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food and agriculture organization of the UN (FAQ), 00100 rome, italy,
Exactly 12.9% of the cover page is shaded black.
This is the percentage of the land in South Africa that is allocated by the Apartheid Government to the Africans, who total 18,629,000 (77% of the population) . The 4,320,000 whites (16%) are given the exclusive use of the remaining 87.1% of the territory - of course, the most fertile and productive land. (These figures exclude the so-called Coloureds and Indians.)
This special double issue of Ideas and Action has been produced by FFH/Action for Development to mark the United Nations Anti-Apartheid Year (21 March 1978 _ 20 March 1979).
There has been so much written on South Africa that it is indeed difficult to say anything strikingly new on the subject and not just to add to all the slogans and rhetoric that are all too easily brought out for’ such occasions. However, we think that this issue, with its focus on Apartheid as it affects the African population in the fields of agriculture, nutrition and rural development - the specific concerns of FAO - does contain some valuable and up-to-date information which can be of use to those striving to improve the lot of their people.
The research that has gone into this issue has been made possible thanks to a grant from the UN Committee on Apartheid.
The material has been prepared by a group working with the Policy Studies Unit in the United Kingdom, including: Neil Andersson, Alan Baldwin, Jenny and William Beinart, Doris Burgess, Lionel Cliffe, June Dumela, Bolzwe Mafuna, Victor Machingaidze, Richard Moorsom, Margal et Prescott, Elaine Unterhalter. Additional queries concerning the texts should be addressed to the Editor, Ideas and M Bulletin, FAO, Rome.
As articles have been prepared by a number of different authors (most of them of South African origin), a certain amount of repetition has been unavoidable. However we do not expect our public to plough straight through this rather substantial text but, rather, that they will use it as source material and for reference purposes. We hope that this bulletin will contribute in a modest way to the struggle of the African population of South Africa for’ a new and just society.
V . u . 1
The preparation of this issue originally included 1 articles on Apartheid as it affects the black rural populations of Namibia and Zimbabwe. For’ space reasons it was not possible to include them here, but the texts are repnoduced in an annex which is being distributed tO- ; gether With thls issue. i J

apartheid is a system which, in economic terms, assures a plentiful supply of inexpensive black labour to fuel a high rate of growth for the South African econom y. The core of this system is the industrial heartland of the country - the southern Transvaal and the north of the Orange Free State, plus the coastal cities of Natal and Cape Province. The periphery of the system is a large network of black labour reserves in a land area that stretches from the Cape in the south for over two tlzousand kilometres up towards the north.

The labour system is thus an international one, giving an underlying unity to the economy of the region as a whole. The same kinds of mechanisms whereby Africans have been forced off the rich land, denied the right to produce for agricultural commodity markets, forced into contract labour in the mines, plantations, farms, manufacturing and service industries of 'white' southern African have been at work throughout all the region.

Most of the states in Southern Africa are funda_ mentally rural. A number of them lack fertile sons and what agriculture exists suffers from over-grazing. And,in spite of their accession to political independence in recent years, the economic structures that have been welded over the past century make it extremely difficult for them to assert their' economic independence. However, recent years have seen increased and courageous attempts of some of these states to stand up to their powerful southern neighbour. But the fundamental decisions that affect the people's lives - rates of pay and terms of labour contracts, pass control, job reservation and the myriad labour laws that control and regulate the labour flow - are still taken in the industrial heartland of South Africa .

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But, in another sense, these rural areas are not peripheral to the system. The black labour that is reproduced and, so to speak, 'stored' in the reserves is the very basis of the wealth and privileges of the white population of South Africa and of the international capital invested there. Black wages do not cover the costs Of the reproduction of black labour power. These costs are born by families - especially the women of the families who try to scratch a living from tiny plots of land in the reserves. It is this inter-connectedness 0f the whole region within the one system which is at the heart of this survey of Apartheid and agriculture .

The first part begins with ahistor'ical sketch showing how the Cheap labour system developed up until the present day, tracing the two interwoven themes of land and labour. We then look at how the migrant labour system has operated outside South Africa's borders and the effects it has had on the overwhelmingly rural economies of these neighbour'-ing countries. The following article examines the 'white' agricultural sector in South Africa and the conditions of black labour on the farms. This is followed by studies that explore the impact of the Apartheid s; stem on the black people of South Africa: specifically, on African ruralfamilies and on nutrition standards.

Finally, because of the white regime's policy to create puppet 'independent' states, known as Bantustans, there is a case study of agriculture in the Transkei, the first Bantustan to be given 'independence' , followed by a brief sketch Of the agricultural situation in the Bantustans as a wholc.

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iAun
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the history of settlement

Prior to European settlement and expansion, the indigenous peoples of southern Africa, the Khoi and the San (commonl) but incorrectly and disparagingl) called Hottentots and Eushmen res)ectix eh) and the two Bantu-speaking groups, the Nguni and Sotho, developed their own social organizations in harmon) with their environment. They lived either as nomadic pastoralists, or as arable phoducer’s and/or herders. Some of them were craft and metal workers. Land was not, scarce, nor was it a commodity that could he brought and sold. Population size was manageable and there was rivalr) and conflict in onl) a few areas, mainl) involving Khoiszm subordination hy INguni oh Sotho.

After 1552, Dutch settlement at the Capo led to tho enslavement 0f the Khoisun. But it took (mother hundred years or so before the expansion of the Dutch along) the coast brought lartge-scalo conflict, with one Nngi group _ the Xhosa people. Man) battles were fought in the htte lilth century along the ’boruiert around the Fish River, with tho Xhosas being restricted to the east of the river.

hi the first quarter of the 19th centur) there Wore twu developments Of great significance. The British colonized the Cape, Officially from 180?)th established their H110 Often in conflict with the Dutch,xx’ho were well entrenched. Laws against slavery and sizeahlo English settlement alienated the Dutch farmers who began the ,rtocess oi’ moving further and further from the Cape in search otlund and independence.

The second event Was the tremendous UDhCQVQlS amongst the Nguni and Sotho known as the mfecane (litmually, the ’hammerting’) which was sparked off by the rise of

the militaristic Zulu kingdom under Shaka. The reverbera-
tions were felt throughout the sub-continent, with rapid
migrations on a massive scale as far north as modern
M alawi and beyond .
In the twenty years after 1818 the African demographic
pattern was totally altered. This meant that subsequent
white expansion into the interior met with little resistance
from the scattered and disorganized groups which remained
on the highveld,. The main Sotho groups had retreated
and regathered on the fringes of two plateaus in the
mountains.or the desert. The iTrek E'oers' (the migrating
farmers of Dutch origin) met with strong resistance in
Natal from the Zulus and from the Tswana, Southern Sotho
and Pedi in the west, east and north. However they were
able to colonize with relative ease what was to ceccme the
Orange Free State and the Southern Transvaal.
By the 1840s the English dominated the southern
coastal areas, the Boers held most of the land in the inte-
rior,whi1e the Africans were marginalized to the less hos-
pitable regions.
conunandeering a labour force
Slavery had been practised at the Cape throughout the
18th century,with the Khoisan at first and then indentured
slaves from East Africa,and even India and Malaya. When
they moved north and east,the Trek Boers took their slaves
with them . After slavery was officially abolished, there
was some modification, but the Masters and Servants Act,
passed in 1856, actually mair.tained agricultural labour in
a state Of helotry y throughout the areas of whitesettlement.
By the middle of the 19th century the whites were
well-entrenched politically within the two English colonies
of the Cape Province and Natal and the two Boer republics
of the Orange Free State and the 'South African Republic'
(later to be known as Transvaal). In all areas the whites
were in possession of most of the land. in 1U52, for example,
Natal was divided into 570 06-0 hectares for the Africans
and 5 110 000 hectares for the whites. Land shortage
am ongst the Africans ensured the limited supply of new
labour that was required by the fairly backward agricultural
l/ helot: one of the lowest class (serfs) Of the people of
Ancient Sparta (Greece).
'the peopTe recentTy defeated Portuguese coToniaTism.
WHAT IS APARTHEID?
Southern Africa is today the onTy part of the African
continent where white minority governments stiTT ruTe. The
three countries under white domination are: South Africa,
Namibia and Zimbabwe (Rhodesia).
In South Africa, four miTTion whites controT the Tives
of T8 miTTion Africans, 2 1/2 miTTion peopTe of mixed race
(cTassified as 'CoToured' in Southern Africa) and three
quarters of a miTTion peopTe of Indian origin. In Namibia
(formerTy South West Africa) South Africa iTTegaTTy occupies
the country in defiance of a United Nations decision which
officiaTTy ended South Africa's mandate (or temporary right)
to ruTe the territory. In Zimbabwe (Rhodesia) a quarter of
a miTTion whites ruTe over six miTTion Africans.
The southern African region aTso incTudes the three
former British protectorates - now independent countries but
heaviTy reTiant on South Africa economicaTTy - Botswana,
SwaziTand and Lesotho. Then to the north and east Tie the
newTy independent states of AngoTa and Mozambique - where
The popuTation figures for the three white controTTed
countries are:

	africans	coloureds	indians	whites
South Africa	T8 629 000	2 434 000	746 000	4 320 000 1/
Namibia	665 000	88 000	-	99 000 2/
Rhodesia	6 440 000	22 000	TO 300	268 000 E/

1/ 1976 Department of Statistics, Pretoria (June, T977).
3/ T974 SWA Survey (Department of Foreign Affairs, R S A.),
1975.
g/ T977 CentraT StatisticaT Office, SaTisbury (JuTy, T977).

economy. Apart. from some 0011111111rci111 farming in the
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African farmers had in some areas been buying up land and
developing productive and profitable agriculture. F011 an-
other, Africans were not ’voluntecring’ for service in the
mines in sufficient numbers Therefore, from the 1880s,
1110 mining companies were having to cast their recruitment
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land in the country. Secondly, from the point of view of the national economy, the relative unim portance of agriculture did not warrant an intervention by the South African state on behalf of the white farmers in particular . It seems that the main reason for such a drastic intervention was labour. Whether in the mines or in agriculture, all employers in South Africa at this time were clamourm ing for labour, the bulk of which was black. But if the blacks had had sufficient land for their own subsistence they would have been unavailable as cheap migrant labour. Therefore, both the creation of an artificial scarcity of land by the governm ent and the suppression of the emergence of any capitalist farmers amongst them by denying those who could afford it the right to buy back their land wherever possible, were designed to guarantee a steady flow of black labour to white centres of employment.

"Asis shown by the outcry among black intellectuals, peasants and workers alike, the full implications of the law did not escape the Africans. In fact, the 1913 Land Act was known, and is still regarded as the -’Iaw of dispossessionl among them . Lack of political and constitutional rights under the Act of Union made sure that there was nothing they could do to reverse the process."

In the period after the First World War, South Africa experienced rapid urbanization of both whites and blacks. Further legislative controls over blacks followed and the greater institutionalization of racial divisions. Tensions were created by the contradiction, on the one hand of having to absorb the sizeable white labour force leaving the land for the cities whilst, on the other, maintaining the cheap black labour force on which the economy was foundedc The emergence of ’poor whites’ was a major cause of the rise of the Afrikaaner Nationalist Party which eventually took power in 1948 and tightened up the racist policies into the fuIIy-fledged ’Apartheid’ programme.

Land hunger amongst the Africans has beenincreasing-Iy acute since 1913. The lNative Problem’ as identified by the then United Party government was a mixture of this land shortage and the competition over jobs caused by rapid urbanization. The 1936 Native Trust and Land Act was intended to ’alleviate the pressure’ in the reserves by adding a further 6.2 million hectares to the area which Africans were allowed to occupy. This brought the re_ serves up to a possible 13.7 per cent of the total land area. It was to be the final allocation, fixed for all time. In fact, this total has still not been reached,as the current Bantustans constitute only 12.9 per cent of the total land.

7

Also at this time, further measures were taken (the Native Laws Amendment Act, 1937) to control African influx to the towns and to allow for their expulsion when their labour was no longer required .

Until the First World War, Southern Africa was still a fairly underdeveloped region within the international economy. South Africa produced gold and diamonds for the international market and imported its manufactured goods. In the inter-war years a massive programme of industrialization was begun,using overseas capital. This process was intensified after the Second World War with the deve-Iopment of a large consumer goods industry. African labour from the impoverished reserves and the white farms was readily available for this industrial expansion but the state stepped in to prevent the emergence of a black urbanized proletariat. They expanded the contract labour system of the mining sector to cover aII sectors of the economy with the huge apparatus we know today - the pass system, labour bureaus and influx control laws.

Whilst the groundwork was established well before-hand, and the historical trend was very clear, it was the Nationalist Government that came into power in 1948 which institutionalized the system as it operates today. They

took the principles of the segregation policy _ 'native reserves', urban compounds and townships, and migratory labour - and worked out the sophisticated system of Apartheid which has been able to withstand the 'winds of change' and pressures of black nationalism and white liberalism. This apparently durable system has provided prosperity and security for the white South African; and high profit returns for local and international capital. Control of labour is the Clue to this system; control over land is the mechanism groviding control over labour. The reserves, now called the Eantustans, are the remnants of Iand available for African agriculture. It is the smallness, overcrowding and unproductiveness of these reserves which guarantees an unending source of Cheap labour to the industrial centres, the mines and the white farms. But it is their very existence and the supposed subsistence living eked out from the reserves which is used to explain and justify the migrant labour system . The African worker IS only in the 'white' area to sell his labour before returning to his 'home' in the reserve where his family is, where he retires to and where the next generation of workers is raised. Thus goes the argument " a neat rationaIization for appallingly low wages, based on the assumption that they are supplemented by subsistence agriculture.

The state has always played an active role in this control of labour. Prior to 1914 its primary concern was with the attraction of labour. From then onwards, until the end of the 19505, its role was one of redistributing labour to where it was needed. This involved balancing out the needs of the mines, manufacturing industry and agriculture, as well as playing off internal as against foreign workers. In the last period, from roughly 1960, the state has changed its role to that of repelling labour from the urban areas and from the white farms, through wholesale removals as well as individual 'endorsing out' from the cities and towns. Africans must only be in the white areas to minister to the needs of the whites, says the government. When not doing so, they must survive as best they Can in the reserves.

the crises of the african rural areas today

These reserves are, however, in such desperate straits, as we shall document in a succeeding article, that they cannot re-absorb people. Returned migrants will have no access to land, and can only count on rural 'lodgings' there. For this reason the only way they will go back to the homelands is if they are forced to do so. Hence all the recent legislation in tightening up influx controls, eroding rights to remain in the urban areas, increasing endorsement of people out, and the wholesale removals.

Mafeje sums up the overall situation today in these terms:

"As a result of policies that have remained basically unchanged over the last half century concerning land and labour and a whole series of laws and regulations to enact such policies, Africans have become marginalized - in every sense - in their own country.

"'ln the years preceding the 1910 Act of Union, conquest of land by the whites had led to their appropriating most of this basic resource for themselves _ particularly the most fertile areas (as well as those containing mineral resources, the larger urban centres and coast lines). This division was institutionalized through the Land Act of 1915 which allocated a mere 7.9 per cent of the total land surface to the Africans, who constituted four-til'ths of the population. This land was referred to as the 1Native Reserves' and comprised such areas as the Transkei, Ciskei and Zululand.

