APARTHEID, AGRICULTURE AND THE STATE

THE FARM LABOUR QUESTION

Mike Morris

Saldu Working Paper No. 8

Cape Town

July 1977
### Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical Background</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture's Crisis in the 1940s</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflicting Policies</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Struggle for Dominance Within the State</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Basis of the Conflict Within the State</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Intervention to Resolve the Crisis in</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dividing the Labour Force and Easing the Farm</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour Shortage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Intervention to Eliminate Squatters and</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transform Labour Tenants</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:**

This paper is a revised version of one originally delivered at the Saldru Farm Labour Conference, September 1976.
The object of this paper is to discuss the position of the agricultural fraction of capital in relation to the other fractions who contended for power within the state by focussing on the question of farm labour. In other words I am discussing state intervention in the context of the relations between farmers and their African farm labourers and in regard to the various conflicts that took place between town and country over labour as the capitalisation of agriculture proceeded apace. My essential point is that the development of capitalism in South Africa (in both town and country) was not the result of any inexorable and purely economic laws. It was rather that such a process would take place, nor that the particular path it took could be specified in advance. The state of South African capitalism's domination in South Africa in its post World War economic, political and ideological aspects was not contained in the state of the inter war period except in a very limited sense; in the same manner as the latter was not an inexorable development of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The particular manner in which such developments took place can only be understood on the basis of the concrete analysis of the class struggles and conflicts within and over the state that characterised the "current moments" of this particular society.

I am not therefore one who believes that the present state of Apartheid South Africa can simply be explained by reference to the inexorable "logic of capitalist development" - as some of the radical commentators seem to imply - nor however do I believe that the policy of Apartheid has been the antithesis of a policy consistent with the development of capitalism in South Africa - as some of our liberal commentators explicitly argue.

As I will demonstrate, the state, as a consequence of a particular class struggle, intervening under the umbrella of the ideologies of Apartheid and Separate Development, acted in a very precise and definite manner to ensure that the major obstacles to the interests of agricultural capital in regard to the labour on the farms were either removed or regulated; State intervention therefore acted to push the capitalisation of agriculture onto a higher plane.

1. My thanks to Dave Lewis for a useful discussion on the central ideas contained in this paper, and to Dave Kaplan for comments on the original.
Having said that, a number of clarifications are required before we move on to the actual discussion. Firstly when I refer to the countryside in this paper I am not including the Reserves. I am specifically referring to what normally, in the ideology of our times, is called the "white rural areas". The latter constitutes the major land area of the countryside and is the place where capitalist agriculture developed.

Secondly as regards the actual manner in which the paper has been written, I have quoted extensively - far more than might normally seem necessary. However I have done so for a specific reason. Most analysis of the problem in my view, is so totally unaware of the real issues that formed the basis of the problems under discussion that it is at the very least essential to set the record straight. For that reason, and given the primary nature of my sources, in the main derived from agricultural congress reports and discussion, I have used this paper to provide what one could call an annotated discussion in order to establish beyond a shadow of a doubt the existence and pervasiveness of the evidence utilised.

The Historical Background Summarised

The farming faction's relationship to Apartheid policy introduced by the Nationalist Party in the 1950s can only be understood by reference to the context of the struggles and conflicts which characterised its general capitalist development through the earlier decades of its history. In

1. Due to the specific object of this paper and the context within which it was originally written and presented I did not elucidate the particular theory of the state, that of Poulantzas (e.g. 1973), informing the concrete analysis found in the following pages. Of course this does not mean it is absent, merely implicit. In doing so, however, I was, unfortunately but necessarily, forced to subsume the complexity of struggles within the various levels and apparatuses of the state, the power bloc, political scene etc, under the simple but slightly misleading phrase of "struggles for dominance within the state". As a consequence the whole question of hegemony within the power bloc is left vague and ambiguous (see Poulantzas for an explanation of these terms). A word of clarification is therefore necessary. I am not suggesting that the capitalist family faction was ever hegemonic, in case the reader familiar with Poulantzas and the attempts to apply him to South Africa interprets the analysis in this manner. However, since capitalist agriculture was always the basis of national capital's strength, the question of the former's ability to enforce its sectoral interest within the state is obviously of critical importance to the further question of national capital's ability to impose its hegemony over the power bloc. See Davies, Kaplan, Morris and O'Meara, 1977 for more general analysis of the state in South Africa.

2. Apartheid should not simply be seen as a unitary policy. Precisely because the word embraces a whole ideology it meant very different things to the different factions of capital and supportive classes who upheld it. I am only here referring to the capitalist farming fraction.
an earlier paper on agriculture I dealt with these issues comprehensively. However since they provide the essential background for the analysis to be presented here I will summarise them, as well as provide additional supportive material not cited there. I trust I shall be forgiven the repetition of certain arguments and quotations.

The development of capitalist agriculture in South Africa was characterised by two distinguishing features: 1) The rapid uneven development of capitalism in general to the relative detriment of agriculture and to the advantage of mining and industry. This manifested itself in a crisis of prices in the later 1920s and 1930s - until the Marketing Act stabilised the position, and a crisis of a labour shortage as mining and industry attracted away increasingly larger quantities of African farm labourers. 2) The particular path that capitalist development in South African agriculture took (the Prussian path) - whereby large feudal estates were slowly transformed from above into capitalist agricultural enterprises.

In our case feudal landlords of the 19th century transformed their estates based on cash/rent paying, sharecropping and labour service peasants - all forms of feudal rent - by a slow and laborious process into capitalist enterprises based on various forms of wage labour including labour tenancy. Leaning heavily on the state for political support, the landlords gradually transformed the mass of these land occupying peasants into landless peasants and labour tenants, cutting down on the amount of land and grazing granted


2. See my earlier paper for statistics demonstrating this. Alternatively the following conclusions from the Government Report on agriculture 1939 brings out all the main points: "Taking as a basis the ratio between the two price groups before the year 1930, the farmer as a buyer now pays considerably more for the products of other industrial groups than he receives for his own products".

3. This was opposed to the French case where all feudal obstacles were swept away and the large holdings broken up into small peasant land holdings (the crux of the social revolution that swept Russia in 1905 except that it failed there) or the American situation characterised by an absence of feudal land holdings and based on the smallholder; both allowing for the rapid development of capitalist agriculture from below. The elimination of the independent African peasant as well as the suppression of peasant movements aimed at occupying the land of absent farmers in the Anglo-Boer War is enlightening in this respect. See Trapido 1975 p. 10 for evidence of peasant jacqueries.

4. In my earlier paper referred to I dealt extensively with the status of labour tenants showing why they were not equivalent to feudal labour service peasants but were to be regarded as a variant form of capitalist wage labour to be located in the transformation from above of feudal landholdings into capitalist enterprises.
to the latter and forcibly keeping down their standard of living in order to maintain their rate of capital accumulation. The essence of the problem for the feudal landlord in his transition to capitalist farmer, accounting in large part for the retention of seemingly feudal political relations, was to transform the peasant into a wage labourer without undermining the landlords political and economic domination and control in the countryside. Breaking up these estates and handing them over to the peasantry would of course have swept away all these political relations of domination but that would have been a transition taking place from below, not from above.

The transforming from above of feudal estates had in the main been completed by the 1920s. Most farmers could be described as capitalist utilising a particular form of wage labour, that of labour tenants, in the main a direct consequence of the Prussian path. The crisis of prices in the 1930s by throwing farmers into the whirlpool of increasing costs, decreasing prices and increasing debts forced farmers to further squeeze their labour tenants. The resulting response of these labour tenants was an increase in migration to the urban areas raising the labour shortage in agriculture to crisis proportions.

The essential features that I wish to stress in this historical summary are:

1) that the migration of labour tenants* (mostly the younger sons who were the principal source of labour) was a direct function of the "transformation from above". Given their inability to launch a political struggle the form that the class struggle between labour tenant and farmer took was to escape (i.e. migrate townswards either temporarily or permanently) from the conditions of labour in agriculture. See my earlier paper for a discussion of the relationship between unmarried sons, squeezing of labour tenants and migration.

* In case of confusion I give the following definition of a "labour tenant". An agreement by the head of the family to provide the labour of his family (usually the sons) and/or himself for a limited period of the year (3 - 6 months) on the farmer's land in return for the right to reside on the farmer's land, to cultivate a portion of land, to graze his stock and be paid in cash or kind (increasingly more the former by the 1930s). "Squatters" however, paid a cash (or kind) rent to a landlord/farmer for the right to have access to a defined piece of land, and were under no obligation to work for the landlord/farmer. A squatter was therefore either a peasant cultivating such land or a wage labourer living in the countryside but working in the town.
2) that migration of African farm workers (both temporary and permanent) to the towns experienced a subtle but critically important shift in the later 1930s and 1940s. Whereas prior to that it was patently clear that most migrant labour in the towns was being drawn from the Reserves, by 1939 "the evidence seems to suggest that the farms are now becoming what the Reserves used to be, sources of a labour supply". (SAIRR, 1939, p.26).

3) that these migrating labour tenants were initially going to the mines - a major source of contention between farmers and mineowners - and later in the 1940s to industry in the towns.

4) that labour tenancy was retarding the development of more efficient agricultural production. Although it was recognised as a necessary step in the development of capitalist agriculture in South Africa, it was also recognised as being inefficient and there were calls for it to be gradually discouraged by the state. Furthermore since it encouraged the unequal distribution of farm labour between medium sized more intensive farms and larger relatively under-utilised farms, it should be regulated and controlled through state intervention.

1. In the absence of official mine records it is of course difficult to substantiate the flow of farm labour to the mines. However abundant evidence exists indicating the anger of farmers at this process. In my previous paper I cited indications from the Native Economic Commission 1930-32, the Native Farm Labour Committee and the 1930 Annual Report of the Chamber of Mines. Additional evidence is to be found in the various Congress reports of the period. "Congress requested the government to raise the age limit of Natives recruited from farms for service on the mines from 18 to 21 years. Delegates expressed the view that with the increased mining activity on the Rand the platteland was demuded of its natural labour force. They wished to retain young Natives a few years longer on the farms". (Transvaal Agricultural Union Congress (TAU), Farmers Weekly (FW) 28/8/35). The Orange Free State Agricultural Union (OFSAU) congress in 1935 requested "Government ... to forbid the recruiting of Natives in agricultural areas for the mines". (FW 4/9/35). The North Cape Agricultural Union congress in 1936, the OFSAU congress in 1936 and the South African Agricultural Union (SAAU) congress expressed similar sentiments. Nor was this conflict only particular to the 1930s. "About 50 delegates attended a meeting at Pietersburg ... to discuss the shortage of farm labour. Referring to the acuteness of the position delegates complained that the Northern Transvaal had for a considerable time been a source of recruitment of Natives for mines. It was resolved to draw the Government's attention to the seriousness of the position and ask it to take immediate steps to stop the flow of Natives to the towns and return surplus Natives to the farms". (FW 3/5/44).
5) that this unequal distribution was linked to the continued (albeit often illegal) existence of squatting (i.e. rent paying) African peasants on white owned farm land, absentee owners and company land. There were allegations that the latter were often directly owned by mining magnates. The farmers put forward vociferous demands for squatting to be eliminated

a) because it withheld such land from farmers who wished to farm commercially and it constituted an uneconomic utilisation of such land, and

b) because it enabled a fairly large section of the African rural population to stand outside of the "rural labour market" by either allowing them to exist as purely subsistence (or middle) peasants or to seek work mainly on the mines when they needed to engage in wage labour. Farmers demanded state intervention to eradicate squatting, thereby opening up large tracts of land and forcing the squatter peasantry into wage labour on the farms.

The critically important parts of Hertzog's "Native Bills" were aimed at dealing with precisely these problems. The Native Service Contract Act of 1932 was a stop-gap measure. It was succeeded by the Native Trust and Land Act of 1936 which incorporated much of the legislation and expanded on it substantially. The purpose of the Act as respectively expounded by the Minister of Native Affairs (its sponsor) and Heaton-Nicholls (one of the architects), was to "enable us gradually to get rid of the evils of squatting and the congregation of surplus Natives in the urban areas". (Col.2748,30/4/1936), and to deal with the "labour tenancy ... breakdown (which) is driving those Natives in increasing numbers to the towns. This Bill proposes to stop it by providing a home for evicted Natives instead of allowing them to drift to the towns". (Col. 1204,4/5/1936). The key section was Chapter IV. By its proclamation to any particular district the Act aimed at regulating and controlling the distribution of labour tenants amongst farmers, and controlling and eliminating the incidence of squatter peasants on white-owned land. It also contained regulations requiring the registration of labour tenants, the payment of a small licence fee and placed a limit on the number of labour tenants any one farmer might have living on his land, in order to "counter wastage" in the distribution

1. From now on all references preceded by "Col." should be taken to refer to Hansard - House of Assembly.
of farm labour. The minimum period of service required for labour was also regulated throughout the Union, being set at 122 days per year. The main principles of Chapter IV were however directed against the squatter peasantry still in existence in the countryside.

