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BACKGROUND PAPER TO THE WORKSHOP :
ECONOMIC GROWTH AND ITS RELATIONSHIP
TO SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CHANGE

by

The Organisers

COMMUNICATIONS OF THE

INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH

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I. PREAMBLE

In most of the arguments which have been advanced about the relation between economic growth and socio-political change in South Africa, diagnosis and prognosis have become almost inextricably confused. There are two main positions. These will be outlined briefly.

The first, and more conventional view, is that the main socio-political problem in South Africa is racialism, seen as an attitude of whites towards blacks. The second viewpoint is that the problem is exploitation by rich (white) of poor (black). It might be argued that perhaps we could debate this topic and yet avoid the question of which is the more important problem, by asking instead two independent questions: (1) What is the likely effect of continued economic growth on racial attitudes?; (2) What is the likely effect of continued economic growth on the distribution of wealth in South Africa? Unfortunately this way of attempting to find possible common ground for analysis may not work. Racialism is necessarily only one of a complex of motives and attitudes, and we can only agree on the possible effects on racialism of economic change if we agree on the relation between racialism and these other motives and attitudes, and in particular the overt or latent motives of exploitation. Similarly, we can only agree on the likely effect of economic growth on the distribution of wealth if we agree in our account of the mechanisms which at present determine the way in which wealth is distributed, and this presupposes some agreement on the role of power and ideology in the whole process.

However, if we attempt first to resolve the question as to the nature of the problem we are faced with similar serious difficulties. How we judge this society depends on our model of an alternative society, and this in turn depends both on value judgements and on judgements about what other forms of society are possible. The argument about racialism and exploitation is usually associated with alternative models which may respectively be described as "liberal capitalist" and "socialist". The argument about socialism turns to a very large extent on the question as to whether a democratic socialist society is possible, rather

than whether it is desirable. A debate on this vital topic would lead us very far afield.

However, if these difficulties are borne in mind, it may still be possible to find ways of reaching agreement. Currently, the main problem is that the argument is conducted at a fairly high level of generality. It may be possible to leave these wider questions open and at the same time achieve some agreement by attempting to move from very general questions to a series of more specific questions about past and present-day South African society. We shall attempt to do this in this introductory paper, but it will be helpful to begin with a brief exposition of the two main standpoints which can be discerned in the burgeoning literature on the topic.

II. THE TWO MAJOR VIEWPOINTS

2-1 The Conventional Viewpoint

The main problem in South Africa according to this view, is white racialism and race discrimination. This racialism is seen as strictly irrational. The South African economy is a market economy, the natural tendency of which is towards the optimal (rational) utilisation of resources. There is thus a contradiction between rationality of the market and the irrationality of racialism, in both its personal form of prejudice and its institutional form of apartheid. As Horwitz (1967) puts it, there is a conflict between economic rationality and the political factor. However, in this conflict the logic of market rationality is likely to prevail. A rational market economy results in the development of a rational and secular outlook, in which legal contractual relations replace traditional status relations. Status is no longer ascribed but is achieved by performance within the market. In South Africa this development will be brought about by three main factors

(a) In a competitive market, capitalists have to utilise

the available resourses in the most rational way possible. They therefore develop techniques of rational analysis to deal with those resources. As labour is a key resource they will also apply these techniques to labour, and so will come to recognise the fallacy of arguments about racial inferiority, and will be motivated to train and develop the black labour force.

(b) Under these circumstances white workers more and more frequently will come into equal status contact with black workers of competence equal to their own, and so the empirical basis for racial prejudice will be undermined.

(c) To the extent which the political factor of apartheid delays this process, it will at the same time, by interfering with the logic of the market, slow down economic growth and threaten the white standard of living. Faced with the choice between prejudice and prosperity, the already partly secularised whites will opt for prosperity.

