

Rural Unemployment in Australia: Orthodox & Radical Perspectives

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Despite renewed interest in providing analyses of the causes and consequences of Australia's unemployment problem, little has been done to establish the nature of the problem in rural Australia. This paper brings together findings from a number of studies as a basis for the evaluation of orthodox and radical accounts of the causes of rural unemployment in Australia. Historically, employment opportunities in rural Australia have varied with the fate of agricultural and mining operations. Agricultural activities, in particular, have been characterised by booms and busts relating to market fluctuations, climatic factors and government policy decisions. Periodically, large proportions of farmers have been forced to leave the land. Many have subsequently provided labour power for manufacturing and service activities in the growing cities. However, in the 1890's and the 1930's not even the opportunity of moving to the cities for work was open to the displaced farmers and farm workers.

In the 1970's again, there has been a correspondence of rural and urban unemployment. Non-metropolitan unemployment which stood at 35,000 persons in 1971 reached 103,000 ten years later.¹ Despite-generating public works (under the McMahon initiated Non-Metropolitan Unemployment Relief Scheme and Whitlam's Regional Employment Development Scheme), unemployment continues to be a major social and economic problem in rural areas.



FEATURES OF RURAL EMPLOYMENT IN AUSTRALIA

Recent analyses of unemployment in Australia indicate that there is no discernable nation-wide pattern. Statistics from the relatively prosperous

years 1961-71 reveal that in the states of New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland levels of unemployment were significantly higher in non-metropolitan than in metropolitan areas. However, in South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania, the reverse was true.²

At times of little overall unemployment in the economy metropolitan areas have a higher proportion of frictional unemployment (the frictionally unemployed are in the process of changing jobs), but non-metropolitan areas show a higher degree of demand-deficiency unemployment. (Those unemployed through demand-deficiency are those for whom there would be no work available even if they changed their occupation.)³ In times of economic recession demand-deficiency unemployment continues to remain higher in the non-metropolitan than in the metropolitan areas. This is revealed in Table 1. The main reason for unemployment by those interviewed in the non-metropolitan areas was that there were simply "no vacancies at all" in their local district.

Official statistics disguise the degree of difficulty faced by those seeking work in the non-metropolitan labour market.

TABLE 1: Main Difficulty in Finding Work by Place of Residence
July 1979

Main Difficulty in Finding Work	Location	
	State Capital Cities %	Other %
Own ill-health or handicap	4.3	3.4
Considered by employers to be too young/too old	15.2	11.6
Unsuitable hours	4.3	2.5
Too far to travel/transport problems	7.1	3.2
Lacked necessary education, training skills	8.8	6.7
Insufficient work experience	9.2	6.3
No vacancies in line of work	17.2	16.1
No vacancies at all	22.2	42.3
Other difficulties	7.6	3.2
No difficulties reported	4.3	3.2

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Persons Looking for Work, July 1978, Australian Government Printer, Canberra, March 1980, p. 11.

Country areas, because of their traditionally limited employment markets are known to contain large numbers of discouraged workers, particularly females.

Discouraged workers are those who would like to work but who have given up the search because of the lack of opportunities in their local district. Studies conducted during the economically buoyant years of the late 1960's and early 1970's revealed that, in three separate country areas of New South Wales, there was an 11-12% hidden unemployment rate among females.⁴ A recent study showed this figure to be about 28% for northern New South Wales.⁵ The latter study concluded that there was also considerable underemployment within the existing female workforce since a high proportion of women who worked part-time indicated a willingness to undertake full-time employment should it become available. In the Bathurst and Orange area, designated as a growth centre in New South Wales, less than one-third of women desiring work had actually registered with the Commonwealth Employment Service.⁶

Allowing for the obvious understating of rural unemployment, it is possible to use Commonwealth Employment Service (C.E.S.) statistics to show the general trend. Table 2 indicates that unemployment in the "rural" occupations (farming, farm labouring, shearing, managing of properties, trapping, hunting, etc.) has increased fourfold in the past ten years while the number of job vacancies has decreased by half. Importantly rural unemployment has become worse each year despite the rural recovery in the late 1970's and despite the fact that many farm workers who lose their jobs register as labourers rather than as farmworkers so as to broaden their possibilities for employment. The "rural" category is, incidentally, one which relates specifically to agricultural activities, and, while it is useful in showing the general trend, is representative of only about 10% of unemployed persons in non-metropolitan areas.

