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STRUCTURE AND EXPERIENCE IN THE MAKING OF APARTHEID

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GETTING AWAY WITH SLAVERY: CAPITALIST FARMERS, FOREIGNERS AND FORCED LABOUR IN THE TRANSVAAL, c1920-1950

Helen Bradford

Was 1948 a turning point in the relation between agrarian capital and the state? Indeed - according to the notoriously impermanent maps that many historians have drawn. But stop, look back, look left, and look back again - and the crossroads of apartheid may disappear.

Consider the usual story. From the 1920s, there was a growing farm labour shortage. But the Native Affairs Department (NAD) adhered to its ethic of paternalistic protection, and argued that a solution was 'above all dependent on farmers' preparedness to offer higher wages'. It would not aid agriculturists 'if this entailed artificially cheapening the price of labour'.[1]

During the urban booms of the 1930s and 1940s, labour tenants fled in droves to towns. Among the farmers worst affected were those in the Transvaal, where labour tenancy was 'the only form' of acquiring workers in the early 1930s.[2] Landlords not only demanded tighter influx control and labour bureaux: in 1945 the South African Agricultural Union (SAAU) also urged a permanent separation of urban and rural workforces, preventing full time farm workers from moving to town. But the state reflected the interests of mining and manufacturing capital, and the proposals fell on deaf ears. Indeed, the NAD continued to advise improved working conditions, and to divert black labour to industry. Due partly to the state's 'reluctance' to become 'the pivot of forced labour measures', Transvaal agriculturists deserted the United Party (UP) in the May 1948 elections.[3]

Almost immediately, the repressive apartheid regime began supporting capitalist landlords. In 1949 legislation was amended to 'permit groups of farmers to recruit' labour; a crucial bill establishing labour bureaux was drafted in consultation with the SAAU, which was afforded a 'privileged hearing' in the NAD.[4] Influx control was not only tightened: from 1954 'petty offenders' were also hijacked to farms.[5] The apartheid state 'sought primarily to secure a stable labour supply for agriculture' by implementing the SAAU's proposals - and by the late 1950s, apartheid had succeeded.[6] Hence the 'coming to power of the Nationalist party...marked a turning point in the class struggle in the countryside.'[7]

Although this story chimes agreeably with opposition to the apartheid state, it is also economical with the truth. Some dates are dubious; numerous facts are fantasies; many premises are perverse. But the silences are as disturbing as the sophisms. By focusing on the Transvaal, this account attempts to address some of the problems of too much politics chasing too little data.

First, a regional economic system shaped the consciousness of farmers and the contours of state intervention. Subcontinental labour mobilization was 'perhaps the single most important feature of the early industrialization of South Africa', and landlords were all too aware that when 'the Native... is exploiting the farmer', 'the only way to counteract this is to import labour.'[8] Cries of 'labour shortage' in the 1930s culminated not in requests for influx control - debt was far more potent than passes in tying workers to farms - but in demands for apparatchiks' aid in procuring black immigrants.[9] State

intervention in the crisis in the 1940s peaked not in pious platitudes, but in facilitating recruitment of foreigners by farmers, and in allocating aliens through labour bureaux. Historically, both capital and labour have crossed international boundaries far more readily than many South Africanist scholars.

Second, many accounts of the farm labour crisis resemble Hamlet without the Prince. Shortages were the breeding ground of recruiters, who repeatedly disrupted labour bureaux, and thrived in precisely the circumstances that debilitated productive capitalists. But since an exploitable workforce is the single most significant factor in capitalist accumulation - 'it is only labour that creates wealth', claimed the director of mine recruiting - many wealthier farmers were forced to turn to these merchants of men.[10] Partly in consequence, most 'large land- owners or financially strong farmers' were not experiencing labour shortages in the late 1930s.[11] Nor did their situation deteriorate dramatically in the 1940s. 'Jan Smuts met sy regering was 'n pes vir ons boere', claimed a relatively large Transvaal farmer, 'maar ons het darem tog kaffers gekry'.[12]

Finally, the dichotomy of paternalism and apartheid shrouds too many continuities. Far from constantly urging upliftment of farm labourers, the NAD depressed foreign workers' wages in the 1920s, and sanctioned a slave trade in the 1930s and '40s. Far from failing to tackle the farm labour problem, pre-1948 administrations laid the foundations on which apartheid built. South African Party (SAP) officials introduced a labour bureau servicing landlords, Pact bureaucrats shanghaied convicts to farms, UP civil servants initiated the brutal 'petty offenders' scheme and let agriculturists invest in jails. For many large capitalist farmers, '1948' was not a turning point in state intervention in the labour crisis.

RECRUITERS AND RECRUITED IN THE NORTHERN AND EASTERN TRANSVAAL

If combined and uneven development characterizes capitalism, spectacular unevenness is a distinguishing feature of southern Africa. Mineowners dominated the development of a subcontinent but patchily penetrated by merchants; extremely concentrated industries were worked by migrants whose homes were scattered thousands of miles apart. Once these early patterns of capital accumulation had been laid, late-developers acquired 'the privilege of historic backwardness'.[13] In both Southern Rhodesia and South Africa, many agrarian and industrial capitalists skipped the stage of primitive accumulation, and exploited foreign workers already gouged out of the countryside by mineowners and colonial states.

From the 1910s to the 1950s, alien migrants heading for the Witwatersrand came above all from the Rhodesias, Nyasaland and Portuguese East Africa.[14] In an attempt to reach the highest wages in southern Africa, many walked hundreds or thousands of miles. Their epic journeys were guided by rudimentary maps, imprinted with the collective experiences of all who had passed before. Notes had been placed in trees; secret signs had been carved into bark; vernacular names of mines served as warning signals; raft-like nests in trees provided nocturnal protection against man-eating lions.[15] For those exhausted by the rigours of their odyssey, there were stop-overs - temporary jobs on mines and farms, where workers saved enough for the next leg of the journey, then deserted and took to the road again.

Their tenacity was extraordinary, their courage enormous. Guided by an intelligence system evolved by wary migrants - 'you must be very careful the place is watched by the Police you must be clever about crossing the river, and you must do that in a hurry' - many successfully negotiated both social and natural roadblocks.[16] They evaded recruiters, outwitted pass officers, and criss-crossed borders; they warded off wild animals, traversed raging rivers and survived barren wastes. Finally, often banded together in large gangs because 'they are strangers in a strange land',[17] they reached the Limpopo. Usually, the river was fordable on foot for nine months of the year; sometimes, crocodiles seized those too desperate to wait for summer floods to subside. Malnourished survivors then hit the last two barriers which remained: the South African state and labour recruiters hungry for 'Tropical Natives'.

Few questions, claimed the Director of Native Labour in 1925, had prickled with more difficulties than black immigration into the Transvaal, 'which has been a long struggle between the conflicting interests'.[18] The clashes occurred between capital and labour: while farmers ogled cheap workers, black immigrants struggled to reach the Rand, and white unionists fought to prohibit their entry. They occurred between sectors of capital: who was entitled to corner these labourers - South Africans or Rhodesians, mineowners or farmers, recruiting companies or freelance labour agents? Moreover, these conflicts were refracted through the state - itself internally divided, itself straddling contradictory imperatives. Civil servants more sensitive to facilitating accumulation than to organizing consent often stripped laws of their content; the state's drive for control in the future constantly collided with capital's insistence on exploitation in the present.

Consequently, highly unstable compromises evolved. By the 1920s, mineowners had been forced to fall back on their monopoly over southern Mozambicans after being squeezed out of the 'tropical' labour market. Their rapacious labour agents - who had transformed the far northern Transvaal into 'the most notorious centre of illegal recruiting in the entire subcontinent' - had been forbidden to recruit foreigners.[19] But since farmers, together with their salaried servants, were completely exempt from any rulings referring to 'recruitment', this was hardly a barrier to agents well versed in the ways of lawless banditry. If touts either represented themselves as landlords' employees, or sold immigrants to farmers' agents, they too could brazenly ignore any restrictions on foreign booty.