"In the rest of the icountry Africans were not allowed to hold land or have access to it, except as 'squatters' , who were expected in return to provide the white farmers with Cheap manpower, unprotected by any labour legislation. This policy, which was so advantageous to white farmers, as well as to the mines and the growing industrial sector, did however pose a number of political, social and economic problems to the South African Government. lts response was to throw the excess population, especially the unemployed, the aged, the women and the children, back into the Native Reserves where the the land resources were already inadequate. In recognition of their new responsibilities the reserves were promoted to the status of Eantustans.

"Fundamentally, the Bantustans represent an attempt, by the South African Government, to resolve these contradictions in a way that is compatible with the overall policies of the ruling minority regime. Cn the economic side, Eantustans entail a method of controlling the permanent labour reserve that keeps costs down and discourages the development of strong labour organizations. The) also absolve the South African state from meeting the social costs normally associated with development, i.o. schooling, health, pensions, etc. Culturally, they represent an artificial retribalization of people whose traditional social structures have already been pHactically demolished over the past century, with the growth of the

modern industrial state.
"All this is presented in the guise of 'independent states' in which the Hack peoples of South Africa will allegedly be free to follow their own development policies. However, this is a proposition that is neither economically Viable, from the point of view of the states themselves, nor politically acceptable to the people involved "
V

"Migrant labour perpetuates the evil of apartheid and retards social and economic advance in the states supplying labour."
(Resolution of the Executive C/ommittee, UN Economic Commission for/Africa, May 1978)

MIGRANT LABOUR and its IMPACT on SOUTH AFRICA'S NEIGHBOUBS __1

Form the earliest days of settlement at the Cape, white employers have drawn their labour from far afield. The mines in particular have consistently relied on contract labour from beyond South Africa's borders. For much of this century, three-quarters of the migrant workers have been 'for'cign natives1 , brought in b), the special recruiting agencies set up throughout southern Africa.

The pattern of recruitment has changed significantly in the 19705. Recruitment from Malawi stopped between 1974 and 1977; from Lesotho, more briefly, in 1975. Since its Independence the very large flow from Mozambique has dropped appreciably. At the same time, the mines have responded to tho upheavals in the supply countries by diversif/ing their recruitment . In 1973 Rhodesia began to supply migrants for the first time since 1912. But, in particular, South Africa has learned more heavily on the population of the Bantustans: from a quarter of the total number of workers in 1970 they .md as much as half of the total in 1978.

There are marked differences between the various countries from which labour is drawn. Lesotho and Swaziland are small states virtually surrounded by South

RECRUITMENT 0F WORKERS BY SOUTH AFRICA 1

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Africa. Botswana, in spite Of its vast territory, has a
population scarcely larger than that of Lesotho.
Mozambique and Malawi are larger countries, more T
distant and with separate outlets to the rest of the world, his is a song the migrant workers From Lesotho
where labour supply has affected only certain regions of sing as they cross the Caledon River (’Mohokare’)
the country- into South Africa:
Nevertheless, comm on processes have been at
work in them all. One experience they all seem to have Mohokare, now I aSl’me another blanket,
gone through (with Swaziland as perhaps the one excepe NOW that 1 have crossed you _
tion), is that they all took advantage Of their first contact
with the expanding mine econom y by expanding peasant
production to meet the new market it offered for food.
Wash me from my profanations I have had
With women at home.
Later, these commercial cpenings were gradually closed Here I cross to the Other Side
through tax burdens and adverse prices for their products And I do not know What dangers may face me -
imposed by the colonial powers. The gresent backward- Perhaps this is the Iast time I cross you here.
ness Of their a ricultures is not a ’n tural’ condition but And if ever I have the chance of crossing you aqain
8 min uced Nash me cIean, Mohokare, and make me a pure man.
Thereafter, it was the continued underdevelopment Make me a man WhO IS H t to go to heaven .
of their agricultures which was the mechanism that gua- Cl ean me from my sins because I am gOi ng t0
ranteed the continued flow of migrants. Given alternative The dangerous pl ace where I may 1088 my er .
sources of cash, the men would not have gone. Yet itwas
the possibility of the peasant economy continuing to pro-
vide some subsistence for the migrants’ families which NOW ll: I ever do nOt come baCk,
made their labour available, and on such advantageous lt Wl ll be jUSt unfortunate.
terms to the white employers. But agriculture tended to BUt NOW that I have crossed you ,
decline below the level .where basic subsistence could be All the evil things I have domemet and food had to be imported - thus in turn emphasiz- May they move wi th you and go down .
ing the dependence of the peasants and their country on
continued flows of migrant labour. _ .
In cr0551ng the river I have become a new man,
A Hnaltrendthatcan beinarkedthroughoutthe Different from the one I was at home.
region is the effect on the fabric of society. Wom’en At home 1 was secure
have had to become breadwinners and heads of family, But now that I am on thi S side
on a temporary or long-term basis. But as their labour
became more prized, ’securing’ them through the pay- I am m a pIace Of danger,
ment of bride-wealth became a monetary operation, s0 Where I may lose my life at any time .
their status was in some respects downgraded. They be- SO prepare me TC0r death. - .
came subject to a double exploitation, working hard to pro-
vide the basic necessities for their familiesnwhich ultima- (Translated from Sesotho)
tely made possible Cheap labour for the South African
employers.
Many of these problems are being recognized by the
countries concerned and they are beginning to explore to-
gether ways in Which they Can reduce their dependence,
or at least win better terms from the migration on which
they are, in the short run, dependent. The brief case
studies below illustrate the specific patterns that have now
to be reversed .

LESOTHO
population 1 300 000
area 30 000 Square Kilometres
density 43 persons per square kilometre
small, mountainous; surrounded by
South Africa
environm ent
econom y exports small amounts of wool , Cattle;
imports much maize
independence 1966
political system constitutional monarchy

Lesotho has not always been a barren country dependent on the export of its labour. Prior to the colonial period the Basotho enjoyed a thriving econom y based on agricultural production - sorghum , beans, pumpkins, melons - animal husbandry and on metal and craft working. They tended to live in quite large settlements, several towns having populations over 10 000 in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

In the 18505 and 187(3, Basotho peasant farmers began exporting grain to the new markets on the diamond fields around Kimberley. One hundred thousant bagsof grain (maize, wheat and sorghum) were exported in 1873. But the prosperity was short-lived. Lesotholost much of its fertile land to the Boers, being restricted to uplands under British lProtectorate' status. The cash wages of the diam 0nd fields were an attraction for labour from Lesotho which was thus removed from agricultural production (one of the chief motivations of migrancy at this stage was to earn cash to buy guns with which to defend Lesotho against Boer incursions).

'l'l

Drought in the early 1880s further undermined production and1by the time the South African goldfields were opened up after 18863Lesotho exports were severe-1y restricted by import barriers established by the Transvaal administration and by competition from cheap grain from North America and Australia, facilitated by the new railway from the Cape.

However , Lesotho continued to be self-sufficient in grain and to export its surplus until the 19303. Migrant labour, though involving a high proportion of the active males, did not kill off agricultural production immediately. However, world prices for maize, wool and mohair (Lesotho's main exports), while improving in the 19205, collapsed following the slump of 1929. This devastated the Lesotho econom y. Droughts in the 19305 accentuated the process and when, after 1936, the new goldfields in the Orange Free State increased the demand for more mine labour, the impoverished peasants of Lesotho were sucked in.

Ever since, the Lesotho economy has been subordinate to its role as a labour reserve for South Africa. Agricultural production has dropped considerably. Yields of all the basic staples have gone down: the production of maize has almost halved each decade since 1950. In 1967-69, 60 per cent of rural incomes came from agriculture. B) 1973-74, it was down to 30 per cent and in 1977 it stood at onl) 15 per cent.

The picture in the late 19705 is that Lesotho is becoming ever more dependent on migrant labour. Forty-five per cent of male workers are employed in South Africa at any one tirne,whi1e 60 per cent of rural family income derives from migrant earnings. The signs are that South Africa will seek to m aintain migrant recruitment from Lesotho at about existing levels, at the same time as it will be declining from Mozambique and Malawi and increasing dramatically from the Bantustans. What are the main effects? Obviously migrant earnings constitute a major source of incomea Surveys in different parts of the country indicate an increase in

rural family income in recent years from an average of 200 randiyf in 1967-9 to 800 rand in 1977. Some of this has been eaten away by inflation: the cost of living rose between 1972 and 1974 by 28.4 per cent. Migrant earnings also have a distorting effect on the distribution of income, as virtually all migrant earnings are spent on

19 1 rand : 0.850 dollar

consumer goods, including food, for the migrant and his immediate family. Thus, increasingly, wealth depends on having claims to migrants' earnings.

ln social terms, migrant labour has monetarized many of the traditional relationships, and institutions such as bride-wealth (bohali). Paid out of migrant earnings, bohali is the main form of redistribution of income to the senior generation. Com petition over claims to such income have maintained traditional kinship structures whilst exacerbating kin conflict.

The disastrous effects of migrant labour on agriculture continue, as little is invested in agriculture and potential manpower is drained away. Lack of agricultural investment is a m ajor cause of soil erosion in the highlands which is denuding what little productive land remains. Ecologically, Lesotho is becoming a desert, through lack of programmes to protect the soil.

This presents a bleak picture, but in recent years there has at least been a greater awareness of the problems. The likelihood of creating alternative employment within Lesotho for the migrants, either in agriculture or industry, is however very small. Government plans give an objective of 1 000 new jobs in manufacturing and 2 500 in construction by 1980 (and expect to develop trade links by utilizing favourable terms through the Lome Convention). They also hope to encourage firms to pull out Of Apartheid South Africa and invest in Lesotho.

Another course of action is to make greater demands on the mining companies and the South African government concerning the pa) and conditions of miners, recognizing that withdrawal from this whole system is impossible. Lesotho's Citizens create vast wealth for South Africa and its mining houses, who realize profits of around 150 million rand each year. But Lesotho sees nothing of this.

Historically, Lesotho's development has been intrinsically bound up with that of its giant neighbour. Clearly, its future will also be so tied. Solutions to her problems Cannot be found within the borders of Lesotho, but Only as a result of changes in the broader political econOm y of the region.

SWAZILAND

population 000 000
area 1/ UUU Square kilometres
density 35 persons per square kilometre
environment very small, mainl) mountainous, but with some lowland areas.
economy exports sugar, iron, ore, citrus (all produced b3 foreigners);
imports maize
independence 1955
political S) stem monarchy;

bThe number of Swazi working in South Africa (some 25 000) may not make the country seem like a major labour reserve. However, as a proportion of a tiny population of less than half a million, their absence has been significant enough to affect local agriculture. Besides, the South African system has wreaked its havoc on the indigenous rural society in other ways. The 19th century kingdom was greatly reduced in size in the second part of the centur) , its administration being taken over by the Boer South African Republik. It was given British Protectorate status after the Boer War.

This Protectorate status did not prevent what even colonial documents called 'an economic conquest' . Be.-ginning in the 18505, and mushrooming in the 18805 and 1890s, miners looking for gold and tin, and Afrikaner sheep farmers looking for winter grazing Vied for cone cessions in the kingdom's remaining areas. By the end

of the century all the land had been given in concessions three or four times over. The Swazi ruler thought he was giving rights to use the land. But the eoneessionaires preferred to interpret the rights in their own way: the land was theirs.

The British rationalized the situation on establishing their over-rule, making the concessionaires give up a third of 'their' areas, but in return they were given freehold rights rather than temporary leases.

The 'modern' sector of Swazi agriculture and forestry is little more than an extension Of the white agriculture of South Africa. Moreover the interests of the

white settlers and the estates meshed very closely with those of the mine recruiters. They too wanted cheap labour and also tended to rely on migrant labour.
The estates, until recently, relied on housing their labour-force in workers' compounds. They too were anxious to prevent potential workers having an alternative source of livelihood through the development of Cash crop production in the peasant areas, and indeed they stifled such competition through their control of the markets .
One result of this occupation of the land has been an agricultural labour force which is now larger than the number of emigrant workers going to South Africa, and paid wages which publicity, for potential new investors, proudly claims are lower than those in South Africa.
Helping to ensure the supply of cheap labour is the fact that the rural Swazi population has been trapped into the 1Swazi National Land' , which a British Land Mission, appointed in 1969, considered "insufficient to provide them with a reasonable standard of living" . Other Swazi - perhaps some 20 000 families - are forced to live as squatters, in their own country, on this foreign-owned land. Moreover when,in the 197Osjdevelopmentl schemes got under way to transfer a further proportion of alienated land to alleviate the land shortage, a condition 'of the 'aid' that financed it was that the absentee owners should be paid the full market price - at the time grossly inflated by earlier speculation - for land that had stood idle for many years.
Before the colonial encroachment, the indigenous agricultural system of the Swazi was more than adequate to provide for the subsistence needs of the people. It was based on the extended family production of basic food crops including sorghum , beans and pumpkinsgand later (and more crucially), maize. Plots were allocated by the local rulers;every family had a right to them . But livestock figured prominently and larger herds and tribute labour were the bases for an aristocratic hierarchy .
This self-sufficiency was not immediately under .
mined by the colonial expansion. But there was no mechanism whereby the emerging cash needs - as a result of taxes and trade goods - could be met through the sale of any agricultural surplus. And any prospect for de_veloping commercial crops or trade outlets for them was systematically ignored by the colonial government. There was no attempt to provide extension advice to African agriculture until the 1930s, and precious little thereafter.
Until 1960 the total marketed production of Swazi peasants was infinitesimal and even today they areresponsible for less than 10 per cent of all marketed produce. Only a quarter of rural families derive any cash income at all from crops. Moreover the Swa21 peasant economy produces only half of its basic food needs. And although the proportion of 'Swazi National Land' has since gone from just over a third to some 55 per cent, the people still find themselves confined to a fraction of their own country, surviving as small, almost entirely subsistence farmers.
They venture out as migrant labourers to the land of Apartheid which summons them on three sides, or offer themselves as even cheaper labourers to white farmers of largely South African origin, or to the large sugar and other agro-business concerns that have spread up from Natal. The result is that African agriculture has been neglected for a century.
Despite the alienation of land by whites, much of their land remained unused - indeed most of it in the 1930s. Even in the 19705 perhaps half is still unculti_vated. Many of the European owners were, in fact, absentee landlords (40 per cent of the 500 who held land titles in a 1932 survey).
Apart from some ranching for export and winter

grazing of sheep near the border, significant commercial development only occurred in the 19508. Sugar was the major new crop introduced - almost exclusively on large, irrigated and corporate owned estates. It has become the country’s m ain export and the largest employer, requiring 5 000 workers.

The worst affected are those with few or no cattle _ over a third of all rural households have no livestock of any kind. Five per cent have neither land nor animals. Having no cattle means dependence on crops and at the same time it means no oxen for ploughing. Thus the family is condemned to bare subsistence. As the men-folk of such families seek work to survive, this left the burden of farming among these poorest families squarely on the women. A recent survey found 35 per cent of home steads were left without any resident m ales over the age of16. As long as they are relegated to only half of their own land, and subject to a neglected and declining agri-culture, the Swazis will have little choice but to offer themselves as excessively cheap labour to South African owned mines and plantations either in the Republic or within their own borders.

BOTSWANA
700 000
area 570 000 square kilometres
population
density 1.5 person per square kilometre
environment dry, mostly desert
economy exports Cattle, copper, diamonds;
imports maize and other basic foods
independence 1966
political system elected President and National Assembly

Agriculture in Botswana is in crisis. ltis suffering from severe environmental deterioration, which many observers fear is reaching disaster proportions. There is overgrazing of the traditional pastures while the spread of semi-desert areas is quickly undermining their ecological stability. Agricultural production per head is less now than it was twenty years ago.