This process is envisaged by various writers as happening, or likely to occur, more or less rapidly and more or less peacefully. O'Dowd, using the general theory of the stages of growth, has attempted to date the probable stages of development. His argument is more complicated than the model sketched here, because he also grants a role to black actors and so to revolutionary unrest. However, most of those who adopt this position stress mainly the role of the whites.

2-2 The Revisionist Thesis

The main problem in South Africa is seen as the economic exploitation by the white colonists of the black population. Racialism

may be irrational per se, but in South Africa it is "rational" insofar as it functions as an ideology which legitimised the rational exploitation of blacks. The South African economy is not a "market economy" in which goods are allocated by the forces of supply and demand. It is a "labour repressive" economy (see Trapido, 1971) in which the rapid accumulation of capital and the high standard of living of the white working class is made possible by the political machinery of repression which assures the continued subservience of the black workers. The tendency in such a labour repressive society is for an increasing concentration of power. The fruits of economic growth will be concentrated in the hands of those who control their economy, thus both increasing their relative domination of the economy, and at the same time providing the wherewithal for strengthening the machinery of political and military repression. Sophisticated weaponry and surveillance systems can be acquired to compensate for deficiencies in manpower. White prosperity and white supremacy mutually reinforce one another. (Johnstone 1970). If capitalism has any rationalising tendency it is towards the rationalisation of domination, rather than towards the removal of race prejudice. Blumer (1965) argues that in any event it is rational for the capitalists to take account of the prejudices of their influential white employees at the expense of their relatively powerless black workers. Johnstone argues that the principles of apartheid are in fact bent whenever they threaten economic growth. Adam (1971, p.181-2) argues that rationalisation produces an increasingly competent technocratic oligarchy, which is even capable of deracialising the society if that would be in the interests of maintaining supremacy. Like the Conventional viewpoint the Revisionist thesis also stresses the role of whites, but whereas in the first case they are seen as more or less inevitable agents of change, in this second argument, they are seen as more or less irremovable obstacles to change.

III. BASIC ISSUES

Perhaps the most crucial difference in the two viewpoints

outlined above turne on the distinction between a market economy and a labour repressive economy. According to Barrington-Moore (1966, p.434) the distinction is between "the use of political mechanisms (using the term political broadly ...) on the one hand and reliance on the labour market on the other hand". That is, it is the distinction between an economy in which workers come voluntarily onto the labour market and enter into an equitable contract with employers, and an economy in which workers are constrained by some or other political mechanism to work for their employers, and so are not in a relation of contractual equality with them.

Now this distinction is in some ways highly suggestive, but it also obscures an important fact by implying that it is possible to have a market system which operates quite independently of political factors. Yet the market is always embedded in a political matrix which defines the rules governing the use of property within that market. Property is a politico-legal category. Who may control property, and how it may be used is a function of the power of various individuals and groups, and of the way in which that power is institutionalised in convention and law. The very existence of a labour market assumes the presence of people who have no direct access to the means of production, and who therefore have to sell their labour in order to survive. This condition does not arise of its own accord, and nor is it a fundamental inevitability.

It has usually required the use of power by some group to acquire sole rights in the means of production, and this use of power becomes institutionalised in a politico-legal framework which defines the rights of the various groups, and so provides the parameters in which the market forces of supply and demand operate. These parameters may be altered by, for example, the extension or limitation of the workers' rights to organise, but also by less obvious factors, such as the way in which a dominant group might use its power over key resources to further strengthen its position within the market.

It would be otiose to document the above position exhaustively.

In all non-colonial societies the capitalist economic system has grown out of a previous system in which nearly all individuals had some form of direct access to the means of production, whether as serfs, as yeomen with certain rights to the use of commonage, or as tenant-farmers with traditional rights. However limited these traditional rights, they had to be destroyed by actions which were, in the broad sense, political, and a new legal system had to replace the old.

