

THE GREAT DEBATE:
HISTORY AND UNDERDEVELOPMENT.

THE EXPANSION OF EUROPE AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF THIRD WORLD AGRICULTURE: TWO COLONIAL MODELS

I. A. Introduction

The European expansion overseas manifested itself, among other ways, in a demand for agricultural products. These might be either commodities that could be produced in Europe, but which were cheap enough overseas to justify the transport costs, or products uniquely from the tropics and sub-tropics. In both cases they were not only consumables, such as wheat, coffee or sugar but also industrial raw materials such as wool, cotton or rubber. Demand for them was not the only reason for colonisation, of course, and in many colonies the drive toward producing cash crops for the world market was weak. Even European colonists might on occasion grow nothing but subsistence crops, albeit with less effort than at home. For these reasons, almost everywhere in the non-European world, European expansion had a notable impact on indigenous agrarian structures.

From the point of view of the Europeans, two major models were followed, each with numerous subvariants. These were:

- a. the creation of an entirely new form of agrarian enterprise, guided by the principles of cost analysis and helped by large doses of European capital.
- b. the manipulation or management of overseas peasantries to ensure the production of cashcrops and/or the delivery of tribute or revenues of a fiscal nature.

Each of these models was available and was employed from the beginning of the European expansion. Before 1750 - with the exception of Spanish America - European conquests were mainly executed in order to expand capitalist agriculture. The Spanish attempts at managing the Amerindian peasantry in Latin America was not followed up. It was only from the late 18th century that our second model start-

ed to play a part in the process of European conquest overseas. India showed Europeans that it was possible to derive an income from densely populated areas overseas with which they had previously only developed trade relations. In the course of the nineteenth century, the French, Dutch, German and Portuguese followed suit. In general, however, both before and after 1800, the expansion of capitalist agriculture always took precedence since this allowed an outlet for investment which was often difficult to realise within Europe, where the existing division of land and the restraint in creating an agricultural proletariat limited the possibilities for profitable capitalist investment.

Similar structural impediments to the imposition of capitalist agriculture could also be found in many other parts of the world, however. On the whole, the establishment of capitalist agricultural enterprise by Europeans outside Europe could only be achieved in those areas of the non-European world where the indigenous population existed at a low level of density, or could be reduced in numbers by war, disease and genocide. This was achieved in the Caribbean, the American continent (with the exception of the highland areas of greater Peru, Central America and Mexico), Australasia and the southwest tip of South Africa. Elsewhere it was only in a few islands of low population density (natural or artificial) that European capitalist agriculture was possible. When it was tried in areas of high density, it almost invariably failed, unless the power of the state was sufficient to back it successfully. In general, only the "empty" overseas world allowed the unlimited expansion of new agricultural business with an optimum combination of land, imported labour and capital.

The second method, the management of non-European agrarian systems, was always considered as "second best", at least when it required more intervention than the simple use of price mechanisms. Only with the growth of the power of the colonial state did it become practicable to administer Asia and Africa. European investors, however, have always remained true to the investment principles of the early days of expansion in that European capital was only transferred into agricultural activities in the "empty"

areas. During the second phase of European expansion international capital was interested in the development of harbours, railways and other means of communication, as well as in mining; it never invested in non-European agriculture itself. If international capital was interested in investing in agricultural development of the colonies conquered after 1750 it wanted to create the situation of a sort of *tabula rasa* as it had done in the settlement and plantation colonies conquered before 1750. European investments in capitalist agriculture could hardly be interested in the newly conquered areas of Africa and Asia; they could almost have done without the results of Modern Imperialism. The (ex-)colonies of white settlement in the Americas as well as in Australia, New Zealand and South Africa remained the only regions in the overseas world where land, capital and labour could be combined into an optimum combination.

The distinction between the areas where the Europeans were able to create a *tabula rasa* and those where they could only achieve their objectives by the management of overseas peasantries is the key analytical tool of this contribution, which allows many of the particular agrarian histories of the various continents to be understood. Some examples of its application will be presented in part II of this paper. First, however, the two major types need to be more closely analysed.

I. B. The Frontier and Labour Migration in the Development of Capitalist Agriculture Overseas

Capitalist agriculture is here defined as agricultural business where the input of land, labour, capital and management is strictly governed, whether consciously or unconsciously, by economic considerations such as the outcome of a cost-benefit analysis. In this sense many agricultural pursuits in the New World as well as in South Africa were capitalistic. Because of this principle, agriculture in the Caribbean or in Malaya, for instance, was mainly organised as plantations worked with imported, strictly controlled labour, whether slave or indentured, while in New England, French Canada and South Africa the family farm was the most prevalent unit of production. In

our explanation the large West Indian plantation and the small Massachusetts family farm are two extremes on the same continuum of capitalist agriculture. The expansion of capitalist agriculture overseas was (and is) closely linked with labour migration and an ever changing frontier between the colonised and the non-colonised world. Both movements are a result of the drive to bring land, labour, capital and management together in an optimum mix.

Two points of qualification need to be made. First, even though capitalist agriculture overseas was impossible without a frontier of settlement, the reverse was not the case. The frontier could be part of both the capitalist and non-capitalist sector. In both South Africa and South America the frontier between the colonizers and the indigenous world changed because non-capitalist farmers of European descent needed more land for themselves and their children. Nevertheless, the fact that many of the subsistence needs of European farmers overseas were met by their own produce does not necessarily demonstrate their non-capitalist character. Given the generally high transport costs of the pre-industrial world, this might be a perfectly rational decision.

Secondly, the motivation of individual migrants need not necessarily have been based on capitalist calculation. In pre-Plassey India large groups of migrant workers moved over considerable distances in search of sheer non-capitalist subsistence. Jews in sixteenth century Portugal, Puritans in seventeenth century England and starved Irishmen in the 1840s could not allow themselves the luxury of a rational economic choice. Still, at least in the last case, one could argue that the U.S. would have resorted to stricter immigration control if the influx of the forty-eighters had endangered the profit maximizing mix of land, labour and capital.

In general, however, labour migration as well as overseas agriculture, in which the input of land, labour and capital is never fixed, but changing continuously, circumstances require. Most of the emigrants, who left Europe, had made the decision to work elsewhere on the basis of a cost-benefit analysis. This same is true for the

new employers: the hiring of additional immigrant labour was a decision made on the principle of marginal profitability. The internal colonial labour migration to the frontier was governed by the opportunity costs of labour performed in the established parts of the colony.

The question should be asked why in the development of capitalist agriculture there existed such an exclusive preference for migratory labour above the employment of locally available workers. As far as the staffing of plantations was concerned, this preference for migratory labour could be explained as a quest for cheap labour. Migrant labourers did not need remuneration for their reproduction costs. Both indentured immigrants and slaves provided the planter with reliable labour of uniform quality; the employer did not have to contract or buy workers that were too young, too old or too weak. Only after the stoppage of the slave trade did the planters resort to a proto-capitalist policy for their slaves. During the subsequent period of indentured immigration the British government had forced the planters to import a certain number of female indentureds from British India.