So in the early 1920s - as 'a devastating combination of inflation, drought and economic recession forced thousands of Central Africa's inhabitants to leave their villages in search of employment' - aliens were channelled to agriculturists by mine recruiters, as well as by agents extruded from the mines when the monopsonistic Native Recruiting Corporation (NRC) was established.[20] New accumulators in the countryside were rearmed by an older arsenal of coercion and deceit, as experienced touts ran rings round the fledgling state labour bureau which supposedly allocated aliens to northern Transvaal employers. (Indeed, since the bureau was illicitly run by an NRC agent, many northerners were recruited in the very belly of the beast.) Some labour agents lay in wait at rivers; others simply 'scoured the country from Pietersburg to the Limpopo and collected up any Rhodesian or East Coast natives they could get hold of'; yet others bluntly informed Mozambican immigrants seeking mine work that 'the road to Johannesburg is closed' but there is 'nice work that I know of' on farms.[21] Food was a particularly potent weapon to deploy against starving immigrants: the most successful recruiter had a food depot on a Limpopo ford; others sent wagonloads of provisions to the border to feed and then force hungry Rhodesians southwards. Not that the initial

bribery lasted long: as aliens were passed down the chain of runners, subagents, recruiters and farmers' 'servants', wages might halve, while the length of contracts could double.

At a time when landlords' average annual income was about £160, who were these agriculturists who posted off cheques for over four hundred pounds to purchase '12 months boys'?[22] Most were based on maize and potato farms scattered around Middelburg, Witbank, and Bethal - good farming land which was profitably close to the Rand. Companies and partnerships ran some of these estates: black immigrants were snapped up by a firm of 'General Merchants and Farmers', as well as by the notorious Medalie Brothers, who extracted their pound of flesh from some 600 workers on three farms.[23] Immigrants were also greedily eyed by wealthy individuals, like the 'Mealie King' Esrael Lazarus, the largest farmer in South Africa. With some ten estates and a coal mine, he was a ruthless robber-baron running one of the greatest maize farming operations in the world.[24]

For such men, procuring a large supply of cheap recruits was the single most important prerequisite for survival as capitalist farmers in the periphery. Since land prices had risen tenfold since the turn of the century, every acre available was frequently put to the plough rather than wasted on tenants. But hired labour often constituted an enormous 35 - 50% of running expenses excluding interest - and was almost the only outlay partially controlled by farmers heavily dependent on imported equipment and international markets. Only by minimizing labour costs could South African maize farmers compete against those in the Argentine; only by maximising labour supplies could they achieve high yields in a period when capital-intensive methods were far too expensive. Having internalised the lesson that the 'main factors responsible for success in maize farming are high yields per acre and low labour costs', they had a voracious appetite for cheap workers.[25]

Unfortunately, their proximity to the Rand and distance from reserves enhanced the bargaining power of their workers. According to many large eastern Transvaal farmers, tenants supplying casual labour were 'absolutely impossible'. As for the 'rejects from the mines' supplied by Rand-based farm labour companies recruiting in South Africa's internal labour reservoirs, they were 'blind in one eye and their limbs more of less impaired', or 'syphilis boys and mentally uncapables'.[26] If many larger landlords were reluctantly forced to rely heavily on these recruiting companies, they also eagerly branched out into the relatively unknown sphere of freelance agents and foreign labour.

RISE AND FALL OF A LABOUR BUREAU, 1924-33

When the Pact government came to power in 1924, it made rather more concerted efforts to stop this endeavour than had its SAP predecessor. One of the first moves of this coalition was to prohibit clandestine immigration. Highveld capitalists objected in no uncertain terms - the issue was a matter 'of life and death', wrote one lawyer representing their interests. '**1st**ly the Rhodesian boys are cheaper; and **2nd**ly the supply is sure there being many of them in search of work.'[27] Thirdly, he might have added, politically vulnerable workers separated from their fellows by a linguistic barricade were often more submissive; fourthly, they 'touched the pen' to longer contracts than many South Africans; fifthly, unlike many indigenous blacks busy with their own harvests, 'Rhodesian boys' were available for reaping.

No capitalist state can ride roughshod over the accumulation requirements of large-scale employers. Since it was impossible to alienate these landlords, yet desirable to erode their monopoly of northerners in a boom period of growing farm labour shortages, impossible to stop immigration without creating a chain of police posts, yet desirable to mollify white labour, a compromise evolved. Clandestinely, with no legal basis, and using a semi- private bank account, an attempt was made to establish complete state control over the distribution of northerners through the Rhodesian Native Labour Depot at Louis Trichardt. On the one hand, regulations were tightened to exclude farmers from independent access to foreigners. On the other hand, immigrants descending on the verminous compound at the rate of 250 a month - often as victims of pass laws or as the booty of constables policing local trains - were informed they had a choice. Provided they passed a perfunctory medical examination - the grossly malnourished were simply dumped back over the border - they could either be repatriated, or be sent to farms for a year to earn a maximum of 30s. a month.

This contract length was double that of the workers supplied by Rand-based recruiting companies. The wage - after farmers promptly cut it to 20-25s. - was half. Although the Depot was 'run purely on business lines', it cleared such embarrassingly large profits that its capitation fee was soon slashed to less than 50% of the companies' tariff.[28] In short, the labour bureau had two outstanding advantages over private recruiters: it dramatically depressed the conditions of workers, and radically reduced the profits of middlemen.

In this boom period of relatively high maize prices and rapidly expanding production, demand for its merchandise was consequently considerably greater than supply. Unperturbed, officials devised a system of allocating northerners which grotesquely symbolized their view of immigrants as commodities. Slips with the names of some seventy approved employers were kept in a ballot box - and a lottery was held. 'When natives are available, a draw is made from the box, and the lucky farmer supplied'.[29] From aliens to be captured to prizes to be won - in a world where men were merchandise, such transitions were commonplace.

In theory, smaller farmers would be the main beneficiaries of this raffle of black bodies; in practice, large capital swept the board. Although the social prejudices of senior officials lubricated this change of gear - 'Judging from his voice he is a man of some standing...If you could possibly let him have, say, five boys as a special concession' - it occurred largely for all too material reasons.[30] Only wealthier farmers could afford the fees and forwarding costs; only very large landlords would accept an 'allotment' of twenty-five labourers whatever the season. Smaller cost-conscious farmers frequently requested 'picannins only and not big natives'; they usually wanted only a couple of workers.[31] But few children had walked several hundred miles, and immigrants valued solidarity too highly to agree to split into smaller gangs. Pact policy had foundered on the rocks of black resistance and economic reality.

In addition to the handful of large landlords employing northerners since the 1910s, those who patronised the 'Tropical Labour Bureau' were drawn from a second wave of eastern Transvaal maize farmers. Although they farmed on a smaller scale, they too obtained South African 'joinboys' from recruiting companies (while cannily ensuring that the bulk of their labourers were foreigners.) The majority lived in Bethal - one of the few South African districts where it was possible to farm and prosper. And large numbers were Jewish refugees from Russia, tightly integrated into a world of non-agrarian and considerably more profitable capital. Some were simultaneously moneylen-

ders; others were associated with the more stolid financial base of insurance companies; many had in the past or present doubled as merchants. Due to this 'combined development', the majority had leapfrogged over their fellows. Instead of standard grade products, they grew choice table potatoes; in place of monoculture, they produced two or more crops a year; escaping backwardness, they ran farms as 'an industrial concern'; avoiding tenants, they hired wage labour 'on a commercial basis'.[32] Not that many smaller farmers appreciated this vastly accelerated progress. The 'Jews have placed large orders with this department for boys and by so doing they are depriving the poor and needed farmer from obtaining Natives', wrote one landlord bitterly; 'the Jews have possession of nearly all trading stands on mines and Hotels etc. and now the boys.'[33]

In the vanguard of those treating people as property were the largest and wealthiest capitalists. Landlords who had spent hundreds of pounds to secure black workers clawed back their cash with a ruthlessness probably unrivalled among Transvaal farmers. For one thing, workers had to repay any advances made at the time of recruitment, repay the cost of railing them to their place of exploitation, and repay recruiters' rake-offs through low or non-existent wages. For another, indirect expenditure was cut to the bone. Although immigrants were often emaciated (or, as farmers viewed it, 'it was quite four months before we had any use from them') their diet usually consisted of grossly inferior mealie meal and almost inedible potatoes. They 'must take the rejects or un-marketable potatoes cut in digging or stabbed with the forks', claimed Sam Medalie indignantly. He had caught blacks cooking potatoes stolen from a bag earmarked for the profits of the market rather than the stomachs of workers as he crept up at midnight on the compound.[34]

