

De Facto Wage-earners in the Gezira Scheme (Sudan)

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Gezira-Managil scheme is by far the most important agricultural scheme in the Sudan and in Africa. It has been in operation since 1925 and covers an area of 2 million feddans (nearly 800,000 hectares) (1) stretching over a very large and fertile plain between the Blue and the White Nile south of Khartoum. In spite of the crop diversification policy adopted in the Sudan after independence (1956), the scheme is still first and foremost a cotton growing scheme; 63 % of the Sudanese cotton is produced in the Gezira. The cotton produced is one of the best long fibre cottons in the world.

The scheme operates like a huge enterprise in which labour power is still the major force of production in spite of the very large sums invested in the construction of the irrigation infrastructure.

Nearly 100,000 tenants (92,773 in 1970/71) are permanently engaged in the scheme; there are over 550,000 seasonal workers (552,827 in 1970/71); 1,578 local inspectors and 7546 employees of the Gezira Board (2).

The legal framework for the bilateral economic relations between the tenants, the State and the Board can be found in two basic texts: the 1927 Tenancy Agreement and the 1919 Syndicate Agreement, amended in 1926.

There are, according to these texts, three partners with equal rights in the farming of the Gezira: the tenants (*métayers*) who produce the cotton; the State, which is a « tenant farmer » (*fermier*) and owns the irrigation system; and the Sudan Plantation Syndicate, a body entrusted by the State with the management of its « farming lease ». *

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* Translator's note: The farmers in the scheme are called « tenants ». The author when analysing the system, uses the term « *métayer* » (*sharecropper*) which is more specific. The State is a « tenant farmer » (*fermier*) because it leases some of the land from *de jure* owners.

Farm proceeds are shared among the three partners in a predetermined proportion, which has been changed several times since the texts came into force. Until now, all the authors have taken these legal relationships for the basic relations of production in the Gezira. In their view, these relations of production are therefore basically relations of sharing. But to assign a place to these legal relations, one must be familiar with the relations of production, which can only be ascertained through a careful analysis and study of the history of the class struggle. We think that «share-cropping» is too general a theoretical category to describe the basic economic relations in a specific situation. It is a category which brings immediately to mind the sphere of distribution. But beyond the relations of distribution of the proceeds, there are cases which call for an attempt to discover the relations of production. This applies to the Gezira scheme.

The term «tenancy» or «sharecropping» is too vague to describe the cotton producer's relations with the «tenant farmer state» on the one hand and the Gezira scheme Board on the other. Analysis and history show on the contrary that the majority of these «tenants» or «sharecroppers» are, in fact, state wage earners. At least, this is what we will try to show.

To do this, we must take into consideration the relations between the «partners» and a category of workers not mentioned in the two agreements, namely the mass of 550,000 seasonal workers. Actually this relationship is decisive for the understanding of the relations between the «partners» in the scheme. Seasonal workers are legally the tenants' wage labour. Hence, the tenants are small employers. Without denying the importance of this legal relation in the formation of class consciousness we consider that, in fact, both tenants and seasonal workers are wage earners of the Sudanese State, at least in essence.

To develop these points, it will suffice to analyse two series of relations and criticise the conventional approach.

- The tenant and the State.
- The tenant of the *de jure* wage earner.
- Criticism of the conventional approach.

II. THE TENANT AND THE STATE

The official thesis is that, although the State has, through the Government, nationalized the use of the land in the Gezira, it does not own all the Gezira land.

To implement the scheme «the Government nationalized the use, but not the ownership of the land» (3), William A. Hance writes, and adds: «by purchase in the open market, the government has gradually acquired ownership of about 57% of the lands in the Main Scheme and 62% in the Extension». (4).

In other words, the State is not the landowner of the whole of the Gezira, but of only about half (5).

This opinion according to which the State owns only part of the land under the scheme is based on a confusion between the landowner in the economic sense and in the legal sense, in the capitalist mode of production. In the capitalist mode of production, the essential concept for the analysis of land ownership is capitalist rent. It is through the place of rent in the scheme that we shall analyse the production relation between the tenant and the State. That will be the first point. The second point will deal with the State/tenant relation at the level of the « technical » organisation of the production of cotton values. First we must consider whether the tenant producer is alienated or not.

1. — *Alienation of the tenant-producer :*

By virtue of the Syndicate Agreement and the Tenancy Agreement the tenant must obey the orders of the Gezira Board which was entrusted by the State with the « technical » management of the Scheme. A refusal to obey its orders entails sanctions which may even go as far as dismissal. The Board therefore has extensive powers over the tenant. This simple fact ought to have been enough to refute the argument that the relation between the State and the tenant is on a « partnership basis ». We shall show how subordination stipulated in the legal texts has been put into practice in the immediate process of production. In fact, we are faced here with an apparently paradoxical situation in which alienation in the immediate process coincides with a very low degree of development of the productive forces, thus turning the tenant into a wage-earner.

The level of the productive forces as a whole is very low and there is even a tendency for yields to stagnate, as shown in the following table :

<i>Cotton yield</i>	
<i>Kantar/feddan</i>	<i>Kantar/feddan</i>
1959 - 1960 2.45	1966 - 1967 4.61
1960 - 1961 1.53	1967 - 1968 4.18
1961 - 1962 5.12	1968 - 1969 5.21
1962 - 1963 2.47	1969 - 1970 5.04
1963 - 1964 2.30	1970 - 1971 5.41
1964 - 1965 3.55	1971 - 1972 4.97
1965 - 1966 3.67	

The irrigation infrastructure is certainly impressive; the research into disease control and into finding the best varieties of cotton both in quality and resistance, have yielded good results; the work is very well organized; but there is no mechanization and the use of draught animals is an exception.

Nevertheless, yields per hectare are among the highest in the world; this can largely be attributed to the exceptional ecological conditions.

«The Gezira contains so many factors favourable to irrigated cultivation that it represents almost an ideal in this field: small difference in level, impermeability which prevents the loss of water from deep seepage; deep ground-water (it is usually found at a depth of about 15 metres)».

The result, Brihe concludes is remarkable: «far from upsetting the soil characteristics and intensifying the chemical and physical phenomena of retroaction, irrigation in the Gezira determines a slow but regular and perceptible improvement of the qualities of the soil» (6).

The rudimentary character of the means of production is attested by all those who have made a study of the Gezira. Cotton growing is extended, not by a process of intensified capital accumulation with a view to raising labour productivity, but rather by bringing new lands under cultivation. The following facts are stated by Yassin: «the area cultivated had increased by 335 % in relation to the average area under cultivation in 1951-1955. In the case of cotton, the main crop, the increase of area was 258 %, and the increase in total production was 293 % for the same years. The increase due to vertical expansion was 12% whereas that attributed to horizontal expansion was 88% (7).

«At first sight, this situation is all the more surprising since conditions in the Gezira lend themselves very favourably to complete mechanization» (8).