In addition, contracted migrants and slaves had several other advantages over the members of a local peasantry:

1. both male and female slaves and contracted labourers could be compelled to work, which made it possible to pay "single" wages (or hand out lower rations);
2. local peasants had an economic alternative: the cultivation of their own plots. This meant that the planter would only acquire local labour if he paid more than the local peasant would earn from his labour at home. To go out and work on a plantation was an even more difficult decision to make for those local peasants who had previously been slaves. For them the awards of plantation work had to be substantially higher than their own earnings from subsistence farming;
3. slaves and indentured labourers were always available to be employed at any moment for all kinds of jobs, while local peasants had obligations at home which prohibited them from working regularly on the plantation in particular during the crucial harvest time.

In conclusion, it should be stressed that large scale ca-

pitalist plantations turned to immigrant labour, be it indentured or enslaved, because this was cheaper than employing local labour from the non-capitalist sector. Only in relatively empty areas was it possible to control the plantation labourers in such a way that they remained segregated from the non-capitalist local peasantry.

The situation is more complex with regard to the development of small-scale capitalist agriculture overseas. Again, the locally available peasantry was discarded in the development of this type of agriculture. In the Americas as well as in Africa, European settlers were attracted in order to establish family farms in areas from which the resident local peasantry had been removed. As always, the situation in the Caribbean presents us with an extreme example. After slave emancipation most colonial governments in the West Indies were very reluctant to allow the ex-slaves to become market-oriented farmers and they had - again reluctantly - to accept the fact that many ex-slaves had turned into a local peasantry. On the other hand in almost every ex-slave colony no stone was left unturned to attract European farmers in order to increase the production of both cash crops and foodstuffs. Also in parts of Africa, the British colonial government refused to allow African peasants to become capitalist farmers. Instead, the British cleared the Kenyan highlands, attracting farmers from South Africa and Europe.

Again it must be concluded that the depopulation of colonial territories and the subsequent importation of European settlers must have seemed more rewarding to the colonial powers than converting the local indigenous peasantry into capitalist farmers. In explaining the preference within capitalist agriculture for immigrant workers and settlers special mention should be made of the dichotomous stereotype regarding the Africans, Asians and Amerindians in the minds of Europeans. On the one hand, the assorted non-Europeans are regarded as "lazy", "chaotic" and "without any wants", in short as a hindrance to the development of capitalist agriculture. On the other hand, the same non-Europeans were considered as important capitalist factors of production in their function as slaves or indentured labourers. In the minds of the Europeans there must

have existed a sharp distinction between the "native" in his homeland and the "native" as a migrating, landless and society-less factor of production. In this respect, however, it should be remarked that the investors in Third World capitalist agriculture were colour-blind. The first imported labourers in both plantations as well as in family-farm America were poor Europeans. They were the 17th century victims of the European capitalists, who refused to invest in the areas from which these European migrant-labourers had come. In Ireland, the Irish were considered as lazy and backward as the Africans in Africa, whereas the American family-farmer or plantation-manager could not do without them.

I. C. The management of peasant economies

From the beginning of the European expansion, Europeans have been concerned with controlling and managing local peasantries. There have been a number of methods employed to extract surplus from them, but, significantly, it has been very rare for agricultural systems to transform themselves from the peasant model to one of agrarian capitalism. Nowhere such a transformation does seem to have resulted from the injection of European capital, and there are examples of developments in that direction being impeded by the application of administrative measures of colonial governments.

The form of European impact depended in the first instance on whether or not the area in question produced crops for the world market. If this was not the case then there have been three main types of development. First, the quasi-feudalism of Spanish America, in which the Europeans either directly consumed the surplus or traded it on the local market. Second, the exploitation of - mainly regional - markets by means of taxation, as in British India. And, finally, the steady destruction of the indigenous economy, to avoid competition with "white" farming and to provide migrant labour, as in South Africa. In those cases where an area could be made to produce crops for export, also three main types can be distinguished. First, the manipulation of prices, the establishment of infrastructure and, frequently, the imposition of taxes to

stimulate cash crop production. This is the classic model both of pre-colonial contacts between European commercial companies and much of the Third World, and also of many colonial systems. Second, the direct extraction of cash crops from the peasants, by some means of forced cultivation. The Cultivation System of Java is the classic example of this. Finally, one might mention a system of forced labour on European-owned plantations; this, however, was unlikely to be profitable in the long term.

All these various forms might of course coexist within the same country and change over time. Also, they might coexist with some form of capitalist run plantation/family farm system, but this, as pointed out above, could only exist in the thinnest settled regions, if it was to have any long term hope of success.

The most common of these forms was the management of peasant economies, either to encourage export production or to tax the internal circulation, without effective intervention at the local level. Nevertheless, under colonial rule there were numerous attempts at change imposed on the social order with the intention of making the colony more productive.

It would be impossible in the space available to describe all the various measures adopted. What needs to be stressed is the catholicism of colonial experimentation. For instance, on occasion the colonial rulers attempted to create an indigenous landed aristocracy; on others they strove as hard as possible to eliminate them and strengthen the peasantry. In some colonies land tenure was communalised; in others, or at other times, it was individualised. The degree of success and the longer-term socio-economic effects of each of these measures obviously varied enormously from country to country, and from region to region, depending on a vast range of other factors in the environment and the historically developed social structure.

Perhaps two generalisations need to be made in this context on the impact of European colonisation. First, during the nineteenth and earlier twentieth centuries, indigenous slavery was, in theory if not always in fact, abolished in all colonies where it had existed. Where this

emancipation was effective, the whole basis of agricultural labour organisation had to change.

Secondly, the direct interference of Europeans in the growing of peasant crops rather than in market management was generally a late phenomenon. In the British empire, for instance, the widespread employment of Agricultural Extension offices, terracing schemes and so forth only began in the 1930s, under the influence of the crisis. Only then was there the beginning of the technological "development" orientated low level management of peasant production, by no means generally with success.

II. A. The non conquest of West Africa

The expansion of capitalist agriculture came very close to West Africa. From the islands in the Western Mediterranean plantation agriculture providing sugar spread to the islands opposite the West African coast. Suddenly, however, around 1550, the direction of this expansion stopped short of the mainland and changed completely: the Portuguese transferred the sugar cane to Brazil, thousands of miles to the West of the Atlantic sugar islands.

Mainland Africa seemed too crowded to the Europeans and consequently the coastal regions were not thought to provide as good an area for the establishment of plantation agriculture as South America. It was clearly not the relative advantages of the Brazilian soil and climate for the production of cash crops which made the Portuguese change directions. In fact, it was not until the 19th century that attempts to grow sugar and cotton in West Africa showed that the coastal regions of West Africa were not suited for the cultivation of these crops. In the 16th and 17th centuries the Portuguese, as well as their successors and competitors, the Dutch, the British and the French, did not know that. Their decision to avoid Africa and to concentrate on the colonisation of the Americas must have been based on the differences in population density. This is certainly true for the British, the Dutch and the French who conquered the Caribbean and the east coast of North America. After the dramatic decline of the Amerindian population in Brazil the Portuguese also came to realize that colonisation in the New World meant the ex-

pensive importation of labour from other continents.