The causes are many and complex. Some of them go back to the beginnings of white settlement in the surrounding areas. Certainly a crucial factor in this whole history is the shadow cast by its powerful neighbour, South Africa. While avoiding being incorporated into the Republic, Botswana has to face the legacy of being an economic appendage of South Africa over the last hundred years .

The early expansion of white settlement from the Cape up towards the several small African states that were to become the British Protectorate of Bechuanaland, at first provided development opportunities. A prosperous trade in livestock, in grain, in more exotic pro_ducts like ivory and ostrich feathers, provided commercial openings to which the Tswana responded. But the prices of cattle and other foods began to decline about the turn of the century with the expansion of white farming in South Africa and Rhodesia.

The final blow was struck in the 19205 when a ban was placed on the import of all but the fattest, high qua_lity beasts into the South African market. This protee_ted white ranchers within South Africa, and their km in the border areas of Botswana, but removed the biggest single market for Botswana produce. It is a familiar story.

With the closure of markets for the surplus agricultural produce there was nothing that most Tswana could do except fall back on migrant labour to the south in order to get the cash to pay their taxes and levies, and to meet the dem ands for new trade goods. It was also important in the local culture to seek to build up herds - one important reason being for bridewealth - and the earning of cash to do this fostered a flood of would-be migrants.

In fact, the first instances of mine labourers from Botswana date back to the 18705. But, beginning with some 5 000 about 1930, the flow began to double every five years. It is over 40 000 today. For the last forty years, over 20 per cent of adult males have been absent at any one time. And almost all men will have had some experience of working in South Africa during their adult life. In the last few years recruitment has been stepped up - from 48 000 in 1974 to 60 000 in 1977, about half of whom have gone to the mines. The significance of this figure for the Botswana econom)’ can be appreciated if it is realized that the total of those in any kind of paid employment inside the country is only 65 000.

Tho Botswana school learner has ’two options: migration or unemployment’

0 UN Economic Commission for Africa report

The agriculture of the area was not alWays in such a critical condition. Early accounts by explorers and

missionaries talk of vast, rich fields of grain, as well as large herds. The population of the 19th century was not only able to feed itself adequately but was involved in a trade disposing of its surplus long before colonial rule was established in the 1880s.

The agricultural areas where most people lived then, as now, were in fact confined to a quite narrow strip of better-watered land along the eastern borders and in the-northern corner. Much of the rest of this huge territory is desert (the Kalahari) or semi-desert.

The agricultural system in the east, was based on both livestock and crop husbandry. All the families living in what were fairly sizeable villages cultivated their fields in a block side by side. Often these lLancls' consisted of the more fertile pockets, or ones not over-cultivated within what were generally still areas only marginal to settled agriculture. Cattle-owners _ some families had none, while the Chiefs were very large herders - grazed their herds at 'eattle posts' even further off. An ecological balance which ensured good returns in what was a very marginal area for agriculture was maintained by the regular moving of Lands and cattle posts and through control of land use by the chiefs to prevent overegrazing and over_eropping. Within this system , basic subsistence for all was guaranteed because every fam ily had the right to the use of some farm land.

During this century a number of factors have combined to undermine both the ecological viability of much of the land and the ability of the poor to meet their own subsistence needs. The introduction of the plough has become general and with it oxen have a crucial part in crop production. However the position of many poor families without enough cattle for a ploughing team becomes precarious: they have to pay for their ploughing. To be able to do this, they are forced to become m igrant workers. Those for whom this is not possible tend, in practice, to lose access to any of the Lands. This happens especially to rural hom esteads with fem ale heads of household - over 30 per cent - as worn en find it difficult to migrate, have no access to cattle and fewer rights to land than men.

More generally, the poorer families are in a more precarious position because the old kinship ties have,to a large extent, broken down under the impact of an increasingly commercialized way of life. Private rights to grazing land and to water supplies are being asserted and even private rights to farm land.

Thus access to land is denied to many. In such ways Botswana has experienced all the disturbing effects of the onset of a money economy with precious few of its benefits. The only exceptions are those with large herds. For the rest there is an ever-deepening circle of poverty: trying to eke out a living on diminishing land areas with deteriorating fertility or forced to migrate to supplement family income.

MALAWI

population
5 600 COO
area 94.00 square kilometres
density 60 persons per square kilometre
environment lakeside with mountains;
adequate rainfall , fertility
economy exports tobacco, tea, cotton, groundnuts; self-sufficient in staple foods
independence 1954
political system life President, head of single party

Labour migration from Malawi, although it began at the end of the 19th century, only took on significant proportions from the 19305. Even then, because of distance and greater agricultural potential, Malawi has never been solely a labour reserve.

Colonial policy aimed at creating two forms of commercial agriculture, alongside the subsistence sector. One was the European-run plantation, producing chiefl3 coffee and tobacco and later tea, and the other was peasant-based production, mainly of cotton and, later, tobacco. Labour migration began, then, against a background of a moderately sound agricultural eeonom y .

Malawian workers have migrated to both South Africa and Southern Rhodesia in roughly equal numbers. Migration increased dramatically in the 19303, from

30 000 in 1931. By 1970 it had reached 300 000, roughly 30 per cent of the adult male population. This has seriously deprived the rural areas of manpower, creating a preponderance of female heads of household. In economic terms, cash remittances from their menfolk became Malawi’s third largest source of revenue, after tea and tobacco exports.

Recruitment of workers to South Africa was suddenl) terminated by the Malawian Government in April 1974, following an air crash which killed 72 Malawian miners in a recruiting agency plane. The effects were dramatic; 1 700 miners returned to Malawi each week as their contracts expired and no further recruit-

1S
ment took place untiI June 1977,when it was opened up again on the much more restricted basis of 20 000 per VCOP. A study by the South African Chamber of Mines (the detailed results of which have been kept secret) suggests that the effects of the. withdrawal were to increase the rate of migration to Zambia and Tanzania, to aggravate rural unemponment and pox’ert) and thus swell the driift, t0 the towns. In any event, it sex’erely strained MaIawi’s balance of pawnents.

As weII (is migrants (Whoreturn to their home after each contract), Malawi has also exported labour which has settled peFmanentIy abroad, becoming absorbed into that country’s workforce. There are, for example, an estimated 100 000 Malawians in Rhodesia, mainI) agricultural labourers - although new migration has Virtually stopped in recent)ezu’s.

In the first quarter of the centuri) , there were, some African commercial agriculture in cotton, tea and tobacco. B) 1930, African production accounted for 90 per cent of cotton exports and 60 per cent of tobacco exports. But three factors were to undermine this dex’eIopment: the worId-Wide econom ic slump; the team 01’ competit ion with White colonial farmers in Southern Rhodesia and KCII)(1; and recruitment to the South African m ines, which was stepped up as the ban on ’triopieul’ miners was IiIt ed and new gold fields were opened up . N)(15i.llilhki ((15 it uas then C(IIICKI) thus became more and more OI it labour" FCSCIWC hiom the 19305. From the 19405 the colonial government gave DPIOFII) to increasing the DPOKIUCIIOH OI European agriculture (1an this was l’utttheiu ed 1)) the Federation ot Rhodesia Lind N)(15(liglIILI.’

"It is hunt to escape, the Conclusion that the small farmers arm pz15ing tor Muluwi’s grandiose dew veIopment schemes. In mun) (iitetis the) have been thrown off their hind uithout compensation . .. (ind forced on to unpmxtuctive and, uhieh is starting to erode under the pressure OIDODHIUIIOH in the style OI South Africa’s R(IHIUSIUHS. ((

Novemher 191.77)

0 (African DeveIenment,

From Independence in 1964, therewus anemphasis on creating a class of small independent turmers h) registering individual titles to land. From this, (1 mp norityof ’progressive Itiritners’ has emerged, producing

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191’ the commercial market. It is these ten commer- CHII Imitneiis. and larger institutionuI landholders Who hm e lwenelitted at the expense of the smallholder.

. The resulting increase in Iandlessness (1nd the 11npoxieiiishment ot’ the small peasant is reflected in the changing emplopnent structure. The number of paid I employees rose 1)) 70 per cent since 1958, estate agri- culture, accounting tor 35 per cent of all jobs. TheI HUIVNI)CI’ 01’ registered unemployed has deut)Ied between 1969 (lllkI 1977. Furthermore, the incomes of the rurel pogr have. risen 38 per cent, between 1968 and 1976 WIHIC prices have risen 78 per cent. Thus the InCIFCaS ed wages being paid on the South African mIines have _ become stiII more attractive to Malawits rural poor.

MOZAMBIQUE
10 000 000
population
area 783 000 square kilometres 1
density 13 persons per square kilometre
environnment long coast-line rising to plateau; varied
economy exports cashew nuts, sugar, tea;
self-sufficient in staples
independence 1975 .
Political system executive President, head of single party
Eom the middle of the nineteenth century workers
from southern Mozambique have played a vital role in
the development of the South African economy. Initially
it was as farm labour to the sugar plantations of Natal
and the farms of the Cape, then from the late 1880s on-
wards, 60 per cent of the work of digging out the gold
from the Witwatersrand was done by migrant workers
from Mozambique and, until the 19705, Mozambique
remained one of the largest sources of mineworkers.
(Likewise white agriculture in Rhodesia depended on
Mozambique for many years; in the 19505 the flow of
workers in that direction was usually close to 50 000
a year.)
There was a series of agreements between the
Portuguese on the one hand, and, first, the Transvaal
government, then the Union of South Africa. Under
these agreements the mining companies, through their
agency WENELA, had monopoly rights of hiring
contract labour in return for the Transvaal using the
Mozambique railway and the port of Lourengo Marques
(now Maputo) for 50 per cent of its trade. Contracts
were limited to twelve months, but renewable. Recruit-
ing was restricted to south of the 22nd latitude and toa
ceiling of about 10 000, thus safeguarding the labour
needs of the Portuguese planters in the northern areas.
The revenue from the transport agreement, and
from labour exports, has been vital to the econom y of
Mozambique. In 1972, income from transport (the rail-
way and the port) amounted to 31 per cent of total current
revenue and the income from migrant labour was 12.5
17
per cent. Combined, this is almost as much as the
figure for total exports. Moreover, their foreign cur-
rency was obtained from the gold paid to Mozambique
by South Africa for the deferred pay of migrants.
Virtually all the adult male population of the three
southern provinces of Mozambique have spent some
time in the mines. At any given time, just under a
quarter of their male working population has been away
on mining contracts. Although there was intensified
recruitment in 1975, following the withdrawal of Malawian
miners, since then a decision by the Chamber of Mines
to reduce reliance on foreign migrants led to adownward
trend. And the newly independent Mozambique Govern-
ment has also taken steps to reduce the rate of migra-
tion to South Africa. ’
Portuguese colonialism created the preconditions
for the establishment of a labour reserve, chiefly through
the imposition of taxes which required a cash income,
and by the creation of land shortages, due to settler en-
croachment on African land. The best 28 per cent of
Mozambique’s cultivable land was colonized by European
settlers. There was, however, a further colonial insti-
tution which played a significant part in generating
migrant labour. That was the Chibalo or forced labour
system , a harsh, semi-slave system geared to meeting
the labour demands of the settlers. One way of avoiding
the horrors of Chibalo was to migrate to the mines.
The institutions of the traditional society adapted
to colonial rule and migrant labour 1 they had to do so.
The introduction of the Cash econom y monetarized ritu-

als like the bride-wealth. The payments to the bridels family at marriage by the prospective husband took on a Cash value which could only be achieved through migrant labour. In this, and other ways, the cash available from migrant labour became essential for peasant farmers to get established. In the more fortunate situations it remained at that. For the less lucky, oscillating migration to the mines became a set pattern for most of their working life. ’ ’

BLACK LABOUBEBS
WHITE FARMING
18

he Apartheid system depends not only on the links be-
tween impoverished African Reserves and white-ownedmines
and industries, but on a third dimension as well: the Iwhite'
farming areas. These cover most of the land area of the
Republic of South Africa and have played a centralrole in shap-
ing its history. In the process they have interacted with the
African rural areas and the towns in varying ways, at times
acting as a labour reservoir as great as the Reserves. In
pursuing their own pressing demands for labour, the white
farms have turned from labour tenancy to employing migrant
labour themselves. We will examine here the historical de_
velopment of this situation and its importance for the black
labourers.

The significance of the white rural areas Can be seen
from their size and economic value. The designated lwhite
areas' occupy 87 per cent of the whole land area of this large
country. Most of this is reserved for farming - a total of 89
million hectares in fact. Individual titles to all of this land
were already established by the early part of this century, and
are at present divided among some 90 000 farm holdings.
Clearly then the white farms are large - averaging about 1 000
hectares. They also contribute substantially to the national
product and to experts. Indeed, agart from gold, agriculture
still brings in more in export earnings than any other sector
of the economy.

The sugar, fruits, wine, wool and other products are of
course produced by AfriCans. The whites have always been
'gentlemen farmers'; for over a hundred years the social
mores of the settlers saw agricultural labour as something
below them - and, even when many poor whites became virtue
ally landless in the years after the Boer War, they would not
'deseend' to working the soil with their hands. So the black
labour force that works the 'whiteI farms has always been
very large. Perhaps one and a half million workers, if we
include seasonal labour, are employed today. Indeed if we
count their dependents, almost a quarter of all Africans live
in these rural areas that are officially dubbed 'white' .
Moreover they are amongst the most disadvantaged and
discriminated against. Agricultural wages are lower than in
all industrial work, even mining. Conditions vary between
localities, and official figures are hard to come by, but there
are still pockets where African workers may be paid less
than one dollar a day. For these workers there isnominimum
wage, no bargaining machinery, even of the limited kind that
exists for blacks in industry. Many of the workers have .
their passes stamped so that they can only work in farming.
Others are recruited as contract labourers, like the miners,

to live and work as single men for a season before being
shunted off home. Yet others have lived with their families
as tenants on what is legally 'white' land for years or even
generations, only to find, in recent years, that they are being
pushed off, and have become part of the huge 'removals'
problem.

Before exploring how this Ithird dimension' fits into the
overall working of Apartheid, and probing the conditions of
the life of blacks in the white farmlands, it is worth tracing
how this situation came into being.

White farming establishes its dominance

Over a period of two hundred years the conquering
whites took over the land, district by district, and at the
same time took over some of the Africans they had displaced,
as an involuntary labour force. The whites would carve out
estates on the frontier in a manner rem iniscent of European
feudalism, walking a horse for half an hour in each compass
direction and claiming the land - and the inhabitants _ so
marked off. By the mid-19th century the land had to be taken
by conquest, as the Transvaal, the Orange Free State and
Natal were settled.

Having pushed native possessors off the soil . . .

(the whites) felt the need of putting native
labourers back onto it . . ."
0 Sir Keith Hancock, SurveyoftBritish
Com m onwealth Affair $71942,
/
At that stage, white farmers were not producing prima-
ril) for the export market . Although wool was produced for export
from the mid_l9th century in areas that were in reach of the
ports, it took the development of railways at the end of the
century and the later provision of other supports before farm-
ing became completely commercialized. The traditional
3 OOO-heetare estates that were carved out needed labour, but
the landlords initially were unable to offer money wages. As
a result, various patterns of servitude have governed the lives
of Africans 0n the white farms, some of which persist until to-day .
At first the Africans were treated as ’squatters’ , and
this came to take one of two forms. Some’came to pay for
the right to live on the land and earned money where they

could - often from migrant labour. The others were victims of ’kaffir’ farming, as it was caIIed, whereby they were kept on a subsidiary farm , often on poor land, to maintain themselves as a labour pool until required on other farms. Later, especially in the Orange Free State, Africans were ’share-eroppers’ , being left on farms by absentee landowners with whom they divided their crop. The other patterns, which became more common as the white authorities pursued Apartheid policies designed to remove squatters, involved IIabour tenancyI . The tenant, in some cases, worked for a regular monthly wage - part cash, part rations-plus the right to cultivate a plot or pasture a few cattle. But under what was perhaps the most common form , until the 19605, the tenant contracted to provide so many days’ labour, first onIy 90 and then 180 a year - and that of his family when needed - for little or no payment but in return for the right to live on the farm .