TABLE 2: Rural Unemployment and Job Vacancies in Australia During the Month of February 1972 - 1981 (February 1981 is the most recent C.E.S. figure available at the time of writing.)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Rural Unemployment</u>	<u>Job Vacancies</u>
1981	15,185	1,874
1980	13,550	1,250
1979	13,091	2,393
1978	11,807	1,413
1977	9,528	1,721
1976	8,336	1,965
1975	8,315	2,510
1974	4,637	3,605
1973	3,800	3,742
1972	3,403	2,133

Source: Commonwealth Employment Service, Monthly Review of the Employment Situation (various issues)

One group of workers not identified in the table, but who are facing constant employment difficulties, are the abattoir workers in country regions. Country meatworks responded to good export markets and to the desire of

farmers to reduce their herds during the recent drought by killing large numbers of cattle. But with the rains during the Autumn and Winter of 1981, farmers have been "breeding up", and the numbers of animals being offered for slaughter has been reduced considerably. The live sheep trade has also threatened jobs at abattoirs. The Bureau of Agricultural Economics has forecast a 13% increase in the demand for live sheep exports during 1981, and a 13% decrease in local slaughtering.⁷ Union officials are blaming the live sheep trade for many of the economic difficulties of rural abattoirs and are forecasting that unemployment will grow in those rural occupations which "service" the sheep industry - shearing, meat processing and packaging.⁸

Unemployment does not affect all rural areas in the same way. Various "pockets" of unemployment can be readily identified. They tend to be areas with a declining agricultural base (such as the North and South coasts of New South Wales where dairy activities have receded during the past decade), or those large country towns where young (post-school age) populations combine with limited secondary industry (regional centres such as Dubbo, Tamworth, Wagga Wagga, Bendigo).⁹

It is acknowledged by most researchers that the rural labour force has a lower level of skills, training, and general education than has the metropolitan labour force.¹⁰ Hence, both opportunities for work, and job mobility are limited in rural areas. Groups most affected in rural areas are juniors, school leavers, aborigines and the slightly handicapped.¹¹ A recent study of unemployment in Euroa, Victoria, revealed that there were few full-time employment options for juniors and young school leavers, and many of those who had work moved from one part-time job to another. Ironically, histories of part-time employment often become a barrier to obtaining full-time work in the district at a later date.¹²



In regions dependent upon agriculture there appears little likelihood that natural resource development will assist the unemployed. The New South Wales Department of Industrial Development and Decentralisation believed that where new rural jobs were being created experienced personnel would be brought into the regions. There were no developments underway to relieve the high level of female unemployment in the clerical and administrative areas in rural districts.¹³

Even in rural areas where mining and large scale industrial activities are occurring, there is little likelihood of easing the problem of unemployment among females and junior males. In the Hunter region of New South Wales two-thirds of those seeking work fell into these categories. Yet industrial and mining development, capital-intensive in nature and

requiring an experienced, skilled workforce, bypasses both these groups.¹⁴
One writer has noted:

With proper manpower planning labour demand could have been forecast two or three years ago and technical training accelerated to cope with the boom. Instead, it has been left to the market and, now that the market is being seen to fail, immigration is turned to for an urgent solution.¹⁵

The "boom", incidentally, has other implications for the rural unemployed. As the cost of housing rises in response to the influx of workers in the construction sector and in response to purchases of land and dwellings by large corporations, the unemployed and others on social welfare benefits are finding it increasingly difficult to live. As well, in the Hunter region, welfare benefits and community services are being curtailed as a result of federal government policy.¹⁶

The rural poor, and in particular the aborigines, also suffer as unemployment grows. One study revealed that aborigines constituted the "hard core of those in chronic poverty in rural areas";¹⁷ another found, not surprisingly, that aborigines in rural areas received the lowest wages of any workers in Australia.¹⁸ At a time of full employment in the Australian economy it was estimated that there was a 20% rate of unemployment among aboriginal males in rural New South Wales.¹⁹ In Wagga Wagga during 1980 the unemployment rate among adult aborigines was put at 75%.²⁰ Aborigines are often the "last hired, first fired" and have obviously suffered greatly in recent times.