In Africa, on the other hand, labour was plentiful. However, it was not until the abolition of the Atlantic slave trade that the European nations (including the U.S.) started to develop schemes to "bring the West Indies to Africa". Changes within the constellation of interest groups in the British parliament caused this legislation to yield to the wave of religious protests against the slave trade. Investors, interested in the development of capitalist agriculture, now looked to West Africa with different eyes. This change in the European attitude towards Africa in the period 1800-1850 did not mean that Africa suddenly had become a *tabula rasa*, providing the ideal conditions for the development of capitalist agriculture. On the contrary, Africa was as full of native peasants as it had always been. Plantation agriculture might, however, be possible there because

1. the abolition of the slave trade and of slavery itself had raised costs spent on labour in the Americas such that these might now outweigh the costs for creating "empty areas" in Africa for the establishment of plantations and the settlement of European farmers and for keeping these areas well sealed off from the indigenous society, and
2. part of these overheads would be offset by the use of relatively inexpensive African slaves or migrant workers. Only Africa was able to provide these.

Once again it should be stressed that the Europeans were as afraid of the presence of African peasants as they had always been. They had no intention of creating capitalist agriculture under the conditions as they had found them on the coast. Capitalist agriculture was only to be developed if the local population was moved away. Management and capital were supposed to come from Europe or the U.S., while migrant, landless slaves or contract labourers were to be used as labourers.

None of these attempts to create plantation areas within West Africa succeeded. Instead, the Europeans conquered Africa hoping to manage the native peasant societies in such a way that the continent would yield products which could be sold at the international commodity market.

Still, the idea of creating enclaves of capitalist agriculture was never abandoned.

II. B. 1. Portuguese America (until 1800)

The Portuguese discovery of Brazil in 1500 hardly changed anything in the course of European expansion. After that year the coastal areas of Atlantic South America were frequented by both Portuguese and French traders.

The situation changed when the cultivation of sugar cane was transplanted from the island of Sao Tomé to Brazil around 1550, although the colonisation of Brazil rather than that of West Africa must have been a deliberate choice by the Portuguese. Both coastal areas presented the invaders with the same physical difficulties: unnavigable rivers, a hostile disease environment and a capricious climate with - on both sides of the tropical zone of the Atlantic - periods of severe drought. No wonder that the well-known historian of the early Portuguese expansion, Charles Boxer, explains the Portuguese choice to colonize in Brazil rather than Africa by the difference in the Portuguese evaluation between sedentary African societies and the "wandering Amerindians of Brazil".

As a footnote it should be added that many historical explanations are extremely vague on this important Portuguese choice. One of the most recent texts, Wallerstein's *Modern World System*, claims that the Americas were conquered because of the limited range of marketable commodities that they produced. However, the same argument applies to Africa, which was not conquered until after 1870.

After the initial conquest was made, the Portuguese established sugar estates in the Bahia area in a way which became typical for the establishment of capitalist agriculture elsewhere in the New World. The Amerindians were moved away from the plantation zones. At first the Portuguese estate owners tried to use Amerindian migrant labour on their plantations brought in from the interior, but soon African slaves had to be imported from Africa in order to supplement and subsequently take over the manual work on the sugar plantations. In contrast to Spanish America international capital had direct access to the plantations of Portuguese Brazil from the very beginning.

The further development of Portuguese Brazil during the 17th and 18th centuries did not deviate from the practice in the establishment of capitalist agriculture elsewhere in the Americas or in South Africa. A frontier was established behind which the native population was pushed back into an ever shrinking area. By 1800 this process had progressed already further than in Spanish America, where the development of capitalist agriculture was much more scattered. Around 1570 the Amerindian population of Brazil made 90 % of the total population, around 1815 less than 10 %. In Spanish America the percentages are 97 % and 42 %, although in both areas there occurred a rapid growth of a native peasantry of mixed European, Amerindian and African origin, who formed the basis of the non-capitalist sector in agriculture.

II. B. 2. Spanish America (until 1800)

Originally, the Spanish conquest of America seemed to have had the same results as the Portuguese penetration into the New World in that the Amerindian population was reduced drastically. Three quarters of this group were killed mainly by their susceptibility to European diseases. However, this process of decline in the native population was as unevenly spread over the Spanish American colonies as it was over time.

As in the previous cases, it is our contention that the expansion of European financed capitalist agriculture - if at all - developed in the scarcely populated areas, where the local Amerindian population had been reduced and where i) migrant Amerindian or slave labour was used to staff the plantation-type agricultural units under European management or ii) where Spanish settlers had started family farms.

In the existing literature there seems to be no one accepted opinion about the character of the agricultural development in Spanish America. Many authors stress the feudal aspects of the organisation of Spanish American agriculture while others contend that there were several export-gearred areas which were run as capitalist enterprises. The Spanish did not seem to have organised capitalist agriculture by setting up family farms - there

existed no Spanish American equivalent to "New England". Rephrasing the debate in our terms, the development of capitalist agriculture was blocked by the presence of sedentary Amerindians or by non-capitalist peasantries of mixed Spanish-Amerindian descent in some parts and only the empty areas would allow the establishment of either plantations or European family farms.

In fact, recent research supports this hypothesis. As an overall observation it should be remarked, that there seems to be a connection between the 18th century rise in the number of Amerindians from 30 to 70 % of their pre-1492 total and the increasingly autarkic economy of most parts of Spanish America during the latter part of the colonial era. The increase of the indigenous population reduced the export of agrarian surplus to other parts of the world, in accordance to our thesis.

In addition to these changes over time, it now seems possible to note differences in the types of agricultural pursuit according to the patterns of settlement. Slicher van Bath had divided the Spanish settlements in Spanish America into a collection of concentric circles separated by non-colonized territories. In the centre of such a settlement were found the towns or villages, in which small subsistence farmers, artisans and civil servants lived together. A large section of the population of such villages and towns were Amerindians or people of mixed descent. These centre areas were most heavily populated and there it was impossible to develop capitalist agriculture.

The second concentric circle - the semi-periphery - was situated around the cities and villages and in these less densely populated areas subsistence farming constituted the main agricultural activity, both by Europeans and Amerindian peasants of mixed descent. In addition some surplus was exported either to the villages and cities in the core or to the plantations and mines out in the periphery. Again, the semi-periphery did not seem an area where European or local capital would seek to transform the agricultural system into a profit-maximising business.

A different situation existed in the peripheries of the Spanish circular settlements in the New World. In these areas the native population had been reduced or chased

away and plantations or mines had been established, mainly worked by African slaves. Here, we can speak of capitalist business producing for export overseas and specializing in only a few marketable commodities.

In short, the Spanish colonised parts of America should be divided between the relatively densely populated areas with a non-capitalist agriculture, in which Europeans, Amerindians, and their mixed off-spring freely cohabited and relatively empty areas with "islands" of capitalist production worked by European management and migrant workers.

