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Vol. 1

RURAL PROLETARIANIZATION; A SOCIAL AND HISTORICAL ENQUIRY INTO THE
COMMERCIALIZATION OF THE SOUTHERN CAUCA VALLEY, COLOMBIA

by
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VOL. I

ABSTRACT

This thesis attempts to describe the historical development and contemporary status of the rural lower class inhabiting the Cauca valley in Western Colombia, South America. Put at its briefest, this history is one that encompasses a trajectory beginning with slavery, passing through a century of social existence as free peasants, and gradually terminating in the twentieth century with the proletarianization of those peasants as they become landless manual labourers on sugar plantations and large commercial farms.

The research involved in this work includes both archival investigation of historical sources, and anthropological field-work. Some fourteen months were spent living in a small area at the southernmost extremity of the valley where "participant observation" was carried out.

The thesis is broadly descriptive in aim; no specific hypothesis has been advanced or refuted. While the historical section considers events from a fairly wide point of view, the ethnography is far more detailed and tends to concentrate on peasant economics and social organization. The final chapter is concerned with beliefs and the changing ideology of production, and stands as a summary for most of the preceding chapters.

The theme that runs throughout most of the work is the process whereby landed peasants become rural wage labourers, since this is not only the major component in the valley's history but is also the

single most important factor influencing peasant life today. Consequently the ethnography focusses on some of the main effects this process has on the remaining peasantry, and their reactions and attitudes towards their being cast into a totally distinct mode of production and way of life.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Without the help of Anna Rubbo, who accompanied me in the field, and the scores of friends born and resident in the Puerto Tejada region of the Cauca valley, Colombia, this essay would never have been completed. It is a sad testimony to the bitterness of social relationships between social groups in the valley that these friends must remain unnamed, for their own protection.

I would also like to thank my teachers and fellow students at the London School of Economics for the part they played in the early formation of some of my ideas. Mr. Malcolm Deas of St. Antony's college, Oxford, was instrumental in introducing me to the complexities of Colombian history, and gave valuable assistance in the more mundane but equally essential matters concerning introductions to Colombian intellectuals and politicians. Professor Ernest Gellner of the London School of Economics, and Dr. de Kadt, now at the University of Sussex, were both extremely helpful at all times. Professors Eric Wolf and Marshall Sahlins, now departed from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, were constant sources of stimulation and support. Dr. Fals-Borda and his wife, and Andrew Pearse, guided and encouraged me in my choice of locale, and like Dr. de Kadt and Mr. Deas visited me in the field. Dr. Eric Hobsbawn has listened patiently to me on various occasions when I have discussed my work. Graduate students from the department of Anthropology at the University of Michigan have

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Since the time of the Spanish conquest the Cauca valley has been plagued by a shortage of manual labourers willing to work on the large estates. The large landowners have constantly complained that either the labouring population was insufficient in numbers, or gravely deficient in motivation. The wealthy have regarded the labour problem as the most severe of all the obstacles standing between them and the efficient commercialization of the valley's rich resources.

Until the early twentieth century the labour problem was seen basically as a matter of inadequate numbers, but since then, owing to a dramatic natural increase in the local population and an influx of migrants from other parts of Colombia, it has been viewed more as a question of workers' discipline and their lack of commitment.

The Indian population, which the Spanish hoped to harness to the alluvial gold mines and haciendas, proved intractable and was largely obliterated through war, flight, and disease within sixty years of the first settlement established in 1536. The slaves brought from West Africa were somewhat more manageable, but were never available in numbers sufficient to satisfy demand. Following the abolition of slavery in 1851, the ex-slaves and their descendants retreated from the mines and plantations to become free peasants squatting on the edges of the large estates, and only the most generous inducements

or severe threats could get them to work as hired field hands. As a consequence, the valley became a commercial backwater for the remainder of the nineteenth century; its mines largely stopped producing, the haciendas decayed, and commerce and trade routes with other parts of Colombia fell into oblivion.

With political stability ensured by the end of the War of One Thousand Days in 1902, the opening of the valley to foreign trade through the construction of a railway to the Pacific coast in 1914, unprecedented foreign investments at the same time, and a massive population increase, the large landowners were able to restore and reinvigorate their estates. They have unleashed a wave of commercialization which has spread across the valley, converting small freeholders into landless day labourers working on the large estates. The sugar cane these labourers cultivate today, accounts for some 20% of Colombia's foreign exchange. In addition, the large commercial farms also produce a variety of export crops, but on a smaller scale--crops such as beans and soybeans.

The conversion of the peasantry into a landless day labouring class is almost complete, and is as much due to physical force and coercion on the part of landlords as to the seemingly ineluctable forces of population growth and the anonymous pressures of what we may refer to as modernization. Certainly, the remaining peasantry are hostile and afraid of what is happening to them, and hate the plantations.

In the southern section of the valley, the Puerto Tejada region, where the ex-slaves tended to concentrate, this process has not run its complete course. There one still finds pockets of peasants wedged

between the plantation boundaries, and it is with these peasants that this thesis is largely concerned. Most of them are very poor and control less than sufficient land by which they can gain a subsistence living. Many of them work intermittently on the plantations and large commercial farms, and assuredly increasing numbers of their descendants will have to eke out a living from wage labour alone.

Despite their precarious economic situation, neither the peasants nor the permanent plantation field hands respond to wage incentives or management as the plantations desire. The population is now more than sufficiently large to meet the labour requirements of the large scale commercial sector, yet the workers are considered by the wealthy entrepreneurs to be belligerent, undisciplined, and lacking in motivation. Initially, the field hands were allowed to organize themselves into rural trade unions, but since the late 1950's and early 1960's the estates have destroyed such organizations and now around half or more of the rural labourers are mobilized by individual labour contractors, who hire workers on a part-time basis for specific jobs paid at piece-rates. The peasantry, being somewhat independent, offer some advantages to the large scale commercial sector, since the latter is thereby ensured of a resident labour pool which can support itself to a certain degree, and yet be called upon to work on the estates whenever the situation demands.

On the other hand, both these and other factors have induced an instability and indifference amongst rural workers which has created many problems for the large landowners, who are now increasingly turning towards costly machinery to replace manual labour. Moreover, except for those jobs which have been traditionally considered the

province of men, such as cane cutting and loading, the labour contractors are displaying a preference for female labourers, since they consider the female element of the population to be more "boken-in," harder working, and less likely to cause labour disputes.

With changes in the family and household structure, consequent to loss of land and migration to the rural towns, there is an increasing tendency for women to live apart from their childrens' fathers. Thus the women become almost totally responsible for their childrens' upkeep. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that these women are more docile than the men, and accept wage labour on the estates with less recalcitrance.

The theme that runs through this thesis is the opposition and set of differences that exist between landed peasant status and landless rural proletarian status. How did this come about and how is the society of the remaining peasantry constituted? How is the process of commercialization unfolding as regards the remaining peasantry of this small part of Latin America? These are the questions that we examine in the following pages.

The Colombian novelist, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, has vividly captured the atmosphere of the new plantation towns and villages that emerge from the decomposition of the pre-existing peasant society. As peasants lose their land and as their children move into the new rural slums which are little more than barracks for wage labourers, his words seem strikingly faithful to the popular consciousness and understanding of that transition.

--Suddenly, as if a whirlwind had set down roots in the centre of the town, the banana company arrived, pursued by the leaf storm. A whirling leaf storm had been stirred up, formed out of the

human and material dregs of other towns, the chaff of a civil war that seemed ever more remote and unlikely. The whirlwind was implacable. It contaminated everything with its swirling crowd smell, the smell of skin secretion and hidden death. In less than a year it sowed over the town the rubble of many catastrophes that had come before it, scattering its mixed cargo of rubbish in the streets. And all of a sudden that rubbish, in time to the mad and unpredicted rhythm of the storm, was being sorted out, individualized, until what had been a narrow street with a river at one end and a corral for the dead at the other was changed into a different and more complex town, created out of the rubbish of other towns (Garcia Marquez, 1973, 9-10).

This passage could well stand as the epitaph to most of the small towns and villages of the Cauca valley.

The emphasis of this thesis is empirical. It appears to the author that the need for carefully researched factual material is of the utmost concern in the study of the rural social history of Latin American countries today. In terms of anthropological theory, much of this thesis is indebted to what is called the structural-functional school, though this approach is tempered in two major ways. Firstly, given the nature of the subject matter, there is an attempt to transcend the more binding equilibrium postulates of structural-functionalism as it is usually conceived, and thereby remain faithful to the changing historical currents, disequilibriums, and conflicts, that so clearly characterize the valley's past and present configuration. Secondly, particularly in the final chapter, the difference between what the author regards as two quite antithetical modes of production and ways of life--peasant and proletarian--is defined and analyzed in terms of theoretical insights derived from three principal sources of intellectual inspiration; the pioneering work of A. V. Chayanov (1966) on the Peasant Mode of Production, the analysis advanced by Karl Polanyi (1957) concerning the

evolution of the self-regulating free market, and finally, to a very small extent, some ideas suggested by the contemporary school of French Structuralism, specifically the work of Claude Lévi-Strauss.

Generally speaking, however, this thesis is a descriptive and not a theoretical work. I have tried to let the factual material speak for itself without forcing conclusions, and in this way pay tribute to the complexity of the historical process and contemporary social life.

If there is a general bias or emotional disposition diffused throughout the following pages, it is surely the author's feeling that the peasants and workers of the Cauca valley are to be numbered amongst the most cruelly degraded and victimized persons in the world today. Having said that, it has to be also immediately pointed out, that these people have a gaiety and joi de vivre which casts pity into a rather awkward paternalistic affront.

In the first third of this work, Chapter II through to Chapter IV, we consider the historical development of the valley and the broad features of the contemporary situation in its southernmost portion. In Chapters V and VI we discuss in detail the basic characteristics of the area in which field-work was carried out; demography, land tenure, class and occupational structure, and income patterns. Chapters VII through to IX are devoted to an analysis of the traditional peasant agriculture in the context of the changing socio-economic situation, and Chapters X and XI consider the two alternatives facing the peasantry, as provided by the new commercial agriculture. On the one hand, there is the conversion of their traditional agriculture, based on perennial tree crops, to a completely different set

of seasonal crops requiring machinery and large amounts of capital. On the other, there is the possibility of working as manual labourers on the plantations and large commercial farms.

Chapters XII and XIII examine the social organization of the region with particular reference to the peasantry, and attempt to relate the family and household structure to the changing economic context. The concluding chapter analyses the changing ideology of production and further integrates many of the issues raised in the preceding chapters, particularly the hostility of the peasants towards wage labour and the type of life associated with it. This chapter also brings out some of the kernel ideological components associated with peasantry's disinclination to view land and labour as market factors and strictly commercial variables, despite their poverty, their relatively long history of cash-cropping, and the apparent weakness of their own social institutions.

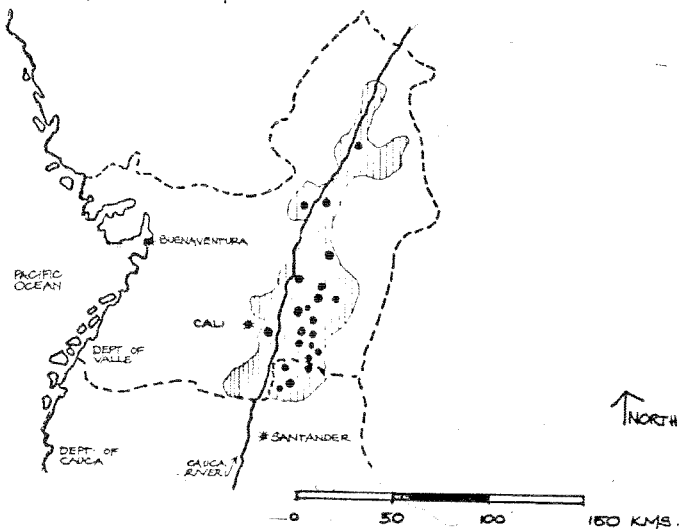
An appendix on field methods is included, and three maps of the region follow below.

MAP 1



REPUBLIC OF COLOMBIA

■ DEPARTMENTS OF VALLE & CAUCA



MAP OF THE CAUCA VALLEY
SHOWING SUGAR MILLS

● SUGAR MILLS



LAND UNDER SUGAR
CANE CULTIVATION

MAP 2

DEPARTMENTS OF
RISARALDA, CALDAS
& ANTIOQUIA

DEPARTMENT
OF
CHOCÓ

DEPARTMENT
OF
QUINDIO

BUENAVENTURA

DEPARTMENT
OF
VALLE

PALMIRA

DEPARTMENT
OF
TOLIMA

PACIFIC
OCEAN

CAJÍ

PUERTO
TELEPE

DEPARTMENT
OF
CAUCA

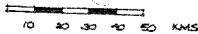
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SANTANDER

POPAYÁN

DEPARTMENT
OF
HUILA

DEPARTMENT
OF
NARIÑO

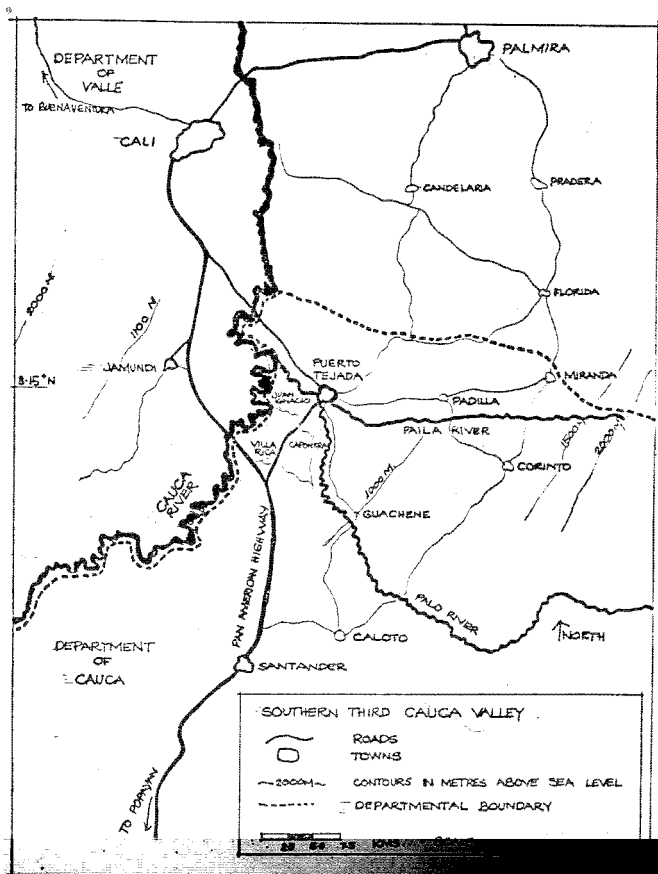


-  0-1000 METRES
-  1000-2000 METRES
-  2000-3000 METRES
-  3000-4000 METRES

RELIEF MAP OF THE
DEPARTMENTS OF VALLE
AND CAUCA

INTENDENCIA
DE
PUTAYÁN

MAP 3



CHAPTER II

SLAVERY; 1600-1851

Introduction

The aim of this and the following two chapters is to take a fairly broad look at the social history of the present-day inhabitants of the Puerto Tejada region in the southern extremity of the Cauca Valley, from the mid-colonial period onwards. Essentially, this is the history of the West African slaves who were imported in increasing numbers towards the end of the sixteenth century to fill the place of the defunct Indian population. I have chosen to present a good part of this history with wide brush strokes so that the reader has the opportunity to see the wider and evolving context in which this small part of Colombia rests. At the same time, I have concentrated on important details concerning the local history, such as the social constitution of the local slave hacienda and the viewpoint adopted by local people at certain stages in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This is an attempt to create a satisfactory balance between the general flow of events that shaped the region and the particular activities which bring it to life as an entity in its own right. Finally, I present an overview of what I consider to be the most important events in the past 20 years, and the major features of the contemporary socio-economic structure.

Thus it is hoped that the stage will be set for the remainder of this dissertation in which the purely contemporary characteristics of

the Puerto Tejada region shall be analysed. It is thereby assumed that the reader will understand some of the deeper implications of contemporary activities without the author having to break up the discussion with continual interjections and references to the larger context and events that occurred many years past.

Colombia, Some Introductory Remarks

Colombia was the chief gold producing region of the Spanish-American empire and had the highest Afro-American population of the Spanish-American mainland. Its social and economic history owes a great deal to the early numerical ascendancy of the free mixed bloods (mestizos and mulattoes) and the political and property relationships they represented. Nineteenth century Colombia was unique, even by Latin American standards, in its great degree of regionalisation, factionalism, and caudillismo (control by local warlords). Added to this, the fanatical division of the society until very recently into two monopolistic political parties, the Conservatives and the Liberals, not dissimilar to religious war machines, has set it apart from all American republics since the 1840's.

Its composite character drew on all the features that were separately concentrated in the other colonies of Latin America. Its topography owes everything to the splayed backbone and dissected valleys of the Andes, yet it was African slavery, not Andean Indians, that its wealth chiefly depended on. But unlike the other slave colonies, it was not the intensive cultivation of exotic tropical crops in large scale plantations conveniently located near coastlines that drew the slaves. Rather, it was an economy based on mobile, scattered, and

small scale alluvial gold mining camps. In a phrase, both Caribbean and Andean in its component elements, but unique in its synthesis.

Forming an intermediate cultural area between the "high" cultures of Meso-America to the north, and the Incan empire to the south, its mosaic of chiefdoms and incipient indigenous states had quickly succumbed through war and flight to the conquistadores who could find no firm aboriginal authority to channel their demands, as they did with the Aztecs and the Incas. With the exception of a few highland areas, conquest and colonization largely meant genocide on a scale equalled only by the earlier fate of the Caribbean colonies such as Hispaniola (West, 1952, 80; Tovar Pinzon, 1970). Thus deprived of a labour force, the colony faced severe difficulties by the end of the sixteenth century and recourse was found in African slaves who by 1600 were entering the Caribbean entrepôt of Cartagena at a rate of around 1,000 a year. The slave system itself displayed many contradictions. The intensity of exploitation in the mining areas was high, yet it was extremely difficult to enforce that exploitation. The colony was vast and generally poor. Except for a handful of tiny cities and occasional areas of dense settlement, it was impossible to effectively police the slaves through brute force and penal conditions. Expeditions sent to round up runaway slaves were more often than not total failures and more whites were killed than blacks. The costs of such forays were prohibitive (Meiklejohn, 1968, 111-2).

Slaves fresh from Africa, known as bozales or "muzzled," were much preferred for their ease of socialization over ladinos, who were considered crafty, far wiser in the ways of the colony, and much more likely to escape and cause problems (Meiklejohn, 1968, 254-8; Bowser, 1974, 79).

Lacking a strong military establishment, the masters adopted a policy of personal intervention into the innermost regions of the slaves' social structure and spiritual space, involving minute and constant paternalistic direction of sexual and family life (De Pons, 1806, I, 166). The ideology of white supremacy was hammered home through Christian ritual and state norms which further encouraged servility, as many an unsuccessful slave rebellion due to over-caution and exaggeration of the whites' forces on the part of the blacks testified (Sharp, 1970, 287).

Manumission was generally held out to the slave as reward for good behaviour and as a means of alleviating social tension and the temptation to easy escape into the enormous hinterlands. By the last quarter of the eighteenth century, the ratio of "free persons" (libres) to slaves was about eight to one (Pérez Ayala, 1951, 392-3; Silvestre, 1950, 79-80), and in the words of one of the foremost students of the institution in Colombia, slavery became something of an apprenticeship (King, 1939, 219). Yet if it was an apprenticeship designed to equip and induce the slave to later participate in the society as a free person, it failed dismally (Meiklejohn, 1968, 289-95, 316-8). Whether manumitted, runaway, or born free, the black usually refused and was able to refuse to enter the mainstream of the economy as a wage labourer or tenant farmer (Sharp, 1970, 254), which were the only conditions acceptable to the labour-starved landlord and mine owning class, a situation sustained until well into the twentieth century when rural proletarianization eventually occurred on a massive scale.

The Indian element of the population passed through a succession as confusing as it was rapid, of slavery, encomienda, reducción, mita, and

concertaje; institutions so monumentally engraved on the social configuration of Mexico and Peru, but which in most of Colombia, especially around the lowland areas, found little footing even though encomiendas continued to be granted up till the early eighteenth century. Diminished as it was, Indian labour played a crucial role which is usually overlooked. Indians provided and maintained most of the social infrastructure of roads, bridges, wayside houses and other public works, even in the low-lying valleys. African slave owners were most reluctant to have their precious piezas ("pieces"--i.e., slaves) serving gratis on public works. In addition, a continual attempt was made in many areas to establish and support an ethnic division of labour whereby Indians would provide food crops for slave mining gangs, thus allowing the slave owners to get the most out of their bought labour force, at the state's expense, so to speak. With the steady diminution in the Indian population and the associated trend towards their being driven off their communal lands into debt-peonage, this convenient pool of state-run labour was lost, with many deleterious consequences to the transport system and food provisioning.

With the transfer of gold production to capital intensive foreign companies, consequent to the phased abolition of slavery beginning early in the nineteenth century, the Colombian economy underwent a radical re-orientation towards the export of tropical cultigens, such as tobacco, quinine, and indigo, from the lowland valleys and rainforests. This possibility was created by burgeoning European markets and the greatly reduced costs in oceanic transport occurring around that time. This greatly augmented the regionalisation of the country, converting it into a handful of quasi-satellites, each one pointed towards the nearest coastal outlet

and more closely connected to the exterior than to one another (Safford, 1965, 508), a state of affairs sustained if not furthered by the railways constructed for the transport of coffee in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Cf. McGreevey, 1971, 277; Beyer, 1948). This phase of the commercial development of the lowlands was also acutely affected by lack of labour. Tobacco, the leading crop in the Magdalena Valley around the mid-nineteenth century, for example, depended largely upon Indian migrants forced off their alienated communal lands in the eastern highlands to work as sharecroppers, tenant farmers and day labourers. Their powerlessness under the government monopoly of this crop remained unchanged with the passing of the latter to free enterprise accompanied by stringent vagrancy laws allowing landowners to practically enserf the terrorised rural proletariat.

Coffee, which became the mainstay of the national economy from the late nineteenth century onwards, owed as much or more to free mestizo peasant smallholders along the temperate mountain slopes, as it did to plantations worked by peones. Where there were peones, as along the western slopes of the eastern cordillera, they were able to exert powerful political leverage when national circumstances were favourable.

Behind these patterns of forced labour on the valley bottoms and small free holding on the slopes lay the fact that labour was as excessively scarce as land was abundant. The inclination of the peasantry, if given half a chance, was towards independent production on self-secured plots, preferably on the slopes where marked ecological diversity due to altitudinal variation allowed them to practise within a small area a balanced agriculture of interplanted corn, plantains, beans, and sugar

cane, as well as the strictly commercial crop of coffee. The sensitivity to the ratio of subsistence to commercial production, a crucial factor in determining peasant independence, became clearly recognised, as the Antioqueno folk aphorism, "bought corn does not fatten," gave witness.

The Cauca Valley

The Cauca Valley, far more isolated from the exterior than the Magdalena, and on which this discussion shall now focus, suffered a virtual eclipse during the nineteenth century as a result of the new international framework into which Colombia entered. This immensely fertile alluvial valley, running some 200 kms. north to south, and 15 kms. wide, lies enclosed by two of the three chains of the Andes which break central Colombia up into precipitous longitudinal strips. The river which drains it, the Cauca, has no clear run to the sea, and the western chain or cordillera of the Andes kept it virtually landlocked until 1914.

This valley had been the centre and breadbasket of the slavocracy which ruled over most of western Colombia until well into the nineteenth century. By the eighteenth century, a small number of intermarrying families had upwards of 1,000 slaves each, employed in valley plantations, and in mines both in the valley and across the western cordillera in the rainforests of the Pacific coast. The rise of the slave regime in the seventeenth century, subsequent to the extraordinary decline in the Indian population, meant important changes in the nature of the society. Slaves were not just slotted into another ethnic caste category leaving the colonial structure intact; slavery meant the emergence of a private sector within the colonial mercantilistic economy. The buying and selling of labour put a premium on and gave the boost to the merchant class as the

only group strategically placed to mobilise liquid capital and maintain the trade web necessary for continual imports of human cargoes (Marzahl, 1970, 37-8). This commercial aristocracy fused with the descendants of the conquistadores to control a giant complex of ranching and mining together with an intricate network of regional and interregional trade and credit, sewing together vast areas of scattered settlement and far-flung cities. Their mines not only produced gold, but served as captive consumer markets for salt beef and pork, Indian produced cotton goods, tobacco, sugar products, and liquor, most of which came from their valley holdings, and which the slaves bought legally or illegally with the private earnings gained from the occasional free mining that their owners found necessary to allow them.

The haciendas of the valley had sprung into life on account of the miners' needs for provisions, particularly meat. Furthermore, the cities such as Popayán, and Quito well to the south, depended in large part on this production, as did the mining centres to the north in Antioquia and over the western cordillera in the Chocó. In return, the valley imported cotton goods from the Indian obrajes (factories) in the Quito area. Beginning with the seventeenth century, there was a steady replacement of Indian labourers by African slaves on most of the valley haciendas, although this was never complete until well towards the end of the eighteenth century. Around the middle of the eighteenth century, by which time external demand for livestock well outstripped local supply, there were many active haciendas practising a diverse agriculture based on African slave labour. Just south of Cali, for example, the following haciendas are mentioned (Arboleda, 1956, II, 82, 87): in 1733, the Hacienda

Ciruelos belonging to the Caicedos had 400 head of beef cattle, 40 oxen for ploughing and hauling, and a small sugar mill with its own cane fields; in 1733 the hacienda of Cañasgordas with extensive lands, sugar cane fields, a small sugar mill, horses, mules, oxen, plantings of plantain, corn, and rice, and black slaves; in 1809 the sugar mill (trapiche) of José Fernandez de Cordoba with its house of tile roof, irrigation, and 30 slaves (Arboleda, 1956, III, 227); in 1809 the hacienda of Juan Antonio Caicedo with 26 slaves (ibid, 227); that of Domingo Pérez Montoya with its house of tile roof, trapiche, and 29 slaves (loc. cit.); the Hacienda Melendez, "which can support 1,000 head of cattle" (ibid, 228); the hacienda of Cañasgordas which by 1809 had 200 slaves cultivating traditional sugar cane as well as the new Otahiti variety, plantains, corn, zapallos, manioc, onions, cauliflower, extensive plantations of cocoa, grapes, a type of passionfruit, in addition to possessing just over 2,000 head of cattle (ibid, 232).

Most of the holdings seemed to have had around 20 to 30 slaves (a hacienda like Cañasgordas being exceptionally large), and they all appeared to practise a very diverse agriculture quite distinct to their nineteenth and twentieth century counterparts.

The plentiful and widespread distribution of gold deposits encouraged the formation of a class of small slave owners who, not having sufficient hands to work lode deposits, concentrated their small gangs of 20 or so slaves along the river banks, panning for gold. Since the pattern of rainfall is heavy and occurs twice a year at equal intervals, some three to four months of production was blocked out or slowed down by the swollen and flooding rivers. Lacking the complementary and diverse resources of

the large slave owners, yet also basing their economy on the large capital investment in slaves, the small owners were often forced into usury or bankruptcy (García, 1937, 117), which again furthered the position of the ruling class.

The Slave Hacienda

One such clan was the Arboleda family which rose to prominence through the slave system at the beginning of the seventeenth century, having shifted its gangs from the Anserma region at the north of the valley due to Indian raids, settling down in the region's capital of Popayán, and putting the slaves to work in the gold-rich Caloto area along the southern rim of the valley floor. This quickly became the richest worked source of gold in the valley and was the main prop to the province's economy throughout the seventeenth and part of the eighteenth century. The Arboledas forged affinal links with the rising merchant class, intensified their mining in Caloto, as part of the Santa María mining settlement, and in 1688 bought the neighbouring large Hacienda La Bolsa, in addition to all of which they were amongst the first to expand mining into the Pacific coast in the late seventeenth century. In 1777, profiting from their close connections with the Church and the expulsion of the Jesuits from the colony, they bought for 70,000 pesos an additional hacienda in the Caloto area which had belonged to the Jesuits. This was Japio, tens of thousands of hectares of valley and slope land, cultivating sugar cane and raising livestock by slave labour. Thus they welded together the rich gold placers and mines of Santa María, with the sugar and cattle haciendas of La Bolsa and Japio.

The owners were generally absentee, preferring to live in the temperate and more comfortable climate of the region's capital, Popayán (70 kms. to the south of the valley rim), the centre of state power, the site of the royal smelter, and through which trade with the Caribbean coast, Bogotá, and Quito was coordinated. The day-to-day management of their holdings they left to resident administrators who received copious instructions (A.C.C.) which I have had the opportunity to examine and analyse as follows.¹

One such set of instructions to the mining administrator in Santa María (in which the Arboledas had over 250 slaves by 1820) in 1753, provided a salary of 10% of gold extracted, some staple foods, and three black servants. One-third of the instructions dealt minutely with the details and necessity for religious instruction. Children had to be taught prayer each morning, adolescents each night, while adults were to be instructed in Christian worship twice a week and on all holy days, apart from prayer and singing each evening. Great care was to be taken with the sick slaves and if medicines were not available, they were to be bought at the mine's expense. In the case of impending death, a priest had to be notified so that confession and the last sacraments could take place. In addition, a negro racional who knew how to "help die well" should be made available. If no priest was procurable, the administrator should substitute as best he could and collect all the slaves into the sick bay to pray and entrust the dying to God's care.

A priest had to baptize the newborn and careful watch was required that the mothers did not drown their babies as had happened on many occasions. The mothers were to be given three months off work, an extra

ration of clothing, and a specially nutritious diet for the first 40 days (a general custom and one still practised today when such foods are available).

Despite the emphasis here on the Church, the role of formal Christianity in the colony as a whole and amongst the Afro-American segment in particular was more indirect than the manifest organizational parameters might indicate. Its ideological function was to serve as a node around which folk mysticism and official doctrine met and congealed. The basic categories of the sacred and the supernatural were rooted in the mysticism of everyday life, drawing together the folk beliefs of medieval Catholicism with black and Indian cosmologies. The Church per se was but a single moment in this field of forces and often organizationally weak and corrupt (Cf. King, 1939, 217; Lea, 1908, 462-516; Meiklejohn, 1968, 257-8; De Pons, 1806, I, 160).²

The administrator was to personally give the slaves their weekly ration, each Sunday, consisting of one-fifth of a bushel of corn, two dozen plaintains and 12-1/2 pounds of meat (an amount that the average lower class Colombian today would be lucky to get every two months). Once a month half a pound of salt was added. All this applied only to adult workers. Children and those not working received one-half these amounts. The slave captains received one pound of salt, and the white mayordomo, two. These rations were considerably in excess of those recorded in other mining areas outside the valley, such as those on the Pacific coast (Cf. Sharp, 1970, 276) where cattle and pigs were scarce.

Special vigilance was demanded against theft of both food and gold. The mining areas had to be patrolled on fiesta days and a permanent guard

had to be mounted whenever fresh lodes were opened up. Nightly patrols were mandatory, and a curfew was always in order after evening prayers when the slaves were meant to retire to their huts and the gates of the camp were locked until morning. No slave could leave the customary areas without special permission, even on fiesta days, and were to be punished for drinking liquor. Tight restrictions were enforced against wandering traders who tried to sell liquor, and no slave was to be allowed to go to the nearby town because of the "sins they would be tempted into." The maximum punishment that could be inflicted was 25 lashes, and these had to be spaced out to something like three, six, or nine per day until completed, "always with charity because an excess is bad."

As regards the haciendas,³ our records begin with Japio in 1774, three years before it became part of the Arboleda empire and when it was under government supervision following its take-over from the Jesuits. Its sister hacienda, Llanogrande, situated well to the north and also part of the Jesuit domain, was turning out annual profits from sales of cattle, to markets as far away as Quito, of around \$4,500 to \$9,000⁴ in the mid-eighteenth century when it had some 90 slaves (Colmenares, 1969, 124). Japio in 1774 had 127 slaves, by far the most costly item in its inventory, who supplied all its manual labour. These slaves were mainly used in the cultivation of its 22 hectares of sugar cane and in the grinding of the cane to produce sugar cane syrup (miel). The peculiar and extremely favourable climatic conditions of this valley are such that sugar cane, while it takes 15 to 18 months to mature, can be grown and harvested all the year round. Hence there is no zafra as in most sugar producing areas, labour can be uniformly used throughout the year, and

thus the possibility is provided for avoiding the social problems of a large unemployed workforce during the slack period. The state of Japio's cane fields showed that the system of year-round planting and harvesting was in practise; at the time of the 1774 inventory, eight hectares were ready for harvest, four were about three-quarters mature, four were at the six-months state, three were sprouting, and one had just been sown. There was one wooden two-piece mill for grinding cane, together with a small furnace and heavy bronze pots for thickening the syrup, as well as inverted cone moulds for preparing a crude sugar. Only 24 light spades and four machetes were listed amongst the tools, a surprisingly small amount, but one which was verified in later records. All metal equipment was made by local blacksmiths from imported iron--quite distinct to the situation in the second half of the nineteenth century when even machetes were being imported from London!

There were some 2,000 head of cattle, almost 100 bullocks for ploughing, mules to transport cane and firewood to the mill, 40 horses to turn the mill, and plantings of corn and plaitain sufficient to make the hacienda independent. Slaves had their own provisioning grounds as well, which were considered indispensable since otherwise maintenance costs would have been excessive.

Of the 127 slaves, only some 50 were workable, comprising men, women and children above 12 years of age. Something like 200 steers were killed a year at weekly intervals to provide the hacienda's meat ration, leather, and tallow, yet still on frequent occasions 25 to 50 pounds of meat had to be bought from the nearby town of Quilichao some eight kms. away. A British observer noted that around 1810 there were 10,000 head of cattle,

each worth \$8. This number represented about one-tenth of all the cattle in the valley at that time (Hamilton, 1827, II, 119-20). Tallow was crucial for greasing the mill's moveable parts, and for the making of soap and candles, a good proportion of which were destined for the hacienda chapel which kept them burning every night. Six hundred and eighty-five pounds of fat were consumed annually at this time: 200 to grease the mill, 418 for candles of general use, and 65 pounds for candles for the large May fiesta. Hides were essential for harnesses, beds, and pack bags. Of the 200 hides per year, half went into harness for the drawing of plows, cane and timber, one-third was used in the construction of beds for the sick and slaves in birth, 12 for leather pack bags (zurrones), and 10 were sold at one-sixth of a peso each. Only specially privileged slaves received tallow and leather, and 10 pounds of tobacco was consumed annually by each adult slave.

The hacienda was thus essentially a self-contained unit, entire unto itself. It was also its own ceremonial centre, containing, as did all the valley haciendas, its own chapel, besides which it was also the centre of the parish of Our Lady of Loreto (just as the nearby mining settlement of Santa María was also a parish centre). The meticulous list of religious ornaments runs into several pages. The chapel itself was of brick and tile in contradistinction to the other buildings of adobe and palm thatch. Prime place was given to the figure of Our Lady of Loreto, complete with silver crown and the Holy Child in her arms, likewise crowned. A mere portion of her shimmering wardrobe included petticoats of glacé silk, two necklaces of gold and one of coral, a brooch of 29 emeralds, bracelets of coral, and other jewels. Rich brocades and other bejewelled saints completed the

stunning spectacle which was presided over by a visiting priest who was paid a stipend of \$50 a year. Chapel and trappings amounted to 15% of the hacienda's total value.

Except for an increase in the number of cattle and a slight decrease in the number of slaves, the hacienda was much the same when the Arboledas acquired possession three years later, but it came to signify much more, as it now acquired a direct role in feeding the owners' mines. By 1789, the hacienda cost \$744 in annual maintenance (as compared with \$600 in the mid-1770's), and money received from the sale of agricultural products was at least \$2,344. This gave them an annual profit of \$1,600, which was a paltry 2% on the original investment, but not unreasonable when compared with colonial interest rates which were always very low.

As far as the mines are concerned, no accounts are at hand. However, it is possible to hazard a minimal estimate of \$160 profit per slave per year. This figure does not allow for costs of buying slaves, which averaged around \$400 for an adult male and \$300 for a female for most of the period, declining greatly towards the end of the eighteenth century when the Crown had to institute a policy of lending capital to miners, which was very tardily repaid. Fermin de Vargas, the Colombian eighteenth century author, in his Pensamientos Politicos (Bogotá, 1944), and W. F. Sharp (op. cit.), both suggest an annual profit of \$160 per slave, although Sharp shows how extremely variable these profits were. Since by 1819 the Arboledas had 204 adult slaves mining in the Caloto area of Santa María, their income from this activity in this area alone must have been of the order of \$25,000 to \$30,000, and probably at least double that if the coastal mines are included, a colossal figure for those times and one

totally dependent on slavery and the intricate combination^a by which they were worked together with the haciendas. Considering that the originator of the family tree, Jacinto de Arboleda, left in his Will in 1695 a total of \$26,512 comprising only 47 slaves (Jaramillo Uribe, 1968, 22), and that by 1830 Sergio and Julio Arboleda had some 1,400 slaves with profits of the above order, one can see what rate of progress had been made.

But these and similar figures, although helpful up to a point and extremely hard to come by, need much contextualisation before they can be meaningfully interpreted. In the first place, a substantial proportion of production was never exchanged for cash but went direct to the mines. More importantly, one has to consider the whole framework of economic institutions at the time. Banks did not exist, capital was in short supply outside the religious orders, and the free market as it came to be understood in nineteenth century Europe, was barely developed. In its place existed small local markets, owing as much to custom and social obligation as to commodity speculation, and long distance trade heavily dependent on personal trust and connections. Enveloping all of these was an elaborate system of state controls--taxes, monopoly contracts, price fixing and wage regulations--all aimed at preserving a social structure of hierarchically arranged castes, each with a separate legal status, virtual endogamy, residence rules, and task specialization. This was a far cry from the 'free economy' and society of 'equals' that the capitalistic market society was associated with, and thus the social implications of economic indices and material factors have to be correspondingly interpreted in a manner that classical and marginalist economic doctrine barely allows for,

if at all. Conversely, the economy itself has to be seen as an aspect of these social relationships, rather than as an autonomous sub-system tending to predominate over the other levels of society, and this would seem true not only for the colonial period, but also to a large extent for most of the nineteenth century when, despite the rise of the Liberal ideology and class formations in place of compartmentalised castes, the valley's economic structure was heavily based on subsistence.

Slave Social Structure

At least for the haciendas if not for the mining settlement, the birth rate was far in excess of the death rate by the last quarter of the eighteenth century. The data is inadequate, but a birth rate of the order of 42 per thousand and a death rate as low as 25 is suggested, probably exaggerating the reality, but nevertheless indicating a substantial population growth rate at this time, with all the implications that had for the vitality of the slave system and the diminished necessity for new acquisitions.⁵ This also appears to have been the case on the Pacific coast at this time (Sharp, 1970, 265). The fact that the ratio of males to females was weighted in favour of females, presumably played a part in the relatively high birth rate.

Church marriage and legitimate birth seems to have been the norm, slaves being the same in this regard as whites. One cannot be absolutely certain of this from the data at my disposal. While it is true that this was an ideal emphasised on many occasions by the estate owner to his administrators, one detects in the rough censuses carried out periodically in the estates, particularly in the early nineteenth century when the institution of slavery may have been falling apart, a certain degree of

fluidity in mating patterns suggestive of the presence of some free unions rather than Church marriage. On the other hand, Church records from Santander de Quilichao would seem to indicate a high degree of marriage amongst slaves, and it should also be borne in mind that the ratio of churchmen to laity was relatively very high. Silvestre supplies us with figures for the number of priests in the Gobernación (or province) of Popayán in 1789 which amount to a ratio of one priest for every 142 persons (Silvestre, 1950, 22). In Cuba at roughly the same time there was one priest for every 168 persons, which Klein (1967, 99) regards as an extraordinarily high proportion, and one that is not even approached by any country in the Americas today. But of course, these are average figures and do not tell us about distribution.

Contrary to received opinion, the ratio of male slaves to females from the mid-eighteenth century onwards was weighted in favour of females (see Tables 2.1 and 2.2).

TABLE 2.1--Population by totals and sex for some of the slave haciendas and mining settlements in the Puerto Tejada region, 1767-1819

	Hacienda Japio 1767	Hacienda La Bolsa 1795	Hacienda La Bolsa 1814	Santa Maria Mining Settlement 1819
total pop.	152	195	267	341
females	77	102	141	173
males	75	93	126	168
male:female ratio	100:103	100:111	100:113	100:103

TABLE 2.2--Sex ratios of slave population for Colombia and different regions of Western Colombia, 1778-1843

Year	Region	Male Slaves	Female Slaves	Ratio Male:Female
1778-9 ^a	Nueva Granada	31,751	37,775	100:112
1779 ^a	Province of Popayán	6,284	12,441	100:198
1789 ^b	Province of Popayán	5,726	6,715	100:112
1793 ^c	Distrito de Cali	4,949	5,660	100:115
1825 ^d	Nueva Granada	20,730	26,099	100:126
1825 ^d	Province of Popayán	5,748	6,645	100:116
1843 ^e	Nueva Granada	11,546	15,232	100:130
1843 ^e	Province of Cauca	1,739	2,106	100:120
1843 ^e	Province of Popayán	1,446	2,077	100:140
1843 ^e	Distrito Parroquial de Caloto	292	342	100:117
1843 ^e	Distrito Parroquial de Santander	289	414	100:140
1843 ^e	Distrito Parroquial de Cali	154	398	100:260
1843 ^e	Distrito Parroquial de Popayán	79	370	100:470

^a1778-9 census recorded by Antonio Caballero y Gongora, in Pérez Ayala, 1951, Antonio Caballero y Gongora (Bogotá), pp. 392-3

^bFrancisco Silvestre, Descripción del Reyno de Santa Fe de Bogotá, 1950 (Bogotá), p. 22.

^cTabla No. 2, "Resumen del censo general de población de la Nueva Granada," in Miguel Urrutia y Mario Arrubla, Compendio Estadísticas Históricas de Colombia, 1970 (Bogotá).

^dGustavo Arboleda, Historia de Cali, 3 vols., 1956 (Cali, Colombia), III, p. 120.

^eEstadística General de la Nueva Granada, Parte Primera, Población e Instituciones, 1843, 1848 (Bogotá).

These figures are of some importance, if only to correct statements and hypotheses such as the following, which are clearly misleading.

Sexual behaviour of slaves was not highly structured. Though there was more legal protection of the marital bond in the Spanish America than in the English colonies, in colonial Colombia male slaves outnumbered females two to one, a situation which did not contribute to conjugal stability (Pavy, 1967, 359-60).

Not only do the government as well as the hacienda censuses belie such a remark, at least from 1767 onwards, but some idea as to the incidence of marriage is offered in the following table (see Table 2.3).

TABLE 2.3--Comparison of whites ("blancos") with slaves as regards marital status of women, 1779-1843.

Year	Region	SLAVES			WHITES		
		Unmarried Women (Solteras)	Married Women	Ratio Married to Unmarried	Unmarried Women (Solteras)	Married Women	Ratio Married to Unmarried
1779 ^a	Province of Popayán	6,715	5,726	85%	7,275	6,076	83%
1825 ^b	Province of Popayán	4,865	1,780	36%	29,905	12,420	41%
1835 ^b	Province of Popayán	2,139	986	46%	14,865	6,683	45%
1843 ^c	Canton of Caloto	647	654	101%	1,787	1,754	98%

^aPérez Ayala, 1951, 392-3

^bUrrutia, et al, 1970

^cEstadística General de la Nueva Granada ... 1843.

Of course, the ratio of married to unmarried women is only a very indirect index of marriage incidence, but, nevertheless, the figures do serve as

a salutary reminder that Church marriage may have been very common amongst slaves. In fact, the high degree of equivalence between slaves and whites as regards these ratios is little short of astonishing.

In the haciendas and area that concern us, males appear to have married at a slightly older age than females (approximately four years or so) and have a shorter life expectancy. When it comes to assessing the household structure of the slaves in the haciendas and mining settlements, some fairly accurate inferences can be made from the private censuses undertaken by the slave owners. However, these are only inferences, since although people are bracketed by what appears to be living units, there are considerable discrepancies in the format. If we examine Tables 2.4, 2.5, and 2.6, we observe that there is a marked tendency for the incidence of the simple nuclear family to diminish with the passage of time from 1767 to 1819, and for more complex household types to increase, together with an uneven increase in the proportion of female-headed households (defined as households in which the eldest woman has no affine or adult male sibling). However, even the "most nuclear" situation, that of the Hacienda Japio in 1767, at the beginning of the time series, shows a relatively large proportion of female-headed households.

It may be useful to cite Edith Clarke's findings from her fieldwork in rural Jamaica in the 1950's, and my own⁶ in the Puerto Tejada area in the early 1970's, in order to gain some comparative perspective. Edith Clarke reports that between 16% and 20% of the populations she studied existed in female-headed households (Clarke, 1966, 192-4). My figures for the rural areas of the Puerto Tejada region indicate that 24% of the population lived in this type of household. Hence we can conclude that

TABLE 2.4--Numbers of different types of slave households for some of the slave haciendas and mining settlements in the Puerto Tejada region, 1767-1819

	Hacienda Japio 1767	Hacienda La Bolsa 1795	Hacienda La Bolsa 1814	Santa María Mining Settlement 1819
Simple nuclear family household	26	25	30	43
Denuded nuclear female head	10	11	14	22
Denuded nuclear male head	2	1	0	1
Extended family (> 2 generations)	0	1	1	6
Denuded extended female head	0	4	5	0
Joint family sibling heads	0	2	5	4
Single female	11	4	1	10
Single male	15	9	1	5

TABLE 2.6--Percentage of total slave populations living in simple nuclear family households or female-headed households, 1767-1819

	% in Simple Nuclear Family	% in Female- Headed Households
Hacienda Japio (1767)	63	17
Hacienda La Bolsa (1795)	57	28.5
Hacienda La Bolsa (1814)	50	33
Santa María Mining Settlement (1819)	48	25

TABLE 2.5--Percentage distribution of total slave populations living in each type of household, 1767-1819

	Hacienda Japio	Hacienda La Bolsa	Hacienda La Bolsa	Santa María Mining Settlement 1819
	1767	1795	1814	
Simple nuclear	63	57	50	48
Denuded nuclear; female head	17	20	22	25
Denuded nuclear; male head	4	2	0	2
Extended	0	2	0	2
Denuded extended; female head	0	9	11	0
Joint	0	2	10	4
Single male	9	4	1	2
Single female	7	2	1	3
	100%	100%	100%	100%

the figures presented for the slave haciendas, particularly for the later periods, are relatively very high. (Clarke's and my own figures are not very different from innumerable studies on household composition for the Caribbean and lowland Latin America--e.g., M. G. Smith, 1962; R. T. Smith, 1956; Solien Gonzalez, 1969; Carlos and Sellers, 1972.)

It is by no means easy to explain these apparent changes in household structure. An enormous array of factors would have to be considered to more fully explicate the developmental cycle of the domestic group, but it serves our purpose here to merely document the situation as revealed by the estate censuses as part of our description of the slave situation and for

the sake of later comparison with the type of social organisation existing in the mid-twentieth century. It is important to mention that the censuses of 1814 and 1819 mention, for the first time, the fact that there were a few runaway slaves (nine in the case of the 1814 census, and three in 1819), and that these were mainly adult males who had deserted. Moreover, in both these latter censuses, one observes the practice of rotating slaves from this area with those working the gold placers in the far-off Pacific coast region where the Arboledas had large holdings. Once again, the number involved is very small (10 in the 1814 census and five in 1819), but sufficient to indicate the existence of this practice. One should also mention that the Wars of Independence severely affected the valley from 1810 to 1822, and these certainly contributed towards social instability and possibly altered the relationship and numerical ratio between male and female slaves (Cf. Zawadsky, 1943; Hamilton, 1827, II, 120).

It also deserves mention that female slaves worked the gold washings together with males. According to Hamilton, who inspected the Arboledas' gold mining around 1824, the women would wash the clay and earth that was brought to them by the men (Hamilton, 1827, II, 121). West (1952, 98-99) also describes women in the alluvial gold mining camps of Antioquia in the late sixteenth century. There were almost twice as many women miners as men in the case West cites.

It also needs emphasising that there was a tendency by the state to favour the principle of matrilineal descent over patrilineal, as the mother-child link was regarded more certain and reliable than paternal or affinal ones--a principle the state seems to have employed in relation to Indians as well as blacks (Arboleda Llorente, 1948, 69). The 1821 law of "free

birth" by which all slave offspring born after then were to be formally free, yet had to serve the masters of their mothers until 18 years of age, was a double reflection of this tendency by the state and the wider society to encourage the matrilineal principle amongst the slaves and lower castas.

At the same time, however, administrators and owners showed a common concern over "licentiousness", and repressed consensual unions. Slaves in free unions were sold in preference to those that were legally married. There is no indication in the records at my disposal of slave families being separated by sale.

From the master's point of view, there was very little in the way of formal status differentiation amongst the slaves, apart from one or maybe two slave captains for upwards of each 100 slaves.

A powerful influence in the area came from the illegal cultivation of contraband tobacco by free black peasants, either legally manumitted or runaway. Situated along the Palo River at the northern periphery of the Arboleda's hacienda in the zone that today roughly corresponds to the municipio of Puerto Tejada, these blacks had been growing vast quantities of high quality tobacco since the last quarter of the eighteenth century. "Living outside of the social conventions and legal provisions of the time", these people produced around 1/12th of the entire valley crop at least up till 1850 (Harrison, 1951, 39-40). Most of the tobacco was grown clandestinely. The selling price was higher, and police rarely dared enter the area which included a well-defined palenque of escaped slaves (Harrison, 1951, 134). This activity was associated with the growth of armed bands of contrabandistas in perpetual conflict with the state.

Thus, a large number of outlaw, cash-cropping black peasants existed on the very edge of the Arboleda's slave hacienda during the last half-century of slavery, and constituted a type of internal republic or state within the state, cut off from the rest of society except for the illegal cash and crop transfers of tobacco upon which so much of their autonomy depended.

The presence of such a large group of militant, powerful and de facto free black peasants was undoubtedly of great importance in shaping events following abolition, providing all blacks with some political leverage in their conflict with the large landowners.

However, the general picture of the slave hacienda then was one of a very secure and controlled social organization, and one which only began to fragment in the early nineteenth century when political pressures for abolition mounted and when male slaves were recruited to fight in the Wars of Independence. Bolívar himself was a firm advocate of the latter, mainly on the grounds that if blacks did not fight and die, then the future of the society would be endangered by a black majority enjoying the fruits of freedom won at the cost of heavy white casualties (Bierck, 1953).

As regards the political relationship between master and slave, it appears that the Arboledas had no serious problems until eight years before abolition. The colony had been founded on war, slavery, and continual rebellion. In eastern Colombia, Indians like the Pijao and many smaller groups had preferred to fight and die, and the first experiments with African slaves were only slightly more successful (Arroyo, II, 96). Slave rebellions and escapes were common in the

sixteenth century, and reappeared again in the late eighteenth as a major social factor alongside the growing restlessness of free blacks and a general wave of discontent in the colony as a whole. In the valley, plots were uncovered for areal revolts, some of which included alliances with Indians, and there is the suggestion that secret black societies of slave cabildos, common enough along the Caribbean coast, even existed in some of the Cauca Valley haciendas (Jaramillo Uribe, 1968, 68-71) and were instrumental in uprisings.

Although the Caloto area seems to have been free of such outbreaks, one small uprising has been recorded for 1761 when a mine owner and his son were killed by their rebellious gang, which was quickly rounded up by the local mayor and thirty well-armed men (Arboleda, 1956, II, 306-7). In 1843, slaves from Japio and La Bolsa joined the rebel army of General Obando which was sweeping western Colombia with the promise of general abolition, and sacked these two haciendas. Their reward for this was to incur such wrath, fear, and business-like calculation on the part of their masters, who clearly saw the writing on the wall, that 99 adult and 113 child slaves were sold for \$31,410 to Peru, where slavery was still secure and demand high (Helguera, et. al., 1967).

Whatever relative peace the Arboledas appeared to have enjoyed for most of the slave era, the memories bequeathed till today by that travail indicate unremitting bitterness. It is commonly held by blacks native to the region that the interior walls of the still-existing haciendas are permanently blotched by the blood of the tortured and whipped slaves which no amount of whitewashing can

long conceal, and at midnight on Good Friday people still claim that they can hear the clatter of a mule carrying the last slave owner, endlessly seeking repentance for his sins.

NOTES TO CHAPTER II

1. The data on the slave haciendas comes from archive material in the Archivo Central del Cauca--the government archive in the Department of Cauca, located in the City of Popayán. The material consists of letters and account books belonging to the estate of Sergio Arboleda (deceased). These documents were not indexed or in any way classified at the time of my research. Hence, I refer to them simply as A.C.C. (Archivo Central del Cauca), or as A.C.C., colección Sergio Arboleda, undated and not paginated.

2. The extremely complex issue of slave and folk religion will be taken up in Chapter XIV.

3. The distinction proposed by Wolf and Mintz between hacienda and plantation (Social and Economic Studies, 1957, VI, 3) was not observed by the people themselves in the Cauca Valley at this or at any other time, and accordingly I tend to follow their opting for the label 'hacienda', except for the twentieth century sugar mill-plantation complexes which I call 'plantations' as they clearly come under these authors' definition of large-scale, profit-oriented, agricultural enterprises with abundant capital and a dependent labour force.

4. In this article, the sign '\$' stands for the Colombian silver peso which up to around 1880 equalled the U. S. dollar.

5. Colonel J. P. Hamilton who travelled through the valley in the mid-1820's regarded the Arboledas' slaves as being in a very healthy condition, and considered them physically superior to slaves in other haciendas and mines in the valley (Hamilton, 1827, II, 139). He also thought that their material conditions of life were superior to that of the labourers in "some countries in Europe" (Hamilton, *ibid.*, 124).

6. A more detailed analysis of the contemporary household structure appears in Chapter XIII.

CHAPTER III

POST ABOLITION: THE RISE OF THE FREE PEASANTRY; 1851-1900

Manumission, Laissez Faire, and Regional Disarticulation

The Arboledas, in common with all the large slave owners, resisted the manumission laws of the nineteenth century, and contested abolition by leading an unsuccessful civil war in 1851. Nevertheless, the alacrity with which they picked up the reins of freedom and harnessed the freed blacks to their mills and fields was little short of astonishing, especially given the resistance of their former slaves and their opportunities to reinforce that resistance. The Arboledas' relative success in this matter, as with their immunity from slave revolts compared with the rest of the colony, must have been due in good part to the size and density of their holdings, and their geographical position between the two major and closely connected cities, Cali and Popayán. The region was densely settled in relation to most other parts of the country, and state aid more forthcoming. Moreover, they had prepared contingency plans for general abolition; a policy which was unconsciously encouraged by the national government's vacillation and slowness. By the time of abolition in 1851, the Hacienda Japic, and its sub-division, Quintero, had prepared for the transition by institutionalizing a new category of worker, the concertado; blacks who in return for a small plot of a few hectares worked a certain number of days on the hacienda. Just before abolition, some 40% of the adult slaves had been put in this position. The general predicament they

facéd was well put by a neighbouring slave owner, Joaquín Mosquera, who wrote in 1852,

Up till now the general abolition has not produced any serious commotion; but I do see alarming difficulties because agitators have been advising the blacks neither to make work contracts with their former masters, nor to leave their lands, but to take them over. I know that señor Arboleda has offered his three reales a day in order to continue working on his sugar cane haciendas, but none have taken up his generous offer. (Posada and Restrepo Canal, 1933, 83-5)

Three months later he added that he had just made a tour of inspection of his mines in the Caloto area, which, owing to abolition, resembled a town destroyed by an earthquake. He spent two weeks bargaining with the ex-slaves over the re-arrangement of the mines, most of which he rented out at "vile prices" to local white merchants, and the blacks who paid him up to one peso a month. The huts and plaintain groves were divided up between the ex-slaves, by family, and distributed free of charge. The pastures were rented at the rate of two reales per head of cattle. The blacks, he wrote, "are now the owners of my properties, leaving me only a kind of dominion, allowing me but one-fifth of my previous income" (Posada and Restrepo Canal, loc. cit.).

In 1853, the Arboledas began a refinement on the concertaje system in an attempt to both hold labour and expand production without resorting to the tenant production policy which Joaquín Mosquera had opted for. Three hundred and thirty hectares of virgin forest were divided up amongst most of the ex-slaves of Quintero, who were also provided with "bread, clothing, and a roof." The holdings consisted of two parts; one for a village site, and the other for cultivation, both of their own plots and for new plantings of the hacienda. Their task was to clear the jungle and pay off their rent dues, known as terrafes, with five to 10 days' labour each month for the

hacienda, which together with Japio had 50 hectares of sugar cane, 20 hectares of plaintains, and 21 hectares of cocoa trees. The owners attempted to closely control all activities. Public gatherings were restricted, and even work on the private plots was monitored. Lacking other means of coercion, a patronage system was developed whereby a finely graded hierarchy of latent status differences was accentuated and formalised. However, even though the owners scored considerable successes, their hegemony was far from intact. Years later, looking back on this transition period, the owner wrote that anarchy reigned, and so great was the "horror that permeated those woods, that nobody dared to enter them in claim of terrajes." An administrator was unsuccessfully contracted to "enforce morality," and a belligerent neighbour himself volunteered to police the region in return for the money rents (which were infinitely smaller than the cash equivalent of labour dues), but was assassinated in the attempt.

The blacks' resistance was ably reinforced by the frequent national political convulsions which tore no part of the country further apart than the Cauca Valley. This region was fiercely divided between rival elites scrambling for state power. It was permeated more than any other part of the republic by the class presence of the hostile new yeomanry, imprinted with the antagonisms of centuries of slavery, and now squeezed by the political rivalries of the whites and the pressures of a subsiding economy. It was in this process of economic contraction that the estate owners strove to commercialize their holdings and recoup their earlier status--a hope as premature as it was desperate, given the valley's isolation from the new markets and the new means of turning land into cash.

As the republic entered the lists of free trade, liberalism and tropical exports, regions were disarticulated from one another and inter-regional

commerce shrank.¹ The owner of Japio in 1857 noted that the economy of the country, and particularly of the Cauca region, was in bad straits and, in his opinion, far worse than in the eighteenth century. Everything was in ruin; public buildings, aqueducts, bridges, churches, and private houses. The countryside was replete with the debris of run-down haciendas, and it was now impossible to find artisans for reconstruction. And, "if we look to the mountains enclosing the valley, the roads are completely abandoned, covered by jungle and inhabited by reptiles, mute but eloquent witnesses to the decadence of internal commerce." On the other hand, "if we have lost our internal trade, we have gained an external one. Today foreign imports are six times as great as before" (Sergio Arboleda, 1972, 328-31).

Associated with this "decadence of internal commerce" went an atomisation at the inter-village level of integration. A British government observer noted in 1883 that,

...since the villages and cultivated districts lie so far apart, and the means of communications are so difficult and costly, it often happens that no system of exchange between them is practicable. Each village therefore attempts to grow all the various products it requires and the people content themselves with the very scantiest crops of such products as are unsuited to their climate, whereas if they could readily exchange with a neighbouring village, perhaps some 2,000 to 3,000 feet lower or higher, but a few miles off, the combined cultivation of the two would supply the necessities of both with an infinitely smaller expenditure of labour, and at a greatly reduced price (Great Britain, Foreign Office, 1888, 635).

The cultural integument sewn by State and Church in the preceding mercantilist society likewise disintegrated. From the earliest days of the colony, and especially since the Jesuits ran it, the hacienda had been its own centre of religious contemplation, glory, and submission. Japio was itself an official part of the national ecclesiastical administration, but

as the larger society ruptured, so did the integrating function of its religious ideology, leaving the hacienda as far from God as it was from labour and foreign markets. This was brought out in the disputes between the Church and the hacienda in 1858. The owner contested the right of the former to keep charging him dues, claiming that since the slaves were now free and could earn wages, he could relinquish that responsibility. Furthermore, he stated that when there had been slavery, there was some benefit to be gained from the Church, but

today, the other landowners as much as myself, only receive damages. The priests only come to the hacienda chapel to celebrate the fiestas of the saints, and the blacks only attend as a pretext to enjoy themselves in situations quite unfavourable to morality and to agricultural work. This is why there are no peones to do the work, why vagrancy increases, why fights multiply with the liberal use of liquor, and why the assaults, robberies and other attacks on private property are everyday more common (Sergio Arboleda, A.C.C.).

The chaplain's acerbic reply was most revealing. He alleged that up till the time of abolition, the parish priests were forced by the owners to give a monthly mass, and that he had complied with this duty until it became impossible, due to the lack of worshippers. The slaves, having then no free time, had to spend their Sundays working on their own provision grounds. Moreover, all the sacred ornaments belonging to the chapel were ensconced in the owner's house. As for the church fiestas, these were not the cause of fighting and immorality, because there were very few fiestas and it was rather the owner who was to blame by insisting on selling liquor to all and sundry without scruple so long as he received money. He concluded by sounding a note from a lost era when man and nature were viewed as part of the same inalienable cosmos and not just as commodities for the market. "From our point of view," he wrote, "the payment of Church dues

falls on the spontaneous fruits of the earth and on the people who gain from its cultivation." His point of view was not shared, and the chapel fell largely into oblivion.

The cleavages in the local society were further aggravated by the fact that the blacks and the estate owner took up entrenched positions on opposite sides of the political fence formed by the division between the Liberal and Conservative parties. It was the Liberals who had dealt slavery its final blow, and it was to them that the blacks lent their fervent support.

By the late 1850's, despite the anarchy of labour, the hacienda was producing about 90,000 lbs. of molasses a year, as compared with 2,500 lbs. in 1789, and 78,000 in 1838. Overweighing the significance of this increase by far, was the secondary (and, relatively speaking, capital intensive) elaboration of this raw material into brandy. This had begun in 1851 as a switch in resource allocation to offset the threatened decline in labour and field production, and was probably the chief factor accounting for the economic viability of the hacienda in the post-abolition epoch.

Other haciendas relied largely on tenant farming and income from rents, which seems to have been the norm for much of Colombia during the second half of the nineteenth century, but was far more significant, or effective, in the densely settled highlands than in the valleys. The enormous and impoverished Hacienda La Paila in the northern part of the Cauca Valley relied on charging tenants between \$1.60 and \$3.20 per year for plots between a half and two acres, as well as their labour services on the hacienda. (These annual money rents, similar to Japio's, could be earned by a mere five to 30 days of wage labour.) In the 1850's, despite its gigantic size, its income amounted to no more than the average U. S. farmer's, due to the

scarcity of labourers and high salaries. Only cattle raising could give more profits. On the other hand, in the eastern highlands where Indian communal tenure had been destroyed, income from rents was a very important and profitable source of income. One hacienda, for example, is being recorded as obtaining an annual income from money rents in excess of its buying price in the 1840's (Cf. McGreevy, 1971, 160; Eder, 1959, 410).

Despite his continual and misplaced optimism concerning the terrajeros, the owner of Japio found it necessary to obtain labour through a system of contracting and sub-contracting, as well as from his tenants. A medley of cash contracts with all categories of tenants and outsiders, working alongside a labour aristocracy of resident whites, was established. In the instructions to his administrator in 1857, he urged the procurement of honest white peons (peones blancos formales) from central Colombia to serve as a resident labour force. Once proven, they should be contracted for three years, given a regular salary, a hut, and a small plot. They should not be charged a rent, but were expected to work on the hacienda when required and could not work for anybody else without the owner's personal permission. The black terrajeros were obliged to work when called. If they did not work well, they were to be thrown off their plots, and under no circumstances were they to be employed in the harvest of food crops like rice. This measure was dictated by the inability to control theft and the desire to keep tenants as dependent on the hacienda as possible. Black women were to be employed in weeding tasks, and if the administrator took the trouble to consult a trusted black, he should be able to lower the prevailing wage rate for this. All work was to be paid at piece rates per task, not per time. Money rents should be collected every two months, and those that did

not pay should be deprived of their land. Great care was necessary to ensure that the blacks did not steal firewood and damage the woods, and this could be achieved by paying informants (agregados honrados) to act as spies.

The cash terrajes amounted to a mere \$326 a year, from some 180 small tenants. The owner reserved all rights to firewood, would not pay for improvements to land, and would not allow the tenants to work for anyone else so long as they were required by the hacienda. Payment of labour dues was incumbent on the entire household, not just its head.

A further source of income, continuing the trend towards sub-division and sub-contracting, was to rent out large areas of land to small landlords who in their turn established the terrajero system as well.

Through the planting of perennials like cocoa and the fencing-in of savannah, an attempt was being made to hem in the restless peasantry. Specially reliable tenants were to be chosen in order to facilitate rent collecting, and were to be excused from paying or serving as much as the rest. As salary, the administrator was to receive \$6 a month plus 5% of sales of sugar and miei, 3% of brandy sales, 5% of brick sales, and 10% of the terrajes paid in cash.

Thus, in place of the monolithic and tightly centred slave hacienda, was substituted an encysted series of concentric spheres of authority with a great variety of distinct yet overlapping relationships to the central power. Large renters, resident white peons, rent workers, free contract workers, and small tenants were thereby structurally placed in a gridwork of oppositions to one another in an attempt to bind them to the hacienda and make the best out of the owner's insecure grip over his enormous and sparsely occupied estate.

Slaves had constituted just over one-half of the value of the hacienda's total inventory. Free labour now constituted one-half of the hacienda's annual running costs of around \$500. Even so, the labour bill represented only 5% of the annual \$5,000 profits accruing at this time.

By the mid-1860's, the hacienda was doing even better. Annual rents, including those from small landlords but excluding labour services, amounted to \$1,700, and annual profits based essentially on sales of brandy and cocoa to strictly local markets were around \$25,000. However, this was neither a steady nor an assured income, since the hacienda was several times overrun and confiscated during the civil wars in which Sergio Arboleda took a prominent and always costly losing role. Subsequent to each defeat and temporary appropriation of the hacienda, tenants and squatters would penetrate and enlarge their holdings at the estate's expense, only to be pushed back when national conditions were once again favourable to the owner's return.