By requiring their registration and the payment of progressively higher licence fees, the aim was to eliminate them completely from all white agricultural areas and to transform that land into farm-land cultivated by capitalist farmers. The squatter peasants who were forced off were, in terms of the Act, either to be transformed into farm labourers or removed to the Reserves where additional land was to be provided for their settlement if they refused to work on the surrounding farms. The buying of additional land (the released areas) to be added to the Reserves must therefore be seen as directly related to the Act's purpose in the countryside as set out in Chapter IV. All the Chapters were interrelated. Chapter IV was basically the means for transforming rent paying squatters' land into capitalistically exploited farm-land by forcing out African squatter peasants. Those forced out would have to be accommodated somewhere else - either as farm labourers or settled in released areas, provision for which was set out in the previous Chapters. The whole purpose of the Act was therefore to force the transformation of capitalist agriculture.1 The provision of further land was also however a function of the continued struggles of rural Africans against the 1913 Land Act and their demand for additional land.2 The major objections to the Act came from landowners "who derive a fruitful source of revenue from Native tenants" (Col. 2780, 4/5/46) (amongst whom it would seem some mining companies were to be included) and who therefore opposed this intervention to spread capitalist relations throughout the rural areas; and some members of the National Party who expressed the fear that the purchase of additional land might mean that not enough squatter peasants might be transformed into farm labourers, as well as some who demanded higher squatter registration fees to complete the process sooner.

1. Brookes in the Senate on the 1951 Amendment clearly summarised this. (Col. 3031, 8/5/51).

2. Roberts, one of the commissioners, claimed in the 1927 Select Committee on the Hertzog "Native Bills" (SC-10-1927) that the key question for most rural Africans was that of additional land rather than the franchise. Also the Minister of Native Affairs claimed that "there is nothing which agitates the Native mind more than the cry for more land". (Col. 2747, 30/4/36).
Chapter IV was only applied once and immediately raised a major problem. In 1937-8 the district of Lydenburg was proclaimed under the Act. The net result was that instead of increasing the supply of farm labour it effectively acted to reduce it. In its particular application the minimum period of service was raised to 6 months. African labour tenants in response simply "trekked to other districts where the Act was not in force". Squatters, rather than be transformed into labour tenants or farm labourers, demanded land in the Reserves. A general revolt of peasants and farm workers in the Lydenburg area occurred as a consequence of the proclamation. The result was that farmers were forced to request the suspension of Chapter IV. This was the source of the demands by farmers' organisations for the proclamation of the whole of a province or the whole of the Union under Chapter IV in order to cut off the escape route of trekking to an unproclaimed area, and to ensure tighter control.

Agriculture's Crisis in the 1940s

The 1940s undoubtedly showed significant alterations in the whole development of capitalism in South Africa. It was certainly a critically important period for agriculture. Both its own specific economic interests as well as its political interests as the leading element of national capital seemed to be threatened.

On the political party level the entry of South Africa into the Second World war on behalf of Britain forced Hertzog and his faction to split from the Fusionist United Party and left Smuts - on previous experience certainly not agriculture's favoured son - as Prime Minister. This had major effects on

1. I shall use the term capitalist farming fraction and agriculture interchangeably.

2. See Kaplan 1974, 1976a, 1976b, 1976c, for clear analyses of the conflict within the state between national and international capital; for the position of agriculture as the leading element of national capital; and for the manner in which coalition and fusion between the SAP and the NP weakened but did not destroy the dominant position of agriculture and national capital within the state. Kaplan's work is the first theoretically clear analysis of the importance and nature of the conflicts within the state in South Africa. Its importance in this respect cannot be over-emphasised.

3. The importance of this, given the vociferous nationalist stance of the Pact Government and the somewhat lesserly so Hertzog-led Fusionist UP, should not be underestimated.
agriculture's ability to assert the primacy of its interests in the state. Of course this is not meant to imply a sudden fall of farmers from political grace in 1939 immediately Hertzog parted parliamentary company with Smuts. The effect was uneven, characterised by fierce struggles within the state, spread over at least the war years and marked by shifts and turns, depending on whether one is looking at it from the point of view of the farm labour shortage problem or the attacks on the Marketing Act.  

The latter in fact only surfaced when the Government's refusal to act decisively to ensure agriculture's labour needs was becoming apparent (i.e. around 1943-4). Given the object of this paper I shall restrict myself to the labour aspect only.

The drift of farm labourers to the towns increased rapidly and the farm labour shortage reached crisis proportions during and immediately after the war years. Already in 1941 it was being stated in Parliament that the "shortage of farm labour is undoubtedly the greatest problem the farmer has to contend with at the moment" (Labuschagne (Bethal) Col, 5849, 3/4/41). Following that, agricultural congress after congress repeatedly drew attention to the shortage. In 1942 the TAU congress "viewed with alarm the continued movement of Natives from farms to towns" (FW 2/9/42). At the SAAU congress of that same year the principal speaker on the farm labour position complained that "although the Government has been repeatedly warned in the past about the acute position, matters had been allowed to drift until today the country had to put up with conditions short of chaotic".

The specifically appointed sub-committee resolution "drawing the attention of the Government to the fact that the farm labour shortage is extremely acute" was unanimously adopted. (FW 4/11/42). Two years later at the Natal Agricultural Union (NAU) congress "delegates expressed alarm" at the "acute shortage of farm labour". (FW 3/5/44). At the OPSAU congress the debate on farm labour lasted for several hours and "delegates from all parts of the province complained that it was impossible to maintain adequate labour forces on their farms, no matter how well they paid their labourers, The drift to the towns would have to be stopped in some way". (FW 23/8/44).

---

1. See Finlay 1976 a and b for an exhaustive discussion of the conflicts over the Marketing Act.

2. For further evidence see my earlier paper.
10.

It is difficult to substantiate statistically this drift to the towns by farm labourers. However, using rough population figures the Fagan Commission (Native Laws 1946-8) showed that (1936-46) the total African population of the Union as a whole increased by 18.32 percent, whilst the increase in rural areas excluding the Reserves was only 15.5 percent, i.e. less than the average increase of the African population as a whole. Therefore they concluded "that indicates ... that Natives have indeed moved away from the rural areas" (p.9). The Tomlinson Commission claimed that "to the increase in the number of bantu urban residents since 1936 the European farms and other rural areas contributed 40 percent, the bantu areas 8 percent, foreign centres 23 percent, and the natural increase of the towns themselves 29 percent". (p.28).

1. As regards the statistical substantiation of the drift there are some important points that need to be noted. In the first place most agricultural statistics in South Africa are notoriously unreliable. I am therefore inherently sceptical of too much emphasis being placed on complicated statistical computations. Secondly, the actual total black workers on farms during this period (1937-1945) according to census reports declined from 764,000 to 633,000. Even though it would verify my position I am sceptical of the figures. However, to look on the positive side:

a) the population of the rural areas includes considerable numbers of people who are not engaged in farming, e.g. workers in construction gangs, employees of rural factories and mines, as well as squatters around such places and around urban areas. As the Pagan Commission concluded therefore, "the number of Natives falling in these categories may well have increased by more than 16 percent between the years 1936-46" (p.9).

b) in the rural areas the proportion of dependents to workers is much higher than in the towns. "The towns have a preponderance of males over females ... a greater percentage of workers, while the rural areas carry more old men, women and children" (p.9). Therefore the number of workers amongst the rural population is proportionately much less than amongst the urban Natives. In fact it is more than likely that the 16 percent figure distorts the actual situation, and that many more workers have left the rural areas. Once again to quote the Pagan Commission "the numbers remain in the rural areas but the workers are in the towns" (p.10). In which case computations based purely on numbers are problematic and would underestimate the situation.

c) the figure for the rural areas includes large numbers of squatter peasants who have nothing whatever to do with working on the farms.

2. The Tomlinson Commission unfortunately gives no basis on which they computed these figures.
Conflicting Policies

What did agriculture recommend as a solution to the problem? Essentially capitalist farmers were demanding the further intensification of state intervention to halt the migration of farm labourers to the towns and substitute settled full-time wage labour for the partial wage labour of labour tenancy. The general lines along which farmers saw the solution to the problem was very clear from the beginning. The Native Farm Labour Committee Report (1939) stated that "farmers can see relief only in action by the Government and that only in the direction of compulsion on the Natives to accept farm work and the imposition of further restrictions upon the movements of those already so employed" (p.81). The 1942 special committee of the SAAU, following through this line, received unanimous support in requesting the Government a) to "apply Chapter IV of the Native Trust and Land Act to all provinces immediately"; b) to "exercise control over unemployed Natives in locations"; c) to "revise the recruitment of Native labour for mines and for all public works ... (so) that these bodies will obtain their labour mainly from sources outside the Union". In addition there was also the general demand that the pass-laws be tightened up and the Urban Areas Act be properly implemented. (FW 4/11/42).

Reflecting the struggle taking place within the state and in direct response to the experimental relaxation of the pass-laws in 1942, "anxiety was also expressed regarding the future of the Natives pass system and congress was of the opinion that earnest representation should be made to the Government against any endeavour to abolish the system". (FW 2/9/42).

Agriculture's fear had a real basis to it, for it was patently apparent that it was no longer able to assert unequivocally the primacy of its interests within the state. There was a major cleavage emerging between farmers and the state over the resolution of the farm labour shortage crisis. In the first place farmers' delegates complained bitterly at congresses that "the Departments of Labour and Native Affairs were unsympathetic towards requests made by farmers on the matter", and that they were "sick and tired of asking the same thing year after year" (FW 1/9/43).

1. A recommendation put forward by the Native Farm Labour Committee 1939 but ignored by the state, as well as repeatedly called for by congresses.

2. The special sub-committee of the OFSAU of 1942 passed basically the same recommendations. The request that mine labour should be recruited only in reserves and outside the Union had already been raised in 1936 at the OFSAU and SAAU congresses (FW 23/9/36, 4/11/36).
The crux of the matter, as admitted by the state at the time, was that "the Department of Native Affairs explicitly refused to impose any enforcement on (farm) Natives". (FW 4/11/42). In its recommendations circulated to all farming organisations in 1943 the Department of Native Affairs (NAD) explicitly rejected "the application of force" and the application of Chapter IV of the Native Trust and Land Act. Instead it proposed paying higher farm wages, improving working conditions and appointing inspectors to see that standards were improved in voluntary conjunction with farmers.

These proposals were unilaterally rejected by the farmers. Indeed they had already been rejected in no uncertain terms, as was apparent from their scornful reception given them at the TAU congress of the previous year when the NAD had suggested them. "When the official spokesman of the Native Affairs department with a rather shy smile of apprehension, told the assembled delegates that the solution of the labour problem lay in making more attractive the conditions of employment on farms his words were instantly greeted by a chorus of No's". (FW 30/9/42). In 1943 the TAU in response to the NAD initiative, pointedly adopted a resolution "viewing with disappointment the difference of opinion between practical farmers and the Government" (FW 1/9/43). The next year the TAU formally rejected the circular's recommendations and again requested the application of Chapter IV throughout the Union. Indeed the rejection of the circular was so unanimous, and individual farmer's responses so stridently worded that the NAD admitted that the response from the farmers had been "disappointing and unhelpful".

The farmers' response was somewhat predictable since these proposals had already been dealt with at length and rejected in 1939 when the Native Farm Labour Committee put forward similar suggestions, although it did not there explicitly suggest raising wages, and furthermore did not suggest that they be the only mechanism utilised. At that time the problems with such recommendations were succinctly summarised in an editorial

1. At the TAU congress in 1942 the Chief Clerk of the NAD said that "his department had come to the conclusion that restrictions would never force the Native into certain channels" (FW 2/9/42). In Parliament the Minister of Agriculture (Reitz) explicitly stated that "we cannot and may not create a condition of compulsory labour in South Africa ... we don't want to force labour, and just the same as with other matters, there are certain economic laws in regard to labour. I can't take people by the scruff of their necks and tell them that they have to go to work here or there. We have to leave it largely to the free choice and wish of the labourer himself to say where he is going to work" (Col. 4082, 18/3/42).
in the Farmers' Weekly specially devoted to the report's recommendations. Given the major contradiction between country and town in terms of a conflict over low agricultural prices, high manufacturing prices, and the lower level of capital available to farmers, they regarded it as an unrealistic proposal. "The question (is) ... how higher wages are to be paid by an industry that is so inadequately and insufficiently recompensed for the products from which the wage and every other cost has to be met ... While all these suggestions (for better conditions ...) are admirable in theory and would no doubt be effective in practice, the sum of their cost in application will, to the minds of most farmers, not solve the question of ways and means for finding the ready cash, which in these days is the acutest of the problems which the farmer is called upon to solve" (FW 31/5/39).

In essence the same objections were raised to the suggestions contained in the NAD's 1943 circular. Notwithstanding their general reluctance to pay higher wages and improve conditions of labour on farms, and without meaning to approve or justify this refusal to increase wages etc., there was a kernel of truth contained in the contention that financially capitalist farmers were in a parlous situation in this period. Prices had only just begun to catch up to their pre-1929 level, let alone begin to equalise with the prices of manufacturing commodities. In a set of computations prepared by the Social and Economic Planning Council the very low money incomes of most farmers was revealed. Around half of owner occupiers received a yearly cash income of less than £200, whilst more than half of the tenants' farmers had incomes of less than £100 per annum" (UG 10-1945, p.7). Driven by the fear of bankruptcy the suggestion that they should raise money wages seemed to them to be sheer lunacy when the alternative of putting further pressure on their farm workers was also present.

The second objection that farmers made to the circular's proposals was a denial that even if they had the ready cash it would do no good to raise wages. The argument was simply that if cash wages were to be the only or even the major determinant in halting migration then farmers were bound to be back in the same position very soon, for raising wages would only set up a cyclical reaction. As far as the OFS Agricultural Union executive committee was concerned "if agriculture had to keep pace with other industries
in the wage scale the other industries would also be forced to increase their wage scales to obtain labour and the shortage of farm labour would not be rectified" (FW 1/9/43). This was a reflection in ideological terms of the effect of the uneven development of capitalism in South Africa on capitalist agriculture.