Thus to imply that there are two distinct types of economy is slightly misleading. Instead there is probably some kind of continuum, which possibly also represents an historical trajectory (although almost certainly not a "smooth" trajectory). This continuum does not represent the move from a purely "politically" created labour supply to a purely market-induced labour supply. Rather it represents changing forms of the political parameters. This could represent a process of institutionalisation in which direct coercion or violence is gradually replaced by socialisation, manipulation of needs, and other more indirect forms of control. Or it could represent a process in which the actual relations are changed by the use of power on the part of those who do not initially have control over the means of production in order, by reform or revolution, to change the politico-legal parameters in their favour. At one end of the continuum lies some form of slave society. At the other end lies a socialist society. in which the labour market has been entirely replaced by some system in which labour is no longer a priced commodity. Whether or not that point can be reached is a matter of debate into which we need not enter here. But short of that point there is necessarily some system which maintains the necessity for some people to sell their labour to other people who do not have to sell their labour.

Given that it may not be helpful to ask whether a particular society has a market economy or a labour repressive economy, we should ask instead possibly, how the worker group was initially created as a labour force, how and to what extent the power relationships embodied in that process were institutionalised, and to what extent the working class has managed to bring about changes in those power relationships

and their institutionalised expression in the politico-legal system. We can then understand the nature of the politico-legal parameters within which the market laws of supply and demand currently operate. The study of the historical development of these parameters will also shed light on the motivations and interests of the various social groups.

IV. QUESTIONS REGARDING THE HISTORICAL EMERGENCE OF THE LABOUR FORCE AND SUBSEQUENT DEVELOPMENT

In the light of the preceding analysis, it would seem that we have to ask the following questions :

(a) Until about 1860 South. Africa, with the exception of some coastal areas in the western and eastern Cape, was predominantly a society of subsistence agriculturalists. There was a limited amount of wage labour but nearly everybody had some form of direct access to the means of production. How, then, was a labour supply, and hence a labour market created?

(b) In whose interest was this labour supply created, and what structural relations between classes resulted from this particular mode of coming into being of a supply of wage-labourers? How and to what extent were these relations institutionalised?

(c) How has economic growth affected the structural relations between these groups? What new groups has it brought into being? How has it affected the sources of power of each of these groups? How has it affected the attitudes and the real and experienced interests of members of each of these groups? What structural tensions have thereby been introduced into the system, and to what extent and how have these structural

tensions been resolved?

If we approach the problem in this way we shall be able to grasp the present as part of a dynamic process and thereby to some extent at least short-circuit some of the mutually contradictory assumptions contained in the two standpoints outlined above. Here we shall obviously not try to answer these questions ourselves. We shall attempt to formulate some of the further questions which arise by examining some of the major themes concealed in each of the above questions.

4-1 The Creation of a Labour Supply

The original conquest played a major role here. It severely limited the amount of land available to Africans. Many Africans became designated as "squatters" on white-owned land, and so were available either as agricultural labour, or, later, could be expelled entirely from the land, either by legislation to satisfy the growing need for urban workers, or else immediately by the landowners when the growing market for agricultural produce made it more profitable to farm more intensively. Although African workers were available in some areas of the country,for wage-labour from the 1860's it may well be that at this stage, land shortage was still not a major factor. The availability in the cash economy of new products, such as guns, was probably also an important consideration. As population growth and lack of capitalism led to a declining per capita product in the African agricultural areas there was probably a threshold point at which the target motivation was replaced by the survival motivation. For example, when the mine-owners drastically reduced wage levels at the end of the Anglo-Boer War, there was a virtual strike by African miners, and the supply of workers dried up. This "strike" lasted for several years, and was only really broken by the large-scale importation of Chinese workers. At what point did African workers lose the alternative of withdrawing their labour in this way? Almost certainly such a threshold point would be reached at different times in different areas. Much light would be thrown on the

whole question by a comparative study of the factors underlying migration from different areas in South Africa, from places like Malawi and Tanganyika which were less affected by white possession of the land, and also from Mozambique, where the colonially-imposed "obligation to work" was perhaps the most directly coercive factor found anywhere.

