter the economic project of socialism in the USSR in the late-1920s.[67]

The triumph of the Bolshevik Revolution, however, was made possible only through a revolutionary alliance of the proletariat and the middle and poor peasantry. This necessitated initial conces-

sions to small private property - albeit de facto rather than de jure since the land was immediately nationalised. But private property, in effect private economy, on so massive a scale was bound in the end to shred the economic plan upon which socialism, in the final analysis, depended. Significantly, Lenin - before the Bolshevik seizure of power and (surely) in full cognizance of the need to effect an alliance between worker and peasant - "showed preference for measures tending towards collectivization and, in conformity with Marxist doctrine, expressed very definite reservations about the regime of small-scale ownership."[68]

Such doctrine, however, could not be applied immediately in a country where the peasantry constituted the vast majority of the population - especially in the midst of the civil war and the economic devastation that followed the victorious socialist revolution. From the mid-1920s, however, the doctrine could have been applied progressively[69]; but by that time, the policy of appeasing small property had become a veritable cult amongst most sections of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, its most extreme manifestation being Bukharin's cry to the peasantry: "Enrich yourselves!". The results were to be well-nigh fatal. Collectivization, instead of being carried through over many years and not in the midst of crisis, was clamped upon the peasantry at that point, in the late-20s, when private property began to subvert planned economy and when hunger (summoned forth by grain-hoarding) stalked the cities. The character of the collectivization - belated, brutal, undemocratic - has scarred Soviet agriculture to this day, Deutscher's analysis of its fundamental contradictions still pertaining.[70] In Part, the torments of the Soviet experience were made inevitable by the contradictory nature of the alliance between peasantry and proletariat which alone had made the Revolution possible. But there is no reason why South Africa should suffer similarly. For South Africa possesses that which Russia lacked in the early-twentieth century: an overwhelming preponderance not of the peasantry but of the proletariat. Peasants have ceased to be a strategically or numerically significant class in this country. The sequence of peasant rebellions that swept South Africa in the 1950s were already stamped by the proletariat, migrant workers playing a key role in them.[71] Today there are extremely few self-sufficient peasants. Some statistics indicate that in the areas where most peasants are located, the bantustans, "agricultural production contributes as little as 10% to household income and sustenance".[72] Overwhelmingly, wage labour not subsistence agriculture maintains such households.[73] Outside

describes its relative prosperity in "one of the few areas in South Africa where a black peasantry has been able to survive, to an extent, the onslaught of Apartheid...and capitalist agriculture". But even this community is said to be dependent on wage labour "in the PWV area".[74]

All evidence points, then, to the extinction of the peasantry as a significant social class in South Africa. To divide commercial farms into small plots would be, in effect, to recreate a class. Some mention has already been made of the radical violation of the economic structure of the countryside this would entail. It is worth recalling here that the landowning class of Czarist Russia was a rentier class, drawing a surplus from peasant families working small plots of land: the expropriation of Russian landlords, and the division of their estates amongst the peasantry, therefore entailed no fundamental rupture of the economy, although where economies of scale existed they were initially undermined.[75] The basic unit of agricultural production in South Africa, however, is not the rented smallholding but the giant capitalist farm. The degree to which economies of scale exist in South African agriculture, therefore, is incomparably greater than the extent to which they existed in the Czarist countryside. Consequently, a fragmentation of farms into smallholdings in this country has an immeaurably greater potential for destroying economies of scale.

A division of the great capitalist estates of rural South Africa carries with it the danger of rendering redundant existing agricultural technologies: such technology, as one writer has recently pointed out, cannot be utilized on the smallholdings of the bantustans;[76] at present, the combine-harvester cannot be used profitably on South African farms where the maize-harvest is less than 250 tonnes[77] - a threshhold far above the capacity of the peasant smallholder. Marx's judgement on the economy of "the small-holding peasants", for all its harshness, appears correct.