Faced with this major contradiction between farmers' demands and the declared policy of the Smuts Government, and amidst angry mutterings at expressions that "the need for a farmers' political party ... was becoming increasingly necessary" the NAU took the initiative and appointed a special committee to investigate the "problems of Native labour supplies for agriculture" in order to "prevent revolutionary changes in Native policy without due consideration by Parliament of the opinions of farmers" (FW 2/5/44).

The result was a coherent document adopted by the SAAU almost immediately and used as a basis for its negotiations with the NAD that same year. The policy linked the farm labour shortage to the wider political problem of controlling the African population, by starting from the "axiom that no solution is practicable except through the medium of long-term Native policy ... (therefore) it was proposed that the Native community be encouraged to advance in two main groups, agricultural and industrial, the former divided into sub-groups consisting of farmers and farm labourers. The Native farmer should be assisted to develop within Native areas under leasehold tenure while the labourer should be accommodated on European farms not as a tenant or part-time employee. The industrial group ... should be wholly cut off from the practice of agriculture as a means of sustenance ... In this way the Native could be encouraged to develop along useful lines and at the same time an enormous labour force would be released ... Elimination of the, at present, usual periods of idleness would produce an enormous potential labour force, a reservoir of manpower with no corresponding increase in the actual numbers. Under such circumstances labour surpluses occurring in one area could be applied to the needs of other areas, and in time the tendency to drift from one class of employment to another would gradually disappear".

1. See also Labuschagne (NP) in Parliament col. 3087, 8/3/40; and a discussion of agricultural problems by the President and Secretary of the SAAU and the Manager of SASKO (FW 10/12/1947).

2. There were a number of letters around this time expressing grave dissatisfaction with the UP Government e.g. - "One thing is certain: the farmers will not make it easy for the Government should it continue in its present imbecile policy of appeasement". (FW 19/1/44).
15.

As regards improvements in farm labourers' living standards and conditions, the memorandum raised no objection to it in principle but argued that this was a subsidiary solution and was "not possible until the farmer's own position has been stabilised and his labour become more efficient". This required the continuous employment of farm labour for the whole year (FW 10/10/45).

The essence of this proposed "Native Policy" therefore required the political intervention of the state to divide firstly the labour force into industrial and agricultural sections and thereafter (or as simultaneously as possible) to transform labour tenants into settled full-time, solely wage paid farm labourers. Labour shortage (due to migration) was thus directly linked with the existence of labour tenancy, as the TAU recommendations to the Native Laws Commission (1946-8) clearly stated. "The ruling practice of allowing Native labourers ... to leave their master's farm for a portion of any year and to be employed in towns is one of the principle causes of labour wastage ... this state of affairs would naturally be altered if a division of labour forces is created. The Native must be given the choice of becoming either an industrial worker or a permanent farm labourer". (Reproduced in part in FW 26/5/47). The remnants of labour tenancy could only be eliminated if a division of labour was instituted, hence the argument that "the division of labour is ranked as first and second comes the scrapping of the part-time system of farm labour" (Pres. NAU, The Farmer 11/3/49).

In terms of concrete suggestions to implement these policy recommendations the various congresses urged the adoption of four proposals. The abolition of the numerous passes that existed and their consolidation in one general identification document with a passport size photograph, to be carried by Africans and produced on demand by authorised officials. This was to be coupled with an effective system of registration which by means of the "identification certificate" (in effect what is now called the "reference book" or "compass") would establish the identity, place of employment and domicile of every African. This would provide the necessary information about the movements of Africans and hence form the basis of control over the movement from country to town, presupposing of course that the pass-laws were strictly enforced.¹

¹. Registration as a form of control was very explicit. "You can not control anything if you do not know all about it" (Botha, Pres. NAU Farmer 11/2/49); "to control the movement of the Native population ... we should determine how many Natives there are and where they live" (F.C. Erasmus, col.6397, 1/5/45).
16.

The third proposal involved the setting up of labour bureaux in order to distribute the labour force properly between town and country, as well as within the urban and rural areas. Such measures, if undertaken by the state, would control the flow of labour from the farms and contribute to the division of the labour force. Fourthly the implementation of Chapter IV of the Native Trust and Land Act over the whole country was also demanded. This would eradicate squatting, control the distribution of labour tenants between farms and eventually lead to its elimination.¹

At this stage, in the face of attacks on the Marketing Act, faced with demands for cheaper food and increased efficiency, farmers started to link the defence of the Marketing Act and raising productivity with their demands for state intervention to ease the shortage of farm labour and facilitate the full scale utilisation of twelve monthly wage paid labour.² Dividing the labour force would solve the labour shortage problem, which it was claimed hampered production and would stabilise labour to a degree, whilst attacking squatting and labour tenancy would further raise the efficiency of farm labour, facilitating more efficient mechanisation, hence raising productivity and increasing output. All this would enable the farmers to feed the expectedly large increases in the non-agricultural population as industrialisation (which they clearly supported) proceeded rapidly in the coming decades.

It was argued that "The principal reasons for the inefficiency of South African farm workers are the disinclination of the Native to settle permanently in one district, to work regularly throughout the year and for a number of years for one employer and the relatively greater attractions offered by town amenities and wages. Because of (this) ... there is a regular coming and going of workers on our farms and a just as constant flow of labour from farm to town ... higher wages will not encourage the Native to take up permanent employment on farms ... If South African town-workers are to enjoy food it is imperative that some attention be given by the Government to the question of permanency of farm labour, both from the point of view of farm employment contracts and the competition of urban employers ... if farmers are left with only casual and the most inefficient labour there can

1. See e.g. SAAU FW 30/10/46; FW 26/10/49; FW 5/11/47; TAU FW 10/9/47; NAU FW 22/9/48; OFSAU FW 17/8/49.
2. See for example the editorial of the Primary Producer (official organ of the SAAU) 27/11/46 linking the problem to price stability.
be no cheapening of food ... what is wanted is a sound labour policy that will balance urban and rural requirements and ... encourage the permanent settlement of farm workers on our farms". (Primary Producer 27/11/46).

As far as the SAAU was concerned simply increasing wages would "be no permanent solution of the problem." It would not increase output nor cheapen agricultural produce. Only an increase in efficiency could do that, which as we have seen was integrally related to creating a permanent agricultural labour force. It was on this basis that the mechanisation of agriculture could be accelerated. "Production efficiency could be raised by greater mechanisation which is dependent upon a considerable cheapening of mechanical equipment and power, fuel and more efficient labour". ¹ (Report of the executive committee SAAU in Primary Producer 6/11/46).

The Struggle for Dominance within the State

As we have seen the position of the farming fraction was very clear at least from 1944 onwards. It articulated a clear cut "Native Policy", which, in its opinion, would not only solve the farm labour shortage and facilitate the further development of capitalist agriculture, but also enable the state to cope with the emerging political conflicts and strains of industrialisation. However the continuing struggle for domination within the state was thus far not being resolved to agriculture's advantage. Not only was its "Native Policy" not being implemented but the emergence of different tendencies gaining dominance over its policy was becoming apparent. Although agriculture had clearly lost its position of dominance and was struggling fiercely to reverse its declining fortunes, the struggles for dominance were not resolved in any clear cut manner with one fraction clearly asserting and establishing its hegemony over other fractions. In fact in this respect the period was marked rather by an instability in achieving hegemony amongst the dominant classes. For this reason, amongst others, the decline in agricultural power did not result in new policies/legislation being promulgated. At this stage the index of the steps and turns of the struggle amongst the dominant classes lay rather in the struggles over the relaxation or administrative waiving of existing legislation.

¹ "Every move towards efficiency will be frustrated unless a national effort is made to stop what is now a fast flowing current of labour from country to town" (Editorial Primary Producer, 16/10/46).
As pointed out above, the Native Service Contract Act (1932) regulations attempted to institute some control over the movement of farm workers to the towns by forbidding their employment there unless an identification document specifying that they were not obliged to render farm service was in their possession. Although the administrative provisions of the Act were at first not properly enforced, in 1936 and again in 1938 (in general circular No. 22) new administrative machinery was introduced and instructions were given that the provisions were to be rigidly adhered to in order to control this movement. However in 1940 (under general circular No. 3) they were once again relaxed and Africans arriving in towns without documents were furnished with temporary registration certificates permitting them to seek work whilst enquiries were supposedly instituted in their rural districts. The administrative provisions of this Act, designed and intended to place some control on the flow of farm labour to the towns, were thus explicitly ignored by the Smuts Government.

Likewise with regard to the pass-laws, the Minister of Native Affairs stated (in the Senate) in April 1942 that he would request the Minister of Justice to issue instructions to the police that no African should be arrested under the pass-laws unless there were reasonable grounds for suspecting that he had committed an offence. On May 12 1942 the Minister of Justice instructed the police in city areas not to ask Africans to produce their passes unless there was reason to suspect them of having committed, or being about to commit, a serious crime. (SA Outlook, May-June, 1942). Subsequent to this Van der Byl (as new Minister of Native Affairs) and Smit (as secretary) held discussions with the Commissioner of Police where it was "agreed for a trial period to reduce still further the arrests under the pass-laws, officers being asked to use their discretion in cases involving ignorance or carelessness". (Van der Byl 1973 p.230). This relaxation of the pass-laws in certain areas became the focus of a major struggle amongst whites in the urban areas. Besides the obvious objections from farmers, there were fears (in fact incorrectly founded)

1. See Native Laws Commission 1946-8, Annexure 6, p.69.

2. The pass-laws relaxed were: 1) Travelling pass proclamation No. 150 of 1934 (Tvl. and OFS). 2) Natal Acts Nos. 48 of 1884 and 52 of 1887, and Natal Government Notice 120 of 1910,3). Transkei proclamation Nos. 110/1879, 112/1879, 140/1885, 109/1894, 497/1895; Registration regulation under Section 1 of Native Urban Areas Act 1923. The following areas were affected: Johannesburg and Witwatersrand, Durban, Pretoria, Pietermaritzburg, Kimberley, Bloemfontein. NAD Circular April 1947.
that the relaxation was the major cause for the crime wave supposedly sweeping the Witwatersrand. The net effect of this struggle was a continuous process of shifts and turns in the manner in which pass laws were implemented. Although there were short periods when the police enforced them strictly, the dominant tendency over the period was clearly towards their controlled relaxation. This tension over the implementation of the pass-laws — precisely an effect and index of the struggle within the state — is clearly apparent at the end of the trial period where as a result of the charges of a "marked increase in lawlessness ... instead of a progressive relaxation of the restrictions in other areas it was found necessary in 1946 to modify the instructions to the police again to enforce the pass-laws in the areas where they had been relaxed with the understanding, however, that the police would use their powers sparingly". (NAD circular, April 1947).

Once again on the issue of registration it was by administrative default that the index of the struggles within the state can be established. The NAD showed no inclination to maintain a registration system. One of the chief debating points made by the Nationalist Party over the Natives' (Urban Areas) Consolidation Bill of 1945 was that the Smuts Government was not implementing the 1937 Native Laws Amendment Act which required all municipalities to take a two yearly census of all Africans in their townships. The rationale being that this was necessary in order to gain the necessary information to deal with the surplus urban Africans. ¹

These struggles for dominance emerged quite clearly in the parliamentary debate where the Nationalist Party argued that the "pass-laws are not being enforced", and that the pass-laws and registration system "exists on paper only with the result that the situation has got entirely out of hand" (Col. 6403, 1/5/45). If the pass-laws were "stringently" and "uniformly" enforced throughout the country then "most young Natives (who) migrate

¹. The Nationalist Party continually argued along the following lines: "To control the movement of Natives you must know ... how many there are. Will you believe it, that the Minister does not know, that the Provincial Councils do not know, that the Divisional Councils do not know, and that the municipalities also do not know". (F.C. Erasmus, Col. 6399, 1/5/45). The last census was taken in 1938.
from the farms to the towns" could be "brought back to the farms" and "there would not have been a shortage of farm labour". Speaking metaphorically, but somewhat ironically, the Nationalist Party urged the "Minister ... to make the pass-laws more stringent, so that he can place his finger on the pulse of the Native ... and an end can be put to the migration from the platteland to the towns". (Col. 4295/6, 27/3/45).¹

The Minister of Native Affairs was repeatedly accused of being "reluctant to take action. His reluctance borders on a lack of sympathy". Charges were made that "segregation under the present Government ... is a farce, they pay lip service to segregation but their actions lie in a different direction", and that the "impression in the country is that the Government does not want to stop the infiltration of Natives into urban areas". (Col. 6401, 1/5/45) (Erasmus).

Although a certain amount of such talk is based on the inevitable ideological point scoring that characterises the party political struggle and should be discounted given the arena in which it takes place, the Nationalist Party was nevertheless reflecting the general political position of the agricultural fraction. (It was also of course reflecting other fractions and strata but I am only concerned here with agriculture's struggles within the state). The reluctance (as well as its reasons) of the Smuts Government to implement agriculture's "Native Policy" was illuminatingly illustrated when the Minister of Native Affairs (van der Byl) met the special SAAU delegation for discussion of their proposals in 1944. In reply to their "suggestions for a long-term policy to encourage and develop the division of the Native population into two main groups - agricultural or rural, and industrial or urban", the Minister said that "the shortage of farm labour was an economic question and no Government had yet found a solution. The mining industry also had a shortage of 70 000 labourers and the Natives had a right to sell their services in the highest market to their best advantage". (My emphasis). In effect rejecting their demands for the political intervention of the state to divide the labour force and control the movement to the towns more strictly, he begged them "not to ask me to do impossible things which would savour of conscripted labour, and of which the merest suggestion could only create bitterness in the heart of the Native, who is watching us as his trustee". (Reported in FW 20/8/44).² To

---

1. See also a very clear speech indeed by Strauss (NP) (Col. 4112-4119, 23/3/45).

2. He made a similar statement at the special congress on "Native Farm Labour" of the TAU in 1944. (FW 23/8/44).
agriculture all such talk of the problem and the solution being purely "economic", and references to "mining", "highest market" etc., could only mean that the state was prepared to allow the situation to develop to the "disadvantage" of the farming fraction. The Minister, in his reply to the Native Urban Areas Consolidation Bill, again showed that the hesitancy of the state to implement stringently the pass-laws to halt the flow of farm labour to the towns was partly grounded in the fear that "it would cause an enormous amount of difficulty and bitterness ... it would make the Natives feel they are being suppressed ... and that can only serve to cause more bitterness between white and black". (Col. 6406/7, 1/5/45).