If these rural accumulators had emulated the mines in their systems of social control, they also debased their borrowings to accommodate far more primitive conditions. The compounds were often locked, guarded and behind barbed wire fences; retention of both wages and passes also helped curb desertion. Bloody assaults were endemic; brutal murders were far from infrequent. The 'economics of death' suited farmers who relied on an endless stream of replaceable migrants. During frosty highveld winters, some workers were clad only in thin cotton blankets and loin cloths; others had no clothes because these had been confiscated to prevent desertion. The cold took ill, the weaker caught pneumonia, and the older died, while employers claimed they were 'shaming' and a 'shambuck' would send them back to work.[35]

For labourers, the system united the sins of both slavery and capitalism with the blessings of neither. Although many workers described their plight in the vocabulary of slavery, their protest was rooted in that transitional world where waged labourers were bought and sold. They struck, rioted, and marched to police stations to complain; above all, they deserted. Since many immigrants had doubtless regarded the eastern Transvaal as but one more temporary halt in their long stop-go journey to the Rand, they frequently fled in large groups, the enterprising having already reappropriated their contracts and passes.[36]

What were the implications of this rural resistance for the labour bureau? Within less than a year of its establishment, 'tropical natives' were 'deserting wholesale', and querulous landlords were complaining that labour agents 'guarantee desertions which you people do not do'.[37] In addition, the depot was disrupted by unauthorised recruiters - who longed to '**break up** your organisation'. (Indeed, one labour agent boasted that he alone had recruited 2,700 'tropicals'in 1925 - only slightly fewer than all those

distributed by the depot.[38]) But the greatest blow was struck by blacks crossing the border - which was badly policed, easy to cross, and meandered for 400 miles through desolate bushveld terrain. Moving both west and east, immigrants simply changed their ports of entry. By late 1925 the numbers were noticeably falling; by 1929 the depot had almost ceased to function.

The coup de grâce was delivered by the depression. Agricultural prices collapsed; rural trade came to a standstill; maize farmers faced financial ruin. By late 1930, only six employers were still interested in the lottery; even they were reluctant prizewinners 'as we are overstocked'.[39] In 1933, as drought compounded the effects of economic devastation, the depot was closed.

Although capital no longer sought labour, a 'flood of unemployed released by the impact of the Depression on the rural areas of Central Africa' streamed into South Africa.[40] By 1931 some 65% of the desperate men crossing the northern border came from Nyasaland, that rural slum of the British Empire and notorious labour reservoir of Africa.[41] As both foreign and South African men driven by the spectre of starvation forced their way onto the Rand, the sheer size of the swollen reserve army of labour concentrated bureaucratic minds on the disadvantages of idle immigrants. From 1930-36, vast sums were spent in a grim effort to export thousands of unemployed black aliens back to their peripheries. Many could not bid farewell to their families before they were forcemarched to trains; some died on the journey to the nearest dumping spot; others were seized by wild animals when ditched on the road. As one hostile group of 'Nyasaland Natives' observed in 1932, the state might as well 'gather us all, and open the gate to the zoo, and let to be devourd By your lions'.[42]

It was the end of an era of ruthless restructuring of a reserve army of labour. Northerners had been expelled from the mines in the 1910s, partially prised from the grip of recruiters in the 1920s, then thrown out of the country when spurned by farmers in the early 1930s. But the depression was succeeded by the boom of the later '30s and '40s - during which northerners who had fled the peripheries for South Africa increased sixfold. They flowed back onto the mines, filled the lorries of labour agents, displaced black South Africans from domestic service, and featured as the cornerstone of the state's attempt to address the farm labour crisis. This time, history repeated itself not as farce, but as tragedy, with an unprecedented increase in savagery.

'BLACK SLAVE TRAFFIC ON A GRAND SCALE'

During the depression, numerous larger highveld farmers kept their heads just above water by switching from recruiting companies to cheaper freelancers, and from clandestine immigrants to convicts and children. By introducing the first large-scale farm labour scheme affecting black prisoners, the state had tried to shift the burden of capitalism's crisis onto the shoulders of the most vulnerable sector of society. Few whites cared a whit about its utter illegality: Bethal landlords exulted over their ability to extract at least 25% more work from short-term convicts; the Prisons Department gleefully pocketed the entire wages of the victims it sold.[43] The NAD lagged not far behind, with administrative relaxations regarding black child labour which flouted not only morality but also the legislature. 'What authority' - demanded a recruiting corporation anxiously seeking legal grounds for packing twelve year olds off to farms - had NAD officials 'to relax a Law or Act of Parliament?' . What authority indeed - except that of bureaucrats in the modern capitalist state, where typically the 'most important part of the decision- making process...occurs at the executive and administrative levels'.[44]

But as the pall of the depression lifted, civil servants diverted prisoners from farms to public works. Moreover, robber-recruiters who had stolen an entire generation of children rapidly ran out of loot. By the mid-1930s, 'practically all the picannins' had disappeared from the traditional hunting ground of northern Transvaal agents serving eastern Transvaal farmers. By early 1936, although old customers of the labour bureau besieged recruiters specializing in child labour with telegrams crying 'SOS for Labour', there was none to be had.[45] Even adults were sparse, since the sluice gates preventing movement from reserves to the Rand had been opened in response to industrial expansion. And at this point, foreigners were reinserted on the agenda of agrarian capital and the state.

At the start of the greatest mining boom for fifty years, a policy of twenty years standing had been rescinded. From 1933, northerners could be recruited by the Chamber of Mines. In mid- 1936, on the eve of harvesting a bumper crop, and at a time when maize prices had risen to their highest level for nearly a decade, labour-starved eastern Transvaal landlords demanded a similar concession. The Pact government had been replaced and so should its policies forbidding recruitment of foreigners by farmers, they argued; they wanted renewed access to 'die skepsels wat oor die grens kom'.[46]

These 'Mealie Kings' packed a considerable economic punch - the preceding year, a mere 6% of maize farmers had harvested over half the crop.[47] Yet the UP government was also concerned about domestic control and foreign legitimacy. Allegedly, it would be dangerous to have 'all these strangers on our hands when the next period of depression comes'; moreover, forcible recruiting near the border might complicate relations with Rhodesian authorities.[48] As a compromise was hammered out, administrators imposed a string of conditions that would establish a recruiting- free buffer zone stretching 20 miles back from the border, and would ensure the ejectment of 'these strangers' from the land once their six months of exploitation was over.

However, as economic upturn developed into industrial boom, and as Transvaal landlords squeezed by uneven development howled for labour, the state beat a hasty retreat from almost every condition. These sky-rocketed the price of aliens to £10 each; since wages had been rammed down to £1 a month, grasping farmers saw no prospect 'om die bedrag van die Naturel se lone terug te kry nie'.[49] Undoubtedly, this economic logic would defeat even the most predatory of landlords, so officialdom cut the Gordian knot by letting farmers ignore repatriation. As significantly, they and their so-called servants obtained exclusive rights to the 'zone', where they could legally procure all foreigners except 'the Portuguese' notionally earmarked for the mines.

Since the influx of northerners had transformed the 'zone' into 'the actual cream of South Africa' for recruiters, the gourmets of cheap labour lost no time in gorging themselves.[50] Some large landlords appeared in person with fleets of lorries; others, like Lazarus, scrambled for white agents who in turn appointed battalions of African runners. But as the economic spring of 1936 developed into the recessionary winter of 1937-39, even freelance recruiters were too costly for many members of the second wave of easten Transvaal farmers. After failing to persuade officialdom to procure foreign workers for them -'trying to get the boys free', claimed a recruiter sourly - they brazenly formed a co- operative which traded in black bodies.[51] Like larger recruiting corporations, this Bethal labour company was soon clamouring for the same privileges as wealthier individual farmers. Throwing concern about clashes with Rhodesian authorities to the wind, civil servants opened the zone to all and sundry in 1937.