> Their mode of production isolates them from one another instead of bringing them into mutual intercourse....Their field of production, the small holding, admits of no division of labour in its cultivation, no application of science and, therefore, no diversity of development....Each individual peasant family is almost self-sufficient, it itself directly produces the major part of its consumption and thus acquires its means of life more through exchange with nature than in intercourse with society[78]

> life more through exchange with nature than in intercourse with society[78]

Moreover, aside from the liquidation of economies of scale, the recreation of the peasantry on the basis of a division of the land amongst those who work it, must terminate the basic social prerequisite for socialism in the countryside: the rural proletariat. That great force, still largely unharnessed organisationally, would be dissipated as its members dissolved into a sea of smallholdings. Where the basis now exists for united struggle and defence, there would instead be a petit-bourgeoisie, incapable of playing a revolutionary role because its plots of land would not be under the fist of landlords or state. Agricultural unionisation would be shattered in an instant.

And it is perhaps on that somewhat alarmist note that this paper should conclude. For the peasantry is the most quicksilver of classes, capable of multiple political permutations. The French peasantry, revolutionary in the late-18th century became the mainstay of a reactionary Bonapartist despotism in the mid-nineteenth;[79] the Russian peasantry, revolutionary against its landlords, proved itself sullen and intractable once those landlords had been extinguished; the Bolivian peasantry, radical and violent in the wake of the 1952 Revolution, proved itself (after land reform) to be inhospitable to Che Guevara and an ally of the military.[80] Indeed, where revolutionary upheavals of a socialist nature have been based upon the peasantry, that class has been led by organisations which were careful to canalise the social forces they were unleashing in a collectivist direction: the essential political achievement of the Chinese and Vietnamese Communist Parties. For Marx, writing in The 18th Brumaire, the peasantry only became "revolutionary" when it struck out "beyond the conditions" of its "social existence, the small holding".[81] To set it in the opposite direction, back towards its smallholdings, is merely to recreate the conditions out of which rural capitalism has often come. If that were done in South Africa, in the midst of a "socialised" economy in industry, then socialism itself might snap at what is presently the weak link of South African capitalism.

REFERENCES

1. Given the hoary debate over the place of history and historical

research in political struggle, it is perhaps worth re-stating here the classical Marxist conception of it: "For...historical materialism...one of the central purpose of understanding the past is to provide a causal knowledge of historical processes capable of furnishing the basis for an adequate political practice in the present, aimed at transforming the existing political order into a prepared, popular future...". "For historical materialism, as for socialist politics, what the past bequeaths the present is first and foremost a set of lines of force for transformation...". See Perry Anderson Arguments Within English Marxism (London, 1980)

2. See, for example, Business Day, Oct. 28th 1986, p. 3

3. See Business Day, Nov. 5th 1986, p.1

4. David Cooper, "Ownership and Control of Agriculture in South Africa", University of York Centre for Southern African Studies Paper, presented at the Conference on The South African Economy after Apartheid (29th Sept. - 2nd Oct. 1986), provides a brief analysis of the role of rising interest rates in plunging farmers into debt. See pp. 15-16 of this paper, hereafter referred to as Cooper (York, 1986)

5. See, for example,, the comments of the vice-president of the Transvaal Agricultural Union quoted in Business Day, Sept. 5th 1986, p.3.

6. See, for example, Business Day, Sept. 23rd 1986, p. 3

7. See Business Day, Oct. 7th 1986, p. 1, "Beleaguered farmers now owe R11,2 bn".

8. See Business Day, Nov. 10th 1986, p. 2, which cites the official estimates of total agricultural income for the year ending in June 1986 as almost R9,9 billion and profits as R1,3 billion. As has already been pointed out, the farmers' debt at the same time was R11,2 billion.

9. For evidence of the increasing bankruptcy of farmers, see Business Day, May 6th 1987, p. 3 and Sept. 23rd 1986, p.3. The process of monopolization alluded to in the text is well-proven by government statistics. According to such figures, the number of farms in South Africa increased by a few thousand after 1946 to reach 116 848 in 1950; since then, there has been a more or less continuous decline: in 1980, for example, the figure stood at 69 372 (see Abstract of Agricultural Statistics, 1987, isssued by the Directorate Agricultural Economic Trends, Dept. of Agricultural Economics and Marketing, p. 6. Table 6). Since 1980, given the accelerating monopolization attendant upon the recession, the number of farms is likely to have fallen still more. A recent paper, citing what appear to be government statistics for later than 1980, gives the number of white-owned farming units in SA as