Two years after its initial meeting with the Minister the SAAU reported that although a special committee was serving in an advisory capacity to the Minister of Native Affairs, something which arose out of the 1944 meeting, "little progress has been made in the long-term proposals of the Union to encourage and develop the division of the population into two main groups". (Report of the executive committee, Primary Producer 6/11/46). Thus by the mid 1940s it was obvious that the struggle within the state was turning against agriculture. Besides their problems over farm labour, at this stage major attacks on the Marketing Act were being spearheaded by the commercial fraction (through Assocom) backed by the Chamber of Mines and more discreetly it seems by some sections of industry. At this stage agriculture prepared itself for the task of tightening its organisational strength and moving onto the offensive. Using the defence of the Marketing Act as a key rallying point a campaign was launched to improve its relative position in the struggle. In an important opening speech the President of the SAAU pointed out that "the economic structure of the country was generally in a state of fluidity which various sections of the community, egged on by the gain incentive, were trying to exploit to the full (and) ... appealed to the leaders and representatives of agriculture to approach the position from a national point of view and ... to farmers to close their ranks by joining their agricultural associations". (FW 21/6/44). This was followed by a concentrated attempt to mobilise their

1. The following discussion does not deal with the manner in which the interests of the farming fraction were organised on the party political level, and the manner in which the offensive operated there. Nor does it deal with the critically important manner in which the interests of capitalist agriculture, as the leading element of national capital, were articulated within the renewed class struggle between the national and international fractions of capital post World War II.
their forces in the countryside by ensuring that the maximum number of farmers were involved in the various associations. A special full-time public relations officer was also appointed by the SAAU to spread the "farmers' case" as widely as possible and to bring the offensive into the towns.

In February 1945 plans for widening agriculture's organisational strength were laid by the convening of a special conference by the SAAU to discuss with the representatives "proposals for co-ordinating their business affairs". It was explicitly acknowledged that "the main object of the conference was to form a united front with adequate funds and staff to meet attacks made upon the farming industry". (FW 7/2/45). The urgency of forming a united front was the "key note of the reports" submitted to the SAAU congress later that year. The President "urged farmers to set aside all political and other differences and to organise a strong and united front which would enable them to maintain their status and give their fullest services to the nation". The newly established Public Relations Committee in its report drew attention to "the gradual loss of parliamentary influence through direct representation of rural constituencies" and repeated that "the farmers" case should be adequately presented through publicity and propaganda ... Unless the urban community appreciated the facts there was a serious danger that both farmers and soil would suffer disaster, and that other interests organised as "pressure groups" might gain their ends at the expense of the country as a whole". (FW 31/10/45). In September 1946 the united front was organisationally established. All co-operatives merged with organised farmers into one national organisation, the SAAU, which was now said to "form the voice of the agricultural community in South Africa". (FW 4/9/46). Organised agriculture had clearly moved onto the offensive.

The dissatisfaction of the farmers over the lack of effective action on the part of the state to deal with the farm labour shortage continued to be evident: Congress farmers muttered angrily in the platteland over the seeming decline of their political and economic fortunes. Immediately prior to the 1948 election, reports of "bitterly aggrieved farmers" were heard (TAU secretary, FW 25/2/48); and the President of the NAU felt obliged to state openly that "it is disappointing that the Government has taken no steps to put into practice the policy of organised agriculture in regard to farm labour". (FW 12/9/47). The coming to power of the Nationalist Party in 1948 was however to ensure that some of these steps were taken in the following decade.
The Basis of the Conflict Within the State

Before we go on to examine how the coming to power of the National Party affected the struggle for power within the state, it is necessary to clarify the previous discussion on the conflicts between agriculture’s "Native Policy" and the stance taken by the state in the 1940s to avoid some possible misconceptions arising from, and consequent upon, only discussing the farming fraction. It is in fact impossible to discuss the state in the 1940s (or any other period for that matter) without a coherent analysis of the alliances and conflicts between all the major fractions of the dominant class or classes (including a discussion of the position of such supportive groups and strata as the "white wage earners") i.e. the white and white working class for class hegemony within the state, as well as the conflicts between the fractions of the white dominant class and the organisations of the black population over the latter’s economic and political conditions of existence.¹ I have obviously not expanded the scope of my previous discussion to enable me to produce such an analysis. Nor would it be appropriate given the specific object of this paper. However, it is essential to clarify a few points in order to avoid incorrect preconceptions, derived in general from an overly ideological understanding of the problem, being imposed on my partial discussion of the conflict between capitalist farmers and the Smuts government in the 1940s.

In explaining the basis of this conflict between the demands of the farmers and the ineffectiveness/hesitancy/refusal of the state to act accordingly, we are in fact dealing with the manner in which the conflict between the various fractions manifested itself within the state. There are two errors that can be made in this regard - one of ignoring such differences and one of over-emphasising such differences.

Both of these errors do not simply exist on the plane of knowledge. Depending on the particular circumstances they can (and usually do) have determinate political effects. The error of ignoring such differences is manifest in all analyses which simply see Apartheid and the operations of the state post 1950 as a simple extension (and therefore qualitatively equivalent to the domination) of the previous decade. It becomes therefore impossible to periodise the specificity of the state and politics since all differences and struggles over hegemony have been spirited away. The opposite error of placing inordinate stress on the differences is however the most prevalent one especially,

¹. See Lewis 1976, for an important analysis of the latter set of conflicts.
but not only, in the "liberal" literature on South Africa. It is also manifest in most of the African political organisations of the period.

Since in only partially discussing the conflicts between town and country engendered by the overall uneven development of capitalism in the 1940s I have emphasised the conflict over the drift of farm workers to the towns, it is therefore necessary to warn against a reading, which, based on a false interpretation of this conflict, would over-emphasise the nature and extent of the demands of either side. The resultant mistake would be to produce an over-polarisation of the struggles between the dominant fractions as they manifested themselves with the state. The source of such an interpretation usually stems from an ideological, i.e. superficial, reading of these conflicts as they appeared (necessarily in ideological terms) in the political party discussion. This is the basis of the mistakenly absolute juxtaposition that is often made between two alternatives confronting South Africa in the 1940s - integration or segregation as it was ideologically posed. The former claiming to be the "norm" for economic development, the latter being characterised as an attempt to turn the clock back on industrial development. The political effect of such a general line is obvious being, for example, the source of many mistakes in regard to potential long term allies, as well as the basis of a nascent economism where implicitly or explicitly, it was expected that economic development would either smash Apartheid by itself or inexorably drive more and more allies amongst the whites, i.e. dominant and supportive classes, over to the side of the black majority.

So to be more specific about this conflict amongst the dominant class(es) it was certainly not a conflict based on the demand for the unrestricted movement of all Africans to the urban areas, as opposed to the demand that no Africans should be allowed in the "white" urban areas. The former would have implied a demand for the immediate and total abolition of the pass-laws, influx control, and of the principal features of the Urban Areas' Act, i.e. all discriminatory legislation and state control over the movement of Africans between town and country, and within the towns. The latter would have implied a demand for the immediate and wholesale (de facto and not simply de jure) removal of all urban Africans, of absolute freezing of movement from all country and Reserve areas to urban areas. Now despite the manner in which the conflict may at times have been ideologically presented
in party political debates, the farming fraction at no time seriously put forward a proposal which would have meant that capitalist industry should be starved of its industrial labour force. In the first place all that they demanded was that the state control the flow of labour from the farms, secondly they had no objection to African labour from the Reserves being utilised in the towns (indeed they suggested the reorganisation of production relations in the Reserves to produce precisely such an expanded labour force for industry), and finally they were themselves the most ardent and vociferous supporters of further national industrial development. It is as well to be clear about this from the outset. On the other hand no major section of industry, commerce or gold mining expressed a view which would accord with a policy of the completely unrestricted movement of Africans into the towns.

The conflict between town and country we are dealing with in the 1940s and the alternative paths proposed did not therefore represent a conflict within the state between unrestricted capitalist industrial development implying completely unrestricted movement of Africans and total restrictions on all movements of Africans implying restricted capitalist industrial development. All concerned, to varying degrees, assumed capitalist industrial development.

1. Even in the ideological demands on the party political level the dominant position in the Nationalist party was not presented in such a manner. One has only to read the debates in Parliament in the later 1940s and early fifties to understand Verwoerd's exasperation at what he termed the "wilful misrepresentation" of the party's position. "For anybody to have said or believed at any time that if the Nationalists got into power they would just like, that or within a few years shove out all the Natives as a crowd ... and make the rest of South Africa a white country, is nonsensical. I have stated that repeatedly, to the point of boredom, and I have quoted from the pamphlets which we circulated during the elections of 1948 and 1949, to show what our true Apartheid policy is". (Col. 2842, 1/5/1951 Senate).

2. This does not at all imply that there was agreement about the extent of post-war industrialisation, nor whether further industrial development would occur under national control or international control with all the ramifications for such development that they entailed. A division which is of extreme importance in this period (given the massive inflows of foreign capital immediately after the war) and which manifests itself not only on the party political level but within industry itself, hence containing a warning about too glib references to the coherence of "industry".
They also assumed some form of state regulation of the flow of African labour for industrial development. What they differed about was the path that such development would take, which fraction would maintain political control within the state given the changes it would bring and at whose expense and benefit such development would proceed. For our own purposes all we need to note is that this meant the conflict was located around the effect that the uneven development of capitalism had on the overall labour supply and the particular balance that the state would be required to maintain between town and country as national industrialisation proceeded.

Hence the conflict was about whether the state would intervene to control the drift to the towns primarily for the benefit of industrial capital without taking account of whether this labour force came from capitalist agriculture or the Reserves. Given the general tendencies in labour migration at this time this could only mean a major shift in African employment and population from farms to towns, hence further exacerbating the farm labour shortage. Such a policy in turn implied the absolute ascendance of town over country and the political demise of that fraction which had previously been the leading element of national capital's offensive. A policy which on another level coincided with the fragmentation of industry into national and international sections and implied the ascendancy of the latter over the former.

Or, alternatively, whether the state would intervene to control the drift to the towns by clearly distinguishing between Africans hence ensuring both an expanding labour force for urban industrial development and forcibly preserving the bulk of the agricultural labour force in the countryside.

In my earlier paper (1976) I said that since the effect of the conflict between farm labourers and farmers was the migration of the former to the towns, this conflict was itself generalised into the urban areas. We see this precisely

1. See my previous discussion and the next few pages on the Fagan commission. The following statement by van der Byl is also fairly representative: "we do not stand for the abolition of the pass-laws ... to suggest that we want to abolish all pass-laws is untrue". (Col. 9381, 25/6/52). See also The Forum, (the most liberal group within the UP) for the transformation of pass-laws into a Fagan Commission type solution (Lewin Forum, 113/1944).

2. The term balance here is not meant to imply that the state was in equilibrium, balancing between the different fractions. It is rather meant to encompass the process of seeing to the relative demands/requirements of the different fractions.
operating in the manner in which the conflict within the state manifested itself over urban areas' legislation during this period. Although the difference between the various fractions and the two political parties over the treatment of Africans in the towns contains an important political component (i.e. it relates to the struggle between urban Africans and the dominant class(es) which I shall touch on below), much of the conflict can also be related to the question of the balance between agriculture and industry/mining. In this respect the conflict over the place of Africans in the towns was in fact a conflict over the size of the reserve army of labour which industry was to have at its disposal in the urban and peri-urban areas. No one of any importance amongst the different fractions of capital was seriously proposing that the employed labour in town should be sent elsewhere. The struggle took place over the question of the urban unemployed "surplus" - how large the surplus was to be allowed and whether a part of it could not be redirected towards agriculture. The debates in parliament over this issue are very illuminating indeed, and at times the fact that the conflict was over the reserve army of unemployed breaks through with remarkable clarity. I give only one extraordinarily clear example from the beginning of the decade which already touched on this conflict within the state. "If there are over 50 000 Natives left over every day in a town like Johannesburg then it is very easy for people in Johannesburg to get adequate labour ... I know that the Minister will be told that there are no superfluous Natives in the urban areas, because under the capitalist system ... it is to the advantage of the employers that there should be as much available labour as possible which can not get any other employment than what the employers' offer them". (Labuschagne NP 3088, 8/3/40).

Although (for reasons given before) it is impossible to present an extended analysis of all the conflicts within the state during this period, the differing political responses of the various fractions to the mounting economic and political struggles of Africans during this time are very germane to our discussion, precisely insofar as they affect the question of control over the movements of migrating and urban Africans.

In the fact of large scale industrial strike action by African workers during the war, general urban unrest, large scale squatting movements in peri-urban
areas which often assumed political undertones, and directly political protest campaigns centred for example around the pass-laws, the UP Government responded by and large defensively with a policy of partial appeasement over the question of further state control over the African population.