As an illustration of this oscillating pattern, we can review the situation in 1871, when, once again in more or less secure possession, the owner instructed his administrator to take a census of the squatters and expel those who were not bona fide terrajeros or were not forthcoming with rent, noting that there were many people illegally occupying his land. He advised that the expulsion should be done very cautiously. Prior notice should be given, which, if not obeyed, should be followed by destroying the squatter's house and filing a complaint with the local magistrate or mayor. It would not be prudent, he wrote, to expel all the refractory tenants simultaneously. Rather, they should be dislodged one at a time. The policy of renting out large areas of land to arrendatarios (wealthy

tenants with large land holdings) with their own terrajeros was still in existence as a means of occupying more land, facilitating social control, and diluting authority. It was wise to make an inspection of the small tenants once or twice a year with a magistrate or the mayor at the hacienda's expense, and to contract a rent collector to ensure that arrears, allowing him 25% to 40% of what was collected, according to the difficulties. All squatters on pasture land had to be expelled by destroying their habitation, and all clearing of land for the sowing of corn by small tenants had to be stopped.

A new factor arose in this tenuous situation as soil exhaustion in the cane fields began to occur. Since the 1850's, only one ratoon (soca) was being harvested, and by 1871, fertiliser made out of the dried cane fiber (bagazo) had to be applied. While the lands of the more thickly wooded and lower-lying sub-division of Quintero were far more suitable to cane cultivation, it was there that tenants and squatters were most fractious. "Quintero demands more care than Japio," the owner wrote, "because there everything is in disorder and it is now habitual that there is no respect for private property" (A.C.C.).

By the 1870's, profits were well down and remained so till the demise of the family and the beginning of a new era in the early twentieth century. The capital infrastructure remained virtually unchanged since the early 1850's, with the mill of stone rollers relying on animal traction and the primitive distillery remaining the same. Despite the hacienda's notable commercial success in relation to most other valley haciendas over the same time, it too eventually succumbed to the same fate that most of the other large scale commercial land holdings met. The pressures of intermittent

but frequent civil wars, a refractory tenant work force, and the restricted nature of the market, posed insuperable obstacles to an inappropriate mode of production which would have required the quite contrary principles of political stability backed by a strong state, latifundia, a docile and large landless work force, and a flourishing market.

The valley, which in colonial times had formed the centre of the gold exporting economy, now found itself on the very margin of the commercial world as the national domain was ruptured into selectively discriminated dependencies by the world market. The attempts by the landed class to develop a plantation agriculture, converting slaves into tenant workers, not only had to bear with the staggeringly high costs of transportation across the Andes, exacerbated by the state's manipulation of road taxes, but had to contend with the hostile political reaction amongst its would-be workers that its policies necessarily engendered. The large landlords were truly caught in the vice of a contradictory transition period between two modes of production which they tried to resolve through "neo-feudalism" diluted by elements of free contract labour, both of which were inevitably unsatisfactory. The former was virtually impossible to maintain since land was abundant and the culture of servility had been transcended. The latter, given the bottleneck to exports and any sort of market formation, was too expensive.

It was these contradictory and antagonistic forces which made the valley into a battlefield of economic stagnation and contending socio-economic formations. The tendency towards a semi-subsistence yeomanry on the one hand, was arrested by the sluggish and fitful maturation of a capitalist export agriculture based on large estates on the other. And the latter was

riveted into near paralysis by internal disputes deriving from its incomplete control over the various means of production.

One eye-witness after the other described the general ruin and tantalizing promise of the valley during this period. It was commonly agreed that the problem lay in finding an outlet to the sea and in overcoming the laziness and surliness of the lower classes.

General T. C. Mosquera, one of the Cauca's most prominent sons and three times the President of the Republic of Colombia, noted in 1853 that

Sugar, coffee, cocoa, indigo, cotton, elastic gum, dye woods, quina, balsam, tolu, balsam of Peru, sarsaparilla, building and ornamental woods, vanilla, and cochineal abound... Nothing is wanting but roads to permit foreign countries, especially Chile and California in the New World, to see their ports supplied with intertropical productions, and America and Europe to receive them by the Atlantic (Mosquera, 1853, 77-8).

In the same work, Mosquera presented figures from the official 1851 population census. Blacks and their offspring constituted roughly 60% of the population of the State of Cauca. This proportion would have been much higher for the valley proper, where Indians were very few in number (see Table 3.1).

TABLE 3.1--Population census by racial categories for the State of Cauca and the Republic of New Granada, 1851.

	Cauca	Republic of New Granada
Common white race	49,000	450,003
Indigenous 'civilised'	25,000	301,000
Indigenous 'savage'	6,000	120,000
Ethiopian Negro race	38,000	80,000
Quadroons	14,600	30,054
Mestizos	33,049	998,997
Mulattoes	114,600	283,000
Zambos	2,300	100,000
Total	276,249	2,363,000

Source: T. C. Mosquera, Memoir on the Physical and Political Geography of New Granada (New York), 1853, p. 97.

Mosquera tells us that the whites were "intelligent, active, laborious, and moral," that the mixed group was "indolent, enduring, suspicious and frugal," that the "copper coloured" were "strong, voluptuous, intelligent, and brave," and that the blacks were "weak for labour, enduring, and suspicious" (Mosquera, 1853, 97).

Nineteenth century geographical determinism and invidious psychologising reinforced one another; the astonishing fertility of the soil meant that "to eat, one does not have to work," and from this simple circumstance derived the fact that "people excuse themselves from serving others, and this spirit of social equality, that predominates amongst the poor, drowns and tortures the aristocratic pretensions of the old mining feudocracy" (Pérez, 1862, 212-3).

"When a road is opened to the sea," continued the same author wistfully, agricultural development will be vigorously unleashed throughout the valley producing massively for the external market... Cali will become the emporium of commerce in the south of the Union, changing the face of the valley completely, multiplying the haciendas and shifting livestock to the mountainsides ... eliminating all the shacks in place of rural businesses... Profits shall change completely, reaching down as far as the most miserable hovel, and those whom today, whether through abandonment or ignorance prefer a life of idleness to the zeal of production, shall change their ideas once they see the most active and intelligent amongst them accumulating riches (Pérez, 1862, 137-9).

But to "achieve this happy future, all that is necessary is that the idle hands which exist today, stop being idle, and that social harmony, the best guarantee of work and business, be allowed to prevail" (Pérez, loc. cit.).

But "all that was necessary" was far from possible. Freed blacks continued to seek refuge along the fertile and raised river banks, planting

their staples of plaintain and corn and some few commercial crops like tobacco and cocoa. Their plots stretched in irregular ribbons along the rivers, simulating with interplanted crops the dense growth that had been there initially. Fishing and panning for gold were supplementary activities (Palau, 1889, 28), as was the occasional raising of livestock on the "common lands" and indivisos of open savannah. These black peasants were in many senses outlaws; free peasants and foresters living by their wits and armed strength rather than any legal guarantees to land and citizenship rights. "In the woods that enclose the Cauca Valley" wrote a German traveller in 1880,

vegetate many blacks whom one could equate with the maroons of the West Indies. Whether because of crimes that were too grave even for the liberal Cauca justice, or whether because of the simple desire to return to a savage state typical of their race, what is certain is that searching for solitude in the woods, where they regress once again slowly to the customs of their African birthplace as one commonly sees in the interior of Haiti. These people are tremendously dangerous especially in times of revolution, when they get together in gangs and enter the struggle as valiant fighters in the service of whatever hero of liberty who promises them booty (Schenck, 1953, 54).

The same observer went on to paint a vivid picture of social tension and hostility between the black peasantry and the landed gentry. He found the blacks generally very unsympathetic and unlikeable, and was informed that the situation had been less tense before the 1860's. Since the "revolution" of 1862, in which the Liberal party had given a freer rein to the black masses and had come to dominate the valley, the majority of the haciendas were bankrupt, although still legally in the possession of their old owners. There was a great lack of capital to restore the haciendas, which had suffered terribly from the persistent onslaughts of the enraged blacks, whom he described as "fanatics." The free black in the Cauca Valley,

he wrote, "will only work under the threat of an excruciating poverty, and even so, is capable of continuing his destructive work" (Schenck, 1953, 53-4). A flourishing hacienda near the northern town of Bugalagrande had had all of its 60,000 cocoa trees felled, one by one. The haciendas around Palmira had replaced their wooden fences with hedges of agave because the peasantry continually burnt the wooden ones, even in times of peace. In short, as he said, there were practically no guarantees of life or property, and the very worst blacks in this regard were those who lived at the south of the valley.

The open grasslands, or "common lands" as they were referred to by the peasantry, were more like no-man's lands, and were in some ways the functional equivalent of the truly communal lands that highland Indians had held, but differed from them in highly significant ways. Whereas Indians had had government sanction to this type of holding, which involved community councils legitimized by the state and formal internal controls, the commons of the Cauca Valley lowlands in the second half of the nineteenth century were, if anything, negatively sanctioned by the state and informally controlled. For it was in the very nature of this valley society that informal, underground controls would be the dominant modality of social organization, and this was as true for the regulation of peasant land as it was for all aspects of their social structure up to the present day. Pursued by a hostile gentry, denied any representation in the formal hierarchies of government, lacking security of land tenure, denied the possibility of any representative village structure within the official framework of administration, the black peasants matched the former Indian communities, point for point, but in an inverse relationship. As today, there were no black

institutions that meant anything on official lawbooks, yet blacks were discriminated against and formed as distinct a cultural group from the whites.² Their social organization, so to speak, was created out of a series of flitting shadows, built on an infrastructure of invisible supports and dispersable elements capable of endless permutations and combinations, as their kinship structure still certifies.

The point deserves emphasis. This lowland peasantry formed what was virtually a new social class. It did not evolve from years of patrimonial benevolence encrusted in manorial custom and feudal obligations ensuring the peasant some minimal guarantees and protection. There were neither ancient rights enshrined by tradition nor any contemporary warranties of security.³ Rather, the two traditions that fed into this new peasantry were that of the slave and that of the peasant-outlaw, or palenquero.

Were there any other remedies available to the upper class? Apart from the solutions tried by the Arboledas, were two others, as distinct from one another as the dead and future epochs they respectively represented.

One was to propound and apply vagabond laws. Police were given wide powers to second so-called vagabonds and force them to work on haciendas, and, as one student of these matters has written, the plains of the Cauca were turned into lands of brigandage and fear (Harrison, 1952, 173). Such measures to contain ex-slaves were notorious in Venezuela (which had been under the same jurisdiction as Colombia), and the clear purpose of these laws was to keep the ex-slave as a peon or day labourer on the land under supervision (Lombardi, 1971, 53). Vagrancy was an important concern of the state from the 1850's onwards as government reports attest (Estado del Cauca, 1859).

In 1858 the newspaper El Tiempo published a circular in connection with a new law aimed at controlling vagabondage. The author, a leading government official (Miguel Pombo), described the need for stricter laws as lying in the increase in idleness and the cost of food. This was as marked in the rural areas as in the towns. The peasants were no longer bringing their foodstuffs to the town markets, and were allowing their plots to fall into disuse. Such peasants, like the rural day labourers, would have to be forced to work by placing them under the control of the local police and landowners. The measures stipulated included starvation and flogging (El Tiempo, 7th September, 1858, p. 1)

But the state, suffering from severe structural weaknesses, was unable to achieve the ends so desired by the entrepreneurial class. In 1874, for example, town officials of Palmira, the most important rural town in the valley, received the following complaint from heads of the tobacco industry. The decadence of this industry, they complained, was due to lack of manual labour. Not just the lack, however, but also its indisposition. To overcome this, stronger laws favouring the employing class were essential so as to be able to compel recalcitrant workers into disciplined activity. "What is necessary," they urged, "are means that are coercive, prompt, efficacious, and secure" (Anuario Estadística, 1875, 139).

The other attempted remedy, vastly different in its subtlety and understanding of modern economic forces, was effected mainly by European and U.S. merchants who formed a rising commercial class in the valley from 1860 on. These were, in fact, intermediaries organised into the buying of export crops from small holders, which then trickled over the rough trails and rivers to the coast. Given the uncertainties of the valley's politics, the

reluctance of small holders to work for wages, and the fluctuations in the world market, this policy made sound sense. The type of intermediary most likely to succeed was the one who had sources of foreign credit and good market information. Such was the founder of the Eder family fortune, Santiago Eder, who, as a U.S. citizen and consul with close kin in commercial houses in London, New York, Panama, and Guyaquil, established himself in the southern part of the valley in the early 1860's. With the impetus from his successful dealings in foreign trade, he was slowly able to climb ahead of his Colombian rivals, such as the Arboledas, whose incapacity to engage in foreign commerce meant a decline in all components of their wealth. As the latter type of family, rooted in slavery, lacking capital and locked into the internecine political conflicts of the day, spent their energies and money, so entrepreneurs like Eder managed to acquire enormous land holdings to reinforce their trading activities. Eventually, with the opening of a route to the sea, they held the helm of the valley's economy. The fact that Eder himself, as consul and U. S. businessman, had to be backed up by a U. S. warship on the occasion of a default of respect and debts, was only the more outstanding and obvious outward sign of the international political connections which were behind the new ways of making money from land.

By the mid-1860's, the perilous Dagua River route across the western Andes had been sufficiently improved so as to allow a substantial increase in trade with the exterior (Palau, 1862, 9-13), so that by 1876, the value of trade was of the order of two million pesos as compared with \$85,000 in the mid-nineteenth century (Eder, 1959, 111, 162). Santiago Eder, who without the financial aid of his kin entwined in the business houses of Europe

and the U. S. A., would have had no success (Eder, 1959, 395), was one of the prime movers of this route and of subsequent improvements which allowed him to weave together a network of foreign and domestic commerce. With the aid of tobacco, bought from surrounding black smallholders which he exported to Panama and London, he gradually underwrote a large sugar plantation. He profitably rode the successive export booms in indigo, quinine, rubber and coffee, and imported cotton goods, luxury foods, wheat flour, wood(!), sewing machines, matches, kerosene, plows, and even machetes from Western Europe and the U. S. A.. As one of his descendants, writing in the twentieth century, observed, Santiago understood that indigo, for example, was going to be a boom of very short duration, and thus kept well supplied with information as to the state of the international market through his overseas contacts, not to mention sharp injections of capital when and where necessary (Eder, 1959, 439).

By the late 1860's, he had over 1,000 hectares of choice valley land, was the first or second person in the valley to construct a hydraulic powered sugar mill, and was already producing 95,000 lbs. of crude sugar at a time when the Arboledas' Japio, at the peak of its productive career, was grinding out 90,000 lbs. of miel.

Coffee, which ultimately proved to be far less successful on the valley floor than on the temperate slopes, excited his interest in 1865, and during a trip to London, he formed the "Palmyra Coffee Plantation Company" in which he, one of his brothers living in London, and the city firm of Vogl Brothers held the shares. With this capital formation, he was able to plant extensively alongside his other holdings. Orders around £2,000 for tobacco were regularly placed with him by London and German buyers, often in the

form of standing credits, a type and amount of financing which was also made available to him by Manchester cotton firms for imports. In 1878, for example, his profits on the sales of imports alone were slightly over \$10,000.

Land and property accrued through other means as well. When other businessmen like himself failed to play the market swings correctly and went bankrupt, he was able to acquire their holdings, since their foreign creditors had no interest in taking them over directly themselves. Also, being a foreigner, he was not liable to have his property confiscated during the civil wars. In fact, this meant that Colombians would entrust their holdings to him.

By 1874, when the manager of Japio was forlornly recommending a new mill, the "Victor" from the U. S. A., Eder's plantation, "La Manuelita", was installing a "Louisiana No. 1" mill and producing not only the highest grade sugar, but by 1881, was the largest producer in the valley, with about 550,000 lbs. a year, part of which found its way to foreign ports.

Writing to the U. S. Secretary of State in 1868, in keeping with his duties as consul and in pursuit of his continual requests for aid, Eder described the valley in glowing terms as a natural paradise of physical resources whose exploitation only awaited U. S. interest. The local whites, who formed but a sixth of the basically black population, saw U. S. intervention as the only solution to the endless civil disturbances which wracked the valley (Eder, 1959, 163). The 1876 outbreak, ostensibly like all the rest a civil war between Conservatives and Liberals, did great damage to the City of Cali and was described by Eder in terms which leave little doubt as to its basis in class conflict, albeit one that was crucially

dramatised by religious doctrine and confusingly channeled by the real-politik of formal party alliances. The 20,000 inhabitants of the city included some 16,000 of a vagabond population, he wrote, made up of Negroes and mestizos imbued with intensely communistic doctrines. The remainder was principally of Spanish origin, and unlike the rabble, belonged to the Conservative party. The leader of the former was described as a communist visionary, a mystic lunatic, and assassin, driven by the maxims of the French Revolution and the Colombian democratic clubs founded in the 1840's. This leader obviously represented a powerful populist movement with chiliastic overtones, searching for Glory and the end to all "Goths" (Conservatives) who were to be swept out of the city in a flood of vengeance and destruction to Conservative and Liberal property alike, a lack of discrimination which drove the Liberal government to swift retaliation.

The extremely complex relationship between religion, party, race and class, naturally found expression on the haciendas as well. In the mid-1870's, Japio's owner received a letter from his son, then managing the property:

In the last session of the local Democratic Club, mainly attended by blacks, they were saying that the aim of the Conservatives is to make a new revolution in order to re-enslave all the blacks. The Conservatives are believed to be saying, "Slavery or the gallows for all blacks!" What is more, the blacks state that the Conservatives are not true believers but feign Catholicism in order to deceive; the only true Catholics are the Liberals.

All this was accompanied by the most alarming threats of death to the Arboledas.

Again in 1879, there was deep unrest in the woods around Japio. The slightest hint could panic people into believing that slavery was to be

recommenced, and on this occasion, due to the owner's attempts to stock up stores of rice and plaitain flour, it was held that a massive round-up and sale of blacks to the exterior was imminent, as it had been in 1847.

Throughout the last half of the nineteenth century the peasantry was armed and fighting for one or the other local Liberal machines. The owner of Japio had almost given up hope of ever restoring control; continual attempts were made to let large areas of land and live off the rent, and by 1882, the family was eager to sell out altogether. Production of brandy, their mainstay, was unreliable and intermittent. In addition to armed resistance, it was difficult to control even that fraction of the population which did frequently work on the hacienda. In July 1882, for instance, all the workers were in fiesta for a week, drinking, horse-racing and bull-fighting their time away, much to the administrator's fury: "We mill weekly when there is no fiesta and when the blacks don't have to lie down," was his bitter comment. "We cannot find workers even though one trips over idlers every day."

NOTES TO CHAPTER III

1. Safford writes in this regard:

The more or less nationalist bent of the earlier period gave way during the 1840's to free trade policies which prevailed for most of the century. The free trade current was encouraged by the mediocre showing of local manufactures, the growing efficiency of overseas competitors, the expanding European market for tropical products, and the influence of English policy. But an important factor was the breakdown of the interior's geographical protection with the definitive establishment of steamboats on the Magdalena River and in oceanic transportation in the middle of the nineteenth century. These improvements in marine transportation made it cheaper to bring goods to the western provinces from Liverpool than from Bogota. Thus, New Granada's national market became fragmented, and each segment of the interior carried on its principal economic dealing with Europe (Safford, 1965, 507-8)

2. This seems to have been common to black settlements throughout the New World. Compare with the following:

A community in their (ethnographers') eyes seems to be a co-residential pattern with political and ritual solidarity and reducible to a pattern of institutions rather than social relations. But throughout the Caribbean, the Church, the school, and the political party are institutions external to the village and not therefore organically a part of the social system of the village. Frequently their personnel are alien, and certainly their rules are (Wilson, 1969, 80).

3. Compare with similar observations for other parts of the New World where African slaves were present; S. Mintz' concept of a "proto-peasantry" and an "opposition peasantry" in the Caribbean (Mintz, 1961, 34), and N. Solien Gonzalez' concept of a "neoteric society" (Solien Gonzalez, 1969, 10).

CHAPTER IV

THE NEW RURAL ECONOMY, 1900-1970

The twentieth century brought profound changes. The unstable relationship between the two previously coexisting modes of production, that of a subsistence yeomanry on the one side, and a latent rural capitalism based on large estates on the other, was resolved in favour of the latter. From this time onwards, the peasantry became progressively reduced to two main groupings; day labourers and minifundistas (defined as peasants with less than sufficient land to meet living requirements). Conversely, the holdings of the white upper class became either larger or more intensively capitalised, or both. The de facto common lands used by the peasantry for grazing and some cultivation became enclosed by the rich landlords who had always seen many of these lands as their own, and could now successfully prosecute their claims.

Schematically one can point to four major factors accounting for these changes:

1. Political unification of the upper class and consolidation of the nation-state.
2. A massive increase in foreign (U.S.A.) investment.
3. The opening of the valley to international commerce by rail and sea.
4. Demographic changes; a sharp increase in the local rural population, putting pressure on land, and an even greater increase in the urban population, increasing the consumer demand for agricultural products.

In 1902 with the end of the catastrophic War of One Thousand Days (1899-1902) and its severe dislocation of local political party machines, the growing tendency towards national centralization of the state and the consolidation of regional and factional elites into the one, more or less unified, class was greatly accelerated (Fals-Borda, 1969, 103-4, 117; Dix, 1967, 115).

The regionalization of the country into semi-autonomous exporting or subsistence enclaves tended to remain, thereby giving some persistence to regional elites, but nevertheless, the need for national integration at the administrative and financial levels transcended the finer regional differences. Even as late as 1929 the country was still being described authoritatively as a loose conglomerate composed of four principal marketing regions; the Atlantic coast area centred on Barranquilla, the Bogotá region of the eastern highlands, the Medellín area in the central highlands, and the Cali area of the southwest. These were seen as somewhat separate and isolated from one another, each with its distinct and different population, distinct sub-culture, and autonomous marketing networks focused on the principal cities. Nevertheless, it was also a national economy under centralized government administration, and it was this complex combination of region and nation which caused so many problems for businessmen, as well as certain great advantages (Garnett Lomax, 1930). If anything, it was the connections between region and overseas centres that was crucial. Santiago Eder, who died in 1921, was in the habit of making frequent trips to New York and Europe from his home in the Cauca Valley, but hardly ever made the journey to the national capital of Bogotá (Eder, 1959, 363). However,

the relationship between regions and the national capital came to exercise increasing importance as the twentieth century progressed.

A reciprocal movement was triggered off in which foreign investment multiplied as state power and local business strength increased. Between 1913 and 1928, foreign money entered Colombia (very much including the Cauca Valley) at unprecedented rates, greater than for any other Latin American country during the same period; U.S.A. private investments, mainly in public works, amounted to 280 million dollars (Rippy, 1931, 152). President Reyes (1904-1909), a very close friend of Santiago Eder, was in great need of funds to develop the Cauca Valley where he himself had large investments (Rippy, 1931, 104; Eder, 1959, 221, 405). The security of these loans was guaranteed by measures which mostly affected the poorer strata of the population, being effected through sales taxes on tobacco, liquor, and the deguello, or stockyards (Rippy, 1931, 161, 164). Radical fiscal reforms devised by U.S.A. advisors (the Kemerer Mission, 1923, 1930) established a reasonably efficient national banking structure for the first time (Wurfel, 1965, 416).

Land was now beginning to become felt as scarce as population pressure and new economic opportunities began to have their effect. Land values increased in response to the swelling urban demand for foodstuffs, but the peasantry rarely had legal title to land. An intricate and lengthy series of disputes over "common lands," baldíos (state lands), and indivisos (inalienable lands inherited from a common ancestor), terminated in the opening decades of the twentieth century to the peasants' loss as cattlemen, inspired by rising beef prices, wanted more

land and no longer had to pacify labour in what was quickly becoming a society with a surplus of workers. As Phanor Eder wrote in 1913, "cattle prices are going up continually... Profits are large, since as already stated, no care or expense is bestowed on the animals, three to four men being sufficient to look after a great many" (Eder, 1913, 142-3).

Prior to this extension of modern concepts of private property, the valley's peasantry had simply squatted on land which they cleared and planted with corn, plantains, and cocoa. They may or may not have entered into verbal arrangements with the local large landowners who claimed ownership, and if they did, this more often than not was based on the concept of tenancy in which the peasant became owner of the "improvements" (mejoras), such as the clearing of the land, the housing, and the perennial tree crops planted on it such as the plantains and the cocoa trees. Once planted, such crops--particularly the sturdy cocoa trees with a life extending from 25 to 50 years or even longer--could become a virtual claim to complete ownership, and this may be one of the most important reasons why the peasantry of the Puerto Tejada region took to this crop with such enthusiasm. As we saw in Chapter III, such plots of land could be granted by the ostensible owner of a large hacienda in return for the tenant's labour. Once granted however, the tenant would increasingly come to consider the plot as his or her own, especially when the improvements became fairly substantial. As the social milieu changed following the War of One Thousand Days, this desire for ownership on the part of the tenant could only be accomplished by the payment of the price of the land, which was usually far too high for any peasant cultivator. At the same time, however,

the large landlords themselves were rarely in a position to be able to pay for the improvements of all their tenants, and thus both parties became locked in an increasingly unviable situation (El Agricultor Caucaño, I, 1934, 543).

In addition, as previously mentioned, there existed vast stretches of savannah which the peasantry used in communal tenure for the grazing of livestock. The legal status of such lands was very confused; the original titles, dating back to the conquest itself, were usually wonderfully vague, sales and transfers since then were often equally imprecise, and the complex political struggles of the nineteenth century had allowed a thick overlay of de facto possession rights to assume the balance of ownership. The indivisos are especially interesting, since they displayed a peculiar amalgam of earlier and later forms of tenure and concepts of private property. A large colonial slave hacienda like that of the Jesuits' Llanogrande near Palmira, for example, had passed into the hands of the crown with the expulsion of the Jesuits in the eighteenth century, and a good part of those lands had come to be used and passed down generations of descendants as inalienable holdings, both for the first family trunks and for later persons who had come to acquire usufruct rights. It was a situation in which there were a large number of owners in common, due to estates being handed down from generation to generation without any partition, and these undivided interests being collectively inherited (Cf. Eder, 1913, 156-7). By 1886 this particular indiviso had hundreds of families using parts of it, and was essentially an open area with no fences dividing off those portions. Santiago Eder, in particular, bought up plot after plot in order to ensure himself a

favourable position when the lands passed into purely private tenure following the official Judgement of Partition which began in 1886. Frequently this simply meant buying up the mejoras, or improvements, which was one of the customary ways in which peasants handed down property. In the final event, Santiago Eder obtained the full extension of the Haciendas La Manuelita and La Rita, approximately 920 hectares (Eder, 1959, 374-6).

A local scholar, Marino Escobar, understands the indivisos as having their origin in colonial times when the beneficiaries of large land grants from the crown would in turn allow peasants to use portions of the land under a type of feudal tenure. Such rights granted by the owner of the estate were often referred to in units of patacones (a colonial monetary measure equal to 100 pesos), and to a certain extent could be thought of like shares in the total area of land. The underlying idea, which seems to have been preserved down to the twentieth century, was that such land was inalienable (Marino Escobar, n.d.).

From the early 1900's onwards, local newspapers contain reports and notices on the partition and sale of such lands, particularly the indivisos; for example, the indiviso "Bolo de Escobares," just to the north of the immediate Puerto Tejada region, valued in 1904 at \$40,070, in which around 440 owners were involved (El Comercio, Cali, 7th July, 1904; El Correo Del Cauca, 28th April, 1906). At least some if not all the lots had to be paid for. The newspaper El Comercio, on the 16th June, 1904, announced to the "sharecroppers" of the above mentioned indiviso that lots from 25 to 100 hectares were now on sale. Advertisements abound in the press during this time for the sale of land, and many of

these concern the selling of indiviso land and land with mejoras—improvements that could have been used to establish ownership. This is particularly so for the south of the valley. One also notes news reports and advertisements indicating great interest in the use of barbed wire for fencing. Barbed wire was introduced into the valley in the late 1870's (Horna, 1970, 54), together with the importation of new grasses and the upswing in the cattle industry (Parsons, 1968, 132-3). Small wonder that one of the more common advertisements in newspapers around the turn of the century reads;

The Most Useful Book Ever Published
in Colombia is
"The Household Lawyer"
("El Abogado en la Casa")

Price \$80.00

An old Negro peasant, now residing in the township of Puerto Tejada, understands the indivisos in this way:

Indiviso lands begin when the discoverers came to America. The land was then guarded by the Indians that were here in those times. Then the discoverers began to take their lands, because all the poor people were held by them as slaves. All the poor class was enslaved by the people who took the land. This owner would have that land over there, and another owner would have another portion of land over here, and there was still a lot of land without any owners at all. Thus they uprooted those who were here first, the Indians, but never got round to selling all the land that remained. They just sat content with their arms folded and a lot of land that they possessed was never sold and it became impossible to sell it. This is what they called an indiviso, and such land could never be alienated. They also called these lands "comuneros"; that was the land where you and I, and he, and someone else and someone else, and so on, had the right to have our animals. The animals were divided by their brands; no bit of land was divided by fences. There were some comuneros with 80 families. They were lands where you could place yourself as an equal with everybody else. Here almost all the land used to be like that. But

after the War of One Thousand Days, the rich came along and closed off the land with barbed wire. From then on they began to take ownership of the lands, even though it was not theirs. If you had your portion of land or share of land and it was not fenced in, they would come from afar, and as they had wire, they would close it off and you just had to get out of there because the law would not shield you. That's how it started; the rich kept coming and coming, throwing people off the land, stripping every poor person of their possessions. Then they planted grass for pastures. That is why the people who were here had to either leave or go to work for the rich, because there was no law for the poor. They felled the poor. Even the mejoras (improvements) had no value; when they closed you in, you had to get out.

Of very great importance was the simultaneous opening of the Panama Canal and the railroad from the valley to the Pacific Ocean in 1914. Now the commercial promise of the valley, so tantalizingly promised for decades, could finally be realized. Phanor Eder cites a conversation recorded as early as 1850 which is typical of the numerous statements made by the valley's well-to-do; "In order to exploit the wealth of this part of Colombia, in order to give work to its unoccupied population, in order to correct at least some of the conflictful social inequalities,... above all a road has to be opened to the Pacific." (Eder, 1959, 394) It was the dream of many a wealthy Caucano from at least the mid-nineteenth century on, and the way was strewn with many failed attempts. Julio Arboleda, the owner of the Hacienda La Bolsa, was one of the main shareholders, together with General Tomás Mosquera, in a company formed in Popayán around the mid-century to build such a road (Eder, 1959, 111; Horna, 1970, 138). Foreign companies from the U.S.A. were several times granted contracts and offers of virtually free land in order to construct a railway across the Andes to the ocean, but they made little progress (Eder, 1959, 132-3; Horna, 1970, 135-73, 273-4). U.S. citizens who had

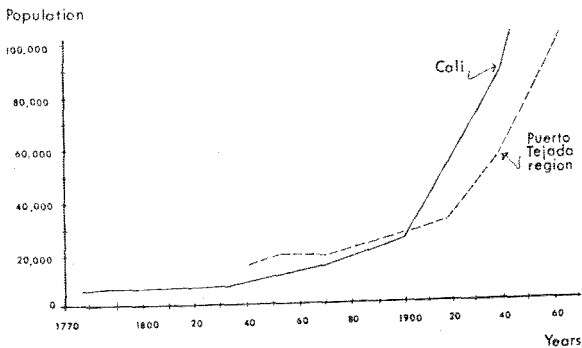
settled in the Cauca Valley, like the Simmonds and the Barneys, struggled continuously to build this line to the sea. Communication to the Pacific and therewith the opening of commercial channels to overseas markets acquired the features of a legend. P.A. Banderas, in his Diccionario Geográfico Industrial Y Agrícola Del Cauca (Cali, 1944), was only echoing a common response when he dedicated that work to the opening of the valley.

This work is the homage of a journalist of the Cauca Valley to the creators and instigators of the Carretera del Mar (Road to the Sea) and to all the workers who gave their lives to the tremendous task of breaking the western massif of the Andes--port of gold of the Cauca Valley--in order to give to Colombia a new route to progress and a most fertile lesson in what muscle directed by will and intelligence is capable of performing (Banderas, 1944).

Added to these factors was the increase in population (see Tables 4.1, 4.2, and Figure 4.1). The rural population in the Puerto Tejada region which had remained at around 17,000 to 19,000 for most of the latter half of the nineteenth century, grew to some 33,000 by 1918. The population of the nearby City of Cali increased from around 13,000 in the 1870's to 25,000 in 1905, and 88,366 in 1938.

TABLE 4.1--Population of the Puerto Tejada region, 1843-1964 (municipios of Caloto, Santander, Puerto Tejada, Corinto, Miranda)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Population</u>
1843 ^a	16,366
1851 ^b	19,789
1869 ^c	18,832
1870 ^b	19,751
1918 ^c	32,963
1938 ^c	56,406
1951 ^c	75,914
1964 ^c	105,084



POPULATION OF CITY OF CALI AND PUERTO TEJADA
REGION COMPARED, 1777 - 1964.

^aEstadística general de la Nueva Granada, ...1843, Bogotá, 1848.

^bAnuario Estadística de Colombia, Bogotá, 1875.

^cNational censuses.

TABLE 4.2--Population of Cali, 1777-1964

<u>Year</u>	
1777 ^a	5,384
1787 ^a	5,690
1793 ^b	6,548
1807 ^a	7,192
1833 ^c	7,621
1843 ^d	10,376
1851 ^e	11,848
1870 ^e	12,743
1905 ^a	25,000
1938 ^a	88,366
1964 ^a	637,929

^aUniversidad Del Valle: Division de Salud, Estudio demográfico de Cali, mimeo, Cali, 1969, 6-13.

^bG. Arboleda, Historia de Cali, Cali, 1956, Vol. III, 120.

^cCenso y estadística de los cantones de la provincia, año de 1833, unpublished manuscript, A.C.C.

^dEstadística general de la Nueva Granada, 1843, parte primera: Población e instituciones, Bogotá, 1848.

^eAnuario estadística de Colombia, Bogotá, Imprenta Medardo Rivas, 1875.

By the early twentieth century, the haciendas Japio and La Bolsa and their immediate surroundings had transferred ownership. A large part had gone via daughter marriage to the up-and-coming Holguin family, with wealthy industrial and rural interests, and which provided Colombia with

two presidents. Smaller parts went to middle class entrepreneurs who turned to cattle raising and cultivation of cocoa. The peasantry was put on the defensive as a myriad land claims made by wealthy businessmen descended on them. "We are the government, and our fences are our titles," was the landlords' literal reply to anguished peasants who stubbornly retained faith in the law as fences were driven through their plots, evicting tenants and squatters regardless. The process started slowly around 1902 with the smaller landlords taking the initiative; men who lived close to the peasantry but were not of them, men who understood them and knew how to manipulate them, insinuating themselves into the peasant labyrinth. The process varied from place to place, but in general they first converted the free peasant "squatters" and terrajeros into concertados with tiny and insufficient plots in return for labour services, and then in the late 1920's into fully fledged wage-earning rural proletarians lumped into new villages such as Villarica, two miles south of the township of Puerto Tejada. As prospects quickened, the Arboledas affinal descendants, the Holguins, returned in 1913 after many years' absence in order "to dominate the blacks and expand their hacienda," in the words of one of their old mayordomos. A seventy year-old peasant woman remembers, "around 1914 the Holguins began to try to get rid of us terrajeros. They planted pasture in Juan Ignacio (a vereda, or neighbourhood), even growing it right up to the edges of our houses. Those who resisted were thrown in gaol." Her son-in-law breaks in, "that was a violencia! They tried to enslave us once again." She continues, "Cenecio Mina and Juan Zappe came and supported us. People were armed and it looked really tough. Then the government came along and the

hacienda ended up paying the terrajeros whose houses and crops they had destroyed. But that was all! The poor lost their rights, got some money, but the hacienda got the land."

The Holguins were able to roll back hundreds of free peasant families, force through fences and pastures, and claim increased ground rents from those that remained.

From the following two tables (Tables 4.3 and 4.4), one can get a rough idea of the degree to which the peasantry was becoming a day labouring class. For the Puerto Tejada region (enclosing the municipios of Puerto Tejada, Caloto, Corinto, Miranda and Santander), landless day labourers constitute something like one-fifth the number of small holders present in 1912. But by 1938, the proportion is radically different, with landless day labourers forming a larger number than the independent small holding class. In the case of the Puerto Tejada municipio itself, by 1938 the landless day labouring class is slightly more than one and two-thirds as large as the small holding class.

Armed conflict between peasants and landlords continued. The period when the Holguins were re-establishing their inheritance from the Arboledas, from around 1913 onwards, tended to centre on the colourful figure and exploits of the legendary bandit, José Cenecio Mina, who was regarded as a charmed person with magical powers by the peasantry. He was, in fact, as much a powerful sorcerer as a bandit chief, according to contemporary peasants. He had the ability, so it is said, to change himself into an animal or plant, disappear magically when being pursued by the police or the hacienda guards, and was supposedly impervious to bullets. He was said to have large hidden farms deep within the jungle, and possessed many wives. An old peasant dotes on his memory as follows:

TABLE 4.3--Changes in occupational structure in the Puerto Tejada region, 1912-1938.

Year	Number of day labourers (1)	Number of land holders (basically smallholders) (2)	Ratio of (1) to (2) as a per- centage
1912	930	5,311	18%
1918	5,142 ^a	9,808	52%
1938	7,098	6,041	112%

Sources: National censuses.

^aFor the 1918 census there is no separate category for day labourers in agriculture. Hence I have used the category "cuenta ajena" (those who work for others). Since even by 1938 in the municipio of Puerto Tejada the vast bulk of the economically active population was employed in agriculture rather than the secondary or tertiary sectors of the economy, 2,800 people as against 75, this would seem to be an admissible manipulation.

TABLE 4.4--Changes in occupational structure in the municipio of Puerto Tejada, 1918-1938.

Year	Number of day labourers (1)	Number of land holders (basically smallholders) (2)	Ratio of (1) to (2) as a per- centage
1918	655 ^a	1,077	61%
1938	1,238	729	170%

Sources: National censuses.

^aThe same remarks apply as to 'a' in the preceding Table 4.3.

When they began to tear down the peasants' trees around the vereda of Palito the people called on Cencio Mina to defend them because all the lawyers for miles around were with the Holguins and none would help us. Thus, as he was a Negro, they called on him. The Holguins tried to raise rents by charging rent on each tree of cocoa; four pesos per tree. The people wouldn't stand for that because it was they who had planted those very same trees. They would pay for the right to use the land, but for the trees, no! And so the people got together and said they would do nothing.

Cencio Mina wasn't educated in the university, but he was a man of natural talent, gifted with science; natural science. He hadn't had even a week in the school. He was a colonel in the War of One Thousand Days. The people around here loved him a lot and he had a band of over 100 men. Thus he came to defend us against the hacienda of Periconegro, the Holguins' hacienda, and those who were defended went with him to defend other blacks in trouble way over in Ortigal.

They captured him and took him prisoner to the capital of Popayan, but as he was a man of means, I guess he bribed the police, because he got away soon after that. That man could break open mountains and go wherever he wanted to and nobody knew how he did it or where he was. The day he broke out of prison was celebrated around here like the birth of a newborn child.

He knew the law. He knew how to defend himself, and he defended all the rest of us. They chased him and chased him. Another time they got him but he wouldn't let them keep him. He wouldn't let them. He just slipped away all the time. It was the rich who got him in the end. They paid a friend to poison him at a fiesta.

One of the grand-daughters of the Holguins who was supervising the estate at that time relates how, in the retaliation for the fencing in of land and the sowing of pasture, Mina and his followers would kill cattle, which would be found by the hacienda personnel with a sign propped up against the remains of the carcass, "Mina did it." As the legend goes, Mina eventually became an accomplice of the Holguins, but not everybody agrees with this version. However, all are agreed that he met his death, not through the activities of the police, but through being poisoned by

one of his bandit rivals. Such men as these had risen to fame and proven their metal as guerrilla commanders during the War of One Thousand Days, nearly always on the side of the Liberal party.

In 1915, some two years after the Holguíns returned to the region to reclaim their patrimony, the alarm at Mina's activities was so great that the government dispatched a permanent body of National Police to remain in the Puerto Tejada area in an attempt to track him down (Gobernador del Cauca, 1915, 2).

In 1919, the annual report by the Governor of the Department of Cauca complained bitterly about the degree of social instability in the Puerto Tejada area, which it ascribed to the "economic abnormality" of the times, the difficulties people faced in feeding themselves, and the lack of a penal colony. It urged the formation of a special corps of police that "would give guarantees to the hacendados and the business of cattle dealing" (Gobernador del Cauca, 1919, 4).

During the elections of 1922 the police narrowly averted a slaughter of white Conservatives by black peasants in the district of Guachene, some five miles to the southeast of the township of Puerto Tejada. In the same year, the police were directed to contain the attacks against landlords in the Tierradura district, six miles to the east of the township of Puerto Tejada. The peasantry were intent on invading and occupying lands which had been fenced off (Gobernador del Cauca, 1922, 4, 6). Part, if not all, of the lands in question had been assumed by the Eders' company, La Compañía Agrícola del Cauca, and today this land provides the basis for one of the largest sugar plantations in the entire Republic, El Ingenio Cauca--still owned by the Eder family. The peasantry claimed (and still

do) that the land belonged to them as a result of its being an indiviso, and since 1922 the area has known repeated land invasions by these peasants and their descendants; again in the mid-forties, and in 1961 (Cf. Instituto de Parcelaciones ..., 1950).

The struggle led by bandit chiefs was transformed in the 1920's as peasants formed defensive but militant syndicates, a wave of which spread all over Colombia in the second and third decades of the century (Gilhodes, 1970, 411-22). The peasants increasingly commercialized their own agriculture, spending a greater proportion of their time and land on cash crops such as cocoa, and later, on coffee. This was associated with the new monetary demands by the landlords who were determined to squeeze out in rent what they couldn't by dispossession, and to the more subtle but equally effective pressures of incoming commercial middlemen representing large trading houses with tentacles sprouting from as far as the national capital or the northern hemisphere.

A part-time resident of the valley and descendant of the Eder family has left us the following description of rural commerce at this time. The bulk of the country's business was done by general stores, which functioned as exporters and importers, wholesalers and retailers. Foreign trade worked through commission houses of the U.S.A. and Europe. Even a large part of the gold and silver went through the same firms. As regards coffee, the larger planters shipped direct to the commission merchants to whom they were often indebted for advances. The smaller sold to the general stores which financed the purchases by 60- and 90-day drafts on the commission houses. Local dealers had agents who scoured the countryside. These local dealers may have been independent, but

more often they were in very close relationship to the purchasing agents of the foreign houses, many of which in addition owned a number of plantations which they took over for debts (Eder, 1913, 124-5).

By the second decade of the century, the extreme southern region's commercial and population centre had shifted to "black territory" in the depths of the "dark jungle" (monte oscuro), as it had been called by outsiders (Sendoya, n.d., 83). Here the blacks slowly evolved a flourishing market on the junction of two tributaries of the Cauca River, linked to the city of Cali by the river system. Municipal status was granted by the government in 1918. By the late twenties, this centre, called Puerto Tejada, became part of the road network which allowed for a freer and different movement of goods, took a good deal of the transporting away from blacks, since they had monopolised the riverine transport, and indicated above all the region's commercial coming of age. The annual reports by the Governor of the Department of Cauca during the third decade of the century are full of notices concerning the construction of bridges and roads connecting the Puerto Tejada region to the main centres of commerce. The railway line between Cali and Popayán had reached within walking distance of Puerto Tejada by the mid-twenties (Ortega, 1932, 193-206), built mainly on the money paid over by the U.S. government as indemnification for the secession of Panama. Roads and railway lines were one of the chief obsessions of local entrepreneurs who were constantly chafing at the high costs of freight due to poor transport trails (Cf. Eder, 1913, 151).

As peasants turned more and more to cash crops, they created a vicious circle, whereby the dependence on money to the detriment of their earlier

economy and the autarky of subsistence, led to their selling most of what they produced and buying most of what they consumed.

The crop they chiefly relied on was cocoa which did superbly well under local conditions, required very little labour (far less than coffee), was what they had been used to since slavery, had a high selling price, and, what is more, could not be easily removed by landlord predators greedy for cattle and sugar lands. As peasant syndicates gathered temporary strength and a mild agrarian reform was activated in the mid-thirties in response to growing rural violence throughout the country, so tree crops like cocoa also acquired an increased legal importance as they represented improvements for which any landlord bent on appropriation would have to reimburse. These plantings were initiated by the peasantry without any capital overhead costs; they would seem to have emerged slowly as the main cash crop in steady proportion to the decrease in subsistence crops from which they lived while waiting the five or so years the cocoa needed to mature. This became impossible later on when holdings became too small to achieve this balance, and cocoa plantings after that date required indebting oneself to wait out the maturation period.

As described in Chapter II, cocoa had been fairly intensively cultivated on the Arboledas' slave haciendas, and indeed was a major source of income. No doubt it provided one of the most convenient sources of cash for the ex-slaves after that period, cultivating it in their small plots. A census of the various cantons of the Province of Popayán in 1833 states an annual production of 11,400 kilograms of this crop in the Puerto Tejada region (which, with due allowances, I take to be the Canton of Caloto). The same census reports for the same canton an annual production

of only 2,500 kilograms of partially refined sugar, 5,000 kilograms of panela, or crude sugar, no coffee at all, and the presence of 4,198 head of cattle, in the valley part of the canton.

The military census of the mid-1850's cited by the Codazzi Commission (Codazzi, 1959, II, 169), recorded the presence of 23,700 head of cattle and 19,500 pigs for the Puerto Tejada region. The commission also noted that there was much cocoa, relative to other crops.

Cocoa cultivation tended to be restricted to the small holders and a distinct physical environment, the two being more or less inevitably associated. Pérez, who pointedly and continually refers to the decadence of all forms of agriculture and livestock raising in the valley, repeatedly singles out cocoa and plantain as the two crops of outstanding importance around 1862. These tended to be found along the edges of the rivers and in the swampy areas produced by overflow from the rivers and in the densely wooded regions where the sun penetrated less. The pastures for cattle were generally separated from the river banks where the cultivation of crops took place on the one side, and the densely wooded and marshy areas on the other. In the two dry seasons of the year the cattle could wander into the marshy areas where the grass was still verdant and the water level had dropped sufficiently (Pérez, 1862, 112-3). The raised banks of the rivers not only contained the small holders' crops, but were also thickly wooded, the crops being interplanted amongst the large trees. This was also a zone of much wildlife which was hunted by the residents and served as a supply of meat (Pérez, 1862, 140). Hamilton in the 1820's noted the presence of what he called beavers, otters, and guaguas inhabiting the banks, together with deer, monkeys, wild turkey,

grouse, partridges, jaguars, "leopards," and still other animals. He also mentions flora such as wild cotton, vanilla, and rubber trees, apart from a prodigious number of fruit trees (including mangoes, breadfruit, and the royal palm tree), and was very impressed by the enormous size of certain trees (Hamilton, 1827, II, 127-65). Locals say that as late as 1930, monkeys and parrots were not uncommon around Puerto Tejada. Today these are seen only as circus sideshows or as curios brought hundreds of miles from the Amazon basin.

Santiago Eder's biographer describes the boundaries of the great Hacienda La Manuelita in 1879 as being partially formed by the Amaime River. Running towards its banks were the immense pastures, which were separated from the river proper by the "picturesque cabins" of the Negro cultivators growing tobacco and groves of cocoa (Eder, 1959, 301-2).

Doubtless the cultivation of cocoa was given a boost by the effects of the cocoa leaf disease in the 1870's which devastated the crop in the adjoining State of Antioquia, well to the north. From that time on, Antioquia was forced to import cocoa from the State of Cauca, swelling the demand and increasing the price. Beyer notes that the cocoa cultivators in the south of the valley had been growing cocoa for a long time, but without particular interest or care. Now they were becoming a bit more enthusiastic (Beyer, 1947, 36-7).

Emigdio Palau traces the development of cocoa cultivation by the non-indigenous population from the late colonial period onwards, beginning essentially around the mining and provisioning centre of Cartago at the north of the valley, from where it diffused southwards along the Cauca River and its affluents as far as the Puerto Tejada region up to

Santander. He notes that there, in the south, the valley is at its widest, and that conditions are superb for cocoa growing. "It is the 'region privilegiada' for cocoa" (Palau, 1889, 28), especially the banks and alluvial areas formed by the Palo River, which takes us to the very centre of the Puerto Tejada region where the crop was being grown by black small holders in great quantities. The crop did best, in his opinion, where there were virgin soils, a lot of humus, and high humidity, and these were the conditions par excellence of the areas inhabited by the black squatters. It was generally conceded that the cocoa trees did best under shade, and here along the banks of the Palo River were great numbers of the florescent cachimbo tree (Erythrina Umbrosa), which stood several metres high, was very thick, and also served for the construction of canoes (Palau, 1889, 29-30).

Plantain trees also served the function of providing shade for young cocoa trees, and according to an eye witness in 1898 the best plantings of plantain throughout the entire valley, outstanding for the quality of their fruit and the size of the bunches, were located in the Puerto Tejada region along the banks of the rivers Palo, Paila, Desbaratado, Frailc, and Bolo (García, 1898, 23). As Palau pointed out, the plantain tree is the single most important foundation of subsistence in the valley, and what he calls, "the most useful tree of the Indies" (Palau, 1889, 32-3). It is used for shade cover, lasts many years through the production of its suckers which bear fruit in this region every eight months regardless of the time of year, reproduces itself spontaneously, and requires very little maintenance. It is a great source of carbohydrates, being roughly the equivalent of potato or wheat. It can be roasted, boiled, or fried,

and can be made into beer and vinegar. Its bark is customarily used as a fibre for packing and transport, and also serves as padding for mattresses and cargo saddles. García estimated that one hectare of plantains, planted in the customary density of 625 trees per hectare, could supply 24 working adults per year with their staple food requirements (García, 1898, 26).

Surplus plantains, and some other products such as cocoa, were transported down these tributaries and into the Cauca River to riverine ports such as Cali (six to 12 hours away, depending on the state of the river), and even further northwards, by large bamboo (guadua) rafts manned by the local peasantry. The rafts would be disassembled at the port of disembarkation and the bamboo sold as well.

García described how in his various journeys through the valley he would enter the densely wooded parts and find inhabitants of the "Ethiopian race" sheltering in huts of thatch surrounded by plantain trees and innumerable other useful plant species. Some families also possessed small herds of cattle, horses, and pigs. Because they could thus subsist so easily, in his opinion, the peasants were loath to work on the cattle and sugar haciendas, and it was for this reason that there were so few functioning large estates at the turn of the century. There are very few large plantations of cocoa, coffee, tobacco, and plantains in the Cauca Valley, he wrote, these crops do not only belong to and are not grown by just a few large landowners (García, 1898, 29).

The cattle pastures of the rich were situated between the fertile river banks and the dense woods. The cultivated areas along the banks of the larger and more central rivers belonged to numerous families of "the

white race more or less crossed with the negroid" who cultivated their own holdings. The whites and mestizos (cross between Indian and white stock) cultivated the open lands adjoining the public roads and highways, where malaria was less intense than in the thickly wooded and marshy areas inhabited by the black peasants, "refractory to the attacks of malaria" (García, 1898, 28-9).

All were agreed that cocoa was the most profitable cash crop of the region, with an enormous commercial potential. Palau even compared it favourably to the mining of gold. It was more profitable to cultivate cocoa, in his opinion, since the returns were so high and the capital outlay so very minimal, especially in comparison to gold extraction-- at least as practised by the large companies (invariably British by this time). The only thing holding it back, according to Palau, was the absence of a market and the incessant civil wars. Despite these, cocoa was being exported in small amounts from the valley from 1886 onwards, to the U.S.A., France, and England, being taken over to the Pacific coast along the Dagua River route (Palau, 1889, 11).

The 1888 report by the British government on Colombian agriculture stated that cocoa was probably the most profitable crop in the entire country. It claimed that most of the agricultural products from the tierra caliente (hot country) like cocoa, sugar, corn, plantains, manioc, rice, and tobacco, were in fact produced by "cottagers" and small land-owners. Only cattle, and then not always, was raised by the large land-owners. Even tobacco was generally cultivated by small holders who then sold it to dealers and manufacturers.

The advantages claimed for cocoa over its nearest competitor, coffee, were that although it took twice as long for the trees to bear fruit, once they were bearing, the cocoa beans required no machinery and very little labour to prepare them for market. Therefore, the profits were much greater. The calculation of profit is complicated by the fact that it varies according to the price and scarcity of land. As was noted at this time, while coffee trees yield two and a half times less than cocoa trees, by value, one could plant four times as many coffee trees per unit area than cocoa trees (Great Britain, 1888, 640). Hence, where land was abundant and cheap, cocoa was a better-paying proposition than coffee, but when land became scarce and more expensive, coffee started to become the more lucrative alternative, provided the selling prices of the two crops remained roughly in the same ratio. Urrutia's series for the retail prices of cocoa and coffee in Bogotá between 1846 and 1933 indicate that this was indeed the case; the ratio fluctuating between a high of 15:1 to a low of 2:1, always in favour of cocoa. The ratio hovers around a fairly stable 4:1 from 1879 to 1933 (Urrutia, 1970, 38-100).

With reference to the question of alternative crops in relation to land scarcity, it is interesting to note that coffee plantings increased very considerably in the Puerto Tejada area between the mid-1920's and 1932. Diego Monsalve in his census of 1925 reported the existence of a mere 53 coffee plantings ("plantations") in the municipio of Puerto Tejada, and 223 for the entire region (Monsalve, 1927, 386). The National Federation of Coffee Growers in its census of 1932 stated that there were 260 plantings in the municipio of Puerto Tejada alone, and 2,076 throughout the entire region (comprising the municipios of Puerto Tejada, Caloto,

Corinto, Miranda, and Santander). The number of coffee trees increased by almost 1000% (from 59,318 to 576,680) in the municipio of Puerto Tejada over this time period--1925-1933.

The middlemen who flocked to the town of Puerto Tejada in the 1920's and 30's acquired great political as well as economic control. They were white, generally from Antioquia, and mostly were members of the Conservative party. Local memory has it that the black stores and shops around the central plaza were eliminated by these incoming merchants in the early 1930's. The latter tended to hold agencies or commissions from the large cocoa buying companies such as Luker, and generally were more easily able to raise capital and secure special relationships with the business houses in Cali. On this question, an old peasant had the following to say:

The black is more afraid of big business deals. He fears to put even 20 cents into a business because he thinks he will lose it. The black is less of a financier than the white. He's just not the same as a "Paisa" (Antioqueño). The "Paisa", if he has 20 cents, he invests them, and gets out 40 or nothing. The blacks here are agricultural people. They aren't acquainted with business, with the bringing in of a pack of clothing or establishing a cocoa buying agency. And what is more, if I set up a shop here, then it's not long before the gossip and the maliciousness starts; the envy of man against man. And then I slowly enter ruin because I have to live by trust. "Here, take it, pay me tomorrow! Go on, take it, tomorrow will be alright!"

And then you, for reasons of race, or because you are a compadre, or for friendship, just never pay me. In that way I would become ruined. I would lose all my capital. But the white man, no! Because he gives me credit within the bounds of business--he gives me credit of 40 cents because he has already robbed me of 80 on the same deal. He already has 80 cents' profit. Thus he gives me 40. If they are lost, he really hasn't lost anything!

It is interesting to speculate on why the majority of the incoming merchangs--grain buyers, sellers of consumer goods, and so on--were mainly of the Conservative party, when the vast majority of the local populace were fervent adherents of the Liberal party. It should be remembered that from 1902 to the early thirties, a strong Conservative party government held state power, and that the Holguins, a key family in the Conservative party, were the largest landowners in the district. The Puerto Tejada region therefore had many of the ingredients required to make for an unstable situation, since party hatreds and rivalries fused with class and racial differences.

By the late thirties, land pressure seems to have been felt acutely. The sugar industry in particular, and large-scale commercialized agriculture in general, was becoming firmly institutionalized into the social fabric through stable financial arrangements and powerful landlords' associations welded together by a common fear of the peasantry and the need to control marketing and infrastructural development (Cf. Gilhodes, 1970, 417; Fals-Borda, 1969, 141; Dix, 1967, 323-6). Technological uplift with new and improved varieties of disease resistant sugar cane and other crops, and new livestock species and methods of breeding, were either introduced or restimulated by the Chardon mission and the opening of the Palmira agricultural school in the early thirties (Chardon, 1930; García Vasquez, 1937, 68-89).

A local black school teacher wrote an impassioned appeal to the government in 1945:

Since a long time now many people are being forced off the land here. Most people have only two to ten acres and nearly all grow cocoa exclusively. Most of the peasants

are illiterate and only know how to work their plots. During the first decades things went well because the soil was so rich and there were no plagues. But now there are too many people. Minifundia and mono-production have emerged with all their dreadful consequences. The occupants of each plot doubled and tripled in a short time and the plots became smaller. In the past 15 years the situation has changed threateningly. Today each crop gets smaller and smaller and the harvest is preceded by a long wait; thousands of physically active people are forced into idleness... Usury increases, stealing increases; life is now a pendulum oscillating between misery and forlorn hopes. The peasants of Puerto Tejada are suffering a situation without parallel. It is obvious that it is not possible to limit this process, yet neither is it possible to diminish the danger of this situation as more and more people are deprived of their patrimony.

In 1948 with the assassination of Gaitán, the populist leader of the Liberal party, a frustrated social revolution which had been brewing since the 1920's broke out over all Colombia. The predominance of the old party hatreds and ideology, together with the failures of any of the political organizations to effect overall control, resulted in a ceaseless "Violencia" which coursed through the countryside for over 10 years, turning peasant against peasant according to party allegiance and territoriality, resulting in the death of over 200,000 people (Guzman, et al., I, 1962, 292). Patron-client hierarchies became bandit groups, often detaching themselves from their urban patron; species of mafioso sprang up, particularly in the departments of Antioquia, Caldas, Valle, and the Puerto Tejada region, and some communist guerrillas emerged as well.

One effect of this was to drive peasants off the land as the dangers of rural isolation and landlord opposition to antiquated forms of tenure in developing regions was allowed full scope. The Puerto Tejada area, unlike any other rural area in the country, reacted to Gaitán's murder with a spontaneous uprising in which the stores and bars of the white elite

were sacked and an anarchic rebellion, more a revelry than a concerted political assault, took place. A local middle-aged truck driver, a Liberal, sums it up by saying: "the 9th of April¹ here was not political--in the sense of Liberals versus Conservatives. It was neither political nor feuding. It was more like mass robbery, a complete sacking of the town; as much of the few rich Liberals as of the Conservatives." It died away as quickly as it had begun, due to aerial machine-gunning and the arrival of government troops which retained martial law and Conservative party rule for the next 10 years. This was not lost on some local landlords whom, according to the local peasants, began to appropriate what was left of the peasants' lands through force and offers they could not refuse; hired bandits, flooding, blocking access, and finally in the early fifties, aerial spraying with herbicides which killed the shade trees of the cocoa plantings and later much of the cocoa itself.

There was a sudden drop in cocoa production for this region commencing between 1950-1953, so that by 1958, the cash basis of the peasant economy had dropped by some 80% (see Table 4.5). This massive drop in production occurred when two sugar plantations (El Naranjo and La Cabaña) were being established (see Table 4.6).

Furthermore, analysis of two out of the five local land registry offices shows that the owners of these two plantations "bought" 270 separate lots of land between 1950 and 1969 and that with hardly any exception, these were all peasant plots acquired at very low prices.

It needs to be pointed out that the figure of 270 lots is bound to be smaller than the actual number of peasant plots involved, since only two out of the five land registry offices were consulted, and only two out of the four local sugar plantations were analysed.

TABLE 4.5--Production and area cultivated in cocoa for three regions, 1949-1960

Year	DEPARTMENT OF CAUCA		DEPARTMENT OF VALLE		DEPARTMENT OF HUILA	
	Tons of Dry Cocoa	Hectares Cultivated in Cocoa	Tons of Dry Cocoa	Hectares Cultivated in Cocoa	Tons of Dry Cocoa	Hectares Cultivated in Cocoa
1949	6,056	?	2,338	?	1,456	?
1950	6,000	6,000	3,200	8,000	1,900	6,000
1953	4,500	?	3,200	?	1,200	?
1958	902	2,404	2,019	3,365	3,999	9,140
1959	897	4,176	2,031	4,514	3,993	9,270
1960	888	4,230	2,099	4,664	4,028	9,590

G. P. Wood, Supply and Distribution of Cacao in Colombia, Universidad Nacional, Facultad de Agronomía; February, 1962, mimeo.

Note: As nearly all the cocoa from Cauca comes from the Puerto Tejada region, we can safely assume that the figures for the Department of Cauca are more or less the same as for the Puerto Tejada region.

TABLE 4.6--Production of sugar in metric tons for the Puerto Tejada region, 1938-1969

Year	Metric Tons
1938	2,000
1963	13,220
1969	91,750

Source: Asocaña, Cali (nd).

The speed with which all this happened deserves mention. A study of peasant plots acquired by sugar plantations throughout the entire valley (and not merely its southern section) between the years 1922 and 1953 asserts that only 169 plots smaller than 25 hectares were taken over during these 32 years (Mancini, 1954, 30). (These figures, likewise, were obtained by Mancini from local land registry offices.)

The township itself changed from being a service and marketing centre into a rural slum, little more than a barracks and dormitory of landless sugar cane workers. To the steady stream of the locally dispossessed was added in the 1960's the flood of black immigrants from the Pacific coast, fresh from a subsistence culture and at first eager for wage work in the cane fields which the locals despised. In the 15 years between 1951 and 1964, the town's population almost doubled, and immigrants from other departments constituted 26% of the town's population. By 1964, most of the land was in sugar cane and only one-fifth of the area's population actually lived in the countryside. The sugar growers association estimated in the mid-sixties that half of their work force was made up of migrants, with the

other half made up of people displaced by the expansion of their plantations (Asocaña, 1965, 14). Sugar production in the valley as a whole, from 1950 onwards, increased at an annual rate of about 10% (see Table 4.7), and the area planted in seasonal crops such as soybeans, cotton, sorgo, corn, and rice--almost all on large farms--increased 353% between 1958 and 1969 (C.V.C., 1970, 1).

TABLE 4.7--Growth of the sugar industry in the Cauca Valley, 1934-1968

Year	Hectares Cultivated in Sugar	Production in Metric Tons (1000's)	Metric Tons Sugar Exported (1000's)	
			Total	To U.S.A.
1934		33.2		
1940		51.2		
1952	51,029	196.7	3.3	
1955	53,173	253.3	29.8	
1961	62,755	362.6	45.9	45.9
1964	71,633	427.6	25.3	25.3
1966	91,633	537.3	113.9	45.9
1968	90,235	665.0	208.0	60.0

Source: Asocaña, Cali (nd).

Unlike many other regions in Latin America, the Colombian sugar plantations have not been directly owned or controlled by overseas corporations or investors. Nevertheless, U.S. finance has played an increasing role. From the outset, families like the Eders did try to float large overseas loans around the turn of the century (Eder, 1959, 502-3; 583), but with

only variable success. More recently, however, such loans have been available and have in fact provided the impetus for the most recent wave of expansion (and hence peasant displacement). Foreign money enters the industry through two channels. A.I.D. as well as World Bank loans are made to the newly established (1962) private loan company, the Corporación Financiera del Valle, which serves as a conduit of U.S. government loans into the Colombian private sector. Secondly, the Corporación Financiera del Valle attracts overseas private investors as well.

The Private Investment Fund (F.I.P.) of the national bank (Banco de la República) was organised in order to channel foreign government loans to the private sector (including the aforementioned Corporación Financiera), and the four plantations in the Puerto Tejada region have all been beneficiaries of such loans.

In 1963 the Ingenio Cauca, largely owned by the Eder family, received such a loan of 20 million pesos. The Ingenio Bengala owned by Alvaro H. Caicedo received a loan in 1970 for 15 million pesos and in 1970 was in the process of receiving another five million. The Ingenios El Naranjo and La Cabaña received seven and one-half million pesos at around the same time from the same source.

The policy statement of the Corporación del Valle, approved by the board of directors in 1966, includes the statement that,

the Corporación will promote the development of the Colombian capital market in the following ways: it will seek the association of foreign capital ... encouraging investors by the assurance that their contributions will be put to use in the different economic activities of the country... The Corporación will seek to give priority to the following operations; to stimulate, through specialised lines of credit, national exports in such a way that Colombian manufacturers have access to foreign currency loans... for the manufacture of products

intended for foreign markets (International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, April 12, 1966, 98).

The list of main shareholders is likewise instructive. As of 1966, it reads as follows (see Table 4.8).

TABLE 4.8--List of main shareholders in the Corporación Financiera del Valle, 1966

	<u>% of Total Shares</u>
I. <u>Private Colombian Shareholders:</u>	
Ingenio Riopaila	3.6
Ingenio Manuelita (Manuelita S.A.)	2.6
Jaime H. Caicedo G.	2.6
Gonzalo Caicedo T.	2.6
Hernando Caicedo T.	2.6
Angela M. Caicedo T.	2.6
Central Castilla Ltda.	1.0
Juan Ulloa Caicedo	0.7
Central Tumaco	0.7
Ingenio Providencia	0.6
Ingenio San Carlos	0.6
Fabrica de Dulces Colombiana	0.5
II. <u>Government Shareholders</u>	
Empresa Colombiana de Petroleos	12.9
Corporación del Valle del Cauca (C.V.C.)	1.3
III. <u>Foreign Shareholders</u>	
Continental International Finance Corporation	13.0
Citizens and Southern International Corporation	6.5
Banco Frances e Italiano	1.3
Banque Nationale pour le Commerce et l'Industrie	0.3

In summary, private shareholders held 65%, Colombian governmental interests had 14%, and foreign firms had 21% of the shares (I.B.R.D., *ibid*).