65 972 : see Cooper (York, 1986), p. 2, table 1. Moreover, as a recent work has pointed out, the number of units will be more than the number of owners in South Africa; i.e. government statistics are based soley on the number of farms in the country; they do not take into account the fact that particular owners may own more than one estate. For the latter point, see Tessa Marcus Restructuring in Commercial Agriculture in South Africa; Modernising Super-Exp,loitation: an investigation into the impact of restructuring on the position and conditions of farm workers(Amsterdam, 1986), p. 6. Marcus, in fact, underestimates the decline in the number of farming units in the 198Øs - see her page 4.

1Ø. For allusions to the differing fortunes of these various sectors, see, for example, Business Day, Sept. 8th 1986, p.2 and Sept. 11th 1986, p. 1 (citrus); Sept. 23rd 1986, p. 3 and October 14th 1986, p. 3 (maize); Sept. 24th 1986, p. 1 (wool and maize); November 2Øth 1986, p. 2, "Tongaat turns in a little sweetie" which (circumstantially) suggests that the drought, whilst having adversely affected sugar-cane supplies, has not prevented profits for Tongaat-Hullett. For the vigour of the deciduous fruit sector during the drought, see, for example, Business Day, Nov. 11th 1986, p. 16

11. See Business Day, Oct. 14th 1986, p.3

12. I attempt such an invstigation in the first chapter of The South African Agrarian Future, a study I am presently preparing and which should be completed by early next year.

13. For which see Robert Ross, "The Origins of Capitalist Agriculture in the Cape: A Survey", pp. 56-1ØØ (esp. pp. 79-96) in Beinart W, Delius P and Trapido S (eds.) Putting a Plough to the Ground: Accumulation and Dispossession in Rural South Africa, 185Ø-193Ø(Johannesburg, 1986). Readers are warned, however, that Ross's essay is vitiated with a conceptual confusion that leads him, at times, to confuse slavery with capitalism and slaves with proletarians thereby cancelling the interesting and important points he makes about the social and economic effects of the abolition of slavery. Critical comments on Ross's approach will be offered in a critique of Putting a Plough to the Ground in Transformations.

14. See Stanley Trapido and Shula Marks, "Lord Milner and the South African State" in P. Bonner (ed.) Working Papers in Southern African Studies(Johannesburg, 1981); Jeremy Krikler, "The Transvaal Agrarian Class Struggle in the South African War", Social Dynamics, 12 (2), 1986, especially p. 18 ff. For massive, preliminary evidence of the British attempt to create a scientific agriculture in the defeated Boer Republics, see the British-

sponsored Transvaal Agricultural Journal of the early-twentieth century, a journal circulated in the Orange River Colony as well. Beinart and Delius, in their "Introduction" to Putting a Plough appear to concur with the view that the period of direct British control of SA was central to later agricultural developments; on on pp. 40-1, they write: "...the period around the turn of the century can be seen as that in whicb the initial foundations were laid for the development of a racially exclusive form of capitalist accumulation on the land...". See also their p. 31.

15. See, e.g., E. Hobsbawm Industry and Empire (Harmondsworth, 1970), pp. 29-32.

16. This was, of course, one of the contentions of the famous study with which South African agrarian historiography proper began - W. M. Macmillan's The South African Agrarian Problem and its Historical Develpment (Johannesburg, 1919), esp. pp. 36-41, 62-3, 76-7. Crucial economic infrastructure, e.g. railways, was, as Macmillan pointed out, distorted and skewed by the needs of mining capitalism. Later studies appear to reinforce Macmillan's contentions: see, e.g., Putting a Plough, pp. 28 & 31-2.

17. See the comprehensive and convincing demonstration by Bradford in her chapter "Masters and Servants in the South African Countryside" in her Wits Ph.D. thesis: "The Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union of Africa in the South African Countryside, 1924-1930" (1985). For the concurring historians, see Delius and Beinart, "Introduction" to Putting a Plough, p. 17.