Two final remarks should be made. Firstly it should be stressed that the peripheral areas devoid of Amerindians were available in Spanish America to be used for the development of capitalist enterprises, but were not always taken up as such. Both Spanish and international capital investments in Spanish America were limited. One example: the Amerindian population of the Spanish Caribbean (Cuba, Santo Domingo, Puerto Rico) had been quickly wiped out after the first contacts as in all other areas of the Gulf of Mexico. However, it was not until the 19th century that international capital started to invest in these relatively empty Spanish colonies. Spanish America was long unable, or unwilling, to attract investments into these empty areas, probably because the colonial policy of the Spanish government was based on a system of taxation geared to the non-capitalist core and semi-periphery of its American empire and on exploiting the mines.

Secondly, the *haciendas* should be mentioned. These appear similar to plantations, but use the locally available Amerindian and mestizo labour. However, Mintz and Wolf have pointed to the basic differences between the *hacienda* as an "old style plantation" producing a surplus for local export in addition to subsistence crops for internal use and the new plantations where the drive towards profit maximisation resulted in a selection of crops regardless of the internal subsistence needs. In fact, many capitalist plantations had specialized to such an extent that food had to be brought from outside. Translated in our terms, it was exactly the presence of a local non-capitalist peasantry which made it impossible for the owner of

the hacienda to exploit his estate in a capitalist way. All he could do is to try and raise a marketable surplus. Without depopulating the surroundings and importing labour from elsewhere, the hacienda-owner would be unable to achieve the optimum ratios of labour, capital and land, such as would allow him to maximise profits.

I. B. 3. The Caribbean

It has been remarked that no region in the overseas world was so thoroughly colonised by the Europeans as the West Indies. No other area in the world presented as fully the features of a *tabula rasa*. The story of the indigenous Amerindians is well known: their numbers dwindled rapidly and they subsequently disappeared completely from the islands in the Caribbean. Only in the backlands of the Guyanas, on the South American mainland, did they constitute a "native factor", and as such remained thoroughly divorced from the coastal plantation areas.

Originally the first Spanish invaders thought that the Indians could be used for mining and plantation agriculture. This scheme failed to work and subsequently African slaves were imported both from Spain and later - via asiento treaties - from Africa.

In the section dealing with Spanish America it was argued that the development of capitalist agriculture in the "empty" areas under Spanish rule had been severely hampered by lack of capital. Many of the Caribbean islands had remained undeveloped during the 16th century and the second wave of invaders had little trouble in re-creating the *tabula rasa* conditions needed by the English, French and Dutch immigrants looking for opportunities to develop capitalist agriculture. At first, the family farm was the dominant pattern among the settlers from Western Europe, but later many of the Caribbean islands became plantation areas *par excellence*. The development of Caribbean agriculture shows that both European family farms and European managed plantations are interchangeable features of capitalist agriculture as is the case with small and large plantations.

The main Caribbean cash crops were sugar, coffee and cotton. The cultivation of sugar especially was a very ca-

pital-intensive operation. The new and expensive technical developments in the sugar mills required the development of large plantations. For this reason the number of slaves, the amounts of invested capital, the number of European managers, the total area under cultivation and the internal division of arable land were constantly changing. From one moment to the next a piece of jungle could be transformed into a plantation or an abandoned area be returned to the bush.

All this changed on the very moment of slave emancipation. Suddenly the Caribbean had been transformed from a heaven for capitalist agriculture to a region full of native peasants, obstacles in the way of capitalist agriculture. The ex-slaves were no longer a valued factor of production, but had overnight turned into an unmanageable peasantry. Nevertheless, the post-emancipation history of the Caribbean shows that the development of capitalist agriculture remained a feature in many of the colonies, regardless of the respective metropole. The plantocracy tried to hang on to their plantations as "islands" of a capitalist development. Efforts were made to avoid a labour-market, where the supply consisted of ex-slaves, who had become native peasants and who could only be relied upon to work as part-time labourers at high wages. First, the planters usually succeeded in continuing the practice of slavery *de facto* by instituting a period of "apprenticeship". During that period legal barriers were set up in order to prevent the creation of a peasantry blocking the way towards the acquisition of small plots of land by ex-slaves. In addition, the planters imported indentured labour from elsewhere (China, British India or from other Caribbean islands) in an attempt to keep their plantations as islands of capitalist agriculture with as few ties as possible with the non-capitalist peasant surroundings. In part, the planters were successful, especially in those areas where the ex-slaves could be prohibited from acquiring land or from squatting, and where they could be turned into migrant labourers, thus once more becoming factors of capitalist agricultural production. Barbadian ex-slaves worked as contract labourers in Dutch and British Guyana, while Jamaican seasonal labourers migrated to cut cane in Cuba.

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The planters, however, did not succeed in re-emptying the West Indies to a degree that would have allowed them again to combine the optimum doses of labour, capital, land and management. In general, slave emancipation had made the West Indies sugar production less competitive in comparison with the production of beet sugar in Europe or with the production of sugar by peasant cultivators in Asia. Therefore, the international investments in the Caribbean sugar plantations were withdrawn as soon as the compensation for the emancipation of the slaves had been paid. If some of this international capital returned to the Caribbean, it was invested in newly discovered goldmines or bauxite sites. The circle which had started with Columbus' goldpanning Indians had been closed. The Caribbean had changed positions: from the "darlings of the empire" and a heaven for the development of capitalist agriculture it had become a stagnant backwater full with a peculiar kind of unreconstructable native peasantry. The influence of the West Indian plantocracy had made it virtually impossible for the colonial civil servants to try out our second model of colonisation: the production of cash crops by managing the peasantry.

II. B. 4. The North American mainland

On the North American mainland several types of capitalist agriculture coexisted, according to the three climatical zones:

1. The South where agriculture focussed on the production of cotton, tobacco, rice and indigo,
2. the Middle Colonies which produced foodstuffs for export and
3. New England, where the farmers produced little more than they needed themselves.

The relevant literature leaves little doubt as to the overriding capitalist nature of agriculture in the South. In some ways, the southern plantations resembled the type of capitalist agricultural development which prevailed in the Caribbean albeit that the plantations on the North American mainland were much smaller in size and the number of slaves per owner was far lower than in the West Indies. As in the Caribbean the profitability of these cash crop

plantations was dependent upon the demand as registered on the London market.

Whereas, in addition to the plantations, the South counted many family farms, producing foodstuffs, the Middle Colonies specialized in the exportation of wheat and maize, selling both to Europe and the Caribbean. In fact it was only New England where the farmers sold less than 50 % of their crops on the market.

The capitalist character of North American agriculture expressed itself in the ever changing acreage under cultivation, the extremely expansive internal migration, the easy absorption of the high surplus of births over deaths, the importation of additional migrants from Europe and Africa, and the relatively small social and economic distance between tenants and freeholders. All these factors, taken in combination, suggest a common tendency among the North Americans towards the optimisation of the labour-land ratio according to the prevailing market conditions. Unlike Europe, land in North America had no "sacred" value. Farmers sold their land as soon as they envisioned making a profit elsewhere, e.g. by moving Westward and by opening up a new plot along the frontier. The frontier made it difficult for land prices to rise and as a result one did not find, for a long time, restraints on the acquisition of additional land. The frontier enabled the average farmer to adjust his holdings according to his family size either by buying more land or by sending his grown children elsewhere.