By this stage - and for years to come - recruiting in the northern Transvaal was at least as violent and anarchic as during the early days of 'bodysnatching' for the mines. By the late 1930s, some 2,500 Rhodesian and Nyasa immigrants were crossing the border near Messina each month; Mozambicans were also entering in their thousands. Their routes were eagerly traced by innumerable recruiters and runners, who intercepted gangs in Bechuanaland, penetrated hundreds of miles into Southern Rhodesia, snapped up Mozambicans in Portuguese East Africa, and grimly patrolled South African roads after nightfall in their lorries. They relentlessly exploited the restrictions imposed by the state on prohibited immigrants - promising permits to the passless, Rhodesian identities to the 'Portuguese', and police intervention for the recalcitrant. Those working for large labour companies waved the magic wand of Johannesburg depots: few immigrants realised how quickly they would be rerouted from eGoli to the farms. In addition, many recruiters found their past experiences in the army, policeforce or compounds particularly helpful. In the context of cut-throat competition, they press-ganged women and 'Portuguese Piccannins', kidnapped northerners who escaped only by throwing themselves off lorries, and dumped Nyasa immigrants suffering from pneumonia 'outside in the veld to die to make way for more sufferers likely to live.' They also fought over possession of gangs, 'prosecute[d] each other for "theft" of these human beings' and channelled their booty largely to landlords willing to pay the highest price.[52]

Although officials publicly boasted that freeing farmers from recruiting controls over foreigners had greatly reduced their labour shortage, they privately admitted to helping 'the few rich ones at the expense of the vast majority of poor ones', and to sanctioning '"black birding" on a large scale'.[53] As others less delicately expressed it in 1940, 'the callousness towards the immigrants shown by the higher officials of the Native Affairs Department savours more of the old Arab regime'.[54] Yet the war years were no time to end a slave-trade: not when the country was plagued with maize shortages, and farmers were fettered by increasingly fractious and costly workers. Not, too, when the demand for cheap recruits had increased dramatically. Spurred on by the 1937 Marketing Act - which by inflating domestic prices made working-class Africans compensate maize farmers for exporting at a loss - and galvanized by soaring wartime prices - which reached levels last seen in the early 1920s - 'the four fifths of the Maize farmers who grow only one fifth of the crop' had begun to expand production.[55]

After bitter battles, representatives of this third wave of farmers had taken over the recruiting co-operative in the eastern Transvaal. By the early 1940s, Afrikaner nationalist sentiments infused this Bethal Boerearbeidsvereniging, which had blacklisted several larger English-speaking capitalists because their barbarous regimes exacerbated the district's labour shortage. Yet men like Sam Medalie were never loath to explore new ways of abusing cheap workers. Challenged from below by upstart Afrikaners, and neglected from above by recruiting companies more interested in booming industries, scores of predominantly Jewish entrepreneurs simply formed their own co-operative recruiting groups, which mushroomed uncontrollably in the zone.

As farmers greedy for labour multiplied - and as tenants became townsmen and labour reservoirs became hunting grounds for the army - the scramble for vulnerable foreigners intensified. In 1944, 100% of the recruits of a large farmers' group came from the Rhodesias and Nyasaland, as did 99% of those caught in the trawl of the Boerearbeidsvereniging, and two-thirds of those seized by large Johannesburg-based labour companies.[56] The following year, over 18,000 northerners - some 75% of those entering

the country - were passed along a chain of runners and recruiters to Transvaal and Free State farmers.[57] In Bethal alone, the number of contracted labourers increased almost fivefold in the decade after 1937. Indeed, so many of the recruits here were foreigners that some large estates were simply called 'Nyasaland'.[58]

Immediately after the war, the demand for aliens soared as production records were smashed in the eastern Transvaal following favourable weather and reinsertion into the world market. And the barometer of the slave trade rose by leaps and bounds. Confronted by armed whites and blacks impersonating the police and demanding 'to pas',innumerable northerners and many South Africans were 'forced to take a join'.[59] They were dragooned into service - after beatings, broken arms, robbery and murder of comrades; they were 'conscripted'- after imprisonment in makeshift jails 'built of thorn trees with big poisonous thorns pointing inwards', and torture on island hideouts. Small wonder that in the eyes of shocked reporters, 'press-gang procedure' paled before the grim battles for labour being fought on lonely terrain stretching well into neighbouring colonies.[60]

If the press-gangs of capitalist accumulation were bloodier than before, procuring forced workers was also more profitable. By 1947, foreign black runners raked-off 12s. a head - five times more than ten years earlier - and white recruiters creamed half as much again. But since both regarded seizing and selling Africans in the same light as "n boer sy mielies groei en teen markwaarde verkoop', they flogged their merchandise to the highest bidder.[61] And at a market price of around £3, the wealthiest landlords were cornering the alien 'joinboys'. To the dismay of the Boerearbeidsvereniging, the mushroom groups of black-listed farmers were carrying off their human cargoes by the lorryload, supplying plenteous labour to Rand industrialists as well as to eastern Transvaal members.[62] Merchant-farmers had extended their portfolios: selling black bodies had become big business.

Not surprisingly, smaller landlords in the eastern and northern Transvaal were denouncing recruiting as a racket which had reached its 'toppunt van onreelmatighede'.[63] Understandably, officialdom was also increasingly restive about 'black slave traffic on a grand scale'.[64] Under the whip of this crisis on its borders - and the spur of broader struggles to secure workers - the state reformulated its policies towards procuring farm labour.

THE FARM LABOUR SCHEMES OF THE 1940s

Between 1944 and 1948, the Foreign Farm Labour Scheme evolved through close co-operation between the NAD and a Liaison Committee of the SAAU, institutionalized in meetings that included the President of the SAAU, the Chairman of the Transvaal Agricultural Union and the Secretary of Native Affairs. This 'very intimate relationship' began with a 1944 flirtation intended to find extra-Parliamentary solutions to the farm labour shortage.[65] But the partners rapidly established their compatibility when tackling the fundamental issue - the SAAU's insistence on dividing Africans into full-time farm and industrial workers. Contrary to conventional wisdom, the Secretary of Native Affairs was delighted, the Minister of Native Affairs enthused, the Prime Minister gave his stamp of approval. (To their mutual surprise, even Nationalists raised no objections in Parliament.[66]) Having established that the state would proceed experimentally on the issue - officialdom feared that classifying part the African population as permanent urban dwellers was far in advance of (white) public opinion and would undermine segregation - the partners began discussing state siphoning of labour to farms.

Here rather more compromise was necessary. As in all capitalist societies, bureaucrats were reluctant to identify themselves too closely with crises in any one sector. In South Africa at that time, an additional deterrent was the crippling shortage of workers on the mines. Yet 'the content of "relative autonomy"' was subject to continual 'redefinition in response to crises'.[67] In particular, if black South Africans could not be funnelled to farmers alone, both black and white foreigners had long been another matter. As farmers' wartime bonanza of Italian prisoners- of-war drew to an end - and as officers flowing back to their offices tightened influx control in the immediate post-war recession - black immigrants resurfaced as obvious victims for conscription onto farms.[68] As the Minister of Native Affairs bluntly declared, 'We cannot force Union Natives to work on the farms but we can force Natives illegally in the country to work on the farms.'[69]

If Pact was dead, long live its policy - with some appropriate modifications. First, this was social engineering on a grand scale. The scheme could potentially embrace some two hundred thousand 'tropicals' already in the country - the vast majority living illegally in urban areas - as well as 24-30,000 clandestine immigrants per year. Second, a rough index of hegemony had to be constructed, as claimants to this pool of labour had multiplied since the 1920s. Crudely balancing profits against paternalism, officialdom determined that only Transvaal and Free State farmers would receive foreigners: immigrants deprived of a minimum wage would thus be protected from devoting more than 25% of their pay to travel. To the alarm of administrators, landlords on the Liaison Committee dictated which base metal mine qualified for how much of 'their' foreign labour. But to the relief of both partners, urban industry was excluded from this bizarre parlour game. Despite the protests of organized manufacturing, the NAD refused to 'bind itself to consult the South African Federated Chamber of Industries before it decides on a general policy for dealing with foreign Natives.'[70]

The NAD had, however, bound itself to the SAAU, and this conflictual union required yet another, fatal compromise. For many officials, a state monopoly over foreign labourers would suppress the slave trade and soothe northern governments; for most capitalists, it would undercut labour companies demanding spiralling fees. Yet farmers' representatives had an additional concern, since their constituencies contained increasing numbers who profited from the 'selling and buying of human bodies.'[71] As the election loomed, members of the Liaison Committee anxiously advised against legal control of the 'groups', since this would 'set the farming community by the ears.'[72] And when Bethal landlords were threatened with a labour boycott after yet another scandal, apparatchiks who proclaimed their 'stand for private enterprise' prevailed.[73] Since civil servants could not guarantee an adequate supply of foreign workers to a district pre-eminent for both abuse and production, recruiters had to be allowed to continue with coercion.