18. For the subsidy statistic, see Cooper (York, 1986), p. 8, table 5 - using figures provided in the 1986 Abstract of Agricultural Statistics; for the information concerning the reduction of interest-rates, see Business Day, Oct. 29th 1986, p. 2, "Land Bank cuts rate": the reduction (by 1%) afffected both existing and future loans to farmers.

19. See M. Sarakinsky and J. Keenan Dying For Change (Zed Press, forthcoming), a book which notes that some farmers have done away with wages entirely, demanding labour from their workers merely in return for residence rights and access to paltry plots. In an interview with a member of the South African Agricultural Union, it was revealed to these writers that such arrangements were expected to increase on South African farms. It should be noted that Sarakinsky and Keenan do not detail this as a pre-capitalist production relation and I am not imputing the designation in the text to them. For further evidence of the reappearance of labour tenancy (this time in the Lydenburg District of the Transvaal), see Alan Mabin, "Land ownership and the prospects for land reform in the Transvaal: a preliminary view", University of York Centre for

Southern African Studies paper, presented at the Conference on The South African Economy after Apartheid, Sept-Oct 1986, p. 6. Hereafter Mabin's paper will be referred to as Mabin(York, 1986).

20. Wine and deciduous fruit are concentrated in the south-western Cape, the oldest zone of agrarian cpitalism in South Africa - the zone in which an already commercialised group of slaveholders were forcibly mutated into proto-capitalists by the abolition of slavery in the 1830s. Wool and sugar, likewise, have a long history of capitalist orientation in South Africa, stretching well back *into the nineteenth century. In South African agriculture,* these were the first major `crop belts' to use wage-labour comprehensively in production. Importantly, these sectors capitalized in an era preceding that during which the state began comprehensively to aid agriculture (i.e. before the early-twentieth century). They were, therefore, forced to rely more on the enterprise and organisation of farmers themselves than was, for example, the maize sector in the twentieth century. For the early history of agrarian capitalism centred on wine and wool in the Cape, see Ross'
s "Origins of Capitalist Agriculture in the Cape" and (for wool) Saul Dubow's important study Land, Labour and Merchant Capital in the Pre-Industrial Rural Economy of the Cape: the Experience of the Graasf-Reinet District, 1852--72 (Cape Town, 1982); for sugar, see Peter Richardson"s forbidding but erudite, "The Natal Sugar Industry in the Nineteenth Century", pp. 129-175 in Beinart, Delius and Trapido (eds) Putting a Plough to the Ground

21. *Michael De Klerk, "Seasons that will Never Return: The Impact* of Farm Mechanization on Employment, Incomes and Population Distribution in the Western Transvaal", Journal of Southern African Studies, Vol. 11, No. 1, October 1984, p. 84.

22. Such statistics and complaints were to be heard at the annual conference of the Transvaal Agricultural Union in Pretoria in 1986: see Business Day, Sept. 5th 1986, p. 3.

23. See G. A. Cohen Karl Marx's Theory of History: A Defence (Oxford, 1982 edition), pp. 41-2 & 45-7. Cohen advances his argument, with customary devastating logic, not simply in terms of the Marxist schema he is defending.

24. See, e.g., Business Day, Nov. 11th 1986, p. 16, "Research ups Westfalia's...crop". Westfalia Estates in Duiwelskloof, an expor-oriented avocado estate employing 1200 workers has been the site of a concerted application of research-findings and scientific technique to agriculture. The result: "The estate produces 13 tons per hectare - compared with the industry average of about three tons - due mainly to research inputs."