Associated with the fact of dispossession were the positive and negative steps taken to prevent the growth of efficient cash-crop farming in the African areas. There is evidence that, in some areas at least, African peasant farmers reacted as efficiently as white farmers to the growth of markets for agricultural produce. (cf Bundy, 1972, and also Arrighi, 1970, for similarities in Rhodesia). The main motive behind the 1913 Land Act was to increase the labour supply but a secondary motive may well have been to protect white farmers against competition. In the ensuing period the "underdevelopment" of African agriculture was brought about, whether intentionally or unintentionally, by the massive assistance to white agriculture and the virtual total neglect of black agriculture. This assistance took the form of direct loans, the strategic place of transport routes, and transport subsidies. State intervention thereby provided the necessary capital for the development of white agriculture, and at the same time rendered African agriculture non-competitive.

There were thus two groups which stood to gain from an attack on African agriculture: mine-owners and other industrialists who wanted a labour supply; and white farmers who did not want competition. But at one stage there were at least two other white groups with different interests: white landlords who let their lands on a share-cropping basis to African peasants; and white miners who were in favour of a whites-only employment policy on the mines and in industry. The outcome of the conflict between these white groups was determined by political conflict for state power. How was this political conflict carried out? What was the precise relation between the political par parties and these interest groups?

It can be argued that an African labour force would have

emerged anyway, without any attack on African farming. This is obviously true, but the movement to the urban places of work would have been slower, much more restricted and creating "market forces" which would have favoured higher wages for Africans. The presence of alternative forms of livelihood would have given African workers greater independence and bargaining power from the outset.

Once a large labour supply was made available the way was open for a new kind of social conflict in which the African working class would try to bend the parameters governing the operation of this labour market in their favour, and other interest groups would attempt the contrary. In order that "market forces" would continue to operate to produce low wages, it was necessary to prevent African workers from organising. How, and by what agencies, was this done? How was this related to political struggles between black and white for control of the state?

The above questions indicate that in analysing the present situation we need to ask (a) to what extent does and will supply of labour continue to exceed demand on the labour market? And hence, (b) what are the factors which continue to push African workers into the labour market in large numbers? How is this connected, on the one hand with the continued underdevelopment of the rural homeland and independent areas on the periphery of the white-controlled industrial sector, and on the other hand, with changing patterns of consumer demand amongst Africans? Finally, (c) how do the legal mechanisms designed to atomise African workers operate at present? Given changing socio-economic conditions, how well are they likely to suceed?

4-2 In Whose Interest?

We have already suggested that there were tensions between various groups within the politically dominant white group. We need to ask to what extent and in what way these interests were reconciled in the process of creation and control of an African labour supply.

Can we distinguish between four groups: white mining capitalists, white farmers, white workers and white "kaffir-farming" landlords? Or were there other significant white interest groups at the turn of the century? What was the significance and what were the interests of the commercial sector? There is always a tension within a capitalist economy between the need for high income consumers and the need for low-income (i.e. low cost) workers. To whom were Africans important as a market?

There wes conflict between mining capitalists and white workers over the employment of black workers. How and to what extent were these interests reconciled? What is the significance of the particular way in which the enormous wealth created by the black mine workers was distributed between mining capitalists, white mine workers, and white farmers through direct and indirect subsidies? How has this affected the possible continued dependence of these groups on a low wage structure?

To what extent were the interests of the African workers themselves taken into consideration in this process? That is, to what extent did they voluntarily enter the market, and to what extent were their needs satisfied? How has the standard of living of African workers changed?

V HOW HAS ECONOMIC GROWTH. AFFECTED THE POSITION?

Broadly speaking, economic growth may bring about four kinds of change :

(1) Change in the number and kind of interest groups represented.

(2) Change in the power potential of these groups, through changes in their size, social role, and access to resources.

(3) Changes in the actual interests of these groups.

(4) Changes in the tastes and attitudes of the members of the various groups.