In fact, we are only surprised if our attention is concentrated on technology. If, on the contrary, we analyse the basic relation — profit — we see that non-mechanization is very profitable.

To say that the development of the productive forces is still at a very rudimentary level, does not mean that the producer of cotton values controls the organisation of production. On the contrary, through the application of the results of systematic agronomic and organisational research, he is subordinated to an external force which dictates what he must do and imposes the time of work.

When the Gezira programme was drawn up, production work took only three months (one quarter of the year). Now it is necessary to work almost continuously for eleven months. But above all to be profitable, the gigantic irrigation work required a systematic organisation of work, this taking practically all initiative from the producer.

The producer's submission was carefully worked out through two essential processes: the division of the scheme into blocks, and crop rotation. The two processes lead to a better productivity of labour and to a better supervision of the producer.

The presentation which follows is borrowed from the Belgian agronomist Brihe. He states that for the needs of irrigation, the plan has been divided into large sectors depending on the major canal or minor canals. The sectors are split up by field outlet pipes into long strips of 1420 by 292 metres known as numbers.

Every number is subdivided by small ditches into 9 basic plots each having an arable area of 280 x 150 metres, i.e 10 feddans or 4.2 hectares. The fields are in turn irrigated by tranches which feed the spaces between rows. The whole complex is covered by a very complete network of paths and roads.

Every farmer is given four adjacent plots of 10 feddans and these are spread over four adjacent « numbers ». Each number grouping nine farmers is considered as cropping unit. This parcel of about 38 hectares is uniformly treated and always bears the same crop.

During the scheme's history there have been some modification of the forme of crop rotations and the size of the plots. But the principle has always been to organize the rotation in terms of cotton production and always to devote one block to reach crop. This practice deprives the producer of all autonomy. The aim was not to lose one precious drop of water for irrigation. To achieve this, the producer had to be detached from the land; he had to go round from one plot to another like a worker changing machines.

The irrigation is remarkably well coordinated. The control is centralized at Basatna.

The watering time-table determines all the other operation (8).

Block and field inspectors play a major role at production level. A block inspector heads a set of 6 to 10 blocks as the case may be. A field inspector operates within a block. According to Manoun Yassin, the latter may be compared with foremen in factories. « They are synonymous with foremen in factories. They were responsible for ensuring that the schedule of work was strictly adhered to by tenants and were given powers of punishment ranging from fines to the dismissal of those whose performance was not up to the expected standards » (9). « In these circumstances the tenant producer is not a farmer... but a producer of agricultural commodities on a land which can be likened to a conveyer-belt « provided by the management » (10).

In other words, the producer cannot organize his work autonomously. Everything is imposed on him from outside. In so far as he produces values, he is nothing more than a proletarian, a wage-earner, even if he is not legally called so. The producer in the Gezira is alienated.

Of course, the partisans of « partnership » do not admit this alienation. Thus Kamal Hussan Ahmed, when considering the problem of work management, argues that the tenant could not be considered as a wage-earner : « the concept of supervision in use in factories cannot apply to the present situation » (11) (that of the Gezira). But he himself observes that standardization is one of the essential practices in cotton production in the Gezira. Indeed, he is surprised that the Board instructs the inspectors « always to insist on a high standard of work » (12).

Standardization is in fact one of the essential means by which capital can control production without making the producer a *de jure* wage-earner. Standardization makes it possible to save on supervision and checking of the work process. It is one of the « invisible » threads binding capital to the producer.

The author thinks that standardization is a kind of « Taylorism » and that management must consequently be humanized. Instead of achieving standardizing through supervision, he suggests exploiting the resources which the social sciences place at the disposal of managers. He forgets that the practice of such techniques alienate the worker from capital as much as Taylor's method.

b — *Ground rent in the Gezira Scheme*

It follows from the preceding section that the means of production used in the Gezira are very heterogeneous as to their degree of sophistication.

With regard to the immediate process of cotton production, only the ploughing operations are mechanized. That is to say, the major means of production in the Gezira are the irrigated lands and the seeds. The only problem worthy of our attention here is the expropriation of the irrigated land.

Concerning title to (non-irrigated) land, there are two categories of tenant farmers in the Gezira : those who own land and those who do not. The former have kept their right of ownership and have been compelled to lease their lands to the State. The State has gradually acquired possession of these lands and now owns 50 % of the million hectares covered by the scheme and the Managil extension. As we shall see later, at least 70 % of the tenants, do not own land. The essential criterion of the distinction between the two categories is the *symbolic rent*.

As regards the way the land is allocated, both categories of sharecroppers are equally expropriated (12).

I. b. — *The symbolic nature of the rent*

We will go back to the stages of proletarianization in the Gezira in Part Two, but we must already stress an important point, namely that large industrial capital manages to abolish rent or at least to suspend its payment for a period of 40 years. The clear objective of capital was that its super profits should not be appreciably out down by ground rent. On the other hand, it could not entirely do without the alliance, or at least the « voluntary » submission of the former large landowner. The trick consisted in practically abolishing rent while consolidating the right of ownership, a right which was, however, accompanied by restrictive conditions particularly as regards mortgage and transfer.

According to the Tenancy Agreement, the landowners were compelled to lease their lands to the State for a period of 40 years which was renewable. This clause still applies. What characterizes the rate of capitalist ground rent in the specific Capitalist Mode of Production is its connection with the demand for, and the supply of, land. Another characteristic is that improvements made to the land by the capitalist tenant farmer lead to an increase in the rate of rent, so that at the end of the lease, the landowner takes into account any capital incorporated in the land in the form of irrigation canals, building etc. in order to ask for a higher rent.

This practice encouraged a large number of British speculators to try to acquire lands in the Gezira as soon as they knew that the State was going to build an irrigation network there. The large industrial capital, with State help, was able to put a stop to this speculation movement by restricting the Sudanese right of ownership: land could then only be sold to the villagers or to the State; the right of mortgage was later abolished, particularly after the crisis of 1930.

Nevertheless the construction of the dam was going to increase the price of land and the rate of rent. Britain intervened energetically here, fixing the price of a feddan of land and the rent rate at a level which postponed the consolidation of a class of Sudanese landowners in the Gezira.

Legally there was no expropriation. But economically, there was an expropriation at least in the case of landowners. The rate of rent and the price of land were fixed unilaterally at a very low level. Officially, the advantages due to irrigation had to be excluded.

The rate of rent was fixed at a maximum of 10 piastres or 2 English shillings per feddan. « People thought this compensation was equitable ».

Sheira thinks that « the rent corresponded to the average productivity of the land before the implementation of the plan » (14).

In fact the problem is not whether the rent was an equitable one or not. The problem is what class was ultimately going to benefit from the construction of the irrigation network. By fixing a rate of rent excluding the effects of this construction from the price of land, large-scale capital prevented the emergence of a class of landowners. According to Gaitskell, estimates had shown that the price of land would have risen from 5-10 shillings a feddan to 20 Egyptian pounds, that is 40 to 80 times as much ; it is probable that if the rent had been fixed on this basis, a class of landowners might have been constituted.