The Henderson poverty study revealed the close relationship between poverty and unemployment. The irregular work available to many agricultural labourers and the lack of off-farm work opportunities for economically marginal farmers results in hardship for the agricultural workforce. It was found, in the early 1970's that 18.4% of farm and rural workers lived below the poverty line, twice as many as in other low-income occupational groups.²¹

The restructuring of the Australian economy as foreign investment proceeds virtually unimpeded is becoming a major cause for concern. Foreign investment in our relatively cheap rural land has the effect of reducing local ownership and driving up prices of agricultural land beyond productive potential. As The Land recently noted: "foreign investors are pricing the farm out of the reach of the average Australian agriculturalist ..."²² . It claimed, for one area of New South Wales, "if landowners in the Gwydir Valley were required to fly the flag of their country of origin, it would look like the gathering of the United Nations."²³ The influx of foreign capital may at first glance appear to be a healthy sign - jobs will be created in rural towns to service the huge irrigation schemes and other agricultural projects being commenced. The problem, however, is that the big farms are not labour intensive. The small farmers (and their families) displaced as land is taken over are not usually replaced by an equivalent number of rural workers. So, by forcing the small "family" farms into liquidation, the large, foreign owned, capital intensive farms will be adding to the unemployment problem in rural areas. And, there is concern that where farmers and farmworkers wish to remain, they must join the workforce of the foreign corporations. The New South Wales Minister for Agriculture has warned of the possible creation of a "peasant class" of tenant farmers working for overseas landlords. The Minister released figures showing that overseas investment in Australian rural land rose from \$9 million in 1976 to \$69 million in 1980. Over the past four years a

total of 13.8 million hectares (equivalent to the area cropped to wheat in Australia each year) has been purchased by foreigners.²⁴

In summary, the effect of continued unemployment in rural areas is to prevent marginal farmers from obtaining off-farm work, to increase the extent of poverty among low income rural workers, to disadvantage particular groups such as youths and aborigines, to exacerbate the problem of hidden unemployment among females, and to further erode the economic and social base of rural towns.

THE ORTHODOX PERSPECTIVE

The orthodox explanations of rural unemployment provided by agricultural economists and rural sociologists tend to be based upon an uncritical acceptance of the forces of capital accumulation. Most accounts have implicitly treated such forces as desirable and have thereby focused upon the need for 'adjustment' by those disadvantaged through the continued growth of capitalism.

Increased mechanisation has meant that society requires fewer farms and fewer farmers. Less labour time is required to achieve the same output, so that farm labour-power can be 'released'. Those farmers and their families who are 'released' are regarded as having been the least efficient - off-farm migration is seen to be a natural and desirable outcome of the growth of an efficient agriculture. As these least efficient farmers and their families leave the land existing units expand. This in turn, is seen to promote the use of even more productive large scale machinery.

Those who leave the land and, in turn, many families in the country towns which exist as service centres are supposed to migrate to urban areas. The phenomenon of rural-to-urban migration, claimed to be one of the most profound social changes of the twentieth century,²⁵ and recognised as being concomitant with the processes of industrialisation and urbanisation, is looked upon favourably. In the U.S.A. it is estimated that some 40 million people have moved from rural to urban areas during the past 50 years and farms are being abandoned at the rate of 100,000 per year.²⁶ In Australia, 31% of the population lived in rural areas in 1949 but this had dropped to 14% by 1971.²⁷ Migration is seen to benefit members of the rural population. They move in response to 'rising aspirations' and a 'drastic departure from the fatalism of the past'.²⁸ As well, the country produces an 'excess natural surplus' which must be absorbed by the city to overcome its 'vital deficit' of needed workers.²⁹

Rural sociologists and agricultural economists have recognised that there are ways in which the rural to urban flow of population is blocked. Farmers may have low levels of training and may not have skills required for urban work; the older farmers in particular may be reluctant to move if this means retraining for another occupation; in some instances the prospects of off-farm work may not be known or fully understood by the farmer; some may simply prefer a subsistence level income and the farming 'way of life' despite advice that they should move. These factors create, on the one hand, the phenomenon of 'underemployment'. Unemployment, on the other hand, is seen to be largely due to the inability of those displaced from farming or from rural occupations to move to other areas in an effort to obtain work. What prevents their movement? Such factors as low education levels, low job aspirations, lack of achievement motivation, and a limited world view, have been proffered as factors which act to stem the migration process.