Such changes result (a) from the changing structure of the economy, which, in the South African case, has seen a shift from a predominantly subsistence agricultural economy, to an economy based on mining and market agriculture, and latterly in the direction of an economy based primarily on secondary and even tertiary industry: these changes have meant both modifications in the structure of capital, and an enormous increase in the size of the proletariat. Changes have also resulted (b) from the changing social situation of people, due both to mobility within a social structure and to general changes in life-style concomitant on an increasing standard of living. This second kind of change is obviously far less easy to measure. There is still, for example, heated debate about whether or not workers in the most developed countries have become embourgeoised. It is both difficult to establish a bench-mark and also to lay down criteria of significance in trying to decide whether and what changes of this kind have taken place.

Once more speaking broadly, and ignoring the distinction between town and country, we can distinguish roughly between five different "classes" (using the term "class" in its traditional sense to mean a number of people all having the same relationship to the means of production).

(1) Capitalists who have large investments, whether in agriculture or industry.

(2) Self-employed whites, whether they are working farmers or owners of small businesses, between which, two groups there is probably a considerable amount of mobility.

(3) Employed whites, which is a very wide category, covering both blue- and white-collar workers, but whom we shall nevertheless describe as "white working class".

(4) Black workers predominantly dependent on wage-labour.

(5) Those African rural-dwellers who are still predominantly dependent for their income on their own farming activities.

The above classification is obviously imprecise in definition and entirely leaves out some groups, such as the black "middle-class". We consider it legitimate to distinguish between a white working class and a black working class because white and black workers have different kinds of access to and control over the means of production. However, in the following discussion we shall attempt to delineate more accurately the patterns within these classes.

5-1 Capitalists

Early capital investment in South Africa was overwhelmingly in mining. The mining industry had two significant characteristics. Firstly, it was export-oriented, and so had no interest in the development of an internal market. Secondly, it required a very large amount of cheap labour and relatively unskilled labour. It had a motive, therefore, for keeping wages down, and, when more sophisticated techniques might have made wage increases possible, it had no positive motive for wanting wage increases. Control of labour was greatly facilitated by the early emergence on the gold mines of a recruiting monopoly and a collective agreement not to pay above a certain maximum wage. This prevented the competitive determination of African wage rates through a free interplay of supply and demand.

In analysing the changing capital structure in South Africa and in particular the growing predominance of industrial manufacturing capital, we need to investigate, firstly, its labour needs, and secondly its market needs.

There may well be a clash of interests between mining capital, agricultural capital, manufacturing capital, and service industry capital, insofar as each of these industrial sectors have different cost structures and different market needs would it be possible to trace out this conflict of interest on the political level?

It has been argued that hitherto the South. African economy has had a capital problem, rather than a market problem, and for this reason wages have been kept down in order to maximise rates of profit and rates of accumulation. It may well be that with the changing structure of the economy certain sectors at least require a rapid extension of the market if they are to continue to prosper. If so, to what extent will such sectors be able to bypass the problem by finding export markets? To what extent will the representatives of such sectors be willing to act as pressure groups to favour measures which will tend to increase the wages of Africans? A particularly important sector to investigate here is agriculture, which is the most dependent of all on the internal market. Up till recently agriculture in South Africa has been labour-intensive, and hence has had an interest in a low wage structure. However, according to Wilson, at least in some branches, there is a move towards greater mechanisation and the employment of casual labour in season, rather than perennial labour. Under these circumstances it may well be that farmers will become more sensitive to the need for an increased internal market.

It would also be important to discover the extent to which capital in these various sectors is in fact intertwined. Some of the mining companies have very large investments in industry, and perhaps also in plantation agriculture. Huletts, originally purely agricultural, has recently diversified, and has, inter alia, acquired a controlling interest in Alcan South Africa. The Anglo-American Corporation has acquired interests in the Wattle Forestry Industry. Thus it is important to discover the extent to which capital is concentrated in South Africa, and the extent to which this concentration is horizontal (conglomerate) rather than vertical.