"My grandfather woke one morning at his own kraal and found a white man who said: HYou are on m y farm and you must work for me.H
0 (A Chief of the Transvaal, quoted in E/Hellman, eLI.3Handbook on Race Relations imSouth Africa)

The lot of African labour on the farms was further worsened by virtue of being subject to the semi-serviIe conditions of a ’Masters and Servants Act’ . At the same time in history when other countries were aboIishing such legislation that bound an emponee to his ’master’ by unbreakable contract and gave the latter the right to punish his charge,the South African colonies were enacting such laws. In the Orange Free State such an Act was introduced as late as 1904, and an amendment of 1930 specifically extended these provisions to labour tenants. Reports of physical punishe ments, even deaths, under this code have continued up to the present. And because this law made it iIIegaI for a black worker to run away, they helped to guarantee a doeiIe, permanent labour supply and also kept wages at a subsistence level by eliminating; competition between emponers.

In recent years prosecutions under this Iaw have diminished. More efficient and generalized statutory controls over Africans removed the need for such aclumsy instrument, 4AF!
and the Act was finally abolished in 17/4. But nowadays, instead of a hue and cry set in motion by the individual boss when his worker absconds, the worker’s pass is simply stamped farm labourer and a computer does the rest.

The dominating role of the white farms was not limited to the way they treated their black labourers. In the effort to become more commercially productive they were able to demand priority treatment, and in the process undermined the prospects for African peasant farming in the Reserves. They had already taken control of most of the best land through conquest. Then the 1913 Land Act entrenched the white farmers’ monopon position. It designated the racial division of the land, thereby putting an end to any Chance of Africans buying land in the white areas, eliminating (intheory at least) what were Called the ’squatter locations’ or ’black spotsI where Africans had lived unmolested in the midst of white farming areas. It also curbed the rights of share-croppers, forcing more of them into mere wage labour or tenancy - and on the harshest terms.

Other acts of collusion followed. A Land Bank was established to provide extensive credit for white farmers only. Further support was extended to them by the development of agricuIturaI cooperatives and by the paying of export subsidies in the 1920s. Then in the next decade a series of marketing measures to bolster prices for white farmers were introduced and have been maintained. To keep pace with the resulting demand for labour - without paying more - there were further legislative measures. Local magistrates were empowered, by a mere. Iproclamation’ , to increase existing labour require_

ments from tenants to 180 days wherever existing agreements specified only 90. The curbs imposed by the Masters and Servants Act were extended to Iabour-tenants. And a Second Land Act of 1936 included measures to reduce the number of squatters on white farms - to make them and their land available for commercial farming.

White farming in South Africa then entered its most productive period and exports grew and have remained considerable. White incomes in farming have since then comDared not too unfavourany with those in the towns. But these ’achievements’ have only been made possible through an artifieial stimulus - the massive injection of state subsidies, credit, marketing supports, etc. The aggregate debt of the white agriculturaI sector had already topped one billion rand a decade ago. In 1973 state expenditure on white agriculture amounted to 203 million rand compared with 35 million rand on African agriculture in the Bantustans. In the words of the best known Afrikaner economic historian:

outh Africa is not an agricultural country . .
Without subsidy and under conditions of free
competition much of the land could not be eco-
nomically cultivated, and many of the agricultu-
ral and pastoral products could make no headway
against the products of New Zealand, Canada,
Argentina or the United States of America.
C.W. De Kiewiet, A History of South Africa
(1957)

The subsidies, of course, come from the revenues of the mining industry - whose enormous profitability is in turn based on super-cheap black labour. Competition, at least at home, is eliminated by virtue of the fact that all such farm supports and even the very existence ofamarketing structure are not extended to African peasant farmers. In fact, compe; tition by such low-eost producers had been a distinct possibi-lity around the turn of the century, as our articles on the Bantustans and on South Africa's neighbours show, until such opportunities were closed to African peasant farmers. In the last analysis, however, the chief subsidy was provided by those allepervasive controls on black labour which kept it so Cheap.

apartheid
and the control of farm labour

The intensive commercialization of white agriculture that occurred from the 19305 led to measures for intensifying the exploitation of black labour. Although there were migrant Workers, kaffir farming and pockets of squatters, the predo-minant form of em ployment remained labour tenancy until a few years ago. Under this system , the African labour worked for half the year on the farm , in return for a very sm all wage, grazed a few goats and cows, cultivated agarden patch and lived, in a kraal, a life that had a permanency and Which retained some meaningful clan or other community structure. These black residents of the white farms also sought to supplement their meagre cash income by migrant labour. Menfolk filled in the part of the year when not re-quired on the farm by going to the mines and towns; their sons might spend some years away on contracts. Thus the 'white' rural areas came to be a source of contract labour for the developing urban areas of South Africa.

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In an effort to' improve their labour situation without cost to themselves, white farming organizations began to campaign for legislation to eliminate the labour tenancy sys_ tem to prise Africans off white land and to force them into agricultural employment. The whole set of laws to intensify segregation that came to be labelled Apartheid stemmed in large part from a response to these demands of the white farms. A number of measures were enacted to attain this end. Action was taken against 'illegal Squatters' in the towns, that is Africans without jobs, many of whom were from the farm lands. The Native Laws Amendment Act in-- troduced not only 'influx' control (to stem the flow of blacks Q the towns) but 'eflux control' (preventing them leaving in the first place). It also regulated the movement of Africans, preventing them from entering any 'preseribed' area with a labour surplus or from moving from one with a labour shortageo Labour bureaus were set up to direct this process of what the regime clinically and Callously described as 'Canalizing labour' .

There were also measures finally to eliminate squatters - both the handful who might be resident on a particular farm , and the so-called lblack spots' where substantial Clusters had existed in what were by law Iwhite areas' . Agradually increas-ing scale of registration fees that farmers had to pay for each 'tenant-labourer' also set in motion a process that aimed to eliminate this category of labourer over a period of years. The effects only became marked in the 1960s. Whereas tenantelabourers had numbered over half a million at one time and still topped 160 000 in 1964, by 1970 they were down

to 27 585, and by 1973 labour tenancy had, in theory, been eliminated.

A further notorious measure introduced to overcome the farm labour shortage of the 1950s was the setting up of (farm jeils’ . There were at one time 260 of them, providing ultra-cheap labour for white farmers.

These Changes in the status of black workers were fuelled by the rapid mechanization of white agriculture. num ber of tractors increased threefold in the 19503 and doubled in the 1960s. Although the area brought into cultivation has continued to expand, doubling in the last fifty years, the labour employed reached a peak in the early 19505, flattened off and has declined in the 1970s. Moreover,mechanization had far more profound effects than a slight drop in employment. It has created a demand for two types of labour. The

On one hand, some labour has to be more skilled - drivers, mechanics and others who Can work with mechanized equ1pment. These Wlll be few in number but there is pressure

to employ them throughout the year. On the other hand, if there is need for fewer Qermgnent labourers, there is a corresponding increase in the need for seasonal labourers for weeding, picking, harvesting from the larger acreages - work that, with exceedingly cheap labour, is not worth mechanizing yet in South Africa.

The number of casual workers increased by 100 per cent between 1965 and 1970 and recent estimates suggest that these new outnumber the regular employees. Following the pattern that has come to be applied to mining and other manual labour under Apartheid , much of this labour is now migrant.

There had always been some migrant workers in agriculture: parts of Natal, the fruihgrowing districts of the Cape and the maize areas of the Transvaal have relied on them. The sugar industry, which employs 115 000 workers, has long brought in workers (in the 19th century, even indentured labourers from India) but recently moved to a more institutional reliance on migrants when, in 1971, a recruiting corporation organizing contract labour similar to that for the mines, was set up - the Sugar Industry Labour Organization (S.l.L.O.). These workers share similar conditions to the mineworkers. As they are classified as industrial workers, they are subject to the regulations which only allow employers to provide family housing for 3 per cent of the work force. The rest live in Single_menls barracks.

Since the 19605 the recruitment of migrant workershas become widespread: from Transkei and Ciskei to Natal, and to the Western Cape - where the y have replaced coloured farm workers who have taken advantage of the fact that they are not subject to the same draconian labour control laws that keep Africans from job-seeking in the towns.

The casual workers are now often migrants too. One pattern, described in a following article, hasemerged whereby women, and even children are trucked in to the farming areas in the Transvaal and Orange Free State, where there are pockets of Bantustans within a short distance, or from the towns. But women agricultural workers are recruited from further afield, even from outside the territorya Indeed in the country as a whole a majority of casual workers are female.

Thus there has been a tumultuous ugheaval among the black 0 ulation of the f m lands. There has beenamassive exodus of people who had their homes on the farms: the tenants and squatters and their dependants. They have been removed, some to the towns but many to the Bantustans where they had never lived before. Moreover these displaced had no autom atie claim to land. Indeed with the reserves so overcrowded they have often just been shipped to ’resettlement villages’ . They have a house, but no land to cultivate and so no alternative to migrant labour.

conclusion

Agriculture remains the largest employer in South Africa. The workers are also the poorest paid and the most deprived of any rights with which to protect their position. For over a hundred years they were semi-serfs on the white domains.

This form of labour has changed dramatically over the last generation. The white farms have yielded up a reserve labour force to the rest of the economy and themselves taken to employing migrant labour. In the process, over a million black dwellers have been removed from the white areas. If wages have improved slightly, the social conditions of life and the security of the workers have worsened. Moreover, there is no hint that the kind of reforms that are being lobbied-by some international observers and that might even be considered by the white racist regime in South Africa - of certain rights for skilled workers in the cities, of black trade union recognition, and removing some of the ’petty Apartheid’ restrictions - will ever be extended to the black farm workers. No decent future can exist for them as long as the basis

of Apartheid, the white monopoly of the land, continues-

he sneers and grunts of the men filling the com-
pound ar’e rudely interrupted by the sound of a gong, an
old, disused and rusty plough-shar’e hanging near the
entrance. The door is a piece of hessian sacking, hange
ing loosely from the doorframe, and not offering much
protection from the bitterly cold night.The howling
wind blowing from the Drakensberg mountains races
through the glatteland (flatland) of the ChangeFree
State. Only the whining of the dogs near the whiteman’s
house and the cackling of the chickens accompany the
din caused by the gong. It is time to wake up for the
farm labourers; it is the beginning of a fourteen-hour
day, but if you are lucky and happen to be working for
a reasonable boss, perhaps twelve.
"Chaysa’. Chaysa’.", screams the ’bossboy’, the
trustee, the loyal servant of the white farmer, who has
been staying on the farm since childhood and grew up
with the present owner of the farm ,known to all the farm
workers as Oubass - the old boss, and feared like the
lightning that comes with the summer thunderstorms.
a DAY in the LIFE
of an AGRICULTURAL WORKER :7
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workers, and ahe locked in every night. The hired
farm labourers also cannot leave the farm without the
written permission of the farmer, or his caretaker.
The scramble for the rudimentary washing faci-
lities, usually a small basin or old drum cut in two, is
accompanied by the screams and threats from the
bossboy, who is impatient to get the workers on the
tractor which is used to transport them to the fields.
The time is four-thirty’. Work starts at five. Thelength
of the working day depends on the season - there are no
fixed working hours.
The same ritual takes place at the prisoners’ com-
pound. Nobody has time even to fold the dirty old blan-
kets, stinking from the sweat of hundreds of nameless
users, their predecessors in the years gone by, whose
sometimes tragic attempts at escaping are the perpetual
reminder that the Orange Free State is no game. "Hier
_i_s die Vry Staat mx’ kaffirsl" - this is the Free State -
is the welcome that usually awaits the young and able-
in the ORANGE FREE STATE Lit
The bossboy pulls the hessian aside and shouts at the
sleeping men: "He ’ o staan iulle’.’l - he)". wake up,
you’. He speaks Afrikaans, the language of the Boers,
like most farm workers who have never been to school,
01" have had very little of it. Only the so-called ’cheeky
Bantus’ from the towns speak English, and never in the
Free State _ as so many court cases of beatings by
farmers testify. The beatings are givenbyhired convict
labourers.
The prisons are a big source of the cheapest labour
that the white farmers exploit in South Africa, though
it presents problems to the farmers, as most of these
convicts are city-bred youths who have been arrested in
their hundreds for various ’offencesI under the Pass
Laws, and who waste no time in escaping from the
hazards of farm life on the platteland. They are usual-
ly housed in a separate compound from the regular farm
bodied youths who hate been picked up b) the greed)
farmers at the prison ’auctions’ , reminiscent of the da) 5
of slavery .
The new arrivals are usually shemi of their Clothing
and given pieces of hessian seeking in replacement - a
precaution’. The old legal system of slavery has been
replaced with the new prison labour arrangements - just
as the sacking replaces the tattered clothing of the un-
fortunate victims of the legalized slavery of the South
African regime: to cover the naked brutality of Apartheid.
Rosahnde Ainslie, in her study of farm labour in

South Africa, Masters and Serfs, published by the lnter_
national Defence and Aid Fund in London, says: "It seems
that a scheme had been agreed in 1949, but never gazetted
officially, between the Department of Native Affairs, the
Secretary for Justice and the Commissioner of Police,

whereby SO-called ’petty-otfendeiis’ arrested under the phase laws were given the ’eption’ of prosecution or six or twelVe months’ labour on a white tarni . The maximum fine for these offences was in tact 0111) one pound or two pounds. The men were lined up, ordered to ’Velunteer’ , and their thumhprints attached to contracts they had not read. They were then hustled on to the lorries of waiting farmers. Some, it turned out later, were not pass Offenders at all, but in regular employment in Johannesburg tit the time. Eut once on the tamn, thet were totall) in the farmer’s power. Without a pass, the) had little hope of escape .. . nor could they communicate with relatix’es, since thej. were held in barracks, like prisoners, and worked under the supeiwisien of a Vhess-boy’ armed with a siamhok ((1 hide whip) (ind often guard dogs."

Small groups serenihle on to the canon) pulled by the tractor, and two or four men come Carrying the feed that is going to be served during the dti’x, in big contain-ers. The feed usually consists of inealies and CEiPFOfS. Sometimes (’1 few cahbages, andjiiurelybsonie meat is added. The lights shine in the still dark morning, as the bosshe) steers the tractor with its human Cargo towards the threshing machine, where stacks of maize (ire heaped, from the previous tin) ’5 toil. Soon the nm-ehine is humming (111d the duMs grinding rhtthm begins. Cn one side, the tht’esher is tied with nietilie volts; on the other it spurts out the grains into hugs, w eitihing ever (1 hundred kilos each when tull. The men gii’ul) their lead, pitching it on tilCit’ shoulders (lilti wind their way towards the waiting tractors, where, the) unload. The pace increases 1;) the minute, and when the white man (mrives later in the morning, woe to him who slips and spills the contents of his lomt’. Later the bags are going to he stitched h; the women workers, who are recruited in theii" hundreds them (15: tar (15 Northern Transvaal, Traiiskei, Zululand and (1H parts ot the, wastelands oi the. EOI)iHltittSW(ill(l liIOIHCiiiIILiI, t’iioin Thnhzi Nehu t0 Mateking.