In the official scheme, violence was bureaucratized, as administrators and farmers infused their project with mementoes of the war, and with memories of the efficacy of massive state intervention in civil society. Starving and ragged immigrants who had traversed half of Africa would cook in trenches, sleep in tents, and wear second hand military attire; they would be deverminised by pumping 'DDT powder up the trouser legs', and would peer at the outside world through massive security fences.[74] Those detained in urban areas would be imprisoned in depots with padlocked doors; if they declined the discipline of the farms, they would be deported back to the border in troop carriers. As these precautions suggested, officialdom was all too aware of the violence entailed in conscripting foreign labourers to save domestic capitalists.

The offensive commenced in early 1947. Since little could be done about recruiters in the 'zone', the centre of gravity shifted to the urban areas of the Free State and Transvaal. After some months of sabre-rattling - only law-abiding foreigners who reported to pass offices were detained - the blitzkrieg began. All northerners in this region - with exceptions such as 'the Portuguese', those on the mines and all who had worked some six years for one employer - were to 'be rounded up' by the police.[75] The NAD was anxious to clear the towns of foreigners - an estimated 135,000 of whom were employed on the Witwatersrand alone. Urban industrialists, according to this Orwellian vision, would then rely only on a stable workforce of South Africans; state expenditure on urban blacks would not have to stretch to cover alien immigrants; the depots would function as labour bureaux bombarding rural capitalists with workers.[76]

But the best laid plans can go astray. A year after its inauguration - after the lives of tens of thousands of alien blacks had been disrupted, thousands of white householders had lost their domestic servants, hundreds of employers had been prosecuted for illegally employing foreign labour, tens of mines and recruiting companies had been antagonized, and 'a hornet's nest' had been stirred up with northern authorities - the Farm Labour Scheme had siphoned about 1,200 workers to landlords. Each cost the state some £140 a head.[77] Mothered by myopia, fathered by compromise, and delivered by coercion, the Farm Labour Scheme was stillborn.

To the bewilderment of bureaucrats, a major reason for its failure was the enormous resistance it provoked. In urban areas, many foreigners were 'driven underground': they moved to the outskirts of towns, or redefined themselves as residents of the Protectorates or South Africa.[78] If caught in the dragnet, those reluctant to sacrifice national identity to personal emergency 'made the most stupendous efforts to get away'. They bribed guards, broke out of cells, abseiled down walls with torn-up blankets, and 'refused entirely to go to farms.'[79] About 90% of those who initially failed to escape chose deportation over farms; of the 4,000 who travelled back in troop carriers, many fled at the Louis Trichardt depot. Finally, those dumped on the banks of the Limpopo could make their way back to the Rand in a couple of weeks - provided they evaded prowling recruiters.

On the border, runners and resistance were equally effective in smashing the scheme. At the Limpopo subdepots, most immigrants easily evaded the tiny African staff armed only with pedal cycles and with no pecuniary interest in their capture. Some were guided by Mozambicans and claimed 'Portuguese' origins; others 'pulled hatchets and long knives and knobkerries and said if this man is a Policeman or inspector we will kill him.'[80] Moreover, there were hundreds of ways of evading the Louis Trichardt 'konsentrasie kamp'.Its tents accommodated only 'a few stray ones who had been missed out' by recruiters; they were often ill or crippled, and all obdurately refused to go to Bethal. Not surprisingly, northern Transvaal staff spent most of their time 'waiting, like Mr Micawber, for something to turn up'.[81]

What of the tiny minority shanghaied to farms? Certainly a handful of ex-customers of Pact's labour bureau purchased workers. On the aptly named 'Straffontein', one of the largest of these landlords fed immigrants on porridge left over by horses, and sardined them into a windowless compound so squalid that it outstripped 'notorious jails, slums and refugee camps in the Far East, England and Africa'. Although the compound was locked and guarded at night, ten out of twenty-five of these foreigners had deserted within two weeks - perhaps having learnt that other workers had not been paid for five

months.[82] In general, the scheme suffered from an extremely high desertion rate; since the fee was also exorbitant, the vast majority of farmers displayed no interest in the Farm Labour Scheme's wares. Although pecuniary concessions were quickly made, the scheme was already doomed.

Most bureaucrats, however, thought they had been defeated not by 'tropicals' but by touts determined 'to retain their hold on their trade in human beings.'[83] Undoubtedly, these merchants of men were enormously hostile. They feared they would be forced out of business, they declared; the decreased 'turnover' would ensure that recruiting South Africans alone for farm labour would be unprofitable. Consequently, they grimly deployed their sanguinary talents to ensure that 'one man will go out. That man is the Government.'[84] And private enterprise quickly proved its predatory potential: the subdepots were closed in late 1948, and the entire scheme was wound up in 1949.

It did, however, spawn a much more effective successor. South African blacks were also loaded into the vans of police rounding up foreigners - and from September 1947, at the Johannesurg Native Commissioner's court which processed black pass offenders through the grinder of white injustice, they were channelled into the 'Farm Labour Scheme: Union'. Ostensibly, this was the brainchild of a minor NAD bureaucrat with Bethal links ('Oom Piet', as he was termed by Transvaal farmers plying him with whisky and cigars.) From the start, however, he displayed enthusiasm beyond the call of duty in initiating a brutal system of forced labour which had long been the dream of the director of the Boerearbeidsvereniging. Within less than a year, this association had no qualms about claiming both Piet de Beer and the Johannesburg Native Commissioner as its own labour agents.[85]

Thus the court was the nerve centre of a ruthless recruiting system: the victims were blacks, the runners were white police armed with **kwela-kwela** vans, the labour agents doubled as state officials with an arsenal of punitive powers, and the buyers were sunburnt farmers waiting in Oom Piet's office for their 'bag of boys'.[86] Unlike seasoned foreigners, unsophisticated rural Africans new both to **eGoli** and to jail were particularly vulnerable. They were first captured and charged for allegedly breaking the law by the police, then disgorged in a fenced yard guarded by the forces of law and order. Then the 'prisoner's friend', Oom Piet, sauntered out - as the self-proclaimed director of public prosecutions, he presumed (quite correctly) that imprisonment awaited the recalcitrant.[87] They could be jailed for years, he informed them; they could be hired out involuntarily to farmers under the UP's 'nege-pennies-bandiet-skema'; or they could 'volunteer' for the farms at nearly double this wage for six months and their cases would be withdrawn. By April 1948, over two thousand South African blacks had 'chosen' the farms; one fifth had descended straight into the maws of the Boerearbeidsvereniging.[88]

Far from condemning the scheme, the Secretary of Native Affairs was 'much impressed'; the Director of Native Labour was jubilant.[89] A corrupt project based on primeval economics and barbaric law had two major advantages: it cost almost nothing, and it funnelled more labour to the farms in eight months than did the foreign Farm Labour Scheme throughout its existence. For agrarian capital, the greatest attraction lay in the absence of capitation fees, which meant an immediate saving of £5 per worker. Furthermore, the supply was assured: almost any weekday, and sometimes several times a month, those close to Johannesburg could simply drive to town and load labourers onto their lorries. By mid-1948, Oom Piet's customers were predominantly the richest and most influential highveld farmers. Many who had bought workers from

Pact's labour bureau in the 1920s, or from child labour recruiters in the 1930s, or from 'groups' slavetrading on the border in the 1940s, enthusiastically turned to completely free forced labour.