25. As is made manifest in the business press. See the following articles in Business Day: "Fruit Board a major currency earner" (Nov. 11th, 1986); "Sappi beats price hikes working on new system" (Sept. 2nd, 1986); "Adendorf proves to be a miracle-worker" (Sept. 2nd, 1986); and "Pests alive! Borer gets radioactive"(November 18th, 1986), the rather flippant title of which belies the serious programme of research sponsored by the South African Sugar Association.
26. Computed from figures provided by D. J. Agenbach, Director-General of Agricultural Economics and Water Supply in Business Day, 27th October 1986, p. 11.
27. "...that part of...capital that creates surplus-value [is]...variable capital." See Marx, Capital, Vol. 2 (Harmondsworth, 1978), p. 140. The fundamental demonstration of this is, of course, to be found in Vol. 1 of Capital: see chapters 7-9 of the Harmondsworth, 1982 edition.
28. In advanced monopoly capitalism, the giant corporation evinces "various degrees of vertical integration within which hierarchical `direct allocation' replaces the market." (See Alec Nove, "Markets and Socialism", New Left Review, No. 161, January/February 1987, p. 98.) By controlling certain production-inputs, then, the advanced monopoly capitalist is able, to some degree, to protect his or her enterprise form the vagaries of the market.
29. See Cooper(York, 1986), p. 15. Shortly before the parliamentary elections in 1987, the Minister of Agriculture "hoped suppliers" of agricultural inputs, "particularly those with an import component", "would pass the benefits" "of the improved rand exchange rate" "on to farmers". The Minister"s hope pointed to two barriers farmers have yet to hurdle if they wish to exert some measure of control over the inputs they depend upon for production: a) the exchange-rate, and b) the manipulations of businesses producing and marketing such inputs. Only in exceptional circumstances can monopoly capital control, to some extent, the first (clearly, the finance capitalists off the City of London help to shape the sterling exchange-rate). But such capital, typically, exerts considerable control over the second. Farmers in South Africa have yet to manifest such control For the Minister's statement, see Business Day, May 6th 1987, p. 3.
30. See my footnote 19 for evidence of this.
31. Cooper (York, 1986), p. 36 has a brief, useful delineation of the various agrarian union `areas'.
32. See Perry Anderson, "The Limits and Possibilities of Trade Union Action" in Tom Clarke and Laurie Clements (eds.) Trade Unions Under Capitalism (Fontana, 1977), p. 343. Anderson's argu-

ment implicitly supports this contention. It was, of course, Marx who first noted the relationship betweeen the struggles of the organised working class and the advancement of capitalist technique. Thus the successful battle to shorten the working day in nineteenth century England provided the decisive stimulus for the further employment - and refining - of machinery in English factories, aw well as the `streamlining' of their labour processes: see Marx Capital, Vol. 1, pp. 533-536

33. See Debbie Budlender, "Technological Change and Labour on `White' Farms" in South African Research Services (ed.) South African Review Two (Johannesburg, 1984), p. 305..

34. See Cooper (York, 1986), p. 8 who, it appears, geographically overstates the case. In the 1987 election, the ultra-right won seats only in the Transvaal, thoroughly sweeping its plattteland: see Business Day, May 11th 1987, p. 7, "The 'Boer Republic' is CP's seat of power" and map. Significantly, it is Transvaal farming which appears to have taken the worst of the present agricultural crisis.

35. See, for example, Helen Bradford, "Lynch Law and Labourers: the ICU in Umvoti, 1927-1928", pp. 420-449 in Beinart, Delius and Trapido (eds.) Puttting a Plough to the Ground

36. See, for example, Business Day, Sept. 3rd 1986, p. 3, "Malan won't comment on AWB's claims" with reference to the (more than 300-strong) Eastern Transvaal Brandwag. Another article in a September issue of Business Day specifically referred to the central role this Brandwag was to play in protecting farmers.

37. Quoted in E. H. Carr The Russian Revolution from Lenin to Stalin (London, 1979), p. 186.

38. See my footnote 9. The figure concerning "hectarage" is from the Abstract of Agricultural Statistics, 1987, p. 6, table 6. In 1978, the last year the Abstract provides a figure for the area of agricultural land under white ownership in South Africa, it amounted to 85 447 000 hectares.

39. See Perry Anderson, "The Figures of Descent", New Left Review, No. 161, Jan/Feb 1987, p. 29.

40. See Paul Daphne, "Agrarian Reform in a Post-Apartheid South Africa: Issues and Options", paper presented to the Conference of The South African Research and Training Project: A Policy Workshop, Amsterdam, December 1986, pp. 14-15. Daphne provides statistics which reveal that, in 1980, public and private companies owned 7:25% of the agricultural land held by whites in SA, while the state (both central and municipal) held 1:8% of it. Even allowing for an upward-adjustment in the 1980s, the figures are likely to fall below 10 and 2 per cent respectively.