Today, thanks to the purchases made by the State, particularly after the 1931-34 depression, the State is the legal owner of 50 % of the Gezira Managil Scheme. It pays a yearly rent of nearly 50.000 Sudanese pounds (15).

In 1960, the State paid a yearly rent in cash amounting to about 50.000 Sudanese pounds (16).

How is this rent distributed among the tenant landowners ?

Even among the landowning tenants, only the large ones are likely to receive a substantial rent. According to Sheira, «the total amount of rent collected by the majority of the landowners is relatively modest» (17).

Before the implementation of the scheme, a census of ownership rights gave British imperialism the opportunity to consolidate the ownership rights of the former great landowners, and in many cases, to give them titles to lands which were not private property, for instance community or habou lands. But this has not so far been systematically studied.

There is some evidence that, there were very large family properties in some villages (18).

Today, the landowning-tenant group is greatly reduced. It is known that the British authorities decided to favour the former landowners when the plots were being distributed.

Anyone who owned 200 feddans could claim two allotments of 40 feddans each for himself. Then those owning more than 50 feddans had a priority right to an allotment. A recent survey led to the following classification (19).

● Tenants with : more than two plots	10 %
● » » one plot	20 %
● » » half a plot	70 %

In other words, at least 70 % of the tenants of the scheme own less than 50 feddans each. Yet it is the small landowners above all who sold to the State 50 % of the land it holds in the scheme ; thus, it may be said that the 50,000 Sudanese pounds are to be divided among 30,000 tenants (30 % of the tenants), i.e. a yearly average of

1.6 pounds per tenant-landowner a year. This amount is clearly a modest one.

As a symbol of ownership, however, this rent may play an important ideological role. It tends in particular to inculcate a «consciousness of ownership (21)»; in addition a small group of landowners are paid enough rent to live on. When we speak of tenants, we have in mind mainly the 70,000 small tenants.

Infact we have already seen that only 30 % of the landowners had more than 50 feddans. It is, they who could ultimately constitute the embryo of a class of landowners, if the 1921 ordinance were to be abolished.

We may conclude that although the rent paid to the owners is not fixed according to the general rule of capitalism under which rent includes land improvements, such a possibility nevertheless exists, so long as the land is not nationalized. At any rate, the economic allocation of the irrigated land is already made by the State alone.

b.2) — *The State allocates the land for cotton cultivation*

From our study of the rent system in the Gezira, we have seen that there are not really two opposing social classes extracting rent : the capitalist and the landowner. It is the « tenant farmer » (fermier) (the State in this case) who actually receives the *real rent* ; although it cannot abolish the *symbolic rent* paid to those who hold titles to property. Furthermore, the allocation of the irrigated land depends only on the State and on capitalist interests. Thus according to the 1921 ordinance referring to the notice given to landowners in 1920, the Government rents the land on a 40-years lease.

The government then hands these lands over for share-cropping, its owners being given priority when plots are distributed, lastly it is stipulated that the tenants must grow *cotton*. This means that the tenants (sharecroppers) who are paid a rent can neither decide to put an end to the lease, nor put their plots to any other use apart from that requested by the State. Moreover, they have to be satisfied with any plots given them and cannot demand to work on their own land. This is explained by William H. Hance in the following : « The government nationalized the use, but not the ownership of the land (21).

b. 3) — *The suspension of the formation of a class of landowners :*

The existence of a class of politically powerful landowners generally compels the capitalist class to allow them a large proportion of the social product through the equalization of the general rate of profit. In the absence of this class of landowners, capital which invests in agriculture can, on the one hand, keep the differential rent for itself and on the other hand, dispense with absolute rent. The essential effect of the States reducing the rent to a purely symbolic one and

allocating all the Gezira land (to cotton) was to postpone the formation of this class of non capitalist landowners.

The existence of such a class tends to make investments in agriculture unprofitable for capital.

To conclude, in so far as the tenants produce values and are deprived of all capitalist power of allocating the means of production (the State representing capital), the tenant is apparently the proletarian. But does not the tenant contribute a wage-earning labour force? Is he not therefore a petty capitalist rather than a wage-earner? To answer this question, we have to analyse the relations between the tenant and his *de jure* wage-earner, the seasonal worker.

III. THE RELATIONS BETWEEN TENANT AND (*de jure*) WAGE-EARNER.

The analysis of the relations between the tenant and the State at production level has shown that they are very similar to the classical capitalist relations of production. There is however one important difference : the labour power market seems to be hidden by relations of sharing or partnership. But our argument is still incomplete, for if the tenants are in fact wage-earners, is there not a contradiction, since we know that they too employ wage-earners?

To complete this demonstration, we will now examine the relations between the tenants and « their » wage-earners.

Since there are in the Gezira, several categories of *de jure* wage-earners working directly under the orders of the tenants, we have to show on which the category we shall concentrate our attention.

According to the ILO investigators, a distinction must be made between three categories : family labour, local (village) labour, and outside or migrant labour.

On the basis of this distinction, we note that in the picking season, when the greatest amount of labour is used, there were in 1971-72, 551,545 workers distributed as follows :

family labour	:	164.147	or	30 %
local labour	:	64.416	or	12 %
migrant labour	:	321.982	or	58 %

Compared with 1959-60, these figures show a shift from local labour to family labour. According to the survey, this does not mean a real shift, because the 1959-60 figures related to the Gezira scheme proper while those of 1971-72 relate to the Gezira and its Managil extension. As a result of this extension, former local wage-earners had become tenants and the members of their family had become family labour.

The most significant quantity and rate of increase concern migrant workers, although proportion remained stable (57 % in 1959-60 ; 58 % in 1971-72).

The distinction made by the ILO experts does not permit a thorough analysis in terms of the relations of production. We feel the emphasis must rather be laid on two categories of workers : the *de jure* wage-earners and the family workers. Indeed these are basic relations and the analysis of their evolution enables us to understand the social structure. This study of the subordination of family relations to the logic of capitalist surplus value production is outside the scope of the present research.

Our main aim here is to analyse the relations between tenants and *de jure* wage-earners. In this case, the study of the tenant — seasonal wage earner relation must be our main concern because this relations is very dynamic .

1. The number of seasonal workers varies from a minimum of 61,000 workers in slack periods (sowing) to a maximum 321,982 in the picking season.

2. The seasonal worker — tenant ratio increased from 2.51 in 1959-60 to 3.46 in 1971-72.

These considerations explain why we are emphasizing the tenant — seasonal wage earner relations although the purpose of this section is to analyse the relations between the tenants and all the *de jure* wage-earners they control directly.