The purchase of African slaves and the shift away from European indentured labour in 17th century North America was governed by a careful cost-benefit analysis. All slavery historians from Fogel/Engerman to Genovese seem to agree on this. During the 18th century migration from Europe only persisted into the Middle Colonies, where the commercialisation of foodstuff agriculture had reached an all-American high, while, in the South, African slaves were imported. In all 13 mainland colonies, however, natural growth contributed by far the largest share in the supply of additional black and white labour. The agriculture of New England was not geared to large exports. However, the development of other economic activities such as

horse breeding, shipbuilding etc. must have created a capitalist competitive element in the use of labour and capital within the Puritan society as a whole.

Concluding, it should be stressed that the development of agriculture in North America went mainly along capitalist lines. There hardly existed any large sections of non-capitalist subsistence farming as was the case in colonial South America.

II. B. 5. Capitalist agriculture in the post-emancipation Americas

The suitability of the relatively empty Americas for the development of capitalist agriculture continued after most of the regions in the New World had gained political independence. This suitability survived even the abolition of slavery with the notable exception of the Caribbean, where the ex-slaves after emancipation had turned into a non-capitalist local peasantry threatening both the continued existence of the plantations and the development of smaller capitalist agricultural enterprises.

In North America the Amerindian non-capitalist sector was completely wiped out by the Westward movement of the frontier. A similar frontier strongly reduced the non-capitalist agricultural regions in South America, where the Amerindians and colonial subsistence farmers had to yield to the large capitalist estates producing for the export market despite the political independence of most of continental America.

The development of capitalist agriculture in the Americas was made possible by the growing European investments in the infrastructure and in the agricultural machinery as well as by the continued immigration from Europe.

In the U.S.A., the "South" was turned into a declining region. The development of capitalist agriculture had changed directions and now pushed the frontiers towards the Pacific. The well-known Homestead Act of 1862 promised a minimum of 160 acres of land to anyone who wanted to settle along this frontier. The railroads and shipping firms provided subsidies to attract immigrants from Europe. To quote the words of the governor of Minnesota at that time: "Give us the capital of more men and we will vivify

and infuse the breath of life into the dead capital of millions of acres now growing only prairie flowers. Immigration will multiply capital, diffuse wealth, sell out town lots and increase activity in every pursuit and business."

No efforts were made to attract landless ex-slaves from the South. No, after the emancipation of the slaves the South - like the Caribbean - had become a "crowded" area where capitalist agriculture was fighting a rearguard action. In the U.S. South conditions were different from those in the Caribbean in that it seemed even more difficult to keep up the plantations as "islands" within a non-plantation society. Rather than importing labour from Asia, the planters were forced to employ share-croppers to continue growing cotton. By no means all the ex-slaves participated in this and the others consequently had become obstacles to the development of capitalist agriculture. A prominent southern populist leader claimed that "there is absolutely no place in this land for the arrogant, aggressive, school-spoilt Afro American who wants to live without manual labour". Schemes were developed for exporting ex-slaves from the U.S. back to Africa as well as to Panama and Haiti. In fact, several thousands of ex-slaves left the U.S., while at the same time millions of Europeans were welcomed as immigrants.

After the abolition of slavery the economy of U.S. South was no longer an efficient capitalist entity, but had become, temporarily, a crowded area of peasants, who until the 1890's, were unable to move to the North in search of higher pay. Even after this, capital was still very hesitant to return to southern agriculture. Nowadays more cotton is grown in Arizona and California - harvested by machines - than in the 5 former cotton states together.

In Latin America a similar process as in the U.S. South took place in that the ex-slaves and the local peasantry of mixed European and Amerindian descent were considered of little use to the growth of capitalist agriculture. Immigrants from Europe on the other hand were welcomed by the millions. The governor of Pernambuco (Brazil) wrote "The immigration of Italians and Germans would help to populate this land instituting a new crossing from which

will emerge the New Brazilian much better than the present one."

In total 8 million Europeans migrated to South America, mainly from Southern Europe. International investments in the wheat and beef export sectors used the poor Sicilian farmer as a useful sharecropper and farm hand, while the presence of that same farmer in Sicily itself never attracted any of these investments. In fact, nowhere else were the centrifugal tendencies of international investments in agriculture so obvious as in the 19th century history of European migration to the Americas. Many of these emigrants from Europe were impoverished farmers, who had lost out against the competition of American agricultural exports, which now in turn absorbed its former competitors.

In the literature the European immigration into Latin America is usually associated with the growth of large estates on which these immigrants worked as sharecroppers as well as with the development of the agro-industries in the cities. In some regions of South America, however, European immigrants also established themselves as family farmers. The spectacular growth of capitalist agriculture in Latin America should not obscure the fact that the non-capitalist sector in absolute terms remained as important as in colonial times. The management of the local peasantry became the main object for the owner of the successor to the *hacienda*: the *latifundio*. He usually managed a vast estate employing subsistence farmers, who could not manage to live off their own land.

Until today the two variants of colonial agriculture are present in Latin America:

1. the large estate, on which land, labour and capital and management are combined into an optimum mix and
2. the large estate employing part-time peasants who otherwise cultivate their subsistence plots.

Recent developments show some important changes in this variant: the large estate managers are trying to turn some of their part-time peasant workers into a full time agricultural proletariat by a process of decommunalisation of the land while the rest of the peasants are pushed into the cities. Peasant protests, however, show that there

are limitations to combining the two types of colonial agriculture. There will always remain an unbridgeable difference between empty areas in which plantation-like estates are established and where the combination of land, people and management as well as the choice of crops are strictly based on a cost-benefit analysis and areas in which the estates use non-capitalist peasant production.

III. Australasia

The British colonies of settlement, Australia and New Zealand, provide very good examples of the applicability of our model. The major differences between their agricultural histories derive not only from the climate, as subtropical products, possible in Australia, cannot be grown in New Zealand, but also from the relations between the autochthonous inhabitants and the immigrants. Thus in Australia, the Aboriginal inhabitants were relatively thinly settled, and were quickly driven off the more fertile lands of the South East of the continent. During the course of the nineteenth century, three major forms of capitalist agriculture developed in the country, two of which required considerable forced labour. These were, first, the "squatter" sheep ranches, which soon became the main supplier of raw wool for the British woollen industry and was financed by banking capital from the metropolis. These ranchers relied initially very largely on British convict labour. Secondly, later in the century, there were the sugar plantations in the Queensland coast, whose labour was also imported under indenture, mainly from the Pacific islands. The third form was on a much smaller scale, namely middle-sized family farms producing food-stuffs largely for the local market, whether in the towns, the sugar plantations or the mines.