It should also be noted that of all the private investors, the sugar plantations held at least one-third of the shares. The directors of the Corporación at that time included members from the Eder family, the Caicedo family, the general manager of the valley's regional development agency (the C.V.C.), the dean of the faculty of Economics of the Universidad del Valle, and one U.S.A. citizen, the vice-president of the Continental Illinois National Bank and Trust Company.²

During the first 30 years of their major "take off", the plantations with their mills had concentrated ever increasing amounts of land and labour into unified monolithic structures with each plantation owning practically all the cane land, milling all its cane, and allowing workers to form unions as part of the national trade union begun in the 1930's. In 1954, for example, a student of these matters could write:

It is fundamental to realise that the colono (middle-sized cane grower averaging between 50 and a few hundred acres growing cane under contract to the mills) basis of the sugar industry in the Antilles, practically does not exist in our region. While more than three-quarters of the cane in Cuba and Puerto Rico is planted and harvested by colonos, it is totally opposite in the Cauca Valley... At the present time only eight ingenios need to buy more than 10% of the cane that they mill. ...The aspiration of the mills is always to produce their own cane (Mancini, 1954, 23).

This system of manifest and direct control was speedily disassembled in the early 1960's, together with an atomization of land holdings and the work force (Knight, 1972; Castrillon, et al., 1969, 43-85; Asocaña, 1965). This radical shift (in some ways a reversion to the structures of the nineteenth century) occurred when for the first time Colombia was given

an assured place in the U.S.A. sugar import quota, subsequent to the expulsion of Cuban sugar as a result of the revolution. Militant and successful strikes by rural labour for wage increases seriously threatened production, land prices were sharply increasing (Knight, 1972, 70-1), and instead of continuing to massify and consolidate, the plantations now turned to smaller private contractors to provide cane and labour. By 1964, almost two-thirds of the cane milled came from either rented lands or from wealthy farmers growing cane on ten-year contracts (Mañual Azúcarero de Colombia, 1964, 8-9), and from half to two-thirds of the work to produce the valley's sugar was done by contracted labourers working in small, unstable gangs at minimal wages, moving from one job and small contractor to another (Knight, 1972, 79). These workers were outside the trade union structure, could not legally strike, and were ineligible for costly social security benefits (Knight, 1972, 113-21; Cf. C.V.C. 1972, 18). Furthermore, to rid themselves of troublesome sindicatos, many ingenios formed sindicatos patronales (Bosses' Unions), fired militant workers, and even pretended to go bankrupt so that they could legally close down for a period and thereby dissolve the sindicato operating at the time. By 1964, Asocaña, the mouthpiece of the industry, could unshamedly write:

Social Peace:

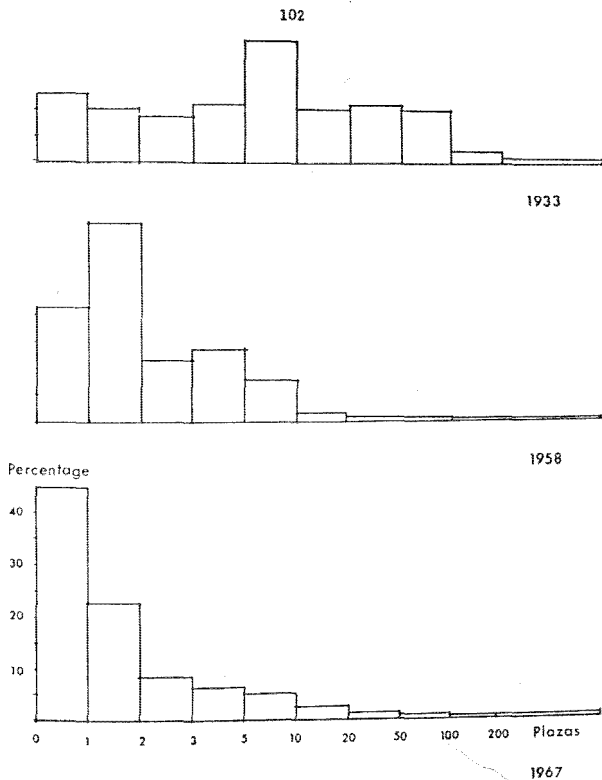
The Cauca Valley has in the past been a center of dangerous social unrest. Fortunately, close and cordial labour-management relations have been developed and they, together with an increasingly democratic leadership in trade unions, have provided for a better atmosphere all over the region (Asocaña, 1965, 15).

What they meant of course was that the trade unions had become less democratic and more obedient to the wishes of the owners. "Close and cordial

labour-management relations" meant nothing more than sindicatos patronales and the breaking up of the workforce into innumerable small units of workers moving from place to place and from one contractor to another with practically no rights at all. It was in this way that the owners of the industry produced a "better atmosphere all over the region."

If the local land tax (catastro) records are any guide, the contraction in the land base of the peasantry, and a progressive shrinkage in the size of individual plots, has extended into the late 1960's. The following figure (Figure 4.2) illustrates this in a remarkably ordered way. In 1938, according to these tax records, the modal-sized holding was around five to 10 plazas. (A plaza is equal to 0.64 of a hectare.) By 1958, the mode had shifted to one to two plazas, and by 1967 it was half that. Population increase and a continual absorption of peasant plots by the large scale commercial farms and plantations would appear to be the outstanding causes of this phenomenon.

The contraction in the peasants' land base has been further aggravated by the attempts of the government to reform the methods of agriculture and change the traditional crops. Until recently, the basic peasant crops were cocoa and some coffee, with a few plantains as a staple food. These are all perennials, and what is more, in this region yield throughout the year (as does sugar cane), being harvested and supplying a small cash income every two weeks. Cocoa and coffee each have two peak periods of production at different six-month intervals so that the decline in the production of one is compensated for by the rise in the other, thereby neatly ensuring a fairly regular income.



PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF LAND HOLDINGS IN THE
MUNICIPALITY OF PUERTO TEJADA; GOVERNMENT LAND
TAX RECORDS.

Figure 4.2

However, the incentives and pressures of the modern economy and technology (tractors, mechanization, chemification, new plant species), together with government encouragement and U.S. assistance through the local agricultural extension office, has led to the rich and some of the poorer peasants uprooting their trees and planting strictly seasonal crops such as soybeans and corn, which are exported out of the region (if not the country). Previously locally produced and consumed foodstuff, like plantain, has now to be imported into the zone from as far afield as the north-west Amazon basin. All these new crops--or rather the system under which they are produced--require heavy capital outlays, a seasonal pattern of labour, and yield incomes only two, or possibly three, times a year. This, plus the fact that natural drainage is poor, of little consequence to cocoa, has meant the ruin of an increasing number of peasants whose land and labour subsequently finds its way into the plantation sector.

The activities of the government's very recently established local agricultural extension service (I.C.A.)--itself heavily influenced by the A.I.D. programme of the U.S.A.--can be partially summarised by the following table which indicates the amount of capital provided by the agency to displace the traditional cropping pattern. (See Table 4.9)

The activities of the agricultural service are not limited to the purely technical or financial. During the period 1970-1972, for instance, they were instrumental in guiding the establishment of the local chapter of the national peasants' union, the Usuarios, promising the members certain rewards, such as low interest loans and free poultry for breeding purposes. The professionals leading the activities of the local office, the agronomists, engineers, etc., have been a crucial factor in shaping

TABLE 4.9--Amount and distribution of money loaned by the local agricultural extension service (I.C.A.) in the four-month period, July-October, 1972.

Type of Investment	Amount in Pesos	Hectares
Soya	\$223,481.00	83.36
Maize	323,172.00	135.36
Beans	51,060.00	16.26
Potato	156,210.00	16.25
Manioc	722,963.00	216.69
Cattle	181,300.00	
Poultry	97,640.00	
Total	\$1,755,826.00	

Source: Boletín divulgativo: Proyecto de desarrollo rural del norte del Cauca, Santander de Quilichao, Cauca, No. 5, Octubre, 1972.

policy and channeling opinion. Usually they favour a handful of local leaders from amongst the peasants, obtaining scholarships for them to attend courses in "leadership training" as well as large loans and other advantages such as the use of government machinery, free seed, technical advice, and so on. This was particularly obvious during the recent rash of land invasions by peasants onto hacienda lands that occurred all over Colombia between mid-1971 and late 1972. According to one author, there were 363 such invasions by the end of the first quarter of 1972 (Escobar Sierra, 1972, 103-25). The most influential leader of such a proposed land invasion in the Puerto Tejada area was promised and received financial assistance by I.C.A. to rent a five-hectare farm away in the foothills, and buy a brick house in the township of Santander, subsequent to which he

decided to enter politics and run for a position in the town council rather than follow the illegal strategy of land invading. This was enough to throw the fragile insurgent movement out of balance, and although land invasions occurred slightly later in adjoining regions, nothing happened in the Puerto Tejada area. The edge of discontent can be blunted in this way quite easily, but it is uncertain for how long. A group of poor peasants in one of the veredas (neighbourhoods) in the Puerto Tejada region were talking increasingly of land invasions in early 1971, when the local agricultural agency decided to make that vereda into a "Pilot Project" of economic development. U.S. advisors were even called in from the Rockefeller and Kellogg funded organization, C.I.A.T. (Centro Internacional de Agricultura Tropical), which has its headquarters in the municipio of Palmira, a few score miles to the north of Puerto Tejada. Instruction was given for the growing of tomatoes, a very labour-intensive and capital-intensive crop in relation to traditional peasant ones, and free seed and pesticides were distributed. Most of the male peasants uprooted their cocoa trees and settled down to grow the new crop in a commercial manner, and stopped attending meetings of the land invading group. The first harvests were successful and they were able to start repayment of the large debts incurred to the local agricultural bank and the agricultural extension office. However, after that, powerful rains destroyed the plants, and the peasants were left worse off than before.

The process of peasant land loss and encroachment by the large agricultural businesses is now further stimulated by the policies of the valley's regional development agency--the C.V.C.--which through a strategy of discriminated loans, encourages sugar plantations to rent or

contract peasant plots as small as six hectares for the cultivation of sugar cane, which the plantations organize in every detail. In the cases known to me, such plots are usually bought up by local townspeople of the middle class, such as butchers, merchants of one sort or another, medical doctors, and wealthy labour contractors, who then enter into contracts with the local sugar plantations. According to the C.V.C., the large scale commercial sector of agriculture, especially the sugar plantations, should be favoured and further stimulated, since productivity is much higher in comparison with the peasant sector (they claim), and the sugar plantations are the greatest generator of employment throughout the valley (C.V.C., 1972, 10, 42).

In fact, both these statements are dubious and would seem to reflect the blind conviction on the part of the C.V.C. that economic growth can only proceed by way of large scale enterprise. It should also be remembered that the sugar industry has a powerful controlling voice within the executive of the C.V.C. Most assessments agree that the sugar industry requires one labourer per four hectares of land, and this is equal to the amount of land required by a local peasant household for slightly more than minimal subsistence. Hence, in terms of employment generation, the sugar industry would seem to have little to offer over peasant enterprise. Moreover, a good case can be made that cocoa production, when properly carried out without harassment, is even more profitable than sugar (see below, Chapter X).

In any event, there is much evidence pointing to the validity of the following statement which appears in the detailed and carefully argued report prepared in 1970 by the Latin American Studies Center of Michigan State University.

Increasing agricultural productivity through mechanization and other production technology has reduced potential employment opportunities in the rural areas and stimulated migration to urban areas. This has created an "urban problem" which is, in part, a result of agricultural modernization (Riley, et al., 1970, 350).³

Taken in isolation and from one point of view, folk religion tends to further this process of peasant pauperization. Funeral rites are the only public ritual left of any importance, and the outlay on this is so great and so obligatory that many a poor peasant household is forced to sell out to cover these costs. Furthermore, partition of inheritance is not only partible in form, being equally divided amongst all offspring regardless of birth order or sex, but extremely conflictful as the pattern of serial monogamy and polygamy leads to diverse and rival claims which can take years to settle.

According to local witnesses, traditionally work in the peasant sector was done through reciprocal sharing and labour exchanges (cambio de mano). Since roughly 40 years this has given way to wage contracts between peasants as they became increasingly stratified into hierarchical kindreds of cognates. By the 1950's, the socio-economic structure of the peasantry consisted basically of local hierarchies centred on a prominent middle-aged male surrounded by a constellation of female headed, poor peasant households, bearing his offspring and supplying his labour. As rich peasants converted their holdings from permanent to seasonal crops and acquired the use of tractors and labour-saving harvesters, so the poor female section of the population was forced to follow the males into day labour wage work on the plantations. This transition was stimulated by the plantations' labour contractors who greatly preferred women over men for many tasks since the former were, in their own words, "more tame" (más manso), and

less likely to cause trouble over wage levels and working conditions. Since by now the female headed and increasingly isolated household, bereft of meaningful extended kin ties, was emerging as the norm, this was not surprising, as it was these women who had to bear the immediate and daily responsibility of feeding their variously fathered children.

In keeping with the formal decentralization of the plantations, the large landlords play only a marginal role in local politics and state administration, a far cry from the situation of 30 years ago when the landlord was the state, and his mayordomo the political jefe (chief). Today this is left to the local directorates of the only two permissible political parties, the minor government officials, and above all, to the all-white rosca which is the basic cell of the Colombian power structure. Literally meaning a wheel or a type of doughnut, the rosca is an unofficial and informal association of power brokers who congeal the power at their respective levels of operation, ascending from the municipal base, through regional coalitions, to the departmental and ultimately national level, with each stage having its respectively more powerful rosca. The bipartite political division throughout the country between Conservatives and Liberals only tenuously affects this network. In the words of a local and successful politician, "a rosca is a group of Conservatives and Liberals who are friends of the government and who receive or manipulate posts within it." It is also simply referred to as "those who command." The landlords, who without exception live outside the immediate region, have no intimate dealings with the local rosca or local government officials (who of course are selected by the rosca). Instead they articulate directly with the highly centralized state apparatus at its highest levels in the

more important regional and national capitals. The plantations and surrounding slum towns they leave aside, in the dusty wakes of their high-powered jeeps and armed police escorts, equipped with two-way radios in case of assault, which is commonly feared.

For the moment the toiling population may be pacified, but this is at the cost of severe but inchoate social tension and a fearfully wide moral disjunction between classes.

The chief research worker of Asocaña (the sugar growers' association), for example, says this about the workers in the cane fields of the Puerto Tejada region:

The workers there sabotage the machinery. This happens whenever there are blacks. They slash the tires of the tractors and drain the oil from the motors. Yes, the workers there have a lot of resentment. They are very resentful. They are also very cunning and very lazy. Despite the great unemployment it is hard to find cane cutters. The other day, for example, the Ingenio Rio Paila needed 250 cane cutters. From their usual sources they only managed to obtain 25! So they had to send trucks into Nariño to bring back Indios to cut the cane. The Indios from there take to the discipline better and don't steal, but the blacks are stronger. The fact is that cane cutting is terribly hard work and people simply don't like doing it. Even when the wages are increased a man doesn't cut more. What happens is that they just cut until they have made enough money for the day and then they leave. Or else they work more slowly. So we don't know what to do. What is more, they hate working to orders and hate discipline.

So we, the cane growers, are slowly getting into the position where we are going to have to use cane cutting machines because of the scarcity of willing labour. I say, with confidence, that in 10 years there will be cane cutting machinery throughout the Valle del Cauca. And already we are starting to use mechanical loaders. You can see them all around the Palmira area.⁴

As regards sabotage, the tractor salesmen in Cali swear that they sell far more replacement parts to the Ingenios in the Puerto Tejada region than any other area, including many whole engine blocks for tractors.

Although rare, it is not unknown for the rural poor to have retaliated against the large landlords' use of machines in the harvesting of corn, for example. One of the richest local merchants, a white and stalwart of the Conservative party who had built up his fortune during the Violencia, had been in the custom of planting around 100 hectares of maize and using local labour to harvest it. Towards the end of the 1960's he decided to utilise a harvesting machine, much to the anger of the surrounding labourers and poor peasants who depended on this work. Consequently a group of them tore down the entire crop at night, moving across the fields with long lengths of rope, making it impossible for the machine to perform.

In the same vein, peasants have been known to retaliate against the sugar plantations' incursions onto their plots by burning down fields of mature cane with the aid of the large candles used in the church at mass. (Until very recently, all cane harvested in the Cauca Valley was unfired; although the amount of cane cut per labourer is less this way, the sugar content remains higher for a longer period of time, thereby granting the milling organization a greater leeway in the processing of cane.)

The owner of the Ingenio La Cabana also says that the Negroes are lazy, that they do not want to earn much money, they are not good workers, they are not ambitious ("el Negro no es muy audaz para trabajo"). He also feels that despite the large amount of unemployment, there is a shortage of cane cutters.

Social control and labour requirements have been obtained as a result of a large reserve army of poor which is a relatively new and twentieth century phenomenon in Colombian social history. This labour surplus is due partially to natural population increase, and partially to the somewhat circular migration of subsistence coastal dwellers.

The social frustrations engendered by the economic and personally humiliating consequence of this large reserve army are to a certain extent de-fused by elaborate cross-cutting microdivisions which reduce class solidarity. These will become obvious in later chapters, but some of the more outstanding can be mentioned here. There is a deep seated animosity between locally born people and the coastal migrants. Even though they are of the same ethnic group, the former refer to the latter as "savages," "apes" who "live in trees," as people capable of tremendously arduous work which local peasants cannot tolerate, as people who like to live in crowded quarters, talk with a peculiar and ridiculous dialect, and so on. Peasant landowners are very suspicious of people who work for the plantations, and accuse the workers of destroying their property. Plantation workers are divided several ways according to degree of permanence, type of job specialization, and geographical sub-section of the plantation for which they are working. Cliques form around prominent local politicians, and factionalism is rife. At certain times, but not always, the old hatreds between Liberals and Conservatives can flare up. Women are often at loggerheads with one another over male lovers or husbands who frequently share their time between various households, and people have been killed in these disputes which, even without such extremes, leave rancour and scars that last for years. Division of inheritance can also lead to homicide as the structural problem induced by partitive inheritance combined with multiple and informal unions can be very difficult to untangle. Competition and favouritism is an essential component of the labour contracting system on which the majority of the landless now depend. To a certain degree, some of these factors are as much the historical bequest of the

nineteenth century as the conscious planning of the contemporary landlords, who in fact mistakenly but temporarily tried to steer the social organization of labour in the opposite direction during the second quarter of the twentieth century.

Furthermore, the government tries its hand at a variety of belated reforms in what appear to be continually doomed efforts to relieve the worst of discontent. In fact, this very area has been singled out, together with a mere handful of other small zones in Colombia, as an area for intensive state intervention involving medical, birth control, agricultural extension, and other services (the 'Proyecto Norte del Cauca') (El Espectador, 3rd December, 1973). The government realises that here it has a double-edged problem requiring urgent attention; not only is there the belligerence of the rural proletariat completely dependent on the sugar plantations and other large scale commercial farms, but there is also the increasing bitterness of the growing class of minifundistas (poor peasants) squeezed between the plantations' fences.

Despite the cruel incentives of poverty,⁵ labour commitment is still low. Especially the poor peasants, but even many of the landless day labourers, try to resist proletarian work whenever possible and seem to stand far removed from the rational cash maximizing models of classical economics. Plantation workers appear to aim at fixed goals, not accumulation, and respond to wage increases by reducing output so long as they achieve their customary wages. The common attitude to wage work is that it is "aburrido" --deathly boring--to the extent that many an erstwhile worker will go hungry or hustle rather than work for a pittance in the hot and monotonous cane fields.

Egalitarian folk norms and informal social levelling mechanisms are firmly implanted in the culture of the valley's poor. People who accumulate wealth from wage work are despised or feared as agents of the devil, and sorcery is a common sanction against men who accumulate lovers. While the local peasantry trust only in God and themselves for maintaining production on their plots, plantation workers are commonly believed to make contracts with the devil in order to increase productivity even though they will die in agony and have to dissipate their hard-gained earnings immediately on luxury consumer items. Such money cannot serve as an investment and renders all capital goods barren. The land thus worked is rendered as sterile as the work process itself; no ratoon or cane shoot, so it is said, will ever emerge from it until the land is freshly plowed.

This view is held by all lower class members of the region. It is not unique to rural people or peasants. The concept would seem to indicate a profound sensitivity towards the difference between wage work on the large estates, and working on the peasant plots. In the former, there is the possibility of increasing income from nature, but only through the illicit ruse of selling one's soul to the devil. There is an attribution of evil which is quite at odds with the prevailing metaphysics and ethics concerning peasant production, and it is to this general theme that we shall turn in the subsequent chapters.

NOTES TO CHAPTER IV

1. The 9th of April, 1948, was the date of Gaitán's assassination and the uprising in Puerto Tejada.

2. A brief summary of contemporary U.S. financial and political influence in the valley can be found in Blasier (1966, 397,407-8). A much more detailed analysis is that of Shirley Jane Harkess, "The Elite and the Regional Urban System of Valle, Colombia, as a Reflection of Dependency," unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Cornell University, 1973.

3. As part of this "urban problem" the same authors note that unemployment in the city of Cali in 1969 was of the order of 20%. As regards income distribution, two-thirds of the city's population earned 2,100 pesos or less per month, while the top 5% of households earned in excess of 9,000 pesos (Riley, 1970, 16-21).

4. Some idea of the rate of mechanization is provided by the following table (Table 4.10).

TABLE 4.10--Number of tractors in the Cauca Valley, 1953-1967.

Year	Number of Tractors	Number of tractors per thousand hectares cultivated in sugar or seasonal commercial crops
1953	2,139	21.2
1959	3,037	16.0
1967	4,555	24.0

Source: Carlos Osso Escobar, Mecanización de la agricultura en el Valle del Cauca; 1970, mimeo, Universidad de los Andes, C.E.D.E., Bogotá, p.52.

5. A recent study of malnutrition in the municipio of Candelaria, which adjoins the municipio of Puerto Tejada and to which it is very similar as regards its socio-economic characteristics, found that 40% of pre-school children were suffering from protein-calorie malnutrition. As regards the life prospects of the adult males in this region, the report says:

They can anticipate that as they get older, their income will not increase, while the number of 'mouths to feed' will; they are able to provide less adequately for their families; more and more of their children will become malnourished (Wray and Aguirre, 1969, 78, 95).

It is pertinent to note that the consumption of beef (by far the largest supply of protein in the area) has progressively decreased in and around the municipio of Puerto Tejada since 1960. On reading the following figures, one should bear in mind that the population of the municipio has been growing at around 3.8% per year since 1951.

TABLE 4.11--Number of head of cattle slaughtered in the municipio of Puerto Tejada, 1960-1969.

Year	Head of Cattle
1960	4,816
1962	5,210
1966	4,693
1969	4,376

Source: Departamento Administrativa Nacional de Estadística, Bogotá.

CHAPTER V

CONTEMPORARY DEMOGRAPHY, SETTLEMENT PATTERN, LAND TENURE, AND ECOLOGY

The aim of this chapter is to describe and discuss some of the basic background features of the regional society, particularly of the peasant sub-culture.

Demography

Between 1951 and 1964, according to the national censuses, the population of the municipio of Puerto Tejada increased roughly one and a half times from 12,071 to 18,629. During the period the proportion of the population living in the township of Puerto Tejada increased from around 70% to 80%, leaving only one-fifth of the entire population inhabiting the rural area.

Of the townspeople, almost one-third in 1964 were immigrants, mainly blacks from the Pacific coast.

The 1938 population density of the municipio of Puerto Tejada was 107 persons per square kilometre, while the Planning Office of the Department of Cauca gives a figure of 210 people per square kilometre for the year of 1968. These figures of population density are easily the highest for the whole Department, even higher than those for the Departmental capital of Popayan, whose municipio had a density of 166 in 1968, and are attributable, mainly, to the fertility of the soil which can support very high population densities.

For the whole of the municipio of Puerto Tejada in 1964 there were as many males as females, although we see that for the age group of sixty-five and older, there were four females for every three males. Around 44% of the population was aged fifteen years or less.

The age and sex structure of the three areas sampled in the field-work--town, village, and rural area--are depicted below (See Figure 5.1).

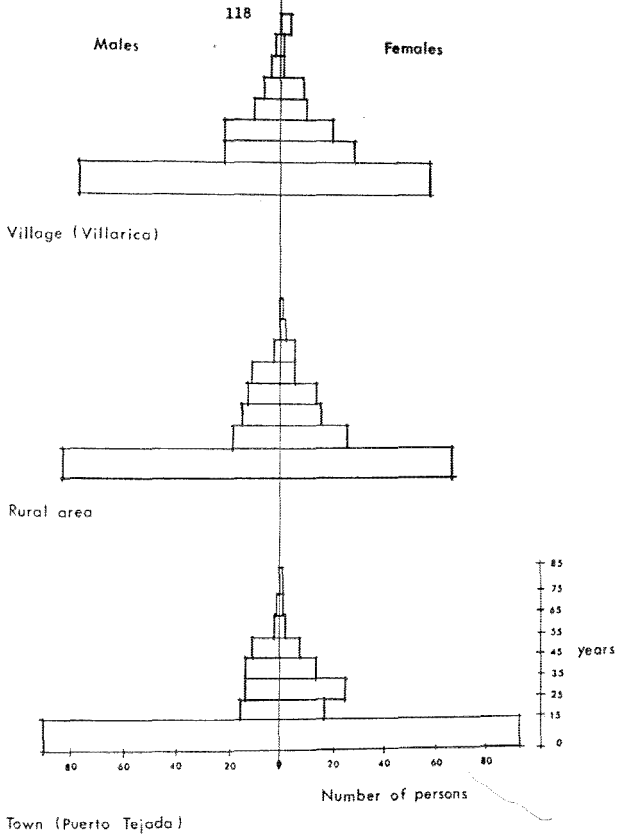
Church marriage is rare, and the trend over the past sixty years has been for it to get rarer (See Table 5.1). There is no civil marriage in Colombia, and divorce is very difficult.

TABLE 5.1.--Church marriages, Puerto Tejada region 1914-1969

Year	Number of marriages per year
1914	14.00
1925	34.00
1930's	40.75
1940's	49.00
1950's	45.43
1960's	47.40

Source: Figures obtained from Puerto Tejada church records. From 1930 onwards there are figures for almost all years and I have adopted the average for each decade.

Since the population has more than doubled since 1938, while the number of marriages per year has remained more or less the same, it is obvious that the marriage rate is falling sharply.



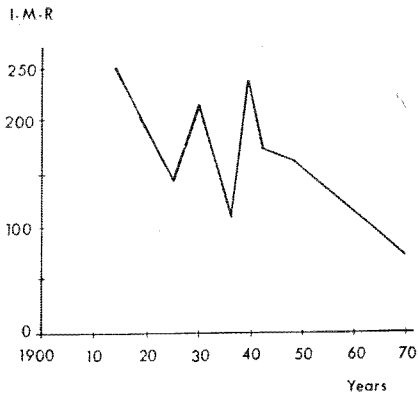
POPULATION PYRAMIDS; PUERTO TEJADA, RURAL AREA, AND VILLARICA, 1970

Figure 5.1

The 1964 national census shows that the municipio of Puerto Tejada and its adjoining municipios had by far the highest proportion of consensual or free marital unions in the whole Department. The ratio of consensual unions to formal (i.e., Church) marriages for the Department as a whole was around 20:100, while the municipio of Puerto Tejada had a ratio of 82:100. That this high proportion of free unions is not simply a matter of ethnicity, it being commonly supposed that blacks marry less than other ethnic groups in Colombia (Cf. Gutiérrez de Pineda, 1968, 183-264), is borne out by the fact that in Timbiquí, an almost all black municipio on the Pacific coast, the ratio of free unions to Church unions is 35:100, and that in Patía, an interior municipio also heavily black, the ratio is 31:100. In both these two latter cases there is much less commercialized agriculture than in the Puerto Tejada area. Timbiquí is a basically subsistence economy and Patía likewise, except for some large cattle estates.

The Infant Mortality Rate for the municipio of Puerto Tejada is not easy to determine since the vital statistics present some problems. However I have compiled a table of figures drawn from the local church and notarial archives which show a considerable decrease since 1914 (See Table 5.2 and Figure 5.2).

The average figure for the entire department in 1966 was 105 per 1,000 baptisms, well above that for Puerto Tejada. The reduction, especially marked since the late 1950's, reflects the effects of preventive medicine, inoculation campaigns against the commoner contagious diseases, and the presence of five medical doctors and five pharmacies in the town, together with a small public clinic and hospital. The proximity of the area to the city of Cali and its high population density



INFANT MORTALITY RATE, PUERTO TEJADA REGION,
1914 - 1969

Figure 5.2

has attracted these facilities, particularly the private ones. The public health facilities are far below the standard and size to be found in regions where whites predominate, such as Caloto or Santander, but on the other hand the inoculation campaigns have been more thorough and have a longer history in the Puerto Tejada area than in many other parts of the Department where the population densities are much sparser and communications more difficult.

TABLE 5.2.--Infant mortality rate, Puerto Tejada region, 1914-1969.
(Number of deaths one year of age and less, per 1,000 baptisms)

Year	Baptisms	Deaths, one year of age and less	I.M.R.
1914	180	45	250
1925	619	92	149
1930	473	100	210
1936	556	63	113
1938	595	142	240
1942	688	120	175
1955	928	128	138
1961 ^a	1,440	102	71
1966 ^a	1,372	117	85
1969	1,551	118	76

^aFigures supplied by D.A.N.E. (Departamento Nacional de Estadística, Colombia), head office, Bogotá.

The number of births over deaths has steadily increased since 1914 (See Table 5.3).

TABLE 5.3.--Baptisms and deaths, Puerto Tejada region, 1914-1969

Year	Baptisms	Deaths	Deaths per 1,000 baptisms
1914	180	130	720
1925	619	238	380
1930	473	195	410
1936	556	204	370
1938	595	345	580
1942	688	337	490
1955	928	348	380
1969	1,551	320	210

Assuming that the church serves a population equal to 1.6 times the population of the municipio of Puerto Tejada--a complete guess--then some of the crude vital statistics are as follows (See Table 5.4).

TABLE 5.4.--Estimated crude rates for births, deaths, and marriages (per 1,000 of population); Puerto Tejada region, 1938-1964

Year	Crude Birth ^a Rate	Crude death rate	Crude marriage rate
1938	40	23	2.73
1951	48	18	2.53
1964	46	11	1.59

^aCalculated from baptisms, not actual births. Since the population served by the church, from which most of these figures are derived, is an unknown, and certainly larger than the municipio, I have been forced to make a guess as to what that population might be. This obviously affects the estimates for the vital statistics, and this must be borne in mind.

With a population growth rate of 3.5%, as registered here for 1964, and very little out-migration, one appreciates that there are likely to be certain sorts of acute social problems.

Out-migration of a permanent sort to more urban areas seems rare. Only the better-off households can afford it since living expenses (let alone the costs of moving) are far higher in urban areas than in rural ones. The commonest form of out-migration is that practised by young, single, adults, who usually return after a few months or years. The women seek work as maids in the cities, and the men work as manual labourers in very far-off places such as the eastern plains of Colombia (llanos orientales), Venezuela, or the Atlantic coast region.

INCORA (The National and Reform Agency) has made some small attempts to remove peasant families from one area that has suffered repeated land invasions by peasants trying to reclaim land they used to cultivate. Buses take these people to Arauca, in northeast Colombia, where they are granted cheap lots of land near the frontier under very inhospitable conditions.

In the township of Puerto Tejada as well as much of the village of Villarica, the houses are built with one abutting against the other, forming continuous walls along the streets, which are themselves arranged in rectangular fashion to form blocks or cuadras. On the outskirts, where the very poorest people live, the streets degenerate into winding paths and ponds of slush. None of the streets anywhere are paved, and quite a few of them are rarely passable. There is no public sewage system, other than the streets and the open gutters which are permanently filled with a slow moving green sludge, separated from the front of the houses by a metre or so. Toilets consist of holes, a few metres deep,

dug in the ground at the back of the houses, often quite close to the water wells. These wells are heavily contaminated with faecal bacteria, as is the water in the two rivers that intersect at the town's south-western corner. Samples of drinking water examined by the bacteriology department of the University of Cali in 1971, showed that water from the wells, the rivers, and the public drinking supply which is connected to about a third of the houses in the town, were fearfully contaminated with faecal bacteria which were far in excess of the maximum regarded as safe. However, the water in the rivers upstream from the two sugar plantations, which empty the waste from their factories, living quarters, and pig pens, into one of the rivers, the Palo, was relatively clean and drinkable.

Electricity, run in from Cali, is connected to many of the houses, who use it for lighting the one or two naked bulbs hanging by cords from the bare rafters. Only the central plaza and the streets of the better-off people are lit at night.

According to a 1970 Health Department study, 55% of the town houses, and the majority of the village houses have earthen floors. The remainder are of concrete, or rarely, ceramic tiles. The 1963 Health Department census states that only 41% of the town houses then had earthen floors. The usual type of wall is bahareque, consisting of stout and tall bamboo uprights planted into the ground, with mud plastered onto thin bamboo sheets attached on either side of the uprights. Alternatively, there is the embutido wall which is made of packed mud secured by thin bamboo slats. The poorer houses are made of bamboo poles and slats only, and the inhabitants complain bitterly of the wind and cold at night and during the wet season. Roofing consists of mediterranean-style mud

tiles, made locally, suspended on long thin poles of caña brava (Arundo donox), themselves supported on stout rafters of bamboo. The traditional style of house, now despised by the middle class, is also one with very high walls and roof, thus providing a coolness absent from the squat modern houses built from city materials, cement, and metal. All houses, except the very poor, are fixed with strong shutters and locks; the fear of thieves is tremendously high, and practically all households possess at least one savage dog which is trained to attack outsiders. Apart from the shutters, and in the wealthier homes, bars, the windows contain no glass.

Although the older inhabitants and better-off homes in the town have a few plants and flowers in the backyard, the majority of homes are without. This stands in stark contrast to the surrounding villages and towns where commercial agriculture is barely practised. There, flower gardens and fruit trees abound in and around the homes in a glorious profusion of scents and colours.

Most of the traditional houses are L-shaped, with a long patio running outside the rooms which open onto it. On the other hand, the modern houses are square shaped, and if they have a patio, it is very small. The overall tendency is for newer homes to be more self-enclosed and more privatized. Most houses have a small yard at the back, but no agriculture is practised thereon. While the traditional houses are usually painted, often white, with a bold red, green, or blue, horizontal stripe running at ground level, the new houses are generally left with their bare bricks or cement rendering.

According to my census, 52% of the houses in the town are rented, while only 32% are in the village. In the rural area, none are. Rents

in the town are around 26 pesos a month (being about 12% of household income), and around 12 pesos in the village. The average household size in the town is 6.48 persons, while in the rural area there are 7.3 persons per household.

In 1964, according to the government census, 30% of family units within the average size range, were living in two rooms or less, while 63% were living in three rooms or less. By 1971, some 80% of these family units were living in two rooms or less.

The town contains one very large Catholic church, and several small protestant temples. There are two resident priests. The village also has a church, with one of the largest landowner's names emblazoned on a plaque in the doorway, but has no resident priest.

Both the village and the town contain graveyards, a large Catholic one, and a small protestant one. The Catholic ones are surrounded by high brick walls, and the gravestones and graves are generally in poor repair. The skeletons are usually dug up by the gravediggers to make way for new corpses, and skulls and bones dot the ground. It is from these that sorcerers make their sal--salt--with which they ensorcell people and houses.

There are several nuns living in both the town and the village, and they administer the primary schooling of the majority of the children who go to school. There is also a secondary day-school in the town, but it does not take pupils on to the end of secondary education. The town also has three banks, a very rundown cinema, a multitude of bars, seven dance halls, two billiard parlours, and two blocks devoted to prostitution--the "zona de tolerancia," or red-light district. There were sixty registered female prostitutes paying taxes to the state, in

1972, but the unofficial number is far higher. The demand for their services by the mechanics and administrators from the plantations and commercial farms, not to mention the white shopkeepers, merchants, and professionals resident in the town, is seemingly insatiable, and the whites commonly refer to their nocturnal visits as to "escribir en pizarras"--to write on the blackboard with white chalk.

There is one marketing area in the town, which is very busy on Wednesdays and Saturdays, with perhaps 200 stalls selling different sorts of foods, meat, and clothing. There are also many small shops--tiendas--about two or three to every block, which sell food less liable to spoilage. The best cuts of meat are put aside for housewives and businessmen from Cali, who make the trip out to Puerto Tejada twice a week, despite their fanatical abhorrence of the town, because the meat is cheaper. At least half of the people who run stalls in the Puerto Tejada market come from outside the immediate area. The local peasant women, and poor townswomen who make a living selling small quantities of food often bought at the marketplace itself, squat on the outskirts of the market with the pigs and refuse, spreading their tiny bundles on the ground before them. The village of Villarica also has a market, once a week, but this is a very small affair.

The centre of the town is occupied by the central plaza, or park (parque) as it is known locally. This consists of a concrete platform shaded by enormous trees, with a few benches firmly fixed in place around it, with their donors' names ostentatiously chiseled into the backrests. There is an incompleated obelisk in the centre of the area, said to have been there for over ten years, and on that obelisk one day will stand a statue of Nathaniel Diaz, probably Puerto Tejada's most famous black

lawyer and an advocate for striking plantation workers. Since the whites run the town finances, and generally feared and hated Nathaniel Diaz, it may be many more years before the obelisk is ever finished.

Surrounding the plaza are the banks, the church, and the large shops --almacenes--selling foodstuffs (wholesale and retail), clothes, shoes, hardware, and luxury goods such as radios. With one exception, these thirty or so shops are all owned by whites born outside the area, generally members of the Conservative party. Just around the corner from the plaza stands the Municipal Palace, a two storey structure containing the civil servants' offices, the mulatto mayor, the treasurer, the tax collectors, as well as the police, the judges, and the gaol, which usually contains around fifty male prisoners, and three or four females. The six lawyers and tinterillos--scribes, bush lawyers, and clerks-- have their offices close to this building.

At one corner of the park is the bus stop, a point of continual disturbance and commotion. Buses to Cali run every twenty minutes during daylight hours, and buses to and from other towns make their rendezvous there as well. As they slowly begin their journey, a slowness of pace inversely proportional to the hurricane swiftness of their motion on the open roads, they sound their horns in a never ending cacophony of trumpeting announcing their departure and warning to late arrivals. The ticket collectors run alongside screaming out their point of destination, abusing late-comers, and teasing the lower class women. In no other town that I know of in the area or the Department, is the point of entry and departure, the aperture to the outside world, so blatantly and ostentatiously intrusive onto the centre of the town, and symbolically this is quite in keeping with the special sociological character of Puerto Tejada.

For Puerto Tejada is a plantation town, and is secured to the outside world in a very intensive manner. Being mainly a black town, in a country that discriminates against blacks, it preserves some closed and nucleated characteristics, but the ties between it and the outside are far stronger than the barriers that racial solidarity can erect. Migrants move in and out with great rapidity. Tractors and wagons full of cane rumble constantly through its streets, stirring up vast clouds of choking dust all day long in the dry seasons, and creating large holes and ditches of water in the wet ones--even on occasions sending flood waves into the houses lining the streets. Trucks with supplies for the commercial farms and plantations are forever moving in and out of the town. Street vendors looking for naive peasants, or plantation workers with fat pay envelopes, are constantly hawking their wares, often with megaphones. Frequent amongst the latter are sellers of patent medicines, particularly remedies for gastrointestinal parasites which plague the townspeople, especially the young children. Poor townspeople, called iguazos--ducks--wait at the bus stops and the main corners of the town for transport to take them to the plantations and commercial farms where they work as day labourers, or where they go to glean the leftovers after harvest.

In the rural areas, the settlement pattern is a dispersed one. Originally each house was built to occupy the centre of the builder's plot, but with time and the fractionation and changing of plots, the house may no longer be even close to the householders' area of cultivation. Occasionally one finds two or three huts built around the one compound of bare earth, and such compounds contain siblings, affines, and close relatives. Very occasionally one still finds extremely large houses

containing as many as thirty people; enormous extended families that would seem to be survivals from the past when such households appear to have been far commoner than today. Such houses are generally L-shaped, and rooms can be easily added to or subtracted from either end, quite contrary to the modern designs adopted by the rich peasants which are block shaped and hence less flexible.

Most of the peasant houses have earthen floors, and are built of adobe and bamboo in the manner described for the town houses. The roofs, however, may be different, being constructed from palm thatch which can last up to twenty years with slight maintenance. Generally the kitchen is a less solidly constructed extension, with slatted bamboo walls, and the utensils and food are taken into the main part of the house at night out of fear of marauding dogs and thieves. Cooking is nearly always done on the fogon, a raised hearth of adobe bricks and mud placed at thigh-level above the ground, and the fuel is nearly always wood collected from the household plot. There is no electricity, sewage, or piped water supply. Water comes from wells dug close to the huts, and is usually foul, though wealthier households have deeper wells with concrete walls at surface level, and neighbouring households may use these.

In all houses in all areas, whether rural or town, rats infest the houses, and food is best kept suspended from the roof beams.

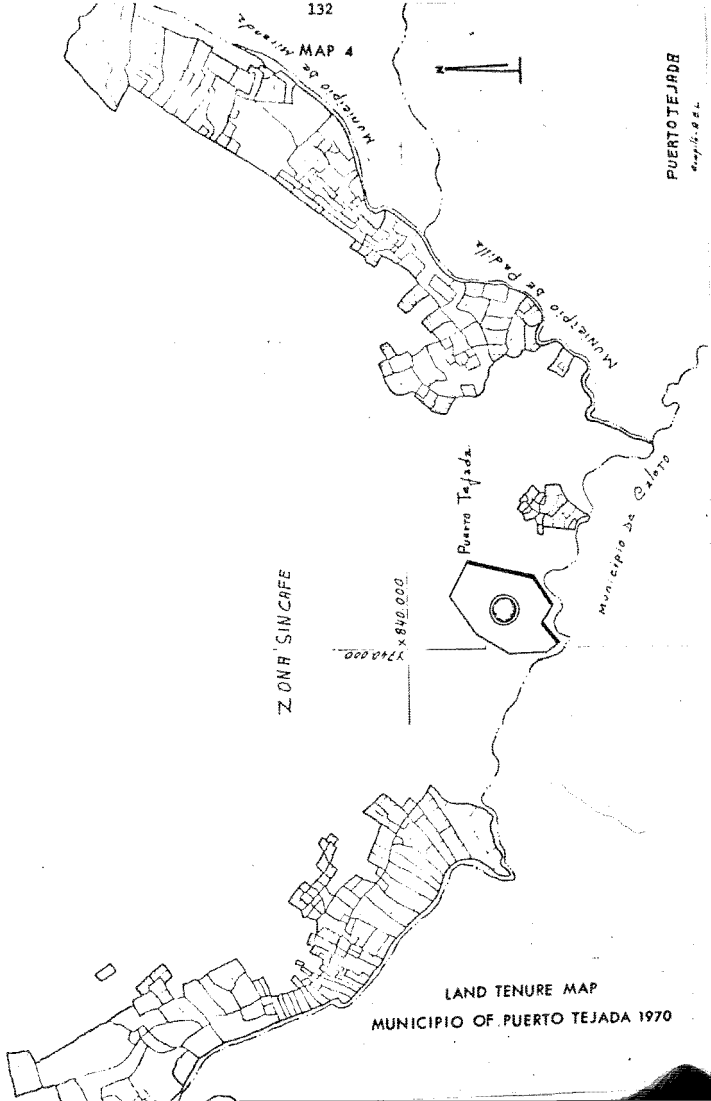
Land Tenure

In the Cauca valley, as in the rest of Colombia, land is distributed in a very unequal fashion. Around 70% of farms in the Cauca valley have less than 10 hectares, and control only 9.5% of the area, while farms

over 100 hectares control 58% of the area and constitute a mere 4.3% of all farms. Furthermore, a comparison of censuses taken in 1954 and 1959 indicate that the total number of farms is decreasing, and that land is becoming concentrated into fewer owners. In addition there is an increasing trend towards the renting of land by large commercial farms (Grunig, 1968, 322-3).

A glance at the following three land tenure maps (Maps 4, 5, and 6) prepared by the National Coffee Federation in the late 1960's for the municipios of Puerto Tejada, Padilla, and Miranda, which adjoin one another, gives an idea of the distribution of land. The overwhelming proportion of the blank areas in these maps denominated as "zona sin café," is devoted to the cultivation of sugar cane, either by the four plantations in the area, or by wealthy landowners who grow cane on their properties under ten year contracts with the plantations. The blank areas also include large scale commercial farms growing crops such as soybeans, new varieties of corn, other types of beans, and on rare occasions, rice and peas. A small proportion of the land is still in pasture devoted to cattle raising and fattening. The small blocks represent peasant holdings, most of which grow perennials such as cocoa, coffee, and plantains.

Accurate and detailed statistics on the distribution of land by owner or household are very difficult to obtain for the Puerto Tejada area. Thorough and reliable surveys have probably never been carried out, landowners of all classes are very reluctant to part with information concerning the size of their holdings, and tax records suffer the same defects. Nevertheless one can obtain some idea of the distribution of land from the following sources.



Municipio de Miraflores
MAP 4

Municipio de Padilla

Puerto Tejada

Municipio de Caloto

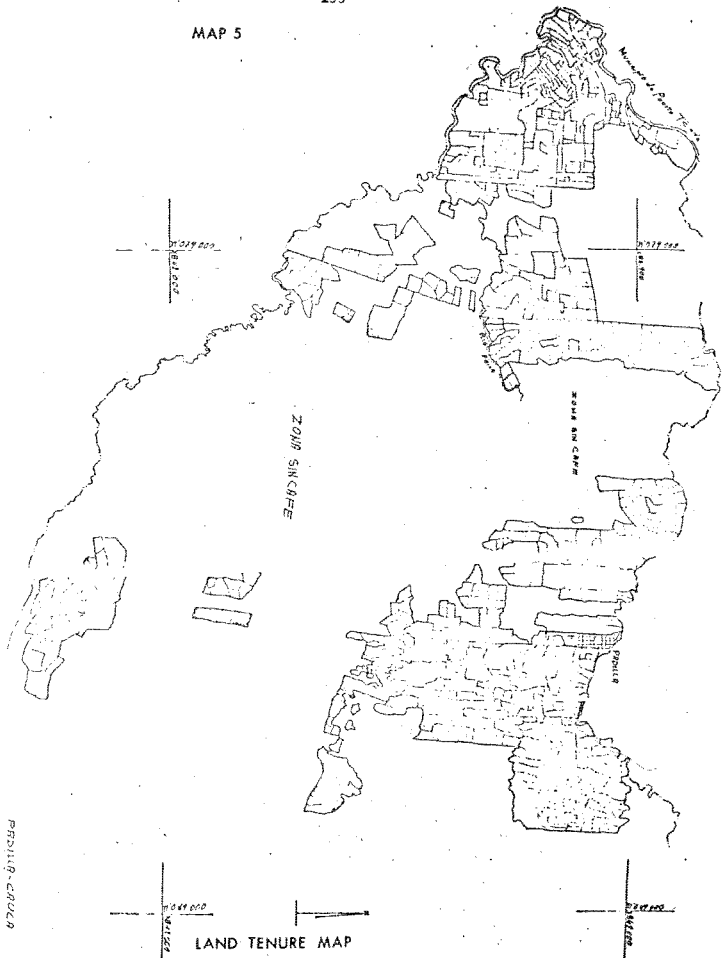
ZONA SIN CAPE

x 840.000

1240.000

LAND TENURE MAP
MUNICIPIO OF PUERTO TEJADA 1970

MAP 5



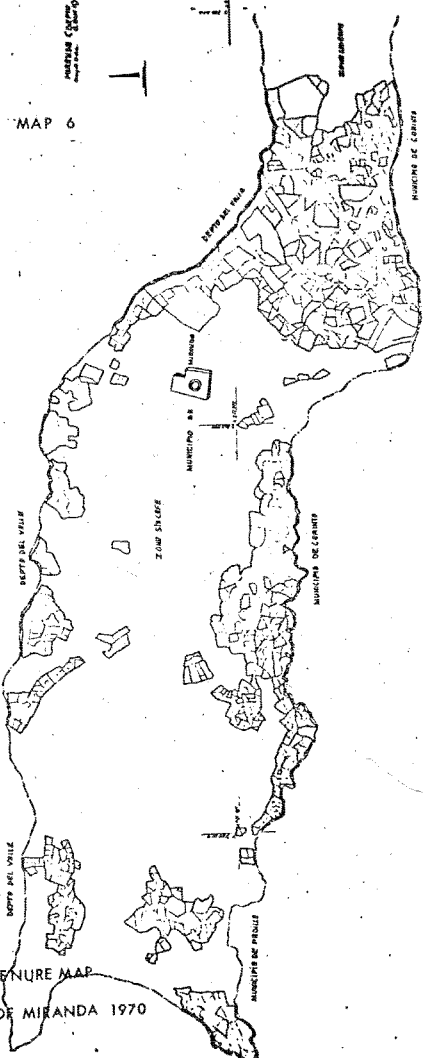
LAND TENURE MAP
MUNICIPIO OF PADILLA, 1970.

PADILLA-CRUCIA

MAPA CENSO
MUNICIPAL 1970

MAP 6

LAND TENURE MAP
MUNICIPIO OF MIRANDA 1970



In 1959 the University of Valle carried out a fairly exhaustive agricultural survey for the Department of Valle, which adjoins the Department of Cauca. The distribution of land for the municipio of Candelaria, which shares a border with Puerto Tejada and is very similar sociologically, is shown in the following table (See Table 5.5).

TABLE 5.5.--Distribution of land in the municipio of Candelaria, Department of Valle, in 1959

Area in Hectares	Number of Holdings	Percentage	Area in Hectares	Percentage
<1	566	41.00	273	1.0
-5	510	37.00	1,223	4.7
-10	118	8.50	778	3.0
-20	42	3.00	576	2.2
-50	40	2.90	1,281	5.0
-100	30	2.20	2,206	8.7
-200	35	2.60	5,036	19.5
-500	19	1.40	6,088	23.5
-1,000	7	0.50	4,868	19.0
>1,000	2	0.14	3,575	14.5
Total	1,369	approx. 100%	25,917	approx. 100%

Source: Adapted from Universidad Del Valle, Censo Agropecuario del Valle del Cauca, 1959, Cali, 1963, p. 108.

According to this table, 86% of the landowners have only 8.7% of the used land in the municipio, and this is held in areas of less than

10 hectares, while a mere 7% of landowners at the other end of the scale possess 85% of the utilised area, in holdings greater than 50 hectares. The vast majority of landholders occupy small plots, while a small minority possess over four-fifths of all the utilised land.

The 1970 survey carried out by the Departamento Nacional de Estadística revealed the following figures for the municipio of Puerto Tejada (See Table 5.6).

TABLE 5.6.--Distribution of land in the municipio of Puerto Tejada, 1970

Area in Hectares	Number of Holdings	Percentage
<2	274	39.0
-5	208	29.0
-10	112	16.0
-50	72	10.2
>50	41	5.8
Total	707	100.0

A survey carried out in 1965 by the National Land Reform Institute (INCORA), which covered a zone of land some six kilometres to the east of the township of Puerto Tejada, produced the following results (See Table 5.7).

According to this table, four-fifths of the utilised land is held in a mere 12% of the holdings, while two-thirds of the holdings occupy only 9% of the used land.

TABLE 5.7.--Distribution of land in the Guachene-Ortigal zone, region of Puerto Tejada, 1965

Area in Hectares	Number of Holdings	Percentage	Area in Hectares	Percentage
<3	8,319	66	10,994	9
-10	2,793	22	14,045	11
-50	1,153	9	22,403	18
-100	166	1	10,743	9
>100	202	2	64,441	53
Total	12,633	100	122,626	100

Source: INCORA (Instituto Colombiano de Reforma Agraria), Departamento de Estudios Tecnicos, Proyecto Cauca No. 4, Resumen General, Bogot , 1966, p. 3.

According to this table, four-fifths of the utilized land is held in a mere 12% of the holdings, while two-thirds of the holdings occupy only 9% of the used land.

The National Federation of Coffee Growers carried out an extremely thorough census of small holders in 1970. This showed that small holders growing coffee occupied only 13.5% of the total area of the municipio. Since the persons who cultivate coffee also cultivate cocoa and plantains, and in this area coffee is a smallholder's crop, we can safely assume that the category of persons we label as peasants cultivate this 13.5%. Moreover, since according to the National Agricultural census of 1960, only 1% of the total area of the municipio of Puerto Tejada, was unutilized (in the sense that it was not cleared and still remained in virgin woods and brush), the figure of 13.5% stands as the percentage of land in the hands of the local peasantry.

The Coffee Federation census also revealed that the average sized peasant plot was three hectares in size, and that 95% of the coffee crop came from owners working their own land, rather than persons renting land, who produced only 5% of the annual crop. The population density of the peasant occupied areas was 260 people per square kilometre (Federación Nacional de Cafeteros, 1970).

This census also showed that while the traditional crops of coffee and cocoa occupy roughly equal areas of land, totalling 871 hectares, the new seasonal crops (cultivos temporales) occupied 192 hectares of the peasant sector, an area equal to 22% of that occupied by the traditional crops.

Looking at the peasantry alone, and disregarding the total distribution of land between all classes of owners, my own census¹ of smallholders in one rural area and the nearest village (Villarica), showed the following results (See Table 5.8.).

We shall have occasion to return to this table, but here it is important to point out that three plazas are considered to be more or less the minimum amount of land on which an average sized household can sustain itself without external support--a plaza equals 0.64 hectares. The standard of living for a family with this amount of land would be considered by many people to be very poor, but at the culturally standardized ideal of normal welfare it nevertheless represents a subsistence base, although there are poor peasants who claim they could get by with only two plazas.

Taking three plazas as the lower limit, we observe then that 60% of the households situated in the rural area are beneath the subsistence margin, and in order to survive they have to seek income from sources

outside their own plots, if they in fact have one. In the case of the village of Villarica, the proportion of households with less than three plazas of land is far higher, standing at 75% of all the households in the village sample. In the town, even fewer people possess land.

TABLE 5.8.--Distribution of land amongst a sample of peasant households in the Puerto Tejada region, 1972

Area in plazas ^a	Rural Area		Village (Villarica)		Total	
	Number of households	Per-centage	Number of households	Per-centage	Number of households	Per-centage
Landless	3	7.9	24	48	27	31
-1	11	29.0	8	16	19	21
-2	9	24.0	6	12	15	17
-3	4	10.5	4	8	8	9
-5	5	13.2	3	6	8	9
-10	4	10.5	5	10	9	10
-20	0	0.0	0	0	0	0
>20	2	5.3	0	0	2	3
Total	38	100.0	50	100	88	100

^a A plaza is the local unit of land measurement and is a square whose sides measure 80 x 80 metres, being 0.64 of a hectare.

Nevertheless, poor as the majority of the peasants are, they are not tenants for large landlords. Poor peasants relate to large landowners as free persons under no legal obligation. The more feudal situation in which peasants held usufruct rights from large landowners

as terrazgueros, ended slowly in the 1930's and 1940's, as peasants either bought their land from the landowners, or more commonly, simply stopped paying rent.

Today peasants buy and sell land in the area for around 6,000 to 8,000 pesos a plaza. On account of the fact that the majority of peasants do not have secure legal title to land, these sales are usually conducted in the notary office as the sale of "mejoras"--improvements. A small minority of peasants also rent land from one another, and such agreements are often, but not always, also conducted in the local notary office. Renting periods range from one to ten years, with an average of around three years, and the price per plaza per year varies between 200 and 400 pesos. The money is nearly always demanded in one lump sum to cover the entire period, since the peasants who let land usually do so to cover emergency costs, especially illnesses. Frequently the need for cash to pay medical expenses for terminal illness of the household chief is the cause of letting and selling land.

The price of land in the large scale commercial farming sector, either to buy or rent, is much higher than in the peasant sector. The selling price is around 13,000 to 17,000 pesos a plaza, and the sugar plantations are prepared to pay rents of 1,200 pesos per plaza a year.

In part this large difference in land prices between the peasant and the wealthy landowning sectors is due to the fact that the latter desire large lots of cleared land, whereas the former consists in small plots of land planted in perennials. But a complete explanation would require an analysis of the different marketing structure and motivation between the two sectors.

There is no marked consciousness amongst the peasantry with respect to the sanctity of land. There is no great sentimental attachment to the earth expressed in daily conversation, myth, or ritual. There is "land hunger" in the sense that many peasants want more land, but this is seen in material terms.

Inheritance of land and all property is based on equal partition between offspring, regardless of sex, age, or birth order. If the deceased was officially married, and had children from that union as well as from consensual unions, then the offspring from the official union normally receive at least twice as much as the children born from the consensual unions. The widow or widower, if living in the household, usually receives half of the deceased's property, but this is held more in trust than perpetuity, and should pass to the children of the deceased on the death of the affine. All these rules however are liable to great manipulation, and the rule of force and residence in the household unit often assume priority. Given the fluid mating structure, the frequency of serial monogamy, and high proportion of consensual unions, disputes over inheritance are very common and often violent. Few people like to take their case to court, since the areas of land contested are normally quite small, and lawyers' costs and court costs can quickly consume more than the land is worth.

Often, therefore, the general concept and defining of particular ownership is most complex. If one asks a peasant, "Who is the owner of this land?", or, "Who is the owner of this house?", then there is likely to be great hesitation, and the eventual answer will not be that one particular person is owner. Rather there will be a long reply couched in terms of who died at the senior level of the household within the

past ten years, who remains, and what their kinship ties are, and one is meant to draw one's own conclusions.

Generally speaking, one's hold over property is very insecure, and this would seem as marked here as in most of Colombia. As the peasant aphorism has it, "The law is one thing, and man is another. They are two things apart; one is law, and one is man." And as to the law, the peasants distinguish between the law of the statute books, and the "ley de mayor fuerza"--the law of might. It is the latter that deserves most attention and fear. Both informal social relationships as well as the state's administrative organs make it well-nigh impossible for any person, wealthy or poor, to feel secure in their property. Many a peasant has a sad tale to tell concerning loss of land to other peasants as well as to large landowners, for which recourse to state law or informal sanctions are rather hopeless remedies.

Soils, Rain, and Water

The Puerto Tejada region lies at 1,000 metres above sea level and is situated at three degrees latitude north of the equator. Technically this means that it is semi-tropical in the sense that while the latitude is within the tropical zone, the altitude gives it some of the characteristics of a temperate climate. The mean monthly temperature fluctuates between 73 and 77 degrees fahrenheit, and the average rainfall is around 1,400 millimetres per year.

The whole of the Cauca valley is a narrow, level, plain, running south to north. The Puerto Tejada region lies at the southern extremity which is also the widest part of the valley, being some 25 kilometres across. Generally speaking the Puerto Tejada region is slightly more

lower-lying than most of the valley, has poorer drainage, the water table is higher, and the soils are heavier and more humid.

The chains (cordilleras) of the Andes which run parallel to the valley and the flow of the Cauca river, which bisects it, enclose the valley on both its eastern and western sides. These ranges run, on average, at 3,500 metres above sea level. The formation of the mountains on either side of the valley is such that the cross-section of the valley is assymetrical, with the west side being steeper than the east side. The Cauca river, which runs south to north along the valley floor, flows close to the west side. Due to the assymetrical form, the crest of the western chain of the Andes is closer to the valley floor than is the crest of the eastern chain. The catchment areas of the western tributaries are therefore smaller than those of the east, and consequently on the eastern side one finds far larger alluvial fans, such as compose a great deal of the Puerto Tejada region which lies well to the east of the Cauca river.

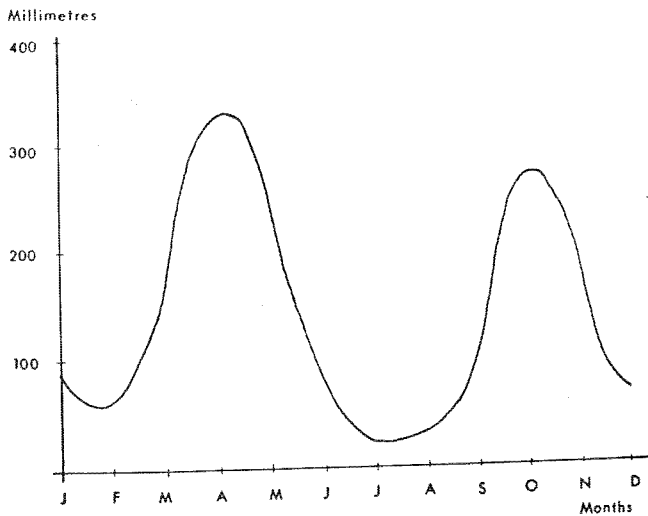
The geological history of the valley shows that there have been several periods during which its floor was covered by a lake. Much of the lacustrine sediment has been eroded away to be replaced by the fertile alluvial fans and flood plains of the rivers, together with some volcanic ash (Reese et. al, 1957).

The alluvial plain of Puerto Tejada differs from other alluvial fans and plains found in the valley in that it has a lesser slope (and hence poorer drainage). The topography is almost level; the dominant slopes are less than two degrees. It also bears some differences in the composition of the soil. The plain is formed mainly from water transported volcanic ash and other volcanic materials, and also contains

several small areas of poorly drained clays. Underlying the volcanic ash materials are fine-textured silts and clays. The soils range in acidity from being slightly acid to neutral. The area is more subject to occasional flooding than most areas in the valley. During the wet season the water table is always above 120 centimetres and this can interfere with the growth of some plants. Thus, apart from the problem of drainage and humidity, these soils are excellent for agricultural purposes, but the water problem is a very serious one.

To the south of the Puerto Tejada region the land becomes drier, more acidic, and better drained, but on the other hand is not as fertile. To the east, the land changes rapidly as one encounters the escarpments of the central cordillera of the Andes. To the north it is much the same as in the Puerto Tejada region, but is better drained and less heavy. To the west, on the other side of the Cauca river, the land is less fertile and even more subject to flooding.

The rainfall in the Puerto Tejada region between the years 1967-1969 averaged 1,377 millimetres (C.V.C., 1970, 77-9). The pattern of rainfall is shown in the following figure (See Figure 5.3). It will be observed that there are two rainy periods and two drier periods over a twelve month cycle. The rainy periods occur from March through May, and September through December, the former being more intense than the latter, and in total amount to some six months. This pattern is of some importance despite the fact that it is commonly said that the Cauca valley is seasonless. The rainfall pattern has immense implications for the annual production cycle of the traditional peasant cash crops, cocoa and coffee, determines the planting time of the seasonal crops such as corn and beans, the labour requirements within both the peasant sector



RAINFALL PUERTO TEJADA REGION 1967, 1968, 1969
ADAPTED FROM C.V.C., ANUARIO METEOROLOGICO, 1956-69,
CALL, 1970, pages 77-79

Figure 5.3

and the plantation sector, and of course the general tone of life which is greatly affected by the ceaseless rains of the wet season and the scalding heat of the dry periods.

There is some truth to the idea that the Cauca valley is seasonless, and this is most important. Certain crops can be more or less planted and harvested all the year-around, and much has been made of this fact as regards sugar cane. Unlike other areas of the sugar growing world, sugar cane is planted, harvested, and milled continuously in the Cauca valley. Some slowing down in field activities does occur during the rainy seasons when the soils become muddy and the tractors are impeded. This seems more acute in the Puerto Tejada area than anywhere else in the valley where sugar cane is grown, owing to the poorer drainage of the soils. This does have a slight effect on the annual rhythm of labour and production, but nevertheless production continues all the year-around, and the demand for labour is more or less stable. This sharply differentiates the Cauca valley from most other parts of the world where sugar cane is cultivated and where the demand for labour fluctuates in a most marked manner. Since sugar cane is still mainly harvested by hand, unlike most other commercial crops, the industry is heavily dependent on manual labour. In areas such as Cuba, perhaps the most notorious example, the seasonal fluctuations in the demand for labour induced a great degree of occupational instability affecting the majority of the island's rural population. In the Cauca valley, on the other hand, there is no solid ecological reason why the labour requirements in the sugar cane industry should induce such fluctuations.

Local Flora and Fauna

Descriptions from the nineteenth century indicate that an enormous and exotic variety of plants and animals abounded in the valley, and that there was a systematic pattern to the use and occupation of land according to race and class (See Chapter IV). By and large the peasantry occupied the more wooded areas, particularly those in the lower-lying areas and along the river banks. The pastures of the rich landowners were set back from the banks and away from the low-lying areas, although mention is made of the custom of allowing the cattle access to the marshy areas during the height of the dry seasons. The peasantry lived from fishing, and some hunting, together with the cultivation of interplanted plantains, some corn, and to an increasing degree towards the close of the nineteenth century, of cocoa. Coffee only becomes an important crop in the 1920's. The typical technique for cultivation was that known as slash-and-burn, or slash-and-mulch, in which the underbrush would be cut away with a machete, leaving the larger trees. The seeds or young plants would be planted in the cleared areas in and around the large trunks. There would naturally have been a tendency to grow the corn in the better drained and more elevated areas, since this crop, in comparison with most of the other peasant cultigens, is more susceptible to damage from flooding.

Today, as is illustrated to a certain extent by the land tenure maps of the National Coffee Federation, the vast majority of the land is cleared and denuded of all plant and arboreal cover in order to facilitate the modern commercialized cultivation of sugar cane and the large-scale growing of corn and beans by the wealthy landowners. Of all the land in the municipio of Puerto Tejada, only around 13% is still in

any sense wooded, and this is almost all in peasant plots. The Coffee Federation maps show how the peasant areas of cultivation and habitation form clusters of irregularly shaped blocks and straggling ribbons alongside the boundaries of the large estates and farms, the river banks, and the sides of the public roads and thoroughfares. The sides of the roadways are covered with reeds and dense grasses, and the peasants ironically refer to these narrow strips as the pasto largo, or long pastures, which those of them who possess a horse or some cattle use for grazing.

The peasant areas present a spectacle of densely woven clumps of trees and shrubs, some standing as high as fifteen metres, surrounded on all sides by vast open expanses of fields of sugar cane and other large-scale commercial crops. In quite a few areas, such as the vereda of Juan Ignacio, the sugar cane planted by the plantation comes right up to the peasant huts, enclosing them on two or three sides. Small paths run off the main thoroughfares and lead through the cane fields to such plots. Very occasionally a track wide enough for a truck or tractor winds its way through the plots, but even in these cases the passage is most difficult and frequently impossible during the rainy season. For reasons such as these, nearly all peasant crops are transported by horses instead of mechanized vehicles, but only households with more than around seven plazas of land can afford to buy and feed a horse. Very little of the peasant land is in pasture, and feed for horses is a considerable problem. In the wet seasons, due to the added dampness which afflicts the peasant areas on account of their thick arboreal cover, some horses become afflicted with a hoof disease, which commonly requires several months for complete cure. Peasant

horses found wandering in the cane fields have been slashed by the plantation foremen.