Ratio of the various categories of workers per tenant (22)

	1959-60	1971/72	Variation in %
	Rate		1971 %
1. Workers/tenants	4.34	5.93	159
2. Permanent wage-earners per tenant.	3.70	3.53	— 17
3. Family labour per tenant	1.15	1.76	+ 61
4. Migrant wage-earners per tenant	2.51	3.46	+ 95
5. Local wage-earners per tenant	.80	.70	— 10

To analyse these relations is to answer the question of the appropriation and allocation of the surplus value created by the *de jure* proletariat. Who appropriates this surplus value and to what end? That is the real question. If it is mainly done by the tenant, then he is a small capitalist. If not, i.e. if this surplus is appropriated by another agent, it must be concluded that the tenant is only a second-degree employer of the *de jure* wage earner.

Our method will consist in dealing with the scheme as a whole, as part of a wider social formation which is the State and the capitalist world.

The various points which follow will be developed in the following order :

- 1 — The tenant and the surplus value of the *de jure* proletarian.
- 2 — The allocation of the over all surplus value.

a — *The Tenant and the surplus value of the de jure proletarian*

According to the official thesis, the seasonal workers are employed by the tenants, which is legally correct since the service agreement is concluded between the seasonal worker and the tenant. But in no way can it be concluded that it is the tenant who appropriates and allocates the surplus value. In order to show that the tenant is not primarily the exploiter of the seasonal worker, we shall examine the level and the allocation of his income. The consumption level of the Gezira tenant is higher than the national average.

In money term, the income per tenant from commercial production increased from LS 111,8 (Sudanese pounds) in 1959-60 to LS 180 in 1972.

This evolution is due to the diversification of cash crops, particularly through the introduction of two widely consumed crops wheat and groundnuts, marketed by cooperatives and not by the Board (cf. table below).

Tenants' incomes in 1959-60 and 1972 (1)

Crops	Cost (i.e. source of money income) (in Sudanese pounds)			
	1959-60		1971-72	
Cotton	92	82 %	100	55.3 %
Dura	16.5	14.7	10	5.5 %
Lubia	3.3	3.3	—	—
Wheat	—	—	50	28 %
groundnuts (lubia)	—	—	20	11 %
Total £ S	111.8		180	

(1) *Source* : ILO Report to the Government, p. 140.

The table shows also that in ten years, the monthly income accruing from cotton increased from \$ 92 to 100. This result was obtained after the intense economic struggles which began in 1946.

1946 was indeed a very important year in the Gezira, since it was in that year that the proletariat became aware at least partially, of its status. A sowing strike not only led to the capitulation of

the Board, but resulted, a few years later, in the creation of a powerful Trade Union. This is what Caitskell, an apologist of capital, wrote about the strike, « within a week, and on the eve of sowing, 90 % of the tenants had sworn an oath not to plant the cotton crop until they had had all the money out. It was the Gezira's first strike. Few of the organizers were people of any previous known importance » (23).

Subsequently the tenants gradually organized themselves. The Tenant's Union was founded in 1953 to replace the Tenants' Association which had been powerless. From 1953 to 1955, Sheikh el Amin Mohamed el Amin, as president of the Union, gave it a revolutionary orientation. The capitalists formed a coalition against him to defeat one of this essential proposals : the admission of non tenant workers. His stand was a fair one, based on the observation that most of the tenants were in fact, wage-earners.

The ability of the tenants to resist state pressure on their income enabled them to obtain an increase in their share of the « gross production income » as shows by the following table :

Changes in the share of the « tenants » in the cotton values since 1925.

	before 1950	1950	1960	1966
Tenant	40	40	42	48
Government	35	40	42	36
S.P.S. ±	25	20		
G.S.B. +	—	—	10	10
Tenants' reserve funds ...	—	—	2	2
Local Government	—	—	2	2
Social development fund ..	—	—	2	2

Source : MM. YASSIN, C.S. 2544-16, p. 16-17.

± Sudan, Plantation Syndicate.

+ Gezira Scheme Board.

To sum up, the Gezira tenants were able to increase their average money income from 111.8 to 180 Sudanese pounds in ten years, thanks to their trade union organisation and to crop diversification. Since a Sudanese pound is equal to \$ US 2.78, their income is by no means negligible, even if the increase in prices is taken into account (24).

Some authors think that the increase in the share of cotton income accruing to the producers has reached its limit. As Yassin puts it, more emphasis must henceforth be laid on the volume than on the proportion.

« Thus, the crucial question becomes how productivity could possibly be increased, since by so doing, simply, returns to all participants will increase » (25). He urges his countrymen engaged in

planning to devise means of achieving this. He thinks this is all the more imperative because the sharing rule itself cannot be challenged, as it has become a « real symbol » of the rural development of the Sudan.

It is true that, although the formula adopted in the Gezira leads to the exploitation of the seasonal worker with hardly any counterpart, it makes it more difficult to despoil the producer utterly than in the case of the classical colonial trade system (*économie de traite*) practised in West Africa.

We can understand why the formula adopted in the Gezira is demanded elsewhere.

Some authors, considering only the relative aspect (in relation to other regions and seasonal workers), neglect to study a fundamental aspect, that of the level of reproduction of the tenant and his family as a productive force.

Others confine themselves to comparing the present with the past, claiming that there has been a change in the level of consumption.

But the new working conditions must be taken into account. Before the Gezira Scheme, the production work was spread over only three months. Today, the producer-tenant must work eleven months out of twelve. He has other needs which the MPC creates but cannot meet.

In about the fifties « Gezira villages were dirty and hygiene primitive. Dysentery, malaria and bilharzia were endemic » (26).

This situation had hardly changed in 1964 : « the community's state of health is inadequate. Added to this is an unbalanced diet with not enough proteins and fats and generally deficient in greens, particularly during the dry season : the result is a lack of vitamins, a lower physical performance and less resistance to disease » (27).

Ali Suliman shows by this survey that generally « tenants do not want to retire at all because the bulk of them do not have an alternative source of income and there is no social assurance to enable the tenant to have something in his old age » (28).

It may therefore be concluded that although the consumption level of the tenant is relatively high, it is not so in absolute terms. But is this not perhaps due to the fact that part of the income is transferred to accumulation, thus making the tenant a small capitalist ?

Some small farmers do accumulate capital, even outside agriculture. In that case they cannot be considered as future proletarians even if their consumption level is stagnant. But a recent survey has shown that such a movement does not exist in the Gezira.

« In the sample, only about 2 % were partners in agricultural machinery (tractors and harvesters) and no one had any agricultural machinery wholly owned by himself ».

In conclusion, it is wrong to consider the tenant producer of the Gezira as a small capitalist who apparently shares the surplus value with the State and other capitalists. It is not to him that the surplus value of the *de jure* wage earner actually accrues, since he scarcely manages to reproduce his own labour and does not accumulate (29).