One of the clearest examples of this in regard to the farm labour shortage, especially in regard to the question of conflict between the state and the African rural population, is the Minister's response to a request for the application of Chapter IV of the Native Trust and Land Act. "I want to live a few more years and not to be shot before my time. Lydenburg was the only place where it was applied, and we know what happened there. I doubt whether the population of our country will agree to the application of that measure". (Col. 3097, 8/3/40).

As I have said the state in conformity with the recommendations of the Smit commission on the position of urban Africans and a request from the Native Representative Council, relaxed some of the pass-laws in 1942. This was moreover a political response perfectly in accord with the tendency, previously discussed, of maintaining the labour distribution balance against agricultural interests. Once again I am not suggesting that the Government was about to drop, nor that it did, all repressive and discriminatory legislation and action against Africans. They did not after all abolish the pass-laws. However it is the case that the political response of the state during this period was by and large tending in a different direction to that called for by the Nationalist party - specifically in regard to the question of controlling the rising struggles of Africans. Whether it would have been willing and able to follow this through in the partial way envisaged in following decades is

---

1. The question of squatting and housing was a critical issue and served as the basis for much conflict between the state and industry post 1950, as well as being an important method of control post 1950.

2. Of course it may be objected that the Smuts Government's handling of the 1946 mine workers' strike stands in contradiction to the tendency. Not at all. Firstly I am not suggesting that the "liberal" democratic state was about to make its appearance (i.e. the mistake of overpolarising the conflicts within the state). Secondly it is the overall function of the state to maintain control and the cohesiveness of that society, and therefore when it is threatened even the most liberal of states has attempted to respond in a directly repressive manner. Thirdly this objection confuses the difference between the general overall attempt of the state to maintain cohesion and separate state actions aimed at specific incidents. A policy of defensive appeasement is not inconsistent with a directly repressive response if the cohesion of that society is threatened or the dominance of one of its principal fractions is threatened. This is especially the case in a period of instability. To confuse the two is to make a whole series of mistakes, including spiriting away the very political existence of the state, not to mention the mistake of ignoring the importance and existence of conflicts within the state.

3. See Lewis 1976a, 1976b, for a clear and important discussion of the manner in which the instability in dominance and defensive appeasement manifested itself over the rising offensive on the part of the African masses.
of course quite another question. The only point I wish to establish - as is also quite apparent from the statements cited earlier by the Minister of Native Affairs - is that there was a difference in the political response of the various fractions and political parties during this period to the question of how the state should react to the political struggles of the African population. To illustrate these points I will refer briefly to the Fagan Commission, which in many ways clearly reflected the ruling Government position in 1946 as well as one possible path for the future, even if it did sometimes slip into idealistic wish fulfillment.

Significantly underlying its approach was the following observations and the necessary consequences that derived from it. "In respect of the integration of the Natives in the industrial system of the country, South Africa is at present passing through a period of disturbed equilibrium. In the course of time the equilibrium will be restored. But the redistribution of the population has shifted the spear point of our Native problem ... It is no longer in the Reserves, it is now in the towns. It is therefore a disturbing thought that ... the regulation of the contacts in the towns is not in the hands of the Central Government but in the hands of the hundreds of municipalities that are scattered over the country. It is they who have to handle the explosive situations ... We ... propose that the Government should equip itself ... so as to enable it, firstly to give general guidance and direction in an efficient manner, secondly to step in where the situation is not being managed by any authority and thirdly to be in a position to take matters in hand itself where conditions get out of control". (p.51).

1. The precise rhythm of this conflict between the mass of the African population and the state, especially in regard to its effects on the political responses of the different fractions obviously lies outside the scope of this paper. It is however critically important especially in regard to the relative strengths of the different tendencies of defensive appeasement and offensive repression. The brief discussion contained here is not meant to imply that this conflict produced exactly the same alliances and differences within the dominant fractions as the discussion over, for example, the question of the drift of farm labour to the towns. See Lewis 1976, for a discussion of the rhythm of this conflict in the 1940s.

2. It is necessary to place the Fagan Commission in the correct context since it is so often incorrectly referred to by writers of many shades of political opinion. We will therefore be able to see that it was a) not simply the foreshadow of the policy adopted by the Nationalist Party, b) that it was not a "radical liberal"-alternative to the latter, and c) that it was certainly not a mixed up, ambiguous document trying to be all things to all men, except in the very special sense that any political policy has necessarily to provide for "allies" amongst other classes.
The importance of the position of the towns and the general necessity for state intervention is very clear. It is now a question of seeing this in relation to the problem of the drift to the towns and of understanding how this state intervention would relate to a) agricultural interests and b) the mass of the African population.

In discussing the question of the influx to the towns the Commission likened it to a stream of water going to a number of market gardeners. It explicitly rejected the policy of leaving it up to each individual "market gardener" in favour of the "regulation of the labour stream". (p.5). Since "the movement of Natives across the country in search of employment is confused and often to no purpose. In their own interests as well as that of the community as a whole it ought to be given direction". (p.19). It was therefore "urgently necessary" for "a shifting of the emphasis from the local to the central authority, so that comprehensive, co-ordinated plans for the whole terrain can be devised and put into operation". (p.5). So the importance of state intervention to regulate and direct the "stream of labour" is clearly accepted. What about the balance? Since "the townward movement is simply an economic phenomenon ... it can be guided and regulated but it is impossible to prevent it or turn it in the opposite direction". (p.49). Since this was the general case the same principles applied to farm labourers drifting to the towns. Therefore the same practical conclusions applied to any form of state intervention to solve agriculture's labour shortage crisis. "A migration (of farm labour) was therefore inevitable; what has happened is merely that, owing perhaps to subsidiary causes, it has exceeded convenient limits". (My emphasis, p.17).

As regards the other side of the problem, that of the size of the urban reserve army of labour, "the question whether the stream which is thus flowing to the towns from various sides, has become too great to be absorbed is one not easy to answer". However, "we think it must be accepted that the influx to certain centres has been greater than the immediate requirements, otherwise the strict measures that have often been applied to check it would soon have had repercussions in the form of a serious labour shortage. It may be too, that the movement to towns, viewed as a whole, is greater than the requirements of all the towns taken together". (p.18). However "in estimating labour requirements one has to remember that, where there is great industrial activity, it is also necessary that there should be a substantial reserve of labour". (My emphasis, p.18);
With reference to the relation between state intervention to regulate the African "labour stream" and the effect of the response of African protests (i.e. the question of the means whereby this regulation was to take place) it is "clear to us that the abolition of the pass-laws, will be regarded by a large portion of the white population as a danger to the economic life of the country as well as a serious threat to law and order and even to personal safety". (p.27). However "it was brought to our notice in an unmistakeable manner that the feeling amongst the Natives against the pass-laws is a very violent one". (p.27). Therefore given the position of both sides, "the existence of such a feeling must be reckoned as one of the facts which we have to take into account". In response therefore "we believe ... that the regulations can be carried out in a manner which will make it more effective than it is at present, and which at the same time will greatly mitigate, and may in time entirely eliminate, those features of the pass system to which the Natives object?". Such regulation could be made more effective by setting up "a country-wide system of labour bureaux" and a system of "registration, under which identity cards are issued to people and a central record of such people is kept". Both systems should however be voluntary, and the exact relationship between these identity cards and passes was left somewhat vague. (p.28).

The new pass system to "mitigate" African objections was firstly to be brought under the general category of "the production of documents", applicable to all people who at some point were required to produce documents, thereby supposedly eliminating the legal discrimination against Africans. The main question however was whether the non-production of documents should be a punishable offence. The Commission recommended an alternative to immediate and compulsory production which they thought would still maintain the pass-laws and, in their eyes, hopefully mitigate African opposition. This was a provision which, whilst still allowing the police to be "empowered to call upon any person on whom an obligation is imposed ... to furnish ... information" (e.g. rights to be in an urban area) would allow that "no penalty should be imposed for the mere non-production of a document" if the police officer was satisfied that "a summons can be served on that person" and "that he will appear in court to answer it". (p.30). It should be remembered that we are only discussing the response of the state. Whether Africans would indeed have responded in the desired manner is of course quite another question, especially in view of the frank admission that the proposed system of appeasement would still mean the application of pass-laws even if in a modified form. "We concede that in all probability a European will practically
never be taken into custody while it will frequently happen with Natives". (p.30). This was patently an attempt to maintain control, but given the manner in which the balance was to be maintained and the response of the African population to the pass-laws, to allow it to be exercised differentially where necessary. Furthermore it was also an obvious attempt to divide Africans and pursue a defensive policy of appeasement towards the settled urbanised African.

Provided this new provision was introduced "the law and the regulations relating to the entry of Natives into urban areas and the registration of their service contracts can ... remain as they are". (p.31). In other words it was accepted that "the registration of service contracts, as provided for in the Natives' Urban Areas Consolidation Act ... in principle ... ought to remain". (p.30). With this policy of partial appeasement (and directly reflecting its origins) it was hoped that "the opposition which the Natives have up to the present put up with success against the application of the registration regulations to women should disappear ... the reason for their opposition is that they regard the registration certificates as a pass, and their feelings are violently roused when there is any talk of subjecting their womenfolk to the obligation of carrying passes". (p.31).

Having established some clarity as to what the conflicts within the state were about, and what the various tendencies were in regard to state policy, it is now possible to return to our principal object and discuss the impact on the state of the National Party coming to electoral power.

State Intervention to Resolve the Crisis in Agriculture

The president of the SAAU opened the 1948 congress, a few months after the election, by claiming that although agriculture had had to wage a fierce struggle "during the past five year" against the attacks made on its political and economic independence "our boat has now entered calmer waters" (FW 27/10/48). Even if its timing was purely coincidental, at least on the issues we have been concerned with, it would, at least in the early 1950s, have been a correct conclusion.

1. It would be a mistake to place too much emphasis on this shift in Parliament. Questions of dominance within the state are not simply decided by electoral victories. In fact as we will see 1951/2 shows the shift towards defending the interests of a capitalist agriculture more clearly than 1948. This does not however mean that this fraction became the hegemonic fraction in the power bloc; a subject outside the scope of this paper.
The new Government acted almost immediately with what were essentially stop-gap measures, being both temporary and random. The new Minister of Justice (Swart) before the year was out gave instructions, after "consultations with the farmers' organisations", that the old Free State Squatters Act of 1895 was to be strictly enforced by the police from November 1st. The object being to "ensure an even distribution of Native labour".

(FW 3/11/48). The following year the Minister of Native Affairs (Jansen), in referring to the "very serious question" of the "position of farm labour" pointed out that the loss of agriculture's labour to mining and industry was an "unsound state of affairs". In order to introduce "a better distribution of Native labour ... throughout the country" and to "assist in supplying farm labour" a new system of labour bureaux were to be set up throughout the country. (Col. 6055, 18/5/49, and speech reported in FW 9/2/49). Although the comprehensive nation-wide labour bureaux system was only introduced in the mid 1950s, some rural labour bureaux were set up in 1949 it seems. Attempts were also made with uncertain success to channel some of the "surplus urban" and "undesirable urban" Africans to the rural areas. The Native Labour Regulation Act of 1911 was also amended in 1949 to permit groups of farmers to recruit and distribute labour.

It is doubtful that these stop measures were any more practically effective than the actions of the state under the previous Government. However, their significance lay firstly in the state's willingness to act in accordance with agriculture's demands and secondly in their foreshadowing of future coherent political policy. The basis of this coherent policy was already stated in the introductory letter to the new Secretary for Native Affairs (Eiselen) introductory letter to the Department's Report for 1949-50 to the new Minister.

1. In 1950 the state also passed the Group Areas Act which the NAU supported "in principle and sees in section 10 of the Act the attainment of the policy it has clamoured for for years ... The Act would do away with the squatter system on farms and would free Native labour for both agriculture and industry". A number of other claims were also made for it. I am however mystified as to how this Act which was specifically aimed at urban resident segregation could be claimed to provide the solution to agriculture's labour problems. It might however have something to do with the specificity of Natal and the Indian question since that province was specifically clamouring for such action against Indians in the 1940s. (FW 21/3/51).

2. Eiselen took over as secretary in 1949, and Verwoerd replaced Jansen a year later. Jansen had been interim Minister for two years and was regarded as somewhat incompetent. In any case things only started to get moving when he was replaced by Verwoerd. Eiselen's importance as one of the key formulators of state policy and his influence over Verwoerd should not be disregarded. He taught the latter much of what has been attributed to him.
The problem and consequently also the necessity for state intervention lay in the recent "unbalanced development in all spheres which is attended with the disorganisation of the old order without a sound foundation for a new established order, having been created". That is to say the social, political and economic effect of uneven development on the terrain of "Native Affairs". Although it is not my brief to deal with the ramifications of this in the urban areas, it is just as well to note that "the imbalanced development" and "disorganisation of the old order" was regarded as lying at the root cause of the "unrest", "clashes" and "general disorder" in the urban areas.

The establishment of labour bureaux was the foreshadow of a "more economic distribution of our manpower", but if left to operate in isolation, would achieve little. "To enable them to function efficiently the Native Labour Regulation Act and the Urban Areas Act will have to be so amended that the over-running of cities and indiscriminate squatting in urban areas will be prohibited and the flow of labour efficiently regulated. Chapter IV of the Native Trust and Lands Act was framed to terminate the unequal distribution of farm Natives and the large scale squatting on certain farms. The Agricultural Union now demands that it should be enforced but this can only be done if certain intolerable obligations, concerning the provision of additional land, which have been placed on the Department by the Act, have been removed. As soon as the above mentioned steps have been taken, a more equal distribution of labour can be expected". It was also emphasised that the new distribution of labour required more than regulating labour within the "white" rural areas and between them and the urban areas. The Reserves could not just be left as they were for their reorganisation was critically important in the overall distribution of labour. "It has become obvious that it is uneconomical and also impossible to provide the great majority of Natives with a home on a farm in the Native Territories. Only a portion of them may farm there and that on a full-time basis. The others must make a living in a different way without and within these areas". In other words they were to be the principal alternative to migrant farm workers in the towns.1

The real assault to divide the African labour force nationally and to eliminate squatters/redistribute labour tenants/replace them with full-time farm workers followed almost immediately Eiselen's service of notice.