Clearly, the identification of personal characteristics as being responsible for the problems of rural unemployment/underemployment leads to solutions which are based upon the need to change those characteristics. The federally funded Education Programme for Unemployed Youth (E.P.U.Y.) and Community Youth Support Scheme (C.Y.S.S.) have been based upon the assumption that the individual must change before the problems of unemployment can be solved. Thus, training the unemployed to be more presentable at job interviews, correcting their grammar, improving their mathematical ability and encouraging them to be better mannered are seen to be appropriate responses when it is the behaviour or personality of the individual which is to blame for his or her unemployment.

This approach is, of course, misleading: individual characteristics rather than any underlying material reality (such as lack of work opportunities) are seen to cause the problem. That such views and such schemes can be tolerated in periods when, in some country towns, up to 30 or 40 people are unemployed for each available job vacancy, is an indication of the degree to which the public has been misled by the government and the media, over the issue of unemployment.

There is, as might be expected, support for the government's schemes from both employers, who benefit from a better trained and disciplined labour force, and from public officials involved in the various programmes. It is claimed in one country town that the E.P.U.Y. Scheme has had a success rate in excess of 50%: that is, of all those graduating from the course over half have found work.³⁰ While this may sound impressive and helps to legitimise both the scheme and the idea that the unemployment problem lies with unmotivated youths not prepared to improve themselves for entry into the workforce, it is important to note that the policy of the local C.E.S. office is to give first offers of jobs to those who have completed the E.P.U.Y. course. It does not take much imagination to consider the degree of social control which could be enforced by a government requiring that future C.E.S. applicants receive 'appropriate training' before being advised of job opportunities.

Even when it is acknowledged that there is a deficiency of jobs in urban as well as rural areas and hence no point in encouraging rural-urban migration, proposals by bourgeois academics usually go no further than to suggest more government aid to private enterprises (i.e. decentralisation assistance), or the introduction of stop-gap measures (such as unemployment relief schemes).

It is adjustment assistance which is afforded particular attention. From December 1976 to July 1977, for example, a sum of \$3.6 million in repayable loans and other assistance was provided to some 19,000 applicants from farms around Australia under various rural adjustment schemes.³¹



For those not as privileged as the farmers, the National Employment and Training (N.E.A.T.) Scheme and Special Youth Employment Training Programme (S.Y.E.T.P.) were also available in rural areas. But because these programmes fail to deal with those forces which operate in capitalist society to create unemployment, they fail also to solve the problem.

The rural media, in reporting the views of conservative theorists, provides analyses at the level of appearances. Unemployment seems to be caused by one or more of the unrealistic job aspirations of school leavers, high dole payments, the inappropriateness of modern education, the attitudes of the unemployed toward work, the excessively high wages of youth labour, and, as a convenient scapegoat where all else fails, women in the workforce.³² The nature of the capitalist economic system is outside the scope of analysis.

Clearly the orthodox analysis fails to isolate the reasons for the continued problem of rural unemployment. The problem is dealt with at a superficial level. Consequently, the unemployment programmes and other measures adopted by governments deal with effects rather than causes.

THE RADICAL PERSPECTIVE

A radical analysis of rural unemployment takes, as its starting point, the historical development of social relations focusing, therefore, upon conflicts and contradictions in the course of change.

Marx, during various periods of his lifetime, concerned himself with the proletarianisation of the European peasantry, particularly the dismantling of peasant forms of production and their replacement with capitalist production relations. However, in Australia, even in the very early period of development a peasantry did not become established.³³ Rather, Australian agriculture has been characterised by what Karl Kautsky once described as the "two basic characteristics" of commercial farming - individual ownership of the land, and the production of commodities for exchange. It is the change in capitalist social relations themselves which must be examined in a study of Australian agriculture.

As agriculture developed in Australia, the 'owner-operator' model of farming became prominent. Variation of this model did of course occur, but in general terms family labour supplemented with that of seasonal workers and perhaps one or two hired hands provided the basis of agricultural production. Farmers, as small capitalists, have traditionally worked with limited labour and capital in a competitive market. Their needs are threefold - to maximise returns to their own (and employees') labour, to minimise costs wherever possible, and to expand output as a means of increasing returns to invested capital (thereby improving the competitive position and long term viability of the farm). Their ideological support can be described as conservative radicalism.³⁵

At times when markets have improved and input costs have been held down farmers and graziers have enjoyed a position of relative economic comfort. The opportunity has existed, particularly in areas where shearing or grain handling is a major activity, for hired rural workers to struggle successfully for higher wages. Hired rural workers have become increasingly costly to employ. Farmers have responded by pressing successfully for legislation to have agricultural wage levels kept below average minimum wage rates, and, as an on-farm response, have displaced labour with machinery, wherever possible. They have also resorted to more obvious forms of class action (demonstrations