Finally, it is still not clear precisely what role foreign investment plays in the South African economy. At present "foreign investment" provides about 13% of South Africa's gross capital formation annually, and most of this is in fact made up of reinvested profits, rather than of "new" money (See United Kingdom Parliamentary Report, 1974). It is important to know what sectors of the economy this investment goes to. It may well be that this investment is concentrated in areas of capital-intensive development, and is associated with the importation of new techniques, In this case the main significance of foreign investment may well lie not so much in its total amount as in the extent to which it pushes the whole economy in a capital-intensive direction which is unfavourable to labour. The introduction of new techniques and skills (including skilled workers) may be more significant than the actual cash-flow.

So far we have assumed that capitalists are rational maximisers of returns, and that their political behaviour will reflect this. However, capitalists are also activated by other motives. The "soulful corporation" may be to a considerable extent a public relations gimmick, but it is still different in its behaviour to the "robber baron" entrepreneur. To what extent are capitalists and managers in South Africa likely to become more liberal in their personal attitudes, and more likely to voluntarily consider workers' interests? Here it is worth noting Adam's finding of a positive correlation between overseas travel and liberal attitudes among South African entrepreneurs (Adam 1971 b). This may only prove that more liberal entrepreneurs are more likely to travel in the permissive outside world, but it does indicate that it would be useful to investigate the factors which might change attitudes amongst this class.

It is also important to attempt to discover questions such as whether capitalists of different kinds perceive their interests in a short-term or longer-term perspective, how effective they might be in political action, what channels of influence they command, etc? Are there any other processes which may be factors in change?

5-2 The White Working Class

This class can be further subdivided in at least two interesting ways: between blue-collar and white-collar workers; and between state and private sector employees. There has apparently been a certain shift of whites from blue-collar to white-collar occupations. Firstly, to what extent has this occurred, and to what extent will it continue to occur? Secondly, do blue-collar workers have interests which are in any way different from white-collar workers? It is probably that high wages for white white-collar workers are dependent on low black wages in the same way as are high wages for white blue-collar workers, so in this sense they may have a shared interest in the exploitation of blacks. But there may be other differences. White-collar workers have different job prospects, see their chances of improvement in individual rather than objective terms, traditionally identify to a much greater extent with management, and have a different attitude towards unionisation. Under these circumstances they may well be much less resistant to the movement of blacks into similar jobs. At the minimum, being weakly organised, they are not so well placed to fight such a development. Thus it may well be that particularly Indian and Coloured workers will be able to move more rapidly into traditionally white clerical jobs than into traditionally white skilled-manual jobs. If at the same time there is a certain drift of whites into these jobs (as the proportion of such jobs increased in a maturing economy) this might tend to accentuate any concomitant attitude change. To what extent will equal-status contacts between black and white in such jobs affect white racial and political attitudes? Also, to what extent will changing life-styles resulting from increasing living standards and changing job patterns affect racial and political attitudes?

A very large number of whites are employed by the state. These workers may have different interests and be subject to different pressures than those employed in private enterprise. Also, to what extent can the growing state-apparatus continue to be run by these whites? Relations between black and white are likely to be different

from the normal pattern in those departments which deal with the various black groups. Is this likely to have any significance?

5-3 The White "Middle Class"

What is the political role of members of this group? Do they have any particular political interests different from other whites? Is there any tendency towards a concentration of capital which might squeeze out small shopkeepers, small farmers, and other small businessmen? If so, is this likely to have any significance? Do members of this group in general display markedly different behaviour patterns from executives and other white-collar workers in similar income brackets? It may well be that farmers, small businessmen and professionals play a disproportionately large role in party politics, and if this is the case, the attitudes of this group might be very important.

So far in discussing the various white classes we have ignored the English-Afrikaans cultural cleavage. To a certain extent at least the question of the nature and significance of Afrikaner cultural identity cuts across any class analysis. But it may well be that social mobility and changing living standards will affect both the cohesiveness of the Afrikaner group and the content of Afrikaner culture. This could have consequences for the motives of this group as well as for their attitudes both to blacks and to English-speaking whites. But if there is a change, is it more likely to be towards pragmatic dominance or towards separationist verligtheid? What is the significance of the growth of Afrikaner capitalism? What is the significance of the increasing equal-status contact between top Afrikaner officials and black leaders concomitant on the policy of separate development?