In other words, it is not the tenant who is mainly responsible for the exploitation of the seasonal worker. Who then exploits the seasonal worker ?

b — *The allocation of the overall cotton surplus value*

1. *The Measurement Problem.*

We know that it is impossible to measure concretely the surplus value produced by a particular worker, for several reasons :

In a concrete analysis, it is not really the *economic profit* which is looked for, but only the *accounting profit*. In fact, the volume of profit declared often depends on the accounting conventions and the tax law.

Nevertheless, it is known that the surplus value is a difference between the value of a good (which we assimilate here to its price) and the capital advanced.

The surplus value never appears as such, but only in the form of profit on account of the equalization of the profit rates and the formation of the production price. This circumstance is worsened in a country of periphery capitalism by the operation of the law of unequal exchange. Through the operation of this law, the cotton produced in the Sudan becomes a cheap product in the manufacture of English, Indian, German textiles etc.

The worker is a collective worker, not only at the level of the production unit but also on the social scale as a whole. All the workers of the Gezira including those in the research services, contribute to the overall surplus value created. Therefore, it is theoretically and practically impossible for us to distinguish the share of the profit created by the *de jure* wage earners of the Gezira Scheme.

But we know that at accounting level, the profit is difference between costs and receipts. Now, the wages earned by the seasonal workers are necessarily a cost when the Gezira scheme is seen operating as a unit of production. If the receipts are considered as given, the smaller the costs the greater the difference will be. This assumption is not unfounded. The cotton price on the world market may be considered as given. In this case, costs minimization plays an important role

The official thesis takes as the unit of production the holding and not the scheme. From this point of view, wages are a cost for the tenant only, since they are debited to the tenant's account (gene-

rally in the form of advance granted by the Gezira Board). On the contrary, other costs ; fertilizers, the amount spent on disease control to which are added all the expenses made on transport from the picking area to the ginning factories, insurances, rail transport to Port-Sudan, are borne by all the « partners » and charged to a joint or common charges account. The difference between the overall cotton price at Port-Sudan and these costs constitute the « net income » to be shared among the various partners. Each of them would meet some specific expenses. For instance, the State pays the rent (symbolic in fact) to land « owners » ; thus the tenant is supposed to pay his wage-earners out of his gross income.

This accounting presentation is mystifying, because, so as far as the state is concerned, the tenant's gross income is a much a cost as the fertilizer, but with this fundamental difference that this cost makes possible the « self-valorization » of the whole. This cost also includes the wages to be paid to seasonal workers.

It is in the interest of the State to minimize costs. As the share of the tenants (in fact costs) is rigidly fixed (a certain percentage of the « net income » defined above), it is in its interest to see to it that the part of those costs which is not rigidly fixed (wages of the seasonal workers) is as low as possible, so that the tenants, who are better organized, do not ask for an increase of their quota. This is one of the reasons explaining the starvation wages paid to seasonal workers as underlined by many witnesses.

The following may be read in the ILO report :

« The average total earnings during the whole picking season would be about £ S. 25 of which about two-third is paid in cash. This is a paltry amount and the conditions of work are very arduous ».

Therefore, according to the ILO investigators, the wages paid to the seasonal workers do not enable them to reproduce properly their labour power.

These workers are completely disorganized and cannot really defend their interests. They are still more susceptible to paternalism.

Those who have relatives or friends in the Gezira settle with them ; they help in the farm work and are satisfied to be given food and shelter and to be allowed to graze their cattle, as well as small presents in the form of seeds, cloth and perhaps pocket money. They rather consider themselves as units giving help to relatives and benefit from the advantages a visitor expects from his hosts » (31).

The lack of trade union and the susceptibility to paternalism explain why the increase in real wages is nil or even negative.

« The wages for cotton picking labour have increased by only about 3 per cent a year on an average over the last twenty years. This does not cover the rise in prices and thus real wages have on the whole declined » (32).

2. The problem of allocation or transfer

Two periods must be distinguished so as to see whether significant differences must be introduced, the colonial and post colonial periods.

Before independence, there was open «extraversion», that is, observable even from the legal point of view. In fact until 1950, the fiction of an association among three partners rested on «obvious» bases. There was the Sudanese government (in fact, an English administration), the Sudan Plantations Syndicate and the tenants. The profits were to be shared between the government, the lenders (English banks) and the Syndicate.

It is obvious that the Syndicate and the lenders never invested their profit in the Sudan. It was an institutionalized leakage. We see that this direct leakage consisting in a unilateral transfer of values, involved an average amount of about 60 % of the profit in the last four years.

In order to judge the extent of such a transfer, it must be recalled that the Gezira was the only sector of capitalist production in the Sudan.

PROFITS AND THE RATES OF SURPLUS VALUE-FROM 1946 TO 1950

	PROFITS IN EGYPTIAN POUNDS (£e)				Cotton incomes of all the non specialized producers	Overall Rate of the surplus value or 4/5 (%)
	Profits of the State	Profits of the Sudan Plantation Syndicate	Interest on loans	Total		
	1	2	3	4	5	6
1947	1,840,667	1,163,796	720,000	3,724,463	1,964,013	190 %
1948	3,787,772	2,111,293	720,000	6,616,065	9,213,545	157 %
1949	4,557,216	2,459,963	720,000	7,737,179	4,576,516	169 %
1950	5,320,916	2,778,266	720,000	8,819,182	5,820,630	151 %
Total	15,503,571	8,513,318	2,880,000	26,896,889	16,594,704	
Average	3,875,892	2,128,329	720,000	6,724,222	4,148,676	162 %

SOURCE: *Gaitskell, Gezira Scheme History, specially chapters 7 and 20.*

To this transfer must be added that which resulted from the mechanism of unequal exchange. During the last world war the leakage resulting from this was huge, in spite of the difficulty of evaluation. This leakage was accentuated by the general measures taken by England concerning the Empire. It is known that cotton prices on the London market were frozen at a level which in no way reflected the relation between supply and demand: this is revealed by the «paradox» the low prices of the Sudanese cotton during the second world war. The price of a pound of Sudanese cotton never reached 11 pence, whereas it rose to 19 pence in 1947 and to 38.5 pence in 1948 (33).

Since inflation was rife at the same time on imported commodities in the Sudan, the extent of this unilateral transfert can be imagined.

As regards the « government », the essential part of its income came from the Gezira through its share in the « net income » and from various taxes. In fact, the « government » surplus was no longer allocated to capital accumulation. It was paid into a « reserve fund » — in London, of course. Hence England could make use of it. The cumulative surplus reached £ 16,273,315 in 1950 (34).

It is necessary to draw a first conclusion here. If all the Gezira's producers were wage-earners before independence, it was basically in relation to large British capital. Most of the expenditure made on the spot, i.e. : 19.661.876 during the same period (1925- 1950) was devoted to the maintenance of the State machinery created.