In the long term New Zealand followed the Australian pattern, with large scale wool production based on fairly large capital, mainly in the South Island, linked to far smaller fixed farms, which came to dominate the agricultural scene in the North Island. The establishment of this pattern was a far more drawn out process, however, largely because the Maori population - mainly in the North Island - offered much greater resistance to the settlers,

first economically and then in war. Until the 1850's, the Maoris were able to compete successfully with European farmers in the domestic market for foodstuffs, largely because communal methods of labour kept the costs well down. Despite a certain degree of paternalist protection from the Government, however, the Maoris were under continual pressure as regards their land, until this erupted in the wars of the 1860s. It was these wars which broke the Maori economic strength and deprived them of so much of their land that, barring a few, generally less fertile reserves, New Zealand became a colony of white settlement though not of plantations.

IV. A. Colonial tropical Africa

In the period after they had conquered the great majority of tropical Africa the colonial rulers had a number of alternatives from which they might choose to achieve the basic ends of colonisation, namely at the very least to make the colony cover its own costs and, preferably, produce a healthy profit for the colonising country or some particular interest group within it. In brief, these options were:

1. the South African pattern of white settlement.
2. a Caribbean pattern of plantations, although always with local, forced labour rather than immigrants.
3. the stimulation of cash crops production by local peasantries.

These three patterns competed with each other, as it were, in each colony, although in general there was a choice for the one or the other, but this was not always so. In the Belgian Congo (Zaire), for instance, the various models were all applied, simultaneously and with equal lack of success.

The clearest case of white settlement pattern was in Kenya, where, as a result of the epidemics, bovine and human, that had hit the area during the 1890s, when the British occupied central highlands along the rift valley, they found what they described as "a *tabula rasa*, an almost untouched and sparsely inhabited country". This needed to be filled as soon as possible since the costs of the Uganda railway had to be covered. A South African model,

of large farms, was followed, initially primarily with South African immigrants, but then with British with a certain amount of capital. Large agricultural capital remained as uninterested as ever in East Africa until plantations were set up in the wetter areas of what were by then known as the white highlands. Similarly, it was only after World War I that large numbers of white settlers took up farms in the highlands. The settlers concentrated on those crops which gave a quicker return, notably maize. They were financed at high rates of interest by British and British Indian banks.

Kenya was no pure *tabula rasa* colony, however, in that labour was not imported from outside. As elsewhere in Africa, this was in the long term the flaw in the white settler system. Local labour was never as malleable as imported, despite the use of the administration both to create African landlessness and to enforce low wages. The settlers generally had to work with a system of labour tenancy - the so-called "squatters". The political tensions this entailed, leading to Mau Mau, and the uncertainty among government circles, especially after World War II, as to whether European or African interests were paramount, meant that white farming as the basis of the colony's economic life was inherently instable.

Indeed, attempts to create plantation systems within Africa generally failed. The most far-reaching innovations along these lines were made by the Portuguese, whose effective occupation of the interior of both Angola and Mozambique only occurred in the mid to late nineteenth century. When the former colony lost its position as the supplier of slaves to the New World, attempts were made to make it valuable by producing cash crops for export, of which coffee was by far the most important. This was produced mainly in the enclave of Cazengo where an attempt was made to produce an American style plantation industry, which failed abysmally as labour could not be controlled in its own setting as effectively as overseas. A similar effort in the 1960s, complete with barbed wire fences to control contract labour, was also a short lived failure. It was set up to help pay for the Portuguese fight against the African liberation movements, and went under to them.

Similarly, the various twentieth century schemes to export a European peasantry to Africa, which were always of a more political than economic inclination - were a complete fiasco. In a populated country such measures always were.

In Mozambique too the Portuguese attempted in an almost mercantilist way to exploit their colony for the benefit of the metropolis. In large areas of the colony this entailed taking a (large) percentage of the earnings made by Mozambiquans on the South African mines. Elsewhere, particularly in Quelimane district, attempts were made to set up sugar, cotton, coconut and rice plantations - which ironically were largely financed with British capital. This was accompanied by a ruthless, but never fully successful, smashing of African peasant agriculture and by the widespread and brutal employment of forced labour. Once again, it was only possible to make these enterprises pay because of enormous levels of state investment in control and power, largely derived (indirectly) from the South African mines, and when it came, the challenge of African political movements could not be repulsed, so that the various companies have now gone out of business.

Nevertheless, the Portuguese were not the only ones to hope that the establishment of plantations would give the right mix of land, labour and capital to provide profits for the metropolis. In the Ivory Coast, the French initially hoped to develop European run cacao plantations with local forced labour, but soon discovered that this was not a successful recipe. Rather it only made the development of prosperous export-producing peasantry impossible. Thereafter they would only allow the right of entry to Europeans in "terres vacantes et sans maître" and were stringent as to what they would consider empty land. The British, too, were not averse to attempting large capital intensive plantations, though only in what they considered empty land. For instance, in an effort to supply the world shortage of vegetable oil, caused by World War II, the British government invested enormous amounts of capital in an attempt to turn a large unoccupied area of southern Tanzania into a massive groundnut-plantation. Unfortunately, the area was unoccupied for a very good reason, namely

that it suffered from endemic drought, so that the scheme had quickly to be abandoned as a total loss.

It was only the peasant pattern that, in the long term, could provide the basis of a successful agriculture. By the late nineteenth century Europeans had discovered elsewhere in the world that they could manage densely settled tropical colonies to their own advantage. The barrier of disease had been broken through. The expansion of the Senegambian groundnut production, and the Niger delta palm oil trade had shown that West African peasants could produce valuable cash crops for the world market. The disincentives to colonisation were thus removed (which is of course different from saying that this constituted the motivation for colonisation).

Given that these areas were colonised, they had to be made to pay. As elsewhere there was the basic choice between peasant production and enclave plantation agriculture. As elsewhere, the decision was far from uniform, although in general the peasant model was chosen, the major exceptions being the plantations set up by Unilever in Zaire and by Firestone in Liberia, for palm and rubber respectively.

Elsewhere plantations were not attempted or, where they were attempted, quickly failed. The case of the British Cotton Growers Association in Nigeria is illustrative. Initially they intended to control the whole production process, but quickly they realised that they could not compete with peasant agriculture and reduced their activity almost entirely to ginning.

In those colonies where the peasant pattern was clearly triumphant - Senegal, Ghana, Nigeria and Uganda were the most notable - the colonial governments opposed the introduction of plantations, or of migrant labour schemes. They shrank from the measures necessary to create the landless proletariat which would be required as labour force. Moreover, they were backed in this by, and gave support to, the powerful European trading lobby which realized that the multiplier effect of peasant production would entail much more diversified and larger imports than would an enclave plantation economy. Thus they limited themselves to the provision of an infrastructure and the abo-

lition of indigenous slavery, the latter not for clearly economic reasons. Indeed those developments which led to the growth of indigenous capitalist relations of production were occasionally, though by no means always, cut off, for fear of social unrest. This was the case, for instance, with the limitation of the freehold rights to land among the *mailo* holders of Buganda.