5-4 Black Workers

(a) To what extent are black workers dissatisfied with their

position? Trapido (1971) has argued that South Africa is the only mature economy which has not been able to provide improved social and material conditions for its workers. This has been disputed by Bell and Bromberger, who argue that the per capita income in real terms of African wages in manufacturing industry has been three-fold in this century. (See also Lipton (1974), on agricultural incomes). In any event, how important is this for an understanding of the dynamics of the situation? Is it perhaps not more important to determine to what extent the level of relative deprivation has altered? It is sometimes argued that the reference group against whom African workers measure their relative deprivation is the tribal peasantry, who probably live at a lower level of subsistence thantdo the urban workers. In this case they would not experience relative deprivation. This is probably not ture. (See for example, Schlemmer 1974, Mare 1974, Du Rand 1970). But it is still important to get an idea of the major reference group for African workers. Do they compare their situation with other Africans, or with whites? If, as seems likely, there is a continuing increase of Africans in higher paid skilled and white-collar jobs, will this increase the relative deprivation of the mass of Africans? To answers these questions we need to know more about how the expectations of the African proletariat are formed and change.

(b) To what extent does the increase in the absolute size of the black proletariat, the increase of their relative importance in the economy, and the changing role of black workers as they become semi-skilled and even skilled, change their potential organisational power and bargaining position? In particular, is unemployment likely to increase or decrease, and what is the relative significance for bargaining of the possession of skills, on the one hand, and the existence of a large reserve army of labour, on the other hand?

The question of unemployment is obviously related to the question of agricultural and other development in the peripheral areas - the homelands and the other Southern African states. Are any of these states likely to develop in such a way as to lessen their dependence on

migrancy? In particular, what would be the significance of nationalist or radical governments in the Portuguese territories for the large numbers of migrants from those territories? This question has to be asked both on the political level and on the economic level. An African government in Mocambique might in any event take the political decision to end migrancy, and it might also initiate a programme of development which would render migrancy unnecessary.

(c) To what extent is the black proletariat likely to become stratified, and what would the organisational and political significance of this be? Coloured and Indian workers might already be construed as constituting an "aristocracy of labour". Might a policy of the rate for the job not lead to the growth of a black labour aristocracy with interests opposed to those of the mass of unskilled and semi-skilled workers? Related to the question of stratification within the black working class is the question of the possible growth of black entrepreneurial, bureaucratic and professional classes, as a result of economic growth within the context of separate development. If this happens, what will its significance be?

What, if any, is the significance of ethnic differences within the black proletariat? Are Coloured workers in the Cape, where there is a very small African sub-proletariat, less of a "labour aristocracy" than are Indian workers in Natal? If so, are they more likely to make common cause with African workers in the same structural position as themselves elsewhere in the country? Could an analysis of the behaviour of unionised Coloured and Indian workers help to answer these questions? What is the relation between unionised and non-unionised Indian and Coloured workers? Is there a possibility of immediately building unions including both African workers and those as yet ununionised Coloured and Indian workers?

The African Peasantry

To what extent is there an African peasantry? Would it be

either possible or desirable to initiate a policy in the homelands designed to consolidate uneconomic holdings in such a way as to create a "master farmer" class (and thereby also to increase the number of those who are totally dependent on wage-labour)? If there is an African peasantry, is it a declining force or could it be strengthened by such measures? Is there any tendency towards class-formation in the rural areas? How are the various homeland governments aligned as between the peasantry, the working class, and any incipient rural or urban middle class? To what extent are the traditional-modern (Red-School) cleavages persisting under the continuing impact of the underdevelopment of the African rural areas? Is there, within the possible peasantry, any division into market-oriented "modernists" and subsistence-oriented "traditionalists"?