Another conclusion is also necessary : before 1950, the Sudanese government « was in fact at the service of the Sudan Plantation Syndicate ». A careful reading of Gaitskell's apologetic book reveals that every time there were contradictions between that administration and the S.P.S., the British government decided in favour of the later.

Gaitskell attributes to skilfulness what was a matter of class power.

What has been happening since nationalization and independence ?

We cannot go into the details. We are not concerned here with the necessity for the State to compensate the S.P.S. We are mostly concerned with whether there was a change in the way the surplus value was transferred. This judgement must necessarily cover the whole situation. The government cannot be required to reinvest the surplus from the Gezira on the spot. But one may ask whether the bulk of the surplus is, or is not, re-used for the purpose of capital accumulation. It is obviously misleading at this level to make an artificial distinction between the Gezira Board and the government. It is the Sudanese state which decides and its decisions depend on its nature and, at the same time, determine that nature.

Nevertheless, in so far as the available documents permit, we can try to compare for instance the budget revenue from the Gezira with the State's investments in material production. But before doing that, let us first see whether there has been any change in the transfer of profits abroad.

The study of the official documents shows that the external orientation (« extraversion ») is planned.

The 1965/66 - 1970/71 five year plan was financed as follows . 48 % by internal and 52 % by external resources. Under these conditions, unilateral transfer of profits continued. The current plan provides that 52 % will be financed by internal resources and 48 % by external resources.

But can we say that the State has really taken the place of English capital through nationalisation ; in other word, is it making investments likely to revolutionize the technological structure of production ?

During the 1965/66-1969/70 five year plan, the government invested no more than £ s 8.8 million in industry, although it received *directly* from the Gezira, as shown by the table below, over £ 34 million.

For the current plan (1970-75) this is how the government intends to apportion the £ s 26.4 million :

« Construction of three taneries, two ready-made clothes factories and a shoe factory; a jute factory, a spinning and weaving factory, two glucose and starch factories, a canning factory » (35).

This is import substitution, which has proved its incapacity to manage developed capitalism in every region of the globe. Indeed, the government's report recognizes this itself.

« In many of cases, the investments made have no impact on the national economy » (36).

In fact, the continuation of the report shows that apparently, the impact is rather negative, wastage rather than accumulation, consumption expenditure for the ruling classes.

In conclusion, the allocation of the surplus value which was formerly made mainly by foreign capital in the legal sense of the word, does not lead today either to an internal orientation « intra-version », or even to the constitution of a dependent industry of the Egyptian type for instance.

STATE INCOME FROM THE GEZIRA

	in £ s
1.7.65 to 30.6.66	7,473,322
1.7.66 to 30.6.67	1,500,000
1.7.67 to 30.6.68	3,400,000
1.7.68 to 30.6.69	7,000,000
1.7.69 to 30.6.70	5,838,178
1.7.69 to 30.6.70	14,376,855*
TOTAL	34,333,3555

* Arrears

Source : Annual budgets

Obviously we cannot deduce from these few considerations that there has been no change in the allocation of surplus value since nationalization and independence. What has changed is that jurisdiction over the allocation of the surplus value has been transferred. But this legal transfer can only be accompanied by an economic transfer through bitter political struggles whose stake is national independence and socialism, this can only be accomplished through class struggles in which the *de facto* and *de jure* wage of the Sudan will have to play a predominant role.

IV. CRITICISM OF THE CONVENTIONAL APPROACH

Most of the surveys and studies on the Gezira deal with « employment » rather than with the relations of production. Assuming that these relations are settled for the best by the Tenancy and Syndicate Agreements, these studies focus their attention on the employment phenomenon. In theory, the promoters of the Scheme did not anticipate wage labour in the Gezira. But in actual fact, there had to be wage labour, since it was impossible for the tenants to cope with the work of the picking season with family labour alone. In other words, the « development » of the Gezira, presupposed from the start the proletarianization of those without jobs in other regions. Instead of placing the problem in its context, that of shaping the Sudan as a periphery, people were satisfied with observing the legal relations « in the field ».

Instead of wondering why the seasonal workers accept low wages, they prefer to expatiate on the tenants' laziness.

Caitskell reports that the Ministry of Finance of the Sudanese Government wrote the following in 1924 : « The essence of the matter is that the Gezira Irrigation Scheme is an absolutely dominating factor in the whole Sudan position, and until that Scheme has been working on a large scale for several years, it is impossible to say whether the Sudan is rich or poor » (37).

It was therefore clear that the Gezira was the only scheme of any importance which the British capital was going to develop in the Sudan. And indeed there was practically nothing else until independence. Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that the migrations from other regions to the Gezira began as soon as the Scheme came into operation.

The following table shows the flow of migration towards the Gezira. It shows that these movements are accelerating continuously (not less than 200,000 people a year since 1968-69) and that increasingly remote regions are affected; while the inflow of seasonal labour from the province of the Blue Nile is falling, this fall is more than offset by that from other provinces. The two regions most affected are the Khordoffan and the Darfour, regions served by the railway and in which some cash crops (though less lucrative than the Gezira cotton) are cultivated.

(see table on the following page)

How can this phenomenon be explained? It should first be noticed that this migration is not equally large every year, so that : « When the harvest in the labour supplying areas, mainly Darfur and Kordofan provinces, is good, people do not want to leave their homes to pick cotton » (39).

This assessment must be qualified or at least made more explicit. The ILO is concerned here with « fluctuations ». But, the whole must

first be explained. More than half the 500,000 workers are from outside. This figure may vary from year to year. But why do more than 200,000 people flock towards the Gezira every year in search of work ? That is the fundamental question.

FLOW OF MIGRATIONS TO THE GEZIRA
(Picking labour by source of supply)

Source of Supply	1965/66	1966/67	1967/68	1968/69	1969/70	1970/71	1971/72
Blue Nile	159,875.	96,010	122,703	161,481	118,964	117,893	
Kordofan & Darfur	21,089	64,921	67,475	79,053	97,358	95,572	
Kassala	—	5,297	2,719	7,255	8,851	7,551	321,982
Southern provinces.	—	450	575	790	516	524	
« Others »	39,651	9,409	5,518	10,087	90,180	86,599	
TOTAL	220,515	17,612	198,990	258,666	315,869	308,132	321,982

Source : I.L.O., report to the Government, p. 140.

The Sudan is classified as among the « poorest » countries in Africa, alongside Chad, Niger and others.

With a per capita national income of 40 Sudanese pounds (120 dollars) in 1970-71, « a large share of the national product still comes from the primary sectors, using archaic methods and without the help of modern technology or capital goods ; 70 % of the work force is engaged in agricultural activities and 60 % of exports are made up of one single crop, cotton » (40).

Gezira, however, is one of the three regions in the country to have been « positively » integrated into the world capitalist economy. There are nine economic regions in the Sudan, of which only three produce goods for the capitalist market in any significant volume.

The three regions in question are Kassala on the coast, the Blue Nile region, where Gezira is situated, and the Khartoum region. « These three regions together account for practically all exports » (41).