41. Perry Anderson, "The Limits and Possibilites of Trade Union Action", p. 339.
42. All statistics come from Leonardo Castillo and David Lehmann, "Agrarian Reform and Structural Change in Chile, 1965-79" in Ajit Kumar Ghose (ed.) Agrarian Reform in Contemporary Developing Countries (London, 1983), pp. 255-6, quotation from p. 254. The authors make the point that Allende's agrarian policy was basically an extension of the agrarian reform undertaken by the preceding (Christian Democrat) government - see p. 255-6. No fundamentally new programme was implemented in the countryside.
43. A brilliant analysis of this is Perry Anderson's "The Limits and Possibilities of Trade Union Action" (reference above). Much of the analysis which follows is drawn from the theory he advances in this article.
44. See Ibid, p. 334. The quotation is not from Marx but from Anderson, paraphrasing Marx.
45. Ibid., pp. 335-6.
46. This general strike took place in the most optimum conditions imaginable, conditions dependent upon the structure of the Czarist state and the technology of its administration: see Ibid., p. 340. It is a sobering thought that the logistical conditions which made this general strike immediately so potent have passed away forever.
47. For this latter fact, see Isaac Deutscher Soviet Trade Unions (London, 1950), p. 13.
48. Again for this, see generally Ibid. For the role of the unions in the Russian Civil War, see esp. pp. 25-28.
49. See Arthur MacEwan Revolution and Economic Development in Cuba (London, 1981), esp. pp. 23-6 & 9. Unfortunately, this work does not provide the kind of systematic analysis of the role of trade unions in the Cuban economy as does say Deutscher in his analysis of trade unions in the USSR. Quotations from pp. 25 & 29.
50. Figures provided by Cooper (York, 1986), p. 20, using statistics provided in the SA Agric. Union Survey of Farmers, 1983.
51. This estimate was made at the 1986 Annual Meeting of the Transvaal Agricultural Union: See Business Day, Sept. 5th 1986, p. 3.
52. See Cooper (York, 1986), p. 11 for this. The marketing boards, as Cooper points out, "control the sale of 86% of all produce"; and "cooperatives...are the major input suppliers to agriculture". See also Daphne (Amsterdam, 1986), p. 5.
53. See Mabin (York, 1986), p. 4 & Daphne (Amsterdam, 1986), p. 1.
54. As Mabin (York, 1986, p.4) points out, at its congress in Cape Town in 1986, the National African Federated Chamber of Commerce

expressed interest in "the purchase of large tracts of rural land".
55. See Guardian Weekly, July 21st 1985, "Zimbabwe after the elections"
56. Statistics gleaned, and percentage computed from Ibid. and an article by J. D. F. Jones of the London Financial Times ("The white life in Zimbabwe seven years on") published in Business Day, May 6th, 1987, p. 6.
57. Figures provided by the Zimbabwean minister of Agriculture in The Herald, 29/5/1985, "Favouring small farmer the fight step, says Norman".
58. Calculated from figures in Guardian Weekly, July 21st 1985, "Zimbabwe after the elections" and The Christian Science Monitor, 6/4/1985, "Zimbabwe peasants ...reaping...unprecedented harvest".
59. Significantly, killings of white farmers often follow disputes over "squatting" or illegal grazing -classic symptoms of land hunger. For the strikes on Zimbabwean plantations in 1985, see the Financial Gazette, 4/10/1985, "Labour Unrest As New Wage Comes Into Effect" and the article on Zimbabwean agro-industrial workers which appeared in the South African Labour Bulletin in that year.
60. See Colleen Butcher, "Planning for Rural Development: A Political-Economic Study of Agricultural Policy in Zimbabwe", unpublished MA thesis, Faculty of Architecture, University of the Witwatersrand, 1985, p. 336.
61. See, for example, the report in The Herald dd. 2/8/1985 which quoted an expert on hunger in Zimbabwe, Thomas Shopo: "...in spite of being a substantial food surplus nation, Zimbabwe has a malnutrition problem of major proportions. Upwards of 20% of children under five have second or third degree malnutrition...".
62. For which see Eduardo Naumeister, "The Structure of Nicaraguan Agriculture and the Sandanista Agrarian Reform", pp. 10-35 in Richard Harris and Carlos Vilas Nicaragua: A Revolution Under Siege (London, 1986); see pp. 19-21 for the properties confiscated from Somoza.
63. See Abstract of Agricultural Statistics, 1987, Table 81, "Value of capital assets in agriculture". The figure is for 1985.
64. This is calculated from a set of figures provided in Cooper (York, 1986), p. 23. His statistics are for 1980. Since then wages have risen but the size of the workforce in agriculture has fallen considerably, not to mention the resurgence of labour tenancy in some areas which will have further reduced the collective wage bill of farmers.
65. See my footnote 8.
66. In 1980, there were approximately one and a quarter million