IV. B. Southern Africa

The original European settlements in South Africa were made in the extreme south-west of the country, where the autochthonous inhabitants, the Khoisan, were relatively sparsely settled and militarily weak. The initial plans of the colonists were that the Khoisan would themselves provide those goods that the Dutch settlers required. This was soon found to be less advantageous than the destruction of Khoisan social organisation and the settlement of European farmers inland in South Africa. Therefore, from around 1700 on, the South African countryside was increasingly occupied by middle sized, owner occupied farms, largely worked by imported slaves or by the descendants of the deracinated Khoisan. In this sense the Cape Colony was a society constructed to a European design, with imported slave labour as the most advantageous alternative. It was analogous in many ways to the middle colonies of the (future) U.S.A.

From the end of the eighteenth century on, the continued expansion of the colony to the east and north, which was necessitated by the extensive stock ranches of the colonists, led to a confrontation between the colonists and the various Nguni and Stoho-Tswana peoples. These were themselves agriculturalists, densely settled and organised into reasonably powerful polities. Over the course of the nineteenth century the inhabitants of northern South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland and Zimbabwe were conquered, but only to varying degrees could a model of agrarian relations be imposed by the whites. Large areas of the region remained in which political subordination did not entail a fullscale remodelling of agrarian society but rather, after an initial period of relative prosperity in which African farmers were able to outcom-

pete the whites, the steady impoverishment of that section of South African society, so that its members became increasingly dependent upon migrant labour (to the mines and industries of South Africa) for their cash requirements and even their very subsistence.

Elsewhere in Southern Africa, there was only one attempt to create an enclave *tabula rasa*, on the sugar plantations of Natal which were worked with imported Indian labour. In the Eastern Cape, in the Orange Free State, in the Transvaal this was not done until into this century. Before then the settlers extracted surplus by means of quasi-feudal means of labour tenancy and share-cropping, reminiscent of highland Latin America. Only after the discovery of diamonds and gold was both force and the will available, as the state became immensely richer and more powerful and the presence of the markets of the Witwatersrand made fully commercialised farming a more attractive proposition.

In Zimbabwe, too, white settler control of the state apparatus ensured the smashing of African agricultural competitiveness.

The problem was that there was no mineral base from which the control costs of settler agriculture could be financed. An attempt was made to supply this after the opening of the Zambian copper belt, and the Central African federation should be seen as an attempt to maintain Southern Rhodesian white settlers on the basis of Northern Rhodesian mines, but this failed, so that, in a country without great mineral wealth and dependent on agricultural produce for its exports, the strain was too great, and eventually the Europeans were evicted from power. It is still too early to be certain what effects this will have on the agricultural structure of the country.

V. South Asia

If the ideal type of our first model, that of capitalist agriculture, can be described with the adage "territories without peasants", the second might be subsumed as a quest for "revenues without territory". Oddly enough, the classical example of this latter type of colony must always be British India, the most extensive territory ever

converted into a colony. As elsewhere, trade and the commercial interest in agricultural products was here also the starting point. Yet, agricultural products fit for the world market have always been scarce in India. Considering the enormity of the land mass of South Asia, its cash crops were few and European agricultural investment did not take place until the nineteenth century. The subcontinent attracted traders because of its large internal market for imports, e.g. for spices, and because of its industrial products, that is to say its textiles. At the same time South Asia was at the centre, geographically speaking, of colonial trading activity in the Old World and this partly explains the contest between Britain and France over the control of the main Asian trade routes being decided on Indian soil, during the Great War of the mid-eighteenth century (1740-1748, 1756-1763). But the British victory in this war created, from the point of view of commerce at least, more problems than it solved. The huge sums spent in these wars by Britain, must in the last analysis be seen as investments in a trade empire. Trade would have to increase along the routes of this network in order to turn the investment into a profitable one. But it hardly did. This compelled the British East India Company to take the step away from trade and towards the management of the agrarian economy of Bengal. This step, the acquisition of the so-called *diwani* of Bengal in 1765, can be regarded as a major turning point of European colonial history. It could only be done on the basis of a new awareness of European military superiority over Indian armies, proven at Plassey in 1757. It is true that there were other alternatives, tried out mainly by private traders, such as the exploitation of the internal trade system of Bengal and the greatly increased presents, salaries, and perquisites, which British dominance now made available to its officials serving in Bengal. But these advantages were temporary and to the E.I.C. there was no other choice but to try and keep going its trade with the public, i.e. agrarian, revenues of Bengal and Awadh (Oudh).

Henceforward, the colonial administration of India largely meant the management of a peasant economy. This is not to deny that the peasant economy now and then

yielded a number of export crops, notably cotton, opium and, later, jute. In the nineteenth century, even capitalist agriculture in the shape of tea plantations made a start in the thinly inhabited hills of Northern India. Much foreign capital was also invested in agro-industries such as the indigo and jute factories that produced for export. But, in relation to India's total agricultural activity, the proportion of her foreign trade and its contribution to the national income of the colony were never very substantial.

Not surprisingly, therefore, it has been said that India was atypical in the British colonial empire and as an externally run peasant society the subcontinent has, not without reason, been compared to Ireland. Such peasantries could by no means be transformed in the image of European-run capitalist agriculture. Many of the changes that did occur during the colonial period can be better described as the processes by which these peasantries adapted themselves to the impact of European resource manipulation. These processes are various and defy an unequivocal description, the more so as a certain uneasy fickleness is often discernible in the ways Europeans approached their numberless peasant subjects. Always attempts at a more direct taxation of the actual tiller and at a deeper administrative penetration of peasant society were cut short by financial or political failures which led to forms of more indirect control.

A significant feature, on the other hand, was the, largely successful, policy to reduce the size of the mobile labour force. As plantations to absorb these migrant peasants were wanting, this was an undesirable element from an administrative point of view. Great numbers of peasant labourers had always been on the move in traditional Indian society in search of new patrons whereas perhaps one fifth of the resident labour force was in a state of dependency, had but little claim to a periodical share in the harvest and was, so to say, potentially migrant. This peasant labour force was mobile in a geographical sense as well as jobwise and the most obvious job apart from agriculture was a military one, either as camp follower or as soldier. As far as its military aspects

were concerned this peasant mobility was checked by British rule in two ways. Firstly, the several groups of roaming soldiers that had clustered into large armies, were defeated during the campaigns of the Sannyasi, the Pindari and the Maratha wars ending in 1818. After these wars, this danger to settled administration was under control, though repressive activity continued against a variety of criminal tribes and castes, thugs and dacoits. Secondly, a sizable part of the peasant soldiery was harnessed into the British Indian sepoy army which, in some respects, must be regarded as a semi-disciplined peasant army. This army was recruited in Eastern Hindustan and absorbed, until the mid-nineteenth century, a great part of the agrarian revenues of the state which were thus channeled back, in a way, into peasant society.