The reason is simple. The colonial economic power was not interested in developing the country, but only in capital profits ; hence the concentration of investments over a very limited area. The post-independence government has not introduced any fundamental changes in this respect.

Since 1920, as the ILO experts fittingly remark, all government investments in irrigation, transport and research... have been concentrated in the three regions, a fact that clearly indicates the role attributed to the other regions (42), namely that of suppliers of cheap labour, since the demand for such labour is practically nil in relation to supply. In 1970, there were hardly more than 130,000 (de jure)

wage-earners in all industrial, commercial and public *establishments outside* agriculture, of which more than 75,000 in the three « privileged » regions (45).

Considering the whole of northern Sudan, where the majority of these wage-earners reside, it is to be noted that the number of wage-earners engaged in industry and commerce represents less than 4 % of the regions (43).

Thus, the very low level of capital development in the Sudan, combined with the destructive effects of a regressive type of accumulation, explains the acceptance of low wages by some of the producers, a fact which those who are holding as the unit of production refuse to recognize.

Some economists prefer to resort to subjective theories in order to support the idea that there is a basic contradiction between tenants and seasonal workers. Instead of investigating the reasons for the low wages paid to seasonal workers, they wonder why the tenant hires non-family members as workers, whereas the technocrats had considered that family members would be sufficient to cultivate the plots of land. This is the type of question asked by, for instance, McLoughlin (44), for whom the tenants of Gezira, like other Sudanese, shy off from manual labour. In fact, the impression conveyed is that very often the Gezira tenant hires wage labour for work which, « logically », he should himself be doing.

This approach tends, in the final analysis, to put the responsibility for the poverty of seasonal workers squarely on the shoulders of the tenants.

According to McLoughlin, the reason why the tenants tend to employ paid workers is that in pre-capitalist Sudanese society, certain jobs were done by slaves. Manual work was considered below the dignity of non-slaves, and the implementation of the Gezira scheme has not done away with the old value systems. This is supposed to be why a Sudanese, whenever possible, will refuse to do manual work (45). The author has undertaken a great deal of documentary research in an effort to support this theory. Similarly, another author (46) also supports the theory of a slave society in pre-capitalist Gezira.

If the Sudanese society had been as slave-centred as McLoughlin claims, it is surprising that the scheme's historian, Gaitskell, makes no mention of it. Other authors tend to stress the fact that Gezira was a very active trading area, including slave trade, but that it was not a society organised on a slave-based mode of production.

However, McLoughlin goes on to demolish his own argument by stressing that slavery was mainly of a domestic kind. In other words, the slaves did not work in the fields. One would have thought that if any prejudices against work formerly carried out by slaves were

to survive, it would be against domestic work. If slaves were only doing domestic work, there can be no reason why suddenly the « master and slave mentality should permeate through the entire social structure.

According to Brausch and Gaitskell, the « contempt » for agricultural work in Gezira is a recent phenomenon. They blame it on the rigidity of the profit-sharing system. The system in force in the early 1950's was 40 % to the tenant, 40 % to the government and 20 % to the S.P.S. The 1950-51 cotton harvest was exceptionally good and prices were high, so that British capital was obligated to pay very high wages to the tenants. This sudden wealth gave rise to a « landlord » mentality among the tenants, and high incomes paid at a certain time would seem to be the real reason for the sharecroppers' attitude towards manual work.

Brausch's thesis is more enlightening than McLoughlin's, but falls short of the true explanation. To accept Brausch's thesis, one would have to assume that, in all circumstances, an increase in wages causes a drop in the quantity of work performed, whereas this assumption is only confirmed when there exists such a large reserve army that the poorest are brought to accept work at extremely low wages.

That is, in fact, what happens in the Gezira region. Everywhere, and not only in the Sudan, massive unemployment of the type occurring in the peripheral capitalist societies, tends to transform regular wage and income earners into privileged members of society, to such a point that Singer* has suggested making employment/unemployment the decisive criterion of dualism.

Many authors have erred by starting off on the basis of these « privileges », without first having established a hierarchy in the levels of contradictions.

We had set ourselves the task of showing that through the complexity of the economic relations prevailing in the Gezira project, it was possible to throw light on the fundamental relations of production, which are capitalist.

We hope to have demonstrated on the basis of this concrete example, that the distinction between a *de jure* and a *de facto* wage-earner is not purely speculative, for it has enabled us to show that the Gezira tenant is not a « small capitalist », but a true wage-earner with all the consequences that this enables from the point of view of a strategy in the struggle towards socialism.

Our conclusion is not denial of the existing contradictions between the tenant and the *de jure* wage-earner. We simply believe that

* Singer: *Emploi, revenu et égalité. Stratégies pour accroître l'emploi productif au Kenya* — Genève, BIT, 1975.

in a global context, the antagonistic interests are between the government and big capital on the one hand, and the producers of surplus value on the other.

In the final analysis, both categories of producers are government employees, one category *de facto* and the other *de jure*. As a result, their income is nothing else but variable capital, if we consider the project in its entirety. If the tenant is the «boss» of the wage-earner, he is secondary and not a primary one. The main exploiter of the wage-earner is the state itself.

The most important implication of this conclusion is that from the standpoint of economic struggles at least, the non-tenant workers should consider themselves primarily as wage-earners employed by the true owner of their surplus value, in practice the State. It is the state and imperialism which bear the responsibility for the poverty of the seasonal workers and not the tenants, as the official theory would have it.