During the reaping; season, rows of men, women (ltlki Children work endlessl) in the ineulie fields Item dawn to twilight, filling bags slung t’iieni their waists with INCiliiCS or corn, or whatever else is being reaped. And behind them _ the ever present hosshei, whip in hand, riding on (A horse and accompanied h) the dogs. The lahour contingent is usually swelled h) the children of the workers living on the farm, or sometimes by toddlers

who have been induced by some sm ooth--ta1king farmer in the townships of the smaller dorgies (towns) in the Orange Free State, with the ignorant acquiescence of their parents - Who need the added promised income to augment their meagre resources.

The time for abiutions is the first break for the morning meal. Porridge; mealiepap. Nothing else. Coffee, bread, milk, eggs, sausages; butter - all these are the white man’s food, and what, is left is for his dogs. And for abiutions there is no privacy whatsoever. The toilets (hazardous pits) are far am’a) from the living quarters, and, because the resting time allowed is so short , it is impossible to Visit them. So, the best thing is to slip into the iiearhi maize fields or behind a bush, squat and (it you are a woman) hope that no children are looking or listening to the rude insults coming from the men.

The houses in which the workers lix’e are shacks: mud shacks, tin shacks, (iii kinds of shacks. Tin roots of corrugated iron with boulders to hold them from being blown off. Sometimes the resourceful workers use discarded czirtozvis from beer containers _ African beer sold tat the government, controlled and owned beer-hails and bottle stores. There is no electricit) in the shacks, no running hater, no heating, except for old hru/iers in Which coal tires are made in winter (sometimes cow dung is used (15 fuel). Deaths tire common from carbon monoxide poisoning from these open hrewiers. And of course, prixziey is unknown. And those who live with Children in these shacks twitch their offspring; struggling exer) night, using Candlelight or ii pumitiiin 1mm), stritggliiig to (ihsorty new ideas’. The) live in hope - hope tor (1 new day.

Schooling is a prix’iiege tor the farmworkerst children. It is tree and eomptilsor) tor the xxhite children. For the i)i(lClx’S the privilege is granted h) the farmer. Amt not (ill farms hcn e schools. Sometimes children have to txtuik tix’e to ten kilometres to the nearest school. It is (1 common sight on South African roads to come across toddlers, itilFOiOOtCki in the hitterl) cold xxititer mornings, trotting in single file, noses running freely, iiilkicki hizick amt white uniforms tpassed on from some grown rehitiVe or a benevolent white, parent). F ut (littiOSi exer) parent, farm labourer or factory iimehinist, prostitute or domestic txorlx’er, (til uiil make the most unbeliewihle sacrifices to proyide (,1 little education for their children. I’We want our Children to become people - not like us", thei often so) . But Bantu Education leads them nowhere.

The farm school is a one or two-classroom affair. It is cold, without educational facilities. Perhaps an old rickety blackboard, some desks and the teacher's table and chair. Classes are overcrowded, like anywhere else in the country, and usually are conducted outside - under the shade of a tree or in the sunlight, according to the season. Teachers are unqualified, usually. The schools are built (and owned) by the farmer, though the curriculum is controlled by the Department of Bantu Education (now called Education and Training). Permission for the child to attend school will depend if there is no need for him/her to be employed on the farm. It does not depend on the wishes of the parents, who have to pay school fees or any other requirements, from uniforms to books and pencils. Lunch is not known - and like the rest of black children all over the country they have to study on a hungry stomach. Farm schoolchildren normally have the first meal late in the afternoon, as they cannot have breakfast before the long trek to the school in the morning.

The barest necessities like flour and mealie meal can be bought from the farm store. And the farm labourers are frequently bound in debt to the store-owners. So they have to be careful not to eat too much or too often. The only type of meat they can afford are victuals. 'Fat oakes', made from flour and oil, or faluare easily made and preserved, or sometimes bak-koekies, roast cakes, from unleavened flour. Morogo, a wild spinach, is the most common diet for the farmworker, and he can prepare this together with his 'pap' in a fairly short time on his primus stove. Erewing is widespread, so in the evenings the workers are able to enjoy each other's company in a sociable setting. But because of the lack of time, most of the liquor is of the 'killeme-quickl type; Chesa, Pinedown, Barbeton, Sebapa Le Masenke.

And the farmers paternalistically turn a blind eye on this - as long as their men report for work, and do not give too much trouble. "These people are like children", the farmers sa) .

As most of the people living on the Free State farms are without hope of improving their lot, alcoholism is taking its toll. lllegitimacy is common. There are no Clinics or maternity centres. Hospitals are miles away, and if there is an emergency . There are no social workers (and nobody has ever heard of such people). There are no recreation possibilities. No football clubs, n0 tennis, no swimming facilities (except perhaps in a dirty old stream), no time and no inclination to visit friends who may be at the neighbouring farms, which would be far away - farms are several kilometres apart in the Orange Free State.

The evenings are the time to catch up on essential chores like sewing and mending old clothes. There is hardly any possibility to be involved with the children's school work, if they happen to be going to school. In fact, it is sometimes the Children who will be reading the Bible for their'parents (or their letters).

It is also the time when mothers, young girls and elderly women alike , think of their children and sisters who have been left behind in the care of ageing grandmothers in the 'Homelands' . lhey can only hope and pray that after three or four months in this legal captivity (for they cannot break off their contracts even if they so wished) they will find their Children alive.as child starvation and malnutrition are rife in the lHomelands' .

The farmworkers have little to hope for in the society of to-day - they are the hidden and forgotten residue of Apartheid South Africa, whose toil feeds the most highly industrialized country on the African continent. Their situation in the Orange Free State is especially hard and

is seldom exposed as reporters are afraid to dig too deeply into the hostile society of the backwoods Boers.
In the past some newspapers ew e) and magazines (Drum) have carried reports on beatings , killings and secret burials of farm labourers, especially in the Eethal and Kinross areas. People were alleged to have been buried and later turned into manure by rich potato farmers _ and this led to the celebrated 'Potato Boycott' of the 19505.
The reporter Who did m ost of the investigations concerning the scandals, Henrnyumalo, later died in mysterious circumstances, in Johannesburg. New Age was banned.
The Prisons Act was passed, which prohibited the publication of any material concerning prisoners, or prison conditions - this of course covered prisoners on farms as well. So, a blanket of silence dropped over the lives of thousands of black South Africans. And, while these regulations apply specifically to prisoner farmworkers, there is little difference in the treatment received by the other farimworkers. For all black Africans in the rural areas life is but a prison-

WOMEN: the family food producers of south africa

hile in the past the women of South Africa did much oftheday-to-day agricultural work and were subject to their husbands and fathers, they were at least provided with some security by the social system . Today, the burden of farm work borne by women is im measurably greater; state control of their lives is allpervasive; and security has quite disappeared. Women are often singiehandedly responsible for producing food for their families and their labour underpins the whole system of migrant labour under Apartheid.

There are two groups of women agricultural workers in South Africa: the women who are not employed for wages but who live and work in the Reserves, usually without their menfolk, who have gone away as migrant labourers; and the women who work for wages on the large farms and estates. Since the lives of these two groups of women agricultural workers differ from each other, we shall first look at the overall conditions Of each group and then show something of what these conditions mean in human terms.

.9

WOMEN IN THE RESERVES

From the strongholds which new comprise the Reserves of South Africa, the rulers of the African peoples conducted, in the 19th century, their wars against imperial conquest. These areas, Zululand, the Transkei and Ciskei, parts of the western and northern Transvaal, and areas of the Orange Free State, were not settled by whites, and were later reserved by the state for Africans who had no right to own land elsewhere. Cvercrowding, overgrazing and the imposition of taxes reduced the ability of the people to live off the land and forced the male members of the community to migrate to mining and industrial areas of the country to earn money for food and taxes. The majority of the women remained behind in the countryside. This sexual discrimination was part of a calculated strategy of exploitation.

At the heart of the Apartheid system a pattern emerged in which the system is subsidized by the domese tie labour of women. Mining in South Africa requires large capital outlays to reach gold which lies deep in the earth. To maintain a high rate of profit, the mine workers have always been paid extremely low wages, consistently below the Poverty Datum Line; i.e. , not enough for basic subsistence. The mine owners can get away with these low wages only because the women and children of the workers live in the Reserves and provide their own subsistence.

The workers’ wages thus do not have to cover rent, and food and Clothes for their families. The l’amilies are just barely able to survive and the sons, as they grow up, succeed their fathers as workers in the mines. Growing food on the Reserves to supplement the wages of the male migrant, labourers, the women endure a life of heavy toil and long hours, daily carrying water, gathering fuel and providing other necessities of life in their homes as well.

The oppression of women in the Reserves consists not only of their hard physical labour for long hours in the fields and within the homestead, for small benefitto themselves. There is also the emotional stress of living apart from their husbands, lovers and fathersand having to bring up their children alone. Women are also harrassed b; thC’state, which allows them to visit their families in town only with passes, dictating even the number of hours they may stay on their visits.

The regime administers, according to the dictates of the Apartheid policy, the land on which the women live. This has meant in recent years that family or common land may be lost through the proclamation of resettlement areas or the enforcement of enclosures. Women’s inferior legal status makes their plight even more precarious as it further limits their right to own property in the absence of a father, husband or son. Likewise their limited right of access to livestock deprives them of draught animals and of an important source of subsistence.

Not only are many women left on their own to look after families, but these families form a large proportion of that growing minority who are without plots or herds. The women of the Reserves also suffer from the illness and death of their children from diseases produced by poverty and starvation.

In the Reserves of South Africa some of the longest and most intense struggles against racist rule have been waged. Throughout the 19505 the men and women of South Africa resisted the application of pass laws to women. These laws were intended to document and control the movement of women wherever they sought to live and work. One of the best-known struggles of this campaign took place in 1957 in the country district

of Zeerust where men and women burned the passes issued to women. This resistance, born out of the bitterness of women's life under Apartheid, spurred on the national protests against the pass laws from passive resistance to strikes.

Around 1960 a war was fought in the Transkei and Zululand against the imposition of the Bantu Authorities Act, which tightened state control over the Reserves. In that struggle the peasants were armed and women, by far the majority of the peasant population, partie Cipated in the revolt. They provided food for the fighters, warned of the approach of police and arm y and symbolically supported the uprising by wearing black to indicate the country was in mourning because of the war.

Elsewhere, unpopular decrees about cattle culling, fencing, allocation of land and, worse still, forced removal, have frequently provoked organized response at the grassroots in defiance of these edicts. Numerous women have opposed the police and been prepared to go to prison rather then submit to enforcement or removal from their lands.

our childhood days
our Childhood gaze
ground our generation
into the white ants’ nest
but could not resist
Africa’s sun
filtering through the emist
nibbling at the mind
In the 20th century agricultural production in South Africa has come to be based less and less on small peasant holdings and more and more on very large farms and estates. The white farms and estates need m en and women workers on a seasonal basis at harvest time and other periods of intensive work, while the demand for permanent employees is decreasingo
00111d 110t flatten This need for casual labour has been inereasingh indefinite met by women. In 1936 there were only 3 112 women the curvature 0f earth employed as farm workers while in 1960 there were the oval shape 149 893. By 1970 the number had risen to 450 000 the globe. compared with 900 000 men working as farm labourers.
A.N.C. Kumalo In South Africa, as elsewhere, men tend to be more highh paid, eVen when women do the same work.
As farm labour is amongst the lowest paid categories of work, men who have the choice tend to sell their labour elsewhere. The casual labour of weeding 0r picking is the. lowest paid of all, so it falls to women who cannot support their families through their labour in the Reserves or who have lost their land eompletel) .
Women now predominate amongst Casual labourers in White agriculture as a whole.
Women farm labourers are paid extremely low wages. hi 1973 the aweruge wage paid to farm labourers was 11.50 rand per month mid most, women probtihl) get less. Moreox’er, in man) areas of South Africa casual wages are often paid in maize meal or in part Of the fruit or other crop picked.
During the periods of their employment on farms or on sugar, forest, fruit or wine estates most women ugliiculturtil workers tire separated from their fumiiies and work long hours. The emploiers of casual workers are not subject to labour legislation on minimum wages or length of day Worked. The excuse for the 10W Xthng paid to farm workers - that their families are supported not b) their part but b) the labour of their km in the Reserves - is becoming less Ctllki less true. Especially in the case Of women casual labourers, this Wage may be the onl) means of tamil) subsistence. Eeeuuse of her double Oppression, :1 women’s wage is less than a man’s and is often so low she has to seek help from older women in maintaining her Turnih (ind caring for Children. The rationale used b) the white farmers is

just a convenient excuse for paying such abysmal rates to a large part of the casual labour force, which in turn serves to keep down (111 wages.

CONCLUSION

The South African state does all it Can to control the lives Of men and women who live and work in the countryside. Migrant labourers Can be paid minimum wages because of the unpaid work in the countr)sid0 of their mothers, sisters and wives. Agriculture has brought large profits to tho landowners of South Africa because of the toil of men and women farm labourers. Eut there is also a long history of resistance to this S) stem. The struggle unfolds both in periods of intense conflict, in strikes and confrontations with the police and QPIN) , and as men and women develop strategies of opposition in tho comradcship of everyday life, in scIf-hclp associations, Church groups and political organization.