VI THE NATURE OF CHANGE

We pointed out earlier that proponents of both the conventional and the revisionist position seem to place most emphasis on the role of the whites as political actors. To a certain extent this may represent a realistic assessment of the present balance of forces. However, it cannot be left unargued in an attempt to make predictions. What is needed is a much more thorough analysis of the mechanisms of control other than the obvious instruments of physical coercion. This includes an analysis of divisions within the black group, as well as of other factors such as socialisation and the development of a sense of impotence and cultural inferiority. In the light of such an analysis it should be possible to give a more thorough account of the extent to which socio-economic change will increase or decrease the likelihood of political change being brought about by black action. This seems to us to be one of the most neglectea research areas in the current debate. (For some preliminary findings, see Schlemmer (1974), Douwes Dekker (1971) (1974) et al).

We have now attempted to specify a number of questions which we think are relevant to an understanding of the relation between economic and political change, Most of these questions can be settled empirically, and can thereby at least clarify if not finally resolve the conventional vs. revisionist argument. The reason that these answers may not be able to resolve it completely is that while it may be possible to get some agreement on what kind of change is likely to take place, disagreement could exist on whether or not such change is significant or not. For example, it might be possible to agree that there will be a raising of the job colour-bar so as to enable blacks to move up the social pyramid. But one side might argue that this will improve the status and standard of living of some blacks, and therefore is a significant change. The other side might reply to the effect that wherever the demarcation line is drawn, the pyramid would still have a black base and a white apex, and the gap between incomes will still remain. The whites will be increasing their standard of living even faster than will the blacks and therefore, this change is not significant.

To a certain extent this problem can be circumvented by distinguishing between changes which are likely to lead to other changes, and changes which are not. For example, while disagreeing on the significance, in the first sense, of a black move up the job-pyramid, we may be able to agree on the further question as to whether or not such a change is likely to increase the potential organisational and bargaining power of blacks.

Here we can distinguish between possible changes of three types :

(1) Change towards a more stable but nevertheless highly unequal society, in which blacks and whites continue to occupy roughly the same class possitions as they do today, with perhaps somewhat greater overlap, but in which there is a sufficiently continuous improvement of material tions for blacks to p event

their sense of relative deprivation from rising to a threatening level. Such a model might or might not be seen as including greater political participation for blacks. A question implicit in this type of change is whether or not the society outlined will be likely to generate an impetus for gradual reform towards increasing democraticisation. How far could such change go?

(2) Change towards a materially more prosperous society, but one in which class tensions increase in spite of improved standards of living, and in which the increasing preponderance of black workers within the economy puts them in a position to force a radical restructuring of the society, probably in a socialist direction, but, depending on the nature of black leadership, possibly in a black nationalist - capitalist direction.

(3) A situation in which there is, owing to white intransigence, relatively slow overall growth, little or no improvement or even a decline in the standard of living of the blacks, leading to rapidly increasing social tension, and, perhaps with outside aid, a rapid restructuring of the society, either in the direction of socialism or of black capitalism.

In considering the alternative models of a changed South African society, we have also to consider whether or not contradictions exist in the basic assumptions of the proponents of both the conventional and revisionist viewpoints. When Johnstone, for example, defends his position by arguing that Apartheid is "bent" to allow growth and continued white supremacy, does he or does he not overlook the possibility that an extensive series of pragmatic concessions may finally amount to a mutation in the society of a substantive qualitative nature? The

same point applies to Adam's conjecture about the possibility of "de-racialising" the system. Cannot pragmatic racial domination reach a point where the consequences of pragmatism obviate the need for domination by whites? The major question here is whether or not such processes point to the ultimate dominance of an elite which is not necessarily racially defined [but which will be mainly white)?

As social scientists we may be albe to reach some consensus on which of these scenarios is the most likely. As political actors we also have to choose which one we prefer – which one we regard as significantly different to the present order – and to work out stragegies which might improve the possibility of its coming about.

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