FOOTNOTES

1. 1 feddan = 1.04 acres = 0.42 hectare.
2. These figures are reproduced from the ILO report to the Government of the Republic of the Sudan on the development and implementation of a national employment policy, Geneva, 1973.
3. W.A. HANCE — « African Economic Development. Frederick A. Praeger Publishers — N.Y. London 1957.
4. A. SHEIRA — « Aspects fiscaux et financiers et la Réforme Agraire de la République du Sudan 1920-1961, bulletin de l'économie agricole en Afrique N° 2. Janvier 1963.
5. A. BRIXHE — « La culture irriguée du cotonnier dans le Gezira soudanais », bull. agricole du Congo Belge vol. N° 3. June 1954.
6. M.H. YASSIN and Ibrahim H. Abdel Galil — « The impact of incorporation in the world market and consequent effects of change in the Gezira region traditional society in the Sudan, IDEP, Nov. 1973 p. 11.
7. A. BRIXHE — « La culture irriguée du cotonnier dans le Gezira soudanais » in bull. agricole du Congo Belge, vol. 65 N° 3. Juin 1954.
8. This is how Gaitskell describes in the Gezira Scheme, p. 122, the discipline to which a tenant was subjected, by quoting an example :
« Mohamed Ahmed ABDULLA, of Abu SENEINA village who had previously been the independent owner of an irregular plot of land somewhere on the Gezira plain, became instead tenant N° 1 on the Talha minor canal. His agricultural life was now less a matter of his own whim and judgement, for he and his companions in tenancies 2, 3 and 4 had to be present on an appointed day to take waters on their cotton. They had to complete this watering, in four days so that the water could pass on down to tenants 5 to 9 in their turn. Moreover, all the tenants in field N° 1 had to finish their cotton watering in eight days so that their field outlet-pipe in the Talha minor canal could be closed in time for field number 4 to be opened in alternating fashion on, its correct watering day... What was necessary for cotton was necessary too for dura and lubia.
9. M. YASSIN, IDEP, op. cit. Page 6.
10. D. SHAW — « Les problèmes de la main d'œuvre de la région de Gezira ». BEAA, N° 5, avril 1964, p. 16.
11. KAMEL HUSSEIN AHMED — Management improvement in the Gezira Scheme. Institute of Public Administration. Republic of Sudan, occasional paper N° 6, 1965, p. 19.
12. Idem.
13. S.D. SHAW and SULIMAN Ali A. « Les problèmes de la main-d'œuvre dans la région de Gézira, B.E.A.A., avril 1964.
14. A.Z. SHEIRA. — « Aspects fiscaux et financiers de la Réforme Agraire de la République du Soudan de 1920 à 1961 ». bull. de l'éco. agr. en Afrique, N° 2, janvier 1963.
15. 1 Sudanese pound = 2.78 U.S.A. dollars.
16. Sheira : op. cit.
17. Sheira : op. cit.
18. Yassin writes « By 1927, about 60 % of the land that was later incorporated in the scheme was owned by about one hundred families, a large proportion of whom were traders ». op. cit. I. p. 3.
Gaitskell tells us that in the village of TALHA which he considers as a typical village, there was in 1926, a property of 780 feddans belonging to the family of Sheik Ahmed et Tereifi. The village as a whole had a total of 3,000 feddans — Gaitskell, the Gezira chapter 8.
19. YASSIN and ABDEL GALIL — op. cit. p. 9.
20. Point taken up later.
21. W.A. HANCE « African economic development », p. 42.
22. Calculations based on Report to the Gezira, Table IV, p. 142.
23. Gaitskell, op. cit. p. 227.
24. ILO, report p. 140.
25. Yassin Maud Abdel Galil, I.H., op. cit.
26. Gaitskell, op. cit. p. 218.
27. Shaw — « Problèmes de la main-d'œuvre », op. cit.
28. Ali Ahmed Suliman : « Production Relationships and capital formation in the Gezira Scheme », IDEP C.S., 2544-11, Nov. 1973. p. 10.
29. Ali Ahmed Suliman : « Production Relationships and capital formation in the Gezira Scheme », IDEP C.S. 2544-11, Nov., 1973. p. 10.

50 *Africa Development*

30. ILO report to the Government, p. 145.
31. Brausch — « Problèmes du travail au Gésira », *Civilisations* XIII, 1965, No 3.
32. ILO report to the government, p. 145.
33. Gaitskell, *op. cit.*, p. 273.
34. Gaitskell, *op. cit.*, p. 268.
35. Ministry of planning, Khartoum 1970 five year plan 1970-71 - 1974-75, p. 69.
36. *Idem*, p. 66.
37. Quotation from Gaitskell, *op. cit.* p. 106.
38. Gaitskell, p. 106.
39. ILT Report to the Government, p. 22-24.
40. The Republic of the Sudan. Economic Planning Secretariat, Ministry of Finance and Economics : « The Ten-Year Plan of Economic and Social Development 1961-62 — 1970-71 ».
41. ILO Report... *op. cit.*, p. 150.
42. For a comprehensive analysis of migrations in the peripheral capitalist societies, see Samir Amin « contemporary migrations in West Africa » Oxford University Press 1974 or IDEP Document dated September 1972.
43. ILO Report... *op. cit.*, p. 159.
44. Peter F.M. McLoughlin « Economic Development and the Heritage of Slavery in the Sudan Republic, Africa » (*Journal of the International African Institute*, Vol. XXXI No 4, October 1962).
45. McLoughlin seems to forget that in the capitalist system, all work is a constraint and particularly manual work.
46. H.B. Barklay « Notes on a Villages in the Gezira Area of the Republic of Sudan », *Muslim World* XV No 1, January 1965.

RÉSUMÉ

Le projet du Gesira-Managil au Soudan couvre 800.000 hectares environ. Il emploie près de 100.000 métayers en permanence, 550.000 travailleurs saisonniers, 1.578 inspecteurs locaux et 7.546 employés de l'office de Gesira. Il est ainsi le projet agricole le plus important du Soudan et de l'Afrique.

D'après le statut juridique du projet remontant à la période coloniale britannique, il y a 3 « partenaires » égaux dans le projet jouissant des mêmes droits : les métayers qui produisent le coton ; l'Etat qui est propriétaire du système d'irrigation et fermier ; le Soudan plantation syndicale (Office de Gesira) qui est un organe chargé par l'Etat de la gestion de sa ferme.

Dans cet article, l'auteur discute la position des métayers qui, légalement, sont, avec le Gouvernement et l'Office de Gesira, des « partenaires » égaux dans le projet. Mais, comme on le sait, les relations juridiques ne sont pas conformes aux rapports fondamentaux de production. En effet, en termes juridiques, les métayers sont des « partenaires » dans le projet et la relation existant entre eux, le Gouvernement et l'Office de Gesira, est celle du partage de profit, d'après une proportion déterminée à l'avance et qui a changé plusieurs fois depuis l'entrée en fonction du projet. Mais en fait, en termes de rapports fondamentaux de production, leur position est celle de salariés de l'Etat, au même titre que les travailleurs saisonniers. Ceci est démontré par l'analyse des rapports de production entre les métayers et le Gouvernement d'une part, et les métayers et l'Office de Gesira d'autre part.

L'auteur analyse également la relation entre les « partenaires » et une catégorie de travailleurs salariés, les travailleurs saisonniers. Il trouve que c'est ce rapport qui est finalement déterminant pour la compréhension des rapports entre « partenaires » au sein du projet. En effet, juridiquement, les travailleurs saisonniers sont des salariés de métayers. Ceux-ci sont donc de petits patrons. Quoique ce rapport juridique joue un rôle évident dans la formation de la conscience de classe, il n'en demeure pas moins vrai que métayers et travailleurs saisonniers sont collectivement des salariés de l'Etat, l'un de fait, l'autre de droit, avec tout ce que cela implique du point de vue de la lutte de classe. Le métayer n'est donc pas un petit capitaliste comme on voudrait bien le faire croire, mais bien un salarié

En tant que salariés de l'Etat, métayers et travailleurs saisonniers sont l'objet d'exploitation par l'Etat. C'est l'Etat soudanais et l'impérialisme qui, en dernier ressort, sont responsables de la pauvreté de salariés du projet du Gesira-Managil.