1. The role of the Reserves as they were reorganised and the labour bureaux is critical for understanding the function that contract labour plays in the urban areas.
Dividing the Labour Force and Basing the Farm Labour Shortage

The new Minister (Verwoerd) began in earnest to produce a coherent policy in its economic, political and ideological aspects along the above lines. In 1951 he publically summarised his intentions and the measures proposed to deal with the farm labour shortage by referring directly to the two key Bills at the time being debated in the Senate. They were concerned with "influx and efflux control" and amendments to the infamous Chapter IV.

"Then we will be able to deal with the farm labour difficulties in a satisfactory way", he concluded. (Col. 8312, 31/5/51).

The first piece of legislation to be passed was the Prevention of Illegal Squatting Act in 1951, extending war measure No. 31 of 1944. It had seemingly nothing to do with the problem of farm labour, being mainly aimed at non-peasant squatting around cities in towns. It was principally concerned with establishing political/administrative control over squatting in peri-urban areas by Africans seeking or already in employment in adjacent towns, in order to work out the more effective distribution of such labour to the urban based industries, and to establish some measure of control over the previously uncontrolled influx. Since it was clearly seen that such squatters "come from the farms", measures aimed at controlling the "flow of Natives into the towns" were obviously intended to have a tangible effect on the farm labour shortage, and provide the basis for comprehensive legislation specifically concerned with this problem. The problem, from the point of view of controlling the drift to the towns, was that if an African farm-worker squatted in a camp immediately outside the urban limits then he was legally out of the jurisdiction of the local authority. So even if influx control in an area were applied this did not mean that Africans could not migrate from the countryside to the towns. It merely transferred their presence to outside the city limits. Hence the reason for the state's concern to bring such areas under some control and another reason why one should not view state intervention aimed at peri-urban squatting in isolation from the overall issues.

In 1952 the heavy armour emerged from the state arsenal and it acted decisively to bring about the division of the African population into two groups.

---

1. "Our object is to so plan matters in conjunction with our industries so that the Natives can also be used systematically. For that purpose an effective system of labour bureaux is required, which are not available today, to put the Native in his place". (de Wet Nel, Deputy Minister, Col. 7361, 22/5/51).
rural (i.e. agricultural) and urban (i.e. industrial) - by passing the Native Laws Amendment Act. This was the most important piece of legislation in the post-war era and laid the basis for all state intervention to control the "distribution of labour" between town and country and within the towns from 1952 until 1971. It was also explicitly acknowledged as being a legislative attempt to put into effect the long-term "Native policy" of the SAAU - originally formulated in the 1944 memorandum of the SAAU. The two key clauses which laid the foundations for this division were clause 16 introducing the "principle of control of efflux and the institution of labour bureaux" and clauses 27-32 concerned with the "control of influx".

The object of the Bill, as explained by the Minister, shows that its function was clearly to deal with the problems discussed earlier.

"At the moment we find that when a Native from one of the Reserves or from the platteland, wants to migrate to the city, he can do so ... (but) at the loss of his own work which he already has". (i.e. read loss to the farmer! MM). However, "when he arrives in the city there is a form of entry control ... there is not work for him ... there is no housing accommodation for him and he eventually finds himself in a squatters' town ... It is therefore wise to ensure that the labour which is available is directed along the proper channels to those places where it can be used. That is the purpose of the control of efflux, namely to ensure that the Native can be stopped (if he must be stopped) at the place where he is at home so that he does not go to a place where he cannot adapt himself"

"Stopping" and "channeling" African labour was to take place be dividing the country geographically (and therefore the African population on it) into urban (called prescribed) and rural (called non-prescribed) areas, and establishing control over the movement from one to the other as well as within each. The result would be "that a Native will only be allowed to go from certain areas which we call non-prescribed (and these are mainly the non-urban areas) to a prescribed area (which will be mainly urban areas) if he can receive the necessary permission ... at the nearest Labour Bureau or at

1. See the speeches by Serfontein, Deputy Minister, Native Affairs, (Col. 632-634, Col. 1632-34, 4/2/52, Col. 1100, 13/2/52).
2. The two other contentious clauses that were important were directly repressive. Clause 20 concerned with directly political control, i.e. "the removal of Natives from certain areas" aimed at removing more effectively "agitators" and directly a consequence of the state's initial inability to handle the Witzenhoek rebellion; and Clause 36 concerned with the removal of "idle and undesirable Natives in urban areas" which related more to social control.
the Native Commissioner's office. This means that there will be unrestricted movement within the non-prescribed areas. It also means that a way out will be available to a person from a non-prescribed area who wants to go to a certain prescribed area, but who is not allowed to go there since there are other prescribed areas of a similar nature where he can do the kind of work he wants to do and where there are vacancies. It also means that there will be restrictions controlling movement from a prescribed area, where there is a labour surplus, to another prescribed area where there is also a labour surplus. There will, however, be no restrictions controlling movement from a prescribed area with a labour surplus to a prescribed area with a labour shortage. The whole process is therefore exclusively a process of canalising labour. (Verwoerd, Col. 551-2, 4/2/52. My emphasis).

On the basis of the establishment of prescribed and non-prescribed areas throughout the country, Clauses 27-32 tightened up the influx control provisions in urban areas already in existence - legislatively incorporated in the 1945 Urban Areas Act. The most important aspect of these clauses referred to a modification of Section 10 and Section 13 of the 1945 Act. In the old Act Section 10 - which prohibited any African from entering a specified urban area for the purpose of seeking work or residing there unless certain conditions were complied with to the satisfaction of the local authority and thus the key-stone of the influx control regulations - was only applicable in areas specially proclaimed at the request of the local authority. Moreover, when proclaimed, its implementation was left to the discretion of the local authority. This in effect meant local authorities adjusted the size of their local reserve armies of unemployed in a manner unrelated to the national policy of the state. As we have already seen even the Fagan Commission demanded a clear correlation between local and central control. The Government in this Bill insisted on local authorities taking cognisance of this, and in the new Bill reversed the previous ruling on proclamations. In line with the establishment of prescribed and non-prescribed areas, Section 10 was automatically applicable, and had necessarily to be applied (and therefore stricter influx control) in all urban areas unless especially excluded.

1. See in addition speeches by Maree (who became Minister of Bantu Education in 1958) (Col. 1103-4, 13/5/52).
Section 13 of the old Act had exempted mine Africans from provisions of any proclamations issued in terms of Section 10. "As a result thousands of Natives entered urban areas on the pretext that they were proceeding to employment on the mines". (Language 1954, Manager of Brakpan non-European Affairs Department). The 1952 Act stated that an African working in the mines is governed by Section 10 from the moment he ceases to work on the mines.

The two sets of clauses (influx and efflux control) were necessarily linked creating the basis whereby state intervention on a national scale in the rural and urban areas could bring about the division of the African labour force in a co-ordinated way. "We say that we must not only stop that influx at the borders of the urban areas; by that time the influx is already taking place. We say the influx must be stopped at the source where it comes from. That is the principal underlying this Bill in connection with the control of influx". (Serfontein, Col. 636, 4/2/52).

The conflicts that emerged in the debate over the Bill revealed once again the issues of the balance that state intervention should achieve given the uneven development between town and country, the type of control this necessitated and the size of the urban reserve army of labour. Van der Byl's immediate response (now as the opposition spokesman) to Clause 16 was: "I suggest this will create further resentment to that already existing because ... one of our principles in this country was that the Native has a right to offer or sell his work in a market most advantageous to him". Stripping aside the ideological nonsense concerning the rights of African workers, what that actually meant was having a system of labour distribution to the primary and fairly exclusive benefit of urban-based industrial capital. He went on to suggest an alternative - "The Fagan Commission ... recommended that a wide network of labour bureaux should be set up on a voluntary ... registration system ... the basis of the idea of the Fagan Commission was to try and get as far as possible the willing co-operation of the Natives in this matter and I feel that as far as possible we should regulate the flow of labour without compulsion". (Col. 559-60, 4/5/52).

All this simply meant that state intervention to direct labour should not attempt to solve the farm labour shortage in any way. A position which Verwoerd clearly saw through, knowing full well that the word "voluntary" not only reflected a policy of appeasement in the face of African opposition but fundamentally could only mean the continued flow of African farm labour.
to the towns. Consequently he dismissed such arguments with brusque
sanity: "Do you know members ... think that the Natives who hear all
those beautiful stories about Johannesburg will not if migration is a
voluntary matter go to Johannesburg just as they did under the policy of
those members of the other side". (Col. 1131, 13/2/52).

The issue was clear to the Government. If the labour force was to be
divided into a permanent urban section and a permanent rural section then

the only alternative was what they called the canalisation of labour
according to the principles of efflux and influx control specified in the
Bill. The other alternative proposed was certainly another path that

further capitalist development would follow but it would not bring about a
balance of labour to the advantage of agricultural capital. Serfontein
brought this issue to the fore in the most explicit manner possible when he

confronted van der Byl on the question of "voluntary" state distribution of
labour. "I want to ask him how he is going to implement that recommendation
by the Agricultural Union ... if it approves of this principle that there
should be no canalising". (Col. 634, 4/2/52).

The debate over the manner in which the state would apply influx and efflux
control revealed quite clearly that the conflict lay in the size of the
reserve army of urban African labour. Brooke (UP) who claimed to have "come
into this house as an industrialist" placed the cards on the table, in his
attempts to bring to the notice of the Minister the views of industry on
this clause. I think that my friends in industry feel that the clause is
a little too stringent to be entirely satisfactory from the point of view
of industry and its labour requirements. The Minister ... said that the
basis of the Bill was to see that no more Native labour came to the urban
areas than was necessary ... I have always agreed ... on that point". The
question however was what they understood by necessary. He therefore went
on to say "you must have a certain variation in the demand for labour.
You cannot simply say that you want only 100 labourers for 100 jobs ...
You can certainly say in connection with industry that a 5 per cent plussage
of labour at any time is not a surplus ... under today's conditions I
think you need 100 workers for 90 jobs". (Col. 1289, 1/2/52).

Hertzog expressed in most succinct but also clearly ideological terms the
issue, as well as the political problems of control attendant with it, when
he put forward the class viewpoint of the principle supportative class,
the white petty bourgeoisie. "In Johannesburg they (the municipalities)
obeyed their master's voice, the voice of the capitalist employer ... (who) wanted reservoirs of unemployed Natives there ... The result was this tremendous incidence of crime that we have today among the Natives ... the Rand is making criminals of the Natives of South Africa by that principle of capitalism which demands the keeping of a reservoir of unemployed for the convenience of the employers ... a man who has no work, has no income and no food. He must live and he is forced to steal. Crime is the outcome of the capitalist system of reservoirs of unemployed which was so vigorously advocated here today ... This Bill is, based on the principle that we can now move those who are unemployed to places where there is work for them. The industrialists and the capitalists need not suffer because of this Bill but we are no longer going to allow them to have a number of unemployed there for their own convenience". (Col. 1299/1300, 18/2/52).¹

It should by now be clear what the issues of conflict were about, and that any claims that in framing such a policy the Government was intending to starve industry of its labour force, are based on a misunderstanding of the real points of contention in the two possible paths that lay open at this time. However since the kleineburgher Hertzog might well have dreamt of crushing industrial capital in his little bureaucratic fist, let me return to Verwoerd who in his reply to Brooke showed at least a sufficiently sympathetic perception of the problem and intention not to cut down the urban reserve army of labour so that industry would suffer. "The administration will naturally see to it that there would be a certain plussage. It is quite impossible to determine exactly the labour need and the labour available ... In the ordinary course of circumstances there will be a certain small margin of available labour but it must be expected that the plussage cannot be large ... It is a matter of where you must stop' providing surplus labour ... When we take into consideration the fact that the instrument dealing with this provision will be the local authority and that the local authority has sufficient interest in the development of industry in its own area and the prosperity of its industries, we can take it that it wont cut down the possibility of obtaining employees in such a way that industry would suffer. Industry is therefore in very good hands indeed". (Col. 1315, 18/2/52).

¹. Although outside my brief, Hertzog clearly reveals the concurrence for different reasons and therefore within definite limits, of the white urban petty bourgeois with the demands of the farming fraction.
Discussions behind the scenes between the FCI and the NAD ably reveal the nature of the struggle within the state over the main points in the Bill as well clearly specifying their definite limits. A warning against the temptation to overemphasise the contradictions amongst the dominant fractions.

"I reminded Mr. Heald (under-secretary NAD) of our discussions at the time when Section 10 of the Act was introduced during 1952, when it was queried to what extent the control of Native work-seekers which was introduced, would do away with the labour reserves in the cities. It was only when the Department indicated its intention to maintain a floating Native reserve from which various industries could draw according to their requirements that the parliamentary committee at the time agreed to let the Bill pass without any objection". (Record of interview by P.W. Penzhorn, parliamentary secretary FCI with Heald, 4/3/54).