As to other migrant labour, the British system of settlement tended to bet on the continued dominance of old established peasants and to substitute individual property rights for diffused harvest shares. The colonial state naturally kept those elites in power that were in the best position to help them to collect its taxes while it at the same time attempted to control them, among other things, by an enormously elaborate and time consuming cadastral system that often provided the colonial administrators with agrarian information about fields, crops, irrigation and tenants far below the village level.

Yet, in spite of the cadastral survey and the taxation of government-declared proprietors, the system did not result in total control of peasant society. The actual tiller of the soil again and again escaped government. This was not because middlemen were often engaged as proprietors, but, more fundamentally, because population growth and the security afforded by the new legal system caused the accretion of new classes of tenants. This can be seen as the form in which the old patterns of migrant agricultural labour in search of farming opportunities, reasserted themselves. Below the well-ordered social strata ruled by property rights, a legal jungle of tenancy relationships came into being. After 1850, to prevent chaos, the British government was compelled to transfer certain proprietary rights to the tenantry and to recognize, for

instance, that "occupancy rights" could accrue in course of time (the 12-year rule). This, of course, was difficult to reconcile with the administration of justice as introduced by the British. As new layers of tenants, undertenants, and dependents appeared and power relationships changed in agrarian society, a gradually increasing body of tenancy laws was passed. The process continued well into the twentieth century. In Bengal and Bihar, for instance, as tenants' rights were registered and protected often a new class of dependent undertenants appeared who were unprotected and whose rights were not registered. But elsewhere also, the phenomenon of increasing official protection along with the accretion of a new dependent class of semi-landless labourers was general. It meant, in fact, that the tension between the rule of European law and the built-in processes of Indian agrarian society now became part of the procedures by which agrarian society was dealt with by colonial rule. It can also, perhaps more significantly, be regarded as the way in which agrarian society continued the various old patterns of dependency by adapting them and allowing them to be squeezed and jointed to the rule of law.

Basic to these embarrassments of colonial rule in India was that crucial decisions about peasants' rights and the agrarian economy had been dictated by the financial and commercial stringencies of empire. The assumption that market forces should be freed from the constraints of traditional society was, of course, part and parcel of this. A result of this again was the transfer of land to non-agriculturalist as a result of indebtedness. Late in the nineteenth century the British passed several laws affording relief to peasant proprietors and prohibiting the transfer of land to non-agricultural creditors in selected areas, thus admitting the failure of one of the central assumptions of colonial administration.

Paradoxically, but in perfect harmony with our thesis, the British impact on agriculture was greater in those areas that were, so to say, at one remove of peasant society. During the second half of the nineteenth century the Department of Public Works supplanted the Military Department (that, until 1857, had employed the peasant army

of sepoys) as the most significant spending department of the administration. In the canal colonies, especially those of the Punjab, something approaching to an agrarian economy based on empty space, family farms, and immigrant labour took shape. It was the beginning of a phenomenon which since then, in a haphazard way, has reappeared in some more densely populated regions of India and in which one may gradually discern a certain convergence of traditional agriculture and capitalistic enterprise: the emergence of the so-called rich peasant and the green revolution. But, as one would expect, before this was well under way, colonialism was over.

V. B. Southeast Asia

The story of capitalist enterprise and peasant agriculture in Indonesia is certainly one of the most dramatic and tragic of colonial history and is as such described by Geertz in his "Agricultural Involution". The structure of land ownership is, he contends, only an indifferent guide to the social patterns emerging under the impact of Dutch rule. The intricacies of tenancy and sharecropping defy description in a systematic way, as they do in India. Essentially, what was tried on Java was to square the circle and to superimpose commercial capitalism upon a subsistence peasant economy. During the 17th and 18th centuries, indigenous agriculture in the Indonesian archipelago - unlike India - produced a variety of crops for which there was a demand on the world market. Some of these export crops such as sugar were produced by peasants (in addition to their own subsistence) responding to the market price. Other crops, perennials such as coffee, were produced by the imposition of colonial labour taxes on the peasantry in the "empty" areas which still existed on Java. The "Priangan" system provides us with an 18th century example of this kind of colonial peasant management.

However, in the beginning of the 19th century, the Dutch colonial government in Indonesia found the price mechanism to be an insufficient instrument to induce the peasants to a higher production of export crops. At the same time Dutch colonial government was desperately trying to raise more revenue. The solution was the Cultivation

System, begun in 1830. The world market was flooded with this system of direct extraction of cash crops from Javanese peasants, the proceeds of which not only enabled the Dutch to pay for their colonial administration, but also to transfer substantial amounts to the coffers of the home government. For a time it seemed that the Dutch colonial administration was able to achieve results in the production of colonial cash crops without European meddling with the economic structure of the village. Anywhere in the world such results had until then only been produced by introducing capitalist agriculture backed by a large input of European capital and management.

The Cultivation System on Java was surprisingly successful from an economic point of view, but boosted the peasantisation of Javanese society in that its peasants produced large amounts of export crops above their subsistence, while they remained shielded from capitalist penetration by the Dutch colonial administration. Geertz typified the history of Indonesia as one long attempt to bring Indonesia's crops into the modern world, but not its people.

After the abolition of the Cultivation System, private enterprise took over the function of the colonial government in providing both a link and a shield between the Indonesian peasants and the world market. After 1870 private sugar producers continued the management of sugar factories on Java employing the villagers as well as some of the fields of the indigenous *desa*. Nowhere on Java, however, real plantations were established; the Javanese *desas* remained as centres of subsistence farming.

Capitalist agricultural development occurred (mainly on plantations on the "empty" outer Islands, particularly on Sumatra, using Chinese and Javanese migrant labour). On the one hand, Java sank deeper into an extremely labour-intensive rice economy in which the marginal productivity of labour input was zero. On the other hand, a separate economy, based on crops like tobacco and rubber and geared to the world market, came into being that was capital intensive and extremely profitable.

Malaya perhaps can best be compared to Sumatra: much empty space and capitalist agriculture, mainly in rubber

plantations. These plantations relied heavily on Indian and Chinese migrants, especially since the beginning of the present century.

The case of the Philippines is more complex. Before the U.S. conquest there existed a non-capitalist subsistence agriculture worked by sharecropping peasants and run by a variety of small, medium and large landlords of Spanish and of mixed Spanish-Philippino descent. The larger estates produced a marketable surplus of sugar and rice.

After 1898 the new U.S. administration tried to introduce capitalist agriculture within the indigenous structure, which - in accordance with our thesis - failed. The Americans tried to restructure Philippino agriculture by creating indigenous family farms whereas this type of capitalist agriculture could only be established by removing the native non-capitalist peasantry and by introducing European or U.S. settlers. American attempts at anti-usury legislation and the distribution of all public land to cultivators as family farms proved unsuccessful as did cooperative credit schemes. Landlord pressure on the administration prevented the creation of peasant-ownership and led to an increase of sharecropping and landless labour.

The growing agricultural exports produced by an indigenous non-capitalist agricultural economy made for a deepening peasantisation and led to revolts, particularly since the 1930s. However, the system based on the articulation between the capitalist export sector and the non-capitalist peasant production of cash crops survived.

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