And, just as the labour of women in rural South Africa is at the root of tho Apartheid s) stem of exploitation, so women can he soon at the forefront of o nwositiou to it. Tho) mu) ho strained, exhausted and hungryiot the) fully realize their political and economic siluation and (1P0 prepared to declare their power. The) showed this when, at the height 01’ the anti-puss Campaign, ’hc) said to the Prime Minister:

HNOW 5014 have touched the women,
You have. struck (1 rock,
You have, dislodged a houldcli,
You will be crushed "

MIGRANT WIDOWS

ost migrant workers are employed in jobs which pay low wages - in public works, railways, mining, refuse collecting, brick yards, docks, stoclworks and oven grave digging. 111 1974, of the men I knew, those who were employed b; some Cit.) Council as Cleaners 014 park hands earned between 30 and 35 rand per m onth, those in tho iiailxx’a)s 3O - 45 rand.) according to length of SCIW ice and overtime. The main construction firms were pa) ing 38 rand with gm annual increase of one Hind. From this pa) packet the migrant worker has to maintain himself - pa) POIII , food, transport, clothes and send something to his family for maintenance, insurance premiums. More of this later; first let us have a look at a da) in his life.

a typical day
He gets up at 4 a.m . He stands in the queue for his turn to wash. The queue is usually long at this time and more often than not he leaves the hostel without having washed.
There is no breakfast for him . Outside where he works are women selling some kind of fat_cakes known as magwinya. These are easy to eat without tea, so he purchases four or five at tea time. For lunch he has a ’cold lump of mealie-pap, molatsw , which is left over from the previous night.
After work he rushes ’home’ . Getting into the train carrying Africans is a feat both physical and mental. At the hostel is a long queue for a place at the stove to cook his meal. By the time he sits down to his meal he is thoroughly exhausted. He has been literally fighting it out the whole day, like an animal. But perhaps the night will bring him rest? This is what awaits him:
The utensils need Cleaning. He goes out into the street where there is a communal water tap, if he doesn’t want to push and fight again for the kitchen scullery. A bath before he goes to bed? Not for him . There are communal showers with no hot water,whatever the season. He shares his open room with 15 other men, irrespective of age. Washing facilities are primitive: communal toilets with rows of buckets next to each other. He watches some desperate men practising homosexuality and prostitution openly, without any prlvacy, in these open rooms. To add to this, police with torches may break noisily into the room looking for women who have been sm uggled in, disguised. How long can a migrant worker stand this?
His reaction to this dehumanized life is not surprising. Within a week or a month he will have to find a way out. Along the street dividing the hostels from the residential houses are the women selling maqwinva, sweet potatoes, etc. There are also houses near the hostels where food and drinks are sold in home-like surroundings. These places give comfort to the migrant worker. Soon he becomes an unofficial member of the family or an unofficial son-in-law. But the pay packet of 30 or 40 rand is definitely not enough for two fam i-
3"
lies - and it is the family in the Jfar-away homeland that suffers. To help out some men take up odd jobs on Saturdays and Sundays - gardening in the townships or in the towns, for whites. This helps them to get trainfare money for the week. Such jobs pay them one to one-andea-half rand a day. Some become open-air barbers, others cobblers. They never rest _ small wonder their life expectation is 35 years.
the impact on the women
The life of a migrant worker at his place of work and at the hostel has a direct influence on the life ofhis wife and family in the Bantustan. As will be seen in a later article the possibilities of agricultural production in these reserves are very limited, because: (a) they are over-crowded; (b) they are mostly arid and to make them productive would require much capital; and (c) hoes are alm ost the only instruments used. Circular 25 of 1957 from the Secretary for Bantu Administration to Bantu Commissioners instructed them not to allow Africans to rear stock, as there was not enough land even for hum an settlement. So the majority of families cannot use ploughs. In the thirties, forties and even the early fifties an ox-pulled or donkey-pulled plough was a common sight; a woman holding the plough, a boy of eight or ten driving the team and a girl of seven or eight. sowing behind the plough. These are rare today.
The women wait anxiously for money from their

husbands or sons in town. This money hires a government tractor at one pound per acre. The same money buys seed, food, pays burial society premiums, local taxes (for local administration, building dams, or chief's transport expenses), the school building fund, school fees, books and school-uniforms. The higher the Class the Child is in, the more expensive it is to keep the child at school. On top of these are the food and clothes items. In 1975 a 50-kilo bag of maize-meal cost 4 to 5 rand at a mill or maizeemeal dealer in' Pretoria and Johannesburg, but it cost 7 to 8 rand at Malamulele, Vendaland and Leboa. A loaf of white bread cost 3 to 4 cents higher. Fruit and fresh vegetables are hard to get; if available, they are astronomically high in price. As a result it is starchy food all round. Fresh milk is out of the question. The whole country is in the grip of malnutrition. All these problems beset women in the Bantustan.

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wa fa wa ia wa sala wa sala
In the big Bantustan villages of Nkowankowa (in Gazankulu)_and Lenyenye (in Lebowa) the men work mainly in Tzaneen ’or onsthe nearby citrus estates, where women also find seasonal employment. There are three firms connected with citrus estates near Nkowankowa. Seasonal labour is needed for picking oranges, mangoes and cutting sugar cane.
Those who are ten miles away or more are carried by baas in open trucks. The farmers of the 1970s have trusted ’boys’ who can drive. These take trucks home at night and then, at 3.30 to 4 a.m. , the labourers arrive to be ferried. There is the scramble into the truck . . . wa fa wa fa (one who dies, dies) wa sala wa _s_al_a (one who rerrains, remains). This is true. In the Potgietersrust and Middleburg districts in 1971 and 1972 these trucks frequently capsized. They must reach the farms on time to start before sunrise. In the Zebediela citrus estate, as well as Tzaneen and Melspruit, the picking of oranges and naartiies (tangerines) as well as the sorting are work for women and children. In return, they are giyen a ’packet’ of about 70 oranges, usually small ones. These they sell at 1 cent a piece. So the earnings for a day’s work are 70 cents or less than $1. Where do they sell them ? Near the schools: women can be seen sitting outside the gates with baskets or big dishes full of oranges, sweet potatoes (cooked), and green mealies,’ i.e. maize cooked or roasted there or. the spct.
The farmers have introduced another item as wages. They cultivate hectares of sweet canes that are like sugar cane, but with seeds like that of sorghum . These are used as wages for women who then get together to hire lorries to transport them home, when they will go to the open markets.
When the stock is exhausted, the in other goes back to wa fa wa fa - wa sala wa sala’. Those who have old mothers who cannot stand the strain of walking and working get the old ladies to stay and sell. The cook_ing is done at night. The selling has been extended to street corners of these ’Bantoedorps’ (Bantustan villages). But to call them street corners is an exaggeraa tion - most have no streets’.
33
They ate a lot of river fish and drank healthy vucema (palm wine). The liberation war in Rhodesia and Mozambique caused the government to uproot this community to an arid, reclaimed game reserve, where only mogane worms flourish. They have learnt to eat these worms.
With men away in towns the Government and demolishersi vehicles did their job and women found themselves struggling to build houses during the winter months. Poles and grass were not available. Winter months passed into spring and into rainy summer. They hoed their gardens but the harvest was nil. Nothing at all. The following year, rain drowned the young crops. he third year heat scorched the crops - you could set fire to them . For four successive years there was nothing to reap. Death ravaged the settlement. In the fifth year there was some promise of a good year. But wild beasts, especially buffaloes, baboons, monkeys and buck, as well as hares, caused complete destruction. Those who set traps to catch them were jailed for five years and more. They were told they should have reported and asked the white Bantu Commissioners to go and shoot these beasts. The beasts ravage at night and the white commissioners are hundreds of kilometres awayi
At Sibasa in Vendaland the resettlement (or rather, removal) was caused by bad physical planning. People

had been resettled in the wrong place and within a year they had to be removed again. Grass for thatch is hard to get. Taking the old thatch along breaks the grass, and using it again means a leaky roof. The Venda women, sitting in front of their halLthatched huts with no fire, no shelter for their pit latrines, no privacy whatsoever, were indeed a pitiful sight.

services in the rural areas

This picture of women’s life in the Bantustan would not be complete if we leave out the water problem . Much noise is made about boreholes and irrigation dams which are ’turning deserts into gardens’ . A borehole Can only be useful if it strikes a vein or stream. Some of the boreholes run dry at Makuleke in Giantreef, at Matiane - places where news reporters are not allowed - and women have to travel as far as six kilometres for water. They balance about four to five gallons on their heads

the perils to the children
There is a third type of casual ’daily’ labour . . .
those who are far away from farms, for instance
Makonde (in Vendaland), Mhinga and Shikundzu (in
Gazankulu). These look for friends and relations who
are within walking or ferrying distances to the farm .
They stay with them for about a week. They are obliged
to give some of their gains as ’rent’ or ’good will’ and
take the rest home. Usually they have to find some sort
of transport. Their stuff is not always fresh by the
time they get home, so they prefer cash, which is
perhaps 30 cents a day on average. But usually the
farmer pays this amount once or twice and then tells the
worker that she is not needed’.
The effects of casual farm labour on women are
just as severe as they are on men. These women are
shamelessly exploited by farmers, who make fortunes
from their labour. The xx omen leave home very early.)
groping their Way in the dark, no electric lights, and
are in constant danger of attack. They have to leave
before their children are awake. W51: l,.rter (101 um
they have
and, as many houses are thatchedi/there is always the
risk of fire. In September 1978, at Mamhedi in the
Louis Trichardt district, three children died in
their home. They were afraid after their in other had
left and they lit a candle. Then they fell asleep but the
candle set fire to the thatched roof.
:ithe
Their fathers are in the towns, their mothers perma-
nently in ’Casual’ labour . . . after maize, comes fruit;
after fruit comes cabbage, tomatoes, etc. There is
always seasonal labour on the farms. if women don’t
take such jobs then in order to survive they are forced
to sell liquor - or themselves.
to in ake open fires (there are often no stoves)
Children grow up practically without their parents.
l
and carry in their hands a gallon to drink along the way.
Irrigation dams are for watering Cash crops belonging
to the Government.
At Mdavula, Northern Transvaal, a demonstrator
organized people - mostly women and old men - to dig
out the dry bed of a stream so, that when the rain came,
the water would not flow away. After two rain; months
the water was full in the dam . Then Came a dry season,
women were allowed to climb wooden steps up the dam
wall and then down to the water. The tadpoles’. The
whole dam was black with them . Even using a spoon to
scoop water you would scoop up a dozen live tadpoles’.
There was nothing else to do but carry these tadpoles
along and strain the water before drinking.
woman,s changing role
Women’s role in the Bantustans has evolved from
life as a household worker pure and simple to one that
combines that role with a broader economic function.
They now wield authority - all authority, in the long
absence of their husbands. They contribute economi-
call) to the wealth of the home. Can a man who contri-
butes little or nothing in the home still hold sway over
his wife and children? Both his wife and children have
learnt to live without him . To his Children he is asso-
ciated with money parcels. He is a stranger to them ,
an ’uncle’ to use the colloquial language of the townships.
Just as a man finds the strain of separation from
his wife unbearable, the woman who remains in the
Bantustans has to undergo a smilar strain. The result
is women are ’looked after’ by the few men, especially
teachers, businessmen, extension workers, who are in
the Bantustans. As a result, families break up comple-

tely, others exist only in name. Often there are unwanted births. This used to be an embarrassment but now it is considered as just part of life under Apartheid-

"Nomen in Southern Africa" is the theme of the ISIS international bulletin No. 9, Autumn 1978. It gives a good picture of the double oppression of black women in South Africa: Zimbabwe and Namibia, with contributions from Laurette Ngcobo, Sithembiso Nyoni, Bernice Rubens, Sikose Miji, Putuse Appolus, Brigalia Bam. This issue costs $3 and can be obtained by writing to Case Postale 301, CH-1227 Carouge, Switzerland.

he health of the majority of black South Africans is permanently endangered by malnutrition. There is Clear evidence of the well_known diseases like kwashiorkor, marasmus and pellagra. Also, many African children die from relatively minor" complaints like gastro-enteritis which would never happen if they were properly nourished. But these clinical effects of malnutrition are only the tip of the iceberg.

The iceberg of malnutrition involves almost the whole African population. Moved off the land, they are prevented from producing enough food for themselves, and have to do wage labour in order to survive, as has been seen in previous articles. And for many, especially children, there is no survival.

The nutrition problem is commonly regarded as one of protein deficiency. The logical solution, according to this view, is to feed more protein to those who are short of it. But most of those suffering from protein deficiency in fact eat more than enough protein to meet their requirements. It is because they do not take in enough calories that the protein they eat is not used as protein, but as calories to supply their energy needs.

The fact is that malnutrition is above all a question of poverty and inadequate food. Ignorance about the nutritional value of foodstuffs hardl) comes into the picture. The problem has to do with access to food production directl), or sufficient cash to bu) food. In South Africa, under Apartheid, many blacks are deprived of either of these alternatives.

, The effects and extent of malnutrition

According to one account, three Children die from malnutrition every hour in South Africa (Sunda Tribune 27 June 1976). This coincides roughly with our’ own calcu-n lations (based on the Department of Statistics documen 97- 03-03 May , 1974) and with the figures from various hospitals throughout South Africa. These indicate that between 15 000 and 30 000 children die each year from malnutrition, excluding those from related diseases like tuberculosis. In the rural areas children dying from mal_ nutrition make up the bulk of the 300 to 500 children in every thousand who die before they grow up.

It is Generally acknowledged that the infant m ortality rate (the number of children per thousand who die each year before their first birthday) is a good indicator of the state of health of a society. Among whites over

MALNUTRITIoii
and APAB’I’I-IEID

half of the infant deaths are duerto peri-natal problems, with congenital anomalies being another important cause. Among African and coloured children the big killer is infection, the close companion of malnutrition. Although no national statistics exist, isolated surveys show that about 60 per cent of the infant mortality rate among blacks in rural areas was associated with malnutrition and gastro-enteritis.

Recent statistics indicate that the infant mortality rate for South African whites has dropped below that of the United Kingdom , 1.0. to 12 per 1 000 (R nd D 11 . Mail, 5 October 1978).

At King Edwan Vlll Hospital, which serves the black population in Durban, about half of all children admitted in 1974 were malnourished (in 1930, it was 35 per cent, so the situation is getting worse). A quarter of these eventually died. In fact, malnutrition is the cause of a third of African and Asian child deaths in Durban.

1,.1 PERCENTAGES OF!
19 3 MALNDUFIISHED CHILDREN
a es 0-6 Transvaal 1073
white
(urban black black
&rural) (urban) (rural)

C , C
/., /L /(
overweight _ 17.6 __7.4 _3.4
and obese
moderately ._ 6.0 _21.0 _65.6
and severely
under weight
protein-Calorie 0.0 _.0.6 ___7-0
malnutrition
(Source: South African Medic 1 Journal 47, 688: 1973)
,4 11/

Malnutrition is widespread among the general population too, although the situation is worse in the rural than in the urban areas. Using a crude measure of malnutrition, the 'Shakir Strip' , it has been shown that in 1978 1.9 per cent of children in Crossroads, Cape Town, were malnourished compared to 7.3 per cent in Nqutu and Nandweni, rural areas of KwaZulu.

Urban blacks suffer less malnutrition than their rural counterparts probably because employment in the urban areas means that relatively more proteinerich food is available. Family incomes are much higher in the urban areas: in Crossroads it is 86 rand per month and in Nqutu 25 rand per month. But when malnutrition does occur in the urban areas it is more severe as the impoverished do not have the support system that exists in the rural areas. Early weaning, because mothers have to go out to work, also plays a major role.

, Sgeeifie syndromes and malnutrition

K_v_vashiorkor is the protein deficiency which causes swelling of the belly and limbs. Marasmus is an even more serious disease which results from a lack of protein and Calories. Both conditions occur widely throughout the black population, affecting mainly younger children. In the rural areas ix. the rainy season the situation is particularly bad, when more flies contribute to repeated attacks of diarrhoea, which aggravate malnutrition.

Studies by the National Research Institute for Nutritional Diseases of the South African Medical Research Council show that about 5 per cent of younger children in the rural areas suffer from marasmus, and about IO_15 per cent from kwashiorkor.

Kwashiorkor has not been a notifiable condition among whites since the 1960s, when the number of new cases dropped to less than ten. At that time the number of new reported cases among blacks was around 10 000 a year, and the unreported incidence was probably several times higher .

About 10 per cent of children suffering from kwashiorkor also suffer from xeroghthalmia (a painful disease of the eyes caused by Vitamin A deficiency), which leads to blindness. Malnutrition lowers the body's res_ ponse to infection and consequently broncho-pneum onia is a major cause of death in these children.

Eellagra is a severe and common deficiency of B Group vitamins which affects blacks of all ages. It is more common in the summer and repeated bouts can lead to dementia (mental illness). In 1975, there were 26 000 cases of this dementia caused by pellagra, and it accounted for half of all admissions to Pretoria Mental Hospital. Pregnant women, herd boys and agricultural workers are most vulnerable, as they have a particularly inadequate diet. In the Ciskei 26 per cent of 7-8 year-olds show signs of pellagr'a. This is more than double the frequency in urban areas am ong the same age group.