As I have pointed out state control to maintain political stability in the urban areas is not really the concern of this analysis. However we should note that the question of the size of the reserve army of labour in the urban areas was not simply related to the distribution of "surplus" African workers to other areas and sectors. It was fundamentally also a question of effective state control in the townships surrounding the urban areas, and the Government was also responding to the political threat being posed from there. If the cities were surrounded by large pools of unemployed workers flowing in too rapidly for "housing to keep pace with the great influx" and waiting their turn to be promoted from the ranks of the reserves to the front divisions, this would exacerbate the "urban areas (as) a fruitful breeding ground for unrest ... To control the overpopulated villages held in Native ownership such as Sophiatown and Alexandria and the numerous squatter camps ... efficiently, would be attempting the impossible. From these safe hiding places many undesirable elements threaten the orderly community ... which could have reached serious dimensions. Use was made of this explosive situation to organise May Day demonstration throughout the length and breadth of the land. Purposeful preventative measures to maintain order were taken ... these steps checked at birth, an attempt which could have had incalculable consequences for the whole community and averted the immediate danger. The position outlined above, however, continues and could easily be exploited by irresponsible persons. Summarily these circumstances may be described as the growing pains which must necessarily accompany the development of industries in every country. In South Africa, however, it reacher greater
dimensions than elsewhere as the heterogenous population which we have here is apt to lose its balance sooner because of the ready fusion of class and race interests". (Eiselen to the Minister in Report of NAD 1949-50). ¹

To pass the above legislation for the division of the labour force and to set up labour bureaux was not however equivalent to the state intervening to enforce it. Efflux control, influx control and labour bureaux could only distribute the African workforce between non-prescribed and prescribed areas if the state was able to co-ordinate and track down the movement of all adult Africans. To do that an effective system of registration ("you cannot control anything if you do not know all about it") and pass-laws were necessary. Following on the Fagan Commission's recommendation for the co-ordination of pass-laws and the introduction of an effective identification system, but with important modifications, the Natives (abolition of passes and co-ordination of documents) Act was passed in 1952. The Act was based on the fact that "owing to the absence of portraits, fingerprints and thirdly, of fixed identity numbers and durable identity documents it has thus far not been possible to determine the movements and still less the identity of our Natives". It was therefore necessary to simplify the pass-laws, introduce a more effective system of registration and identification and implement this uniformly in all provinces. The recently passed legislation which racially classified everybody was to be crucial in the implementation of this new system of identification and control of Africans. As Mentz² noted with scarcely disguised glee, "the introduction of the Population Registration Act serves as a key for the abolition of this outmoded and obsolete pass system and it now gives us this excellent opportunity of introducing a single effective system for the identification of Natives and the tracking down of criminals. If this new system is accepted ... the work of our police will be much simplified".³ (Col. 9313, 20/6/52).

1. See Lewis 1976m for a discussion of this question.
2. See also Mentz, deputy Minister, (Col. 622-33, 4/2/52). One could carry on quoting ad nauseum to show that the issue was clearly conceived to be over the reserve army of labour and that intentions at least were not to create a labour shortage. Let me quote the Minister again for good measure "Only when there is a labour surplus in the city will it be essential to limit the number needed by the city". (Col. 767, 7/2/52).
3. Lest there be a reader who still has doubts on my discussion re the similarity/differences between the UP:NP positions, I give him the following to chew on. "The UP stand for simplification of the pass-laws ... both sides stand for a policy of simplification ... and not their abolition" (Robinson UP, 9344, 25/6/52). And "We do not stand for the abolition of all pass-laws ... to suggest that ... is untrue. (Van der Byl Col.9381,25/6/52).
The network of labour bureaux had begun to be organised by the NAD prior to the passing of the necessary legislation, and the first labour bureaux came into operation in late 1952. By 1953-54 the total number of labour bureaux in the Union was 450 - of which 130 were local (i.e., urban) labour bureaux. The NAD report for these years claimed that "practically all major local authorities are already associated with the labour bureaux system". (UG 53-1956). By 1957 there were 234 (local) and 278 district (rural) labour bureaux, which increased to 418 and 379 respectively by 1971. As regards the effectiveness of the system to deal with the resolution of the farm labour shortage and the distribution/placement of labour in the urban areas, it is unfortunately impossible to provide coherent statistical evidence. The officially published figures make no distinction between the number of African workers registered as employed and those the labour bureaux themselves place in employment - both sets of figures simply being published as "placements". So we have to depend on circumstantial evidence. The manner in which it operated with regard to maintaining a balance between town and country is easily ascertainable from the NAD reports. Almost immediately after the Act was passed the state acted to distribute labour to agriculture. "Active steps" were taken to "divert the surplus or urban Native labour through labour bureaux to agriculture where an acute labour shortage is generally experienced". By the end of 1953 around 21,823 such Africans were directed to work as farm labourers. It was claimed that they "came almost exclusively from rural areas but because they do not make use of the labour bureaux before departing for the city, they end up in the cities where they find that, owing to the large supply on the urban labour market, they have to drift about unemployed". Thus the NAD could claim that the introduction of the district labour bureaux along the Witwatersrand and the tightening up of influx control by local authorities there "have tended to ease the position considerably". (NAD Report 1952-3, UG 48-1955). The following year 32,582 Africans who "illegally" entered the urban areas from the rural areas were claimed to have been "placed in employment in non-prescribed areas". The department claimed that "on the Witwatersrand the influx of Bantu from the country districts has been brought under control to a great extent by the operation of the labour bureaux system..." The "surplus Bantu workseekers" were formed into "teams" and "sent to farmers to assist with the harvesting of crops". (NAD Report 1953-4, UG 53-1956). By 1957 the department was, with a satisfied air, arguing that due to their great "success in checking the illegal influx ... the labour shortage problems in the rural areas has thus been reduced to the minimum". Furthermore
"the greatest contribution of the bureaux in supplying agricultural labour was drawn from the urban areas and not from the Bantu areas... A great many of them come from the platteland, particularly the farms, and... they are in this way being recanalised to their natural field of labour"... (NAD Report 1955-7, UG 14-1959).

While the NAD was perhaps overstating the success of state intervention, it is certainly true that the farmers' journals and congresses by the late 1950s had ceased to be predominantly concerned with the farm labour shortage when labour was discussed. The question of eliminating squatting, redistributing and gradually phasing out labour tenants was the main issue at hand.

State Intervention to Eliminate Squatters and Transform Labour Tenants

The division of labour was not the only means whereby a more efficient system of labour distribution was to take place; that only controlled the distribution of labour between non-prescribed and prescribed areas. There was still a major problem that had to be dealt with within the countryside before the stabilisation of agricultural labour was to be completed. Firstly there was still the existence of purely rent paying squatter peasants in the "white" rural areas. If they were on white-owned land then that was perjoratively called "kaffir farming", if they were crowded onto those few bits of land which had been acquired in various (necessarily dubious) legal and illegal ways then they were referred to as "black spots". (These "black spots" contained a mixture of rent paying peasants and industrial/mining migrant workers merely renting a piece of land for their homes). Secondly there was the "maldistribution of labour", due mainly to the importance of labour tenancy, that occurred within agriculture between areas and even individual farms. The causes of such a maldistribution lay in some farmers using labour tenancy as a front for actual rent paying squatters, other farmers keeping a farm purely as a labour supply for another farm which they cultivated (found mainly or only in Natal and Transvaal), and farmers who kept or used more than the number of labour tenants necessary for production in the absence of the proclamation of Chapter IV of the 1936 Act. Thirdly, the continued existence of labour tenancy (in parts of the Transvaal and Natal mainly, although the position in the OFS was ambiguous) which necessitated keeping a greater number of labour tenants (precisely because they were part-time) on the farms than if 12 monthly settled farm labour was utilised. For the state
to deal with this situation within its previous framework it would have to alter the position within the countryside concurrently with the policy of dividing the labour force through the operations of efflux, influx and labour bureaux control.

Furthermore, tackling these problems of distributing and increasing the supply of farm labour within the rural areas by discouraging the "wasteful labour tenant system" was simultaneously a policy of transforming most of the rural population (African) into a full-time settled agricultural labour force. Likewise the policy of dividing the labour force was not only a means whereby, the farm labour shortage was to be resolved. It was also fundamentally seen as a step in the stabilisation of agricultural labour. A necessary step in the transformation from a dependance on part-time labour tenants to full-time farm labourers, and hence towards the more efficient utilisation of labour in both country and town.

The SAAU in their evidence to the Tomlinson Commission summarised their position of the past ten years in the following terms: "The farmers' main requirement is not necessarily always more labour, but rather more efficient labour, that is greater productive capacity of the available labour ... No industry, least of all agriculture can be built up on a system of part-time, migratory labour because an absence of six months from farming lowers his efficiency ... The division (of the labour force) ... will bring about greater efficiency". (FW 18/6/52).

As we have already noted the Minister of Native Affairs introduced an amendment to the Native Trust and Land Act in the Senate in 1951 with the intention of having it passed in the Assembly in 1952 concurrently with the Native Laws Amendment Act. Due in part to the bureaucrats' of-parliamentary procedures as well as the desire to have the necessary machinery available (that set up by the Native Laws Amendment Act and the Natives (Abolition of Passes and co-ordination of Documents) Act) it was delayed until 1954. The policy as put forward by the Minister in the Senate Bill differs in no way from the Assembly Bill except that it is more clearly

1. I cannot go into the relationship between the above steps of state intervention and the problems of urban labour stabilisation/efficiency. But it is an oversimplification to claim that the state's object has been to "migrantise the whole industrial labour force." In point of fact they intended and acted to stabilise the existing settled urban African population, and increase its participation in urban industry by encouraging the usage of "juvenile youths" and women.
revealed in the former discussion. I shall therefore mainly use that to illustrate the argument.\footnote{All further references in this regard to 1951 refer to the Senate proceedings whilst 1954 refers to the House of Assembly.}

The point of the legislation was to allow the state to put into operation Chapter IV of the 1936 Act throughout the Union in order to, on a national scale, control and do away with squatters in favour of full-time wage paid farm labour, thereby avoiding the "problems" that had cropped up in Lydenburg. The full-time farm labourers were, in terms of the Bill, referred to as "servants" and it was intentionally stipulated that "there will be no restriction whatever on one's right to take servants into employment ... One will be entitled to have as many as one requires for one's farming, if one is prepared to pay for it. One will be able to get labour tenants as they become necessary for one's farming, but under such control that it will not change into an indirect form of squatting, and squatting must be done away with ... That is the intention of the Bill". (Verwoerd, Col. 3008, 7/5/51).

As far as the state was concerned "the best type of farm labour is the servant to whom you pay his wage". They should therefore be encouraged. The labour tenant system did however exist in many areas still as a recognised form of farm labour. The purpose of the Act in regard to labour tenants was to ensure an orderly and gradual transference from labour tenancy to full-time labour. Therefore, although the labour tenants would still be recognised by the state as a form of farm labour, "one does not want to increase the labour tenant system unless that is essential in a particular area". (Minister, Col. 3012, 7/5/51).

The new amendments therefore raised the fee for registering a labour tenant on one's farm, and except with the approval of a Labour Tenant Control Board stipulated that no labour tenants could be registered on a farm if there were no labour tenants on such land at the date of the application of Chapter IV. The Minister made it clear that the state would prefer no exemption from the state's policy to ensure a decrease in reliance on labour tenancy but that it "was largely on the insistence of persons who are supporters of the other side of the House, that the point was added". (Col. 3013, 7/5/51). The Labour Tenant Control Board (composed of three
farmers and one NAD official) were to be empowered to investigate and pass judgement on the number of labour tenants any particular farm was allowed to accommodate. The license fees for "excess" labour tenants were also raised and tightened up. An additional clause defined a farm not just in terms of the legal relations of ownership but in terms of the actual production situation - as a "farming unit" - to prevent (as had happened previously) an integrated farming unit being legally subdivided and hence enabling the farmer to accommodate for example 25 labour tenants instead of 5. The excess labour tenants could then be redistributed to other farmers in need of labour in the district.

The above provisions were therefore designed to ensure a better distribution of labour tenants within the rural areas, and by state intervention, to push the capitalisation of agriculture a step forward. As the Minister said, "we want to prevent any retrogression from taking place in regard to the type of labour used ... We take it ... that ordinary servants are the best type of farm labour, the most economical and most sensible ... We are trying not to put the clock back". (Col. 3272, 10/5/51).

As regards the squatter phenomenon in the rural areas the state showed quite clearly that its intention was to ruthlessly eradicate it in the shortest possible time. There was to be no place for the vestiges of independent rent paying peasantry in the context of the rapid expansion of capitalism both in the towns and countryside, nor was there place for a proletariat living in "squatter locations" outside of direct state control. Squatters should either be forced by state pressure to become farm labourers or if they were already working in the urban areas as migrants their families should be moved to more "suitable" areas and the land freed for the expansion of capitalist agriculture. It is important to bear in mind the distinction between squatters who were basically poor peasants occasionally hiring themselves out for wage labour but who in the main stood outside of the capitalist labour market; and squatters who were actually full-time migrant workers, either on farms in the vicinity or in the mines or in industry in the towns, but who left their families on a piece of land which they illegally rented from a farmer. This either took place in areas immediately adjacent to the urban areas or such squatter migrant workers could be living for example in Charlestown in Natal and working in Johannesburg. The response of the state was to differ according to which category of squatters were under review.
Seen from the point of view of the state, the problem with the squatter peasants was to transform this "true labour reservoir" in the countryside into a reserve army of labour for capitalist agriculture, if and where required, and thereafter for industry. As regards the squatter migrant workers the main issue was not to integrate them into the labour market (since they were already there) but to alter the place and condition of their residence to ensure more effective control. In the case of those living adjacent to cities, the intention was to transfer their families to, and under the control of, "the local authorities of those cities". If this was not possible then the same procedure was to be followed as with those squatters living in areas (e.g. of Charlestown) a considerable distance from the cities they worked in, e.g. Johannesburg, namely the families were to be "removed to towns in Native territories ... under their own self administration ... while their breadwinners work at those same places".¹ (Verwoerd, Col. 1142, 24/2/54).

