

world and with a density of population comparable with that of India is not afflicted with the problem [of unemployment or “surplus labor”). The growth of population obviously plays a part in the formation of a proletariat but it is the social processes whereby large sections of the community are separated from their means of production that is the decisive factor.³⁵

Then there was Carmi and Rosenfeld’s assertion that the peasant was “free from work on the land for at least half the year,” which was part of an “agrarian regime that provided limited opportunities.” In essence, what they are saying is that there was an abundance of “surplus labor” in a sector that was stagnant.

Although W.A. Lewis was not mentioned, we are dealing with the same meaning of the concept “surplus labor” in which a portion of the labor force, characterized by “zero marginal product,” could be taken out of agriculture without a reduction in the total product. As noted in Chapter 1, this has been shown to be ahistorical and empirically inaccurate in the case of the former Rhodesia.³⁶

In addition, the use of concepts like “surplus labor” shows a lack of understanding of the nature of agricultural economies and thus the superimposition of notions derived from neoclassical economy theory. Perhaps these concepts, which are

appropriate to a modern industrial economy, are not really applicable. Particularly for the unpaid family labor that accounts for most of the rural workforce, there is no institutionally determined

³⁵Geoffrey Kay, *Development and Underdevelopment: A Marxist Analysis* (London: The Macmillan Press, Ltd., 1975), 154-5.

³⁶Giovanni Arrighi, “Labor Supplies in Historical Perspective: A Study of the Proletarianization of the African Peasantry in Rhodesia,” *Journal of Development Studies* 6, no. 3 (1970): 197-234.