Like recruiting, exploitation was still shaped by 'the dominance of the strong...the standards of commerce, the maximum-profit motive'.[90] By the 1940s, a tiny white minority had risen to the realms of prosperity by extorting maximum work for minimum cost from tens of thousands of black recruits. Labourers, recalled a tenant on Lazarus's farm, 'could not finish working'; in the tractor boom after the war, 'you did more work per day.'[91] All over the eastern Transvaal, recruits spent fourteen hour days bent double scooping up potatoes with their bare hands. Many were still paid in second-hand garments; most now wore potato sacks after their clothes had been confiscated. Invariably, they were robbed, sodomized or assaulted by black 'boss-boys' and white foremen. All slept 'morsdood' in locked compounds which were 'the place of pigs'; at night, some urinated on the floors, if there was not the dubious benefit of a 'a 2" pipe struck through the wall'. 'We purely taken to captivity for six month', cried some; 'we are working like prisoners', cried others; 'We are suffering hell' cried all.[92]

Yet from the 1920s to the 1940s, the NAD appeared reluctant 'to take any strong action in the matter, to take any action at all in fact'.[93] The logic of lethargy was brutally simple. Without forced labour in the eastern Transvaal, no large rural capitalists; without large rural capitalists, only meagre amounts of marketed maize and potatoes from one of the greatest food- producing regions in the country. For large capital which had penetrated the backward countryside from 'the outside', for 'boerende boere' spreading their wings in the wartime boom, for regimes overseeing the uneven spread of capitalism before primitive accumulation had run its course, forced labour in the eastern Transvaal was an 'anomalous necessity'.[94]

In 1947, this lesson was hammered home to the United Party government. As fears of a labour boycott surfaced after the scandal that year, a handful of murderous Bethal foremen and farmers were prosecuted in an attempt to regulate the self- destructive tendencies of capital. But the state retreated with unseemly haste before a storm of protest unleashed by farmers linked to the Boerearbeidsvereniging. Despite yet another scheme to reduce the labour shortage - allowing Bethal capitalists to build their own rural jails heralded the boom in black prison labour in the 1950s - the political damage had been done. By trying to systematize the use and abuse of forced labour, the state had 'antagonized the "platteland" vote and especially that of the farmers in the Eastern Transvaal'.[95] With some justification, many contemporary observers regarded this penetration of the sphere of exploitation as responsible for driving many Afrikaans-speakers into the Nationalist camp in the Transvaal.[96] Far from state inertia on the question of agrarian capital's labour shortage, a frenzied final assault on the problem had facilitated the victory of apartheid in 1948.

CONCLUSION

Unlike God, historians can alter the past. If the history of state intervention in the farm labour crisis were to be revised, then a tale turned topsy-turvy might compel attention, and even yield some durable insights.

Consider the following account. Capitalist farmers had experienced a labour shortage for decades - uneven development nationally and internationally produced appalling conditions absolutely incapable of attracting sufficient cheap wage workers. When the

NAD tackled this problem in the 1920s, it adhered to the principle that the bodies of blacks had exchange value, and supported farm labour recruiting companies operating a system in which 'a person was one pound ten'.[97] It also heeded the South African belief that child labour should be channelled to agriculture, and subscribed to the worldwide ethic that foreign workers could be shunted to jobs spurned by indigenous labourers. During the boom of the later 1920s, a labour bureau sold alien blacks to farmers at a substantial profit, having first cheapened the value of their labour-power.

During the depression, the state sold the labour-power of short term prisoners to larger landlords for its own financial benefit. But in urban booms of the later 1930s and '40s, convicts were diverted to public works, and ever more rural South Africans fled to towns. Among the farmers worst affected were those in the eastern Transvaal, where convicts and child labour had been particularly important. Anxiously, these 'cheque book' landlords demanded and received renewed rights to recruit foreigners.

In the 1940s, the NAD cold-shouldered the 'large majority of farmers [who] do not aspire to money-making as a vocation', but eagerly embraced big agrarian capital.[98] As the acid of profit-making eroded the veneer of paternalism, it cynically tolerated a slave trade on the border which drained labour from smaller landlords, and welcomed the SAAU's proposal of permanently dividing the African population into rural and urban full-time workers. During the wartime and post-war agrarian booms, the NAD and larger rural capitalists worked hand in hand on mass forced labour schemes. Since channelling criminals to farmers was established practice, hijacking huge numbers of lawbreaking foreigners and black South Africans to rural estates was but a post-war corollary to a peacetime theorem.

Unfortunately, the most ambitious joint scheme was spectacularly wrecked on the twin rocks of recruiters' resilience and black resistance. Furthermore, when the state tried to regulate the suicidal tendencies of large capital, the government lost support which facilitated its loss of power in 1948. Nonetheless, significant progress had been made in addressing the labour shortage of larger capitalist farmers. Thus the UP administration endowed its successor with an agrarian sector which had 'become more and more dependent on foreign labour'.[99] It also bequeathed to apartheid a slave trade on the border, a forced labour system in the heartland of South Africa, farmer-owned jails in the centres of agrarian capitalism, and the 'nege-pennies-bandiet-skema' throughout the land.

Almost immediately, the apartheid state implemented policies gingerly skirted by its precursor for fear of alienating large capitalist farmers. In 1949, legislation was amended to control the slave trade conducted by 'cheque-book' landlords; SAAU representatives were warned that this was 'not a matter for decision by the farmers'; private recruiters serving the minority were increasingly subordinated to labour bureaux serving the majority.[100] But the apartheid regime had as little success as its predecessors in eliminating farm labour shortages via these bureaux. Far more significant for large capital was the expansion of its precursor's schemes affecting prohibited immigrants, prisoners and 'petty offenders'. If large Transvaal landlords no longer cried 'labour shortage' in the late 1950s, this was mainly because foreign recruits had been undercut by 'ons eie surplus stedelike Naturelle', driven out of the countryside by the quickening pace of primitive accumulation, and coerced back onto farms through a gulag archipelago of forced labour schemes.[101] If this was a turning point for big Transvaal capital,

then its origins lay in the wartime boom, as ever more indigenous blacks were proletarianized, and as the UP regime introduced the coercive schemes subsequently appropriated by apartheid.

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This story, of course, still contains silences and sophisms, since it omits the fate of small landlords largely dependent on labour tenants, and draws heavily on eastern Transvaal evidence. Nonetheless, it has three advantages for historians. First, it disaggregates farmers. Although scholars of earlier periods are increasingly stressing the role of 'progressive' landlords linked to non-agrarian capital, later rural history has often been perceived through the prism of the neo-classical categories of 'agriculture', 'mining' and 'manufacturing'. A more concerted conceptual shift - towards the conflicts between monopoly and small-scale capital, towards the links between merchant, financial and productive capital - is perhaps overdue.

Second, it relieves scholars from the burden of explaining extremely eccentric states. Pre-1948 regimes did not subsidize agriculture massively, yet refuse to intervene on the labour issue. On the contrary: officials took extremely seriously one of their most fundamental functions - the 'use of state power to create and sustain capitalist relations of production with an adequate, stable and docile supply of labour.'[102] In practice as opposed to pronouncements, they also retained the visible hand of coercion so long as the invisible hand of the market was manacled by incomplete primitive accumulation.

Third, as David Yudelman has persuasively argued for an earlier period, 'the modern South African state has to be periodized in an entirely different way' from that suggested by much of the existing historiography.[103] Governments could and did propose. But under both the Pact and the UP regimes, was not the legislature repeatedly flouted? Were not immigration clamps constantly prised apart by white capital and black aliens? Was not the state-allocated workforce commandeered by large farmers? Did not labour schemes collapse ignominiously under the impact of resistance? Were not state policies profoundly affected by booms and slumps? In the long run, the harsh rhythms of capital accumulation and struggle were the ultimate determinants of state policy on the ground, not the political gyrations of barbarous governments.