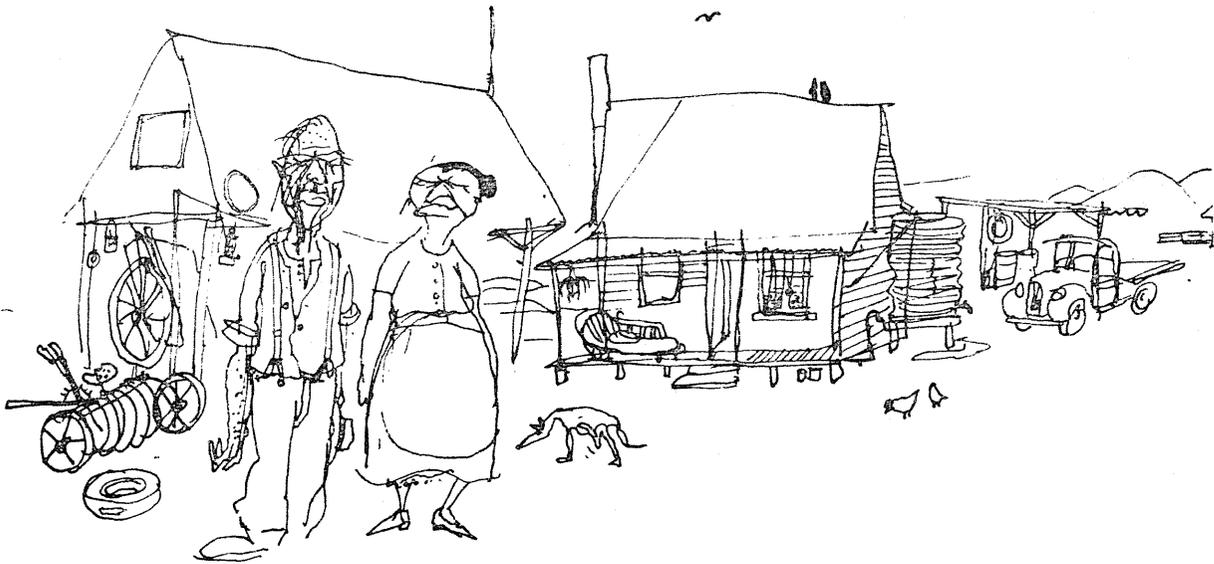
in Canberra, union bashing and strike breaking), when these have suited their purpose .³⁶

Today's farmers are caught in a cost/price squeeze where input costs have been increasing at a greater rate than returns to production. (In the period from 1964 to 1979 farm returns increased by 113% but farm costs, for the same period, rose by 235%.)³⁷ Their responses have been to shed labour, to increase the scale of farm operations and to pressure governments for concessions and allowances. Most of the latter gains disadvantage the working class since it is their taxes which pay for the subsidies, bounties, machinery provisions and tax allowances obtained by the farmers. Where two-price schemes, monopoly boards, market discrimination tactics and output controls are imposed by governments, the working class usually pays again as a result of the necessarily inflated prices of food and fibre.

Notwithstanding that farmers have commonly regarded workers as the enemy, it is important to acknowledge the uneasy relationship between the farming industry and manufacturing industry. While manufacturers have aided farming by the development of machinery, equipment and chemical inputs (herbicides, pesticides, weedicides), thereby helping to ensure short-term productivity gains,³⁸ the heavy protection afforded the manufacturers has added to the input-cost problem of farmers. Increased agricultural productivity obtained in large part through the use of high-cost machinery, has resulted in a growing proportion of the agricultural surplus being absorbed by Australian manufacturing. And farmers have had little choice but to adopt the new, improved machinery and chemicals, since their economic livelihood depends upon successful competition with other farmers who themselves adopt the most profitable manufactured 'package'.

Furthermore agribusiness is growing in importance. Up until now, individual farmers have been able to make suitable adjustments concerning what is produced, how it is produced and to what market they sell. However, many farmers are effectively being proletarianised. They are facing increasing pressures to contract with agricultural processing firms. Contract farming represents an important stage in dismembering Australia's traditional rural petty bourgeoisie: agribusiness represents the penetration of monopoly capital into agriculture. It will mean an accelerated displacement of labour from farms and rural towns,³⁹ something which we noted is already occurring in N.S.W. There is nothing 'natural', according to Marxist theory, about the displacement of labour from agriculture. The logic of capital accumulation has demanded the progressive displacement of farmers and now demands their effective proletarianisation.