Ricketsare even more common than pellagr'a among children in Natal. This severe condition is caused by a low intake of calcium or' a lack of Vitamin D, and results in painful, swollen joints. In the black population the incidence of rickets is about 5 per 1 000, and as high as 20 per thousand in certain age groups in the Ciskei.

Scurvy occurs in about 3 blacks per thousand around Durban and is due to Vitamin C deficiency. It is relatively rare in other areas because maize-meal has a high Vitamin C content and is the staple diet in the rural areas. In the urban areas, where the traditional diet has been weplaced by Western foods like white bread and cake, the incidence of scurvy is increasing. Scurvy can be treated and prevented by eating Citrus fruits - which South Africa exports on a massive scale.

.Just as malnutrition stunts body growth, so it impairs

the cells that defend the body against infection. Enteritis (gut infection) and pneumonia account for 30-80 per cent of all the deaths of black children and infants. Among white children they account for’ less than 10 per cent.

Chest infections. The incidence and outcome of pneumonia often depends on nutrition. Around Durban pneumonia was a causal factor in 40 per cent of deaths of African and Asian Children under’ 10, and of adults between 20 and 50 years. Two-thirds of children admitted for pneumonia were malnourished. At the national level, deaths from chest disease are 15 times as common in young coloured children as in their’ white counterparts.

Measles has been the cause of death am ong more malnourished South African black children in three days than among all children in the United States of America in one year. This condition is relatively harmless in well-nourished children, but in the malnourished it is often complicated by pneumonia and Causes 400 times the number of deaths than in the well-nour’ished.

the face of hunger
I counted ribs on his Concertina chest
bones protruding as
if chiselled _
by a sculptor’s hand of famine.
He looked with glazed pupils
seeing only a bun on some sky-high shelf.
The
like a glove on a doctor’s hand.
His tongue darted in and out
like a chameleon’s
snatching a confetti
OI
Oswald Mbuyiseni
child,
your stomach
roaring day and night.
skin was pale and taut
of flies.
is a den of lions
Mtshali
farm worker complains about diet Wt-
Tuberculosis. TB affects malnourished adults. It is rights
ly known as the disease of poverty, and is endemic to black
South Africans. Careful observation of its declining inci-
dence in Europe, the USA and the United Kingdom has
attributed this decline to improved socio-economic condi-
tions, in particular the increased availability of food -
contrary to the common belief that modern dnugs, screen_
ing methods or even vaccinations are respon81ble.
Around 50 000 cases are notified each year, and it
has been calculated that three to five times this number
actually suffer from T3. In Cape Town, in 1977, only 3
per cent of the 2 000 new cases of TB were white, although
whites make up a third of the city’s population. Three per
cent of all deaths were caused by TB and all of these welfe
blacks. ln Durban, in 1973, Tb was the cause of death 1n
20 per cent of African and Asian children and in 40 per cent
Diarrhoea diseases .
37
of adults aged 20-50 years. In the homelands, most esti-
mates indicate that between 10 and 20 per cent of the piopu-
lation suffer from TB.
Tuberculous meninoitis is a useful measure of the
control of TB. It is significant thatidespite a slight drop in
the incidence of TB over the years, the rate of tuberculous
meningitis in Cape Town remained more or less the same
among blacks between 1968 and 1977, that is.nearly 15 per
100 000 people.
The incidence of non-specific gastro-
enteritis, salmonellosis, typhoid fever and dysentery cle-
monstrates the lack of public health facilities, the lack of
pure piped water and the inadequate sewage disposal sys-
tems. All infections, but particularly diarrhoea, Cause an
increased loss of protein and for people already protein-
deficient this Can be extremely serious. The chance of a
black child dying from diarrhoea is about 100 times that of
a white Child.
Gastro-enteritis is the biggest killer among black
children and contributes to about 60 per cent Of the deaths
in urban areas. The incidence and outcome is far worse
among malnourished Children (S.A.M.J. 35, 223: 1968).
It is rarely found among well-nour’ishedbreast-fed infants
who account for less than a third of all cases, and those
are generally milder.
The baby_killeh scandal, involving the multinational
corporations that sell infant formula foods, is by now well
known. Yet in South Africa the companies continue their
advertising, portraying health and bottle-feeding as syno-
nymous. There is little foundation for this picture, as the
biggest killer of black South African babies is gastro-

enteritis, which is far more common in bottle-fed, than in breast-fed babies.

As m ore mothers are having to work away from home, this advertising promotes the widespread occurrence of what has become ironically known am ong health workers as the ’Lactogen Syndromel,after the product of one of the largest powdered-milk companies. Many hospitals which are accessible to areas of poverty have special rooms set aside where these thin, dehydrated babies are treated with intravenous fl Aids, in numbers too large for admission to hospital. Bottle milk does not convey the protection against infection found in breast milk, and some powdered milk feeds have dangerously incorrect salt concentrations for babies.

) Nutrition and subsistence wages
A minimum cash level on which black workers are expected to live, i.e. the Poverty Datum Line (PDL) is often used to fix wages. These extremely low wages keep the blacks in perpetual poverty and constantly on the borderline of hunger. The payment ’in kind’ that blacks receive for work on white farms produce the same result or worse. The PDL is in fact an artificial construct which reflects the differences in income and standard of living between white and black South Africans.
Most blacks earn wages below the PDL level,and this can be taken as a useful indicator of the probable extent of underenutrition. In Soweto, for example, more than 50 per cent of the families, even when both parents work, earn less than the PDL level. And when the income of all members of the household is combined, 50 per cent of families do not reach the PDL limit.
Despite substantial increases in mining wages since 1973, more than three-wquarters of rural households still have an income below the PDL. Migrant labour is responsible for about 70 per cent of the income of these housew holds and wealth increases with the number of adults that can migrate. This incentive to migrate has the effect of ’freeing’ labour from the land and adding it to the reserve labour pool.
Households in the reserves do not produce as much food as they need. They therefore rely on remittances from migrant workers to purchase food, etc. Over three-fifths of the families in the Transkei have an income below the level necessary for a ’typical’ diet, calculated at local store prices. The food alone, in the proportion found in the diet would cost the Iaverage’ family (consisting of 0.5 men, 1.5 women and 3 Children) some 41 rand Der month. An alternative umnggushe ediet consisting of maize and beans would cost nearly 17 rand Even this is more than a labourer in the mines could send home each month.
) Malnutrition and family relations
A recent study in the Ciskei has shown how Apartheid has broken up families by taking away the men on con_ scripted labour while the women are left unprovided for, and unaided in the difficult task of raising children. In both urban and the so-Called ’Homeland’ groups studied, it was found that 50 per cent of the malnourished children were born out of wedlock. Fewer than half of these were looked after by their mothers. In onl ’ l4 er cent of cases in rural areas and 33 er cent of Cases in urban areas did fathers contribute a token somethin towards the . suggort of their off-sgring. At least, a quarter of these had unsuitable guardians. And in one rural area alone in the Ciskei it was reported that one in ten malnourished children lived in nuclear units. In nearly all the cases studied, the father was unemployed.
In a typical ’Homeland’ area in the Transvaal, over half of the fathers visited their homes once a year, 11 per cent once a month, 9 per cent once a week and 16 daily. (In the remaining 12 per cent of families the mother was single.) In K’uaZulu the situation is similar. More than 73 per cent of breadwinners work more than 140 kilometres away from home; only 14 per cent live near their homes. These figures were shown in an unpublished survey from Charles Johnstone Memorial Hospital at Nqutu. Black families bear the brunt of the social upheaval in South Africa.
, The golitics of scarrzitx’
South Africa produces food sufficient to meet 112 per centAof the maximum daily energy requirement of every-one m the country. In 1976, protein supply was on average 78 grams per person per day, more than any other country in Africa, according to FAQ.
This increase in production, however, has not

improved the general availability of food. Export of food-stuffs and control of domestic distribution by marketing boards have prevented this. Food exports have increased dramatically, accounting for 14 per cent of all exports in 1973 .

Export of agricultural products more than doubled ($572 million to 1 493 million) and food and animal exports trebled ($15370 million to 1 178 million) between 1970 and 1975. Exports of fish and fishery products also trebled over the same period ($45 million to $123 million).

Even if no food were exported, blacks could still not afford the prices, which are kept well out of their reach. Market control boards operate to keep prices high and to prevent food flooding the domestic market. There are reports that milk has been pumped into the sea, butter stockpiled, and eggs dried and added to cattle feed, in order to maintain prices.

The introduction of sheep into the econom y of ’Home-
lands’ hadimportant implications for nutrition. Although
cattle are not usually consumed as beef, at least their milk
provides a valuable source of nutrition. When sheep were
introduced and concentrated in the hands of a few farmers,
they were moved into already overstocked pastures. Their
wool provided a valuable source of cash for the white eco-
nomy, but did not meet the need for nutritious foodstuffs
for the majority of the people. There are now as many
sheep as there are cattle in the Transkei.

As the residential townships are away from the main
commercial centres blacks have to pay more for food. A
comparative price survey carried out by the South African
Council of Churches Ombudsman showed that it was sub-
stantially cheaper to buy groceries inKillarney, a well-to-
do white area, than in Soweto. Mark-ups were of the order
of 50 per cent, and the Ombudsman blamed the situation on
government interference and restrictions on black traders
(Rand Daily Mail, 6 October 1977).

High prices of foodstuffs, poor employment possibi-
lities, low income, poor housing and poor social services:
these make the humus in which the germs of malnutrition
grow and multiply .

Medical treatment does little against malnutrition.
Some of the specific deficiency statese.g., beri-beri,
do respond to Thiamine, and dehydrated babies might dle
sooner if not given intravenous fluids. Lut these methods
can only be applied to the families who live near the hospi-
tals. For the most part the rural areas remain unaffected
by the international standards of medicine :ractised in the
prestigious hospitals in the Cities.

The problem of malnutrition is primarily one of ina-
dequate consumption of calories. The ’easy’ solution of
protein supplements or increasing the protein Content of
cereals has been shown to be at best partial and often iL-
lusory , with the exception of highly atypical local dietary
situations. Food aid and grants cannot replace, and in
some cases can hinder, domestic production. And even
increases in domestic production will not solve the problem
of those who do not have access to it-

iamcunum: %
in the TRANSKEI
i introduction
n 1976, the Transkei was the first of South Africa’s Bantustans to be given pseudo-independence, which still to-da) only South Africa recognizes. It is composed of three separate blocks of territor) on South African’s east coast, which total some 35 000 square kilometres - about the sige of Switzerland or Lesotho. in this area some 2 GOO 000 people live .

A number of factors, which we shall look at in this article, combined to destroy the Transkei’s ability to feed its own people, so migrant labour became in fact, the only way of surviving. While the men had to go and work in ’white areas’ their families had, by law, to sta) behind in the Transkei reserve. They lived on remittances and what little food they could themselves produce. This was most convenient for employers, who did not have to pay enough to support anyone except the individual labourers they needed in the cities, and these were often very cheaply housed and fed - Single_sex barracks and mass feeding. In that dead-end situation, what food migrants’ families were able to produce in fact helped to lower the salary that employers had to offer - a classic spiral of poverty and malnutrition.

And so the Transkei, which once exported sizeable quantities of maize, now imports some 200 000 tonnes a year. Over 70 per cent of economically active men are away working in white South Africa at an) moment - that is, most of the young men. Some 75 per cent of the aver-age family’s income comes from their remittances, and malnutrition and infant mortalit) are high.

So much for ’independencel, which comes down to little more than talk. lf amthing has changed, it is only that the wealthy few use the new opportunity to line their pockets at the expense of the many poor, often in collabora-tion with rich white South Africans. It is hardly surprising that no-one will recognize such ’independence’ .

migrancy
and the fall in food production

The Transkci slopes upwards from a narrow coastal strip to hilly midlands between 500 and 1 000 metres high. ln the central and north-western sections, the Drakensbcrg mountains reach 5 000 meters. Pahts of the coast have a sub-tropical Climate with a)eai’t-round rain of 800- 1200 millin eters, but most of the Transkei is a summer rainfall region with some 500_750 millimeters of rain. This rain-fall is, however, irregular and there are many droughts or floods. Eifad droughts regularly occur ever) seven or eight)ears. The land is cut Ly man) deep, sheer river valleys which are difficult to cultivate and encourage erosion.

Almost 19 per cent of the land is arable - a much higher percentage than for SOLth Africa as a whole. The soil, though thin in some areas, is potentially fertile. Under a better political and social system, it could provide a large agricultural surplus. Most of the rest of the land is used for grazing, though there are large areas of indige-nous forest along the coast and some plantations in the

north-weste’rn uplands. Before the colonial period, the main crops were sorghum and maize: pumpkins, sweet potatoes, beans and sweet cane were also grown. Many wild green plants were gathered. There were large numbers of livestock, particularly cattle, and amasi, a type of soured milk, and meat were major components of the diet.

The people did not live in villages, but in scattered homesteads throughout the countryside. In the late nineteenth century the typical homestead was a group of huts housing perhaps three generations of one family, with brothers and their wives and Children. Each homestead had its arable plots and vegetable plots, and grazed its animals on common land. Although one family usually controlled its plot for a considerable time, there was no private property in land, and no buying and selling of land.

Men were responsible for herding (and, before the conquest, for hunting and war) and women for the house, Children and crops. Men did take some part in agriculture, especially after the plough was introduced, as there was a taboo against women handling cattle (including plough oxen). But most crop growing was done by women. During the period when peasant farmers produced for the market, some new crops, such as winter wheat, oat hay, fruit and cotton, were introduced. The major crops, however, remained tobacco, and sorghum. Cattle continued to be important but sheep were introduced and wool was extensively produced by the wealthier peasants. The cash cropping of tea, cotton or cocoa, such as developed in some other parts of Africa, never became important.

As more and more men became migrants, the organization of the family changed. Young men could now get money and were no longer dependent on their kin for cattle with which to acquire lobola (bride-wealth) and, could set up on their own at a younger age. Smaller homesteads became the rule and fewer men took more than one wife, especially as more and more people became Christians. New agricultural techniques - especially the plough and access to money - meant that smaller families could more eaSIIy survive independently of larger kinship groups.

As the family and homestead Changed through the. . effect of migrancy, so did the crops being grown. Families had far less labour at their disposal, and had to adapt to long absences of the men who went away to work. Intmany areas, sorghum disappeared: it had to be planted on its own, yielded less per acre than maize and needed constant attention as the open seed heads were eaten by birds unless

the fields were constantly guarded. With the men away, that was impossible. Maize took over. It gave higher yields and was protected from birds by leaves around the ripening cob. Unlike millet, it was also possible to plant pumpkins, beans and even sweet potatoes in the space between the plants.

Only one large field had now to be ploughed and sown and the vegetable crops tended to crowd out weeds. Only for the ploughing season was male labour essential. A smaller family without men could therefore cope with a larger area of land. This meant that women became even more responsible for agriculture, even sometimes taking over ploughing as the taboos against them working with cattle broke down. But sorghum is a more drought-resistant crop than maize, which exhausts the soil more rapidly and is less nutritious than sorghum .