The majority of the peasantry live on their plots rather than in the town, but often the house can be some distance from the plots worked by the members of the household. Frequently each household possesses several small plots, scattered around the neighbourhood and demarcated from the surrounding plots by markers such as special trees or rows of bushes. Sewage and garbage is either consumed by the dogs and pigs (if there are any pigs), or left around the house in the nearest clump of shrub.

Since the nineteenth century the area and diversity of land used by the peasantry has been markedly reduced. The custom of slash-and-burn in order to rozar (clear) a field for the growing of corn, raising a few crops, and then passing on to another field when yields fell off, can no longer be practised. Furthermore, the ecological diversity that presumably would have been available to the majority of the peasantry prior to the twentieth century, involving raised river banks, fertile vegas (river and stream terraces), in addition to the lower lying lands appropriate for cocoa growing, is no longer the rule. Only some peasants are now in the position to grow a substantial crop of corn, which requires good drainage, since nowadays only some households are in possession of the better drained lands. Pasture land, essential for horses required for transport, is no longer available to all. Furthermore, for reasons that are quite unclear, the majority of the peasantry has allowed the proportion of land devoted to the cultivation of their basic food staple, plantain, to become sharply reduced. Few peasant households today provide sufficient plantains to cover all their

subsistence, even when they have sufficient amount of land to do so. The difference is made up from rice bought at the stores. In addition, the cocoa trees, their basic cash crop, are usually in bad condition, being old and suffering from a number of fungal and parasitic diseases.

Many of the large shade trees, particularly the glorious red-flowering cachimbos (Erythrina umbrosa) have died off in the past twenty years, and there seems some truth in the peasants' statement that this occurred when the two closest sugar plantations sprayed the peasant plots with herbicides from small aeroplanes. Local agronomists from the township of Puerto Tejada, men of peasant stock, affirm this diagnosis.

Finally one must mention the remarkable absence of any kitchen or vegetable gardens. Hardly any households are in the habit of cultivating a patch of beans, corn, tomatoes, onions, manioc, lettuce, herbs, pumpkins, and so on. Instead they buy these from the local stores or twice-weekly market held in the township of Puerto Tejada. Old peasants are unanimous in saying that kitchen gardens were in vogue up till the 1920's. On being asked why there are none now, people usually shrug and say there are too many thieves and no vale la pena (it's not worth the trouble--a frequent saying). There are a number of reasons which make such kitchen gardens impracticable nowadays, and certainly theft is one of them. Moreover, animals such as pigs are free to wander at will, as are the horses, and these often tear down and eat such plants, since only the wealthiest of peasants can afford to build even the cheapest fence. The basic building material, the thick bamboos, have been mostly cut down, and the cost of chicken-wire is prohibitive. Other factors enter as well, such as inadequate drainage and the

prevalence of plant diseases. It should be pointed out that according to agronomists in the Agricultural University at Palmira, the total ecology of the valley has been drastically altered in the past fifteen years due to the increasingly massive use by the large scale farmers of chemicals, particularly for pest control. This has probably unleashed a series of ineradicable diseases as far as the peasant crops are concerned.

There are no wild game-animals left in the region--discounting rats which abound in all the houses, both rural and urban. There is also very little bird life. A few people fish when the dry seasons begin and the large pools of water formed during the heavy rains are beginning to dry up. In years past dynamiting was a common form of fishing. Fishing is interesting in that it is often done in teams of both men and women under the command of one capitán (captain), and requires a great degree of cooperation. The catch in these circumstances is shared equally between the participants. It is practically the only example of group activity that involves such cooperation and sharing, especially activity that involves persons from different households. It is not done for sport, although it is enjoyed immensely, but is carried out as a serious part of making a living; surplus being sold to neighbours and friends. A few people try and live from this alone for long periods of time, particularly poor peasants who cannot countenance going to work on the plantations, but that is fairly rare. The fishing is done with nets (atarrayas and chinchorros) of Spanish origin.

The overwhelming feeling one has on reviewing this scene is one of decay and hopelessness. All the time one hears of theft, crop disasters, illness, lack of food and essential materials, and lack of

trust between neighbours. Active cooperation is negligible. Many of the perennial tree crops are old and diseased, and little effort is made to plant new ones. There is a great lack of capital to restore the old plantings, and what credit there is available, is channelled by the government and the banks towards the development of new crop lines in which the peasants are inexperienced. In fact, many of the peasants seem ignorant of much of the agricultural technology that is necessary even for their traditional crops. One observes how the old peasants know and practise a great deal more care and wisdom in the handling of their plots than do the younger people who can spend as much time working as mindless day labourers in very specialized and repetitive tasks on the plantations, as on the household plot.²

NOTES TO CHAPTER V

1. The methods by which these land areas were assessed appear in the appendix on field methods (Appendix No. 1).

2. Nevertheless, even the young peasants can still claim knowledge of at least seventy different species of plant life which are commonly found in the peasant plots; though presumably in far less profusion than in decades past. A typical list offered by a young male peasant went as follows; (The botanical names have been obtained from E. Pérez-Arbelaez, Plantas utiles de Colombia, Bogotá, 1956).

A. Trees (including fruit trees)

Cachimbo comun (Erythrina umborosa)
Cachimbo pisamo (Erythrina pisamo)
Cedro (ceder)
Nacedro (Trichanthera gigantea)
Higuerón (Ficus glabrata)
Burlilico (Xilopia maracantha)
Gualandais (Jacaranda)
Ceibo (Ceiba pentandra)
Caimo (Chrysophillum)
Pomarosa (Eugenia jambos)
Guamo (Genus Inga)
Guyabo Blanco (Oncaoba laurina)
Guyabo Rosada
Cañafistulas (Cassia grandis)
Igúa (Pseudosamanea guachapele)
Igúa Negra
Chontadura (peach palm--Guillemma gasipaes)
Corózo (Alphanes caryotifolia)
Drago
Palo de caucho (rubber tree)
Guadua (a species of very tall and wide bamboo used extensively in building and fencing)
Cacao (cocoa tree-four varieties)
Platano (Plantain--six varieties)

A. Trees (continued)

Banano (Banana--two varieties)
 Aguacate (Avocado)
 Mango
 Orange tree
 Lemon tree
 Arbol de Pan (Breadfruit tree)
 Zapote (*Matisia cordata*--a type of fruit)
 Grapefruit (two varieties)
 Mandarin tree
 Papaya (Paw-paw)

B. Shrubs, grasses, herbs, other fruits, roots

Cañabrava (*Arundo donox*)
 Caña dulce (sugar cane)
 Cañagria (*Costus villosissimus*)
 Bihag (Calathea--a common item of sale; leaves used as wrapping)
 Iraca (*Carludovica palmata*--used in thatching)
 Planta de escoba (used to make broom ends)
 Yerba mora (used for toothache)
 Limoncillo (*Cymbopogon citratus*--used to lower fever; antipyretic)
 Jute
 Junco (*Scirpus validus*--used to make mattresses and pack saddles)
 Cilantro (*Adiantum capillus veneris*--spice for cooking)
 Perejil (*Petroselinum sativum*--parsley)
 Sandía (watermelon)
 Lulo (*Solanum Quitoense*--a fruit)
 Maracuya and Granadilla (types of passion fruit)
 Guavo (*Psidium guajaba*)
 Badea (*Passiflora quadrangularis*--a large fruit)
 Guanabana (*Anona muricata*--a large fruit)
 Coffee
 Tobacco
 Yucca (*Manioc*--non-bitter varieties)
 Onion
 Tomato
 Chirimoya (*Anono Cherimolia* mill)
 Azafran (*Scoparia dulcis* L.)

In addition several types of grasses are recognized, and many people have a wide knowledge of medicinal plants. The listing of the latter would run into a few score at the least, but not everybody is acquainted with these.

CHAPTER VI

CLASS, OCCUPATION, AND INCOME STRUCTURE AMONGST THE PEASANTRY

Class and Occupational Structure

A rather crude idea of class stratification amongst the peasantry in 1971 can be given by defining class simply in terms of the amount of land owned per household. We will adopt a tripartite distinction between rich, middle, and poor peasants, defining them according to subsistence capacity. The poor peasant households are those with insufficient land to meet subsistence requirements (three plazas), and have to seek income from sources external to their own plot. The middle peasants are defined as those whose holdings can provide them with sufficient income to meet the culturally standardized level of subsistence, without requiring them to either work outside their holding, or to employ peons to work their holding. Somewhat arbitrarily, I regard a holding between three and ten plazas as falling into this category. Finally, there are the very few rich peasants who have more than ten plazas and produce at a considerable profit over and above their subsistence needs. These rich peasants tend to be ones most likely to engage in the cultivation of the new seasonal crops, hire or own machinery, and certainly hire peons to do most of the agricultural labour. In some respects these rich peasants are similar to middle class farmers; certainly their income is comparable. On the other hand

their life-style, cultural milieu, and life-chances are rather different. They are Negroes, they wear the same clothes as peasants, they talk with the same accent and vocabulary, have the same dietary preferences, and most importantly are connected by a myriad of biological and friendship ties to the surrounding peasant households. In fact they are often parents, usually the male parents, of many of the neighbourhood children. When the rich peasant dies, there is a good chance that his property will be divided amongst a large number of inheritors, and the class position of these inheritors will not become that of the rich peasant class.

The breakdown of the classes on this basis appears as follows (See Table 6.1).

TABLE 6.1.--Class structure of a sample of peasant households resident in a rural neighbourhood, and in the adjoining village, Puerto Tejada region, 1971

Class category	Rural neighbourhood	Adjoining village (Villarica)	Total
Rich peasant (>10 plazas)	5%	0%	3%
Middle peasant (3-10 plazas)	34%	24%	28%
Poor peasants (<3 plazas)	61%	76%	69%

There seems to be no clear-cut correlation between the number of persons per household and the amount of land owned or rented (See Table 6.2).

TABLE 6.2.--Amount of land owned and rented compared with household size; sample of a rural neighbourhood, Puerto Tejada region, 1971

Number of persons per household	Number of households	Average area of land (in plazas per household)
3	1	1.0
4	8	14.0
5	3	1.1
6	3	0.7
7	4	2.9
8	8	2.5
9	2	1.7
11	3	2.3
12	3	2.6

Almost two-thirds of the households have insufficient land to provide a living, and have to seek additional employment. What sort of things do they do? First of all let us review a tabulation of the occupational structure for the rural area sampled (See Table 6.3), which indicates that 41% of the population is economically active.

Several points have to be made about these categories and figures. First of all, women's domestic chores are not included. Secondly it is very difficult to draw a hard and fast line between several of the categories in so far as people can work much of the time on their own plot, but also spend a substantial amount of time working for another peasant as a peon. Similarly, a woman can go to work as a maid in the nearby city of Cali, return every few months and remain on the family

plot for another few months and help with the domestic duties and field work, or work as a peon as well. The women who work as higglers--i.e. small scale wholesalers and retailers buying local produce in small amounts to sell at the local markets--may also own a small amount of land which they will work, and in addition may spend some time working as a peon for another peasant harvesting cocoa or coffee, or whatever. What the table tries to illustrate is the major occupational category involved at the time of my study.

TABLE 6.3.--Occupational structure of workers resident in rural peasant households; sample of a rural area, Puerto Tejada region, 1971

Occupational category	Number of males	Number of females	Total number	Percentage of total
Work own plot	15	17	32	28.3
Peon	20	16	36	31.8
Iguazo/a	16	4	20	17.6
Afiliado	8	0	8	7.1
Higgler	0	6	6	5.3
Town job	2	0	2	1.8
Maid	0	7	7	6.2
Artisan	2	0	2	1.8
Total	63	50	113	100.0

Thirdly, there is a problem with children in the age group of seven to fourteen years, since many of these children help a good deal in the family plot, and the elder ones may even work for wages as peons, or in a few cases, as iguazoa. By and large I have tried to take this into

account, and if I felt that the contribution of the child was substantial enough, have included it in the table above.

By the category peon, I refer to a person who works for wages for another peasant. By iguazo (male) or iguaza (female) I refer to those people, locally termed iguazo/a (meaning a type of duck which migrates over the area and picks at seed and vegetation in the fields), who work in the large scale commercial sector of agriculture as day labourers, but are not affiliated with any business enterprise or workers' trade union. These people move from job site to job site, from labour contractor to labour contractor, seeking work in the sugar cane fields or in the large farms. They get paid either by the day or by the amount of work accomplished. Being quite outside any type of official organization they have no legal right to strike or claim against their employers, and they receive no social security benefits.

By afiliado I mean a person, nearly always a man, who works as a permanently employed labourer for one of the sugar plantations, or, more rarely, one of the large commercial farms growing crops other than sugar cane. These men receive a standard minimum wage in addition to increments assessed on the amount of work done. They also receive certain bonuses and benefits, holiday pay, and do, theoretically, have the right to strike and claim against their employers.

By "town job" I refer to two young men who travel each day into the city of Cali to work at petrol stations, serving petrol and washing cars. The artisans mentioned in the table are men who work in one of the local kilns making bricks and tiles from local materials.

The maids are a fairly important category in that a large proportion of young women usually work in this capacity at some stage of their

lives. Their place of employment is usually the city of Cali. Their wages are around 200 pesos per month, for which they have to live in the house of their employer, receive their board and lodgings free, and have one afternoon a week to go out and do as they wish. Only in the rarest of circumstances can they take their children to live with them, if they have any. The seven that I have included in Table 6.3 amount to 6.2% of the labour force of the rural area, and 14% of the economically active females. But if we were to include the other six maids that I did not enter into the table on account of their living away from home at the time of the survey, then the proportion of the female labour force thus occupied would amount to 22%, which is almost one-third of all the women in the 16-35 years age group including women whose job is purely domestic and do not appear in the above table. The effect of this on the mating patterns, and family structure, must be quite severe.

From Table 6.3 we see that around three workers out of every ten find work in their own plots, and that seven people out of ten work outside their plot as the principal source of their livelihood.

Of those who work outside their plot, the majority work principally as peons for other peasants. Around three-quarters of that number are employed as day labourers on the big estates; for every 100 workers who work outside their plot, some 45 work as peons and some 35 work as day labourers on the estates.

Of those 35 who work on the estates, around 10 will be afiliados and 25 will be iguazos--i.e. for every worker affiliated with the estate and belonging to a trade union in more or less steady and permanent employment, there will be 2.5 workers, male or female, working as

unstable day labourers with no rights and security of employment. These people are hired either by a small, private, labour contractor or, less commonly, directly by the management of one of the estates.

Looking at all of the economically active population, one sees that the peasant households are thus contributing something like 25% of their work force to the large estate sector, 5% to the marketing of some of their crops, and some 6% as maids to the nearby city.

Finally, we note that for every 100 economically active persons, some 65 are engaged in wage labour of one form or another--peons, iguazos, afiliados, maids, etc.--the bulk of them in agricultural labour. In an important sense these persons could be thought of as rural proletarians since the major part, if not all, of their income comes from wage labour in what are basically rural activities. Since the term proletarian is usually reserved for that class of persons who have none of what are thought of as means of production, such as land, apart from their labour power, and since only three of the households in our rural sample are completely landless, the term proletarian may be somewhat misleading. As we shall see, it is in the villages and the township of Puerto Tejada itself where fully fledged proletarians are to be found in great numbers and where they form the major fraction of the population.

Labels aside however, it bears emphasis that even in the rural area of habitation we are dealing with a population in which almost two-thirds of the economically active persons are engaged in proletarian activities, even if they also possess a small parcel of land.

It is rare for a peasant to spend more than twelve to eighteen months working as an afiliado for a plantation at any one time.

The reasons for seeking the work are usually to pay off an outstandingly large debt, since the wage rates in the plantations are substantially higher than those for peons, and the working conditions are more satisfactory than working for an individual labour contractor hiring iguazos. On the other hand, it is much harder to get work as an afiliado than as an iguazo, since one requires a variety of legal documents--health certificates, military pass, and references from previous employers¹--and the competition is more intense. No such documents are required to obtain work from a labour contractor. Plantation work is also chosen as a means to build up some capital in order to improve one's plot or home, or even to start a small store, which is many a young man's dream --rarely fulfilled.

But it is not only that it is harder to get work as an afiliado than as an iguazo. Many people, particularly those with some land, prefer to work for only a few weeks or months at a time in the plantation sector, in order to be free to attend to their plots, and simply to get a rest now and again. It is easier to work intermittently in this manner when one is an iguazo. Those who are permanently employed as afiliados are jeopardized if they miss work; they lose part of their bonus pay and even their job, and this can occur not only for missing out a day or so of labour, but even if they arrive late or leave early. Furthermore, the work is constantly supervised and maintained at such a high level of intensity, that many people think it barely worth the effort, even if the pay is higher.

A calendar of the different occupations, apart from the ones that are constant throughout the year, looks as follows (See Table 6.4.).

TABLE 6.4.--Yearly work cycle theoretically available to an agricultural day labourer (excluding round the year work as an afiliado on the sugar plantations)

Month	Peasant plots	Large commercial farms
January	Cocoa harvesting	Corn harvesting
February	Weeding of plot	Harvesting of corn, soybeans, and beans, Weeding of corn
March	Weeding of plot	Harvesting of soybeans and beans
April	Coffee harvesting	Weeding of soybeans and beans
May	Coffee harvesting	Weeding of corn
June	Cocoa harvesting	Harvesting soybeans and beans
July	Cocoa harvesting Weeding of plot	Corn harvesting
August	Weeding of plot	Weeding of corn, soybeans, and beans
September	Coffee harvesting	Harvesting soybeans and beans
October	Coffee harvesting	Harvesting soybeans and beans
November	Coffee harvesting	
December	Coffee and cocoa harvesting	Corn harvesting

Incomes and Labour Intensity

Household income has been assessed from a number of sources and ~~the final result is not completely accurate.~~ Nevertheless I assume that it is reasonably accurate and that the ~~discrepancies~~

households in the same way, thereby preserving the order of difference between different households, which is my main concern.²

Before reviewing the figures on income it will be helpful to list the retail prices of a few common items of consumption, and also the different wage scales.

meat	7.00 pesos/lb.	potatoes	0.70 pesos/lb.
rice	2.40 pesos/lb.	cooking fat	3.00 pesos/lb.
salt	0.90 pesos/lb.	20 cigarettes	1.50
sugar	1.20 pesos/lb.	shoes (pair)	40-60 pesos
candles	2.80 pesos/lb.	bus fare/passenger	1.00 peso/5 km.

Labour:

Peon in peasant plot:	male	18-20 pesos/day
	female	16-18 pesos/day
<u>Iguazo/a</u>		20-40 pesos/day
<u>Afiliado</u>		25-50 pesos/day
Maid		7 pesos/day

The gross income per household, together with the amount of cash spent on food, and debts, is presented in the following tables (See Tables 6.5 and 6.6).

It should be noted that the middle peasant households earn more, and spend more cash on food than the poor peasants. The middle peasants are, however, far more indebted than are the poor peasants. Most of these debts are incurred as a result of loans from the local Rural Bank (Caja Agraria) in order to develop new crop lines, and some are a result of pawning items such as wrist watches, transistor radios, machetes, sewing machines, jewelry, and so on, to one of the five pawn shops that

exist in the township of Puerto Tejada.³ Middle peasants are in a much better situation to obtain loans of money from the bank since they are more likely to have legal titles to their land than are the poor peasants, and the loan is always made proportional to the amount of land owned or rented by the borrower. They are also more likely to have valuable commodities which they can pawn. Nevertheless, the figures in both instances, that of the middle peasants and that of the poor, are large and indicate a very high degree of indebtedness, widespread throughout the region. We will have occasion to discuss this in more detail later on. In passing it should be emphasized that hardly any of the households, apart from the rich peasant households, have any savings.

TABLE 6.5.--Weekly household income, outlay for food, and debts, for middle and poor peasants in Puerto Tejada region; rural sample, 1971 (Colombian pesos)

	Average household income ^a	Average amount spent on food ^b	Average debts	Average number persons per household
Middle peasants	345	168	1,522	7.44
Poor peasants	209	117	700	7.17

^aProducts like plantains, produced and consumed domestically, are included as part of the gross income.

^bThis does not include the cash equivalent of plantains produced and consumed on the plot.

TABLE 6.6.--Weekly per capita income for peasant households, according to class; rural sample, Puerto Tejada region, 1971

Class	Weekly income/capita		Number of households	Number of persons per household
	range	average		
Rich	>250	625.0	2	4.0
Middle	149-100	150.0	1	4.0
	99-50	60.0	2	5.5
	49-30	43.6	3	9.0
	29-20	27.2	3	8.3
	Average	53.8	—	7.4
Poor	99-50	64.6	5	4.4
	49-30	36.7	7	6.7
	29-20	24.6	10	8.6
	19-10	17.1	2	8.5
	Average	35.6	—	7.2

One of the more useful ways of examining a peasant economy is to relate the consumer/worker ratio to labour intensity. By consumer/worker ratio I mean the ratio of the number of consumers in a household to the number of workers in that household. As developed by A. V. Chayanov, and illustrated in his work Peasant Farm Organization (Chayanov, 1966, 53-79), this index is a rather useful one since it gives a clear idea of the working capacity or potential of a household in relation to the number of consumers. As the ratio approaches unity (1.0), so the household is in a more favourable state to provide for its needs, since

all its consumers are also workers. Conversely, as the ratio increases, so an increasing burden is put on the workers in that household, since the number of consumers is greater than the number of workers.

A household which consists of a young adult couple without any children, for example, would have a consumer/worker ratio of 2:2; i.e. 1.0. On the other hand, a household consisting of a middle aged couple with six children would have a consumer/worker ratio greater than 1.0, perhaps somewhere in the vicinity of 1.4, and would in this sense be in a less advantageous position than our first example. In this second case, the labour output of the workers, assuming that income in whatever form is more or less the same for the same labour output,⁴ would probably have to increase in order to satisfy the needs of the household, since there are fewer workers in relation to the total number of consumers.⁵

The following table shows the consumer/worker ratios for thirty-three households in the one rural area, together with the income per worker, the land owned by the household, and the age of the chief and the eldest child (See Table 6.7). The two rich peasant households are not included.

As the consumer/worker ratio approaches unity, so the household has more labour to exploit, relative to the number of consumers. If the workers in the household maintained the intensity of labour required to meet consumption needs when the consumer/worker ratio was not so close to unity, when for example, there were few adults and many children, then gross household income would stay the same or increase. Conversely, if the income per worker remains the same as more and more children are born into the family, then the per capita consumption would decline.

TABLE 6.7.--Consumer/worker ratios, Average income per worker, land per household, and age of chief and eldest child in household; sample of peasant households, rural area, Puerto Tejada region, 1971

Consumer/ worker ratio	Average income per worker (pesos per week)	Land per household (plazas)	Age of chief	Age of chief's eldest child living in household
1.00	125	8.50	54	21
1.00	100	2.75	61	21
1.03	83	1.25	55	25
1.04	100	4.00	26	2.5
1.06	40	2.70	51	20
1.08	34	1.00	40	21
1.10	53	1.0	52	27
1.12	51	1.0	70	33
1.13	41	0.3	49	20
1.16	70	1.0	65	30
1.16	53	0.5	60	16
1.19	78	3.0	57	29
1.19	50	1.0	49	22
1.21	83	0.25	40	12
1.23	43	2.0	56	21
1.23	49	2.0	43	21
1.25	64	1.0	45	14
1.25	50	1.0	34	23
1.25	80	0.0	36	17
1.26	92	4.0	53	13
1.26	40	0.25	51	30
1.26	59	0.20	33	17
1.27	45	1.50	34	7
1.29	51	3.00	57	23
1.30	100	5.50	65	35
1.31	45	2.00	54	22
1.33	43	1.50	39	20

TABLE 6.7.--Continued

Consumer/ worker ratio	Average income per worker (pesos per week)	Land per household (plazas)	Age of chief	Age of chief's eldest child living in household
1.36	90	2.00	70	6
1.39	89	5.50	82	45
1.41	83	0.25	38	17
1.44	87	0.00	21	4
1.51	100	5.00	67	36
1.56	80	0.00	35	11

What, then, is the position as regards these peasants? Does income per worker increase as the consumer/worker ratio increases, does it remain the same, or does it diminish? Logically, perhaps, one would expect the income per worker to increase as the number of consumers relative to the number of workers becomes larger, and to a large extent this is the case.

Looked at from the opposite point of view, will the income per worker remain the same or change as the consumer/worker ratio becomes smaller? If the peasant household, peasant motivation, and external circumstances, were organized so as to encourage the maximization of labour, then at the very least one would expect the peasant worker to more or less maintain output and hence income. Thus as the consumer/worker ratio declines, so gross household income should tend to stay the same or increase, if the maximizing ideal was observed.

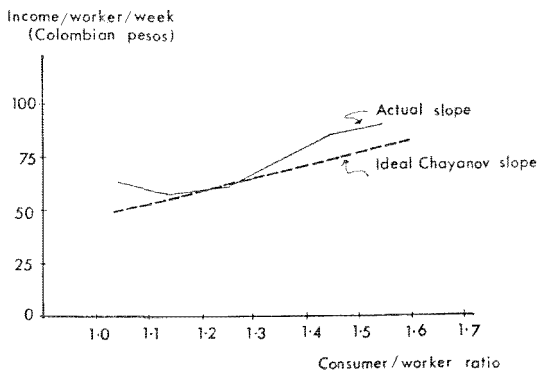
However, our data are far from confirming this type of behavior, and tend to show that as the consumer/worker ratio decreases, so does income per worker. In other words, households with a greater

potential for work, in fact work less than those with a lesser potential. Rather than maximizing labour, the peasant enterprise seems geared to the maintenance of a fixed level of per capita consumption, and this is in keeping with the findings of Chayanov and his colleagues in their extremely thorough studies of the Russian peasantry in the early decades of the twentieth century. But there is far more complexity revealed in our figures than such simple statements would imply. Let us look at the following table and graph (See Table 6.8 and Figure 6.1).

TABLE 6.8.--Consumer/worker ratios and average income per worker, arranged in intervals; rural sample households, excluding rich peasant class

Consumer/worker ratio	Average income/worker (pesos/week)
1.00 - 1.09	63.6
1.10 - 1.19	56.6
1.20 - 1.29	60.0
1.30 - 1.39	73.3
1.40 - 1.49	85.0
1.50 - 1.59	90.0

Table 6.8 indicates that there is a sigmoid curve relationship between the consumer/worker ratio and average income per household worker. Over a median range encompassing the majority of households (22 out of 33), there is an upward slope, income per worker increasing as does the consumer/worker ratio. As the number of consumers



RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CONSUMER/WORKER RATIOS AND
INCOME PER HOUSEHOLD WORKER FOR 33 PEASANT HOUSE-
HOLDS, RURAL SAMPLE, PUERTO TEJADA REGION, 1971.

Figure 6.1

relative to the number of workers increases, so does the income per worker, presumably in order to sustain those added consumers.

Conversely, and what needs emphasizing, is that as the number of consumers to workers decreases, so income per worker drops off. This is graphically illustrated in the following figure (See Figure 6.1).⁶

Figure 6.1 is drawn according to the intervals presented in Table 6.8. The ideal Chayanov slope has been constructed according to the rough and ready estimate that each unit of consumer/worker ratio, (1.0), requires fifty pesos a week, and that the income per worker will vary in direct proportion to the number of consumers in an undeviating manner to maintain that consumption level.

The fact that this figure of fifty pesos is only a rough estimate (as compared with Table 6.6 for example) is of no special consequence since our aim in including it in Figure 6.1 is merely to highlight the degree of conformity or non-conformity to the general direction of the gradient and therefore to the hypothesis that these peasant households are not maximizing their labour, in the sense outlined above. By and large the hypothesis seems upheld, except for the upward deviation to the left at the lower end of the consumer/worker scale.

If we analyze these findings in greater detail (See Tables 6.9 and 6.10) we note some significant differences between the lower end of the consumer/worker scale (in the range 1.04-1.2), and the higher range (1.30-1.55). Within each of these ranges we see that income per household worker increases as does the amount of land owned by the household to which the worker belongs. We also observe that for both these ranges the income per household worker is inversely proportional

to the number of persons in the household (while still preserving the general trend of the curve), and that generally speaking, the income per household worker increases as does the age of the household chief.

TABLE 6.9.--Selected variables for peasant households in the lower consumer/worker ratio range, 1.04 - 1.20

Income per worker	Consumer worker ratio	Difference ^a to subsistence level	Sex of chief	Age of chief	Number of persons per household	Land per capita
<u>High</u>						
100	1.04	48	male	26	7	0.57
78	1.19	19	male	57	12	0.25
71	1.10	16	male	50	4	0.50
70	1.16	12	female	65	3	0.33
Average						
80		24		47.7	6.5	0.41
<u>Low</u>						
53	1.16	-5	male	57	5	0.10
53	1.10	-2	male	52	12	0.08
51	1.12	-5	female	70	9	0.11
50.	1.19	-9	male	49	12	0.08
41	1.13	-16	male	49	9	0.03
40	1.06	-13	male	51	8	0.25
34	1.08	-20	female	40	4	0.25
Average						
46		-10		52.5	8.5	0.13

^aThis difference is calculated from an assumed consumption need of 50 pesos per every 1.0 units of consumer/worker. The exact figure is not important; rather it is the order of differences between different households that is at issue for our analysis.

TABLE 6.10.--Selected variables for peasant households in the higher consumer/worker ratio range, 1.30 - 1.55

Income per worker	Consumer worker ratio	Difference to subsistence level	Sex of chief	Age of chief	Number of persons per household	Land per capita
<u>High</u>						
100	1.30	35	female	65	4	1.35
100	1.51	24.5	female	67	8	0.63
90	1.36	22	female	70	8	0.25
89	1.39	20	female	82	7	0.79
<u>Average</u>						
94.7		25.4		76	6.75	0.75
<u>Low</u>						
87	1.44	15	male	21	6	0.00
83	1.41	12.5	male	38	5	0.05
45	1.31	20.5	male	54	11	0.19
43	1.33	24.0	male	39	9	0.10
<u>Average</u>						
65		18		38	7.75	0.10

Rather than include households with the very lowest consumer/worker ratios (1.00-1.03), I have taken as my lower limit for this part of the analysis the range 1.04-1.20, since according to the curve in Figure 6.1, the very lowest are generally well into maximizing their household labour, while at the slightly higher consumer/worker range (1.04-1.20) we have a spectrum of households more or less in transition.

It is important to observe the differences in performance according to the sex of the head of the household. In the lower range of consumer/worker ratios there is a marked preponderance of male chiefs, in comparison with the higher range.⁷

If we break down the lower consumer/worker range (1.04-1.20) into those households which have a higher income per household worker, and those that have a lower one, we see that there is no great difference in the proportion of male to female headed households between the two categories of income.

On the other hand, if we turn our attention to the higher range of consumer/worker ratios (1.30-1.55), we see that not only is the proportion of female headed households to male headed households far higher in this range than in the lower range, but that these female headed households have a far higher income per household worker than do the male headed households falling into the same consumer/worker range.

Now according to the curve in Figure 6.1, the higher range of consumer/worker ratios, in contradistinction to the very lowest range, tend to decrease their income per household worker for every increment in the working capacity of the household, or every decrement in consumption requirements. It would therefore appear from our finer analysis that this type of behaviour is more the prerogative of female headed households than male headed households.

However when we look at individual cases we cannot dogmatically conclude that male headed households are "maximizers" while female headed ones are not, since at the higher range of consumer/worker ratios, as we have just noted, the workers in female headed households are earning more per worker than those in the male headed households falling

in the same consumer/worker range. These points are graphically illustrated in the following figure (See Figure 6.2.).

Persisting with our assumption that income per worker is an accurate index of labour intensity, the conclusions that would seem to emerge are the following:

1. The lower the consumer/worker ratio, the less likely is household labour to be fully utilized, until the very lowest range is reached. In other words, for the majority of households, as household consumption requirements decrease, or as household working capacity increases, the household workers each earn less. By and large these peasants are not acting "rationally" in terms of the homo oeconomicus postulate central to modern economic and much political theory.

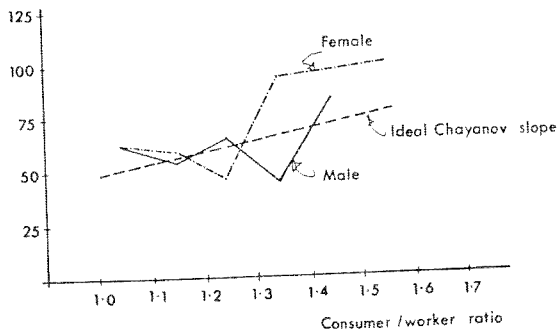
2. (a) The lower the consumer/worker ratio, the more likely is the household to be a male headed one.

(b) The lower their consumer/worker ratio, the less likely are the female headed households going to maximize their household potential.

(c) At the higher ranges of the consumer/worker ratios, the female headed households tend to have higher incomes per household worker than do the male headed households spanning the same high consumer/worker range, while the reverse is true at the lower ranges, particularly the very lowest.

It should be noted that female headed households, particularly in the higher consumer/worker ratio range, tend to have more land per capita than do the male headed households (excepting the rich peasants-- invariably males), and this provides them with certain advantages and options, either of kind or of degree, denied to many of the male headed households.

Income/worker/week
(Colombian pesos):



COMPARISON OF MALE AND FEMALE HEADED PEASANT
HOUSEHOLDS IN TERMS OF CONSUMER/WORKER RATIOS
AND INCOME PER HOUSEHOLD WORKER.

Figure 6.2

Such female headed households tend to have preserved generational depth--there are more female headed three-generation household units than there are male ones--and have more adult women and fewer household members (See Chapter XIII). Consequently they have a larger land base. This is by no means simply the result of widowhood, although we see that most of the female headed households have older chiefs than do the male headed households, but rather one of clearly established cultural norms facilitating the occurrence, frequency, and viability of female headed households (See Chapter XIII).

While peasant men increasingly display a preference for wage work outside the peasant sector, or else the conversion of their traditional perennials to modern seasonal crops organized by the state and large business houses, the women, by contrast, tie their fortunes to the traditional mode of agriculture and the reciprocity inherent in kinship ties. The women are, for these reasons and others, the more conservative and traditional element, and appear much more like the usual idea of the "true peasant." They will expend themselves to maintain income while there are many children in their household, but will slacken off their efforts when the consumer/worker ratio approaches unity. This slackening-off is all the more understandable since at this terminal stage of the developmental cycle of the household, solidarity is at an all-time low, and the female heads realize that their grandchildren will, over the long run, obtain some part of the inheritance of the rich male peasant who has, in most cases, fathered those children. At this point the separate arcs formed by male and female peasants reunite, and new households are formed.

The rich male peasants articulate the most powerful cutting-edge of the incoming market with the peasant sector as a whole. The female headed households represent the most resistant element of the peasantry, with respect to commercialization. The precarious symbiosis between these two elements, rich male peasants and female-headed households, will determine the fate of the remaining peasantry and the outcome of the entire proletarianization process.

The further elucidation of these conclusions must await later chapters. Suffice it to say at this point that we lean neither towards an explanation couched only in terms of peasant psychology, or culture, on the one side, nor towards an explanation which puts all the causal weight on the objective constraints induced by the general economic and occupational context of the region on the other. Rather, it appears to us that the behaviour revealed by this analysis is the outcome of both these types of factors, which cause the majority of the peasant households to orient themselves towards farming for set subsistence needs, as defined by the culture, and not towards farming for a profit in the normal free market sense of the term.

This is surprising given the relatively long history and high degree of cash cropping by the peasantry.

NOTES TO CHAPTER VI

1. According to an official spokesman for ASOCAÑA, the sugar growers' association, a centralized "black book" is kept, containing the names of persons known or thought to be labour militants.

2. The manner in which data on income was obtained appears in the appendix on field method.

3. There are four pawn shops in the township of Puerto Tejada. All are owned by whites who reside outside the area. They charge an interest rate of 10% per month, and each has around thirty to forty clients each day. Something like 5% to 10% of all items left in hock are never reclaimed since the amount of interest has become more than the item is worth. Each pawn shop has to pay a heavy tax to the municipio (1,200 pesos per month), which makes a considerable contribution to the municipal treasury. In this way, as with the sales taxes on meat, alcohol, and tobacco, and so forth, the lower class people bear the lion's share of the taxes. Since credit is very rarely extended by private persons, shops, or banks (except to people with land with legal titles), the pawn shops are the most popular way of obtaining cash. In addition, permanent workers on the plantations, and some of those who work for labour contractors, make a practice of obtaining goods like cigarettes on credit from the company store. They then sell these in the town for 20% less, so that they have some ready cash. The pawn shops also serve the function of tiding a person over

when out of work. A person will slowly pawn more and more items until work is resumed. This is very costly since it means in effect that they have to pay 10% per month extra.

4. This assumption appears as quite reasonable, especially as regards the difference between peon labour in the peasant sector, and wage labour outside the peasant sector. In the former case the wages are considerably lower than in the latter, and all are agreed that the work involved in peon labour is far less demanding. At a rough estimate a peon receives around 100 pesos for full work week, while a wage labourer in the plantations or large commercial farms receives around 200 to 300 pesos. On the other hand, the peon works only about one-third as hard as the average wage labourer working outside the peasant sector.

5. The calculation of the ratio necessitates attributing a differential degree of working potential and consumption need according to age. Chayanov also discriminates by sex. For example, he gives an adult male worker one unit of working capacity and one unit of consumption need, and an adult female only 0.8 units of working capacity and 0.8 units of consumption requirements (Chayanov, 1966, 58). I have decided not to differentiate the sexes, and instead have based my calculations on the assumption that males and females are equal in this respect. I have done this since even if the women are totally occupied in domestic duties, their contribution to the labour needs of the household is surely equal to that of the males. Moreover, many women work in agricultural tasks in the plot or in activities other than just domestic ones, to the extent that it becomes very difficult to

separate them. Finally, I do not think that the women's degree of consumption, in terms of cash or its equivalent, is any less than the men's.

In making my estimates for the different households I have, however, discriminated by age, and the scale I use is somewhat similar to Chayanov's. By the time either an adolescent boy or girl reaches the age of sixteen years, they are, in my opinion, capable of doing the same amount of work as an adult, and consume the same amount.

Furthermore, in making my calculations, I have not simply taken my census figures for the different peasant households at their face value, but have modified them in accordance with the actual capacity of the different persons. If, for example, a person is chronically ill, or unable to work for whatever reason, then I have made a suitable correction. However, whether they work as a peon, a wage labourer on the plantation, as a higgler, a maid, a self-employed peasant agriculturist, in a service job in the village or town, etc., I attributed 1.0 unit of working capacity. In other words a grade of 1.0 represents an adult worker of sixteen years of age or older, no matter what their occupation. Likewise a grade of 1.0 for consumption, represents an adult consumer for the same age range.

Consumer and worker indices utilized in Chapter VI

Age in years	Consumption index	Work index
1	0.1	0.0
2	0.2	0.0
3	0.2	0.0
4	0.3	0.0
5	0.3	0.0
6	0.4	0.1
7	0.4	0.1
8	0.5	0.2
9	0.5	0.2
10	0.6	0.3
11	0.6	0.3
12	0.7	0.4
13	0.8	0.4
14	0.8	0.5
15	0.9	0.7
16	1.0	1.0

6. The method of analysis adopted here closely follows that of M. Sahlins (1972, 41-150).

7. Note that 24.5% of the population in the rural sample resided in female headed households.

A female headed household is one in which all the household members regard a woman as the jefe--the chief. Usually this is

clear-cut, but in cases where a woman takes in a male mate, and she has land and children of her own already established, she may still run the household, and in fact be the jefe, even though cultural decorum will have it that now the man is the chief. In ambiguous cases like this one I have followed the local custom and listed the household as male headed.

CHAPTER VII

TRADITIONAL PEASANT PRODUCTION

The traditional peasant crops are cocoa, coffee, plantains, and to a much lesser extent, corn. There seems good reason to the common belief, expressed by agronomists and peasants, that the cocoa tree does well in humid conditions. Certainly it seems to thrive in situations that would be detrimental to any of the other crops. The local varieties of cocoa and coffee usually take from four to seven years before they are in full production, though it is so long since anybody planted any, this fact is more a memory than anything else.

The plantains yield fruit eight months after planting and every eight months thereafter, with very little attention. The mature plant produces suckers around its root, and there is a more or less spontaneous process of reproduction. The wide variety of uses and caloric importance of this plant have already been described in Chapter IV, and its value hardly needs reemphasis here. Bananas are far less commonly grown or eaten, and are referred to as llena pobre--the filling of the poor.

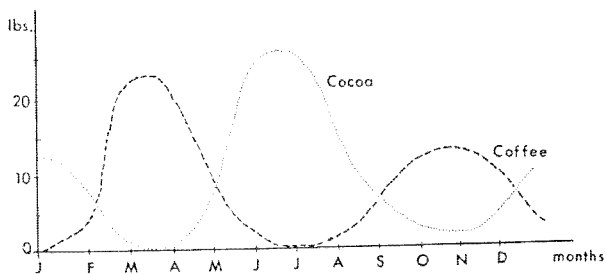
All these crops, together with the plants and trees listed in Chapter V, are interplanted and grown next to each other together with native trees and shrubs, replicating the preexisting ecological pattern to a great extent. The overall appearance is one of a fairly dense tropical rain forest with ascending layers of brush and trees up to the level of the giant cachimbos and finely-leaved guaduas, forming a canopy against the usually intensely blue sky.

Plantains, coffee, and cocoa, are not only perennials but produce all the year around. Exception may be taken to including plantain in this list, but it virtually amounts to being perennial and its production is not dependent on any season. Any household with plantains has them so staggered in terms of planting and production, that they can obtain a fairly regular supply of platanos each week.

This is surely an unusual type of agriculture, and this characteristic deserves some emphasis. The Puerto Tejada peasantry tends to live off crops which are perennial and last for several generations--some say that many of the cocoa trees are around one hundred years old--and these crops produce more or less constantly throughout the year.

When one compares this type of agriculture with the cultivation pattern of seasonal crops (such as corn, beans, yucca, potatoes, wheat, barley, and so on,) which forms a calendar of demarcated and critical events such as plowing, planting and harvesting, over a twelve month cycle, and yield only once or twice a year, one begins to appreciate how distinct the economic and occupational basis of this valley peasantry is.

To say that these crops produce constantly throughout the year is somewhat misleading. In fact even the coffee and the cocoa display marked fluctuations over a twelve month period. Although they practically always produce something at any time of the year, they do have times when there is far more yield than at others. They too have their own cycles, and each displays a peak of production every six months. What is so interesting is that the cycles for each of the two crops, cocoa and coffee, do not coincide with each other. Far from it; they almost perfectly complement one another, as the following figure,



TYPICAL ANNUAL PRODUCTION CYCLE OF COFFEE AND COCOA
ON A PEASANT PLOT OF ONE PLAZA (64 HECTARE), 1970.

Figure 7.1

illustrating cocoa and coffee production over a twelve month interval, on a one plaza plot, displays (See Figure 7.1).

The proportion of cocoa to coffee varies from plot to plot, but generally the trees exist in about equal numbers. The conditions in the Puerto Tejada region, owing to its low altitude, dampness, and heat, are not as good for coffee production as the more temperate areas along the mountain slopes.¹

Nevertheless coffee is one of the mainstays of the cash crop economy, and the logic of this, unconscious or otherwise, would seem to be that its cultivation together with cocoa ensures a fairly regular income throughout the year, since as cocoa production falls off, so coffee picks up, and vice versa. It is as if the peasantry had adopted as a solution to diminishing area, a mode of adaptation which tended to ensure frequent and regular amounts of income, in place of larger increments restricted to only certain times of the year. In addition, such a diversity balances the risks of plagues and price fluctuations, and also tends to maintain a fairly stable demand for labour throughout the year.

All plots have some citrus trees, particularly oranges. Fruit is rarely consumed domestically. Occasionally the younger children may suck on a very ripe orange, but the adults do not like them, or any other fruit, and they are sold to local higglers who take them to one of the surrounding markets.

Livestock

Livestock plays a very minor part in the peasant economy. Most households have a little poultry, which provides a few eggs each week,

and occasionally meat, but the latter is usually sold. This is always the province of the women in the household, and the money thus gained is theirs. A few households try to fatten a piglet, usually one at a time, from kitchen scraps, and this again tends to be the responsibility and ownership of the women. Hardly any households have cattle; only the rich peasants possess any, and then very few. Horses are mainly the prerogative of the rich peasants and some of the middle peasants, and are used for transporting heavy weights, not people. No animals are used to draw plows.

Tools and Some of the Material Inventory

The tools and equipment used in the peasant sector are very simple and few in number. Probably the most commonly used is the machete, in essence a long metal knife, between twenty-five and fifty centimetres extension, and five to seven centimetres broad. A new machete costs between forty to seventy pesos, depending on the quality and the length. Most peasants have only one or two per household, usually less than the number of workers, and frequently they are broken or without handles. Little care is taken of them, and they are often lying anywhere around the house or in the yard. Children of both sexes become expert at using them from around six to eight years of age. They are used for every conceivable task, from opening beer bottles, cleaning one's finger nails, chopping large trunks for firewood, and preparing the meals, to the clearing of brush and weeds in the plot proper. In clearing low scrub and weeds, one of the most important tasks in this tropical climate, a forked stick is held in the left hand and used to push the scrub down and expose the stems as they emerge from the ground. The machete then has clear access to cut at the lowest possible point.

The blacks of the Puerto Tejada region have great fame as macheteros--people of the machete--for indeed they are very skilled in the handling of this tool, which is like an extension of their right arm. Politicians in a demagogic mood, frequently refer to this constituency, as the "macheteros del norte del Cauca" (the machete people of northern Cauca), inveighing the picture of hordes of uncannily skilled knifemen ready to do their political bidding, as happened in the so-called invasion of the state capital in the early 1930's, and in the border war against Peru in 1932. When the peasants were called to revolt on the day of Gaitán's death on the ninth of April, 1948, by a local lawyer and poet who had succeeded in capturing a national radio station in Bogotá with a group of students, he began his appeal with the same phrase; "Macheteros del norte del Cauca . . ." Fights between people commonly occur in which the machete is used to give "planazos"--hits across the body and head with the flat side of the blade given with great force and speed, but with never a cut occurring. Work is never begun without the blade's edge being filed to razor sharpness.

The next most commonly used tool is the pala, a long-handled type of spade, used in an underarm fashion and scraped forward along the ground to dig out weeds and scrub. It is a very lightweight implement, the metal part being quite thin and usually only fifteen to twenty-five centimetres broad. Its edge is also kept in a very sharp state. Far less commonly one comes across a barreton or heavy metal crowbar. Like the pala and the machete this was used in the slave haciendas and in mining. But the slave haciendas had a greater range and variety of tools than one sees today in the peasant plots.

Until very recently there were no plows used in the peasant sector. Even the large estates seem only to have used the light scratch-plow of Spanish origin drawn by oxen, dating back to the earliest days of the colony. This has several important implications. First of all it means that for several centuries in the large estates there was no way of very adequately dealing with the heavy soils found throughout the valley floor, particularly in the Puerto Tejada region. Thus the deeper-lying soils were not brought to the surface, aeration was minimal, and drainage canals were not produced as a by-product of the plowing process--a very serious deficiency for the cultivation of certain crops in these low-lying areas. On the other hand, the absence of the heavy plow probably means that the richness of the soil has been maintained over the centuries. Heavy plows were probably not introduced to the Puerto Tejada region until the advent of the modern sugar plantations in the 1950's, and have only just begun to be used by the peasants themselves, and then mainly by the rich peasants who have the land to spare and money to buy or rent them, and the tractors which draw them.

The vast majority of the peasants, when they wish to plant a crop like corn which requires some clearing of shrub and preparation of soil, as well as the application of the seed, use a simple digging stick (chuzo), about one and a half metres long.

Hoes are rare, although this tool is commonly used along the mountain slopes and highlands of Colombia. As opposed to the pala, the hoe is swung over the shoulder and used in an overarm manner, being pulled towards one. Some people claim that it is more efficient than the pala for weeding and cleaning soil, but the majority of the Puerto

Tejada peasantry dislike using it, and indeed claim a constitutional inability to wield it. The new large scale commercial farms growing corn and beans usually prefer, or even demand, that the weeding be done with hoes and not with palas, and consequently more people are being forced to work with it. However, many people are still adamantly against it, and explain their inability to find work as a result of their being at a competitive disadvantage with those who are accustomed to its use.

Practically every household has a hand-driven coffee pulper based on a roller principle, which husks the ripe coffee berries free of their skin and some of their fleshy covering. Very few households could, today, afford to buy one of these machines which cost over a thousand pesos. They were part of the peasant heritage when household income was considerably more than it is today.

An indispensable piece of equipment is the kitchen molino or grinder, which costs around two hundred pesos and lasts several months to a couple of years depending on usage. It is used to grind meat-- invariably the peasants buy the cheaper and tougher meat with bone and fat attached--corn, and sometimes spices and cocoa (on those few occasions when they make their own chocolate). Water is stored and carried in tinajas, large earthenware bowls and vases, and increasingly in plastic or aluminum containers. The tinajas are bought at the surrounding markets, and nearly all are imported from outlying regions where craftsmen still remain to make them--usually women. There are a few locals left who can still remember how to pot, but they are very old and have no ovens. The advantage of a tinaja over any other form of storing water is that being slightly porous, it keeps the water at

a low temperature due to the effect of the latent heat of evaporation, and this is a blessed relief owing to the nature of the climate. On the other hand, they are not cheap (twenty to forty-five pesos being the price range depending on size) and they break fairly easily. What is more, the quality is increasingly deteriorating, and the chances of buying a faulty one is now rather high.

There are no peasant trapiches in the area. A trapiche is a mill used for the grinding of sugar cane and the making of a crude brown sugar called panela, which is manufactured in blocks measuring around 10 x 4 x 4 centimetres. This is one of the basic staples of the peasant diet, it being far preferred to centrifuged or refined white sugar, and it contains a far richer supply of minerals and vitamins than does white sugar. Panela plays a major role in the diet, usually being consumed in the form of a warm drink, and is the most concentrated form of calories available. One finds horse-driven and hand-driven trapiches in the mountains and in the riverine settlements along the Pacific coast, but since around 1900-1910 the peasantry in the Puerto Tejada region has foregone their use. Trapiches still exist, but they are owned by wealthy upper or middle-class whites.

Most houses still possess an old canoa (canoe);² a hollowed out tree trunk ranging in length from three to five metres, in which cocoa and sometimes coffee was left to ferment as part of the preparation for marketing. Nowadays these are usually left rotting and split, and used as seating more than anything else. Nearly every house also has a two to three centimetre thick concrete slab laid out along the ground in the yard as a drying platform for cocoa and coffee beans. These measure around 4 x 3 metres in area, and are often raised some thirty centimetres

above the level of the ground. It is on these that the cocoa and coffee beans are laid for a few days in the sun until perfectly dry. Usually they are rather cracked and in poor shape. Once again it is difficult to visualize the majority of the peasantry being in a favourable enough financial position to construct a new one of these, and they too signify a time when the land area per household was greater and incomes higher. Unlike other areas of central Colombia, there are no wooden trays on which to dry the coffee beans, nor moveable wooden trays on rollers which slide in and out of a protective cover. Only a few peasants have sieves with which to grade their coffee or cocoa beans into smaller and larger sizes, and this rather time consuming task is done bean by bean with one's hands.

Bags to carry large loads of oranges, cocoa, and coffee, are made from hemp and bought in the town. Smaller bags carried over one's shoulder are now usually of plastic and tear easily. Previously the moral, a very tough bag made of local hemp grown in the foothills was commonly used, and made by the local women. Today only a few old women still remember how to plait these bags.

Lighting is provided by candles which are bought in the town and a household consumes on average thirty to fifty centavos' worth per night. Formerly these used to be made locally by peasant craftsmen, and there is still a household in the village of Guachene along the Palo river where these are made. But the overwhelming bulk of candles are now made in the cities and bought by the peasants. The bottom or side of the candle is warmed and thus stuck onto the nearest wall. When walking at night one tears off a large pear-shaped leaf from a plantain tree and forms a shield around the candle which illuminates the path for metres around.

Shoes are not worn all the time, and only about half the adult peasants wear shoes while working in their plots. Boots are a rarity, but are being increasingly used, as an all-rubber ankle length type is sold by the company stores run by the plantations. It is not uncommon to see people of all ages with festering and chronic infections between their toes, which can slowly spread up the leg and seem unaffected by antibiotics or antifungal agents. Straw hats are customarily worn by the men, while the women wrap their hair in scarves, as is done in West Africa for example. Most people when working wear heavy clothing extending to their wrists and ankles, possibly to avoid troublesome insects, particularly mosquitoes, which are very prevalent in the shaded peasant plots.

About half of the households possess a small transistor radio, often in poor working condition, and these are usually on all the time, playing music, to which the children often dance or walk in time, and serialised crime stories and romances. A few men own bicycles, which are considered very necessary for those who work in plantations or the large commercial farms. Women never ride them. About one-sixth of the households have a sewing machine, on which many of the women hope to make clothes professionally, for cash, but this rarely happens as their time is too short, the demand is low, and the competition fierce.

Technology and Techniques

Drainage

One of the main problems is that of drainage. At its most intense the rain spans around three to four months of the year, in two distinct periods separated by six months. While it is true that the peasantry

have adapted to heavy rains and thick humid soils, these still present problems, and this is more true today than in times past. It is more of a problem today since some of the peasants are turning to the cultivation of seasonal seed crops which are far more sensitive to water and rainfall than are the established coffee, cocoa, and plantain trees. A crop of corn, or beans, or tomatoes, can be ruined in this region with a heavy rainstorm or prolonged rainfall over a few days, particularly when the drainage is rudimentary, as it usually is. This change in crop lines requires the uprooting of the trees and a complete denudation of the plot, which in turn seems to enhance the risk of flooding since there is less vegetation to absorb the rain. The sugar cane fields of the plantations and the new large-scale commercial farms have of course carried out this principle to a far greater extent, and the run-off from their fields is immense, stretching an already overburdened regional drainage system to way beyond capacity.

Most households attempt to maintain a primitive system of drainage canals, diverting the water from the lower-lying part of their plot to the nearest roadside gutter, either directly or via other canals dug by a neighbour. These canals are very shallow and are frequently filled with debris. The gutters alongside the paths and tracks are far deeper, but they also are too shallow to do their job properly and are frequently in a bad state of neglect.

Part of the problem lies in the fact that there is an inadequate amount of cooperation. Each household tries to divert the water off its own plot, and leaves it at that, frequently abetting the flooding of a neighbour; or if not the actual flooding, at least the impairment of drainage.

We must remember that this was not a problem, or not nearly so much of a problem, when the cultivation was more or less purely devoted to cocoa and plantains, and the population density was less. Certain areas of peasant agriculture, and even the eastern edges of the township of Puerto Tejada itself, are today gravely threatened by the flood control and irrigation measures taken by the sugar plantations which have diverted flood-waters into canals which are too small and run over into peasant plots, and the above-mentioned sector of the town itself. So prevalent is the former, and so sensitive and strained is public opinion that the peasants regard the plantations as bent on driving them off their plots through the technique of flooding; they refer to this as the "water war"--La guerra del agua.

Cocoa and Coffee

As regards cocoa and coffee, there are two main tasks; weeding and harvesting. The weeding is referred to as the limpieza or cleaning and takes place once or twice a year in the dry seasons. Weed growth in this region is very rapid, and presents one of the chief problems in the cultivation of seed crops. However in the peasant plots where the traditional agriculture is practised, and the shade cover is thick, weed growth is much slower than in the open areas. If done twice a year, which is the ideal, it takes from five to ten jornales (man-days) to clean one plaza of land devoted to cocoa, coffee, and plantains. The time taken depends on the amount of weed growth and the care with which the job is done. If done with a machete, cutting the weeds as close to the earth as possible, the job is done more quickly, but not as satisfactorily as if done with a pala which takes longer but cuts

deeper and eradicates the roots. For reasons that will be gone into later, this job is often done by peons, rather than the owner or the owning household alone. The weeds and scrub thus cleared are left in piles and only occasionally burnt or used as compost.

Harvesting is the other main task as regards traditional agriculture. This is carried out, as the peasants say, "cada quince días"; i.e., every two weeks. Unless the holding belongs to a rich peasant with more than ten plazas, this is nearly always done by the household members alone, particularly the women and children, although men are by no means averse to doing so as well. In the case of a rich peasant, peons are employed on a per-day basis except during the peak of the seasons when they are paid per quantity picked.

In both the case of cocoa and coffee, the pods and berries are picked individually, by hand, as they come to ripen. This is important as it ensures a higher quality of product than if a branch was stripped of all its fruit at the one time, but of course is much more time consuming. This is particularly the case with the coffee berries, which are small (the size of a cherry), and which the National Coffee Federation strictly regulates by varying the price over quite a wide range according to quality. Coffee picking is more critical than cocoa harvesting since if the ripe berries fall to the ground in between harvests, they cannot be used as they quickly spoil, while cocoa pods can lie on the ground for several days and the ripe pods can be harvested off the tree over a three week period with little loss in quality. If coffee berries stay on the branch for some time after they are just ready to be plucked, they usually tend to dry out and their value greatly diminishes.

The cocoa pods are egg-shaped, about the size of a cucumber, and are relatively easy to pick in comparison with coffee berries which are far smaller, except that the cocoa trees are usually far taller than the average person. To get at the higher pods therefore, a long stick with a fork at one end is used. The pods are left in piles on the ground and are collected later on in the day to be taken back to the house and further prepared.

At the times of most intense production, when the trees are most heavily bearing, a person working the normal day picks the equivalent of around 36 libras of dried coffee beans (a libra, or pound, is equivalent to 0.5 of a kilogram). During the height of the cocoa seasons, a person working the normal day picks the equivalent of 50 libras of dried cocoa beans. In other words the yield per harvester is far greater for cocoa than for coffee. Put another way, if a plaza of land was grown only in coffee, and produced the average annual yield for the area of 400 libras, then 11 jornales (man-days) per year would be required for its harvesting. On the other hand for a plaza of land consisting of cocoa trees only, and producing at the supposed average for this region of 750 libras per year, then 15 jornales would be necessary. Taking the 1971-1972 selling price for producers as our basis for comparison, when a libra of first class coffee was selling at four pesos, and a libra of first class cocoa at seven, then one jornalero picking coffee was picking 144 pesos worth a day, while a jornalero picking cocoa was picking 350 pesos' worth. At that time the average daily wage of a peon was around 18-20 pesos for a man, and 16-18 for a woman.

Of course these figures for yield per harvester per day are somewhat overestimated since they are based on the amount a harvester picks when

the season is at its height. When the trees are not so full, then the pods or berries will be further apart and more time would have to be spent in picking the same quantity. Nevertheless the times required per year per plaza of land are relatively small, 11 days in the case of coffee and 15 days in the case of cocoa, and even if we doubled these, it would still be a relatively small labour output.

Purely for theoretical reasons, let us assume a family of four, a married couple and two children, with a holding of three plazas. Let us further suppose, that these three plazas amount to one plaza of coffee trees, one plaza of cocoa trees, and one plaza of plantains. On average estimates of yields, this would provide them with sufficient plantain and cash for their basic subsistence needs. The most essential productive tasks, weeding and harvesting, would amount to around 142 jornales (man-days of labour) per year at a maximum, and 71 at a minimum (See Table 7.1).

TABLE 7.1.--Crude estimate of annual labour-time required on a traditional three plaza peasant plot (weeding and harvesting only)

Task	Minimum number of <u>jornales</u> per year	Maximum number of <u>jornales</u> per year
Weeding	30	60
Harvesting ^a		
Cocoa	15	30
Coffee	11	22
Plantains	15	30
Total	71	142

^aThis includes time required to prepare the coffee and cocoa beans for market.

The estimates for the harvesting of the plantains are rather artificial since these would be picked one bunch at a time while walking in the area and in between attending to other tasks. However, the point is that culturally standardized levels of subsistence can be met by a household with three plazas of land planted with traditional crops involving, as far as they major tasks go, a labour output of only 142 man-days at a maximum, and in all likelihood less than this. Furthermore, the very nature of the work is such that a small group, like a household, with this area of land and these crops, can accomplish all these tasks on its own without requiring additional labourers at any stage of the productive cycle.

With these crops there is no need for large labour inputs concentrated into small periods of time, as would occur for instance if they were to uproot a plaza of cocoa trees and begin cultivating corn or soybeans which require a large number of people to clear and prepare the soil for planting, and likewise for harvesting. With the coffee, cocoa, and plantains, the work is spread fairly evenly over the year. Even at the four times of peak harvest (two for cocoa and two for coffee), our imaginary household with three plazas, could do its own harvesting.

After harvesting, the beans have to be prepared for market. In the case of cocoa, the pods have to be split open with a machete and the beans extracted and left to ferment for two days in a shady and cool place. The local branch of the National Cocoa Federation, a rather unenterprising organization, recommends five days for this process, but the majority of peasants ferment for only one or two days at the most. Some people throw the pulp in with the beans at this stage to hasten fermentation, and mix the beans around every twelve hours or so. Some

of the younger male peasants do not bother with fermentation at all. On questioning they say they remember their parents having done so, but they prefer not to. This seems to be a bad mistake since it is widely said by agronomists and older peasants that lack of fermentation leads to a higher proportion of the beans being quemada, burnt, by the sun in the subsequent stage of drying. The beans are left on the drying slab until they dry, which usually takes about five full days of good sunny weather. If the beans are not perfectly dry, then the grain merchants in the town claim that they weigh more than would if dry, and consequently offer a lower price per unit of weight. Sometimes the peasants are in a great need for cash and sell before the grain is perfectly dry and put up with the lower price. In any event the degree of dryness of the grain serves as one of the most common and convenient points about which argument and bickering occurs when it comes to selling.

As regards the coffee, the preparation is more time consuming. First of all the berries have to be pulped in the mechanical handpulper (described above) and then left overnight. Then the coffee beans are washed, and put out into the sun on the drying slab where they remain a similar number of days to the cocoa until they are perfectly dry. As with the cocoa, there always has to be someone in attendance, since at the first sign of rain, the beans have to be picked up and placed under cover. In a plot of around three plazas, the first stage of preparation of the cocoa or the coffee beans will be performed in the middle or late afternoon after the day's harvesting.

We should also mention some of the things that are not done. There is hardly any use of pesticides, herbicides, or fertilizers. A generation or so ago the peasants would customarily throw the empty cocoa pods and

coffee husks into a pile, and perhaps add some lime and layers of leaves to make a compost heap, which later on would be spread around the trees. But today there is hardly anyone who does this. There is very little pruning of the coffee or cocoa trees, and practically no grafting of branches from one tree to another, as is recommended by the Cocoa Federation. There is hardly any replacing of old trees, and there are no seedling nurseries.

Corn

It has been customary to grow corn around the yard of the house or where there is a vacant and open patch of land. It was also customary to grow it in fairly large extensions when there was more land per capita, and land that was suitable for its need.

In the Cauca valley it is quite easy to get two crops a year; the maturation period for the corn they use is about six months. The preferred times for planting are just before the rainy season and coincide with certain points in the religious calendar. The older peasants and women often attach great importance to the observance of these dates which are Ash Wednesday in February, and the Fiesta of the Niña María de Caloto--the Patron saint of the nearby town of Caloto--which falls on the eighth of September. But they also take into account the state of the moon, since it is believed that one should only plant when the moon is on the wane and very thin ("bien delgadito"). The land is prepared with a machete, or more thoroughly with a pala. The weeds are often burnt, though some prefer to leave them scattered over the area. The seed used is usually not bought, but selected from the last crop, choosing the biggest ears and taking the seed from the central part of

each. Holes are made in the ground with a digging stick (chuzo), six to ten centimetres deep depending on how moist the soil is. A small wicker basket containing the seed is tied to the planter's waist. In one hand is held the chuzo to make the holes, and with the other three to five seeds are put into each hole. The holes are made at every pace, about one metre apart. A small amount of soil is sprinkled over the seeds but the hole is not levelled off. The rows are about eighty centimetres apart. The rich peasants who are just beginning to use tractors, plows, and mechanical sowing equipment, plant one seed per drop, and place a seed every thirty centimetres, much closer than do those who plant by hand. It is worth pointing out that this technique of planting by hand can be easily carried out by one person alone.

Weeding is done twice. Firstly when the plants are around knee height (the arrodillero) and secondly when they are waist high (the cinturonera). During the weeding some soil is thrown onto the base of the plant to form a small mound. Normally two seeds, or even more, germinate and sprout from each hole. No attempt is made to thin the plants; they are all left. In the case of the large scale commercial farms growing corn, an enormous amount of labour goes into raleando, thinning the young plants, since there it is customary to plant close together--every fifteen centimetres or so--and thin out the plants later on by uprooting them when they are considered to be too close together.

Harvesting is done by hand with a small siver of bamboo which is used to cut the ear off the stalk. With corn grown in any sizeable amount--upwards of a half plaza--usually a number of people are employed. Peasants who have only small amounts of land and grow only small areas of corn, may harvest merely with their own household and shell the corn

(desgranar) by hand, placing the ears in a large sack, beating them with a thick stick, and then separating the grain from the ear by hand. But those who grow corn in larger amounts, such as the rich peasants, hire a gasoline run machine which costs around four pesos a bulto of corn seed. (A bulto is a sack which contains around 150 libras, or 75 kilos, of corn.) For this and other reasons, such peasants have to have their harvest done quickly and hire many peons.

For those who do not wish to wait the full six months until the corn is seco (dry and hard, on the stalk), the corn can be harvested after four months when it is juicier and sweeter, and is known as choclo. Depending on the state of the market this corn usually sells for far less than the seco, but then some peasants are in a situation where they badly need the ready cash and cannot afford to wait any longer.

There are no public or private rituals accompanying planting, or harvesting, or any other stage of the production process for any of the aforementioned crops.

Yields

It is very difficult to accurately measure yields of the traditional crops, and even more difficult to present an average figure covering a large number of households. Since the harvesting occurs every two weeks, and fluctuates widely over the year, an intensive monitoring of many households over many months would be necessary to obtain really accurate assessments. Yields per tree or per unit of land area would seem to vary according to the density in which the different types of trees are planted, the age and health of the trees, and the care taken by the individual cultivator in maintaining the plantings and preparing the beans for market. Furthermore no peasants to my knowledge keep

production records, and memory of production gained every two weeks for different crops is likely to very haphazard and unreliable.