There are two important groups of unemployed agricultural workers. The first Marx called the latent relative surplus population. This group is composed of farm workers and dispossessed farmers and their families - the landless farmers. In rural areas there also exists a stagnant relative surplus population which includes migratory farm labourers, depressed ethnic groups (aborigines, in the case of rural Australia) and other marginal workers whose employment is irregular or casual. This group is recognised by low workforce participation rates, underemployment, and a subsistence level existence.⁴⁰ While the latent workers form the bulk of the reserve army of the unemployed and can, in periods of capital expansion, move to alternative work locations, the stagnant relative surplus population is usually blocked. This latter group forms the bulk of those identified in the Henderson poverty study as being in 'chronic' poverty. Those in chronic poverty in rural areas include



not only the aborigines and older displaced farm workers, but 'pensioners, invalids, the periodically sick, widows and widowers, and deserted wives ... the immobile remnants trapped in previous outbreaks of periodic poverty'.⁴¹

One of the primary insights of the Marxist analysis of rural unemployment is that the problem arises because of the structure and development of the capitalist system and of capitalist relations of production. For Marxists the cause of unemployment is not seen to lie with the individual. Agricultural unemployment and subsequent migration is enforced. That people are generally forced to leave country areas rather than choosing to do so is indicated by a number of Australian studies. Salmon and Western in a study of rural Victoria noted that 'analysis of population trends demonstrates a substantial rural-urban migration pattern, and yet the idea of moving to urban areas is seen in a negative light. The country resident does not want to move to the city. He sees the city as too fast, noisy, overcrowded, unfriendly, impersonal, polluted and unsafe, and yet he is very often forced to migrate.'⁴² In a study of youths they found that over 60% had to move to cities to obtain employment, apprenticeships or post-secondary education.⁴³ In a Queensland study 64% of school leavers from one rural area listed work and education related factors as the reason for migrating from the district. Of the adults migrating the vast majority also detailed economic reasons (employment, job training and education) for leaving.⁴⁴ In a survey of 9,000 high school students in 50 non-metropolitan areas of N.S.W. it was revealed that some 57% wished to remain in their home towns but expected they would have to move to secure work.⁴⁵ In a local survey it was found that 60% of Wagga's school leavers preferred to remain in town.⁴⁶ It appears that despite their preference for country living, the 'latent' workers must of necessity migrate from rural areas in an effort to secure work, training, or education. More revealing are the results of a recent study conducted throughout N.S.W. It was found that 51% of those surveyed in Sydney would

have preferred to live in a smaller city or in the country.⁴⁷ Of those surveyed in country areas only 14% wanted to live in a city, 86% preferring to remain in the country or on the land.⁴⁸ Sydney was described in 1972 as 'a social phenomenon which is beyond human scale'.⁴⁹

Clearly, the concentration and centralisation of capital is not in response to the needs of a majority of citizens. The growth of capitalism, which has embodied state assistance in the accumulation process, has meant the continued displacement of agricultural labour, the formation of a 'latent' workforce in rural districts, and the eventual movement of this workforce in periods of capital expansion to areas where it is profitable for capital to locate. Where the latent surplus population is unable to move it 'stagnates', creating pockets of rural poverty. The state must, however, maintain its legitimacy. Consequently, it may talk of the need for decentralisation and may in some instances initiate schemes designed to attract industry to rural areas. But the state will rarely direct capital movement for fear that it will interrupt and dislocate the forces of capital accumulation.

The changes occurring in agriculture and the associated increase in urbanisation are to the benefit of a few and are enforced on the many. Decreasingly will the traditional owner-operators be among the beneficiaries. Especially during periods of general recession, the latent relative surplus population becomes actually unemployed.

The capitalist state should not be expected to ameliorate the changes, although it may seek to legitimate them.⁵⁰ Only in a planned society which recognises the need for decentralised industrial activity and promotes the elimination of the divisions and antagonisms between city and country⁵¹ is the problem of rural unemployment likely to be solved.