farm emplouees (see Abstract of Agricultural Statistics, 1987, table 4). Since then, there has been a shrinking of the collective labour-force, diminishing its size by perhaps a quarter of a million: a recent study, for example, estimates that this number of jobs was lost in agriculture between 1977-1985: see Daphne (Amsterdam, 1986), p. 7.

67. See Isaac Deutscher Stalin: A Political Biography (Harmondsworth, 1982), chapter 8 and E. H. Carr and R. W. Davies Foundations of a Planned Economy, 1926-1929, Vol. 1 (London, 1969), pp. 3-237. Carr and Davies stress that the crisis was caused generally by the operation of the peasant economy and not merely by "kulaks". The middle peasantry, numerically the largest section of the class, appears, in fact, to have been more crucial in sparking the hoarding crisis than were the wealthier peasants: see, for example, Carr and Davies, p. 55.

68. Marcel Liebman Leninism Under Lenin (London, 1985), p. 183.

69. In the work cited above, Carr and Davies make the point that from about the mid-20s, the Soviets had nothing more to gain from NEP in the countryside.

70. See pp. 121-4 of Isaac Deutshcer"s essay, "Mid-century Russia" in his Heretics and Renegades (London, 1955).

71. See Matthew Chaskalson's convincing demonstration of this in his "Rural Struggles in the 1940s and 1950s", presented at the Workshop on the South African Agrarian Question: Past, Present and Future, Wits University, May 1987.

72. See Daphne (Amsterdam, 1986), p. 5

73. See, for example, Kevin Danaher, "Bantustan Agriculture in South Africa: Obstacles to Development Under a Post-Apartheid Government", paper presented to the University of York Conference on The Southern African Economy After Apartheid, Sept.-Oct. 1986, pp. 5-16, which demonstrates that effective subsistence agriculture has ceased to exist in the bantustans.

74. Alan Morris, "A Peasantry Under Siege: A Case-Study of the farms 'Bloedfontein' and `Geweerfontein'", paper presented to the Wits History Workshop, Wits University, February 1987, p. 2. A report in Business Day, October 17th 1986, p. 7, "Influx control takes a new guise", notes that another peasant community outside the bantustans - that at Braklaagte - was facing removal: fully 90% of its population, presumably of its adult population, "work in SA" today.

75. A point which has been made by Isaac Deutscher in his biography of Trotsky.

76. See Danaher, "Bantustan Agriculture", p. 31.

77. De Klerk, "Seasons that will Never Return", p. 100; for De

Klerk's discussion of economies of scale more generally, see pp. 90-1.

78. See Marx The 18th brumaire of Louis Bonaparte (New York, 1972), pp. 123-4

79. The burden, of course, of part of Marx's Brumaire: see Ibid., p. 123 ff.

80. See James Dunkerley Rebellion in the Veins: Political Struggle in Bolivia, 1952-1982 (Verso, NLB) for the inconsistencies of the peasantry in post-war Bolivia - especially pp. 33, 35, 37, 41, 50, 65-74, 85, 87 & chapter 4.

81. Marx Brumaire, p. 125.

Ruth First Memorial Trust

The Trust is presently cataloguing the papers of the late Ruth First. We should be grateful if anybody with relevant material, especially personal correspondence from Ruth herself, could contact:

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