In lieu of systematic and thorough studies on this question I have attempted to monitor production from two households over a nine month interval, and in addition have attempted to locate figures from various sources which I shall now summarize (See Table 7.2).³

TABLE 7.2.--Estimated annual income and labour requirements on an average three plaza peasant holding, worked in the traditional manner; 1971 prices

Gross cash income	Cash equivalent of plantains consumed domestically	Man-days of labour	Minimum production and living expenses	Net cash income
8,814-10,017	1,114-1,515	71-142	5,200	3,614-4,817

The last two columns are rather artificial, and are only included so as to sharpen comparison with data that will be presented later, on non-peasant production, and on peasants producing seasonal crops. In fact the vast majority of peasants spend all that they earn on what could be called "production and living expenses."

Plot yields vary a good deal. Indeed in some cases the plot may be completely neglected; uncultivated and unharvested. This usually occurs when households are on the point of fission and a number of offspring have moved out to the town or other areas. In these cases the household chief, (invariably a female by this stage of the household cycle) approaches senility or has recently died, and the remaining second

generation members residing on the plot may well decide to stop working the land. They will commonly declare that their other siblings are too egoista (selfish) and would let them do all the work while demanding an equal share in the returns. However, this is not simply the outcome of the extra-residential siblings' selfishness, but selfishness conjoined to the principle of sharing in the household's domain--individualism tempered by egalitarianism. Added to this is the fact that by this stage of a household's life-history, the second generation females will probably have borne children from an extra-residential union with one of the rich male peasants in the neighbourhood, and their own children's life-chances are somewhat secured since these children will have a share, albeit a small one, in his estate when he dies. Since the major impetus to female work is the provisioning of their young offspring, their motivation to extend themselves decreases as their offspring get older, are more able to fend for themselves, and their inheritance from their father becomes more imminent.

Furthermore, there are simply people who do not care. They regard themselves as sufficiently well-off, and cannot be bothered to work any harder. They will attend to a small part of their holding, sufficient to keep them at the subsistence level, and work no more. This attitude is also affected by the fact that it now requires a lot of capital to restore the majority of the plots, and there are many peasants who cannot, or do not wish to enter into large scale loan arrangements.

Another factor which enters into a consideration of poor plot care is that many of the younger people have not been well trained in, or prefer not to practise, agricultural lore. Probably a minority, but

still quite a substantial proportion of young people under the age of thirty, are very ignorant of the cultivation techniques of their parents and grandparents, or alternatively know as much, but simply are not as diligent. An old peasant man, who owned five plazas, but is now almost blind and restricted to his house in the town, expressed this with a sad eloquence.

My children are disinterested. Nothing concerns them but to work by the day and grab the money in the afternoon--to go out to work in the morning and return finished in the afternoon. They live day by day But agriculture is like an art, and for this art the most essential thing is to be constant and patient, and have land.

The final statement is instructive; diligence and land are both prerequisites, and many of the young adults lack both. It seems probable that the two go together. Under a critical minimum of land, the peasant household can easily become decomposed into a discrete number of activities on the part of its different members, and plot maintenance can drop off drastically. Somewhat superficially one could explain this by the fact that with a given quantity of land in relation to the size of the household, the capital and replacement fund becomes so small, in absolute terms, that it becomes terribly difficult to give the plot the care it needs, little as that may be. This is far from being simply a matter of capital and money, but also includes the age structure of the household and its overall ability to cope with the necessities of existence. One must also remember that the condition of the vast majority of the plots is very poor, and that according to the peasants this is a relatively new phenomenon. "When I was a child," says a middle aged man in a typical statement, "we had to turn all the tables in the house upside down in order to contain the cocoa,

because the canoes (canoes) were all full. But today we bring in only a handful from the same land. We have only one table in the house anyway, and the canoe has almost rotted to bits with disuse."

In other words, more care is probably required today than in times past, in addition to which, as a result of increasing fractionation of land and population increase, there is probably less land per capita than there used to be. Now, more than ever before, money is required to combat the various chronic diseases which afflict the trees, and, ideally, plant new ones in their stead. Moreover, labour, even within the peasant sector, has now always to be paid for; there is no more unpaid mutual labour (cambio de mano) between households, as there was up till twenty to thirty years ago.

All in all then, the need for care and cash in order to maintain a plot has increased over the past generation, while the capacity to exercise that care, and to a certain extent, earn that cash, has diminished.

Some Implications of the Traditional Mode of Agriculture

As far as the traditional mode of peasant agriculture is concerned, a single household can accomplish all the necessary tasks on its own. There is no intrinsic need for any inter-household labour cooperation up to holdings of about eight plazas in size.

The mode of distribution of produce, by which households are individually and closely linked to the market for disposal of their crops as much as for many of their items of consumption, also favours this individualism. This is, however, far more marked with men than with women. While the former sell the cocoa and coffee, the women not only

do this, but many of them practise higgling as well. They buy small lots of bananas, citrus fruits, leaves, and tomatoes, from neighbouring peasant households, and sell them at the local markets. This means that their economic role alone involves them with a large number of people in the neighbourhood and implies that their inter-household ties are correspondingly more ramified and densely interwoven. In addition, it is through women that most of inter-household distribution occurs, ranging from small loans of equipment and food, to the bearing of a number of men's children. Moreover, through their higgling, women articulate directly between peasant producer and lower class consumers, while the cocoa and coffee only returns to the community after a long circuit into the external market composed of large scale business houses and processing firms.

When it comes to the cultivation of seed crops on any substantial scale, then larger labour inputs are necessary over short periods of time, and this requires either inter-household cooperation or the employing of peons, and the latter is far more common than the former.

As regards the sexual division of labour, there is no intrinsic reason given in the culture why women cannot perform all the tasks that men do, and in many instances this is what happens. Women can handle a machete as well as men, are just as used to working with the pala in weeding the plots, and are even more accustomed to harvesting coffee and cocoa. As we shall see later, many of the plots are owned and run by women.

Finally it should be noted that the pattern of production and income, small but regular amounts more or less evenly distributed throughout the year, has several interesting implications. This pattern

tends to even out crises. As compared with the cultivation of crops like corn, or soybeans, or beans, the cultivation of cocoa, coffee, and plantains, is not nearly so susceptible to an all-or-none type of rhythm. If a plague strikes, or bad weather occurs, then the long-term production of the perennials may diminish, but will be felt very gradually as a small decrement every two weeks over a very long period, rather than as a sudden disaster. This also implies that peasants will feel the pinch of poverty very slowly. Moreover, crises will appear as individualised events pertaining to discrete households rather than to the region or the peasantry as a whole. Credit and requirements for cash will also be minimal in comparison with seed crops like corn and soybeans, since capital outlays are very small, and because there is a regular, if small, supply of cash in the hand every two weeks.

All this tends to induce a marked individualization. The basic production tasks can be carried out by individual households; there is no sexual division of productive labour, hence no occupational or productive bonds of complementarity binding the sexes. The rhythm of production and income throughout the year is such that there is no marked cycle of different activities affecting the entire population in a universal pattern. The fluctuations in fortunes and yields appear to affect different households in different ways at different times of the year, inducing a type of apparent randomness as well as individualization.

NOTES TO CHAPTER VII

1. The average yield for coffee in the municipio of Puerto Tejada, according to the 1970 census carried out by the National Coffee Federation, is 298.7 kilos per hectare, one of the lowest for the whole department, while for the municipios of Popayán and Caldono, in the same department, the yields are 430.8 and 584.3 kilos respectively. What is more, the quality of the coffee tends to be inferior, and therefore its selling price.

2. Canoes for riverine transport are no longer in existence. In fact, apart from the occasional raft of bamboo poles, the rivers are no longer a medium of transportation.

3. The National Department of Statistics (D.A.N.E.) claimed in 1955 that cocoa was grown in the flat part of the Cauca valley in densities of 500 trees per plaza of land, and that each tree produced on average 1.5 libras a year, giving an annual yield of 375 kilos per plaza (D.A.N.E., 1955, 30). The National Bank in its series of statistics for agricultural production in the Cauca valley for the late 1950's gives an identical figure. Figures presented by Dr. Celso García in 1955 for the Puerto Tejada region indicate an annual yield varying between a minimum of 170 kilos and a maximum of 370 kilos of cocoa per plaza (García, 1955, 1-6).

Under ideal conditions using fertiliser and pesticides, and careful preparation of the beans for market, Dr. Barros, of the Agricultural

college at Palmira, says that a yield of the order of 530 kilos per plaza is possible. A local agronomist of peasant stock, who has his own plots in the area, claims that it is possible to obtain 620 kilos per plaza, and the head of the local branch of the National Cocoa Federation says that yields up to 1,000 kilos per plaza are possible.

Taking the two lowest estimates, that of 170 kilos and that of 370 kilos per plaza, one would obtain a gross income of 2,380 to 5,180 pesos per year per plaza at 1971 prices for first class cocoa.

As regards coffee one is in a better position to estimate yields since the National Coffee Federation carried out a very thorough census of the area in 1970. Their figures show an annual average yield of just under 200 kilos per plaza, which at 1971 prices for first grade coffee would amount to an annual income per plaza of 1,600 pesos.

Since the various trees are interplanted, one next to the other, in an almost random fashion, the estimation of total yield per plaza is not easy. In the few plots that I counted, there were between 350 and 450 cocoa trees per plaza, for example. If all we wish to obtain is a minimal estimate, then it is reasonable to take a weighted average, assuming one plaza grown only in cocoa, and one plaza grown only in coffee, adding the two together, and dividing by two. The resulting figure is sure to be an absolute minimum, since by interplanting the peasants obtain higher densities, and secondly, the various figures cited above would seem to be based on interplanted plots anyway. This last point is left completely vague by the various statisticians, and therefore, to proceed with the utmost caution, I am going to assume that they intend to mean yields/plaza for the particular crop, as if it alone occupied all or most of the space. One can understand then, that our weighted-average method is sure to produce a minimal estimate.

Taking the lowest two estimates for cocoa, and adding them to the yield for coffee, we obtain in this manner a minimal range of 2,690 to 3,390 pesos as the annual gross cash income per plaza of land inter-planted in cocoa and coffee trees. Of course if we were to take the two highest estimates of cocoa production, then the range would be between 5,140 and 7,800 pesos, based on 1971 prices, as is the estimate for the lower range.

My own figures obtained from two peasant households who were asked to keep a record of production over nine months, and which I checked every two weeks, reveal a higher yield than the preceding minimal estimates. The first household contained 17 persons (12 of them under the age of 15 years), and possessed eight plazas of land held in the one plot. This plot contained cocoa and coffee trees, plantains, and many orange trees. The density was fairly light in comparison with most peasant plots, there were numerous stands of guadua (giant bamboo), and several small clearings. There were sufficient plantains to keep the entire household self-sufficient and on a very few occasions they even had an excess which they sold. The gross annual yields they obtained per plaza were as follows:

cocoa	111.0 kilos	1,554 pesos
coffee	57.5 kilos	460 pesos
oranges		139 pesos
plantains (equivalent in cash but all consumed domestically)		2,500 pesos
total		4,653 pesos/plaza

The second household had a number of small plots scattered around the area, and the structure of the family is very complex and will not be described here. The plot that I monitored had very few plantains and the coffee and cocoa trees were very densely planted. The gross annual yield per plaza went as follows:

cocoa	260 kilos	3,640 pesos
coffee	430 kilos	3,440 pesos
total		7,080 pesos/plaza

How general are these figures? It is very difficult to say. My feeling is that they probably represent the upper end of the average range, for there are certainly households whose plots are in very bad condition in comparison with these two households, while on the other hand there are some which do even better.

Taking these two traditional peasant farms, and the lower range estimates of 2,690 and 3,390 pesos/plaza from the preceding calculations, we can derive a crude range of 2,690 to 7,080 pesos/plaza as the gross annual return in cash or its equivalent. This gives us a rough mean of 4,453 pesos/plaza for the gross annual return per plaza at 1971 prices.

If we assume that plantains, which are generally all consumed domestically on the plot, amount to one-third or one-quarter of the total cash income or its equivalent, then this crude mean of 4,453 pesos becomes reduced to 2,938 and 3,339 pesos of actual cash in the hand, respectively.

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Vol. 2

RURAL PROLETARIANIZATION; A SOCIAL AND HISTORICAL ENQUIRY INTO THE
COMMERCIALIZATION OF THE SOUTHERN CAUCA VALLEY, COLOMBIA

by
Michael Thomas Taussig

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VOL. II

CHAPTER VIII

RELATIONS OF PRODUCTION IN PEASANT

AGRICULTURE: I. PEONAGE

One of the strategies adopted by many peasants, especially the younger male ones without much land, is to seek a relatively highly paid job in the sugar plantations or the large scale commercial farms, and use part of their wage to employ another peasant as a peon to work their own plot for them. A hard working day labourer on one of the big estates can earn more money than if he or she was to work as a peon for another peasant. While a peon receives between fifteen to twenty pesos a day working for another peasant, a day labourer on an estate, could earn up to double that amount, though of course the work is much more intense and physically demanding. Thus peons are hired by other peasants, not only when there is too much land and not enough household labour, but also, and perhaps increasingly so, as cheap substitutes for oneself so that time is free to work at a highly paid job.

The question may be fairly put as to why there is any peonage at all in the peasant sector. Why, for instance, do not people work for one another without cash or any other form of payment other than labour repayment, such as was common up till a generation or so ago as cambio de mano? No reasonable answer to this question would be simple, but one obvious factor is that now different jobs receive different remuneration, such that a day labourer in the plantation sector can afford to

pay a peon to work his plot. The commercialized plantation sector offers the opportunity to day labourers to intensify labour and income in comparison with day labouring in the peasant sector.

Another reason, of course, is simply the disproportion in land holdings between households; those with a lot of land need peons, and those with little have to sell their labour.

The entire culture and region is permeated by the cash nexus. Practically everything has to be paid for at the time of buying, and the degree of self-sufficiency is very low--most people have to buy most of their food, for example, and do not grow it. Under these conditions it is unlikely that there would be any substantial exchanges between peasants which did not involve a cash flow, and this includes the exchange of labour.

Furthermore, there is a constant aura of distrust between people, even close kin. It is difficult to imagine someone working for no immediate return for someone else, in the expectation that the recipient would reciprocate when required at a later date.

Another factor which seems to have affected the disappearance of mutual farm labour is that with the increasing dependence on the market, a severe disproportion has occurred between the price of labour, which is relatively cheap, and the products of labour, which are relatively dear. As we saw in Chapter VII a peon who receives up to 20 pesos a day, can pick something like 140 pesos worth of coffee or 350 pesos worth of cocoa beans. Hence peons are employed on a wage basis rather than share and share alike.

It is rather obvious, but possibly deserves stating, that the logic of this arithmetic requires a cultural validation for its acceptance;

that a human being's labour, for example, can be legitimately evaluated in cash terms at current market values, and that the person deserves no more. However, this cultural validation is by no means binding or unambiguous. If the overall economic context in which these peasants have been slowly implicated has differentiated labour from the human being, and given different prices to labour and nature's products--such as cocoa and coffee--the peasant culture has by no means fully accepted these premises, as we shall see later on.

Then there is the other side of the question. Why do not people who work as peons, work in the plantations and large commercial farms instead? The answer would seem to be that many prefer the easier work in the peasant plots, even if it is worse paid in terms of time, or else are tied to their immediate area, as is the case with many women.

Some peons, usually those with no experience of plantation work, often express a strong desire to get a job on one of the large estates, either with an individual labour contractor, or as an afiliado, on account of the higher wages. But even these people display some trepidation because of the greater work demands, and because, they say, the work is more distasteful and dangerous. At this point there is often an interesting fusion with another set of attitudes concerning the coastal immigrants, also blacks, who work mainly on the plantations.

The locally born people, such as the peasants we are discussing, regard these immigrants as much stronger and tougher than themselves, and less "civilized." Plantation work, particularly cane-cutting, the best paid manual job of all, is considered to be rather a degrading occupation, even if the wages are relatively high. Only brutish people, it is thought and said, work like that.

One also finds an interesting attitude expressed towards people of Indian derivation who work in the plantations. There are far fewer of these than blacks, but enough to be noticeable. The locals consider the Indian day labourers on the plantations as fools because they are considered to be too obedient, docile, and diligent. If there is any group which comes close to having the "Protestant Ethic," it is the Indian workers, and the blacks scorn them for it.

In other words, plantation work is considered to be the task of brutes or fools, and only very highly motivated people are likely to take it on.

There is also a group of peasants who alternate between working as peons, attending to their own plots, and working on the large estates. This can produce a complementary pattern between neighbours, where one goes off to work as a plantation labourer and hires a neighbour to work the household plot as a peon, and six months to a year later can revert to working totally in the peasant sector, while the neighbour in turn, goes off to work in the plantation sector, employing the previous plantation worker as a peon. This happens more or less unconsciously; nobody decides with another neighbour to create such a complementary pattern, but such examples of role reversals which persistently intermesh in the area and over time are quite common.

The peasants are generally of the opinion that it is extremely difficult to find honest, hard-working peons, even, and perhaps especially, when they are kinsmen. Nevertheless it is with the latter that peon relationships are most commonly found. As regards the work commitment of peons, an old negro peasant, a male, who owned some eight plazas, had this to say.

It's very hard to find people who work properly; who work a full day and work well. You can count the number of men around here like that on the fingers of one hand. But the Indian, he is completely different. Take the people from Piendamó for instance; Ave María! Do those people know how to work. You do not have to supervise or do anything like that. They are punctual, they do the work well, and there is never any problem. They work and work without any pushing or cajoling at all. You need never worry. But the people of my race . . . they just would not work like that. If they work "per day," they do the job as slow as can be, complaining all the time and making up excuses as to why they are taking so long. Oftentimes they say, "Ah, give me five pesos for lunch," and if you say No!, then they finish the work at two o'clock in the afternoon saying that they have worked straight through the day without stopping and are therefore entitled to leave early. If they work "on contract," then they work too fast and do the job badly leaving great patches covered with loose dirt to give the appearance that they have done all the weeding when they have done nothing of the sort You know, today, the only people around here who work hard, are the women. You can trust them to come through (cumplir); to turn up on time and do the job properly. Some men don't even turn up at all, when they swear the day before that they are coming.

Those who employ peons, especially male peons, tend to prejudice their plots, in comparison with doing the work themselves. Hence the greatest irony and dilemma faces those men who decide to work on the estates and employ peons to work their plot, especially the younger men who are the more prone to this option. In order to feed their families and perhaps gain some working capital to maintain the plot, they seek work on the large scale commercial farms and plantations where the wages are higher. With these wages they are then able to pay for peons to work their plots. But in doing so they tend to let their plots deteriorate.

Peons are usually related to their employer through common descent or marriage. Most households in any one neighbourhood have at least one key member who is related to most of the other households through the same pair of great grandparents--i.e., they are second cousins.

This set of ascendants were usually those who settled in the immediate area following the abolition of slavery. Consensual unions between these second cousins or their offspring is widespread. In particular, the rich male peasants will have had children from several. Thus ties of common descent and (consensual) marriage will amalgamate and overlap in any one neighbourhood, and the wealthier peasants especially will have a large number of such ties enveloping them. It is precisely these ties which structure most peon-employer relationships, in addition to which siblings and even parents and their immediate children will also enter into cash mediated peonage contracts.¹

Since the usual (consensual) marital bond is considered to be of a rather ephemeral nature, however, the ties between households are not as enduring or as mutually obliging as the above statements may seem to imply. Frequently the unions are consummated with the couple maintaining separate residence, or are short-lived. This, together with the fact that adults have children from a number of spouses, means that while the number of kinship bonds obtaining between households is very large, they are also loaded with tension and ambiguity.

It is within this context that one must understand the division between households into richer and poorer, those who hire labour, and those who hire out their labour. It is within this context of neighbourhood ties and kinship ties, that the vagaries of the market, and the buying and selling of labour, are carried out. The finer examination of these ties must be left to a later chapter, but here we must point out that these ties do modify the otherwise anonymous and impersonal forces of the labour and cash crop market. We must hasten to point out that this is not the force of kinship that usually pertains,

for instance, to a well functioning clan or lineage in a more remote area far from the forces of the modern economy, but nevertheless these ties do count for something.

Common descent and cognatic kindred ties serve to take the edge off what could otherwise be harsher exploitative relationships when one person employs the other and when one person has more land than the other. Conversely, however, it is precisely due to such personalistic ties, that the inequalities and exploitation, now inevitable within the peasant milieu, take on a bitter and at times ferocious tone. The interlocking of kinship and class pressures tends to make a travesty of the former, even though it may soften the latter.

Peon Contracts

A peon can make one of three contracts with an employer; "por contrato" (by contract), "por tarea" (by task), or "por día" (by day). In a "por contrato" type of agreement a total sum of money is decided upon as payment for a given material change such as the weeding of a specific plot, the digging of a given quantity of drainage ditches, and so on. A "por tarea" agreement is where a rate per unit of yield is the basis of payment, such as may occur in picking corn, or cocoa and coffee at the time of peak harvest. "Por día" is where the peon is paid at so many pesos per day, regardless of the work and the amount accomplished.

While males are employed in all three categories, women tend to be more commonly employed under the "por día" arrangement.

Many factors determine which of the three types of contract will be chosen, such as the type of work, the type of crop, whether or not

the owner can continually inspect the work, and of course, the personal relationship between the parties to the agreement. As the old man quoted above said, payment per day usually means that less work is done per unit time than if one of the other type of agreements is chosen. But with the latter, the work tends to be done more carelessly.

Most people who employ peons for the six-monthly weeding of the traditional perennials prefer to do so on a "por día" basis in order to ensure a well-done job. But in the case where the owner of the plot cannot spur on the peon, there is a tendency to opt the "por contrato" system. In essence this implies that the employer feels that the risks of getting the job badly done are outweighed by the advantage of getting the job done more cheaply, and since one of the major reasons why the "por contrato" system will be chosen is because the employer is absent, working him or herself for wages, the short-term money question becomes crucial.

The "por día" arrangement is far and away the more flexible in the sense that payment is geared only to days spent, regardless of the amount accomplished and the material conditions in which the work is accomplished. Work generally begins around 7:00 A.M., and a break is taken from around 11:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M. for lunch, for which the peon usually walks home. The afternoon period extends to 4:00 P.M. If the peon does not feel well, or the weather conditions are adverse, he or she can easily slow down. If the work to be done involves some unforeseen obstacle, it makes no difference with this method of payment since although the worker may produce less, the payment is made on a per day basis. It is true that if the owner is present, the peons can be forced along a little harder than they would without such vigilance, but then there are limits to which a peon will be pushed around.

A young male peasant, for instance, decided to grow some corn on almost two plazas of land, and enter the ranks of the new class of peasants growing the seasonal crops. At the same time he was working for one of the sugar plantations and could not do the work himself. He employed the son of a neighbour, a man of twenty-two years of age, to sow the corn seed, and decided to pay him "por tarea," since although he regarded the planting as a very important task necessitating care, he thought that this method of payment would be the more profitable. The peon worked fast, but not well, and the employer decided to change to a "por día" basis, following which the peon worked at one-quarter of the pace he had assumed under the prior agreement. The employer came home early one day and found the peon had finished very early, leaving corn seed in open holes in the ground which was being rapidly eaten by the chickens from the surrounding huts. He waited and half an hour later the peon returned, saying that he had gone off for water, which the employer regarded as a poor excuse. He then suggested to the peon that they revert to the "por tarea" system, but this proved too much for the peon who became very angry, and walked away, never to return.

This illustrates the common tendency on the part of peasant employers to opt for the more commercial agreements, the "por contrato" or "por tarea," when they, the employers, either work for wages outside the peasant sector, or decide to grow the new seasonal crops in place of the traditional perennials, or both. The "por día" type of contract is a more faithful response to the local rhythm of social as opposed to economic time; the other types of work contracts are far more closely geared to the exigencies of profits and the market. The irony is that the "por contrato" and "por tarea" methods run an even greater risk of

the work being done badly; another example of how the peasant sector in general is resistant to neat articulation with the market.

The "por día" type of arrangement differs also in that it obviously requires, and allows, a far more personalistic type of management on the part of the employing peasant. The amount and skill of labour the employer can obtain from the peon under this arrangement is far more dependent on personal manipulation and the history of their relationship, than are the other two forms.

From the above account we see how the special ties induced by proximity of dwellings and common descent, together with a common feeling of belonging to the same race, can militate against a certain type or amount of manipulation and coercion. In the case described above, the peon, a neighbour's son and distant cousin, would simply not be pushed around beyond a certain limit, even though from the employer's point of view such direction was essential if he was to make any money out of his enterprise.

Other examples of how the type of work contract between peasant cultivators and peons varies are as follows. Practically all the new seasonal crops are harvested according to the "por contrato" or "por tarea" agreements. This includes corn, soybeans, and beans. It also includes coffee at the peak of production when the harvesters are paid so much per basket of berries picked. This can also occur with the picking of cocoa, during the intervals when the trees are most productive, but is less common. On the other hand we note that the traditional crops, such as cocoa, plantains, fruits, and coffee apart from peak production periods, are picked by peons on a "por día" basis. The shelling of corn ears is paid for on a "por día" basis when done by

hand, and on a "por tarea" basis when done by machine. The former of course is only done when the peasant is growing small amount of corn for domestic consumption, while the latter is the modern innovation of growing corn in large amounts for the market.

Once again, these examples tend to substantiate the idea that the "por día" type of contract is associated with the older type of agriculture associated with the perennials, or the seasonal growing of corn for purely domestic consumption. On the other hand, the "por contrato" and "por tarea" relationships are more closely associated with the market for the seasonal crops which have recently found their way into the peasant sector, and the cases where the owners of plots, or bulk of the household owning the plot, are working outside the peasant sector for high wages and are unable to safely adopt a "por día" arrangement.

NOTES TO CHAPTER VIII

1. Compadrazgo relationships between God-parents and the God-child's parents have very little force in this culture. All people have God-parents, but the ties between them and the God-parent, as much as between the compadres, appear to count for very little.

CHAPTER IX

RELATIONS OF PRODUCTION IN PEASANT AGRICULTURE:

II. INTRA-HOUSEHOLD COOPERATION

Individualism is the keynote of both inter-household and intra-household social relationships. Rather than an attempt a definition of this elusive concept, several examples of actual households will now be presented.

The solidarity obtaining within households seems largely dependent upon there being a common focus of activities within the household's land. If this focus is unavailable and household members go their different ways as regards gaining their livelihood, then the household is very likely to become severely atomized, even though its different members share the one roof or compound. For example, if one adult works in the plantation sector, another is a higgler, and another works the family plot, then the tendency will be for the household to split internally, the divisions crystallizing around the chief bread-winner of each micro-faction. They will however, continue to share the same residence.

The age, sex structure, and developmental cycle of households will also be crucial in affecting the degree of atomization. As children approach adulthood, the tendency for fission mounts. This can be arrested through the mother assuming control of the household's domain on the male chief's death or separation, but is effected through the

evacuation of offspring from the household, thereby assuring at least a minimal amount of land for the remainder.

Finally, as mentioned earlier, the individualism is always associated with a compelling egalitarian ethic. Rather than regarding the individualism as an inherent cultural attitude conjoined to avaricious selfishness, it makes more sense to see it as the strictly behavioural outcome of a social structure which allows for a great deal of personal independence and encourages individualized rather than group labour.

Let us now turn to some specific households. Two sisters both in their fifties, and the daughter, son, and daughter-in-law of one of the sisters, share the one three-roomed hut. When their mother died, she left them, and their three other siblings, three plazas of land close to the hut. One of the sisters does most of the work on the plot, while the other and her adult daughter specialize in higgling. The son combines working as a peon, with work in the city washing cars, and his wife works as a peon.

The sister who works the plot says that she shares most of the profits with her siblings, even though she does most of the work. However the other sister and her daughter, who both specialize in higgling, tend to keep most of the money they earn, except when they sell produce from the household plot. Not only this, but both the mother and the daughter work separately, each with their own capital, budgets, schedules, and customers. Then again, the son and his wife also keep a separate budget. Thus very little pooling of resources occurs, although of course in an emergency, such as an illness, some help is forthcoming. But the day to

day management of this household, which is quite typical, demonstrates a high degree of atomization, rather than a combined household effort. Even the cooking, from the same fire, tends to be done separately. The two sisters usually share the buying of household food, taking it in turns to go to the nearest market, one on Wednesday and the other on Saturday, but the younger generation buy their own food separately.

Some thirty metres away from this household is that of another woman, aged thirty-eight, who lives in her two-roomed hut with five of her eight children, the eldest being a boy aged sixteen, and the youngest aged three. She has a small plot of about half a plaza which she inherited from her mother. This woman spends most of her time higgling, buying some produce locally and taking it to the city of Cali where she sells it at one of the biggest markets in the lower class suburbs. In this manner she can make thirty-five pesos, each day that she sells. All her children have different fathers, but only the father of the smallest offers any systematic help with food and clothing. Her eldest son works alternately as a peon and for labour contractors, but rarely puts in a five day working week. Most of his income is given to his mother. She works completely independently of any of her neighbours; she amasses capital on her own, transports her goods unaided, and when she has to borrow money, does not do so from her neighbours or uncle, but from one of the large wholesalers in the city market.

She maintains a strict policy of never lending anybody money. "Men are something to be wary of," she says. "The best thing is to be independent, to work for yourself, to never lend, or borrow, and to be independent of men." Without histrionics or exaggerated self-pity, she says, "Sometimes weeks pass and I have no work and no way I can make

some money, and all around me are the children, suffering. I have nowhere I can put the children, nobody to give them to. I don't think of anything--nothing--because soon my life will be finished, very soon."

Take another example. In this case we are dealing with a compound which now consists of two huts, one opposite the other. In the larger of the two huts lives an elderly matriarch, María Cruz, and one of her sons and daughters, both in their thirties. Both the daughter and the son are Church married and have their spouses living with them. The son has one small child. The daughter has two children, one from an earlier consensual union, and one from the present union. None of the children is over four years of age. There is also the eleven year old son of one of María Cruz' other sons, the offspring of one of his earlier consensual unions.

In the hut, opposite lives María Cruz' forty-one year old daughter, one of several that she had from her first union, which was a consensual marriage. This daughter, Ana Lilia, lives with her husband, Luis Carlos, who works mainly as a peon in his cousin's large plot across the Palo river. Ana Lilia has had eleven pregnancies, and has seven living children. The eldest, aged seventeen, lives in the township of Puerto Tejada, and works on contract for a baker, selling bread in the streets and sleeping on the floor in the baker's back room. He earns a relatively high wage, but gives very little to his parents. The other children, ranging in age from fourteen to one year, live with Luis Carlos and Ana Lilia in their two-room thatched hut.

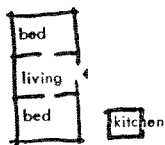
María Cruz is now too sick to work in the fields or in the plot since she has an osteoarthritic hip. She sits around the house tending to the cooking, occasionally, watching the children, and administering the daily running of the household.

She came to this neighbourhood with her grandmother some fifty-five years ago when the landlords evicted them from their home in the adjoining vereda of Juan Ignacio. Her grandmother was able to settle and rozar (clear) some land and grow corn and cocoa. Her first mate lived in this household for a while, and she bore six children. Following the death of her grandmother she went to live with a second mate who had inherited land in the centre of the neighbourhood and they worked their parcels together. Her offspring from her first union lived with her until fairly recently, when all except one have slowly moved out elsewhere (See Figure 9.1 and Cf. Chapter XIII).

Her one co-resident son (from her second union), Robier, works most of his time in the plantations. He has tried a variety of jobs over the past twenty years. First he helped his father, when he was alive, working the family plot. Then he tried his hand at higgling for a few years. Then he became a day labourer on the estates working for a labour contractor, and then became a small labour contractor himself, supplying labour to one of the sugar plantations, specializing in the digging of drainage ditches.

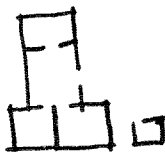
Looking back on his life up to that point he says that he was very ambitious and wanted to make lots of money. At the age of fourteen he was buying small amounts of local produce and taking them by bus to the city of Cali to sell on the pavement. He found this very exhausting. He would gather up the produce during the day and leave the area in the late afternoon. He would try to sleep on the pavement in the city, but in fact slept very little as he had to keep watch on his goods which he would try to sell the following morning. He had a working capital of between 200 to 500 pesos. At the age of eighteen he started a very

Maternal house plan
(scale 1/16" = 1'0")



First house

1922



Second house

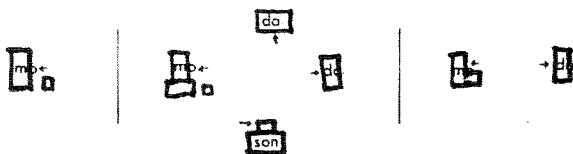
1940



Third house

1960

Site Plan
(no scale)



Stage 1

1922

Stage 2

1940 - 1960

Stage 3

1960 +

HOUSE AND SITE PLAN SHOWING EXPANSION AND CONTRACTION
OF A RURAL HOUSEHOLD OVER A FIFTY YEAR PERIOD (MARÍA CRUZ)

Figure 9.1

small store in his father's house, selling cigarettes, soft drinks, cigars, and biscuits. At the age of nineteen he stopped that, and worked for his brother-in-law's cousin as a peon, receiving seven pesos a week.

In 1960, aged twenty-one, he got a job as a permanent worker (afiliado) in one of the sugar plantations, as a drainage-ditch digger. He continued to live at home, and bought a bicycle to travel the several miles to work each day. He was paid an average of fourteen pesos a week, although the amount varied depending on the amount of work done.

At the age of twenty-four he became a labour contractor for one of the other plantations, and his weekly income soared to around 600 pesos a week, depending, once again, on the size of the contracts the plantation would give him, and the type of deal he could strike with his workers. He says that he was very astute at figuring out the cubic measures for the work offered, through a simple trigonometrical formula which he worked out himself. None of his workers, or indeed many of his peers, could work out these measures as accurately or as quickly as he, and he would never teach anyone else. He regarded this as a personal advantage which he would be foolish to publicize.

One is reminded here of the fact that when people in this peasant culture define an egoista, a very common term of disapproval, so commonly used that it passes as the typical comment on practically everybody's behaviour, they often emphasize the issue of secrecy and concealing of information. A classic phrasing given by a townsman was: "Un egoista es una persona que no quiere que lo demás sepan lo que el sabe"--An egoista is a person who does not want the others to know what he knows.

At that time Robier struck up a fairly intense relation with a woman about his age who lived in the nearby village of Villarica, and he used to spend large amounts of money over the weekend on brandy and taxi fares, and in visiting the dance halls in the township of Puerto Tejada, so that not much of his weekly earnings remained. He would contribute a little towards his own household, enough to pay for his food consumption, but not much more. Then this woman bore his child, but she continued to live with her mother in Villarica while he stayed on in his parent's home. His relationship with his immediate supervisor in the plantation, the man on whom he was dependent for contracts, suddenly fell awry, and his source of income gradually dried up. He left and through the contacts he had developed became a permanent worker once again, for another plantation, where of course he earned a lot less money than he had in his heyday as a labour contractor.

His father died when Robier was twenty-five years old. On his death bed he legally married María Cruz, and thus the children of that union became legitimos--i.e. legitimates, and not bastards. This was of considerable importance since the inheritance customs as much as Colombian law dictate that legitimos shall receive portions of inheritance that are double due any illegitimate offspring. Not only that, but the official marriage tended to separate off the children of that union from María Cruz' previous union in which she had had six children--Ana Lilia and five others. Having thus institutionalized the union with Robier's father, her children from the earlier union would have that much less of a claim to any of her second mate's land. Shortly following the funeral his three plazas of land were equally divided into six portions, one for the widow and each of the five children from that union alone.

In this situation many households continue working the land as before, with the widow supervising, and this is often described as working the land en familia (in family). This can even occur, but much less commonly, when the second parent dies. However in this case, Robier's siblings decided to divide the land up more or less immediately. He states that this was done precisely in order to prevent any claims or argument being made by Ana Lilia, or any other of his mother's children from her previous union, over the land when María Cruz died. It was better, in his opinion, to divide up the land immediately following his father's death when Robier and his full siblings' claims were apparent and strong, rather than work it en familia until María Cruz' death, because by that time her first set of children may have regrouped around her as the central figure of a new household order, and hence become strong claimants to the land.

When his father was alive there were seven people in the household, whom as five children and two adults were all being easily supported by the three plaza plot. But by the time his father died, the number of dependents had increased since his three elder brothers had had children. By 1970, ten years after his father's death, the five children, now all adults, were supporting twenty-seven children, five spouses, and six extra lovers--hardly capable of all being supported on the same three plazas which had given subsistence to seven people when the children were small.

Shortly after his lover had given birth to his child, Robier eloped with another young woman from Villarica, and at the age of twenty-seven became a labour contractor for the plantation where he had, up till that time been working as an afiliado. Once again he was back in business

as a person who was given contracts by the plantation. He would call up other men to work under him for whatever wages he could offer with the money that the plantation offered him for each contract, usually worked out on a weekly or two-weekly basis. He left home at this time and set up a separate home with his wife in the township of Puerto Tejada. They rented one room in a house in which one of the foremen from the plantation also lived; a white man, but "he liked talking to me, about everyday things, and we got along well." Two years later he again struck problems with the plantation's tally man, whom he thought was underestimating the amount of work that Robier's gang was doing, to the point where Robier's profits sank very low. He decided to leave this occupation. The tally man was a white, "who was badly educated in his job and kept arguing with me, a black, thinking that I should always know less than him. He insisted on giving me the most difficult jobs, in which I would have to enter right into the growing sugar cane in order to supervise my workers, and . . . I just hate working in the cane because it cuts my arms and can even blind you. The itch is terrible if you are not used to it. So I couldn't supervise my workers very well, and I ended up getting fewer and fewer contracts from the plantation."

Shortly before this happened, he lost a powerful source of patronage; the foreman who had lived in the same house as he, had been moved to another section of the plantation. Robier is very clearly of the opinion that this happened because "he was getting too well acquainted with the workers. And when that happens the foreman can't dominate them. That's company policy. They change the foremen every two years or so, switching them around to different parts of the plantation. The top

managers are also afraid of cerruchos, that the workers and the foremen shall get together and cheat the plantation."

Since then Robier has moved back to the family plot, working alternately as a peon, and trying to make a living off the land as his father did as an independent cultivator. But now there is far less land, and he has been tempted to rent plots, uproot the perennials and plant seasonal crops on his mother-in-law's half-plaza, with ruinous results.

The present use of the land that the widow and five siblings inherited, illustrates many of these points.

The three plazas were originally divided into equal parts between the six persons. The present situation nine years later, is as follows.

Original owner	Relation	Present disposition of the land and sources of income
María Cruz (the widow)	Mother	Her share is administered by Robier, and the yield is shared by all members residing in the household.
Chu Chu	Eldest brother	Robier administers Chu Chu's plot, and they share equally in the profits. Chu Chu owns a small shop in the township, and is a labour contractor.
Tomás	2nd eldest brother	Works his plot, tried to grow tomatoes, failed, and now works as a day labourer and small-time labour contractor.
Antonio	3rd eldest brother	Lets his plot to a neighbour, and works in the township as a photographer.
Robier	Ego	First of all let his plot to a neighbour. Then sold it to his brother, Chu Chu, to be a day labourer on the estates; now trying to make a living as a peasant cultivator.
Juana	Sister	Lets her plot to Robier. Husband has no land, and works as a day labourer in the large estates.

Robier's wife and his sister tried to share the household tasks, and alternated the cooking on a daily basis. But after a few weeks this became unworkable, with each side accusing the other of shirking their duty. At the time, Robier's income was generally higher than his brother-in-law's, but no attempt was made to share the difference. Food costs for the sub-sections of the household were different, and combined cooking became virtually impossible. Robier's sister, Juana, in an effort to increase her income, began to make a sweet from milk and sugar, which she sold once a week to a store in the township and to the surrounding households. Her husband would collect the firewood, she would collect the milk from the township, and her mother would stir the mixture over the fire for the three hours necessary. Juana could not do this, as it was believed that she, being pregnant, would curdle the milk. The vast copper pot in which the mixture was cooked, was borrowed from a well-to-do female neighbour, who in turn would receive a small portion of the final product. None of the income from this tiny business would directly find its way into Robier's sub-section of the household.

When Robier was trying his hand at cultivation of his brother Chu Chu's plot, and had rented his sister's and mother-in-law's plots, he would occasionally hire his brother-in-law, Juana's husband, who lived in the house, as a peon. In addition, he would also hire Esom, his brother Tomás' illegitimate son aged eleven, and also resident in the household. Both would be paid on a "por día" basis, generally, but there were times when he would give them contracts to do a specific job. Esom had previously worked for nothing, but once he had started to work for other people outside the household, then Robier felt it necessary to commence paying him a wage.

The harmony of interpersonal relationships within the household was often very strained. Frequently Robier would say that José, his sister Juana's husband, was half-mad, in reference to his sullenness and mute disobedience to instructions. Esom, the illegitimate son of his brother Tomás, used to be roundly condemned by both Robier and María Cruz, on account of his supposed laziness and disobedience. Children form an essential service in running errands, particularly to the small stores located on the main road, a mile or so away from the house. Since purchasing is invariably made in small bits and pieces, and usually on the spur of the moment, just before a meal for example, a small child can be sent to the store several times a day, in order to buy a couple of cigarettes, a half pound of rice, a box of matches, two onions, or whatever.

Given the total context of most people's lives, it is little wonder that they often feel depressed about the future. A man like Robier, feels that he is completely trapped. When he tried his hand at the new crops, and borrowed large sums of money in order to do so, he, like most people, failed completely, and had to re-enter the ranks of the day labourers working on the plantations. With the money he saved from that activity, he would try to pay peons to work his mother's plot, and pay off the loans--an almost impossible task.

The work in the plantations is getting more and more difficult. It is increasingly harder to get a job as an afiliado, since the plantations and large scale commercial farms are opting for a labour system based on labour contractors; "The plantations only want us blacks for the cutting of cane, and as I'm not used to that, I can't get a well paid or secure job . . . life is changing a lot for us poor

people" He runs through the possibilities. Perhaps he should go to the Pacific coast and try and get a job on the wharves, with the help of his sister-in-law who has relatives there. His wife could get a job as a maid in Cali, and leave the children with his mother, coming home once a week to wash their clothes. Maybe they should try to emigrate to live in the slums of Cali, but the rent is far too high for them. Maybe they should emigrate to the frontier where land is cheap, so they say on the radio.

It's just impossible to go on like this anymore. One must have money. We need a house of our own. We need money if we want to start a little store. It's not even worthwhile working as a small-scale labour contractor anymore, as I used to. The plantation foremen are now making the contracts so small that there's hardly any money to be made there. The foremen say that 200 pesos a week is enough for anybody. The only peasants living well are the two rich peasants who have more than twenty plazas each . . . they are always doing well and have intentions to be real ricos (rich people). They don't like it any more when we say that all the rich are bad. As for the plantations, you can hardly mention them. Each day they try to oppress us poor people more and more"

CHAPTER X

THE NOT SO GREEN REVOLUTION

In this chapter I wish to discuss the process and results involved when the peasants change their traditional type of production, devoted essentially to the care of perennial trees of cocoa, coffee, and plantains, to a different type of cultivation based on seasonal crops and mechanized farming.

This new mode of agriculture has been hailed in Colombia and the world at large as a "Green Revolution," signifying not only certain radical changes in technology, but also the hope that yields of crops per unit area will increase, and that food consumption and income per capita will similarly be augmented.

Although the peasantry in this area has a long history of cultivating certain seasonal crops, the difference nowadays is that there are new crops with which they have little or no experience, as well as some of the older crops, and that whatever the crop, the idea now is to grow it on as large an area as possible for strictly commercial reasons, and not for domestic consumption. There are other differences as well; such as the diminished per capita land holdings, the greater necessities for cash and capital at all stages of production, the presence of agricultural machinery and chemicals, and new and added channels of credit and state assistance, biased towards certain policies.

Probably the most radical change involved in this process is the cutting down and uprooting of the perennials. This not only demands a great deal of time and effort, since the roots are very deep, but naturally alters the entire pattern of agriculture.

The old pattern (as described in Chapter VII), was one of steady but little work spread fairly evenly over the year. The income, likewise, was patterned into small but regular amounts distributed fairly equally over a twelve month cycle. The plots contained a large diversity of different plants and trees. Not only was there some diversity in the main crops, but there was also a vast array of medicinal and other types of plants and trees used domestically. Furthermore, the labour requirements, in terms both of time and intensity, were such that a single household could easily cope with an area of subsistence size on its own. Finally, and most significantly, the crops cultivated were reasonably suitable to the terrain and climate--particularly the rainfall and drainage capacity.

With the uprooting of the perennials the basis of the old agricultural system is largely destroyed. The land is completely denuded of all trees and shrubs and made ready for the planting of corn, soybeans, beans, tomatoes, or whatever the owner has opted for. Monocrop production becomes far more likely. There is no interplanting and always the one species is planted at a time. The peasants do not plant, for instance, half their plot in corn, and the other half in soybeans. It is always one or the other. Machinery tends to be used by most people for at least one of the stages of production, whereas it is never used in the traditional agriculture, and could not be used. Capital requirements are astronomically increased. Labour inputs are

drastically altered; large inputs of labour over short periods of time replace small but constant inputs of labour over the year's round. Furthermore, the new crops are far more susceptible to flooding and heavy rainfall, and by their very nature, if lost, mean the loss of a substantial amount, if not the entirety of the peasant's investment.

There is, however, a temptation to grow them in place of the old perennials. In the first place it is commonly believed that if all goes well then one will make more money. It requires more work, but, theoretically, one should make more money. It is a way of intensifying labour and certain households will therefore be very tempted to seek in this a solution to their financial problems, not necessarily to maximize for the sake of maximization, but simply to maintain their consumption needs and standards.

Secondly, it is believed, and with good reason I should think, that the cocoa trees are nowhere near as productive as they used to be, due to age and a number of parasitic diseases. The past generation of peasants have not replaced the trees at a rate equal to their decline. This would seem to be a result both of an accelerated rate of pathogenesis amongst the trees, perhaps due mainly to violent changes in the general environment induced by the intensification of the surrounding plantation agriculture, and certain economic changes within the peasant milieu, diminishing the peasants' capacity to attend to their trees in the correct manner. In other words, the trees have deteriorated at a faster rate than was usual, and the peasants' capacity to restore them has also fallen off, compounding the problem.

Faced with this dilemma, and the fact that these perennials require a long waiting period--around four to six years from planting--before

they are in full production, there is naturally a tendency to view the seasonal crops with increasing favour since they yield within a few months of planting. As the banks and credit organizations are loath to make long-term credit available at reasonable interest rates, the seasonal crops become all the more attractive.

Thirdly, the Caja Agraria (Rural Bank) and the local branch of the government's agricultural extension service (ICA) both encourage the peasantry to tear down the perennials and plant the new crops on a commercial scale, and in this they are supported by the U.S.A. agronomists at the C.I.A.T. station near Palmira (as described in Chapter IV). The agricultural extension service has also managed to influence one of the more active branches of the national peasants' association, the Usuarios, and to a certain extent can manipulate opinion through this medium.

Nevertheless, there is an interesting difference to be noted in the response to these inducements, as between men and women. By and large women, especially the elder women, and any women with children, are dogmatically against the change. In respect to their plots they say: "Why? It still gives me something, even if it's only a little." Or else they say: "It gives me a little, but it gives me every two weeks." In this sense they are profoundly more conservative than the men, preferring the surety of a little income, constantly, than the riskier promise of a large windfall intermittently. We must emphasize how universal this attitude is on the part of such women for they are extremely firm in their opinion. Many a young man is torn to pieces with the frustration engendered by his mother's constant refusal to allow the plot to be razed to the ground, and many a husband has to face

up to the fact that his wife will not allow more than a small portion of the household land to be altered in this way. It is the men, especially the young men, who are eager to tumbar, as they call it-- i.e. to fell, or chop down.

One young man kept badgering his mother to allow him to fell all the trees on their land. His father had died twelve years ago leaving two plazas to his family of eight children and his widow. As is customary, she retained half the plot, and the remainder was divided between the eight children, with a smaller section divided for his two illegitimate children who resided elsewhere. The son's argument was that he could make four times as much money from the cultivation of corn than what they were receiving from the cocoa and coffee, but his mother was unimpressed. "Every two weeks I get a little bit of money from my coffee and cocoa. Don't tumba!" After two years, however, the son eventually won her over, to the extent that she allowed him to fell half a plaza.

Another peasant man, aged thirty-five, was explaining that he was sure to make a lot more profits from felling the plot, even though the first two years had proved disastrous. "The old plot was so sick," he added for emphasis, at which point his sixty-four year old mother walked in with a heavy bag of cocoa beans over her shoulder, dumped them on the ground together with a bunch of plantains, saying, "Look! I always come back with something to sell and eat. What do you bring?"

In another case, well known to me, the senior male of the household was a trigeño (light skinned mulatto) and had, on his own, seven plazas. His wife, now in her fifties, had three plazas of her own. Towards the end of his life, the man had been growing the new crops on

four of his plazas, but as one of the daughters and the widow pointed out, with emphasis, his wife never felled her trees and never would. A daughter of this household, aged thirty-three, lives next-door in her own adobe hut with her six children and her male compañero (consensual spouse), aged forty-five, who is father of four of the children. This daughter, Elbia, has no land of her own. Elbia's compañero, Victor, has one plaza of land which he inherited from his mother, but spends most of his time working for a labour contractor, cutting cane on one of the plantations. He is chronically sick and worn out. Elbia spends her time working as a peon, and rents one plaza of land as well. She occasionally works for her mother, as a peon, and receives the standard daily wage from her. Elbia's reaction to felling the old trees was as follows:

It's a lousy idea because then one has to buy even more things from the tienda (small store) than we do already. With the old plot you have firewood, coffee, and chocolate, if you want to make it. There are people who have cut down their trees, people with quite small plots, and they are in real trouble now. They said they were going to make a lot of money sowing corn. But where's their corn? I can't see any! My brother-in-law cut down half his plot, but my sister stopped him from doing any more . . . since she is a woman with family and always needs a little coffee in the mornings for breakfast . . . and, well, it's always there, in the plot, if you keep it like it always was . . .

The women often say that they will die of hunger during the six months that the corn, which would replace the perennials, will take to mature. The young men try to persuade them that they are wrong, since one can obtain a loan from a bank to tide one over the waiting period, but the women remain doubtful.

Those resistant to the change also wisely point out that in a very heavy rainy season the cocoa yields may fall off by anything up to 30%

but that all of the soybeans, for instance, are likely to be lost if the rains come at the wrong time or are heavier than usual.

The local bourgeoisie, the big shopkeepers, professionals, and moneylenders in the town, are all in favour of chopping down the old plots. A black politician of substantial means, for example, is of the opinion that mechanization is a great boon for the area, that the sugar plantations are wonderful, and that modernization of the peasant plots is badly needed. "We have to increase employment, increase--dollars--through exports--for the country as a whole and for progress in general. The problem here is that the people are too lazy. Now, take their grandparents; they were a hard working bunch, but the youth of today is irresponsible. Most of them care about nothing."

A great number of the wealthier townsmen are buying up peasant plots, which accelerates this process. They often work in partnership with wealthy businessmen from Cali. One white who owns a haberdashery in the centre of the town, and began as a pauper, now has four tractors, and several large lots of land around ten plazas each. He rents his tractors to peasants when he has finished working his own lands. Nowadays the tractors work twenty-four hours a day--an extraordinary spectacle is provided by the headlights of the tractors moving through the dense plots at night, making their path to somebody's cleared land, and working their way to and fro across it. This man plants corn and soybeans, but says it's always risky, even with good machinery which plows deep. None of the land, as he says, is adecuada--i.e. adequate, in the sense of being properly drained. The soil is very rich, and will never tire, he says, on account of the thickness of the vegetable

cover (capa vegetal), but still the lack of good drainage makes it always a risk.

In mid-1971 a white man from the Department of Antioquia appeared in one of the peasant neighbourhoods. It transpired that he was going to establish himself on a plot of 1.75 plazas, and convert all of it into a tomatera--a tomato patch. He was in fact being hired as a sharecropper by a tractor salesman from the city of Cali, and had been working in this manner for several years in different parts of the valley. Using local peons he uprooted all the perennials, and proceeded to plant his tomatoes. The seed he used was brought in from Cali, and was imported from California, in the U.S.A., costing 300 pesos per pound. He used a variety of pesticides; some against the ants, which were prolific, and a variety of other chemicals bought from the Rural Bank in Cali. His remarks on his activities are of some interest.

The land here is virgin. It has never been plowed, and is marvelous for agriculture; absolutely marvelous. Also, in comparison with other parts of the valley, where I have worked, there are no really bad plagues as far as tomatoes are concerned. You see this is a new crop for these parts, and there are no bad bugs, as yet. The blacks around here are scared of this type of agriculture. They don't go in for adventures. I had to search a long time for this plot. Not many people wanted to sell, and I had to have a piece of high-lying ground that was well drained, otherwise it would be hopeless.

Machinery

As described in Chapter IV, the use of agricultural machinery has greatly increased over the past ten to fifteen years or so in the valley, and now it is finding its way into peasant agriculture as well. The national agricultural bank, in agreement with the large international

tractor companies, has a special fund set aside to facilitate the importation of agricultural machinery. An executive for the John Deere company notes that between 1958 to 1967 there was a reduction in sales because the government imposed import restrictions. When the ban was lifted, he says, "they sold like mad," and now the company feels that they have just about exhausted their market. They have completed a survey of the valley, and conclude that the market for the next few years will be around 450 new tractors a year, and that they should begin to concentrate on the rich peasant class. To this end they are employing two agronomists and several assistants to tour the valley and supervise credit to such peasants, with instructions on how to cultivate the new crops. In his opinion this is likely to displace a lot of labour, but, as he says, "That's not my business; I'm here to sell tractors!"

In fact, this labour displacement may well improve his business, at least indirectly. The workers on the plantations in the Puerto Tejada region are notorious for their sabotage of tractors. In the month before I spoke with him, this executive had sold four new engine blocks to one of the Puerto Tejada plantations, which apparently is extremely unusual for plantations in other areas. The workers pour sugar into the gasoline tanks, sand into the transmission, and, most commonly, simply unscrew the sump taps, letting the oil drain out. As he puts it, the workers just hate their bosses, and on the plantations in the immediate Puerto Tejada area have no possibility of resorting to strikes because the owners are violently opposed to any labour organization. In nearby plantations, where labour organization is more

feasible, strikes are more frequent, but sabotage, in the opinion of this tractor salesman, is far less.

While machinery is being increasingly employed by some of the peasants, chemical aids are still very uncommon, except in the case of tomatoes, where pesticides are essential. Here again one sees the pattern of household individualism, for if one peasant decides to spray pesticides, and none of the neighbours do, which is the usual case, then the effect of the spray is greatly diminished.

The tractors used by the peasants are usually hired. Only a very few of the peasants actually own a tractor, and if they do so, it is usually a small one without sophisticated equipment. Frequently one finds that those rich peasants who do own one, do so in partnership with some middle class person from the township, and the two of them treat it as a business, making profits out of hiring the machine and driver to poorer peasants who have decided to fell their perennials and cultivate the new crops. One such tractor-owner bought his second-hand, in partnership, for 47,000 pesos. As is customary, he charges 500 to 600 pesos per plaza for preparation of soil and sowing, and claims to have made 20,000 pesos in the first six months.

I.C.A., the government agricultural extension office which encourages peasants to remove their perennials, hires out tractors at a cheaper rate, thereby stimulating the transition to the new mode of cultivation. The slow but steady penetration of these tractors into the peasant sector also encourages the building of roads into the dense plots, or widening the already existing paths.

In the neighbourhood where I spent most of my time, this had the effect of further atomizing the existing households. Prior to the

building of a track wide enough to take the one rich peasant's new tractor, in 1972, the old track, about a metre in width, wound its way from hut to hut. Where huts were built around compounds, the path used to go straight through the compounds. This path served roughly twenty-four households, connecting the neighbourhood to the main road. Hence people were always passing in front of the open doors and through the centres of each other's compounds, observing all that was going on, stopping to pass the time of day, exchanging information, and so on. Once the new track to accommodate the tractor was built, much of this social intercourse ceased, since the new track followed a far less sinuous route and avoided passing directly in front of the huts, or passing through the middle of the compounds. Being far better drained, the new track was more navigable in the wet seasons, when the old path was almost impassable. After a couple of months of disuse the old path was choked with grasses and shrubbery, and few people used it any more. People now pass quickly and silently along the broader path, and have that much less contact with one another. Moreover, merchants buying produce can now enter the neighbourhood in jeeps, and buy directly from the peasants at their plots, bringing the market to the peasants' door, and articulating with each one separately.

The tractor is not only used to plow fields, but also to carry bulky and heavy materials--for example the firewood resulting from the plots chopped down to make way for the new crops, and the odd scraps of furniture of those peasants who are forced to leave the region for lack of land or work. In all of the instances that were observed, the rich peasant whose tractor was being used for this purpose, charged his cousins the regular transport fee, or even a little more. His sons,

who drive and manage the tractor, were treated in the customary manner by the clients, despite the fee, and fed a solid meal for their services--a rather anachronistic handling of the usual reciprocity code, but one totally in keeping with the topsy-turvy exchange relationships promoted by the new machinery and mode of production. Needless to say, the transporting of heavy weights beforehand would have involved at least some cooperation between a number of households, whereas now it is handled by the tractor.

Agricultural machinery is used optionally in the preparation of the soil and in sowing, but is almost always used in the harvesting of soybeans. Even though its use is optional in soil preparation and sowing, most people would prefer to use it in this task also, and yields are supposed to be higher this way. The harvesting of corn is generally done by hand, and the ears are shelled by machinery on the plot. With soybeans, the plants are ripped out of the soil by hand and placed in rows on the ground. Then a large, self-motored machine, somewhat like a tractor, scoops the plants up, strips the grain off the stalks, and deposits it in sacks suspended at the rear end. None of the peasants own a harvesting machine like this, and they are generally hired from the township, complete with driver and his assistant.

Most peasants are agreed that a tractor, plow, and automatic seeder used to prepare the soil and sow, does in one hour what would take five to six man-days of manual labour without machinery. To prepare the average one plaza plot, and sow it, takes around six hours with a tractor, and requires only the tractor driver. To do the same job by hand would take around 25 to 30 persons, working one day each. The normal rate for hiring a tractor, in this area, in 1971-1972, was

around 500-600 pesos per plaza. To have the work done manually by peons, and paying them at the normal rate, would cost anything between 450 and 600 pesos. In other words there is little difference in cost between having the job done by hand or by tractor, and the latter may well be cheaper.

Certainly many of the foremen and owners of the large estates feel that machinery is cheaper, and gives better results. This is not merely an economic calculation, for when some venture to say that machinery is cheaper, they mean it in the wider sense so as to include the problems presented to management by a large labour force, and they feel that these problems are very substantial. But even in the narrower sense of pesos per yield, many are of the opinion that machinery is cheaper than manual labour. The peasantry share this opinion also. However, as we shall see later, the relation between machinery and manual labour is far more complicated than these remarks would imply, and there are situations in which even the large scale commercial farms far prefer to have work done manually than by machine.

Although it is rare to hear invidious comparisons being made as between machinery and manual labour as far as work within the peasant sector is concerned, one often hears bitter comments about the use of machines on the large estates. The following account is typical:

In the cane fields of Canaimo there was a contract offered the workers at the rate of 350 pesos per cuadra (80 x 80 metres), and consisted in the reconstruction of a drainage ditch. But the people already knew exactly what this work would entail, and had no wish to do it for this amount of pay because they thought it far too low. But the owner refused to increase the rate of pay, and thus hired a machine, and did the work better than if we had done it by hand. You know why the people are hungry in Colombia? Because all the presidents are oligarchs and they defend the oligarchy, even when the poor are dying of hunger!

If, in adopting the new crops, the peasants did without tractor-drawn plows, then far larger amounts of labour would be required than are necessary for the traditional crops. But machinery is generally used, and hence the labour requirements for the new crops are only doubled.

This applies as much to corn and beans, as to soybeans, and even more strongly to tomatoes, which are very labour intensive. Here a peasant may choose to have the land plowed by tractor, but even so, the tomato plants require very assiduous treatment; constant hand-weeding, irrigation, and fumigation. A quarter plaza of tomatoes may require as many as from four to six labourers in constant attendance. Moreover, the strategy adopted by the peasants who grow tomatoes, is to maintain a constant production, replanting continuously as the plants stop producing.

Given these characteristics of tomato cultivation, it is very interesting to note that it is the poorer peasants (and I include very much in this category, the class of poor peasants with less than three plazas per household) who tend to grow them, while it is the wealthier peasants who tend to opt for the cultivation of the crops which lend themselves to capital intensive and mechanized farming--soybeans, corn, and beans. In a very real sense, the poor peasants who opt for tomatoes, are persisting in the old style of agriculture, in so far as it still involves a degree of labour intensity and persistent production. The tomatoes are sold by peasant higglers, whereas the other crops go directly to the grain merchants. The outstanding difference such a crop bears with the traditional mode of cultivation, of course, is that tomatoes require a vastly greater amount of capital investment to buy

the plants, the stakes, the portable fumigation sprays, the pesticide, the fertilizer, and the wages of the peons if any are employed, as they usually are.

The cultivation of tomatoes represents quite a different strategy than that usually involved with the other seasonal crops, and this difference in strategy has a social correlate. It is chosen by the poorer peasants, and represents the most feasible way of increasing the intensity of labour for a poor household with a large number of persons, but very little land. In all cases known to me the households that opted for this solution were composed of large numbers of people with tiny plots, a high consumer/worker ratio, and fairly young household chiefs, always males. They all had some legal document to the effect that they owned some land, and could thus borrow money from the banks. However to say that it is the most feasible, does not mean to say that it is always feasible, as later case studies shall reveal. The problem it presents is that it requires too heavy a capital investment for the peasants concerned, and that the technology and ecology are not adequate.

Yields

Most people are agreed that yields per plaza are higher when one uses machinery. The Manual de Costos published by the Caja Agraria in 1967, states that for Colombia as a whole, the average yield per plaza, for corn, is 1.76 metric tons when using machinery, and only 0.64 tons when manual labour is used throughout; a difference of 275%. A very experienced old granero (grain dealer) in the township of Puerto Tejada, a white, who had several lots of land himself and has been systematically

cultivating a variety of crops in the region over the past thirty years, estimates that as regards corn, a peasant using no chemical or mechanical aids, averages around 1.05 metric tons yield per plaza per crop of corn. If machinery is used, but no special seed or fertilizer, this will increase to around 1.65 metric tons, and if specially selected seed, as sold in the town (semilla mejorada), and fertilizer is used, together with excellent drainage, then this will further increase to between 2.25 and 3.75 metric tons. In other words, according to this estimate the maximum difference in yield between the most primitive and the most sophisticated technology, as far as corn is concerned, is the difference between 1.05 metric tons and 3.75 metric tons; a difference of 280%.

This same man expressed the typical attitude towards the hiring of manual labour:

It's impossible! They are all terrible thieves. The person who has workers, the employer who has employees, is nothing but a victim. Everything gets stolen. If you decide to apply fertilizer, for example, then over half the fertilizer is stolen. It's terrible! Every crop requires a watchman, and you have to pay them 20 to 40 pesos a night, and 20 to 30 pesos a day. For corn you need a watchman for the last three months; for soybeans and beans, the last month. Otherwise you are certain to have the crop stolen. Corn needs less attention in general than the others, costs less to produce, but gives less money than the other two. If you have a good watchman, and they are very hard to find since it is usually they who do most of the stealing, then maybe corn is the best of the three.

It is extremely difficult to obtain an accurate idea as to the yields and profits gained on the large scale commercial farms growing these seasonal crops. Owners are generally reluctant to grant this information, if they indeed are aware of it, and there is no guarantee as to their own precision. In turn, official statistics and private surveys are relatively few in number and contain many defects. I have

attempted a fairly rough and ready method of calculation, drawn from a variety of different sources,¹ and have come to the conclusion that the difference in product yield between small peasant farmers and wealthy landowners growing these crops, is of the order of 200% to 250%, in favour of the large landowners.

From these sources it appears that the average net profits on the large scale commercial farms in the Cauca valley are around 800 pesos per plaza of corn, and 1,460 pesos per plaza of soybeans. These are based on 1971 prices and are only rough averages based on yields of 2.18 tons of corn and 1.34 tons of soybeans per plaza. A tabular presentation of these averages and possible maxima is given in Table 10.1.

TABLE 10.1.--Average and maximum yields and profits with corn and soybeans on the non-peasant, commercial farms in the Cauca valley, 1971, according to C.V.C. statistics on yields and costs

Crop	Average yield (metric tons/plaza)	Maximum yield (metric tons/plaza)	Average profit (pesos/plaza)	Maximum profit (pesos/plaza)
Corn	2.18	5.51	797	2,016
Soybeans	1.34	1.80	1,464	2,313

Note:

The derivation of these figures appears in Note No. 1 at the end of this chapter.

At this juncture it will facilitate the succeeding analysis if we draw together various estimates on yields when machinery and modern

technology are used. Since, in the Cauca valley machinery and chemicals tend only to be used systematically at all stages of production by the non-peasant, commercial farms, we can take these estimates to be rough indicators of production for the non-peasant sector of the rural economy.

TABLE 10.2.--Various estimates of average yields for non-peasant, commercial farms in the Cauca valley, 1967-1972 (Metric tons/plaza)

Source	Corn	Soybeans	Beans
Hedley ^a	3.68	—	—
C.V.C ^b	2.18	1.34	0.83
Caja Agraria ^c	1.76	—	0.80
Puerto Tejada Grain dealers	2.25	1.75	0.94

^aHedley, (1969) yield per plaza on field size between six and ten plazas.

^bC.V.C. (Corporación Autónoma Regional Del Cauca), El Valle del Cauca en la economía regional, Cali, 1972, p. 47.

^cCaja de Crédito Agrario Industrial y Minero, Colombia, Manual de Costos, Bogotá, 1967, pp. 20, 22. These figures are for Colombia as a whole, and not specifically for the Cauca valley.