CONCLUSION

The orthodox approach to the problem of rural unemployment has three major deficiencies. First, in looking at the personal characteristics of those unemployed it leads the analysis away from an investigation of production relations under capitalism. It 'blames the victim' and at the same time mystifies the capital accumulation process. Second, it is a-historical. Third, it accepts the existing forces and processes of change as inevitable.

Recommendations are made in terms of the need for 'adjustment' into the urban labour force of those unable to gain employment in rural areas. Technological change is viewed deterministically. Technological change in agriculture is inevitable and beneficial: those displaced have only themselves to blame if they fail to retrain for new positions in the dynamic economy in which they live.

Unlike the orthodox analysis, the radical approach does not consider the personal behaviour and training of rural dwellers to be important causes of rural unemployment. Nor are technological improvements in agriculture in and of themselves responsible for unemployment in rural areas. They are part of a wider change in social relations. The course of change in agriculture involves the displacement of farm workers, the continued concentration and centralisation of capital in agriculture and the demise of rural towns. There is no mechanism which operates to ensure that fall in the demand for rural labour will be balanced by the creation of job opportunities in other sectors. Unemployment,

proletarianisation and rural-urban migration are enforced phenomena; and they are enforced by a logic that does not necessarily compensate for them.

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FOOTNOTES

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3. Ibid., pp. 51-52.
4. Eisenhauer, M.B., Survey of Labour Potential in the Albury/Wodonga District, and Survey of Labour Potential in Lismore, N.S.W., N.S.W. Department of Decentralisation and Development, Sydney, 1969, and Lawrence, G.A., Riverina Regional Demographic Handbook, Riverina College of Advanced Education, Wagga, Wagga, 1974.
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8. Ibid.
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29. Ibid., p. 74
30. Interview with C.E.S. Acting District Manager, Wagga Wagga, 1979.
31. For a full discussion see Threlfall, P., "Government Reconstruction and Adjustment Assistance Measures in the Australian Rural Sector", Quarterly Review of Agricultural Economics, Vol. 30, No. 3, July 1977.
32. All these factors were mentioned over a two year period by The Daily Advertiser, Wagga Wagga, 1979-81. The paper at no time sought to examine the functioning of the economic system.
33. Authors such as Buckley and Fitzpatrick consider that a peasantry may have formed but did not survive (see Buckley, K., "Primary Accumulation: The Genesis of Australian Capitalism" in Wheelwright, E.L., and Buckley, K. (eds.), Essays in the Political Economy of Australian Capitalism, Vol. 1, A.N.Z. Book Co., Sydney, 1975.
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37. Quoted in National Farmer, Vol. 2, No. 23, Jan 25 - Feb 7, 1979, p. 1.
38. Whether long term productivity is improved is a point of debate. There is a growing body of literature which supports the claim that the long term consequence of chemical applications is the poisoning of the environment and hence a decrease in productivity. See Merrill, R. (ed.), Radical Agriculture, Harper, New York, 1976.
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40. See Veltmeyer, H., "The Underdevelopment of Atlantic Canada", The Review of Radical Political Economics, Vol. 10, No. 3, Fall 1978, pp. 102-103.
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45. Study conducted by the N.S.W. Department of Decentralisation and Development, quoted in Riverina Council for Social Development, Out of School, Out of Work, Riverina Council for Social Development, Wagga Wagga, April 1977, p. 20.
46. Ibid., p. 20.
47. N.S.W. Department of Decentralisation, Regional Developer, No. 1, March/April 1979, p. 5.
48. Ibid.
49. Report of the Committee of Commonwealth/State Officials on Decentralisation, July 1972, Commonwealth Government Printing Office, Canberra, 1973, p. 85.
50. O'Connor, J., The Fiscal Crisis of the State, St. Martins Press, New York, 1973, p. 9.
51. Throughout his writings Marx was adamant about the need to unite town and country. In the German Ideology he claimed that the elimination of the town/country antagonism was 'one of the first conditions of communal life'. In Capital he recognised that class divisions in the economy had created 'material conditions for a higher synthesis in the future, namely, the union of agriculture and industry on the basis of the more perfected forms they have acquired during their temporary separation'. This did not mean of course that agriculture was to be restored to its ancient primacy and glory as the utopian socialists were apt to recommend. Rather, it was to envisage 'the gradual abolition of the distinction between town and country by a more equitable distribution of the population over the country'. (Quotes from Marx, K., and Engels, F., Selected Works, Vol. 1, op.cit., p. 52. and Marx, K., Capital, Vol. 1, op.cit., p. 505.



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