FOOTNOTES

1. Saul Dubow, **Racial Segregation and the Origins of Apartheid in South Africa, 1919-36** (Oxford, 1989), pp.64,120.
2. Mike Morris, 'The Development of Capitalism in South African Agriculture: Class Struggle in the Countryside', **Economy and Society**, 5, 3 (1976), p.295.
3. Tessa Marcus, **Restructuring in Commercial Agriculture in South Africa: Modernising Super-Exploitation** (Amsterdam, 1986), p.112.
4. Mike Morris, 'Apartheid, Agriculture and the State: the Farm Labour Question', SALDRU Working Paper no.8, (1977), p.33; Deborah Posel, 'Influx Control and the Construction of Apartheid, 1948 -61' (Ph.D thesis, Oxford University, 1987), p.80.
5. Laurine Platzky and Cherryl Walker, **The Surplus People: Forced Removals in South Africa** (Johannesburg, 1985), p.106.
6. Dan O' Meara, **Volkskapitalisme: Class, Capital and Ideology in the Development of Afrikaner Nationalism, 1934 - 1948** (Cambridge, 1983), p.177.
7. Morris, 'Development of Capitalism', p.338.
8. Alan Jeeves, **Migrant Labour in South Africa's Mining Economy: the Struggle for the Gold Mines' Labour Supply 1890 - 1920** (Kingston, 1985), pp.3-4; South African Institute of Race Relations, **Farm Labour in the Orange Free State: Report of an Investigation** (Johannesburg, 1939), p.40.
9. Race Relations, **Farm Labour**, p.3.
10. *Transvaal Archives, Native Affairs Department files, NTS 2248, 603/280, Notes on a meeting with the Secretary of Native Affairs* (hereafter SNA), 22 August 1947.
11. **Report of the Native Farm Labour Committee, 1937-39** (Pretoria, 1939), p.7.
12. NTS 2250, 646/280(1), J. Prinsloo to Minister Swart, 3 October 1950 ('Jan Smuts with his government was a pest for us farmers, but all the same we still got kaffirs'.)
13. Leon Trotsky, **The History of the Russian Revolution** (New York, 1980), p.5.
14. NTS 2248, 603/280, M. Smuts to SNA, 8 December 1947; Charles van Onselen, **Chibaro: African Mine Labour in Southern Rhodesia 1900 - 1933** (London, 1976), pp.234-5.
15. The terms 'aliens', 'foreigners' and 'immigrants' do not refer to blacks from Swaziland, Bechuanaland and Basutoland, who in the period covered by this paper were treated like South African blacks.
16. NTS 2131, 245/280(6), C. Nyanjagha to Nyanjagha and Jasonl, undated (but c.1938).
17. *NTS 2095, 222/280(87)* (sic),*Native Commissioner (hereafter NC), Nylstroom, to SNA, 25 April 1944.*
18. NTS 2082, 112/280(2), Director of Native Labour (hereafter DNL) to SNA, 16 July 1935.
19. Jeeves, **Migrant Labour**, p.236.
20. Ian Phimister, 'Coal, Capital and Labour in Colonial Zimbabwe: Wankie Colliery 1894 - 1954', part 2, unpublished paper, 1989, p.24.
21. Transvaal Archives, Government Native Labour Bureau, GNLB 122, 1950/13/240, T. Llefeldt to H. Cooke, 24 December 1920; GNLB 123, 1950/3/D240, W. Walker to W. Gemmill, 30 March 1920.
22. TA, GNLB 123, 1950/13/240, S. Medalie to DNL, 22 February 1922, enclosing correspondence with Seelig and Co.; Helen Bradford, **A Taste of Freedom: the ICU in Rural South Africa, 1924 - 1930** (New Haven, 1987), p.26.
23. GNLB 123, 1950/13/240, J.J. Dorfan and Co. to South African Police (hereafter SAP), Val Station, 2 February 1922, and Bethal Magistrate to DNL, 11 December 1923.
24. Robert Morrell, 'Rural Transformations in the Transvaal: the Middelburg District, 1919 - 1930' (MA thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 1983), p.40.
25. Department of Agriculture and Forestry, **Farming Opportunities in the Union of South Africa** (Pretoria, 1936), p.30. See also **The Star**, 28 August 1928, **Farm Labour Committee**, p.22. A handful of tenants often survived as 'boss-boys'.
26. GNLB 123, 1950/13/240, Medalie Bros. to DNL, 30 December 1921, and Bethal Magistrate to DNL 11 December 1923; GNLB 415, 81/18, J. van Woudenberg to DNL, 24 February 1929; NTS 2093, 222/280, Secretary of Low Veld Farmers' Association to *Minister of Agriculture, 8 April* 1929.
27. GNLB 416, 81/19, G. Haupt to Minister of the Interior, 28 October 1924.
28. GNLB 122, 1950/13/240, DNL to SNA, 28 July 1925. See also Star, 4 April 1928.
29. NTS 2024, 26/280(1), DNL to SNA, 23 March 1928.
30. GNLB 415, 81/18, H. Cooke to J. Lyle, 13 December 1927.
31. Ibid., Sub-Native Commissioner (hereafter SNC), Witbank, to DNL, 7 June 1927.
32. NTS 2130, 245/280, unsigned report to Minister of Native Affairs (hereafter MNA), 25 May 1937.
33. GNLB 416, 81/19, H. Howard to J. Heynes, 5 March 1926.
34. GNLB 123, 1950/13/240, Medalie Bros. to DNL, 30 December 1921, and statement by S. Medalie, 15 July 1922.
35. Ibid., statement by C. Helps; van Onselen, **Chibaro**, p.60.
36. GNLB 1950/13/240, SAP, Kriel, to Station Commissioner, Bethal, 25 December 1925; Star, 19 December 1928; Bradford, **Taste of Freedom**, p.156.
37. GNLB 416, 81/19, Natives Louis Trichardt to Natlab, 25 July 1925, and A. Parker to SNC, Louis Trichardt, 24 March 1925.
38. GNLB 122, 1950/13/240, SNC Pietersburg to DNL, 25 June 1925.
39. GNLB 416, 81/19, Secretary Native Labour Board, Low Veld Farmers' Association, to SNC Louis Trichardt, 27 October 1930.
40. Ian Phimister, **An Economic and Social History of Zimbabwe 1890-1948: Capital Accumulation and Class Struggle** (London, 1988), p.202.
41. *GNLB 416, 81/19, Additional NC, Louis Trichardt, to DNL, 2 June 1931; Leroy Vail, 'The State and the Creation of Colonial* Malawi's Agricultural Economy' in Robert Rotberg, ed., **Imperialism, Colonialism and Hunger: East and Central Africa** (Lexington, 1983), pp. 59, 65.
42. NTS 2129, 245/280(1), 'Nyasaland Natives' to 'The Right General', 24 August 1932.
43. Star, 18 January 1930; Alan Cooke, **Akin to Slavery** (London, 1982), p.9.
44. NTS 2016, 19/280(1), Manager of Natal Coast Labour Recruiting Corporation to DNL, 12 March 1930; David Yudelman, **The Emergence of Modern South Africa: State, Capital, and the Incorporation of Organized Labour on the South African Gold Fields, 1902-1939** (Cape Town, 1984), p.16.
45. NTS 1984, 90/279(1), enquiry held at Sibasa, 23 June 1936, evidence of Chief Mpafuri, and W. Sachs et al. to J. Marwick, 18 May 1936.
46. NTS 2129, 245/280(2), Notes by D. Smit of interview with Bethal deputation, 4 October 1934 ('the creatures who come over the border'.) For the far more intense pressure in 1936 by these and other farmers, see correspondence in NTS 2130, 245/280(3).
47. This is calculated from **Handbook of Agricultural Statistics 1904-1950** (Pretoria, 1960-61), p.70.
48. NTS 2117, 225/280, D. Smit to MNA, 15 February 1935.
49. NTS 2130, 245/280(3), D. Smit to MNA, 17 August 1936 ('of recovering this amount from the Native's wages'.)
50. NTS 1962, 19/279(5), Minutes of meeting of deputation of farmers with MNA, 10 July 1950.
51. NTS 1984, 90/279(1), enquiry held at Sibasa, 23 June 1936, evidence of W. Sachs.
52. *NTS 2130, 245/280(5), C. Chamberlain to Major Doyle, 12 April 1940 and C. Chamberlain to Senator Stubbs, 30 April 1940;* NTS 2130, 245/280(4), Sub-Inspector, District Commandant, Pietersburg to Deputy Commissioner, SAP, Pretoria, 25 September 1937, and SNA to Additional NC, Louis Trichardt, 18 August 1937.