Peasant Experience and Performance with the New Crops

Let us now turn to the actual experiences of a few middle and poor peasant households which have actually made the change from perennials to the seasonal crops. Before analyzing three households in detail, I should mention the fact that I have never found a poor or middle peasant household which has made a success of this transition in

monetary terms. Some ten cases are known to me and all have failed, some catastrophically and others mildly. The immediate and most common cause given by the cultivators in question, was the lack of drainage and heavy rains. While it is true that there were some heavy rains over the two years, it is also true that the owners of perennials were not perturbed.

The basic description of three peasant households which have been cultivating the new seasonal crops appears in Appendix No. 2. We present here the summarized information derived from that description.

The following table (Table 10.3) compares the average yields obtained by all these three households with estimates for non-peasant, commercial farms. The two absolutely disastrous corn crops that occurred with households No. 1 and No. 3 have been excluded.

TABLE 10.3.—Comparison of yields in metric tons per plaza as between three peasant households recently embarked on seasonal crop production, and non-peasant farms

Source	Corn	Soybeans	Beans
Peasant households	0.97 (100%)	0.9 (100%)	0.43 (100%)
C.V.C. estimates of average yields on non-peasant farms, (expressed as a percentage increase over peasant households)	225%	149%	193%
C.V.C. estimates of maximum yields on non-peasant farms	568%	200%	268%
Puerto Tejada grain dealers' estimates for non-peasant farms	321%	194%	219%

In terms of profits/plaza of land, these three peasant households do not compare as unfavourably with the non-peasant farms as the figures for crop yields presented in Table 10.3 would indicate. In fact, if we are to take the C.V.C. figures for non-peasant farms, they are doing somewhat better, though not nearly as well as the possible maxima that can be obtained on the latter (See Table 10.4).

TABLE 10.4.--Comparison of profits per plaza for different crops as between three peasant households and non-peasant commercial farms (Colombian pesos)

Source	Corn	Soybeans	Beans
Peasant households:			
1. Including own labour as a cash cost	848	1,250	797
2. Excluding	1,168	1,545	1,517
C.V.C. based estimates for average profit on non-peasant farms	797	1,464	?
C.V.C. based estimates for maximum profit on non-peasant farms	2,016	2,313	1,826
Puerto Tejada grain dealers' estimates for non-peasant farms	822	1,912	1,496

The basic reason why the profits for these peasants compare well with the non-peasant commercial sector, despite their lower yields of produce per area of land, is that their production costs are so much less, especially, but not only if we assume that the peasants' own household labour should not appear as a cash cost (See Table 10.5). In

the latter case production costs for peasant cultivators are around one half of those for non-peasant cultivators (See Table 10.5).

TABLE 10.5.--Comparison of production costs per plaza as between three peasant households growing seasonal crops and non-peasant commercial farms (Colombian pesos)

Source	Corn	Soybeans	Beans
Peasant households:			
1. Including own labour as a cash cost	1,217	1,833	2,803
2. Excluding own labour as a cash cost	897	1,588	1,283
C.V.C. estimates for non-peasant farms	3,432	2,958	4,382

This applies to costs per kilogram of product as well (See Table 10.6).

TABLE 10.6.--Comparison of production costs per kilogram of product (Colombian pesos)

Source	Corn	Soybeans	Beans
Peasant households:			
1. Including own labour as a cash cost	1.08	1.71	6.52
2. Excluding own labour as a cash cost	0.80	1.44	2.98
C.V.C. estimates for non-peasant farms	1.73	2.41	5.64

The intriguing fact we are thus presented with, is that by utilizing certain factors embedded in the peasant economy and culture, the peasant households can maintain profits per area of land that are more or less equal to the average, or lower average, obtained on the technologically modern and heavily capitalized farms, but that nevertheless they seem incapable of climbing out of debt. Farming as peasants, using only a minimum of modern technological aids and capital, their tonnage yield is low, but by virtue of farming as peasants, using their own labour and the relatively cheap labour of neighbouring peasant peons, often kinsmen and kinswomen, they can do as well as the non-peasant sector as regards money profits. In terms of the material self-interest of the money-lenders, the banks, and the graneros, there is some advantage in this state of affairs since these peasants are much more fully integrated into the money economy than if they were farming in the traditional manner, while at the same time they are also far more dependent on the money lenders and the credit agencies, being perpetually indebted to them. At its worst, this eventually means that the peasant's land passes to the creditor, and the peasant becomes forced to work as a full-time day labourer on the plantations.

Put more abstractly, the volume and number of capital transactions increases, the capital market penetrates more deeply into the peasant sector, the modern economy in general expands, but the peasantry is not better off than before, and probably much worse off. The irony of this situation lies in the fact that were it not for the unusual capacity of the peasant economy to reduce costs in relation to the truly capitalized farming sector, there would be economic chaos all round, affecting peasants, financiers, and grain dealers alike. It is largely because

of their ability to exploit themselves more fully and apparently more efficiently than can the large scale commercial farms exploit its hired labour, that the peasantry has locked itself into this situation where everybody profits but themselves.

In comparison with the traditional mode of peasant agriculture, the peasants who have opted for the seasonal crops are intensifying their labour, as well as capital. Their degree of indebtedness has increased astronomically, and the annual net return per unit of land cultivated tends to be lower. Paradoxically, as their capital outlay increases, as both a consequence and cause of the transition from the traditional to the modern mode of agriculture, so their cash return per area worked decreases. Encouraged by persons and agencies external to their culture, they have gambled and lost. Previously poor but relatively independent, despite their mainly growing cash crops, they are now still poor, probably even poorer, and heavily dependent on the external market to a degree they never were before.

The differences in labour requirements and monetary returns between the traditional and modern modes of agriculture in the peasant sector are presented in the following table (See Table 10.7).

The seasonal crops require almost twice as much labour and give a smaller net return per day of labour. Our average figures from the three peasant households show that even on their tiny lots, peons had to be employed in fairly large numbers. There would be no necessity for this on a small sized traditional holding, up to around three plazas in size. It could well happen, but there would be no necessity as there is with the modern crops. For every 100 man-days of labour expended by the household on the seasonal crops, 64 additional man-days

of labour were expended by hired peons. The transition to modern modes of cropping has thus meant that even the land-poor peasants, and not just the rich peasants, now have to hire labour, if they embark on these crops. Consequently, peasants who stood as equals to one another, now will stand in the relation of employer to employee. With the capital loaned by the banks, the grain dealers, and the government agencies, some poor peasants and some middle peasants will now be hiring their neighbours' labour on a scale enormously greater than ever could occur with the traditional mode of agriculture. With this added impetus to the commercialization of neighbourhood and kinship relations, further atomization and tension is likely to follow.

TABLE 10.7.--Comparison of labour requirements and net returns as between traditional and modern cultivation in the peasant sector on holdings less than three plazas

	Traditional	Modern
Annual labour requirements per plaza in man-days	24-47	81
Annual number of man-days of household labour per household plaza of land	24-47	49
Annual net return in pesos per day of household labour	94-185	64

But it is not only the amount of labour that is important in this case, but also its pattern and rhythm of utilization. More peons are required per unit of area than with the traditional crops and they tend to be employed in larger numbers for shorter periods of time.

Moreover, the contracts are rarely "por día." One observes how critical this question of labour can be, when in the case of household No. 3, with its fourth crop, there was insufficient capital to employ peons to do the required amount of weeding. The household increased its labour output above its customary levels, but still the work was incomplete, and the subsequent harvesting was made most difficult. Shortage of capital thus had a critical effect, far above that on the traditional plots.

When the wealthier peasants, and in particular that category we have termed rich peasants, turn to seasonal crops, they usually plant on a larger scale and tend to use more machinery and technical aids than the poorer peasants we have just considered. The richest peasant in the neighbourhood, Jose María, a middle aged man with around fifty plazas of land, has been slowly but steadily increasing his area under seasonal crops, to the point where he has some ten plazas cultivated in this manner. He is part-owner of a tractor, which his sons drive (he is incapable of doing this), the other owner being a white from the township, and when they are not using the tractor they hire it out to poorer peasants in the vicinity. When this peasant had to harvest around four plazas of corn in February 1971, he employed 37 peons for almost two days.

He was very much the chief of operations, controlling everyone. Even the local representative of the National Populist Party, a usually vociferous supporter of equality and peasants' rights, was as meek as a lamb. This man would frequently say, "The problem with Colombia is that there is too much imperialism, poverty, and egoism." But in response to Jose María's command, "Don Marcello, why haven't

you got your shoes on? Go home and get them because I need you to shift this trailer!", he scuttled off without a word. Around two-thirds of the peons were indebted to Jose María for loans of cash he has made to them over the preceding months, and the same proportion are related to him as cousins, mostly of the second degree.

Of these 37 peons, eleven were under the age of 15 years, and 23 were females. Five of the adult women brought some of their children with them to help. These peons came from 20 different households, 13 of which were female headed. Seventeen of the peons came from the immediate neighbourhood (vereda), 12 came from the adjoining vereda, and 8 came from the nearby village of Villarica.

There were two foremen, both sons of Jose María's, but sons who lived in other households with their mothers. The peons were paid "por tarea" at the rate of 2.5 pesos per bulto (sack) of corn ears picked. Most adults managed to pick between 6 and 8 bultos a day, giving them between 15 to 20 pesos a day. Most of them came from households with only 0.5 to 1.0 plazas of land.

Elbia Biafera's day went like this. She woke up around 4:30 A.M. Her youngest daughter aged two was sick all night and awake most of the time with a gastro-intestinal illness and copious diarrhea, and Elbia had to attend to her constantly. Her compañero, aged forty-five, sleeps alone in the other room of their two-roomed hut, and was more or less undisturbed. He rises between 3:00 and 3:30 A.M. depending on whether Elbia is going to make his breakfast. Usually he makes his own, and then walks off to work as a cane cutter for a labour contractor, who picks up his labourers several kilometres away. Cooking is lengthy since they only use wood as a fuel; wood which they

obtain from her compañero's tiny plot of land. Having fed her six children, she left five of them with her widowed mother who lives nearby, as did her sister Elicenia, and the two of them walked together with the three children who were assisting them to Jose María's corn.

They arrived at the plot at around 7:00 A.M., and each person began working separately, severing the ears of corn from the plant with a short pointed stick of bamboo, throwing it on the ground behind them, and breaking down the shoulder high plants as they went along. The two foremen, on horseback, would supervise the picking and take the sacks to the side of the track from where they would be picked up by tractor. As the sun rises the chatter ceases, and each person works quickly and quietly on their own in different parts of the field.

Shortly after 11:00 A.M. she returns home to prepare lunch. She collects the children from her mother's house and places a pot of rice on the hearth. Her compañero buys around twelve pounds of rice on Saturdays and this lasts them until Friday evening. He has to buy his food from the shop owned by the labour contractor for whom he works. She puts a lit candle stub under the wood to speed up the fire, since she wants to get back to work as quickly as possible, and breast feeds her youngest child while standing over the pot of rice. As soon as the rice is well under way she cuts some plantains and fries them in some old fat, all the time directing her scampering and yelling children to gather in firewood, wash clothes, bring dishes, and so on.

From the distance one hears the sirens from the plantations announcing the change in shift for the factory workers, and the signal for midday. "Ah! los doce--ya, caramba." ("Ah! twelve o'clock--

already, damn."). No blessings are announced here as usually occurs in peasant households at midday, for here everything is going at top speed so she can do her two jobs at once, and get back to the plot by 1:00 P.M. They eat standing and shovel the food down with their hands. Elbia soaks the dishes giving her baby a few more sucks at the breast, and somehow has everything ready to rejoin her sister who comes by. They set off in a hurry for they are late.

One gathers from this account some of the features which are associated with this type of peonage, particularly the individualism, the speed, and the pressure placed upon the women peons. Despite the fact that labour requirements per plaza of land are somewhat higher, the fact that the job has to be done quickly, and on a large scale, means that peons will be collected from a wide area. We see how in this case of Jose Maria's corn, that around one-third of the peons came from another neighbourhood, and that an additional one-quarter of them came from as far away as the village of Villarica, some one and half hour's walk distant. Thus, despite the increase in labour requirements, and hence theoretically in jobs and income for the surrounding poor peasants, in practice this is not necessarily the case, since outsiders are brought in to get the job done on time.² If rich peasants throughout the area are all doing the same thing, then the labour requirements throughout the area will increase, but given the specific requirements of the tasks, this means that peons will have to travel further from home, or else not work. In the case of the women with children, as our above account illustrates, distance from the home is a crucial factor on account of the necessity of child-care. Elderly women would seem the logical choice for the caring of small children

while the mother is out working, but in fact even the elderly women, with only few exceptions, are engaged in tasks that take them out of the home for periods of time that make them unlikely candidates for baby-sitting. Hence the theoretical increase in labour requirements is mitigated by other factors of a technical and sociological order, and the amount of work available to a peon, particularly a female peon, may well remain the same or be even less. Added to this, the work will tend to be available far less constantly, and will generally be of a more arduous and commercialized character.

Hence to date, the introduction of new crop varieties has been generally quite unfavourable for the peasant who cultivate them, except for the rich peasants. Turnover of capital has markedly increased, but the middle and poor peasant cultivators of these crops are receiving less than before, and remain heavily indebted, despite the fact that their profits per unit area are not dissimilar to the large scale commercial farms, who make large profits and are constantly expanding. The peasant plots are stripped of all the components that used to play an important part in subsistence, such as plantains and firewood, and the income and spending patterns change radically, since harvesting occurs only two to three times a year as compared with the constant trickle of income from the traditional plots. Whereas two or three generations before, the growing of seed crops like corn would have involved labour-sharing between households, which can cope quite well on their own individually, as regards the perennials, the pattern now is to hire peons and pay them wages. Even poor and middle peasants, cultivating a mere plaza or fraction thereof, have to hire labour to grow the new crops. Hence the degree of commercial

intercourse between households, buying and selling each others' labour, increases greatly in comparison with the traditional agriculture. Moreover the rhythm and requirements of the new peonage throws a new and added strain onto household dynamics, making it more difficult, on balance, for women peons to obtain work, or satisfactory work.

Finally, a new division of labour by sex tends to occur, since it is the men (particularly the younger men), who opt for the seasonal crops. Whereas before both men and women equally grew the old perennials, now one finds that women are increasingly doing the latter, while men tend to the former. This division involves not only a new technology, income and spending pattern, and new labour hiring practices, on the part of the men growing the seasonal crops, but requires a more intensive integration with modern financing organizations, the banks and the governmental agrarian agencies. The adult males are thereby tied far more securely to the outside world of commerce and the state, than are the women. In addition, with the exception of tomatoes, which seem spectacularly unsuccessful, the higgling women are deprived of their local sources of produce, and hence their accustomed livelihood.

The overall effect of these technological changes is hard to summarize at this early date. It would appear that as far as the middle and poor peasants are concerned, that impoverishment increases and that the pattern of poverty changes, affecting sex roles, household structure, and integration with the outside world of commerce, finance, and the state. In the not so long run, it is very likely that the peasant's land and labour will pass either to the rich peasants, or to the large estates and plantations.

A Final Note

Given the enthusiasm by agrarian agencies, grain dealers, banks, and male peasant landowners for the new seasonal crops, it comes as a surprise to note that the wealthiest store-owner in the township of Puerto Tejada, who is also the political chief of the entire region, has started to plant perennials in place of seasonal crops. With a generous loan and technical assistance from the largest of the local cocoa processing companies, Luker (who will lend him up to 10,000 pesos per hectare), he is planting some sixty plazas with cocoa and plantains in place of his corn and soybeans. He says that there are too many problems with machinery, whether you own or hire, and that cocoa and plantains are far more profitable. By the end of the fourth year he expects to be making a net profit of around 10,000 pesos per plaza, far more than for any other crop in the valley, including sugar cane, and he will have no need for machinery or additional loans of capital. He is able to do this on account of his wealth, which allows him to spend three to four years waiting for the perennials to mature, and because he has access to large amounts of credit.

Thus, as peasants become more involved in the seasonal crops, turning away from their traditional perennials, so it appears that at least some of the wealthy townsmen are moving in the opposite direction. As history reverses itself in this manner, it seems that the peasantry is as likely to be cleared off the land as are their old and sick perennials.

NOTES TO CHAPTER X

1. Yields, Production Costs, and Profits on Non-Peasant Farms in the Cauca Valley

TABLE 10.8.--Average yields and production costs for corn, soybeans, and beans, produced on non-peasant, commercial farms in the Cauca valley; 1969 and 1971

Crop	Average yield in kgms/plaza 1969	Average production costs per plaza (pesos)		Average production costs per kgm (pesos) 1971
		1969	1971	
Corn	2,180	2,426	3,432	1.73
Soybeans	1,344	1,984	2,958	2.41
Beans	833	2,683	4,382	5.64

Source: C.V.C (Corporación Autónoma Regional del Cauca), Departamento de Estudios Económicos, El Valle del Cauca en la economía nacional, Informe No. 72-17, September 1972, (Cali) pp. 47-9.

TABLE 10.9.--Average price to produce of corn and soybeans; 1965, 1969, and 1971 (in pesos per metric ton)

Crop	1965	1969	1971
Corn (Average of both yellow and white varieties)	1,065 ^a	1,550 ^a	1,940 ^b
Soybeans	1,580 ^c	—	3,300 ^b

^a Estimate calculated from 1966 price as stated in the Caja de Crédito Agrario Industrial y Minero, Colombia, Manual de Costos, Bogotá, 1967, p. 85, and corrected according to changing prices index in the Banco de la República, XLV y XLVI Informe Anual del gerente a la junta directiva, Bogotá, 1969, pp. 194-5.

^b Personal observation in the field.

^c I.C.A. (Instituto Colombiano Agropecuario) and Sección de Economía Agrícola, Universidad de Valle, Colombia, Estadísticas Agropecuarias, 1950-1966, Cali, 1968, p. 80.

TABLE 10.10.--Average net profits to non-peasant, commercial farms in the Cauca valley, for corn and soybeans at 1971 prices, according to C.V.C. statistics on yields and costs

Crop	Pesos/plaza
<u>Corn</u>	
Gross income	4,229
Production costs	3,432
Net income	797
<u>Soybeans</u>	
Gross income	4,422
Production costs	2,958
Net income	1,464

Note;

These figures are for one crop season only. In order to derive an annual return, the corn figures should be multiplied by two, and the soybeans by three.

A survey of twenty farms in the valley, between the municipios of Florída and La Union, in 1967, revealed the following yields of corn.

TABLE 10.11.--Yields of corn according to farm size, 1967

Field Size in plazas	Yield in metric tons/plaza
<1	2.62
-5	3.01
-10	3.68
>10	4.57

Source: Douglas Hedley, "An Economic Analysis of Corn Production in the Cauca Valley, Colombia," Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Michigan State University, 1969, p. 44.

The results of this survey of twenty farms, clearly shows the difference in yields proportional to farm size.

2. In fact José María has recently offered small plots and accommodation to two mestizo families from the Department of Antioquia. They will work almost full-time for him as resident peons. He claims that they are harder working than his surrounding cousins, and are more experienced in the new crops.

CHAPTER XI

WAGE LABOUR IN THE PLANTATIONS AND LARGE COMMERCIAL FARMS

Both peasants with land, and townspeople without land, work as manual labourers on the large farms and plantations and the wages are generally far higher than can be obtained by working as a peon in the peasant sector.

As analyzed in preceding chapters, the general tendency throughout the area is one in which landed peasants are being forced more and more to work as wage labourers on the plantations or large commercial farms. While a substantial minority of peasants are already spending most of their time at this, it appears as though an increasingly larger proportion of their children will have to gain their living in this manner. Hence, in describing this type of labour we are not merely documenting an important part of the contemporary peasant way of life, but one that more and more of the peasant offspring seem destined to occupy full-time.

The attitude of the peasantry towards this type of labour is ambivalent, and leans towards hostility. We see this latter aspect very clearly in the remarks of a group of peasants, both men and women, who were contemplating invading hacienda and plantation lands and staking out their own plots upon it--a very radical and militant action. In the first place, there is hostility towards the presence

of the rich landowners, and in particular the ubiquitous sugar cane.

A broadsheet prepared by the aforementioned peasants reads in part:

. . . the peasants reject the cane because it is the raw material of slavery of the peasant people. The peasants are disposed towards changing the cane for crops that can be eaten here--like plantains, cocoa, coffee, rice, potatoes, and corn. The cane only helps the rich and the government who buy more and more tractors to give luxury to themselves and their families. Peasants! The cane degenerates one; turns one into a beast, and kills! If we don't have land we cannot contemplate the future well-being of our children and our families. Without land there is no health, no culture, no education, nor security for us, the marginal peasants. In all these veredas one finds the minifundias of the majority of the peasants threatened by the terrible green monster, which is the great cane, the God of the landlords.

We emphatically reject the cultivation of cane for the following reasons:

1. The bad faith that these captains show by flooding our parcels of land with the water they use for their cane.
2. Even more; the fumigation that does damage to the peasant crops leaving us in the most tremendous misery, paving the way for them to send in their comisionistas (agents) to buy up our land.
3. The Holguins took our lands from us for this purpose. Still there exist ancient people born at the beginning of the century who can physically narrate the imperialist history of these señores landlords. The holdings of our forefathers are now concentrated into great latifundia reducing the recent-born to the worst misery.

Peasant enmity towards the plantations is extended towards the people who work for them, particularly the truly landless townswelling proletariat. Below is a sample of the opinions one commonly hears about plantation workers, from peasants.

1. They are our worst enemies.
2. They come from other parts of Colombia--from the coast, from Patia, from Antioquia, etc.
3. They are more faithful to the empresa (plantation) than anything else.
4. They are swollen-headed--proud--because they have jobs with the empresa.

5. They have a different mentality because they have no land; they have sold it or left it.
6. All they think about is how to flatter the managers of the empresa so that they can get better and better jobs.

All this has a solid political dimension. One also finds an attitude that is antagonistic to the work rhythms required by the plantations and large estates. As the peasants say, it is "too obligatory" (demasiado obligatorio).

In the village of Villarica, for example, it has always been the custom for the people to drink and dance on Sunday evenings, and rest on Mondays. Yet the plantations are geared towards a different work week, beginning on Mondays. Nevertheless, many people persist with the old custom and do not work on Mondays, and therefore do not work as afiliados.

A typical story from a peasant man in his thirties goes as follows. He comes from a middle peasant household and lives in the village of Villarica. He had nothing to do and his friends told him that there was work available weeding sugar cane for a labour contractor. He went along and the estate supplied him with a new pala which he sharpened and then began work. They were paying him eight pesos a row, but "Oh! The surcos (rows) were terribly long--even longer than they are on Juan Caicedo's lot. The sun got hotter and hotter and the end of the row seemed further away than ever. It was boring. After about ten metres I threw down the pala and walked home . . . better to sit and relax at home with a few pesos less and be a bit poorer than go through all that!"

The children are very class conscious, especially the children in the towns. One finds boys aged around ten talking constantly about

the ricos (the rich), and how they would like to kill the largest of the shop owners. They talk with glee about the fun they had throwing stones into one of the large shop's windows, when it was on fire. One small boy, the son of near-starving landless workers, had this to say: "Ah, that Pablo Mejia (a white from Caldas who owns a large shop), he asked me one day to shift a sack for him outside his shop and offered me one peso. One peso! I wouldn't do that for one peso . . . maybe for four. That sin verguenza (shameless one)."

Nevertheless 25% of the economically active peasants do in fact work on the large estates, and almost one-third of these persons are afiliados--permanently employed workers on the plantations. If we construct a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 representing the fact that all household workers (other than women in domestic duties) work on the large estates, and 5 representing the fact that none of the household workers are thus engaged, we can construct the following table (See Table 11.1).

Generally speaking, the more land per household member, the less the degree of occupational involvement with the large estates, and this coincides with female headship of the household and lesser number of people per household.

Unexpectedly, the group most involved with labouring on the large estates has a lower consumer/worker ratio and more land per capita than two of the subsequent three groups, but the average income per household worker is not any greater. Assuming the accuracy of the raw data this would tend to indicate that these household workers are not in fact working at their full potential. While their main occupation is in the large estate sector, they are not necessarily working full

TABLE 11.1.--Comparison of peasant households according to their degree of occupational involvement with the large estates

Degree of Involvement ^b	Number of Households	Average consumer Worker ratio	Average income per worker ^a	Land per capita (plazas)	Number of persons per household	Ratio of male headed households to female ones
2	6	1.11	61.0	0.23	9.8	5:1
3	6	1.36	73.3	0.06	7.17	5:1
4	10	1.22	58.1	0.15	8.40	9:1
5	12	1.22	78.0	0.74	5.25	3:9

^a pesos/week

^b An index of 1 represents maximum involvement, while 5 represents no involvement.

time, and hence their income level remains at about the same as the other groups with less land per capita and higher consumer/worker ratios.

As regards the labour force of the large estates, there is a triadic structure of groups.

First of all there are the afiliados, a sort of aristocracy of labour receiving a daily minimum wage plus increments proportional to the amount of work done, social security payments, some security of tenure, bonuses, and sometimes free clothing and tools. These are practically all men, and most of them live either in the villages or in the towns, or else in camps and settlements around the estate's headquarters.

Secondly, there is a group of iguazos who live as peasants close to the hacienda or section of the plantation. These tend to be adult men and boys, but there is a small proportion of women as well. They live on their plots along the edges of the estates, the roadsides, or the river banks, and in this way the peasant groups and the bordering estate form a symbiotic relationship with each other.

Thirdly, there is a large group of iguazas; women and their children who live in the towns or villages and have no land.

All the iguazos and iguazas are essentially day labourers with no security of tenure, no basic minimum wage, and no organizing rights. They are recruited either by the estate management directly, or by intermediaries called labour contractors, and the latter is more common than the former. While the labour contractor is considered to be a more efficient way of recruiting and managing labourers, the estate managers are often irked by their profit margins and the fact

that the work contracted for is often done badly. Hence, some estate managers, particularly those with extensive local knowledge and personal contacts, prefer to recruit directly themselves even though this is a bothersome business. Many townswomen who work as labourers on the estates also favour such direct recruitment, since they have had bad experiences with labour contractors who are notorious for combining lax business organization with unscrupulous morals, and have been known to flee the district with the wages of the work force in their own pockets.

The calculation of wages is very complicated. The iguazos may be given either a daily rate or a piece rate, but will be quickly fired if, when working on a day rate, they do not work to the standard set by the overseer. When working on a piece rate they are usually free to do as much or as little as they wish, and a highly motivated worker can often earn double the day rate, if she or he wishes to really push themselves. On the other hand, the worker may decide to quit work early after working hard, and return home or just lie around waiting for transport back to the town. It should be realized that the mode of recruitment, as far as large gangs are concerned, is not restricted to certain persons or a certain number of persons. The word is spread around the town and the area, from mouth to mouth and over the public address system attached to the outside of the cinema in the township of Puerto Tejada. As many people as feel interested turn up at the pick-up point where transport is supplied, or else at the field itself. The daily rate tends to be a little higher than that offered peons in the peasant sector.

The afiliados are legally entitled to a basic wage per week, and this may be increased according to the amount of work they actually accomplish, depending on the type of job. For example, in the cutting and loading of cane, the digging of earth, the weeding of fields, the cleaning of irrigation ditches, and the sowing and re-sowing of cane, a labourer gets paid by the amount done, on top of the basic minimum. However, the workers are not free to come and go as they wish. They have to arrive punctually and have to stay until the completion of the day around 5:00 P.M. If they are late, or leave early, then they are likely to be suspended for a few days without pay, and if this continues, they may be sacked. These workers put in a nine hour work day (exclusive of travelling time), five and a half days a week, which amounts to some fifty hours a week, while a peon working a full week on the traditional peasant plots on a "per day" pay basis, works around seven hours a day and forty hours a week, if they in fact work the full week. Furthermore, the work in the large estates is considered to be far more difficult and energy consuming.

Peasants point out that afiliado work is much more closely supervised than work in the peasant plots. As they say it is "much more obligatory" than in the peasant sector. One is constantly being spurred on and checked by the foreman, and if the work is done slowly or sloppily then the foreman will report them to the managers and they may be sacked. Although the wage rate appears higher from a variety of perspectives, the peasants claim that the work turns out to be far more exacting on a daily basis than what they are accustomed to. They demonstrate that a weeder employed as an afiliado is expected to cover one-third of a plaza per day, while on average in the traditional

peasant plots a peon covers around one-tenth of a plaza. It is true that this peon will receive only around 100 pesos a week, but then the degree of toil involved is considerably less.

Cane cutting is the most lucrative task available. The cutters receive between 8 to 10 pesos per ton cut, and average around 3 to 5 tons a day.

Only men are given jobs cutting and loading cane, and these men are mostly coastal immigrants, since although local peasants will seek work in the estates, they consider cane cutting to be far too strenuous and unpleasant, and chose it only as the last resort.

Although all types of work in the large estates is done by gangs, the workers are paid individually and there is hardly any team-work practiced. The nearest approach to group cooperation, consciously organized by the workers themselves, is the manguala relationship in which two cane cutters form a partnership and cut together, sharing the proceeds thus obtained. This is quite rare. In the words of the workers it means that "one is a good friend; they drink together and they get women together." On a rough estimate only 12 cutters out of every 100 form such a partnership.

The work force as a whole is finely divided into many isolated compartments. The plantations themselves are divided into separate administrative units termed "section," each with its own legal corporative status, management, and separate labourers. Task specialization is also institutionalized--cane cutters, cane loaders, earth movement, ministra (weeding), planting, fumigators, and so on. Workers are also divided according to whether they are afiliados or iguazos, and each of these tend to regard themselves separately depending on

which plantation, section, or labour contractor they work for. This structure, plus the fact of enmity and rivalry between landless workers and peasants with land, acts to fractionate the working class. There is no common channel within the occupational structure along which common grievances can run.

Labour Contractors

The recent evolution of the labour contractor system owes much to the desire of the estate owners to reduce labour problems; workers' militancy and high wage bills. But it would be naive to imagine that this is solely the outcome of the owners' desires, since the system of labour contracting has a long history stretching back for over a century at least, and the basic principles on which it rests are deeply embedded in the local culture.

The system is simple. An estate foreman and a labour contractor settle on a price for a certain job, and the labour contractor then gets the job done by paying labourers and keeping the balance himself. It is a very commercial and very individualized arrangement. There is no idea of gross work or profit sharing. In essence it means that the labour contractor is making a profit from the recruiting, organizing, and selling of other peoples' labour. Usually the large farm, and certainly the plantation, will have its own overseer present at the work site in addition to the contractor himself; thus in practice the contractor is being supervised as much as the workers under him, and while he is held responsible for the management and payment of the workers, in fact the basis of the work organization rests with the management of the estate.

The labour contractors are an essential part of the labour system for the estates, since it is through their services that the estates recruit half or more of their labour, and the labourers are so organized that much of the danger associated with large trade unions is removed. Particularly in the case of the large commercial farms growing crops other than sugar cane, and the colono farms growing cane for the mills, there is the added advantage that they can obtain large numbers of labourers for short periods of time in accordance with their sharply fluctuating labour requirements. Through the labour contractor system, such farms can arrange to have thirty to sixty workers, for example, for three days, and then fall back on their very small number of afiliados to carry out the day to day maintenance until the next bout of intensive labour falls due. In short, the very crops, the technology, and the commercial scale on which they are produced, are all conducive to a system such as the labour contractors organize.

Some labour contractors are very wealthy men, owning a car or truck, a store, several houses, refrigerators and perhaps have several concubines. They will have from 50 to 120 men working for them at any one time. Usually such men have secure contracts with the sugar plantations and specialize in one task, such as cutting and loading, or movimiento de tierra--earth moving. For the main part, such men are ex-peasants of local origin, and of Afro-American stock.

At the other extreme, one finds very poor labour contractors who can barely be distinguished from the ordinary day labourer. These men will have very few workers, no more than around four to ten, and are definitely considered to be of the same class as the labourers

they hire. A mother of five, an immigrant from the Pacific coast who lived alone with her children in the township of Puerto Tejada in desperately poor circumstances, often worked for a labour contractor of this type. When asked why she did not complain more about her low salary, and the fact that payment was often grossly delayed, her reply was: "Well . . . what can he do? He is poor, just like us. He is conscious (consciente) of us workers . . . He lends us money . . . for the children; one peso here, one peso there . . . so, he is poor, too, but he lends money in this way. He is poor, but very charitable." By and large there is not much hostility expressed against labour contractors of whatever scale. They may be abused if they pay irregularly or run away with the wages, but qua labour contractors, they are denigrated by very few people. In the main, such men are closely linked with the populace through kinship and long-established neighbourhood ties, and it is precisely because of these links that they are effective as labour recruiters. In this sense they are the crucial linch-pins between the estate managers and the populace at large. Overall, their function is to tie the peasants and townspeople to the estates by conjoining personalistic ties to strictly commercial ones, and the pattern thereby formed is an intensely atomized one; a score or so large farms and four plantations, 200 or so labour contractors, and a few thousand workers moving from one contractor and one job site to another.

Don Tomás: A Small Peasant Labour Contractor

Tomás lives in the countryside close to where he was born in a two-roomed thatch hut with his de facto wife and nine children. Seven

of these children are from this union, and two are from his wife's previous union. The eldest child is aged twenty-three, and the youngest is one and a half. Tomás has a son from an earlier union, but this child usually lives with his paternal grandmother--i.e. Tomás' mother--a few hundred yards distant.

Tomás' de facto wife has no land. He has 1.5 plazas. In 1960, aged twenty-two, he went to work as an afiliado for a sugar plantation ten kilometres away. He worked for two years as an assistant on a tractor, and eventually learned to drive one himself. He left this job at the end of two years, and with the cesantía (retirement bonus made up of weekly deletions from the pay check) rented a plaza of land for two years. Feeling that this was not enough, he returned to plantation work in 1963, this time working as a tractor driver. He left after eighteen months and with the cesantía from this job, plus the earnings from his land, he was able to start a small shop (tienda) in the village of Villarica. He lost money in this, and in 1968 decided to leave the region altogether and travelled alone to the nation's capital, Bogatá, where he eventually got a job in a factory, which lasted one year. On returning to his plot and family, he rented another four plazas and worked full-time in his own plots, cultivating cocoa, coffee and plantains. He was living in his maternal home up till 1960, and with his present compañera (de facto wife) since 1969.

In 1971 he decided to relinquish three of the five plazas he was renting, and clear half a plaza of the land he owned in order to grow tomatoes. He borrowed 3,000 pesos from one bank at an interest rate of 14% per annum, and another 11,000 pesos from the Caja Agraria at 8% interest. He brought in his eleven year old son from his mother's

house in order to help him work, and constantly hired between two to four peons a day.

Now, one year later, his tomatoes have all been washed out and he owes the bank 20,000 pesos at an annual interest rate of 24% (which includes penalty rates). While his drains were quite adequate for his plot, the regional drainage system as a whole is so inadequate that when the heavy rains came, his own were of no avail. He has let another half plaza of his land in order to get some cash, but with debts such as his, there seems no real solution.

He had a friend working as a foreman in a section of one of the sugar plantations, and he asked him to send word if ever there was a chance of making money as a labour contractor. This friend eventually sent a letter and now Tomás works as an afiliado for the plantation, in the capacity of a labour contractor. This means that he is employed as a permanent worker with all the rights and privileges, but gets paid according to set tasks, "contracts," decided a week in advance by the foreman. It is then up to him to get the job done as best he can, and for this he then personally hires those of his neighbours who are willing.

Tomás makes very little; 120 to 150 pesos a week. He cannot bargain intensely with the foreman for he fears losing his job. He employs around four people a week, his brother-in-law and three others. They try to keep the numbers down, so that the per capita income is as high as possible, but still the income is paltry. He takes in only a little more money than they do, and realizes there is no chance of paying off his enormous debt and fears that the bank will take the last of his land. Once he used to talk of making 40,000 pesos every four

months from his tomatoes, but the excursion into the new commercial crops has instead forced him into selling his labour, rather than tomatoes, and the labour of his kinsmen and neighbours as well.

Don Chu Chu: A Large Labour Contractor

This man aged thirty-eight has had a contract arrangement with a sugar plantation for over two years. He employs between thirty to eighty men depending on the size of the contracts offered him each week, and he is wealthy, stout, glowing with enthusiasm and pride, and the owner of a shop, a dance hall, and many plots of land.

His opportunity came three years ago when he was working as an afiliado for a small plantation on which the unionized workers were preparing a strike over wages. The owners of the plantation retaliated by firing the organizers, and splitting the plantation into two sections. They then organized the work force on the labour contractor principle, instead of the permanent workers, and Chu Chu became the contractor for movimiento de tierra.

He lives in the township of Puerto Tejada and men come constantly into his shop asking for work. Like other contractors of his scale, Don Chu Chu usually demands that his workers buy their remesa (weekly rations) from him, and offers them goods on credit. He pays them by piece rates, not by daily rates, and on Saturday afternoon they line up in front of one of the barred windows at the side of his house while he slowly goes over the accounts and passes over the money. This procedure can last for hours, and the men become very belligerent, but never forget to treat him with outward signs of respect. The scene is tense. Agreement is rare and each man claims he is being

done out of pay. They act tough; as if they don't argue and criticize then they will be cheated. A man stands at the bars, arguing. He says he didn't have lunch at the camp kitchen that day; he dug twice as much that afternoon; he didn't buy so much on credit the other day, and so on. Then he lurches away from the window as if to say he has had enough of this nonsense, then wheels around and darts back: "Look don, look here! Pay now then and we'll be quits." And the innumerable scraps of paper are shuffled once again, and the next man steps up.

The manager of one of the sections of this plantation, a white from Palmira who is fond of fine horses, often rides to Chu Chu's store where he is treated to free aguardiente (brandy) and all manner of ribaldry. Any workers around will attend to his horse immediately. As he gets drunker the manager slaps Chu Chu (a good foot taller than he) over the shoulders and remarks what a buck he is, at which Chu Chu grins shamefacedly. Apart from his legally married wife, from whom he has six children, Chu Chu has five concubines living in different parts of the countryside, and four of these bear children of his, as well as from other men. Three of these women also work for Chu Chu by administering plots of land that he has scattered over the area near their respective houses, and one of them works in his shop.

Three of Chu Chu's four full siblings live in the countryside in or near the casa materna (the "maternal house"). One of them works for him administering two plots of his, and they share the proceeds equally. Apart from this link, however, there is very little personal contact, and neither his siblings nor his elderly mother receive any frequent, systematic aid from him.

Don Pedro Barato: A Medium Sized Contractor
for Commercial Farms

"Soy barato, pero pago"--"I'm cheap, but I pay!"--is the motto that don Pedro has unwillingly adopted in response to the townswomen nicknaming him Pedro Barato (Peter Cheap). The women claim he pays very little, but as don Pedro points out, at least he always comes up with cash on pay-day, unlike many other contractors.

His specialty is mobilizing workers, mainly women and children from the town, to work in the large scale commercial farms, and he is renowned for the care he takes in supervising the work done. For this and other reasons he prefers to employ women and children, because in his opinion they are easier to discipline and will work for lower wages. This is a common opinion throughout the region; women are más mansa--more tame and gentle--and work better than men. Despite there being solid cultural reasons why women might thus compare with men, although this is assuredly less true of the Afro-American women than the whites or Indians, there are also solid economic reasons for such "tameness" since the majority of these women are in fact completely dependent on don Pedro's wages for the welfare of their children whose fathers generally live outside the maternal house and offer little basic support.

Pedro lives in the centre of the town with his wife and three children. He has one male foreman who constantly lounges about the house, and a stable core of women workers who themselves send word out to other women when more are required. He hires a truck to take the gang from field to field, and he stands in the shade of the truck watching their work, and giving orders to the foreman.

The workers conglomerate around his home at 5:00 A.M. when the dampness is still heavy in the air and the sun has barely cleared the eastern cordillera, forming a clear, dark-blue backdrop to the valley. They wrap little pieces of cloth around their naked shoulders, and wait for the truck's arrival. Pedro jumps in the cabin and the women and children file into the back, packed and jammed until there is no longer any room. The truck takes up to fifty workers, and the tray measures 2 x 3.5 metres.

All around the streets are alive with dark shapes of people hurrying to the various pick-up points around the town where the tractor-drawn trailers and trucks are coming in to carry off day labourers. Transistor radios blare through the cool air, for once free of dust, but the people themselves are rubbing their eyes and strangely quiet, except for the occasional swearing. Hundreds if not thousands of workers are milling around in the grey dawn. A few coffee stands are open. The prostitutes stand tiredly in the doorways watching the shaggy masses scurrying to meet the trucks. The worker's carry a bundle of cold rice and a bottle of sweet coffee, together with an old machete or hoe under their other arm and within half an hour the town is relatively emptied of workers and trucks and life re-awakens an hour later.

Don Pedro, like other contractors of the medium and large range, makes around 100% on each worker he mobilizes. He pays a person around 20 pesos a day, and negotiates the contract with his employer so that he gets about 40 pesos per worker. The composition of his work force on a typical day is presented below (See Table 11.2).

TABLE 11.2.--Composition of work-force in terms of age and sex, recruited by a medium sized labour contractor for a commercial farm

Age in Years	Number of Females	Number of males	Total
10 - 20	6	5	11
21 - 30	9	0	9
31 - 40	4	0	4
41 - 50	4	0	4
	23	5	28

These 28 iguazos came from 23 different households. Fourteen of those households were women headed consanguineal households without an affine, and only nine contained an affinal relationship. Of these nine affinal relationships, four were based on Church marriages and five were consensual.

Thirteen of these workers were workers were born in the immediate area, and all except one lived in the township of Puerto Tejada or the village of Villarica. They have no land or other means of support.

In the distance one sees some twenty workers--men and boys--fumigating corn from back-packs. They come from the surrounding peasant plots and are mobilized by a local peasant contractor. This farm as a whole has several hundred hectares of land, surrounded on all sides but one by tiny peasant plots. It has ten permanent workers (afiliados) who live on the farm. Most of them come from the city of Cali and are expert at the working of farm machinery. There are five large tractors and a mechanical combine harvester. The doctor who owns the farm lives in Cali and visits every day or so. All his land is

intensively cultivated, and don Pedro says he has contracts there for some thirty weeks of the year. The owner puts him in contact with other owners in the area. The tasks Pedro is called upon to do are usually weeding, thinning, and the manual application of powerful pesticides.

Sowing is done by machinery and frequently the density of plants is too great, and hence manual labourers are hired to thin. It appears enormously wasteful; for every metre some four plants are ripped out of the soil, leaving four in place. But given the cost structure of machines, seed, and manual labour, it appears to be the most profitable way of using machinery and local resources

Practically all of the corn is suffering from the attack of a small worm against which a very costly, imported, pesticide is used. If the cheaper pesticides were effective then the owners would hire a helicopter and fumigate from the air, but with the expensive pesticides they get people like Pedro to supply them with labourers who are given bottles of pesticide which they apply drop by drop onto the leaves of each and every plant. Sometimes, instead of bottles they are given open-ended containers of bamboo, but in either case after an hour or so their hands are covered with the poisonous chemical.

These farms are neither capital intensive nor labour intensive-- they are both. The owners balance the expense of costly imported machinery and chemicals, against the cost of cheap labour, and the precise mixture is always composed of both sources.

Pedro drives away to a neighbouring farm to see about another contract. This other farm had 300 plazas of cultivated land, seven

afiliados, and a large number of machines. He inspects the growing corn with the owner who wants pesticide applied as soon as possible. Pedro talks him into thinning as well and the owner agrees, for don Pedro is an expert. He is white and comes from Caldas in the centre of the country and has had years of experience with these crops. The owner asks Pedro's price; forty pesos a plaza. "Too much!" They discuss further and eventually a global sum for the entire field is agreed upon. Depending on how the workers perform, the owner says that he will employ Pedro to do another field of younger corn. There are none of the formalities that accompany personal interaction in these parts; no enthusiastic shaking of hands or asking about one's family. It is purely business. Don Pedro's wife waits in the truck and is not introduced to the owner.

Pedro moves on to another farm, but the owner is not there. Pedro becomes quietly impatient. He tells the foreman again and again: "I have my people. I have my people ready and waiting in el Puerto (Puerto Tejada)."

For don Pedro considers them "his people."

The workers have no contact with the owners of the farms. Everything is mediated by don Pedro. In the old days it was very different. Then the owner was not only boss, but also a patron and type of father-figure, who loaned money, may have bought one's coffin, helped with the fiestas and so on. Pedro will not even lend money, and drives "his people" hard. Around 10:00 A.M. a young woman turned to him and asked permission to go to the river for water, but don Pedro refused to let her go. "Wait till lunch time. If I let you go, all will want to go," was his answer to the sweating woman.

Nearby is another large scale commercial farm with over 2,000 hectares, 700 of which are intensively cultivated. It is owned by a company and the owners visit once a week by small aeroplane. There are 20 afiliados,¹ and at times they employ up to 300 iguazos. There are some 60 women working in one field, and about 20 men and boys in another. "We keep them separated," says the foreman, "so as to prevent fights and larking around."

People state that women and children are preferred as contracted labour because they argue less and work better. But these very same women, although driven to work and obedience through their very desperate poverty and the needs of their children for whom they often have full responsibility, do in fact rebel now and again. Often they use false names, as a boy says, "so they can fight with the foreman and the boss and not get into trouble with the police." The same boy describes a strike, which is typical of other descriptions.

About ten o'clock in the morning we were all in the field working when a little boy said: "Misia Rejina, these rows are very long!" And the señora said to another woman, a friend, "These rows are too long." And then everybody was saying the same thing. There were about 100 people from Puerto Tejada, about 50 from Juanchito, and about 30 from El Tiple--all blacks. There were about five men in all. We went to talk with Marino, the labour contractor. We told him that he had to give us more money for each row. He lives in El Tiple. He said "No!" Then the people wanted to hit him, hard. They gathered around him and he got scared. He had to run away to the hacienda, and after a while he came back saying he could increase from seven to eight pesos. So we stayed on.

We went on Saturday to get paid. We had to catch a bus to Hormiguero and then walk for an hour to El Tiple. But he had the door locked. We started to break it down, and then he showed up. But he robbed us all of one peso each. I got 60 pesos and Jose got 35 for three days of work. Each day we worked till eleven o'clock in the morning.

Often these disputes are not so successfully resolved, and the women just walk off. Women that refuse to join-in may be stoned. These disputes and strikes are quite spontaneous and there are no clear leaders. In that sense they are anarchic, and they reflect the full weight of the lower class cultural ethos--individualism and equality.

But these are desperate acts, for these women are dependent on these jobs to feed their children. Taking a few cases at random one sees the common pattern in which the men spend a great deal of their earnings (high relative to peasant workers and women) liquor, games of chance, lotteries, and luxury goods, and may, in addition, be living outside the household and even in another town or village. One son reports that his father, a cane cutter from the Pacific coast and resident in the region for some eight years, spent all his cesantía (retirement pay) "on brandy for himself and his friends." Elder sons note wistfully that trousers cost between 100 and 200 pesos--at least the sort they buy. One household is still waiting the return of the male head who left over two months ago looking for work as a cane cutter in a plantation well to the north. First the wife sold all the poultry. Then they had to go out and work as day labourers. This household has six persons, discounting the male head, but usually the mother works with only one or two of the children assisting her.

The consumption pattern of a cane cutter over a few typical days, a man without children or wife, is given below.

	<u>Pesos</u>
Saturday (Pay-day_	
bottle of palmolive hair oil	6.00
deodorant	9.50
dozen packets of cigarettes	19.80
cooking oil	14.00
one cake	7.00
half pound of butter	9.00

Saturday--continued

	<u>Pesos</u>
half a packet of cigarettes	
one comb	0.90
sweets	0.60
debt to the company lunch stall	1.00
social security payments	55.00
trade union	5.90
liquor	1.00
	25.00

Sunday

liquor	20.00
cigarettes	4.00
bananas	0.70
loan to a friend	1.00

Monday

3 packets of cigarettes	2.00
breakfast, lunch and dinner	10.00

Tuesday

breakfast, lunch and dinner	10.00
one loaf of bread	1.00
cigarettes	10.20

Most of the cigarettes are bought on credit at the company store, to be sold for cash, at a lower price, later on in the week. One gets an idea from this list as to the "luxuries" bought and desired by the male wage labourers. Other typical items that do not appear on this list are things such as soft-drinks (consumed in vast quantities), rice with milk (a popular sweet), fried fish from the street stalls, bath soap, chewing gum, ice blocks, and peanuts.

All these things are quite beyond the reach of the average woman or child, They are decidedly luxuries, available only to those who earn big money, and they are looked upon as the right of a hard working man such as a cane cutter who is exhausted at the end of the week. Of course the males living with their children will not be able to afford

the same quantities, but they too consider these things as something they ought to have.

Now take the all too typical case of a woman from the coast aged thirty-four. She has had eight pregnancies and has five surviving children, the eldest aged thirteen and the youngest aged five. She has recently had a stillborn child. She arrived in Puerto Tejada nine years ago with her de facto husband who is also from the coast and works as a cane cutter. Some eighteen months ago he left her for another woman of local origin who lives in the countryside and owns a small plot of land. He still supplies his first household with some food, on pay-days--basic foods such as rice and potatoes, but in insufficient amounts. The mother now has to work as a day labourer with labour contractors to get the rest of the food, pay the rent (fifty pesos a month), provide clothes, and buy the inevitable medicines. Together with her children she lives in a type of lean-to of bamboo on the outskirts of the town right next to the sugar cane fields which come all the way up to the town's perimeter. They have two rusty barrels as kitchen furniture, and one old bed frame with a few mouldy blankets on which they all sleep. The girls attend school three days out of five, when they have clothes, and the eldest boy lounges around the streets, doing a bit of petty thieving, and now and again working as a wage labourer which deeply offends and bores him. The mother works as much as she can for a labour contractor, or in gleaning the fields. She sells the grain she collects from gleaning to one of the grain stores. Her youngest child aged five is often left in the house alone, locked inside, while the mother is out working. Every six months or so she literally goes mad--takes off her clothes

and wanders through the streets aimlessly. None of her neighbours or close kin help her, and indeed are ashamed, and wish to get rid of her. When she was bleeding from an abortion, the room in which she lived was divided by a thin bamboo partition from her neighbours, and they could hear and more or less see everything that was going on. But they refused to help her or the children. The toilet, a few metres away out the back, was completely filled up, and urine was starting to cover the entire earthen floor.

Even if they have food, they often have no money to buy kerosene with which to cook it, and firewood is even more expensive. She is constantly dizzy with a ringing in the ears, and wants medicines. But of course there is no money to buy any. They have to either buy their drinking water, or walk almost half a mile to the river, and in either case the water is foul. A packet of high protein flour, prepared by U.S.A. agencies for malnourished populations, lies rotting on the floor; nobody likes the taste of it.

Sometimes the father allows the daughters to go once weekly to the company store and charge food to him. A typical list is given below.

<u>Item</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Pesos</u>
rice	10 lbs.	26
potatoes	10 lbs.	13
panela (crude sugar)	6 lbs.	4.50
sugar	4 lbs.	5.20
flour	2 lbs.	5.20
oil	2 lbs.	12
salt	1 lb.	8
cigarettes	6 pac.'s	10.20
rough soap	3 blocks	7.50
soft drink	1	0.90
condensed milk	1 lb.	7.20
		<u>92.00</u>

The mother constantly denies herself food for the sake of the children. Attempts were made to measure their food intake over two weeks and assess the calorific balance. Sunday's meal, their best and on this occasion shared by the de facto husband who was in the habit of calling in for meals when he was in town drinking, was as follows.

<u>Person</u>	<u>Calories for Whole Day</u>
Father	1,252 (excluding alcohol)
Mother	731
Daughter (12 yrs.)	1,938
Daughter (10 yrs.)	1,572
Daughter (7 yrs.)	1,418
Son (5 yrs.)	1,996

These adults are eating well below the standard required, but the children are not badly off. However the figures for other days fall well below these, and on balance the household is nutritionally very sub-standard.

The woman has thought now and again of using sorcery to win her de facto husband back to her side, and has also found someone to write a letter of appeal to the judge responsible for domestic disputes, who resides not in Puerto Tejada, but in the neighbouring town of Santander de Quilichao, a six pesos' bus ride away. The letter reads:

My compañero has gone and left me with five children. The owner of the house came last Sunday and insulted me badly because I owe four months of rent; 200 pesos. A woman who is sick like me is not able to work properly. My man left because the neighbours are gossiping; they said, "Why don't you go and leave the children abandoned?" He left while I was giving birth to a child of his and I was sick. He does

not send us sufficient food. I need remedies; drugs. Last week he sent only 5 pounds of rice, 2 blocks of panela, 3 pounds of potatoes, a bottle of oil, and 12 pesos. This money buys nothing and even less of meat and milk. He caught me when I was healthy and young, but now that I am sick he has caught someone else in the streets.

I need drugs, I am very weak, and I ask your favour; help me.

Conclusion

Although wage labour in the plantations and large estates potentially offers relatively high incomes, certainly higher than wage labour in the peasant plots, and on average only a little lower than the income of a peasant owning around three plazas of land, this cash does not go as far as it does with persons living on the land. This is not merely a result of the townspeople having to pay rent, buy fuel and water, and having no subsistence base whatsoever, but is also a result of the social dynamics of family and town life, on the one side, and the occupational opportunities differentially available to men and women.

There is no real way in which the wages of these true rural proletarians can be used other than for immediate consumption, even if they had a surplus. Not even education offers a viable channel to upwards social mobility since the education system is so inadequate and unemployment is so high.

The consumption pattern of the townsmen differs from the peasant men in that they spend less on their households and more on themselves, and in that they much more commonly buy what are considered to be luxury items, such as radios, fine clothes, liquor, and fine foods. The women are forced into a dependence on men which is far greater and more precarious than that affecting the peasant women. Although

the basic principles behind this are the same, qualitatively, in both town and countryside, the particular social and economic conditions of town life and wage labour on the plantations and commercial farms accentuate these principles, and make for a sharp quantitative difference.

The cultural differences are manifested in many ways. The children are less servile and obedient in the town than in the countryside. They are adept thieves at the age of six or eight, and have a stable gang life and sub-culture. They are ignorant of cultivation, and in this sense have been de-schooled of the basic rural arts and sciences. The townsmen are far more spendthrift than the peasant men, less formal (polite), and far more boisterous and aggressive. They tend to move around in groups and gangs and are always having mock fights with one another, reaching for their machetes at the slightest taunt. They are far more animated, and nervous, and are constantly on the move--shouting, shifting, pirouetting, wrestling, teasing, nick-naming--moving and leaning their bony frames at all angles like ballet dancers. In contrast, the peasants are quiet, softly spoken, slow of movement, and place great emphasis on being my formal (very correct).

The peasants want land; the true proletarians want more money. The male peasants see in the latter their most favourable route to the former, and in following that vision seem to be losing both.

NOTE TO CHAPTER XI

1. Since Colombian law holds that there must be a minimum of twenty-five permanently employed workers before a trade union can be formed, it is common practice for employers to employ less than this number if at all possible.

CHAPTER XII

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION, I: GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS AND MACRO-SOCIAL DIMENSIONS

The General Quality of Social Relations

Interpersonal relations are generally characterized by the outwards display of humour, boisterousness, and much talk. However, the outstanding feature marking social life is the high degree of interpersonal mistrust, and this is more noticeable (or less inhibited) amongst the landless town dwelling proletariat class than amongst the landed peasants.

The society is composed of enormously diffuse social networks charged with ambiguity and tension. There is a marked absence of any autonomous formal organizations or groups that could be said to be controlled by the peasantry, the landless class, or black people in general. By and large the basic institutions of the sub-society we are examining have no official place or legal standing in the wider society, and this applies as much to kinship and marriage, as to property relationships.

Furthermore, apart from funeral rites, the lower class and peasant culture is bereft of rituals or any sustained and coherent cosmology. No doubt these people would be regarded as deeply "superstitious" by the average urban Westerner, but one does not find a large corpus of mythology amongst them, as one does, for instance, amongst the near-by

Indian groups in the mountains. There are no regularly performed group rituals which could act as an integrating force.

A common saying in the area, one with much poignancy and cultural validity, is "Tengo muchos amigos, pero muy pocos escogidos"-- "I have many friends, but very few chosen ones"--implying that each person has a large number of close contacts based on kinship and friendship, but that these relationships are rather involuntary and ephemeral. The adult men in particular feel that what they would call "real friendship," such as is involved in the amigo de confianza (friend of confidence) relationship, is illusory, unobtainable, and would herald deep disappointment and trickery. This is felt so profoundly that the above saying, as a more personal statement, becomes one which implies that the person has no friends at all, and this is understood as a result of one's own volition and judgment in the face of an impossible situation in which nobody can be trusted.

The paradox and contradiction which makes this so poignant is that in fact one's life depends on making friends, without whom the major part of everyday activities could not continue. The informal aspect of any relationship is precisely what holds the relationship together, yet at the same time that very informal aspect is subject to wild swings and mercurial changes in intensity and sense of obligation.

This holds as true for actual behavior as for the common consciousness or understanding of what is at stake. People of both sexes and all ages are constantly complaining of thieves, informers (zappos), and the general failure of persons to fulfill their promises.

Permanent workers on the plantations continually and bitterly lament the lack of solidarity between workers, particularly when it

comes to political actions or request for loans. During a twenty-four hour strike in the plantations in 1971 only a minority of the workers--field hands and factory workers--actually followed the union's plans, and the common assessment of the situation, frequently heard in other contexts as well, was that there was inevitably little collaboration amongst the workers; "They stab each other in the back all the time. We have no real collaboration. That's why it's easy for the bosses to keep us where we are. They always know what's going on because of the informers." A small town boy after listening to a discussion about the trade union movement, said for instance; "Oh! How I would like to be the head of the sindicato (trade union) Then I could sell it out for a lot of money." His father was a cane cutter on the plantations and this boy had imbibed attitudes towards workers' union from his father and father's acquaintances from an early age--and that was his considered view. Workers generally feel that their leaders do exactly that; gain a position of leadership only to use it as a way of furthering their own personal interest by entering into deals with the management to the workers' disadvantage. The workers, whether permanent or employed by the day, also feel they are surrounded by informers (zappos) who will report to the management on their every move, especially any aimed at organizing workers. Estate managers say that women workers are far less likely than men to act as informers.

Although people feel antagonistic towards informers they rarely do anything about it. Rather, they accept it as a fact of life and imply that they would do the same thing if it was made lucrative. All leaders are thought to use their position to deceive their

following, and people can tell you the amount of the bribes they are supposed to have taken to the last cent.

The peasants view social life in similar terms, although perhaps not to the same degree. One of the major differences between them and the landless workers, of course, is that they do not work in large gangs, and in fact usually work singly or in very small groups, and with this solid basis in individualistic production they have that much less reason to expect sustained group collaboration anyway. Especially the older people sadly compare the state of social relationships with what they were supposed to be before the 1950's--the period of the Violencia and the dramatic encroachment of the plantations. They complain about the constant thieving, both by peasants and others. Poultry, ripe plantains, bananas and even cocoa are stolen, and on occasion, household implements as well.

People are thought to lie all the time and never live up to their promises. As one old townsman put it; "Today there is even a business in selling human beings. Nobody dare trust anybody else--not even a man his wife or his children. Today there is no cambio de mano (reciprocal labour exchange without cash); not even between a man and his wife or a man and his son. You dare not confide with anyone (placing a finger to his lips). Now, today, someone is sure to inform on you. In the old days you could trust people to keep their mouths shuts, but today, no!"

Enormous precautions are taken against theft, both in the countryside and the town. Peasants growing the new seasonal crops have to have a watchman both night and day--frequently armed--and the large scale commercial farmers are even more careful. If a peasant hut is

left alone, it is securely locked, yet even so thefts commonly occur. At night every door and window is securely blocked up with large stakes, and all external equipment of the slightest value is brought inside, including the poultry which share the sleeping quarters. In the town, the position is even more desperate, although the fear of loss of life or physical violence is not as acute. People always say that they fear lightning assaults in broad daylight while walking the streets, and take care to conceal anything of value they may be carrying. Children are not allowed to carry valuables in the streets for fear they will be attacked.

This fear extends to all levels and classes of society. The owners of the large farms and plantations, especially the latter, always travel in convoys of police and troops, and are in constant two-way radio communication with the army headquarters in Cali. Attempts at robbery and kidnapping of such men are very frequent.

People who run businesses in the town, even very small ones such as a laundry or a small shop, are continually torn between hiring an assistant to help them, and fear that the assistant will rob them. Most people opt to do all the work themselves. A middle aged man who worked around fifteen hours a day washing clothes, which his wife ironed over an equally long working day, would never hire an assistant because of his fear of the clothes being stolen. Shopkeepers say the same. Small-time owners of trucks require an ayudante (assistant) to help them load and unload but are constantly sacking and re-hiring them on account of thefts. The ayudantes are notorious for throwing goods off the back of the trucks to waiting accomplices. Watchmen of crops are always held in deep suspicion, only slightly less than the the fear of thieves at large.

In general there is a monumentally powerful theme running throughout the culture as expressed by these examples; whether a spouse, a lover, a child, a friend, a sibling, an assistant or an ayudante, all stand in relation to one as a possible ladrón (thief) or zappo (informant). The commonly expressed fear of theft is not only or merely a fear of theft as commonly defined, but is moreover a culturally validated statement and anxiety about inter-personal relationships in general.

It is for this reason that theft, strictly defined, is feared and considered to be greater than it actually is, and it is this encompassing cultural fact which sustains the high level of paranoia.

The other side of the coin is that not only do people fall short of what is considered honest and respectable behavior, but that there is very little one can do to prevent such behavior. It is very difficult to apply either prophylactic or punitive measures against thieves or people who fail to conform. The police are notoriously lax and corrupt. Generalized poverty in the midst of valuable cash crops is a great spur to stealing. Plots are scattered and often at some distance from the house, and in the towns, people are so constantly on the move that constant vigilance of the house is almost impossible.

Perhaps more important than these material causes are certain social considerations. There are no locally autonomous organizations which faithfully respond to the desires or needs of the mass of the people and which could be used as instruments for effecting more binding social control. People are most reluctant to take action against a thief or a transgressor of social ideals since, it is commonly and fervently said, that would make an enemy. This fear of

creating enemies is very heartfelt, and prevents not only punitive reactions, but even mild attempts at interference in someone else's affairs.

Furthermore, although people are of the opinion that informing on others is rife, particularly amongst the plantation gangs, they also say that if people know the identity of a thief, they dare not tell the owner of the property concerned because that would make them into informers and open to acts of revenge. This tends to inhibit them from informing the owner, or the owner informing the police.

Certain historical antecedents have been cited in Chapter III which provide part of an explanation as to why there are no formal organizations beholden to the mass of the people, whether they live in the countryside or the town. The community of ex-slaves and runaways was rarely acknowledged as a legal entity within the bosom of the state, and in practice was under continual harassment from the authorities and landlords. Even when black towns and villages acquired legal recognition, it was done when these areas of residence were more or less firmly under white controls effected through merchants or landowners. More importantly, the customary regulation of the means of production and reproduction never became anywhere near to being positively sanctioned by the state. Peasant land, for a variety of reasons, rarely became held in legal tenure. Likewise, marriage, adoption of children, and inheritance, was (and is) rarely conducted in accordance with state norms. For this reason the majority of people are bereft of effective legal instruments when it comes to matters concerning land and inheritance--matters of the utmost importance.

Alienated from the state in this manner, the people are nevertheless amongst its most integrated subjects as concerns other social activities. Over the past twenty-five years at least, the Puerto Tejada region, like much of Colombia, has been subject to intermittent but frequent and lengthy periods of military rule and estados de sitios (states of siege) which include curfews, severe restrictions on the number of people who can collect together (privately or publicly), and a curtailment of all political discussion and activity. At times it can be an offence for more than three people to collect together. Contrawise, the police and the army attempt to stimulate organizations which the authorities feel are beneficial, such as the organizations of "Community Action" (Juntas de Acción Comunal). These organizations, promoted by the national government since several years, are basically attempts to consolidate neighbourhoods into unpaid public works' teams constructing schools, roads, bridges, and so forth. The majority of lower class people, peasants and townspeople, view these juntas with intense suspicion and regard them as vehicles for the personal aggrandizement of the rich peasants and townsmen who assume the leadership. The life-span of such organizations is usually very short, and they normally peter out amidst a shower of accusations and recriminations as to corruption, theft, and bribery. When this happens, and for one reason or another the local authorities wish to rekindle another junta, they often send the police around to notify the people that they are expected to attend a meeting to elect a new covey of office-holders.

Similarly one finds attempts by the state to extract support from the aimless masses in the "civil defense" organizations (Juntas de

Defensa Civil). These are modeled on the teams developed in the early 1960's by the army in its campaign against so-called bandits (frequently guerrillas) in the Caldas region of central Colombia and are composed of a section of the local elite with a few lower class people. They are given easy access to the purchase of arms and are coordinated by the local police and army. They are meant to carry out nightly patrols and act as spies. Essentially these Civil Defense organizations are attempts by the state to efficiently harness local networks of social interaction, gossip, and friendship, to the intelligence units of the army--in other words attempts to cement the pueblo (community) to the state through the vitality of the existing informal local ties. Although the wealthier shopkeepers such as the pharmacists, and some of the richer peasants, are active in these organizations, many other suitable candidates are very ambivalent. A local taxi driver of peasant ancestry expressed the typical view when he spat on the ground, after due consideration, and said: "Well, they're not bad, but I wouldn't join because if I had to arrest someone or give them in to the police, their family would take it out of me."

The state is also insinuated into some other vital areas of social control. In the towns, much more than the villages or the rural areas, people often attempt to settle interpersonal disputes through the agency of the courts or the police, rather than directly between themselves. This is both a reflection and a factor maintaining social atomization; rather than being able to settle disputes directly between themselves and through their own customs generated from kinship and neighbourhood ties, the people are tending more and more, especially

in the town, to use the police as mediators and agents of coercion and punishment.¹ Usually this is done in the form of a caución (caution) made out in the police office at the request of a claimant who files an official complaint. The accused party is then brought to the police station together with witnesses, if any can be found, and if the judge or police are in agreement with the claimant, then the accused is warned to desist under penalty of a stiff fine in the vicinity of 500 to 1,000 pesos. On average, five to eight cauciones are made out each day,^{*} mostly for fights between neighbours, for marital disputes, and for "failure to respect property." If a husband and wife, or a pair of lovers, are constantly arguing, and this occasions physical violence, then one of the parties, unable to do anything else to protect her or himself, will adopt this method as an attempt to reduce the conflict, or at least its most violent manifestations. But the logic of the situation is such that this procedure may only escalate the problem, both in terms of its intensity and in terms of widening the circle of people involved. Getting witnesses, for example, implies the latter; hence the institutionalization of factions and long-standing hatred between groups, and not just between an isolated pair of individuals.