These attempts to adapt to migrancy, tothe lack of male labour and to smaller homesteads, did enable many families to maintain production for some years. But there was a gradual decline in the quantity and quality of food. By the 19303, that was obvious over the whole of the Transkei, but it was seen earlier in the less fertile and heaviest populated areas. Food production continued to decline. It is worthwhile trying to list the main factors

separately.
There was less labour available. The family was stretched to its limit with its men away and it was not always possible to plough and cultivate adequately. Women were under particularly great pressure, with ever increasing workloads.
The natural resources were in decline. Each family needed its own Cattle for ploughing and milk and their numbers increased rapidly. The richer families had also increased the numbers of their sheep in the early 20th century, to ensure some cash income. This led to serious overstocking by the 19305; grazing began to deteriorate, and there was serious erosion especially in drier zones. Little new land was left for fields, and stock-owners resented turning over grazing lands to crops. In the absence of a system of rotation (such as had existed in the pre-colonial period) and of adequate fertilization, the soil - planted with maize year after year - began to deteriorate.
Holdings became smalle . A11 taxpayers were jentitled to land but the population increased rapidly, and although some families left for the towns (especially during

the 19305 and the war years) the South African government made it more and more difficult for families to accompany their men. The land available for each family decreased. Many families had over 4 hectares in the early 19005 but, by the 19505, the average holding had dropped to about 2.5 hectares.

There was little cagital to invest in agriculture. As households had to spend an increasing proportion of their incomes on consumer goods, and even food in the recurrent drought seasons, there was little left over to improve farming.

The present agricultural problems of the Transkei are deeply rooted in history and, in the role the Transkei has played, since the beginning of this century, in the broader South African economy. Production figures are not at all reliable, but they clearly show an absolute decline from before 1930: that is, of course, an even greater decline per head of population.

state intervention in agriculture

The South African Government has m ade some attempts to improve the Transkei’s agriculture. It encouraged local councils to establish agricultural schools to train African demonstrators for extension work. By the 19305 about a hundred demonstrators were teaching contour ploughing, winter fallowing, the use of ox-drawn planters, harrows and cultivators and stock improvement. But only the chiefs, headmen and the wealthier families, who dominated the councils, were able to take full advantage of the new techniques and implements, although some improved methods of cultivation di’d gradually spread more widely.

In the 1940s, attempts were made to encouragewomen to introduce cabbage, tomatoes, potatoes, carrots and other vegetables. The scheme made some initial impact but pests and a lack of irrigation and labour stopped many families from growing vegetables. So very little market gardening developed in the Transkei, which depends largely on imports from white-owned South African farms for these foods .

Since the beginning of the process that has led to ’independence’ , the Transkei Department of Agriculture has encouraged cooperatives and farmer’s associations to provide some of the badly needed capital. But most of them have collapsed because of lack of funds and inability to repay loans and interests. In fact, the central South African state devoted almost all its funds for agriculture to white-owned farms, while the African reserves have been starved of funds. This is perfectly consistent the logic of Apartheid: labour, not crops, was reguired from these areas .

When the land started to deteriorate rapidly, the councils undertook some earthworks and terracing but these piecemeal solutions were inadequate and the funds were always insufficient.

After the Second World War, a more concerted effort to rehabilitate the African reserves did begin. Scattered homesteads were to be concentrated in villages, farming land to be fenced off, and grazing lands enclosed and put under a rotation system to prevent overgrazing. To prevent overstocking, surplus animals were to be killed. A shortage of funds, and peasant resistance to animal culling and forced concentration into villages delayed the carrying out of that scheme. It is still, however, the official basis of improvement efforts in the Transkei. To date, little more than 50 per cent of the area had been 50 rehabilitated. Culling was dropped from the rehabilitation proe gramme in the 1960s due to continued resistance from cattle owners.

In the period before the Nationalist Government came totpower in South Africa (1948), local officials hoped to re-establish a small independent peasantry as part of the

scheme. They believed that only a Class of independent farmers would take sufficient interest in the land to protect it from further deterioration, and that agriculture had no future if left to families whose men were constantly absent. This attempt came to nothing. In the first place, it would have involved forcibly moving many more families off the land, and that was violently opposed by the poorer families. In the second place it would have meant heavy urbanization and many jobs to be created in the reserves to feed the landless. The Nationalist Government finally put an end to the scheme, as it did not wish industry to develop anywhere in the Transkei and thereby threaten the supply of labour to factories and farms in white areas. Plots in the rehabilitated areas have therefore remained small (between two and three hectares) and even more people have been squeezed onto the land. If rehabilitation has helped in the fight against erosion, it has done little to solve the basic problems of Transkei’s agriculture.

The Transkei today: agriculture and migrant labour

In recent years, the number of migrants has increas_ ed rapidly.

By 1976, over seventy per cent of the economically active men worked outside the Transkei. Of the others, 30 per cent were categorized as employed on the land but many of them had been migrant workers at some time in their lives.

The rapid increase in migraney is caused above all, by increasing landlessness in the area. This is due not only Only to population increase but to the brutal South Africa policy that is expelling Xhosa-speaking families in the towns and on white farms back into the Transkei.

This is part of the ’independence’ of the Transkei. It is South Africa policy to treat Xhosa_speakers in white South Africa, even if they have been there for generations, as foreigners and ’deport’ them wherever possible. Fewer and fewer people have either land or animals: 50 per cent of families have no cattle or sheep. Young men, and increasingly women, have noialternative but to become full-time migrants.

For political reasons, the South African m ines now prefer to use workers from the Bantustans rather than bring in workers from independent countries to the north. To do this, they have had to increase wages, and that is another reason for the rise in migrancy.

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Food production has remained relatively static as wage employment has gone up. There are now a little over one million cattle and around 2.2 million sheep. Despite continued improvement schemes the quality of animals or the quantity of wool produced has not improved. Cattle sales are less than 1 per cent of the total cattle population though private sales are not recorded.

Crops are very sensitive to the Transkei’s instable weather, and so show large yearly variations. The mid-19605 were terrible drought years, but even the recently improved harvests cannot feed the Transkei.

With recent wage rises and despite inflation, it is possible that there is now more money to invest in agri-culturec Families with more money from wages invest in production and tend to produce more than others. They also tend to buy cattle. But any recent improvements in production are almost certainly temporary, as the various factors driving the Transkei into sub-subsistence agri-culture are still at work.

Rural inegualityz the new rulers of the Transkei

"We believe that the work of all men as human beings must be recognized, but that all men are not equal and deserve different rewards, each according to his capacity, effort and contribution to society . . . There will, in Transkei, be no distribution of wealth in equal shares, but according to desertsJ’ The Prime Minister of Transkei, Paramount Chief, Honourable K.D. Matanzima

In the pre-eolonial days, the chiefs were responsible for distributing land to their people, and had the largest herds and best plots. After the conquest, chiefs were kept on as salaried officials of the British administration and later, of the South African Government. They. usually proved relatively docile instruments of control, and were replaced when they were not. Chiefs were given guaranteed seats in the Transkeian Legislative Assembly. When the Transkei became ’independent1,lully72 of its 105 members of the Parliament were Chiefs, ex-officio members and not elected. Needless to say, this was to their advantage. The cabinet is now controlled by the most powerful Chiefs’ families and some, like the Prime Minister - who prides himsehc on his agricultural holdings _ have been able to build up quite large farms.

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AGRICULTURE in _
the BANTUS’I’ANS
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his case study of the Transkei illustrates man)
of the proLlems faced by all the homelands: not enough
fertile land; agriculture which is almost entirel) given
over to subsistence production _ but still does not meet
basic food needs; growing landlessness and impoverish-
ment as a result not only of overcrowding and population
-’removals’ but also of increasing privatization of the land.
In fact, as hopeless as the agricultural situation in the
Transkei might seem, in many respects it is less criti-
cal than in most of the Eantustans. With Bophuthatswana,
the second Bantustan to obtain ’independence’ , it has the
largest area of the homelands, moreover almost all of it
in a single, continuous block. The density of the popula-
tion at 47 square kilometres (1972) is smaller than that
of all but Bophuthatswana, which is extremely arid, and
the small homeland of the Venda. And although much of
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the Transkei is mountainous and thus subject to erosion,
rainfall is sufficient for a settled agriculture throughout
the territory.
Contrast this with conditions elsewhere. Popula-
tion densities, especially in those areas with comparable
climate, are much higher. Even so, averages do not
convey the whole story: parts of the Kwa Zulu homeland
have population densities,to quote one report, ’comparable
to Java or Haitil , which are among the most densely
settled rural areas in the world.
Most of the other reserves are arbitrary collections
of many fragmented pockets - showing to what extent the
world ’hlomeland’ is a misnomer. Kwa Zulu, for instance,
has 29 major and 41 minor fragments’. The impossibility
of building up any meaningful infrastructures for agricul-
tural or any other economic development, is further em-
phasized by the absence of power, transport or other
basic services. Whereas the Transkei does have some
links with major road and rail networks, the 19 tracts of
Bophuthatswana have no immediate access to rail, road,
telephone or electrical power.
Most of the other reserves are similarly denied
access to the national power grid, to transport networks
or ports - and thus to marketing facilities should the)
produce an) surplus.
, The contrast in fertility is most marked in a horne-
land like Sophuthatswana where only 6-7 per cent of the
land area is considered good enough for any arable
farming; the rest is too dr) for anything other than live-
stock pas uring. Likewise the small, northern reserves
in the Transvaal - Voncla, Gazankulu, Lebowa and

Swazi - have limited rainfall and periodic droughts and are mostl) unsuitable for arable farming. Cattle are in fact part of the agricultural system , even in the more fertile areas, but despite the ’ planningI of rural locations and its specification of rotational grazing, the desire of stockholders to hang on to their small prospect of security when land is in short supply, leads to overgrazing and then erosion. Thus in the relativel3 well-watered Kwa Zulu, a recent estimate suggested that only a quarter of the land remained untouched by erosion, and the. proportion is even less elsewhere.

In sum, these reserves just do not have enough land to be viable units as they stand. This is how the t South African anthropologist, Archie Mafeje sums up their predicament:

HThe Bantustans are undoubtedly agrarian societies. As is generally recognized, the starting point for any agrarian people is land and what it can produce. For the Bantustans . . . land scarcity is a chronic problem . In the case of the Transkei and Ciskei, where several surveys have been Carried out, the evidence is that virtually no family has enough land to maintain itself. The official estimates for an economically viable plot of arable land are 10.5 acres for the Tr'anskei and 12.7 - 19 acres for the poorer soils of the Ciskei. It has been reported that in both areas 98 per cent of the households fall below these estimated averages. (That is hardly surprising because the 1936 Land Act had stipulated an average of 4 acres.) Worse still, in the Ciskei it is estimated that about 33 per cent of the households are landless, whereas in the Transkei 13-25 per cent are in the same boat. For areas such as Sotho Qanua, Swazi and Zululand, where population densities have reached record levels for South Africa, no surveys need to be Carried out to ascertain the degree of land hunger. Not surprisingly, production, far from having improved, has stagnated or declined over the years.

V'There are several reasons for this. Not only are the already sub_economic units further fragmented as a result of competing claims for land amongst kin, but also the land has deteriorated under conditions of overcropping and worsening soil erosion. In addition, the best labour is, at any given time, away in the urban areas (3-4 million workers, mainly men between the ages of 15-55 years). Livestock production has not made much headway either. Two contradictory situations, which are also the result of the land problem, coexist. Relative to pasturage, African areas are overstocked but relative to the needs of each family, they are under-stocked. Including those households without cattle (30 per cent) the rate of cattle ownership among Africans is put at 4-6 head per family. However, as far back as 1954 it had been calculated by the Tomlinson Commission that it would require lO_14 'cattle units' to give an average African family practising mixed farming enough to live on.

l"Both in agriculture and in animal husbandry government attempts to introduce improvements have been met with a wall of resistance. This has been the case since 1952 when measures such as the Rehabilitation and Stock Limitation Schemes were introduced. Schemes for government Trust Farms, pasture fencing and 'villagization' (concentrated villages rather than the usual sprawling and space-consuming Nguni villages) met with equal hostility and contributed in no small measure to the peasant rebellions of the late 19503. Even innocuous measures such as 'contour farming' were rejected because 'contours detracted from the land that was already diminished to nothing' , as the peasants put it. " _/

Starved of land, agriculture in the 'African homelands is also starved of opportunities and resources. There is no significant cash cropping by peasants in any of them , with the exception of some 3 000 sugar cane small-holder's in Kwa Zulu and other parts of Natal and one or two very recent special 'schemes' . And these, like any other commercial farming venture,however modest, require a minimum amount of land and capital which is quite beyond the capacity of most of the residents and those who have been dumped back as a result of removals. Total production of even staple foods can in no way meet local demand. Thus, even in the relatively higher potential area of the Transkei, it has been estimated that two million bags of maize (almost as much as is grown locally), has to be imported in an average year. Other resources are lacking and not provided. Thus,

for water that might make parts of it productive, Bophuthatswana has to compete with the industrial and personal needs of the white Cities of the Rand and, predictably enough, comes bottom of the list.

Another glaring dimension of the bias against homeland agriculture is in terms of the advisory services. A measure of the contrast is:

90 000 white farmers have the benefit Of
3 000 extension officers

600 000 black farmers have the benefit of fewer than
1 000 extension officers.

The various homelands also share the experience that, as some imprtovements in agriculture are at last being made - credit, advice, new cash crops, and especially through land 'planning' - the benefits are everywhere being enjoyed by the few, those with a big herd of cattle and 'economic units1 of land.

l/ Land Tenure Conditions in South Africa, December 1973, issued by the UN Centre Against Apartheid, Notes and Documents No. 57/76.

But an-indication that this is no solution to the driving poverty of the majority, that indeed these trends can only make their lot worse, is offered by the fate of the large number of people 'removed' from black spots, from expired labour tenancy on white farms, or from unemployment in the towns. These people are being given merely hut plots in resettlement villages and, in a new policy of 1978, in Bantustan 'towns' - purely dormitory connurbations of commuting migrant workers. For this increasingly desperate army of migrants and their dependents, there is no solution within the Apartheid structures.

As we have seen in the Transkei case, allocation of 'economic units' would simply hasten landlessness. The present compromise simply slows down that process and makes available an increasing number of rural dwellers who have to migrate for subsistence. Even if experiments of co-operativc production were tried they would only be sharing out resources inadee quate for subsistence more equally, and would thus only serve as a temporary damper on any unrest from landlessness. Any such alternatives for an agrarian strategy for the Transkei or for Bophuthatswana, or any external aid for their 'development' plan is only making a despem rate situation slightly less non-viable. Moreover such calculations start from the premise that these African people of South Africa have no right to the land and resources of South Africa as a whole-

FAO is preparing, in the context of the UN Anti-Apartheid Year, two in-depth studies on the effects of Apartheid on agriculture and the condition of the African rural population in South Africa.

They are:

- the effects of Apartheid on African agriculture and production techniques in South Africa.
- the effects of Apartheid on African rural family life and nutrition in South Africa.

These studies will be available in the coming months, and we shall keep you informed through Ideas and Action .

FAO honours

Dorothy Nyembe

Dorothy Nyembe is a South African woman who is under a long-term prison sentence because of her anti-Apartheid activities, especially among women and rural labour movements. In 1956 she was one of the leaders of the protest of Natal women against the pass laws after which she was imprisoned, endorsed out and banned several times until l969.when she started her 15-year sentence .

FAQ has portrayed Dorothy Nyembe on one of its Ceres medals, which is illustrated above. Symbolizing the goddess of agriculture she is depicted against prison bars, with ears of wheat. On the reverse side women's hands are shown breaking chains and supporting a pot in the shape of Southern Africa from which maize is growing. (Aluminium samples of this medal are available free from FAG, sterling silver (2 inch diameter) ones are on Sale for $30, and 18-carat gold (1.1 inch) medals for $ 180. Proceeds from sales are used to fund rural development projects in Third World countries.)

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but the long buds growing from the ruins
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