53. NTS 2207, 354/280(3), DNL to SNA, 4 March 1940, and M. Smuts to 'CC', 13 March 1940. This flurry of confessions was related to a (futile and probably corrupt) attempt to exclude licensed recruiters from the zone, while allowing farmers' co-operatives to continue in the area.
54. NTS 2130, 245/280(5), C. Chamberlain to Major Doyle, 12 April 1940.
55. University of the Witwatersrand, (hereafter UW), Church of the Province of South Africa Archives, South African Institute of Race Relations papers, AD 843, Secretary Kaffrarian Steam Mill Co. to J. Rheinallt Jones, 10 August 1939.
56. These figures are calculated from NTS 2233, 469/280(1), P.du Toit to DNL, 2 January 1945, and undated schedule listing numbers recruited by farm labour organisations, 1 January 1944 - 31 December 1944; NTS 2233, 469/280(2), minutes of meeting between recruiting representatives and SNA, 3 January 1946.
57. NTS 2233, 469/280(3), Alport to SNA, 4 April 1946.
58. Interview with William Makana by Frans Swapa, Johannesburg, 24 November 1987. According to one estimate, there were some 14,000 recruited workers in Bethal by 1947.
59. NTS 2246, 564/280, T. Edward to SNA, 18 April 1947, NC Potgietersrus to DNL, 26 June 1947, NC Louis Trichardt to Chief NC, 23 December 1948, enclosing Rex vs. A. Scholtz; NTS 2278, 741/280/124, statement by W. Nkwayamala, 18 March 1952; NTS 2233, 469/280(2), Chairman Chipise Farmers' Association to NC Louis Trichardt, 24 June 1946.
60. NTS 2246, 564/280, F. Herbst to DNL, 28 May 1950; TA, TPD 344 of 1946, Rex vs. P. Murabe; **The Sunday Times**, 4 May 1947; Michael Scott, **A Time to Speak** (London, 1958), p.185.
61. NTS 2205, 338/280, Secretary of Boerearbeidsvereniging to M. Smuts, 29 September 1948, enclosing memorandum on recruiting ('a farmer grows his mealies and sells at market value'.) See also **Sunday Times**, 13 July 1947.
62. NTS 2235, 469/280(6), Notes of meeting between Liaison Committee and NAD, 18 February 1948.
63. NTS 2205, 338/280, Secretary of Boerearbeidsvereniging to M. Smuts, 29 September 1948, enclosing memorandum on recruiting ('some of irregularities').
64. NTS 2246, 564/280, NC Potgietersrus to DNL, 28 June 1947.
65. NTS 2246, 603/280, Minutes of meeting of Liaison Committee with SNA, 22 August 1947.
66. NTS 2229, 463/280(1), Meeting of Special Native Labour Committee with MNA, 5 February 1945; NTS 2229, 463/280(2), D. Smit's notes of interview with Prime Minister, 2 March 1945, and Piet van der Byl to Prime Minister, 9 October 1945.
67. John Lonsdale and Bruce Berman, 'Coping with the Contradictions: the Development of the Colonial State in Kenya, 1895-1914', **Journal of African History**, 20 (1979), p.490.
68. Doug Hindson, **Pass Controls and the Urban African Proletariat in South Africa** (Johannesburg, 1987), pp.56-7. This solution had also been urged by the 1937-9 Native Farm Labour Committee.
69. NTS 2234, 469/280(5), meeting between NAD, Liaison Committee, representatives of recruiters, rural mines and industries, 13 June 1947.
70. NTS 2235, 469/280(6), SNA to Director South African Federated Chamber of Industries, 5 January 1948.
71. NTS 2234, 469/280(5), memo from G. Mears to MNA, June 1947.
72. NTS 2235, 469/280(6), meeting between NAD and Liaison Committee, 10 February 1948.
73. NTS 2233, 469/280(3), deputation to MNA by members of Farm Labour Committee of SAAU, 12 April 1946.
74. NTS 2234, 469/280(4), DNL to SNA, 22 March 1947.
75. NTS 2234, 469/280(5), meeting between NAD and Liaison Committee, 13 June 1947.
76. Ibid., meetings between NAD and representatives of rural mines, 11 August 1947 and 20 August 1947.
77. Ibid., meeting of NAD, Liaison Committee, rural mines and industries, 9-10 February 1948; NTS 2247, 603/280(2), meeting about administration of Native Farm Labour Scheme, 20-21 May 1948. The cost per head refers to those supplied from the Rand.
78. NTS 2235, 469/280(6), Pass Officer, Johannesburg, to DNL, 13 January 1948.
79. NTS 2246, 603/280, Notes on meeting between NAD, Liaison Committee and representatives of rural mines and industries, 22 August 1947.
80. NTS 2235, 469/280(7), NC Louis Trichardt to SNA, 1 September 1948.
81. NTS 2096, 222/290(10), Northern Transvaal Co-operative Recruiting Company to MNA, 3 August 1948 ('concentration camp'); NTS 2234, 469/280(4), CNC Pietersburg to SNA, 23 May 1947; NTS 2235, 469/280(7), Public Service Inspection Report on NC Office, Louis Trichardt, 19 August 1948.
82. NTS 2281, 741/280(213), Inspector of Farm Labour (hereafter IFL) to SNA, 14 May 1947 and 18 October 1947; International Commission of Jurists, **South Africa and the Rule of Law** (Geneva, 1960), p. 189.
83. NTS 2247, 603/280(2), M. Smuts to SNA, 8 December 1947.
84. NTS 2233, 469/280(3), Farm Labour Scheme Conference, 2 October 1946.
85. NTS 2205, 338/280, P. du Toit to SNA, 14 June 1948; **Die Transvaler**, 14 April, 1943; Joel Carlson, **No Neutral Ground** (New York, 1973), pp.11-13 ('Uncle Piet').
86. Carlson, **No Neutral Ground**, p.13.
87. Ibid., pp.11-12.
88. NTS 2250, 646/280(1), NC Johannesburg to DNL, 13 May 1948. The 'ninepence a day prison scheme' was an adaptation of Pact's sixpence a day scheme.
89. NTS 2250, 646/280(1), SNA to DNL, 9 April 1948, DNL to SNA 18 May 1948.
90. Scott, **Time to Speak**, p.170.
91. UW, African Studies Institute (hereafter ASI), Oral History Project (hereafter OHP), interview with Daniel van Rooyen by E. Kgomo, Germiston, 5 July 1989 (thanks to Paul la Hausse for access to this interview.) When Lazarus died in 1946, his estate was worth half a million pounds, and contained some twenty farms and extensive shareholdings in gold mines.
92. NTS 2275, 741/280(60), IFL to SNA, 6 February 1947, SNA to DNL 13 August 1951 enclosing anonymous letter; NTS 2281, 741/280(210), undated report on 'Recruiting Irregularities in Bethal'; NTS 2281, 741/280(213), Nyasaland Government Representative to NC Witbank, 6 December 1949, enclosing anonymous letter; NTS 2274, 741/280(32), W. Woodington to 'Dear Sir', 18 July 1952; UW, ASI, OHP, interview with van Rooyen ('dead as a doornail'); Scott, **Time to Speak**, p.185.
93. Scott, **Time to Speak**, p.171.
94. Robert Miles, **Unfree Labour under Capitalism: an Anomalous Necessity?** (London, 1987), p.221. 'Boerende boere' ('farming farmers') was a term often used to distinguish small landlords from those linked to other forms of capital accumulation.
95. Scott, **Time to Speak**, p.169.
96. Ibid.; see also pp.116-17.
97. UW, ASI, OHP, interview with van Rooyen.
98. **Report of the Reconstruction Committee of the Department of Agriculture and Forestry**, (Pretoria, 1944-5), p.12. I have reserved the term capitalist for those who did consider money- making their vocation.
99. **Report of the Native Affairs Department for the Years 1949-50**, U.G.61-'51, p.ii. Accurate statistics for the numbers of foreign workers are unfortunately unobtainable.
100. NTS 1981, 19/279(4), illegible NAD official to SNA, 24 November 1949.
101. NTS 2132, 245/280(9), notes of meeting in NAD offices, 15 June 1953.
102. John Lonsdale and Bruce Berman, 'Coercion and the Colonial State: the Development of the Labour Control System in Kenya, 1919-1929', **Canadian Journal of African Studies**, 14, 1 (1980), p.58.
103. Yudelman, **Emergence of Modern South Africa**, p.103.