As I have already explained, the provisions in the 1936 Act relating to additional land purchases were precisely meant to accommodate the displaced squatters resulting from the application of Chapter IV Section 38, made it compulsory under certain conditions for the Government to provide land for those driven off farm land by the operations of the Act. In this sense these provisions were an obstacle to the effective removal of squatters, especially since their numbers had increased markedly since the 1936 Act was passed. The Amendment Act altered this section dropping the obligation on the part of the state and left it to the discretion of the Minister of Native Affairs as to whether squatters who were forced off farm land should be granted cultivable land elsewhere. The reason for dropping this provision was the intention to force these squatter peasants into the capitalist labour market. This was perfectly clearly shown by Verwoerd in an extremely illuminating analogy, drawn between the son of a "poor white family" and the African squatter peasant, on the effects of the working of the labour market.

¹. As Verwoerd cold-bloodedly or sympathetically (depending on which way one sees it) put it: "The unlawfulness in connection with many of these people lies in nothing but the fact that they pay rent where they are now allowed to stay". (Col. 1141, 24/2/54).
Due to his economic circumstances the "poor white boy" had also to "come into the labour market ... and do the work which life compels him to do". Likewise the squatter "must come into the labour market, and when he is in the labour market he must, like the white boy, do the work which he is able to find as a result of his knowledge, or of his capabilities, or as a result of the fact that appointments to other work have already been filled. Why should the ... squatter be protected against having to do farm work if he does not like it? ... He must go and work there ... when necessity demands it he has to take it ... The state cannot say that it is going to take the poor white boy and give him other work of the sort he likes. He must find his place through economic pressure. Why should the Native not find his place as a worker through economic pressure? And why should it be called compulsion when one exposes him to that ..." (Col. 3099, 8/5/51).

Thus the Act was intended to make the squatter peasant dependent on the sale of his labour power for subsistence. The forcible ejection of the squatter was primarily intended to bring him under the wider social relation of capitalist agriculture - "there is a large demand for labour in the rural areas ... the chances of having the squatters get work on the farms ... are great" - but also if necessary in the urban areas - "the tendency to trek to the towns ... is not a thing one wants to encourage among squatters, but the possibility is not excluded ... where there may be a shortage of labour ... in the cities". (Minister, Col. 3028, 7/5/51).

The most important means whereby the state was to bring this about was

a) to increase substantially the registration fees progressively payable by a landlord for the squatters on his land for each year, so that within a few years it would not be an economic proposition for him to keep squatters unless rents were substantially raised, in which case it would not be economically feasible for the squatter to pay the increased rent.

Secondly, this grace period for squatters - i.e. the process of squeezing out squatters mainly by taxation - was only to last for 15 years (initially 10 years but under pressure it was increased) after the passing of the Act. After that all squatters remaining were to be summarily removed. The 15 year period only however applied to squatters who could prove they had been squatting before the 1936 Act was passed and were therefore still entitled to the 30 year period of grace. Those post 1936 were however subject to immediate tightening up and removal depending on the discretion of the state. "Where there is clear and irrefutable evidence ... that one is dealing with new squatters the possibility must be there of getting
started rapidly on the process of removing them". (Minister, Col. 3331, 10/5/51).

As far as the phenomenon of African squatting in "Black Spots" was concerned, this took place mainly in Natal but also in the Transvaal and had been excluded from the provisions of the 1936 Act. There had long been complaints, especially in Natal, from farmers and requests, by the NAU particularly, for their elimination. The "Farmer" (Natal based) is full of references to this issue in the 1940s. The amended legislation included a clause which brought such squatting under the provision of the Act. The point, as with the rest, of this legislation was in the main to force them into wage labour on white farms (see Le Roux, Col. 3080, 8/5/51), and allow such land to be taken over for capitalist agricultural production. To give only one example: "Some of the land they occupied was excellent for sugar plantations which could be established to better advantage than the mere grazing of cattle". (NAU Congress FW 21/9/49).

I have already pointed out how the farming fraction saw the division of labour and the stabilisation of farm labour and eradication of squatters as an integrated policy, with the division of labour and the creation of state machinery for the overall distribution of labour as a necessary prelude to the tackling of their other problem. We find the same thing self-consciously stated by the Minister as he summed up the Bill in 1954. "May I tell those members that it forms part of a whole system. The reference book system is one measure among other which will also be of assistance here and which will help in the solution of the whole problem. The introduction of proper influx and efflux control and the development of the labour bureaux are important machinery for us to deal with the consequent problems". (Col. 1136, 24/2/54). The NAD reiterated this claim in following years, repeating in its report the same sentences ad nauseam year after year, expressing quite clearly what the overall policy was about and proudly referring to the application of Chapter IV as "a concrete example of the application of Apartheid policy on the platteland. If all Natives who live on the Platte­land but who do not work there or do not even constitute a labour potential for the area, were to be removed, those remaining would be a far more stable source of labour than is the case today. The places where they can squat in idleness would then be removed, and, while a Native will be able to move from one farmer to another, he will not be able to live in idleness there". (Report NAD 1954-7, UG, 14-1959).

1. See also the Farmer 17/5/61; NAU Resolution 1946, and FW 22/9/48.
It is also by reference to this wider policy that the UP opposition/support can be correctly analysed. The same conflicts within the state over the reserve army of labour manifested itself in the political party debate over the Bill. The main opposition came over the question of what to do with the "squatting in the immediate vicinity of the cities". Once again the intention was not "to take ... all those squatters (whether they be working in industries ... or not ...) and send them back to the Reserves ... I know that one cannot handle this sort of case in that way ... What will have to be done ... is to discover ... who is working in the city ... (they may be idle there up to 40 percent) ... which is the one type of squatter (the unemployed) and which the other (the worker in the city). It is therefore clear that the city council of Pretoria will make provision in the way of proper housing for that portion which is necessary in its industries, in its commerce and in its domestic activities ... in locations ... if a municipality cannot build sufficient houses ... for all ... who are ... bona fide employed ... a controlled squatter camp is set up as a temporary measure ... The surplus Natives must however leave there for some place where there is work inter alia on the platteland". (Verwoerd, 933, 22/2/54).

The objections to the Bill in the Assembly were summarised from the opposition side by Smit in agreement with Verwoerd on the problem but not the proposed solution, "one has to see the problem of squatting against the wider problem of population distribution throughout South Africa generally. You have the inevitable drift from the rural areas to the towns". However, he made it quite clear that this did not mean there should be no "regulation of labour" but that it was necessary "to provide for the ... free movement of Native labour into industry". (Col. 933, 22/2/54) (My emphasis).

After the Act was promulgated the NAD immediately set about organising Labour Tenant Control Boards and investigating the extent of squatting in the countryside. By 1960 they had held 350 meetings and made 1 531 determinations. The overwhelming majority were made in the Transvaal, and also Natal. In addition it was stated that there was a "very large surplus of labour tenants in Natal but that no action could be taken since it had not yet been determined where they should be settled". (Report of Department of Bantu Administration and Development UG 51-1960).

1. Secretary for Native Affairs in the 1940s and UP spokesman on Native Affairs.
By this stage it was becoming clearer that the question of state intervention to transform labour tenants was causing conflict within the ranks of the farmers in the Transvaal and Natal. The years immediately after the passing of the 1954 Act had shown that the majority of farmers in the Transvaal were demanding more active steps by the state to eliminate the labour tenant system. The Transvaal Agricultural Union's (TAU) Native Affairs Committee demanded that something be done about the inefficient and uneconomic labour tenant system still found in parts of the country which they claimed militated against increasing agricultural production. It had a "handicapping effect on the application of more efficient farming methods" by not allowing the efficiency of labour to keep pace with the "increasing mechanisation of agriculture". Furthermore it was a "waste of labour" obstructing a more equitable system of labour distribution in the countryside. (See e.g. Transvaal Farmer, October 1957, FW 14/5/58).

A special congress on farm labour was organised by the TAU in 1958 to come to grips with the problem of labour tenancy. The Secretary of Native Affairs (Eiselen) brought the problem to the fore immediately by bluntly telling farmers that there "was actually sufficient Native labour in the platteland to satisfy the needs of farming".

The problem was inequitable distribution and, in a clear reference to labour tenancy, "the immobilising of manpower for long periods in the year". The major point of conflict revolved around a motion by the Rustenburg Farmers' Union, generally supported but by the Eastern Transvaal farmers particularly, demanding the "total abolition of labour tenancy". The main objections came from the historically more backward Northern Transvaal. The result of this conflict was a resolution calling on the NAD to institute a departmental commission of enquiry into the labour tenant system. (See FW 21/5/58, Transvaal Farmer, August 1960). The issue came to the boil in Natal as well where farmers were so polarised that "the Union could not indicate a clearly defined line of action". (FW 30/3/60). Furthermore the SAAU stepped into the arena as well by directly asking the Minister "to take drastic steps to bring to an end the labour tenant system ... The Union wants existing legislation drastically inforced and where necessary changed to ensure tight control over farm labour". (FW 15/4/59).

1. By now it should be clear that any discussion of mechanisation in agriculture which simply lists increases in machines, technique etc. is inadequate.
2. See my earlier paper where I discuss the Northern Transvaal's backwardness.
The Report of the (Nel) Commission of Enquiry into the Labour Tenant System (1961) effectively showed that the Northern Transvaal and Natal farmers in favour of labour tenancy had lost the struggle. The report recommended that "legislation should be introduced as soon as possible with a view to the total abolition of the labour tenant system." To underline the strength of its recommendation it added that the "committee would like to emphasise that there should be no delay with the abolition of the system and that a progressive policy should be pursued in order that the total abolition can be accomplished within seven years of the date of the legislation." It found that the Labour Tenant Control Boards could not exercise effective control over farm labour. The Board should therefore be converted into a Labour Control Board which could make determinations for both labourers and labour tenants. It also stated that the annual registration of labour tenants was not a control measure, and therefore all "Bantu employees should be registered." With regard to the abolition of the labour tenant system the commission warned that since "simultaneous total abolition ... might cause an uncontrolled position to arise", it recommended its abolition by "means of proclamation to a particular farm, area, district or province, according to circumstance." For the abolition of the system it suggested "the placing of a prohibition on the residence of labour tenants on the land of the owner concerned." Finally it stated that before such legislation could be introduced provision would have to be made for finding "homelands for South African Natives living on farms" as squatters or labour tenants.¹

Taking up the latter proposal the SAAU sent a special delegation to the Minister of Bantu Administration and Development requesting the Government "to hurry the development of the African areas and the border industries to hasten the removal of many thousands of redundant farm squatter families throughout the country ... Recent surveys have shown that much more Native labour is now available than can be absorbed in an efficient farming system ... Many farmers find themselves with more Natives with families on their lands than they can usefully employ. But they cannot be shifted because there is nowhere to send them. The Minister gave the deputation the assurance that the tempo for the development of the African areas will be quickened". (FW 20/6/62).

The state hastened to abolish labour tenancy and complete the transition to full-time wage labour in agriculture throughout the country without exception by including certain provisions in the Bantu Laws Amendment Act of 1964. All the commission's recommendations were included in the legislation. The most important being that Labour Control Boards were set up in the rural areas to establish control over all farm labour. The control and distribution of labour was to be co-ordinated with the district labour bureaux. Furthermore the Act specified that by piecemeal proclamation the state could stipulate that "no further labour tenants" contracts shall be entered into and no further labour tenants shall be registered in respect of land in the areas referred to in such notice". (e.g. a particular farm, or district etc.) It was made clear that "the object is to abolish the system in its entirety but to do so systematically and spread out the abolition of the system over a period of years". (Prone, Col. 2764, 10/3/64).

This policy of eradicating squatting and abolishing labour tenancy was pushed forward by massive state interventions to remove squatters and labour tenants in the 1960s. The rural areas where squatters and labour tenants were still in existence were systematically proclaimed and the occupants forcibly removed under the various "resettlement schemes". Between 1960 and 1970, 340 000 labour tenants plus 656 000 squatters and 97 000 squatters in "Black Spots" were estimated to have been removed. In addition an estimated 400 000 labour tenants were removed between 1971 and 1974.1 By 1976 labour tenancy in South African agriculture had to all intents and purposes been abolished and farm labour was stabilised.

Conclusion

So in conclusion we can reiterate that the intervention of the state in its ideological and political forms post 1948 (e.g. Apartheid) was not in any sense a return to a feudal system of coercion in the countryside, but the specific outcome of a definite struggle between fractions of the dominant class(es) within the state over the manner in which the further development of capitalism, in South Africa generally and in agriculture specifically,  

1. See Baldwin 1974, for a useful description of the process of resettlement. His explanation is however totally unacceptable since it remains only at the level of ideological rationalisation and ignores the development of capitalism in agriculture.
would proceed. The result was the decisive intervention of the state to establish a definite relationship between town and country, industry and agriculture, to restructure the relations of production in the rural areas, and push the capitalisation of agriculture onto a higher plane. Like the intervention of the state to effect the division of the labouring population under the umbrella of Apartheid ideology, the stabilisation of farm labour was consumated under the ideological umbrella of Separate Development.
References


South African Institute of Race Relations, Farm Labour in the O.F.S., Monograph Series, No. 2, 1939.


Government Publications:


1. I have only included works directly cited.