Although there is nothing in Colombian law specifically addressed to the question of sorcery and sorcery accusations, even these are the subject of cauciones on occasions. The fear of sorcery is very high. At the least, the most sceptical will claim that the use of magic to improve life is absurd, but that the use of magic to damage others is both frequent and effective.

* in the township of Puerto Tejada.

Sorcery is commonly held to be far commoner in the town than in the countryside, and the most commonly stated causes concern rivalry over a husband or male lover, an offence by a wealthier person against a poorer, and envy. In practically all cases the accused-- and I use this term in an abstract sense since open and public accusations are extremely rare--is a woman who either does the act on her own, or less frequently hires a professional sorcerer, usually a male. Puerto Tejada township has legendary fame for the number of its sorcerers and the prevalence of its sorcery, although the most famous curers of illness and misfortune are usually Indian shamans who live on the periphery of the general region. These shamans will usually refer to the township of Puerto Tejada as a place full of "dirt" or as a "pig sty," meaning that the incidence of sorcery is very high, and higher than for any other town in the Department.

When a man deserts a woman for another woman, or attempts to maintain a liaison between two or more women, and a misfortune occurs to any of the parties involved, then the unanimous consensus of the informed is that the victim is subject to the sorcery of the other woman, particularly if the misfortune concerns a pregnant woman, or a difficult childbirth. All midwives know a number of prayers and spells for difficult births, spells which involve attempts to counteract sorcery.

Love-magic may also involve attempts by women to seduce men and win them to their side in such a way that they remain forever faithful, and this in turn may involve the men becoming "fools" (tontos) who constantly walk in the woman's footsteps (anda atras) like a tame dog. So servile can the man become, if this sorcery is accomplished, that

the woman is then free to establish further liaisons with other men if she so desires, without prejudicing herself, since the first man will put up with anything she does.

Sorcery is also thought to be the poor or otherwise defenceless persons' mode of attack against wealthier persons resident in the locality. It is supposed not to be employed against the wealthy white landowners or plantations managers, or other powerful figures outside the region such as the president of the Republic. Why this should be so is not clear, but at least some people say that these wealthy people have, as a result of their wealth and influence, access to far stronger sorcerers than the people of the town could ever hope to obtain. Since unleashing an attack of sorcery always runs the risk of instituting a full-scale sorcery war, where sorcerers exchange "shot for shot" (tiro por tiro), this factor breeds caution.

The commonest mode of effecting sorcery in these instances is to "salt" (salar) the entire house of the offender. Human bones and earth from the town's graveyard are broken into dust and buried secretly in front of the main entrance a spell is cast, and from then on the house and its members will supposedly suffer terrible misfortunes. This type of sorcery is thus an attack on the entire household, and not just one person. Landless workers renting rooms or houses have been known to do this to their landlords on being evicted or when the rent has been increased, and it is commonly feared by the better-off section of the town as a result of people's envy.

Well-to-do shopkeepers are in continual fear of this happening, and usually suspect that it has taken place whenever the volume of sales and profits falls off. Consequently there is a high demand for

curers (who charge anything between 500 and 1,500 pesos) to come and cure the house or shop with spells, magical liquids, and incense. This is done according to a fairly elaborate formula on Tuesdays and Fridays² (the best days for sorcery and for curing) and requires nine sessions--the same number as the novena (funeral rites).

The incidence of all of this is far higher in the town than in the countryside.³

A systematic analysis of the patterns and function of sorcery accusations in Puerto Tejada culture would be most complex. In general terms there would seem to be a pattern similar to that described by A. J. D. MacFarlane (1970) for Tudor and Stuart England in which the accusations stem mainly from the wealthier section of the community or else those considered to be more fortunate than the rest. MacFarlane argues that such accusations functioned so as to break down the communal order inherited from the medieval period, and were a means of destroying the old relationships and ideals. Such would also seem to be the case in Puerto Tejada. However the issue is greatly complicated by the cultural norms pertaining to relationships between the sexes, and is not clear-cut.

Property Relations

One of the essential components in this culture is the fact that property, in a word, is weak. There is no effective or secure way in which property of whatever sort can be securely held over a long period of time, and this tends to produce a deep and powerful anxiety.

When people refer to the law (la ley) they contrast it with the more powerful and feared "law of might" (ley de mayor fuerza). In

the final and not so final analysis this is what sways the balance in any dispute, and although cultural values can partially determine what is and what is not forceful, in essence this means money. The law of the statute books is quite secondary, and at best considered to be a tool open to those with the most money. Hence resort to the law of the statute books, interpreted by the judges and the lawyers, and administered by the police, is either more of a post facto strategy employed by those whose power ensures them success, or a risky undertaking chosen in desperation by the poor. It therefore tends very strongly to affirm injustices rather than redress them, contributes to the prevailing insecurities, and in no way offers substantial security to those who need it most. Lawyers are notorious for their high fees, their duplicity, and their exploitation of the ignorance of their barefoot clients. The plantations and the big commercial farms are able to make a killing on land sales due to the fact that peasant land rarely has the correct legal title; correctly titled land sells for around 15,000 pesos a plaza, but most peasants sell their land at half that price on account of their being unable to get the proper deeds. A wealthy white merchant can get his son out of gaol within a day when he has been arrested for murder (of a black) while a peasant or poor townsman has to spend weeks running around lawyers and judges, bribing each one independently (and then with no guarantee of success) to release a relative arrested for a minor charge.

If a lower class person is accused of theft it is extremely difficult for them to prove their innocence. Conversely, if a person is victim of a theft, it is likewise extremely difficult for them to

prove the fact or follow-up the thief, and this is true of all crimes and contraventions. This is due to there being, on the one hand, no institutionalized or effective means of claiming ownership of anything, and on the other hand there being no effective way of mobilizing support from other people to validate one's claim or accusation. In the culture we are considering there are neither effective sanctions of custom nor even the semblance of impartial state authority, and to repeat our opening phrase, property is weak.

Moreover, there is the norm, or ideal, of equality. This is manifested in frequent demands that wealth and largesse should be shared, and in the fact that those local personages who do possess considerably more than others are constantly afraid of envy (envidia). Thus property is weakened for the reason that as one accumulates more, so one accumulates an obligation to share it out.

There is an interesting and significant partial exception to this. People are generally very suspicious of any man who attempts to live with a woman wealthier than himself, particularly if her wealth is in land. It is commonly said that the man is after her wealth, and this is widely considered to be very base behaviour. Such couples are thought to be hopelessly entangled in sorcery intrigues; people will say that despite the wealth of the household, some unnamed party has ensorcelled the house or one of the partners, so that "the money just slips away" Quite real and terrible tragedies can occur in these situations as the tension mounts. In one case the man shot his partner dead, tried to kill her daughter, and then suicided.⁴

Finally, security over property is weakened for the reason that the criteria by which it should be shared or used are multiple,

varying, and contradictory. This in turn is merely a consequence or aspect of a larger theme in the social structure in which statuses are in endless flux, ambiguity is rife, and social groupings are essentially without a leader or a common focus.

Diffuseness and Flux in the Social Structure

In other words we are dealing with a social structure composed essentially of very diffuse and fuzzy networks; a sort of cotton-wool as opposed to a crystalline structure. Statuses are unclear and may often reflect strictly personal qualities and wealth rather than kinship status. State sanctioned authority is enduring and forceful, but only in the abstract sense; its actual usage and allocation to persons is labile and depends on personal and economic factors, often depending in turn on the gamesmanship of political roulette. In practice, kinship statuses are usually unclear, unpatterned and bereft of obligation, while marriage bonds are barely bonds in any sense of the word.

Several other synergistic factors compound this diffuseness of the social ties and structure. As explained in Chapter VII the ecology and technology of the peasants' traditional agriculture, as well as the modern mode of production whether it be organized by peasants or wealthy landowners, tend also to produce a pattern of individualism and flux. There is an absence of seasonal rhythm, absence of need for group activities or cooperation in production, and a mechanical rather than organic division of labour (in Durkheim's sense). The resilience of the perennials means that adversity accrues slowly and individually.

With the seasonal crops there is complete reliance on individualized wage labour. Furthermore, for those dependent on wage labour in the plantations or large commercial farms, occupational instability and its corollary of high geographical mobility, also induces a social pattern of fragmentation and flux.

In general terms this becomes more acute as the degree of landlessness becomes greater; the flux of the social structure becomes more noticeable as the population becomes more proletarianized, and property relations also become increasingly arbitrary.

This is hardly surprising, since the peasant groups, although part of the same culture, still operate with and are to a large degree dependent upon a means of production denied the proletarianized section of the society--namely land. Comparison of social relations as between the countryside and the town displays a markedly greater degree of focus and centralization of authority amongst the former.

Taking a rural neighbourhood as a whole, there are usually one or two rich peasant households at the centre of a kindred consisting of around fifteen to thirty households. Usually this central personage will be a male peasant, resident in the locality.

His authority is by no means all-encompassing or all-powerful, even though he is the single most important and effectively powerful individual in the neighbourhood as far as the peasants are concerned. There are several cleavages and apertures which inevitably break down any barriers such a peasant may hope to erect around his neighbourhood.

First of all there may well be more than one rich peasant household in the vicinity. Quite often one sees a pair of such peasants combining to control an area, but although effective in some ways this

is marred by divisions. For instance, the rich peasants may work their labour requirements in such a way that they do not conflict with one another, one will harvest during the first half of the week, while the other will do so in the latter half, and they will also agree on the wages that they will offer so that there will be no price-cutting or competition. However they may well vie with one another for control over the local Community Action group or other state instituted organizations, and this political competition tends to break their oligopolistic hegemony. Secondly, it is very noticeable how the government agricultural extension agencies are intertwining themselves into the peasant sector, not via the rich peasants so much as through the males from the middle and poor peasant households, and especially those of a relatively young age--in their late twenties and thirties. While the rich peasants extend and intensify their hegemony through the daughters of the female headed households, taking them as concubines, the agricultural extension agency is inserting itself into the peasant milieu by promising to fill the pockets of the men from the middle and poor peasant households. Thirdly, both women and men from the surrounding households can find patronage from a host of other figures outside the neighbourhood, such as rich merchants, politicians, and high wage earning day labourers. On the whole however, while all these forces greatly reduce and fragment the control exercised by the local rich peasant, they do not eliminate his position of general dominance.

Rural neighbourhoods usually display hostility towards one another, and this can act as a source of solidarity within a neighbourhood, depending on the action-context in which such a definition arises.

Furthermore, in accordance with a type of segmentary lineage principle, neighbourhoods may coalesce in opposition to another aggregation of neighbourhoods, but although activated on occasions and always latent, such oppositions and alliances are rarely manifest. Nevertheless they must play a substantial infrastructural function in the over-all regulation of macro-social life.

Apart from the hierarchical mode of integration of a rural neighbourhood, that flows downwards from the rich peasant's dominance, there is an important integrative function subserved by women's networks, no matter what their class. It is the women, by and large, who act as distributors between households and between the neighbourhood and the outside world, while the men tend to be locked into isolated and specialized productive roles which the women coordinate. The women bear and maintain different men's children, serve as concubines for a number of men, either simultaneously or in succession, and sell the petty produce from the neighbourhood in such a way that they are forced to constantly maintain contact between a large number of households. It is true that men sell the cocoa and coffee, but this is done in an isolated, individualistic fashion, with the man simply taking his household's grain directly from the plot to the town merchant. Furthermore, it is mainly the women, rather than the men, who lend between households (money, utensils, items of food, and so forth), women who enter into exchange of services between households (raising of piglets, sowing, and so on), and it is they who have a supremely important group activity denied to the men--the washing of clothes along the river banks or large drains.⁵

Hence, while men are producers, women are both producers and distributors, and for this reason they are far more critical than the men in integrating different households. This also means that they are more sensitively placed as regards accusations of favouritism and selfishness, and this in turn can become channeled into accusations of sorcery. While producers differ between themselves according to the amount of their land and productive resources, and are hence unequal, their acquisition of these resources owes everything to their relationship to women--as will be explained below--and furthermore those resources are subject to constant change with the changing composition of households and the normal developmental cycle of households. On the other hand, there is a general expectation that those differences in productive capabilities will be evened out through the distributive functions of women--directly, or through affinal balances and the allocation of children from different fathers.

The rich peasant is usually linked to the town and the world outside the neighbourhood by specific political and economic ties. Frequently he will be a jefe politico (political boss) whose services in mobilizing the neighbourhood vote will be eagerly sought by competing politicians in the town, who in their turn act as conduits for more powerful politicians in the Department Capital. In actual practice the system is more fluid and reciprocal than this skeletal outline suggests, since there is personal competition at each level, and in order to maintain their position of dominance and respect each jefe will accommodate and compromise himself according to a complex power play structured by forces emanating both from within and outside the domain of his erstwhile control. The peasants of a particular

neighbourhood, for instance, may have a long tradition of support for a particular faction of the Liberal party, but over the past few months may have come to believe, as do the bulk of the plantation workers, that their best interests lie with the rejuvenated populist party. This is partly an ideological matter but one which requires the continual huckstering of political agents with their promises of both specific local gains and general national ones to materialize it. As general sentiment gathers in this direction throughout the neighbourhood, the rich peasant jefe can see that it is in his interest also to support this party. In this sense his control is more a post facto acknowledgement of political consciousness at the base of his little constituency, rather than a dictatorial superimposition upon it. Yet, on the other hand, a firm link will be forged between the rich peasant jefe and the leading representative of that party or faction in the town, and the system will begin to develop into little more than a vehicle for their strictly personal aggrandizement. In essence, the structure depends upon recognizing, and then stimulating and maintaining ideological fervour at the electoral base, while the jefes manipulate the system for personal material rewards. The rich peasants will thus be rewarded, for example, with a grant from the government to build a road into the neighbourhood, and this will be organized through the local Junta de Acci6n Comunal of which the rich peasant will be president. The labour will be provided free by the neighbourhood peasantry, the money will go towards the raw materials, and the road will be used for the rich peasant's tractor and the trucks of city middlemen taking over the higgling women's province.

However, if a peasant jefe has a great deal of control over his neighbours, he may well be able to influence their ideological commitment as well, and the system will be purely top-down from beginning to end. This situation is more likely to occur when a rich middle class white has established a farm in the area on which many of the peasants depend for jobs. In either case the peasantry recognize the importance of the political link between their immediate jefe and the powers outside the neighbourhood, and understand that their security to a great extent depends upon that link.

Economically the rich peasant will be linked to the town through partnerships with tractor owners, merchants, and the banks, who in turn then develop a vested interest in him maintaining his position.

In the town, on the other hand, group boundaries are more vague, and the structural position of the lowermost jefes owes a great deal to strictly personal qualities on the one side, and their standing with town and regional leaders on the other. Authority and political power derive from money and one's standing with the party machines and only very indirectly from the kinship and land. Politics in the town is very much the manipulation of the "mob" composed of highly mobile landless labourers primarily interested in lower retail prices and higher wages for less work.

Racialism is important here, since while the black politicians are far more likely than the whites to gain the following of the people, blacks are fairly effectively denied any place in the political hierarchy, formal or informal, in the seats of power beyond the town in the Departmental and National Capitals. This leads to powerful and persistent contradictions which add to the instability of local

politics. Black leaders are continually forced to compromise themselves, while on the other hand, the white representatives of the political hierarchies are structurally unable to articulate the local and national machines with any smoothness or continuity.

Politics and economics become somewhat more separated in the town than in the countryside, in the sense that town-based political jefes tend to be full-time specialists while men such as labour contractors, plantation owners, and town-based landowners, although a few of them may try hard to influence their employees, generally restrict themselves to the making of money. Both are, in fact, rather unsuccessful at trying to manipulate political allegiance amongst the broad mass of townspeople; "There are no jefes any more" is a common catch-cry. However, where they are important, is in the selection of candidates for political and administrative office, and from that point of view the wealthy townspeople hold a monopoly over political affairs throughout the region.

NOTES TO CHAPTER XII

1. Similar to the policy practised by the plantations with respect to foremen, the police are constantly being shifted from town to town and region to region. According to the local populace as much as the police, this is done consciously to prevent or inhibit the formation of strong personal ties between the policemen and the local people, which could interfere with the former carrying out orders.

2. These two days would seem to be so regarded throughout the highland Indian areas of Latin America as well. La Barre cites them as the best days for love magic amongst the Aymara Indians of the Lake Titicaca plateau (La Barre, 1948, 178). Métraux describes Tuesday and Fridays as the most favoured days for divination amongst Andean Indians in Bolivia and Peru (Métraux, 1934, 90). Stein says that these days are "evil days" in the community of Hualcan, in the Department of Ancash, Peru (Stein, 1961, 324). Madsen says much the same of the community he studied in the central valley of Mexico (Madsen, 1960, 146).

3. In this society no clear distinction is made between witchcraft and sorcery; all practitioners are referred to as brujos which is usually translated as sorcerer, wizard, or magician. The distinction between witchcraft and sorcery advanced by Evans-Pritchard (1937) holds that while witchcraft is a mystical and magical

can be used by its possessor to harm other people, sorcery can be learnt and practiced by anybody.

4. In cases such as these, one sees very clearly the conflict between males and females with respect to household authority. The woman, being wealthier is usually dominant, and while this culture recognizes female independence and power, it is far more difficult for a woman to openly exercise her dominance when actually co-habiting with a man than when she lives on her own. One should also note the emphasis that people place on the closeness of the connection between females and possession of land. This is further analyzed in Chapter XIII.

5. This difference in sex roles, and its association with a high prevalence of female headed households, is found in many other peasant sub-cultures of Latin America as well. Furthermore, contrary to popular opinion, it is not restricted to persons of African provenience, but is found amongst mestizo groups as well (Cf. Adams, 1960; G. & A. Reichel-Doimatoff, 1961, 144-201, and Service and Service, 1954, 149-71).

The Services, in their ethnography of a rural Paraguayan mestizo area, say the following:

In a complete family, the father is recognized as head of the household, at least nominally, but in practice it is the woman who is the most important in maintaining family stability, in encouraging close ties with relatives, and in managing the household. Women usually control the family finances and even bring in additional income. Men, on the other hand, are treated respectfully, sometimes almost like guests, but they seem to play a less important role in the internal life of the family (Service and Service, 1954, 154).

CHAPTER XIII

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION, II: HOUSEHOLD SOCIAL STRUCTURE

When we turn to a consideration of household social structure we get an additional and clearer perspective of some of the main factors creating the diffuseness of social networks, and the manner in which kinship and class articulate with one another.

The characteristic features are the high degree of consensual as opposed to Church marriage (there is no official civil marriage in Colombia), serial monogamy, a high proportion of female-headed households, and the inheritance customs which allow offspring from all unions to have a share. Descent is reckoned bilaterally, with a strong emphasis on the maternal side, and affinal ties tend to be weak in comparison with consanguineal bonds. Of these bonds, the mother-child relationship is of paramount importance to the functioning of household structure, and the kinship system as a whole. Deviations from the statistical norm of the nuclear family household are not considered to be abnormal. All these factors combine together to form an extremely ramified and diffuse series of social networks within which it is possible for any individual to claim close kinship or marital connections with a vast number of other people. Added to this, the fact that the meaning, rights and obligations, of the ties are, for the most part, very imprecisely defined, means that the overall situation is very flexible

and fluid. This last aspect is augmented by the over-all socio-economic context, as explicated above (See Chapter XII).

True polygamy in which a person has more than one co-resident spouse is hardly ever found, although some people claim that there was some polygyny two or more generations ago. Polygyny, in the form of a man having several mates or concubines scattered in different houses, is not uncommon today, but is restricted to the rich peasant males and urban wealthy. In the case of the rich male peasants this is an extremely important factor as it is through their links with the daughters of the female headed households that these peasants are able to secure labour, land, and hegemony over the neighbourhood. The land in fact often passes into the hands of the rich male peasants on the death of the chief of the female headed household (see below). Conversely, the poor female peasants who bear the children of the rich males, thereby achieve a small degree of security through the link thus forged by the birth of the child.

The following table (Table 13.1) presents the data on the marital statuses of household chiefs in both the rural and the town samples.

Only a small percentage of household chiefs in either the rural or the town sample are living with a Church married spouse, and the percentage is slightly higher in the rural area than in the town. Half the household heads are living with a spouse in a consensual union. Most lower class people and peasants, both men and women, say that they are against official marriage at whatever age.¹ A variety of reasons are given for this. Most people simply say that one is freer if one does not enter into a Church marriage. Many women claim that men only want to marry them so as to take their land or possessions

(Cf. Chapter XII, Note 4). A few people argue that separation, which is always highly likely, is much easier when one is not officially married, and this is so for two reasons; the spouse has less claim and control when one lives in a consensual union, and secondly it is often considered to be less sinful to live in a consensual union, whether or not one separates later, than to separate when one is married. It should be pointed out here that official divorce is practically impossible for lower class Colombians.

TABLE 13.1.--Comparison of affinal statuses between rural and town samples (percentages of household chiefs)

	Rural Sample (N=36)	Town sample (N=35)
Church married	18	14
Consensual co-resident	50	49
Consensual separate	9	18
No spouse	23	19
	100%	100%

Note:

The town sample does not include immigrants originating from anywhere outside the Puerto Tejada area, and this convention is maintained throughout the following tables and discussion unless specifically stated to the contrary.

As described in Chapter V, the Church marriage rate has steadily decreased over the past sixty years. It is now about half of what it was thirty years ago. Most people are aware of this and say that " . . . before, marriage was obligatory. The parents made one marry. Now it is voluntary. The young people have no land and no future as

landowners, and that is a reason why marriage is less common today." The average age of married males in the rural area is forty-three, while in the town sample it is fifty-three. All the rural Church married people possess land, while none of the townsmen do. This plus the difference in mean ages and the fact that Church marriage is slightly more prevalent in the countryside tends somewhat to support the claim that the incidence of Church marriage is affected by landownership, but in reality the situation is far more complex. As we saw from one of our examples in Chapter IX, Church marriage was chosen when the household chief was on his death-bed, partly in order to consolidate the claims of one section of the family, and also because this family considered itself a little more respectable, in upper class terms, than the neighbours, and wished to preserve its history of persistent Church unions.

One should take into account that while lower class people and peasants generally say that there is no difference in social standing between Church or free marriage, it is a fact that middle class people regard free unions as ignominious: "They would not call me doña!" says a middle class shop-keeper's wife, "if I were not married." Married women, especially middle class women, lead very restricted lives and are constantly being watched by their husbands. Often they are not allowed to leave the house, except in the company of a close relative or the husband himself.

On the other hand, spouses living in free unions are far more independent. They are freer to come and go as they wish, although this freedom does apply far more to the men than the women, and sharing between such spouses is minimal. For instance, a thirty-eight

year old peasant woman with a considerable amount of land had been living three years with her fourth spouse in a consensual union. He was aged twenty-nine--less than her which is unusual--and had practically no land. The woman had three adolescent sons from her previous unions and they lived in the same house with the mother and the latest spouse. The adolescent sons and the spouse worked for this woman for very little pay, but received food and gifts. When work was slack the spouse would go out to work as a wage labourer on the large farms and keep the wages for himself. At the end of about three years he was involved in a fight with her and one of her ex-lovers, and deserted, taking her revolver with him. What is especially interesting in this history is that the woman's first thoughts were to go to the police and lodge a complaint against the theft, but she had to reconsider her position when she was informed that the run-away spouse was also thinking of going to the police to complain about her not paying him a wage over the three years that he had worked for her.

Most persons alive today have attended school for two to four years and learnt the following catechism by heart.

El padre es como el presidente de la República,
 La madre es como la secretaria,
 Los hermanos son como soldados a las ordenes de sus superiores,
 Los parientes son como la policia.

The father is like the president of the Republic,
 The mother is like the secretary,
 One's brothers and sisters are like soldiers at the orders of
 their superiors,
 One's parents and elders are like the police.

This catechism, instilled by the state and the Church, attempts to make a clear analogy between the structure of the Colombian state and the structure of the family and the household, but in fact

nothing could be further from the truth when it comes to the Puerto Tejada family and household, particularly that of the town. It is true of course that parents have the respect of their children, but is quite untrue to regard the father or husband as standing to his spouse in the relation of president to secretary. Furthermore, there is an interesting confusion over the last line, since many people delete the word "police" and say that "one's parents and elders are like the pueblo," and not like the police. Since the pueblo can mean the community in its moral and socio-geographical aspects, we are dealing with a wildly different interpretation, and one which gives us great insight into the contradictions between state mandates and folk custom.

The fact that official (i.e. Church) marriage is relatively uncommon also implies an interesting disjunction between the state and folk society. Since one fairly sure means whereby the state in many societies can integrate itself into everyday social life is through the regulation of the affinal bond, and since such bonds in this society are mostly beyond the regulation of either the Church or the state, this means that the state has that much less control over the inhabitants of this region. This also follows historically from the general character of the relationship between black communities and the society at large, wherein the community was never really integrated into the state machinery, except by default, so to speak (See Chapters III and IV).

This analysis also implies that the nature of the relationship between husband and wife may not be as hierarchical and authoritarian as it would tend to be if more strictly controlled by state and

Church norms, since the usual coordination of forces under the latter is to align the male with the prerogatives of the state and the female with the sanctions of the shame complex. In Puerto Tejada culture this type of synthesis between morality, marriage, sex roles, and the society at large, does not exist. The bonds between husband and wife are controlled by folk custom, not law, and are often short-lived and ephemeral to boot.

From Table 13.1 it is important to note that the percentage of household chiefs with an extra-residential spouse (and none co-resident) is twice as high in the town sample as compared with the rural sample. This supports the idea that lower class townswomen are more prone than countrywomen to have extra-residential mates and support--usually plantation working males or men otherwise employed in relatively high earning positions. All of the household chiefs falling into this category (Consensual Separate) are women.²

In both samples slightly over 20% of household chiefs have had more than three substantial unions, either co-residential or separated, which have resulted in offspring being born. "Aventuras" or adventures, meaning a passing romance resulting in the birth of a child is not included in this figure. Generally speaking, fathers are by no means reluctant to claim or acknowledge paternity under any circumstances, but this does not mean that they are prepared to fully support the child, unless it lives within their household.³ It is far more common for the child to stay with its biological mother than its biological father when its parents separate or if the child is born from a union between parents living in separate households. If the mother is desperately poor and the father well-to-do, then it is possible that the child will be taken into the father's household.

As an indication of this, and the general degree of social flux, we present the following table (Table 13.2) showing the number of children living without either their biological father or their biological mother.

TABLE 13.2.--Percentage of all children fourteen years of age and younger living in households without either their biological father or mother

	Percentage of all children living without biological father	Percentage of all children living without biological mother
Rural Sample	31	10
Town Sample	30	12

Note:

The total number of children sampled in the rural area is 147. The total number of town children is 138.

Almost one child in three is living in a household which does not contain its biological father, whereas only around one child in ten is living in a household which does not contain its biological mother, and this applies more or less equally to both town and countryside.

The general attitude towards shifting house, one's mother living with a series of men, being adopted by one's grandmother or grandparents or other relatives, is fairly blasé. As the saying goes, "Más padre el que crea que el que engendra"--more father he who raises than he who beget. No doubt this parental mobility plays a major part in socializing children into behaviour patterns that abet the general flux that characterizes the culture as a whole.

In only an extremely small number of cases is the female spouse older than the male, no matter what the type of union. The average age difference in favour of male partners is 5.2 years for the first union, and 9.0 years for the last union, in the rural sample. For the town sample the differences in ages are 6.7 and 4.8 years for the first and the last union respectively. When one considers that the average life expectancy of women is higher than for men, and that unions are almost always such that the male is older than the female, it is little wonder that the proportion of female headed households is fairly substantial.

However sexual differences in life expectancy and age difference at marriage (i.e. union of any sort) cannot be the full explanation by any means for the prevalence of female headed households. In both town and countryside the proportion of the population living in such households is around 25%, which is very high by any standards.

If we look at the numbers and proportions of old men and old women we see that for those older than fifty-six years there are three men and four women in our town sample, and that there are two men and eleven women in the rural sample. There are fewer old people in the town than the countryside, and the proportion of old women to old men is much higher in the rural area than in the town. Neither the absolute figures nor the proportions between the sexes would seem to account for the high proportion of the population that exists in female headed households.

On review of the biographies and statistical information pertaining to the female headed households for whom we have adequate data, we obtain a clearer idea of the part that widowhood has to play

in the aetiology of such households. In the first place there is a persistent aura of doubt and imprecision in regarding widowhood as a cause of single status since women are prone to live without a mate for a large number of reasons, and it therefore becomes somewhat arbitrary to select the death of a male spouse as the necessary and sufficient cause of single status. However, if we define widowhood as that status consequent to recent death of the co-resident male spouse then we see that it does play a part and that this is far more obvious amongst the peasantry than amongst the female headed households in the town.

In the town sample, six of the eleven female headed households have male lovers living in other houses, four have recently broken such liaisons, and only one could be tentatively called a widow since her spouse, with whom she lived in a consensual union, died in 1969.

As for the rural area the situation is rather different. Of the twelve female headed households, one chief has an extra-residential liaison, three have broken such liaisons recently, one broke hers many years ago, and of the remaining seven, the spouse lived in the household but has died within the past twelve years. In only two of these seven cases did the spouse die within the past four years. Hence it is somewhat difficult even here to regard widowhood as a major factor in the aetiology of female headed households. Even so, the rural area differs from the town in that the chiefs of female headed households are much older, the structure of their households are significantly different, and their ex-spouses tend to have been co-resident (ten out of twelve cases), and more of them were officially married. This is tabulated below (Table 13.3).

TABLE 13.3.--Comparison of marital statuses between rural and town;
female headed households

	Rural (N=12)	Town (N=11)
Extra-residential consensual union	1	6
Recently broken consensual union	4	4
"Widows"		
Church marriage	5	0
Consensual union	2	1
Mean age	60	46

At this point it is necessary to review the overall structure of households in both town and countryside.

TABLE 13.4.--Comparison of household structures between rural area and town (percentages of all households)

	Rural (N=36)	Town (N=35)
Simple nuclear	32	45
Extended	32	26
Denuded nuclear:		
female headed	8	6
male headed	2	0
Denduded extended:		
female headed	24	23
male headed	2	0

The greatest difference in overall social structure between the countryside and town according to Table 13.4 is the trend towards increasing nuclearity of households (from 32% to 45% respectively) and diminishing numbers of extended family households. We see this also in comparing generational depth between the two areas (See Tables 13.5 and 13.6).

TABLE 13.5.--Households in the rural area by number of generations and sex of head (percentages)

	Male headed	Female headed	Total (N=36)
Two generations and less	42	13	55
Three generations and more	18	27	45
Total	60	40	100%

Table 13.6.--Households in the town by number of generations and sex of head (percentages)

	Male headed	Female headed	Total (N=35)
Two generations and less	61	14	75
Three generations and more	8	17	25
Total	69	31	100%

While three-quarters of the town households are less than three generations, only around half of the households in the countryside are so generationally shallow. Conversely, while almost half of the rural

households have three generations or more, only one-quarter of town households fall into the same category.

In other words, conditions of life in the countryside promote or sustain ties between ascendants and descendants over a greater range and presumably with more intensity than occurs in the town. Conversely, while generational depth is sacrificed in the town, alliances between households through affinal links are important. Peasant households are relatively more autonomous and concentrate their forces within the house and plot of land, while the landless or town resident households are more likely to be affiliated--loose as that may be--with other town households. We also note that rural households are larger than town households.

It is also apparent that while male headed households form the large majority of households with less than three generations, it is the female headed households which form the majority of households with three or more generations, whether they be in the countryside or the town. Furthermore, female headed households are more likely to fall into the higher generational range than the lower one.

While female headed households are slightly more common in the rural area than in the town (32% as against 29%), the percentage of population included in these households is the same--around 25%. There is, however, a noticeable difference in the age of the household heads (See Table 13.7).

This considerable difference in the age structure of female headed households, according to whether they are in the countryside or the town, is not simply a product of there being slightly more elderly people in the countryside, but reflects grossly different

socio-economic situations. Outstanding amongst these is the fact that peasant households are tied to a basic means of production--land--while the proletarian households of the town are not. The cultivation of this land and its distribution both during life and after death strongly affect the shape and dynamics of the rural household.

TABLE 13.7.--Comparison of ages of heads of female headed households in the rural and town samples

Years	Number of households	
	Rural area	Town
21 - 30	0	2
- 40	1	3
- 50	2	3
- 60	2	1
60	7	2
Total	12	11
Mean age	60	46

While it is true that slightly under one-third of the households in the town sample do own some land, in very small amounts, three-quarters of these town resident landowning households are female headed. In other words slightly over half of the female headed households residing in the town own some land.

On the other hand all the female headed households in the rural area own land, and the mean amount of land per person living within

those households is 0.51 plazas. For persons living in the female headed households in the town, the mean per capita land size is far smaller; for those households which do own land the figure is 0.18 plazas per person.

Hence, while land owning amongst town dwellers tends to be strongly associated with female headed households rather than male headed households, only slightly more than half such female headed households in fact own land, and the land owned is far less than that controlled by female headed households in the countryside.

Moreover, amongst the rural households, the land per household member is greater in the female headed households than the male headed households.

The picture that emerges from much of this data is that land tends to be associated with women and female headed households, whether rural or town dwellers, but that this association is less for town dwelling women than rural women, although town women are much more closely associated with landownership than are town dwelling men.

The fact of the matter is that in both the countryside and the town, the female headed households tend to have more land per household member than do the male headed households, and the female headed households contain a far higher proportion of females to males over the age of fifteen years than do the male headed households--roughly three times as many females as males. Furthermore, the number of persons per household is less in the case of female headed households than the male headed households (See Tables 13.8 and 13.9).

TABLE 13.8.--Sex ratios of persons fifteen years of age and older, and average number of persons per household; rural sample

	Female headed households	Male headed households
Mean number of persons per household	6.9	7.5
Ratio of males to females	100:362	100:80

TABLE 13.9.--Sex ratios of persons fifteen years of age and older, and average number of persons per household; town sample

	Female headed households	Male headed households
Mean number of persons per household	5.5	6.7
Ratio of males to females	100:300	100:115

We are now able to make a partial assessment of the general structure and developmental cycle of households. The most characteristic feature would appear to be that there is a marked tendency towards the formation of short matriline, with a female bias in terms of personnel, in both the town and the countryside. These matriline preserve and concentrate land and women. As the household grows older there is a concentration of females mobilizing around the mother to form extended matrilineal households rather than nuclear families, preserving land and maintaining a smaller number of persons per household. Males tend to be excluded whether consanguineally or

affinally related, especially the latter.⁴ These males find work in the large commercial farms or plantations and tend to live in the town where they live "day to day," moving from job to job, and female mate to female mate, often in extra-residential unions.

Any attempt to document all the variables associated with this exceedingly complex process would require a staggering amount of analysis, but one can point to two themes of central importance. In the first place the cultural definition of sex roles is exceedingly important. In passing, one should mention the autonomy of adult women vis a vis men, the fact that it is women and not simply wives (or husbands) that are responsible for the rearing and maintenance of children, and the greater degree of industriousness and thrift displayed by women in comparison with men. Secondly, there is the general economic and occupational context which offers more highly paid jobs in the plantation sector to men than to women. The resulting household developmental cycle would seem very much to be the outcome of these specifically cultural and specifically economic factors.

While this general pattern seems to hold for both town and countryside, there is a significant and crucial difference in that town women are far more dependent on men, than are countrywomen. This would seem largely a result of town women having less land than countrywomen and their having to attach themselves to males on account of restrictions on jobs for women and problems associated with child care. This is reflected in the larger proportion of extra-residential unions amongst female chiefs in the town than amongst female chiefs in the rural area.

Restricting ourselves to the rural scene we can trace the critical stages in the development of such matrilineal by comparing life-histories of households, and comparing the elderly male households with the female headed households.

Taking all the rural households headed by males over the age of fifty years, one notes that of these seven households there are five with three generations and two with two generations. One of the male heads is widowed, and the others are all older than their spouse by three to ten years. Only one is Church married. In only one case does the female spouse not have any land of her own. In three cases the woman has more land than her mate, and in the other three cases the man has more than the woman.

In the second generation of these households there are already more females than males--twelve daughters, nine sons, one son-in-law, and two daughters-in-law. Furthermore, in four of these seven households there are, in the second generation, offspring of the male head's spouse from other unions living in the house, but in no case are there any offspring of the male heads from other unions.

In the five households which contain three generations we encounter further signs of the general trend towards the matrilineal principle and female dominance. In three of these cases the third generation is born of a resident daughter; in one of these three cases the daughter in the second generation is the offspring of both the male head and his spouse, but in the remaining two, the daughter is the result of the male head's spouse's other union.. In the fourth of the five households with three generations, the grandchildren are born of a son, but that son is the result of the male head's

spouse's previous union and is not consanguineally related to the male head. Only in the last of the five cases is the grandchild born of a son who was born of the union between the male head and his spouse.

Turning now to the rural households headed by women alone (whose average age is sixty, compared with eldest cohort of male headed rural households just considered, whose mean age is fifty-four), we observe that of these twelve households, nine are three-generational, and three have two generations. Only two of all these households contain resident affines in the second generation; two sons-in-law, and one daughter-in-law.

In the second generation of these twelve households there are seventeen resident daughters and only seven resident sons. Six of the households have daughters only, three have both sons and daughters (without affines), one has a daughter and son-in-law, one has a son only, and one has a daughter and a son, each with a spouse.

Looking at the third generation, one sees that of these nine households, six of them have grandchildren through a daughter with no resident affine, one of them has grandchildren through a son, who likewise has no resident affine, and one of them has grandchildren through both a daughter and son, each with their resident spouses.

The evidence thus overwhelmingly demonstrates the predominance of matrilineality coupled to female predominance. While this was structurally obvious at least as a latent tendency in the oldest cohort of male headed households, it comes into full actuality when the spouses of these males achieve complete control over the household on the male's death or separation, as the above comparison

between the eldest male headed households and all female headed households makes quite clear.

Although in reality the situation is more complex, we can assume that the female headed households by and large emerge from the oldest male headed households with the death of the male head. But even at the penultimate stage before the female headed household emerges as a real entity, one witnesses the budding formation of the female matriline and, so to speak, a mobilizing of forces around the mother and women in general.

The social structure and ideological evidence all point to a determined effort by the elder peasant women to keep male affines out of the household at any generational level. Old mothers will allow their resident daughters to have affairs with men, but strongly discourage men from living in the house as their daughters' mates. On the other hand, in the town, this is not nearly so marked, and in fact male affines in the second generation would seem to form a considerable amount of support for the household.

All this adds understanding to the sexual bias we have described in respect to attitudes towards cultivating the new seasonal crops. Since these new crops and their technological and economic correlates favour the male domain, and since the social structure is based to a certain degree on the opposition between the sexes, it is little wonder that the women, especially the chiefs of the female headed households, are against the agricultural innovations. The government agricultural extension office aligns itself with men; the loaning agencies favour men over women; the technological innovations are handled by men, and the new work patterns deny the household its

autonomy over labour inputs since large numbers of workers are required for short periods of time.

One significant difference between the town and the rural area is that sons become increasingly important in the second generation as proletarian status become more firmly established. This is supported by our figures. If we compare female headed households in the town with female headed households in the countryside, we see that in the former the third generation issues from sons in three out of the seven cases, and from daughters in four. Since a son is implicated this way in only one out of nine of the rural cases, this would appear to hint at quite a substantial difference. In all of the three cases involved in the town sample, the sons have permanent jobs as manual labourers in the plantations.

One basic factor involved in this complex transmutation of household forms over time is the outward dispersal of offspring. Restricting ourselves to rural households, we note a sizeable movement of offspring out of their household of origin; that is, the household in which they spent most of their childhood years.

This outward movement increases with the age of the household, i.e. as the household heads grow older. In the following table (Table 13.10) we present a comparison of heads' offspring leaving the household according to the age of the head.

TABLE 13.10.--Number of heads' offspring leaving heads' households according to age of head; rural sample

Age of household heads	Total number of offspring remaining in the household	Total number of offspring that have moved out	Number of households (N=33)
21 - 30	10	0	3
- 40	37	2	9
- 50	34	8	7
- 60	30	15	8
> 61	8	22	6

Note:

By "offspring" is meant one's immediate biological descendants only, and does not include grandchildren, great-grandchildren, step-children or fictive descendants.

Pursuing this line of inquiry we now present further details regarding the sex of those who move out of the household, and their place of destination (See Table 13.11). It should be emphasized that this table pertains only to the heads' offspring who have moved out, and not to offspring of the spouse (if one exists) from other previous unions. Since the latter occurrence is by no means infrequent, the table is of a very specific and limited use.

We observe that almost one-third of the heads' offspring have moved out of the head's household. Although it appears as though more females than males have moved out, this is misleading for two main reasons. In the first place many of the women who are classified as moving to the town have in fact moved to become maids in the city of Cali, where they stay a few months and then return to the household of

origin, where they remain a few months and then repeat the cycle. Secondly, these same women, and other women from the household often eventually move out of their household of origin to form their own household on their family's plot, and thus many of the females classified as having moved out to reside in the rural area, have merely formed a separate household on the same land or even compound as their parents'. On the other hand, the bulk of the males have moved out permanently, and it is noteworthy that the proportion of males emigrating to the town is almost double that of those males adjourning to a rural habitation. These town based males will generally be employed as plantation workers or as day labourers on the large commercial farms.

TABLE 13.11.--Dispersal of offspring of heads of rural households (expressed as percentages of all heads' offspring; N=182=100%)

Destination	Females	Males	Total
Rural residence:			
Offspring 14 years and younger	1.0	2.7	3.8
Offspring 15 years and older	6.0	3.8	9.9
Total	7.0	6.5	13.7
Town residence:			
Offspring 14 years and younger	1.0	1.0	2.0
Offspring 15 years and older	9.9	6.0	15.9
Total	10.9	7.0	17.9
Totals:			
Offspring 14 years and younger	2.0	3.7	5.8
Offspring 15 years and older	15.9	9.8	25.8
Grand total	17.9	13.5	31.4

It is when to turn to a break-down of these figures, comparing male headed households with female headed households, that we begin to see the critical developments in some clarity. The following tables (Table 13.12 and 13.13) present the same information as Table 13.11 but for male headed households on the one side, and the female headed households on the other.

TABLE 13.12.--Dispersal of offspring of heads of male headed rural households (expressed as percentages of all male heads' offspring; N=126=100%)

Destination	Females	Males	Total
Rural residence:			
Offspring 14 years and younger	1.6	4.0	5.6
Offspring 15 years and older	3.2	2.4	5.6
Total	4.8	6.4	11.2
Town residence:			
Offspring 14 years and younger	1.6	1.6	3.2
Offspring 15 years and older	8.7	1.6	10.3
Total	10.3	3.2	13.5
Totals:			
Offspring 14 years and younger	3.2	5.6	8.8
Offspring 15 years and older	11.9	4.0	15.9
Grand total	15.0	9.6	24.7

TABLE 13.13.--Dispersal of offspring of heads of female headed rural households (expressed as percentages of all female heads' offspring; N=56=100%)

Destination	Females	Males	Total
Rural residence:			
Offspring 14 years and younger	0.0	0.0	0.0
Offspring 15 years and older	12.5	7.1	19.6
Total	12.5	7.1	19.6
Town residence:			
Offspring 14 years and younger	0.0	0.0	0.0
Offspring 15 years and older	12.5	16.0	28.5
Total	12.5	16.0	28.5
Totals:			
Offspring 14 years and younger	0.0	0.0	0.0
Offspring 15 years and older	25.0	23.1	48.1
Grand totals	25.0	23.1	48.1

Comparing Tables 13.12 and 13.13 we begin to see how movement of offspring out of the household changes over time as the female headed households come into existence. First of all, the chiefs of the female headed households have a far greater proportion of their immediate offspring living outside the house than is the case with the male headed households; almost double. In the case of the female headed households, almost half the chiefs' offspring are now non-resident, while for the male headed households only one-quarter of the chiefs' offspring are living externally. In other words a tremendous evacuation has occurred with the evolution of the female headed household.

Secondly, this marked increase in the outwards flow is much greater for males than for females. While the evacuation of females increases by the order of 1.6 times, the evacuation of males increases by the order of 2.4 times.

Thirdly, despite the fact that the females are still moving into the towns to work as maids, we note that for the female headed households the proportion of males moving to reside in the town is even higher than the females (16% as against 12.5%--Table 13.13). Conversely, we observe that of the offspring of the female headed households, more females than males are moving to a rural location, often merely to form an adjacent residence to their mother's on the same plot of land.

Thus in summary we see how emigration from the rural household plays an important part in household development, is markedly accelerated with the emergence of the female headed household, and in so far as this emergence follows from the death of the woman's spouse, we have depicted the characteristic social dynamics of the changes subsequent to the first stages of household disintegration and fission.

The gross causal factors operating in this context are the association of women with land, their sturdy capacity for independence from men, the clustering of personnel, mainly daughters, around the mother, the subsequent formation of short matrilineal lines of women, and the sexual bias in employment opportunities which favour men as workers in the plantations and to a lesser extent on the large commercial farms.

It is this evacuation or sloughing-off of persons from the household which provides the remaining members with a sufficient

amount of land for subsistence. Whereas the males will tend to find work in the plantations, the women will tend to retain their links with the land, and forge affinal ties with the neighbouring rich male peasant. Although the affinal ties are weak they are strengthened by the consanguineal link when the woman bears children from this rich male peasant.

As has been described in the foregoing chapters, inheritance ideally follows the rule that all of one's children share equally, regardless of sex or birth order. However, it is generally said that the offspring of a couple married in church should receive double the share allotted to the offspring of a consensual union in those cases where the deceased has offspring falling into both categories. Moreover, all rules are in practice subject to the fact that long-standing residence in the household of the deceased at the time of death allows that heir to promote and sustain a claim equal to or greater than that of offspring living outside the household. Ideally spouses are supposed to obtain one half of their mate's entail.

Since most people have had several spouses, and children from a number of mates, the situation at death is extremely complicated and fraught with tension as the overlapping and competing claims come into conflict with each other. Ilegítimos (offspring of a consensual union) residing in the household come to feel that they deserve an equal or greater share than legítimos (offspring of a Church marriage) residing externally, especially if they live in the town. Offspring of the union of a co-resident man and woman, tend to feel that they deserve more than their half siblings also residing in the household on the death of either one of the parents, regardless of whether the

unions involved were consensual or official, and so the contradictions can be multiplied. Running throughout all this is the theme expressed by ilegitimos that Church marriage should not be allowed to favour one set of half siblings against another. However, the legitimos have the law of the state on their side in this matter, and are usually able to prosecute their larger claims successfully. This leads to rancour and hatred on the part of the ilegitimos, who have to abide with the unequal division but persistently make forays into the larger lots of land of their half siblings and carry off produce, and this is a common form of "theft." The legitimos are constantly uneasy about their larger share, and although adamant in retaining it, are susceptible to a variety of pressures propounded by their ilegitimo half siblings, particularly if the mother of all concerned is still alive and in residence.

Given this context it becomes easy to understand the ambiguity and flux associated with social relationships; most people are related through kinship and marriage, but the relationships are generally mercurial and often loaded with conflict. State law, indigenous custom, and land shortage, combine under the worst possible circumstances and with extremely unsettling results.⁵

If the case involves the death of the male head, the household is very likely to remain intact under the guidance of the female spouse, whom as we saw above has usually already begun the process of concentrating females from both this union and others into the household. As she approaches senility or death, pressures can accrue dividing the members of the second generation, and cooperative endeavour within the household falls off dramatically. It is probable that this pattern

of social forces and development is largely responsible for the shape of the curve drawn in Figure 6.2 depicting the relation between male and female headed household economic performance and consumer/worker ratios. As the solidarity within the female headed household is increasingly strained, in association with the aging of the chief and the daughters, so land is increasingly left idle or less adequately cared for. Hence, as the consumer/worker ratio decreases, so income per worker does likewise, as Figure 6.2 so clearly demonstrates.

With the death of the household matriarch, the co-resident household members may, on occasions, continue to work the land as a single unit (en familia), either because they genuinely desire to--which is rare--or because they cannot resolve the inheritance division. The usual outcome is for the land to be divided between the members of the second generation, with one or two of them perhaps eventually acquiring the land of the others who often leave the area for the town. Alternatively, and with increasing frequency, the solution to the conflict will be to sell all or most of the land and divide up the money.

Given the tension surrounding the death of the household head it is not surprising to find that funerals are without exception the most elaborate and significant life-crisis ritual throughout the region, and in fact are the only rituals of any importance. Typically these have little to do with Church rites for the dead, although they are heavily marked by folk Catholic beliefs. The first night after death is the occasion for an elaborate mourning ceremony attended by kinsmen from near and far. Following the burial in the town cemetery there

commences nine nights of collective mourning, ostensibly to ensure the soul's safe passage through purgatory, and the last of these nights is attended by as large a crowd as came for the first night following death. The soul of the dead, particularly of the mother, is supposed to vigilate over the survivors, and attains the status of a quasi-saint and spirit able to influence the daily affairs of mortals. Market women for instance may be in the habit of praying to the soul of their mother for success in their sales, and sorcery can be conducted through their mediation with other spiritual beings. In this way, the earthly focus provided by the mortal mother becomes a focal point of spiritual power over the surviving kindred after her death, but given the nature of the ties binding the kindred together, this spiritual focus is as much a point of fission and explosion as one of fusion and implosion.

There is no real ancestor worship which could function so as to bind the kindred together. The latter is essentially a weak quasi-group (Cf. Mayer, 1966) with ill-defined boundaries. Apart from the funeral, there are no rituals to the dead, and although people may on occasions feel the presence of the spirit of the dead, up to the second generation of ascendants, this is vague and of very limited sociological importance.⁶

The funeral rites are relatively very costly. People feel exquisitely embarrassed if they are unable to afford the minimal service and will attempt their utmost to obtain the money necessary for a respectable coffin, food, coffee, cigarettes, a prayer-leader, and perhaps a canvas awning suspended from the front of the newly white-washed house to accommodate all the relatives. This is the only time

when hosting and generosity are forthcoming from the household to large numbers of people. Although there are occasional dances and parties held by households, these are organized so that each of the invited actually pays cash for the food and liquor that they consume.

Minimally the funeral rites cost around 4,000 pesos. An average coffin costs in the vicinity of 2,000 pesos. Two or more generations ago the coffin was a much simpler affair made in the household at a negligible cost, but now it is socially obligatory to buy an expensive coffin from the town--even death has been commercialized with the passage of time. These sums of money are way beyond most household's capacity, and a poor peasant household may well have to sell its land to obtain that money.⁷ Even if there is a rich relative, he or she will be reluctant to lend the money out of fear that it will never be returned. Alternatively, the household will divide the land and sell the individual lots to one of the richer relatives. In this way the de jure custom of partible inheritance gives way to de facto impartible inheritance. In any event the increasing tendency is for the land to fall into the hands of one owner at the death of the last member of the eldest generation and that owner is usually either the neighbourhood's rich male peasant or one of the sugar plantations, since these are the only people with large amounts of ready cash. Greater solidarity amongst household and family members, or alternatively less preoccupation with the rites of death, could avoid this, but both these phenomena are deeply rooted in the culture and inescapable.

Hence, land becomes increasingly concentrated into the hands of the rich peasants and the plantation sector, and the majority of the

household members follow the fate of their land in becoming peons or wage labourers on the large estates. Whereas until recently one could say that some of the land that entered into the rich peasant's possession, would find its way back to some of the offspring of the poorer household, since some of those offspring are his too, this is becoming increasingly uncertain, since the plantations and the sugar industry may now well take up the land following his death.

A plausible argument could be advanced that this process could not have been so advanced a few generations ago since Church marriage was more common (and hence presumably less potential for conflict between legitimos and ilegitimos), cash was less important, and the sexual bias in employment opportunities was less marked. It seems likely that much of what we have just described has been augmented by the commercialization of agriculture, both within the peasant sphere and outside it, and while this potential has always existed within the peasant culture, it required the development of commercialization to draw it out to its present importance.

Whereas the cycles of household and inter-household development used to articulate female headed households with a rich male peasant household, guaranteeing some redistribution of land on the death of the latter, it now appears as though such redistribution of land will become increasingly unlikely. Either the sugar plantations or middle class white farmers may take up his land, and although some of the cash from the land sale will return to many of his offspring, this cash will not function in the same way as land. There is little in which the offspring can invest this money; it will not function as capital or as a productive resource as land does. What used to be a

social structure ensuring some re-cycling amongst personnel, is now likely to become a purely hierarchical structure in which land passes firstly from the poor to the rich peasants, and then to the large estates.

As the second generation members move out of the household towards the town slums, so the position of women is totally reversed. Although the percentage of the population in both town and countryside living in female headed households is the same, the reasons for this are rather different. In the countryside this is largely an index of female power and independence, while in the town, although the same ideological buttressing is present, the sociological pattern is one in which females are now largely dependent on plantation working men. The proportion of extra-residential liaisons increases, sorcery accusations regarding love rivalries increases, women are more likely to attempt to bewitch men into tontos (fools) that will anda atras (walk behind), and the nuclear family household becomes more common in comparison to the extended family household. Moreover, the ages of the female headed households in the town are lower than those in the countryside, and the immediate cause of such status is far less likely to be widowhood. All this testifies to an increase in flux of household membership, attenuation of social bonds within the household, and a greater degree of social atomization. This is also reflected in many other areas of social life within the town. Since town residence is generally an indication of landlessness and increased dependence on the plantations and large commercial farms, all these characteristics can be said to be direct correlates of proletarianization.

NOTES TO CHAPTER XIII

1. A common saying in the area, pronounced equally by men and women, says that Church marriage leads to one becoming "flea-ridden" and will have seven years of bad luck.

2. Defining an extra-residential liaison (which M. G. Smith terms a Visiting Union [Smith, 1962]) can be difficult since the intensity of such relationships spans a very wide spectrum, one end of which is characterized by fairly minor and infrequent interaction. In these cases the decision as how to classify rested upon whether the person in question regarded the union as meaningful, whether or not a child had been born from the union, and whether or not some material reciprocity was involved.

3. Machismo, so frequently described for metizo and white groups in Latin America, is not a characteristic feature of Puerto Tejada culture.

4. Compare this with Clarke's observation concerning rural Jamaica; ". . . the fear of the sisters that, if they do not occupy and use the home, their brother may attempt and even succeed in establishing individual ownership, has its result in their separation from the several fathers of their children" (1953, 105).

It would, however, be misleading to imply that this type of household developmental cycle is only found amongst New World

Afro-Americans. Elizabeth Bott in her study of twenty English households in London came to the following conclusion:

To phrase the discussion in general terms: whenever there are no particular economic advantages to be gained by affiliation with paternal relatives, and whenever two or preferably three generations of mothers and daughters are living in the same place at the same time, a bilateral kinship system is likely to develop a matrilineal stress, and groups composed of sets of mothers and daughters may form within networks of kin. But such groups are only possible, not necessary. Quarrels between matrilineal kin, preference for the husband's relatives, and a host of other similar factors may upset the pattern . . . these groups of mothers and daughters have no structural continuity. They do not last for several generations; they are not named; they tend to break up when the grandmother dies, and they are readily dissolved if their members are separated from one another (Elizabeth Bott, Family and Social Network, 2nd edition, London, 1971, pp. 137-8).

5. A regrettable ethnocentricity can influence the connotations and overall impression conveyed by such words as "instability," "diffuseness" and "flux" which can be applied so readily to Puerto Tejada social organization. Firstly, the precise meaning of such terms really requires some quantitative referent; "instability" means not stable or less than stable, but what is the index of stability? Secondly, there is an implicit comparison with other cultures and form of social life, which are supposedly "more stable." It is all too easy to generate the misleading impression that the Western ideal of the middle class nuclear family is the epitome of household and social stability, and that certain structures dissimilar to such a family are "unstable" and therefore inherently dysfunctional in some significant ways.

Contrary to this impression a strong argument could be made that the very flux and "instability" of Puerto Tejada culture had its own

stability and regularities, and that these qualities have many functional consequences which sustain the culture as a whole.

The reader is urged to abandon the arbitrary assumption that the complex mating patterns and household structures described herein are distortions, pathological or otherwise, of the nuclear family structure.

6. This is quite distinct to the role of ancestor worship amongst the Black Caribs as described by Gonzalez (1959), who in fact posits the non-unilineal descent group as a social cell of great importance throughout most of the Caribbean (Ibid., 581).

7. Alfred Métraux describes the same degree of respect and self-sacrifice by heirs amongst the Haitian peasantry; "Even the most destitute family does not hesitate to sacrifice its last pennies to ensure a proper funeral for one of its members The needs of the heirs are pitilessly sacrificed to their duties towards the deceased" (Métraux, 1972, 243-4).

CHAPTER XIV

CONCLUSION; THE DEVIL AND THE CHANGING IDEOLOGY OF PRODUCTION

An intriguing aspect of contemporary affairs in the Puerto Tejada region (to which we referred at the end of Chapter IV), is the widespread belief that the male wage labourers on the plantations and large commercial farms often make a contract with the devil in order to increase their productivity and wage. Such an activity is not credited to females working at the same job, or to peasants of either sex.

This alleged practice and its associated beliefs greatly helps us to integrate the data presented in the foregoing chapters, and gives us a deeper understanding of the principal social changes affecting the peasantry and landless workers throughout the region.

It is commonly believed by local people today--townspeople and countryside, proletarians and peasants--that the male field workers in the plantations, particularly the cane cutters, sometimes make secret contracts with the devil in order to increase output. It is thought that such a ventaja (advantage) can increase yield per worker up to two or three times. It is held that the money thus earned cannot serve as capital, in the sense of investment or productive capital, but has to be spent immediately on what are considered luxury consumer goods such as fine clothes, liquor, butter, and so on.

To invest this money in land or livestock is to invite ruin. The land will not bear and the animals will die. If one buys or rents a peasant plot with this money neither seed will grow nor crops will bear. If one buys a piglet to fatten for market, it will sicken and die.

Furthermore, it is believed that the plantation sugar cane thus cut, will not re-grow. The ratoon will die and the land will not produce until freshly plowed and replanted.¹

Finally, such a contract means the selling of one's soul to the devil, and therewith a premature and terribly painful death.

The contract is made in the deepest secrecy, individually with the aid of a brujo (sorcerer or witch). People are decidedly of the opinion that the brujo in this instance works with the devil, either directly or through an evil spirit attached to him. A small anthropomorphic figurine, referred to as a muñeco (doll) is prepared, usually from flour, and spells are cast. The male worker then places the figurine at a strategic point at his place of work. If he is a cane cutter, for example, he would place it at the far end of the rows of cane that he has to cut, and work his way towards it, often chanting a mantra-like, repetitive, cry as he cuts his swathe. I have been told that sometimes a special prayer (oración) is said just before beginning the work.²

The plantations are divided into sections several hundreds of hectares in size, each one managed by a resident administrator, invariably a white well versed in rural lore. Even at this level of the social hierarchy, one finds men who solemnly believe in the use and power of the muñecos, are afraid of them, and would dismiss a person

instantly on suspicion of using one. When this has happened, the worker usually submits without question.

It is believed by the population at large that all foremen keep a sharp watch-out and are very suspicious of any person who produces well above the average. The sensitivity of all concerned, workers, and managers, is very great. Even the local peasants, when they work occasionally for the plantations, ditch-digging and weeding, chide one another when one member of the gang outpaces the rest, saying, "What a way you have come with the dolls today," an expression which is never heard in the peasant plots.

The solicitation of 'bad' spirits is made in other ways as well. For instance, the contractor of a small gang wished to make larger profits by bribing the plantation's tallyman into recording more work than was actually done, but was refused. The labour contractor then solicited a male Indian sorcerer, born in the north-west Amazon but residing in the valley, to get rid of the tallyman by magical means.

Contracts with the devil are also believed to be made by card and dice gamblers, and thieves.

Historical Roots

An outstanding feature of the history of the labouring class of the Cauca valley has been its steady refusal to work for wages, until very recently, when there has been, for the first time, no choice. The free blacks always preferred to live quite apart from the estates. Attempts by the slave masters to woo back their slaves after abolition to work as free labourers on what were, given the times, very generous salaries, failed dismally. This has been a recurrent and

major theme shaping the pattern of the valley's economic development until land pressure and concerted violence against the rural poor had their inevitable effect in the twentieth century.

From the very beginning of slavery, the blacks were feared and respected for their sorcery and magical healing powers, which were the subject of much concern to slave masters and clerics (Lea, 1908; Acosta Saignes, 1962; 131). The Inquisition had been founded in the port town of Cartagena (several hundred miles to the north of the Cauca valley) in the early seventeenth century for reasons that included the concern on the part of the Church fathers that the colony was the "most vicious and sinful in the Spanish Dominions, and the faith on the point of destruction" (Lea, 1908, 456). Blacks held a monopoly over the occult arts in the tropical areas of the colony, which earned them the supremely critical eye of their masters; some female slaves served as curers to such exalted personages as the Bishop of Cartagena and the Inquisitors themselves, while other slaves were subject to severe punishments when sorcery was suspected, particularly when it took the form of social movements and sorcery epidemics.

Reports on the early years of the colony indicate that slaves and free blacks alike were notorious for their militantly anti-Christian behaviour, which included the public destruction of Catholic symbols and deliberate blasphemy. It was common for slaves, when being whipped, to cry out, "I denounce God" (Medina, 1889, 106). We have an account of one slave mistress who measured the length of whippings by the amount of time it took her to recite her rosary (Meiklejohn, 1969, 218)--a graphic presentation of the forces of Christianity and

slavery as they may have registered in the slaves' general understanding.

Unlike Indians, the African slaves were formally subject to the Inquisition, though not perhaps to quite the same degree as whites. However, slave owners were so reluctant to pay the bill involved in the lengthy inquiries and penalties of the Inquisition, that some of them, if not all, actively encouraged their chattels to disappear into the bush if they appeared on the Inquisition's wanted list (Meiklejohn, 1969, 109).

This pattern seems to have existed equally as strongly in the far-flung mining camps as in the large towns, where "devil worship" (idolatría del demonio) at times manifestly replaced even the pretense of orthodox Catholicism (Medina, 1889, 119). The Chief Inquisitor, writing in 1622, attributed much of the sorcery to the heedless materialism of the Spanish mine-owners who "live only for profit . . . and keep watch only that the slaves accomplish their daily labour, and care for nothing else." (Medina, 1889, 120). It was claimed that the sorcery practiced by the slaves could not only kill or maim people, but could also destroy the fruits of the earth (Lea, 1908, 463)--a theme to which we shall return below. The mining area specifically referred to in these reports, and at this time, Zaragoza, was the scene of one of the greatest slave revolts yet recorded in Colombia, and to observers it appeared like a wholesale attempt at extermination of the whites and destruction of the mines as well (Vasquez De Espinosa, 1942, 341).

In attempting the extremely hazardous task of reconstructing the evolving meaning of the devil to the various parties involved, it

becomes reasonably clear that a powerful dynamic was unleashed which encouraged devil worship on the part of the blacks. In that spasmodic instant bridging the crack of the whip and the cry of renunciation of the white masters' God, was captured a good part of the historical development and significance of the slaves' devil. He demonstrated a capacity to become a figure of solace and power. The slaves' worship of the devil was nothing less than an appropriation by them of their enemy's enemy. The irony of the situation was that the Church indirectly validated and recognized devil worship and invested it with power through its very attempts to suppress it. Unlike more recent cases of colonialism in other parts of the world, the Spanish inadvertently delivered a powerful instrument to their suppressed subjects through acknowledging fear of their spirits and of their ability to enlist the support of the devil.

This attribution was all the more likely given the Spaniards' continual insistence that the heathen African was the spawn of the devil, and that all slaves were part of his ministry, by no means merely a minor deviation from orthodoxy in an age which defined its very essence through allegiance to a God persistently threatened by the evil forces of the underworld. The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were, after all, the years of the witch cult in Western Europe, the counter-Reformation, and the Inquisition, an epoch in which the whole of Christendom trembled before the threat of the diabolic and the magicians' manipulation of nature. Rationalizations, such as those of Alfonso the Wise in the Siete Partidas, where it was stated that enemies of the Faith could justifiably be enslaved, no doubt reinforced the belief in the diabolical genesis and loyalties of the African slaves.

But it was not only the Africans who were considered part of the devil's forces; their spirits and gods were likewise defined. Here we are dealing with an ideological and social process very similar to that which affected the European peasantry and their pagan beliefs over roughly the same time period (Thomas, 1971; Hill, 1969; Michelet, 1971). With their own spirits defined as devils, or one in particular defined as the devil, it would appear that the attribution these subject people would apply to the "devil" would by no means be necessarily one of evil, at least not in the first instance. The confusion of diametrically opposed meanings involved in this cultural conflict are well expressed in the following letter by an unusually cynical Dutch traveller to the west coast of Africa in the late seventeenth century, describing the Apo ceremony amongst the Ashanti (Bosman, 1967, 157-8).

By this you may see that the Conjurors and Miracle-Mongers are no strange things amongst the Negroes: they firmly believe in them, but in a different manner from our European Ridiculous Opinionists; who are persuaded no Conjuror can do any feats without the help of the Devil. For on the contrary, the Negroes do not doubt but that 'tis a gift of god, and though in reality it is a downright cheat, yet they, ignorant of the Fraud, swallow it as a Miracle, and above Humane power; but that the Devil may not in the least participate of the Honour, they ascribe it all to God.

Whereas the Spanish ascribed it to the Devil!

"The ignorance of these gentiles is so great," wrote the Jesuit father Sandoval in the early seventeenth century from his post in Cartagena (Colombia), "and their blindness to heaven so extreme, that they regard the life there the same as here on earth. They cannot be persuaded of the existence of hell and instead believe that all who die go to their god" (Sandoval, 1956, 71, emphasis M. T.). He took

notice of the purely formal character of baptism and conversion.

"They worship the devil . . . and offer sacrifices, throwing on the ground part of everything they eat. In their work and when they are sick they invoke the name of Jesus and María" (Sandoval, 1956, 82).

As for "Guinea," he was of the opinion that the devil there held such sway and had so many ministers, that those who were inclined towards the Christian faith or the adoration of the cross would die without remedy from sorcery or poisons (Sandoval, 1956, 71).

Accounts of Christianization of the slaves in the colony of New Granada (Colombia, Venezuela, and Ecuador) are scanty. However, one is left with the very strong impression that conversion and consolidation of belief was little more than a formality. Sandoval went as far as to say that the slave owners believed that Christianized slaves (i.e. slaves exposed to Church doctrine including very much the quasi-manichean fear of the devil) were more dangerous than those not so indoctrinated, a theme shared by many other contemporary writers (Cf. Bowser, 1974, 79). In 1771, the Bishop of Popayán, the capital of the Cauca region, complained bitterly that his attempts to catechize the slaves of his diocese and prevent their being worked on Sundays and holidays were useless, because of the opposition of the slave owners (King, 1939, 217). Contracts with priests for serving a hacienda or mine, or group of these, included only a "minimal" service to the slaves (Meiklejohn, 1968, 257-8, 287), and the services themselves were described in the early nineteenth century, for another part of the colony, as latinized formalisms, quite secondary to the doctrine of innate white supremacy which formed the mainstay of the cultural carapace enshrouding hacienda and mine alike (De Pons, 1806,

I, 160). An observer for the British government who travelled through the Cauca valley in the mid-1820's, Colonel J. P. Hamilton, noted that all the large haciendas had their own chapels and curés, who said mass to the blacks morning and evening, and held confession as well. As far as he was concerned, the custom of confession had the great advantage that, "if any conspiracy is plotting among the blacks, the priest will, in all probability, find it out in the confessional chair" (Hamilton, 1827, II, 130).

If Church and state could not effect Christian rule in any positive manner, then they were at some pains to suppress or limit some of the most important expressions of popular religion such as the fiestas often organized by the black cofradías (brotherhoods) and cabildos (councils), which according to some authors had the function of augmenting the solidarity of slaves and free blacks and of being conducive to liberation as well as maintaining a New World African cultural tradition (Acosta Saignes, 1967, 202-5; Bastide, 1971, 99). Here again, one sees another example of the paradoxes facing the Church's and the state's drive for hegemony, since one of the reasons for allowing the formation of such cofradías and cabildos in the first place was to further control over the black population (Ortiz, 1921, Bastide, 1971).

It would be naive, however, to discuss slave religion purely in terms of the Church and formal Christianity. Far more important to a discussion of the evolving black culture, is an awareness of the entire cosmological flux which permeated everyday life to produce a folk religion derived from the occult arts of three continents. These occult influences were regarded, by the Inquisition for instance,

not as idle fantasies, but as the exercise of supernatural powers, involving express or implicit pact with the demon. There were the slaves who brought from the Guinea coast the mysteries of Obeah and dark practices of sorcery, the Indians with their store of superstitions to cure or injure, and the colonists with their own credulous beliefs (Lea, 1908, 462).

The Church was only one of a variety of forces influencing religious feeling and understanding. As far as the religion of the common folk is concerned, a good deal of the Church's latent function must have been to coordinate distinct castes and ethnic groups around a common ideological fount in which folk mysticism and official doctrine congealed.

The large slave haciendas and mines within the Cauca valley were all equipped with their own chapels, and all slaves were baptized and received a Christian burial. Church marriage was the norm. But, as the cultural integument woven by Church and state in the colonial era disintegrated with Independence and the growth of laissez-faire, the abolition of slavery and the atomization of the country into provincial fiefs and distinct neo-Imperialist enclaves, so the haciendas and mines were left as far from God as they were from labour, and in the case of the Cauca valley, from foreign markets as well. The unity of hacienda and chapel was broken. The ex-slaves retreated into the adjoining jungle to form a subsistent and independent cultivating population of squatters.

As described and documented in Chapter III, the owner of the ex-slave hacienda in the Puerto Tejada region became most reluctant to continue paying the major portion of church dues and continue to have his chapel serve as the mainstay of local religion. He now considered

the Church and folk attitudes towards Catholicism to be a part of the ex-slaves' indifference to his control.

If the landowners' perception of the Church was changing, so was the blacks'. Increasingly it appears as though the devil, (at least in areas like the Cauca valley close to the centres of European culture), was being seen more and more as the symbol of white supremacy. Now, with their capacity to relate to the Church and religious symbolism as free peasants, rather than as slaves in their masters' chapels, the situation reversed itself. Instead of identifying themselves with the devil, albeit a devil more akin to a pagan spirit than the full-blown Christian personification of the spirit of evil, the ex-slaves now saw the devil closer to its Christian meaning, and identified it with the perceived causes of their new oppression.

It was the religion, the Mysteries, the spirits and the Saints, not the Church, which interested the ex-slaves. Today while it is obvious that women are more attached to the Church than men, both sexes view the organization with great suspicion and cynicism-- "Priests? Some are less repellent than others," is a classic statement made as much by women as men.³

Religious zeal became intimately connected to political struggle and with competing claims to legitimize one political party to the detriment of the other. The ex-slaves regarded themselves and the Liberal party as being the only true Catholics; the Conservatives were charlatans and un-Godly, claiming Catholicism only to deceive and re-enslave the blacks. The liberals stood to God, as the Conservatives stood to the Devil.

During the second half of the nineteenth century the black peasantry was armed and fighting for its right to land, either fighting on its own or under the banner of one or another faction of the Liberal party--the party that had successfully promoted the abolition of slavery. Today, the local peasantry in recollecting these events and relating them to party symbols, state that it was Christ who gave liberally (hence their membership in the Liberal party) and the Conservatives who wished to conserve the evil. A very old peasant on being asked to explain the differences between the two parties responded:

Todo está en uno
y uno está en todo.
En el uno cabe todo
por algo tiene que dividirse en dos
una sola cosa tiene que dividirse en dos

All is in one
and one is in all.
Into the one goes all
for everything divides into two
a single thing always is divided

The valley experienced one so-called civil war after the other during the second half of the nineteenth century. Ostensibly wars between two multi-class political parties--parties composed equally of both upper and lower class persons--these wars in the Cauca valley were in reality energized by a complex class struggle. The class antagonisms were channelled into unstable inter-class alliances in which class conflict could be checked, but only up to a certain point (See Chapter III).

These wars were often fought under religious slogans and in many ways could be depicted in terms of a manichean drama with chiliastic overtones. One Colombian social historian, describing the situation

for the Republic as a whole, is of the opinion that "in general the internal conflicts after 1853 that were fought ostensibly for control of the state and the disposition of the budget, or for changing the constitution were really fought on religious grounds" (Fals-Borda, 1969, 108). In the civil war of 1875, peasants (in areas other than the Cauca valley) are described as going into battle with banners depicting Pope Pius IX and Christ, and wore crosses and long hair in imitation of the Nazarene (Fals-Borda, 1969). Descriptions of the 1875 struggles in the Cauca valley⁴ leave little doubt as to their chiliastic fervour--a leader being described by a notable landowner as a communist visionary inspired by the maxims of the French revolution, fighting for "glory" and the extermination of all Conservatives.⁵

At least some of the new technological devices introduced towards the end of the nineteenth century were attributed by the peasants to the devil. When the first telegraph was being built in the Cauca valley, the peasants would destroy the wires in the belief that they were hung by the devil. When the first electricity plant was constructed in the valley in 1910, the owners had to have it blessed by the archbishop because of the widespread belief that it was the work of the devil (Eder, 1959, 459). Somewhat similar reactions by peasants in highland areas in east-central Colombia have also been described (Fals-Borda, 1961, 234-5).

Since then, the peasantry has been, to a large extent, proletarianized to become landless wage labourers, and the landed class holds undisputed control over its plantation domain. Nevertheless, the estate owners bitterly complain that labour commitment, despite the spur of poverty, is very inadequate, and they are increasingly turning

to costly machinery. They say that if they increase wages, the workers' output drops. My field work experience tends strongly to confirm this opinion.

Local Peasant Magic and Material Production:

It is crucial to realize that neither the local peasantry, nor the immigrants when in their area of origin on the Pacific coast, are believed to enter into contracts with the devil to augment or maintain productivity levels. In fact, the peasants say that such a practice would damage the peasant plot. The notion of deriving more money from nature in the above way, is a purely proletarian, and as we shall see, male, proletarian phenomenon.

Despite the poverty that afflicts the majority of the local peasants, they are not tempted by the monetary rewards that result from the devil contract. The only magic allegedly used on the peasant plots is "good" magic worked through good spirits such as the Catholic Saints or the ánimas (souls of the ancestors). Such magic is aimed at curing the plot of malign influences in general, and as a prophylaxis against thieving in particular. It is not used to increase production. Anyone who tries to rob such a cured plot will either fall asleep, on entering it, to be found later on by the owner, or else the owner leaves out a sharpening stone, a machete, and a gourd of water so that when the thief arrives he or she is magically forced to take the tool, sharpen it, and commence work until interrupted by the arrival of the owner.

In passing it should be noted that market women and retailers of both sexes use magic to ensure luck in selling, but once again this is con las buenas--with the Saints and the good spirits--and not with the devil.

The traditional peasant agriculture is in many ways quite anti-theoretical to that practised on the plantations and large commercial farms, despite its being oriented towards cash crop production. As described in detail in preceding chapters, traditional peasant agriculture is not based on mono-cropping. The crops produce in a pattern which ensures, through their complementarity, a steady trickle of income every two weeks and avoids the necessity for loans and heavy indebtedness. Moreover, the plots provide a helpful margin of subsistence goods denied the landless workers such as fuel, construction materials, medicines, and so forth. The plant species and their organization very much replicate the structure of the pre-existing eco-system, while the plantations and large farms destroy it totally. Work contracts between peasants engaged in traditional agriculture are far more flexible than those found outside peasant agriculture, are infinitely more responsive to kinship and friendship claims than are work relationships in the plantations, and the work itself is considered far less arduous. Moreover, there is no gross sexual division of productive labour--women work side by side with the men and children, and indeed women are on an equal footing with men in many respects. In short, to speak apodictically, there is far less alienation between persons, and between person and nature than occurs on the plantations and large commercial farms.

Added to these series of differences, there is the long-standing enmity between peasant and plantation--between smallholders and large landowners. This enmity is expressed in numerous ways and has been described at various points in the foregoing pages. Another example is provided over the control of water.

Amongst the grosser techniques used by the plantations to drive peasants off land has been the "war of the water" (guerra del agua). Although not fully irrigated, the plantations have developed a large system of waterways which they can manipulate in order to flood or impede the drainage off peasant plots. The southern end of the valley in particular is notorious for its poor drainage at the best of times which presents severe problems for all crops except those traditional to the peasant sector. Nevertheless, even these traditional crops cannot withstand several months of inches-deep stagnant water.

A typical dispute between an angered peasant and a plantation worker occurred over this issue when the latter was engaged in irrigation work prejudicial to an adjoining peasant plot.

"And even our own people work against us . . . How would you like it if your plot was being flooded?"

"We have a plot," the plantation hand replied, "I'm just carrying out orders, that's all."

"Orders of the devil, that's what they are. I suppose you would kill someone too if that was ordered?"

"Well . . . that's different."

"Oh no its not. That's exactly what you are doing when you go on blocking the canals because you are killing our livelihood."

Given almost unconsciously in the culture is the assumption that plantation workers have sold themselves to the plantation owners. The symbolism of the devil refers automatically to the plantation owners.

In this particular context, working for wages on the plantations is seen as analogous to selling oneself to the devil.

Such an analogy is not made as regards the poor peasant working for wages under a rich peasant. Undoubtedly conflict between peasants is not nearly as great as that between plantations, and peasants, or between plantation bosses and field-hands. Secondly, the class distinction between rich and poor is not nearly so marked within the peasant sector as outside it; all peasants stand as pobres (poor), even when they differ a lot between themselves, when placed in the larger and more determinate context of plantation-and-peasantry. Thirdly, the inter-peasant wage contracts are far more reciprocal than are the employer-employee relationships in the plantations. Fourthly, the peasants have their own means of getting even with one another for what they see as transgressions to reciprocity and fair play. However, apart from some sabotage and walking off the job, the plantations workers have no control over their work conditions.

The peasants feel that the plantations are robbing them of control over their land and the physical environment. A letter from a group of peasants to a government agency reads:

Since a long time ago we have been suffering the enormous damages inflicted upon us by the industrial lords dedicated to the benefit of sugar cane . . . for which they remove the water from the Palo river without any type of control (sin control de ninguna clase) . . . without practicing nor respecting the sacred norms as written into the law books. So long as justice based on equality, justice as the voice of God, is still in motion, we ask for your attention.

From the peasants' point of view, those who work for the plantations have literally 'sold-out.' The contract with the devil seems to signify an alliance with the un-Godly and a release of oneself

from the peasant milieu. Lack of control over one's fate and one's birthright is central to this. The plantation workers are felt to lose control over their work conditions. The remaining peasantry likewise lose control over their "lost" brethren and see the peasant sphere as a whole steadily losing control over its physical and social environment.

There is a clear implication that anybody who steps out of the peasant mode of production runs the risk of being included in the devil's sphere of influence, and becomes accessible to the devil's contract, as opposed to the peasants' Godly contract. This attribution is not simply due to the fact that the peasants, as much as the poor townspeople, regard the plantations as the principal power in the region, and a threatening power at that. It also appears to rest on people making a critical comparison between the peasant mode of production and the plantation mode of production itself.

Field-work experience, as well as close analysis of our economic data (See Figure 6.1), lead one to the conclusion that the peasant's mode of production depends on the notion of fixed and regulated production goals. Rather than being primarily oriented towards maximization of household workers' potential, it appears to be mainly influenced by a concern to meet a fixed quantity of consumer need, and this quantity should only be met by working within a specified social matrix. The peasant mode of production is not organized along the lines of a modern business, as the plantations' so obviously are. In the latter, capital is invested with other production variables in order to constantly yield the maximum profit, for profit's sake alone. Being purely business enterprises, the plantations are organized with

one aim in mind, that of gain--an endless quest since, by definition, gain is limitless.

By contrast, peasant economic behaviour displays a paramount concern to provide for the household's needs, and no more. It is not just that the peasants, with the exception of the new rich peasant class, do not have much capital, or do not make much of a profit, but that these terms and the paradigm of economic organization and motivations that they imply, are rather misleading when applied to their householding economy. Analysis of individual household's economic behaviour shows that workers' output decreases as the needs of the household decrease, especially when more workers accrue to the household (See Chapter VI).

The concept of householding as a particular type of economic organization owes a good deal to Karl Polanyi (1957, 53-5), who in turn was influenced by Aristotle's Politics. In Polanyi's analysis of the evolution of what he called the self-regulating market economy, he cited householding as a special type of economic organization, preceding the market economy and diametrically opposed to it.

. . . It has nothing in common either with the motive of gain or with the institution of markets. Its pattern is the closed group. Whether the very different entities of the family or the settlement or the manor formed the self-sufficient unit, the principle was invariably the same, namely that of producing and storing for the satisfaction of the wants of the members of the group . . . Aristotle insists on production for use as against production for gain as the essence of householding proper; yet accessory production for the market need not, he argues, destroy the self-sufficiency of the household as long as the cash crop would also otherwise be raised on the farm for sustenance, as cattle or grain; the sale of surpluses need not destroy the basis of householding . . . In denouncing the principle of production for gain as "not natural to man," as boundless and limitless, Aristotle was in effect aiming at the crucial point, namely the divorcedness of a separate economic motive from the social relations in which these limitations inhered (Polanyi, 1956, 53-4).⁶

While the vast majority of peasant households conform to this principle, such conformity would seem to apply more to women in general, and female headed households in particular, than it does to men or male headed households (See Chapters VI, X, and XIII, and Figure 6.2). The impulse towards modern farming, in the sense of using land and capital as variables in the profit equation, is now slowly penetrating the region, finding some support from some of the male peasants, particularly the younger ones. Nevertheless our data and field-work impressions convince us that with the exception of the rich peasants this is still a very muted response.

Despite being essentially a cash cropping peasantry, these people cannot be considered in terms of paradigms that apply to free market entrepreneurs. They themselves contrast their own mode of production with the plantations', as God is to the devil, and as good is to evil.

The peasants' crops give little, but they give regularly, in fact every two weeks. But for the plantation workers, the archetypical exchange structure as represented by the devil contract is quite different. It seems quite valid to state the matter this way--i.e. that the devil contract represents all proletarians--since the essence of belief in the devil contract is that it is so secret that one never knows who is involved and who is not, and this is reinforced by the fact that work is performed and paid for on a completely individualistic basis. For these reasons all plantation workers are suspect. The stereotypical exchange structure in their case thus involves the worker making a lot of money in return for selling his soul to the devil, but it is paid for, or reciprocated, by various non-repetitive and final events as well as increased income; a premature and agonizing death, and barrenness of soil and investment.

Rather than being an exchange which reinforces and perpetuates a perennial set of similar exchanges, as is the peasant's relation to the perennial tree crops, the devil contract is the exchange which ends all exchange.

These two antithetical types of exchange coexist throughout the society. Taking the region as a whole, we see the antithesis in its clearest and most pronounced form in the contrast between peasant production and the plantation mode of production. On the peasant side, there is the ideal of reciprocity and cyclical exchange, guaranteeing production, reproduction, and fertility. On the plantation side there is the conception of unequal exchange resulting in barrenness and death. The former is felt to be automatically self-perpetuating, while the latter is thought to be self-extinguishing.

The devil in the cane fields seems symptomatic of what workers and peasants regard as unequal exchange and the distortion of the reciprocity principle. This perception not only pertains to the social relations between management and workers, but also to far more subtle aspects of the work process, and the folk conception of nature.

The point is not only that the workers receive what they consider to be inadequate remuneration for the labour time actualized in the product, nor that the producer's contribution to the character of the product is cancelled out by the wage and hence workers and produce are split, but that as a result of such a split and the conditions in which it is realized, both work and product assume monetized commodity status. As contrasted with their multitude of meanings in terms of their physical, aesthetic and symbolic properties, work and product now enter into a totally different sphere of meaning in which all

things stand as prices and can be detached from owner to owner as property contingent on commodity price.

As regards this splitting, one is reminded of the felicitous distinction drawn by Mauss between sale proper and what he calls the gift relationship, central in substance and principle to non-market societies. According to Mauss, the manner in which goods are exchanged in the latter is as if the object forever bears its source within it, whether that source be person or Nature, or both.

This bond created by things is in fact a bond between persons, since the thing itself is a person or pertains to a person. Hence it follows that to give something is to give a part of oneself . . . It follows clearly from what we have seen that in this system of ideas one gives away what is in reality a part of one's nature and substance, while to receive something is to receive a part of someone's spiritual essence (Mauss, 1967, 10).

This conception of the bond between things, and between persons and things, is also found, to a certain extent, amongst the lower class people of the Cauca valley. It is precisely because these people feel that such bonds exist, that the devil beliefs can occur and carry conviction.

Less starkly, one also finds the existence of these contrary exchange structures within the peasant sphere itself, where the devil contract is absent. It is as if a common cultural theme permeates the totality of social life, but is expressed in different ways and with different content according to the specific situation under consideration. This theme is that of the conflict and antithesis between the exchange structure based on reciprocity and self-renewal, on the one side, and the exchange structure based on negative reciprocity and self-extinction on the other. This conflict embedded in all social activity is most dramatically symbolized and expressed in the belief

concerning the devil and the male plantation workers, but exists in other forms within the peasant sphere as well.

This pattern of antitheses is particularly clear in the contrast between the sexes. For example, the female peasants are in almost total disagreement with the male peasants over the question of uprooting the traditional perennial crops and embarking on a far more commercialized type of production. Only under the greatest pressure will the females allow such a change, and this seems quite in keeping with their kinship roles as much as their general attitude towards maximization and free market farming principles (See Chapters VI, X, and XIII). Both the pattern of material production to which the women wish to adhere, and the social pattern of reproduction of offspring in which they are implicated, can be viewed as cyclical, self-perpetuating exchange structures.

On the other hand the male peasants tend to be structured in a quite dissimilar manner. The way in which they relate to their offspring, and the pattern of the new mode of material production which they espouse, are both far less cyclical and reciprocal than the exchange patterns forged by the females. As described in Chapter XIII, women are far more firmly embedded in roles of reciprocal distribution than are men, and the specificities of their kinship roles amount to the same principles of cyclical, self-maintaining and renewing principles of exchange.⁷

In this system of serial monogamy and matrifocality, women are far more integrated into cyclical and reciprocal exchanges than are men whose parental roles are negligible in comparison with the womens' roles as mothers and grandmothers. In the context of ephemeral

affinal ties and the relative unimportance of the father's role, women say "se pican y se van" in reference to their male consorts--"they sting then fly away." Another common simile, acknowledged by the men, is that of a fly which leaves its eggs in meat and then flies away, never to return. Men produce children through sexual intercourse, but rarely maintain those offspring in any real sense. On the other hand, women both produce and maintain children, and expect and receive a large measure of reciprocity from their offspring, while men do not.

Thus a formal pattern exists as regards sex roles, and this pattern is much the same for the relationships between parents and offspring on the one side, and the relationship between the two sexes and the two types of material production now open to the peasantry. Men are to women, as non-reciprocal, non-cyclical exchange structures are to their converse. Although the male peasant exchange paradigm is not necessarily self-extinguishing with the same finality that it is supposed to be for the male proletarians contracting with the devil, it is definitely not a cyclical or perpetuating structure. In the case of the male peasants contracting with the government to change their crops, and hence the very basis of the traditional mode of production, the male peasants' exchange paradigm does tend to become self-extinguishing as well, as our analysis of peasant experience with the new crops clearly demonstrates.⁸

Thus, the devil contract practised by the male labourers on the plantations and large estates can be viewed as merely the most manifest and extreme expression of a general structural contradiction which permeates peasant life in most of its basic aspects. While this contradiction is omnipresent throughout the entire culture, its

ideological representation in terms of the drama of the devil and mortal man only occurs where that contradiction is felt to be at its most pointed and extreme; namely on the plantation fields.

Female Proletarians and the Magic of Production

Increasingly women are bearing great hardships. The matrifocal extended family of the peasantry tends to break down into the matrifocal nuclear family household of the rural slum towns. The urban women are at once the most defenceless, and most burdened group in the region, in the sense that it is they who have to meet all the demands placed by children, while the fathers drift off into the never-never of serial monogamy. Even in this fairly libertarian culture the double sexual standard has strength; "the men have the right to wander." The labour contractors for the large commercial farms seize on this structural lever and prefer to employ women where possible because they are more manageable, or as the contractors themselves say, "more broken-in" (See Chapter XI). They work for less pay, strike less, and accept more odious working conditions than men, in order to return at sunset with at least some food for their young.

Nevertheless, women day-labourers do not make contracts with the devil to increase their productivity. As one elderly woman put it; "The women work with God, and make less than one hundred pesos a week." Why should this be? The answer would appear to be as follows.

Women in this culture nearly always have the sole responsibility for the feeding and caring of their children, and this of course is only part of their general role--householding--whether they have dependent children or not. Since the wages of the devil, according to

local belief, are unproductive, barren, and antagonistic to growth (as described above), they are obviously worse than useless in providing staple fare for children or as investments in the household.

Be it noted that the peasant mode of production is not at all unlike householding in its most general sense (Aristotle, 1941, 1130-46; Polanyi, 1957, 53-5), lends itself to classification as the Domestic Mode of Production (Sahlins, 1972, 41-148), and that neither women nor peasants utilize the devil contract in production in the region we are considering; a commonality which underscores the aptness of the concept of the Domestic Mode of Production. Householding, the generic term, is oriented towards subsistence in the sense of production for use and the satisfaction of the wants of the members of the group; not production for gain as an end in itself. The paradigm is one based on use-values and qualities mediated and defined by the cultural code and given in the mental and material wants of the human species, rather than the commodity conception of exchange-value for profit. "Women's work," and the peasantry's domestic mode of production, are but particular expressions of the generic form, householding.

There should thus be little surprise that both peasants and women share a disinclination to enter into a devil contract, just as the belief in the devil contract itself expresses a pre-market contempt and concern for what is considered to be an unnatural and improper economy geared to individual gain for gain's sake; wealth getting, as Aristotle puts it (1941, 1138).

The Coastal Migrants:

Around half the labour on the plantations is supplied by black migrants from the Pacific coast, a littoral far removed from cities, roads and twentieth century life. These people travel hundreds of miles along the coastal rivers and eastwards over the Andes in search of wage labour in the Cauca valley. While a substantial proportion seem to return home, the majority remain, due either to spiralling indebtedness and lack of the wherewithall to make the journey home, or because of the lures of the "civilized" life.

Like the peasantry native to the valley, there is no contracting of the devil by coastal people in order to increase productivity or production on their own plots on the coast. Their own economy there is very largely subsistent; fishing, hunting, and the cultivation of a little corn, plantain and coconuts. Cash is far less used than in the valley, although gold mining organized by locals is not infrequent. In the long-occupied areas, land is held in private property owned by families in the community, and such land can be sold to outsiders. Further afield from the river banks are the communal lands which may be used by any member of the community, while people from other rivers must obtain permission if they wish to use them. Much labour is done by cooperative or festive labour groups (mingas). This applies, for example, to clearing bush for the planting of corn, house-roofing, canoe building, and sluice construction for the alluvial mines. Such labour organization has been regarded as African in origin (West, 1957, 131, 154, 191).

Muñecos (dolls) are a customary item of magic on the coast, but are not used as they are alleged to be on the plantations in the valley.

Rather, they are employed in curing rites, protection against thieves, and against interpersonal sorcery. In fact, economic success is viewed as dangerous, and as one student has put it, "the resulting ethic is the antithesis of success" (Pavy, 1967, 279)--success of course being viewed here in white middle class terms. Indeed, quite contrary to this conception of commercial success, these people locate their ethos firmly in Nature. "The use of medicinal plants is highly developed on the river. As one woman put it, "The plants are the wisdom of this coast'" (Pavy, 1967, 281), and amongst these plants hallucinogenics are used (Pavy, 1967, 286). Magical lore is transferred between blacks and the Indians who generally live nearer the headwaters of the rivers. Blacks utilize Indian shamans, and Indians have absorbed African magic. For instance, Wassen (1940, 10) claims to have discovered African features in most of the equipment used by Cuna and Chocó Indian shamans.

According to Pavy (1967, 229), orthodox Catholic belief is of minimal and superficial importance in the religious activity of the riverine settlement of Afro-Americans that he studied. The people have a pantheon of devil figures, not one devil in particular, and the devils are not seen as threatening figures. Death is not ascribed to any of them (Pavy, 1967, 234). In a locality of Bush Negroes further southwards along the coast, Whitten (1965, 125) came to the conclusion that in day to day life, neither men nor women were interested in the devil.

The use of muñecos amongst the coastal Indians, such as the Cuna and the Chocó with whom the coastal blacks have regular contact, especially for magic, has been described by Reichel-Delmatoff (1969,

229-41). Made from wood or clay, in the form of animals or humans, they play a vital role in curing ceremonies practiced by shamans to exorcize bad animal spirits or the sorcery of a hostile shaman.

Among the more acculturated groups of the Chocó Indians (the groups most likely to have contact with the riverine blacks) most or all disease carrying powers are attributed to the spirits of dead people. Indians under mission influence call these spirits diablos (devils) (Reichel-Dolmatoff, 1961, 494), hence a direct relation between the figurines (or muñecos) and the devil. The precise nature of this relation is unclear. We can safely assume that one relationship is the use of the figurines to exorcize the "devil(s)." Quite possibly they are also used to cast spells as well, since amongst other reasons, it is impossible to draw a hard and fast distinction between "good" and "bad" magic, and the central function or power of the figurines is to establish contact with the spirit world.

There is a common tendency to attribute a fertility function to such figurines, against which Reichel-Dolmatoff (1961, 236-8) makes an interesting argument. In his opinion the figurines' function, during pregnancy for instance, is not to increase fertility but to prevent malfunction during reproduction which is considered a dangerous state, and by extension I would argue, to prevent malfunction and depress danger during any process of growth.

Thus it would appear that the pregnant effigies were not used to induce magically a state of pregnancy but rather were used in rituals meant to protect the childbearing woman from complications during pregnancy and birth. (Reichel-Dolmatoff, 1961, 238).

In so far as there is any resemblance between this use of these figurines and the use of the dolls in the interior plantations, and I

would strongly argue that there is, we must then be aware of the notion that their meaning to the plantation labourers may not be so much the crass and simpler-minded one of increasing yield per se, but of preventing the bad side-effects that accrue from such behavior. It is the regulation of process, keeping it within balance, that is at stake, and the potentiality for imbalance, disequilibrium and breakdown in reciprocity, that has to be ritually checked. All production within these subsistence economies can be thought of as reproduction, and an identical philosophy and ontology of reproduction, production and growth, is to be found amongst the Amazonian Indians far to the east, who also have a fairly intimate relationship with the workers in the plantation fields of the Cauca valley.⁹

Lastly, it should be noted that there are reasons to believe that the Chocó Indians formerly inhabited many regions farther inland and that still today small groups of them are to be found east of the Cauca river. Archaeology has revealed the existence of these figurines in the Cauca valley dating back over one thousand years, and it has been argued that "this entire body of concepts is derived from prototypes belonging to a pre-American Paleolithic or early Mesolithic level of culture" (Reichel-Dolmatoff, 1961, 230, 241). Hence the use of the figurines on the twentieth century plantations and large commercial farms in the Cauca valley, possibly involves concepts and a world-view several thousands of years old.

Baptizing Money and the Magic of Exchange

Turning from beliefs concerning production, to beliefs concerning exchange, our attention is irresistably drawn to the practice, or belief

in the practice of baptizing money, referred to as el bautizo del billete.

According to this common belief, the Godparent-to-be conceals a peso bill in his or her hand during the baptism of a child by the Catholic priest. The peso bill is thus believed to become baptized instead of the child. When this now baptized bill enters into general monetary circulation, it is believed that the bill will continually return to its owner, with interest, enriching the owner and impoverishing the other parties to the deals transacted by the owner of the bill. The child remains unbaptized, which if known to its parents or anybody else would be a cause of great concern, since the child's soul is thus denied supernatural legitimacy and has no chance of escaping from Limbo or Purgatory, depending on when it dies. The practice is heavily penalized by the Church.¹⁰

The belief is that through this illegal religious mechanism-- illegal in the sense that it deceives the priest and spiritually mutilates the child, annihilating its acceptance into the citizenry of God--money shall breed money, or that money will grow. The mystery of economic growth and accumulation of capital whereby capital appears to breed more of itself, is in this situation seen to occur as a result of the supernatural forces incurred in the Christian baptism of the money bill. However, this is done at the terrible cost of denying the child a legitimate place in rites of the life-cycle and the cosmological order. Hence it bears the same profound-stigma as does the wage workers' contract with the devil associated with increasing productivity.¹¹

Conclusion

The complete transition of the peasantry to proletarian status can only be said to have been achieved when direct force and economic compulsion are more or less unnecessary. An entirely new set of traditions and habits have to be developed amongst the working class, to the extent that their common sense regards the new conditions as natural.

In the area we are considering in this thesis, neither of these conditions can be said to exist. Physical force is a daily necessity, the tension between the newly proletarianized peasants and their employers is extremely high, and the devil beliefs, let alone many others, strongly suggest that the new economic mode is not looked upon as natural or obedient to self-evident laws of nature.

In fact, this new economy seems to be regarded as extremely unnatural. In the Cauca valley the idea of the devil is not unlike the definition advanced by the Christian fathers as "he who resists the cosmic process." This understanding is equivalent to the notion of action contrary to Nature, and, for example, forcing things in the interest of private gain without regard for their intrinsic principles (Cf. Needham, 1956, II, 71).

Increased productivity within the new economic framework is seen as only occurring as the result of a contract with the forces of evil, just as this new mode of production is equated with the plantations and those whom the peasants see as the "industrial lords" dedicated to the benefit of sugar cane instead of people.

Income may be increased under this new system, working as a wage labourer, but is felt to be immoral and against the ways of Nature,

for it is intimately associated with premature death and barrenness. It is as though increased productivity can only occur with increased "repayment;" but that there is a limit to what can be done within the ritual form, and hence new figures and new meanings are injected into the scheme as the critical limits to reciprocity are surpassed. One pays with one's soul and one dies young. From that critical limit onwards, negative reciprocity is signified by the devil, the personification of the spirit of evil. Such a strongly negative sanction contrasts spectacularly with the positive inducements present in a well-developed modern economy.

It can be argued that one of the functions of the devil belief is to reduce competition and disparities of wealth between persons. In this way the poor assume an ethical superiority over the high wage earners.¹² But there are other functions subserved by the devil belief. It is not just wealth at which the devil accusations are aimed, but the way in which and the reasons for which such wages of the devil are gained. This thesis is adduced from the fact that neither peasant agriculturalists, nor women in general, are supposed to enter into compacts with the devil. Our preceding comparison between men and women, labourers on the large estates and peasants, subsistence coastal dwellers and plantation workers, leads us to conclude that it is the social organization of economics that is at stake, and not merely wealth or differences in wealth. It is the difference and antithetical disjuncture between modes of production themselves, which seems crucial to the ideology we are examining, and the major difference between these modes of production can be summarized

in terms of the antithetical exchange structures that we have outlined above.

Moreover, as both the devil belief and the baptizing of money suggest, the culture does not view the modern economy in what could be called "reified" terms--i.e. that commodities and money are powers unto themselves; self-contained powers split-off from any agencies outside themselves standing over and above people.¹³ In both the case of the devil and the baptized money it is held that income increases, or money breeds money, only through the combined intervention of person and supernatural powers. It is only through people activating supernatural agencies that this increase and multiplication occurs. In this sense the people understand the movement of goods and money as a process intimately connected with human activities. While they condemn the process they understand human beings as central to its functioning--man is seen as an active and creative agent in the productive and financial process, quite unlike the popular conception in a well developed modern economy in which the market tends to be viewed as an autonomous institution obedient to laws of its own.

Furthermore, one's product tends to be seen as inherently part of one's activity and social relationships. It is not viewed as being inseparably cut-off from one, upon receipt of a wage or money interest. One forever bears the consequences. The baptized peso note is forever returning and the god-child will never enter heaven. The cane cut with the devil's assistance will slowly but inexorably exact its due, and the income gained has very specific limitations. One damages others, or damages oneself. The product of one's activity is not viewed as isolated, isolable, or split-off from one by entering into general

circulation. The bonds remain and their genesis determines one's future.

For these reasons it seems appropriate to state that the product of labour, even in the most intensely commercialized situation such as the plantations, is still viewed by the workers and peasants as the embodiment of social relations. Work relations are understood as mutual personal relations, and are not disguised as social relations between the products of labour disembodied from the active human social milieu which gave them form. The finished products are not seen as separate from their origin, obedient to their own autonomous system of price regulation, and in that sense eventually dominant over their creators and no longer recognizable as product.

On the other hand, those very social relations and conditions which exist on the plantations and large commercial farms are such that the human agency tends to be seen as evil and contrary to nature. It is precisely because the field hands are not seen as alienated beings, adrift from the economic process and productive enterprise, that this type of moral attribution can occur.

In the widest sense the devil is the leading and conglomerate metaphor of the opposition between the peasant mode of production and the new economy, and the sensitivity to this is one of the last great insights of a peasant class about to be crushed by the wheels of history and be remoulded by the unrestrained power of the modern institutions.

NOTES TO CHAPTER XIV

1. Sugar cane in this region, as in other parts of the world, is normally harvested by being cut as close to the ground as possible. The root is then allowed to re-grow and the new stalk is cut when mature. This is continued three to five times until the sugar content becomes too low for commercial requirements, and the root itself is plowed up. The cane succeeding the first harvest is referred to as the ratoon. All in all, the one planting normally lasts from eight to ten years in the Cauca valley.

2. I have never seen such a figurine, nor the preparation of one. Neither have I observed anybody using one. What is being reported is what has been told by many people, who take it as a fact of everyday life. The details given are invariably the same, and people will go so far as to say that they have seen somebody working in this fashion and describe with amazement the amount of work accomplished without excess effort.

While it is important to point out that I have never witnessed these events, this does not detract from the value of the following analysis which is essentially concerned with beliefs, and not only with behaviour.

3. The priests in the Puerto Tejada region have always been white, and generally come from fairly well-to-do middle class rural families. The priest who ran the local parish from 1940 to 1970

managed to acquire several hundred hectares of peasant land, and the peasants say that he greatly helped the plantations and large commercial farms extend their land holdings. The townswomen and peasant women commonly say that whenever they brought a child to be baptized, this priest would ask; "And where was this one conceived? In the cane fields?" People commonly believed that the priests make regular visits to the local brothels. One of the local medical doctors, when drunk, would sometimes stand in front of the church at night and shout out that the priest had visited him suffering from an attack of syphilis. Children in town are constantly composing disparaging doggerel to the effect that the priest is an unworthy character; that he smuggles marijuana under his cassock, and so on. Nevertheless, it is also believed that the priest has great magical powers, and that he can exorcize evil spirits with Holy water, for example.

4. A description of these events and the class forces operating appears in Chapter III.

5. An old peasant, (not a protestant) living and born in the southern part of the Cauca valley, is very worth quoting in this regard.

Here the bible was "aristocratized," or wicked and excommunicated, as those people say. The bible was good, but only for them, for the priests. Anybody else who had a bible was excommunicated; they went to hell. Listen! From where came the ignorance of the people, and the lack of understanding between pueblos, the hatred between blacks and whites, the big against the small? From where comes this egoism? It comes from the exploitation that one side doesn't want the other to know the truth about things--the truth in the bible, the truth about life . . . Well, God gave the land in common to all the world, to everybody . . . it says that God said, "My land can be neither sold nor bargained for."

6. This approach has been further advanced by Wolf (1966), Sahlins (1972), and Franklin (1969), to mention but a few of the more outstanding contributions. Chayanov (1966) presents a very sustained and systematic analysis along these lines also. Needless to say these views are not without controversy, as the work of Firth (1967) clearly illustrates.

7. This distinction can probably be applied to much of lowland Latin America and the Caribbean. R. T. Smith in his analysis of the Negro family in Guyana, for example, stresses the distinction between the domestic domain and the politico-juridical domain. While female roles are primarily confined within the domestic domain, male roles are far more dependent on class and occupational parameters, and are relatively independent of familial or kinship roles (R. T. Smith, 1956).

However, there are problems with this analytic distinction between the domestic and the politico-juridical domains, since the domestic domain, empirically, clearly encompasses land ownership and use, and land is one of the key components in a long-standing political conflict. While it is true that state law and norms are channelled through males rather than females, and in this specific sense the 'politico-juridical' domain tends to be the province of males, the fact remains that the wider sense of 'political,' extended so as to include the issue of land, must equally include females.

8. It is tempting to speculate that as females, particularly townswomen, become increasingly employed as wage labourers in the plantation fields, and as men find it increasingly difficult to obtain work

as afiliados, so the men will turn more and more to the commercialization of the peasant crops as a reaction to their diminishing opportunities.

9. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to describe the quite important role played by the north-west Amazonian Indian groups in the devil worship and magic of the Cauca valley. Specifically, groups around the Putamayo river connect with the Cauca valley plantation workers and peasants through the medium of the Sibundoy Indians who are noted shamans and wandering healers. Hallucinogenic drugs form a crucial part in the healing practices and rituals of these Indian groups, and these Indians serve as curers and sorcerers for much of the population in the Cauca valley, who in this way imbibe and maintain many aspects of Amazonian belief.

Hence the Cauca valley receives magical lore and beliefs from two separated hinterland areas; the north-west Amazon, and the Pacific coast. Both these hinterland areas are strikingly distinct to the Cauca valley. Nevertheless, and what is so very interesting, the inhabitants of the valley obviously have a great need for the services of the ritual and magical specialists from those "primitive" areas.

10. This has been described for other regions of Colombia as well; Barrantes Arango (1962, 174) and Chaves Mendoza (1963, 93-4).

11. In purely formal terms we seem to be dealing with a set of basic oppositions which can be thought of as the foundations of a cultural matrix or code. For added clarity of presentation, and in

anticipation of following material, the reader's indulgence is asked in presenting the following condensed and rather over-formalized outline.

The Basic Opposition:

replicating, self-perpetuating,
balanced, cyclical exchange
structure

non-reciprocal, self-extinguishing,
linear, unbalanced, exchange
structure

Replication and Contents

: is to . . .

God : devil
female : male
peasants : proletarians
peasant sphere : plantation sphere
traditional crops : Green Revolution crops
Liberals : Conservatives

fertile : barren
life : death
peasant mode of production : modern mode of production
peasant magic : proletarian magic
baptizing peso note : devil contract

12. This type of explanation has been forcefully presented by George Foster who argues, mainly in terms of ethnographic material derived from field-work amongst highland Indians in Mexico, that peasants in general have an ideology which can be summarized as the concept of the 'limited Good.' This purported ideology holds that all the good things in life are in limited and finite supply. Therefore peasants will use a variety of techniques to curtail the entrepreneurial activities of any of their neighbours who would seem to be gaining a larger slice of the economic pie available to the peasant community as a whole. For a trenchant critique of this concept of the 'limited Good' the reader is advised to consult Jayawardena (1968).

13. Take as an example the following statements regarding capital and markets taken from the financial section of the New York Times during April, 1974.

Money is here clearly described in terms which regard it as animistic or animatistic, containing a power of its own and an autonomy from human beings.

We read of the "sagging dollar," of "cash flows," of "treasury bills backing up," of "run-away and galloping inflation," of "climbing interest rates," of factories referred to as "plants," of "money growing according to investment," of how your "investments can go to work for you," and so on. The active mood predominates; "The London pound closed firmly at \$2.40," "Despite gasoline shortages and uncertain supplies, ten of the fifteen most active issues traded on Monday could be classed as travel-oriented." The price of copper is reported as having now no proportion to the value of the coins in which it is minted; one spokesman for an important producer says, ". . . while our selling price is killing us, we do have contractual and other obligations to deliver, whether we like to or not."

We note here a type of fetishism as regards money and commodities. There is a definite attribution of life, autonomy, and power to what are otherwise considered to be inanimate objects. Conversely, this seems to imply a draining of those very same qualities from the human actors who bestow the attribution.

APPENDIX NO. 1

FIELD METHODS

A total of fourteen months between 1970 and 1972 was spent in residence in the town of Puerto Tejada and one of its outlying rural areas. Most of this time was spent in participant observation working with peasants and plantation field hands, and living with two families; one in the township itself and one in the rural area. Extra time was spent in the state archives in the Departmental Capital of Popayán, and in interviewing officials in various organizations in the city of Cali and the National Capital of Bogotá.

The field-work was enormously facilitated by the assistance of my wife, and one permanent assistant, a male peasant aged thirty-two who was born in the area and who had himself worked for some five years on the sugar plantations.

My acceptance by the local peasants and landless workers was greatly enhanced by the fact that I arrived with a letter of recommendation to one of the local medical doctors who had led a powerful reform movement in the late 1960's. Having a medical degree myself, I was further able to reciprocate with informants in what otherwise would have been rather unbalanced and difficult relationships. The peasants and workers of the Cauca valley are notorious for their suspicion of outsiders, whites, and middle and upper class persons. Given the hostility between social classes and ethnic groups it is

extremely difficult if not impossible to inspire the confidence of all strata of the population, since friendship with one group earns the suspicion or enmity of the others.

As a result of my mode of entry into the town and region, the early friendships I accumulated, and my research interests, my ties were much stronger with peasants and landless workers than with the local middle and upper class. While this allowed me to gain an understanding of the lives, attitudes, and sense of history of the lower classes, it prejudiced my understanding of the middle and upper classes. This was to some extent compensated by close contacts I developed with one plantation administrator, some members of the ruling families resident in Popayán, and bureaucrats at all levels in Cali and Bogotá.

Many tape recordings of interviews with local elderly people were made in order to document local oral history. A substantial census was carried out in 1971 with the assistance of my wife and my one permanent local assistant. This involved 50 households in the township of Puerto Tejada, 50 households in the village of Villarica, and 38 households in two contiguous rural neighbourhoods (veredas). By the time this was carried out I had, I believe, earned the trust of the informants, and I believe the information thus obtained to be reliable.

The samples, however, were not drawn on a technically random basis, and for that reason the statistical basis is suspect, as far as generalizations from the data are concerned. Given the local circumstances it is well-nigh impossible to carry out a door-to-door random survey with any accurate results. My method was the "snowball" one of

moving from acquaintance to acquaintance until I had achieved the number of interviews I desired.

While the data contains no defects as regards household composition (sex, age, and kinship relation), there is naturally some room for doubt as regards income and size of land holdings, always difficult things to measure in a peasant society.

The question of land size is most acute amongst the rural residents, since the villagers and townspeople are generally landless. In assessing the size of land holdings amongst the peasantry I was greatly aided by my permanent assistant who lived in the neighbourhood being sampled, and was related through kinship and marriage to most of the households in question. Since each person in any locality has a good idea as to the land possessed by each household, and since the amount of land is always a crucial question when it comes to settling inheritance, the size of plots is generally public knowledge. In addition, I cross-checked the figures given us by informants with other informants. Furthermore in some 15% of cases I measured the plots by stepping them out, and in all those cases the measures I thus obtained were in agreement with the figures obtained through informants and cross-checking. Reference to the local land-tax office also confirmed my results.

As regards income, the question is even more difficult. A variety of techniques were used to assess this. Since by this time I had obtained accurate data on production from two peasant farms I was able to estimate the cash yields from other peasant farms by extrapolating from their recent production onto the production curves I had previously obtained from my more intensive studies. As the

traditional peasant crops are harvested every two weeks, it was a simple operation to obtain the most recent production figures. The annual assessment was modified according to the state of the peasant farm. In addition, assessments had to be made for income earned apart from the peasant's land--such as manual labour for other peasants, manual labour on the estates, service jobs in the town and city, and so forth. This was obtained simply by asking the informants what job at what income level they were doing at the time of the interview, what their job history had been over the past year, and drawing an average figure.

Weekly budgets of four households were obtained over four months, and production of two peasant farms was monitored at fortnightly intervals over nine months.

Three peasant households that had recently begun to cultivate new crops in modern style were also closely observed. (See Appendix 2).

Much of the local historical information comes from the documents left by Sergio Arboleda, the owner of the local slave plantation in the nineteenth century. These documents are located in the official state archive in Popayán, and have not as yet been classified or indexed. Not only do they contain some of his letters and many of the plantation's accounts during his management, but there are also account books extending back to the mid-eighteenth century. In referring to these I simply state "A.C.C." (Archivo Central Del Cauca).

APPENDIX NO. 2

THREE CASE STUDIES OF PEASANT PERFORMANCE
WITH MODERN CROPS AND TECHNOLOGY

Case No. 1

This concerns a household headed by a grandmother, Martina, aged sixty-one. She lives with her son, Evangelisto, aged thirty-four, his six year old daughter, and a five year old son of one of her other adult sons, Simeon. Martina is moderately well off compared with most peasants, since she owns 5.5 plazas of land. Her daughter lives in the adjacent hut, and mostly works as a higgler. Martina's sons, Evangelisto and Simeon, help her on her plot, and also work as day labourers, sometimes as peons, but usually on the large estates with labour contractors.

Some two years ago, under strong pressure from her sons, she allowed them to uproot slightly more than one plaza of land in order to grow corn. Since then they have had five plantings, and the results are as follows.

First crop	corn	sown by hand	yield of 900 kgms.
Second	corn	machinery	yield of 975 kgms.
Third	corn	machinery	yield of 900 kgms.
Fourth	corn	machinery	nothing--lost all due to heavy rains
Fifth	soybeans	machinery	still growing

Evangelisto is in some doubt as to whether it has all been worthwhile. On being pressed he tends to admit that after two years they have spent more money than they have gained, but then that is a good part of the reason why he has to continue. There is no immediate way in which he can return to the old system. The land is now denuded, and new cocoa and coffee trees would take from four to six years before entering into full production. Moreover it is precisely because of his large debts that he has to keep trying to recoup his losses with one massive windfall, and thereby free himself from his debts with the banks and the graneros. In fact he is in the process of clearing yet another plaza of his mother's land.

One obtains a more detailed idea, of both his hopes and actions, in examining the cultivation of the latest planting of soybeans. This now occupies almost 1.5 plazas.

	<u>Man-Days</u>	<u>Peso Value</u>
Plowing, harrowing, and sowing (tractor hired from rich peasant)	20	1,400
Seed (bought from granero)		480
Fertilizer		1,500
Weedings: Done three times		
peons	20	400
household labour	11	220
Harvesting:		
first stage, manual		
peons	6	300
household	3	60
second stage, machine		450
Total	<hr style="width: 50px; margin: 0 auto;"/> 40	<hr style="width: 50px; margin: 0 auto;"/> 4,810

The seed is bought from don Guillermo, owner of "El Sol," one of the larger graneros in the township of Puerto Tejada. Don Guillermo, a white from Antioquia, also advances them the money for the plowing, sowing, fertilizer, harvesting, and peons. But he demands that the harvest be sold to him, at 2,800 pesos per ton. Since the prevailing market price is 3,300 pesos per ton, this is quite a substantial difference to pay for such credit. Don Guillermo has already lent them 1,500 pesos, and has promised another 500. Maybe he will lend even more . . . "depending on how things go"

They will employ peons, from the surrounding households, and will pay "por tarea"--per row of plants weeded or harvested. Evangelisto and his brother will work as much as possible on the plot, but they must have extra hands since the two of them are unable to weed or harvest the total area by themselves in the times possible. Their mother will help on occasions, but her commitment is not full-time.

They estimate a yield of 1.5 tons a plaza, probably quite an overestimation given their past record. This would give them a total of 2.25 tons for the 1.5 plazas, which when sold to don Guillermo would mean a gross return of 6,450 pesos.

Summarizing their performance, partly actual and partly speculative, we can draw up the following table (See Table A.1).

It is very debatable as to whether this represents a higher annual net return/plaza than would be obtained from the traditional crops. Certainly in comparison with the data presented in Chapter VII (See Table 7.2) this household is now making less money per plaza than those peasants cultivating in the traditional manner for whom we have reasonably accurate information. It has also to be borne in mind that

this analysis of Martina's household veers towards the optimistic, in that we have adopted their rather overinflated estimate as to the future yield.

TABLE A.1.--Economic performance of peasant household No. 1 cultivating soybeans on 1.5 plazas of land

	Including household labour as a cash cost (pesos)	Excluding household labour as a cash cost (pesos)
Capital outlay	4,180	4,530
Gross return	6,450	6,450
Net return	1,640	1,920
Annual net return ^a	4,100	4,800
Net return per household man-day of labour	117	137
Annual net return/plaza	2,733	3,200
Net return per household man-day of labour/plaza	78	91

^a Assuming 2.5 crops of soybeans per year. This assumption is also made in subsequent tables in the case of soybeans and beans. For corn, we assume 2.0 crops per year.

Case No. 2

This concerns a young man called Jonás, aged twenty-eight. He has recently returned to the area after spending four years cutting sugar cane as a wage labourer in a plantation situated in the Atlantic coast region of Colombia.

About seven months ago Jonás decided to clear 0.8 plazas of his land and grow beans. He uprooted the trees with his brother Elime,

working two to three days a week on this task in alternation with working as a day labourer on the estates. In all it took the two of the just over three weeks of labour to complete this job.

The land was plowed, harrowed, and sown by tractor, which was hired from the neighbouring rich peasant, Jose María, for a cost of 720 pesos. The weeding and harvesting was done by hand, as was the separation of the beans from the plant stalks. A peon was employed on occasions, apart from the labour of the two brothers. The Caja Agraria lent him 3,500 pesos. The beans were sold to a small granero in the village of Villarica, for 80 pesos an arroba (12.5 kilos). The seed was bought from the Caja Agraria in the township of Puerto Tejada for 146 pesos. Their balance sheet works out as follows.

	<u>Man-Days</u>	<u>Peso Value</u>
	<u>Man-Days</u>	<u>Peso Value</u>
Clearing the plot	32	640
Plowing, harrowing, and sowing (tractor hired from a rich peasant)		720
Seed		146
Weeding; done twice		
the two brothers	16	320
one peon	8	160
Harvesting;		
pulling out the plants	3	60
separating beans from plants	10	200
(all done by the two brothers)		
Total	<hr style="width: 50px; margin: 0 auto;"/> 69	<hr style="width: 50px; margin: 0 auto;"/> 2,240

Their yield was one of 344 kgms., just about half of that reported by the C.V.C. as average for commercial farms. They were able to sell

this for 2,240 pesos, which gave them a net return of 0 pesos after five months work. This net income would appear much higher if one was to exclude the costs of felling the old plot in which case it would amount to a total of 640 pesos for the two men. Furthermore, if one was to exclude their own labour as a cash cost, then the net income would amount to 1,220 pesos, for the two of them.

TABLE A.2.--Economic performance of peasant household No. 2 cultivating beans on 0.8 plazas of land

	Including household labour as a cash cost (pesos)	Excluding household labour as a cash cost (pesos)
Capital outlay	2,240	1,020.0
Gross return	2,240	2,240.0
Net return	0	1,220.0
Net return excluding cost of felling plot	640	1,220.0
Annual net return excluding cost of felling plot	1,600	3,050.0
Net return per household man-day of labour (excluding cost of felling plot)	164	31.3
Annual net return/plaza (excluding cost of felling plot)	1,992	3,792.0
Net return per household man-day of labour/plaza (excluding cost of felling plot)	22	42.0

The cash return/plaza as revealed by these figures is below or at the bottom end of the range of income derived by peasants from the

traditional mode of agriculture. Moreover the work expended is greater, being 115 man-days per plaza annually, if 2.5 crops were planted a year, as against the traditional peasant plot which requires in the vicinity of 36 man-days per plaza each year.

Moreover, in strict cash terms the brothers are in a very poor position since they borrowed 3,500 pesos from the bank, and ended up with only 1,220 pesos in the hand with which to pay this back-- assuming that all the profits could be used for this purpose. To grow another crop of corn, soybeans, or beans, and use machinery, they will have to find still more credit, to the tune of 600 to 900 pesos. Even if they do not use machinery, which would be unusual, then they would be faced with the problem of paying peons and the possibility of a smaller yield.

In fact, Jonás has already started to grow a crop of soybeans on this plot and has received another loan from the Caja Agraria for 2,500 pesos for this purpose.

Case No. 3

This case involves a household headed by a sixty-seven year old woman, Diocelina, a cousin of Martina, the head of the household in Case No. 1. Diocelina has slightly more than two plazas of land, and her son Rojello, aged twenty-one, persuaded her to fell almost one plaza despite her remonstrances not to clear the plot if one had only a little land, and that at least with the old crops one had produce all the time ("todos los dias"). Their decision to fell the one plaza coincided with the height of the campaign launched by the local branch of the government's agricultural extension service, some two

years ago. In fact this organization (ICA) lent them 5,000 pesos for the express purpose of felling the plot.

The clearing of the plot took Rojelio 40 days of his own labour, and 20 man-days of employed peons. The first two crops they tried were corn, and the next two, soybeans.

<u>First Crop: Corn</u>	<u>Man-Days</u>	<u>Pesos Value</u>
Preparation of soil and sowing--by hand		
peons	24	480
Rojelio	12	240
Seed (bought from Caja Agraria)		170
Weeding:		
peons	12	240
Rojelio	6	120
Harvesting (at four months on account of unexpected rains)		
Rojelio	1	20
Diocelina	1	20
peon	1	20
Total	57	1,310

This was a very disappointing crop. Unexpected rains caused havoc, and with the shortage of cash in the household they decided to harvest the young corn, choclo, at four months rather than wait another two months until it was fully mature. The yield was very low. They garnered five sacks of corn ears, sold four at eighty pesos each, and kept one for domestic consumption.

TABLE A.3.--Economic performance of peasant household No. 3; first crop, corn

	Including household labour as a cash cost (pesos)	Excluding household labour as a cash cost (pesos)
Capital outlay	1,310	910
Gross return	100	100
Net return	minus 1,210	minus 810
Annual net return	minus 2,220	minus 1,620
Net return per household man-day of labour	minus 60	minus 40
Annual net return/plaza	minus 2,220	minus 1,620
Net return per household man-day of labour/plaza	minus 60	minus 40

Second Crop; Corn

The second crop went far better than the first. They were better prepared to deal with the rains, the crop lasted the full six months, and they prepared the soil and planted with machinery loaned by the agricultural extension agency (ICA) at the phenomenally low rate of 140 pesos/plaza.

	<u>Man-Days</u>	<u>Peso Value</u>
Preparation of soil and planting (with tractor from ICA)		140
Seed (bought from the Caja Agraria)		172
Weeding: done twice		
peons	15	300
Rojelio	10	200

	<u>Man-Days</u>	<u>Peso Value</u>
Harvesting:		
household	6	120
peons	4	80
Total	35	1,012

The yield was 1,123 kgms., one-fifth of which was retained for domestic consumption with the rest being sold at 1,660 pesos a metric ton. Their balance sheet for these six months, with annual projections, as far as this crop is concerned, was as follows.

TABLE A.4.--Economic performance of peasant household No. 3; second crop, corn

	Including household labour as a cash cost (pesos)	Excluding household labour as a cash cost (pesos)
Capital outlay	1,012	692
Gross return	1,860	1,860
Net return	848	1,168
Annual net return	1,696	2,336
Net return per household man-day of labour	53	73
Annual net return/plaza	1,696	2,336
Net return per household man-day of labour/plaza	53	73

The yield of corn, 1.12 metric tons, is way below the average reported by the C.V.C. for commercial farms (2.18 tons/plaza), yet

the net monetary return per plaza is amazingly high. In part this is due to the fact that the ICA agency then had a policy of hiring out its tractors at a very low fee. For instance, if the regular amount had been charged in this case, then the net return, with household labour included as a cash cost, would fall from 848 to around 438 pesos. On the other hand, if we take the net return so as to exclude the household labour as a cash cost, then it would fall only to 758 pesos, which is not so far from the C.V.C. average of 825 pesos/plaza for commercial farms. Still, the new type of farming has not even begun to make much impression on the debts incurred in beginning it.

Third Crop: Soybeans

This crop was planted in January, 1972, shortly after the harvest of the corn. The ground was plowed and harrowed by tractor, but no longer by the ICA agency. Its services were no longer available. The peasants who had perilously launched themselves onto the route of seasonal crop production, and been aided and stimulated in this by the ICA low-interest loans and promises of cheap tractor hire, now found themselves without such support, if it can really be called such, and were now face-to-face with the open market. Hence the plowing, harrowing, and sowing, in this case, their third crop, was done at the prevailing market price by the neighbouring rich peasant, Jose María, for 600 pesos. The second stage of the harvesting, as is nearly always the case for soybeans, was done by machinery also. In this crop there was more participation by other members of the household. Two of Rojelio's brothers, aged seventeen and fourteen, helped him with the weeding, and Diocelina also helped with the harvesting.

	<u>Man-Days</u>	<u>Peso Value</u>
Preparation of soil and planting (tractor hired from rich peasant)		600
Seed (bought from the Caja Agraria)		170
Weeding: done twice		
peons	6	120
household	9	180
Harvest:		
manual--household	5	100
machine		144
Total	20	1,314

The yield at the end of four months was quite high; 0.9 tons for the plaza. This was all sold at the rate of 2,780 pesos the ton, giving them a gross return of 2,500 pesos.

TABLE A.5.--Economic performance of peasant household No. 3; third crop, soybenas

	Including household labour as a cash cost (pesos)	Excluding household labour as a cash cost (pesos)
Capital outlay	1,314	1,034
Gross return	2,500	2,500
Net return	1,186	1,466
Annual net return	2,965	3,665
Net return per household man-day of labour	85	105
Annual net return/plaza	2,965	3,665
Net return per household man-day of labour/plaza	85	105

The yield of 0.9 tons per plaza is but 67% of the C.V.C. estimated average of 1.34 tons/plaza for commercial, non-peasant farms, and very much lower than what the skilled commercial farmers in the area, using all the technical aids possible, say that they can achieve as a maximum, which is around 2.0 tons per plaza. Nevertheless, the net monetary return is not very different to what the commercial farms can make, being 1,186 pesos/plaza, if we include the household labour as a cash cost, and 1,466 pesos/plaza, if we exclude the household labour as a cash cost.

According to the figures we have derived from the C.V.C. and other sources (see above) the net profit for a commercial farm with the average yield of 1.34 tons of soybeans/plaza, is 1,464 pesos/plaza/crop, two pesos less than the peasant profit/plaza in the case under examination. In other words, the peasant rate of profit, assuming that household labour does not appear as a cash cost, is greater per unit of soybeans produced than that obtained, on average, on the commercial, non-peasant farms.

Nevertheless, this household is still deeply in debt. Even if they had accumulated no more debts than the initial 5,000 pesos loaned by the government agricultural agency, they would still be owing 3,176 pesos.

Fourth Crop: Soybeans

This crop was planted in July, 1972, six months after the preceding crop of soybeans was planted. The soil was only harrowed in this case; there was no deep plowing. Instead of buying seed from the Caja Agraria, they used seed obtained from the preceding crop. There

was only one weeding, instead of the customary two, since they said that they lacked the money to pay for peons, and could not do it themselves. Diocelina, the head of the household, and her adult son Rojelio, shared the weeding this time.

On account of the fact that the second weeding did not occur, there were some problems when it came to the harvest. Before the plants could be pulled out of the soil, and the mechanical harvester sent in, the plot had to be cleaned and weeded so that the machine would only scoop up soybean plants. Four peons, including at least one of Diocelina's cousins (Evangelisto, mentioned in Case No. 1), and four members of the household worked one day each on this task. The actual extraction of the plants from the soil was done two days later, with four peons, all women, and four members of the household. The peons were from neighbouring huts, and were all paid on "por tarea" basis, averaging around twenty pesos a day. Rojelio had to act as watchman over the plot for four nights because the machine came later than initially agreed.

The cost of hiring the harvesting machine had risen in the past six months from 12 pesos a bag, to 15 pesos, an increase of 25%. The selling price of soybeans had also increased over the same time period, from 2,780 pesos a ton to 2,940 pesos, an increase of only 5.7%.

The costs therefore were as follows.

	<u>Man-Days</u>	<u>Peso Value</u>
Harrowing of soil and sowing (hired tractor from a rich peasant)		400
Weeding (once only)		
household	12	240
Harvesting:		
peons	8	160
household	9	180
machine		180
Total	29	1,161

The yield this time was the same as for the preceding soybean crop, being 0.9 tons for the plaza of land. They sold it in the township of Puerto Tejada for 2,642 pesos. The economic performance of the household for this planting is outlined below.

TABLE A.6.--Economic performance of peasant household No. 3; fourth crop, soybeans

	Including household labour as cash cost (pesos)	Excluding household labour as a cash cost (pesos)
Capital outlay	1,161	741
Gross return	2,642	2,642
Net return	1,481	1,901
Annual net return	3,702	4,752
Net return per household man-day of labour	87	112
Annual net return/plaza	3,702	4,752
Net return per household man-day of labour/plaza	87	112

At the end of two years this household has still barely made enough money to pay back their first debt of 5,000 pesos, regardless of whether we include their own labour as a cash cost or not. Their yields on all the crops planted is well below the average for non-peasant farms, and their annual income from the seasonal crops is less than that obtained by peasants adhering to the traditional mode of agriculture.

GLOSSARY

Afiliado	Permanently employed field hand on the large estates. Usually a male. Compare with <u>iguazo/a</u> , below.
Almacen	Large shop or store.
Brujo	Sorcerer, witch, or magician.
Caja Agraria	The Rural Bank.
Campanero	Companion; term often used in reference to one's consensual union spouse, whether co-resident or not.
Finca	Farm; usually refers to a peasant plot.
Granero	Grain merchant; wholesaler who buys crops.
Higgler	Term the author uses to refer to people (usually women) who market small items of food in local and regional markets.
Iguazo/a	Literally refers to a type of migratory duck. Is the local term used to refer to a male (<u>iguazo</u>) or female (<u>iguaza</u>) who works as a day labourer for a labour contractor on the plantations or large commercial farms. They are also sometimes called <u>piratas</u> (pirates). They have no security of employment and cannot join a trade union. They constitute at least 50% of the work force employed by the large estates. They

are cheaper to hire and present less political problems than the permanently employed--the afiliados.

- Injenio Mill. Refers nowadays, in the Cauca valley, to the large modern sugar mills, and by clear extension to the sugar lands owned by the owners of the mills. Technically, refers to rather old fashioned mills.
- Jefe Chief. Can refer to a political leader (jefe politico) or the head of a household.
- Jornal One day of wage labour.
- Jornalero A person who works as a day labourer, usually for cash wages.
- Latifundio Large land holding.
- Mestizo A person born from the union between an Indian and a white.
- Minifundio Small land holding; usually considered to be less than required for household subsistence.
- Muñeco Doll. Refers also to the doll made of flour or wood that is widely believed to be used by male plantation workers as part of their pact with the devil to increase productivity.
- Municipio Municipality; basic and lowest political-administrative division within the Departamento (State). Is governed by its own mayor (alcalde) who is appointed by the Governor of the Departamento. The Governor, in turn, is

- appointed by the President of the Republic.
- The alcalde and municipal offices are located in the chief town of the municipio, called the cabecera, and the names of the cabecera and the municipio are usually the same.
- Palenque Run-away slave encampment.
- Palenquero Run-away slave living in a palenque.
- Peasant Small scale rural cultivator who owns or rents land. Referred to by the society at large as "campesino". In the case of the Cauca valley, and most of Colombia, the campesinos are ethnically and culturally distinct from the large land owners, most state officials, most clergy, and the upper class in general.
- Peon As used in this thesis, refers to a labourer, male or female, hired for wages by a peasant. Usually, peons are peasants also, owning at least some land.
- Plaza Can refer to either the principal square within a town or city, or to a unit of land measurement. In the latter sense it is synonymous with a fanegada and is equal to 0.64 of an hectare.
- Tienda Small shop.
- Trapiche Old fashioned sugar mill which only produces crude sugar called panela. Usually animal-drawn.

Remesa Weekly ration.

Vega Flat fertile land near a river.

Vereda Sub-division of the municipio. Can refer simply to a neighbourhood, with vague boundaries, or to a specific political-administrative unit governed by a police inspector.

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