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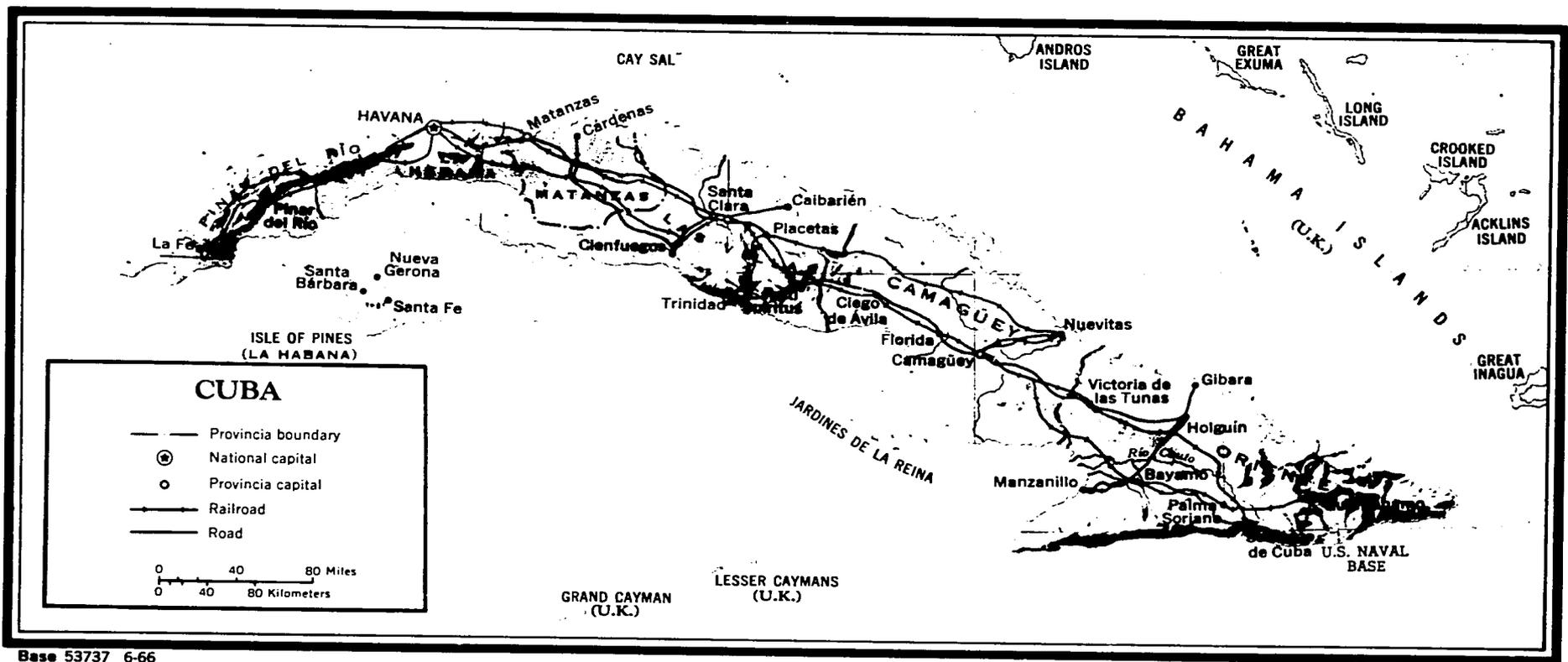
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I. Introduction

Cuba, the largest island in the Caribbean Sea, has been undergoing radical changes in its political, social, and economic structure since the take-over of the Revolution in January, 1959.

Located directly south of the Florida Peninsula and stretching almost 1,200 kilometers from East to West, Cuba dominates geographically the entrance to the Gulf of Mexico. The area of Cuba, including the isle of Pines and all the other cays and islets surrounding it, has been calculated at 114,524 square kilometers.¹

It is located slightly south of the Tropic of Cancer, which separates the North Temperate Zone from the Tropical Zone, resulting in a moderate climate all year round.

According to an estimate of the United Nations, the population of Cuba was around 7,132 million people, as of 1963, based on Cuban Government estimates.²

The Revolution, which overthrew the dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista, has drastically changed the Cuban social and economic structure from a private enterprise economy with Government intervention to a socialist economy in which the State owns and operates the productive resources. The political changes have also been very profound, for Cuba has severed most of its ties with the nations of the Western Hemisphere, except for diplomatic relations with Mexico, while establishing close bonds with the Socialist bloc.

¹Cuban Census Office estimate, cited by Leví Marrero, Geografía de Cuba (Havana: Alfa, 1951), p. 3.

²United Nations (ECLA), Economic Study for Latin America, 1963 (Mexico, 1964), p. 272.

A. Historical Sketch of Cuban Agricultural Development

The first colonizers arriving at the island of Cuba in the early 16th Century were seeking riches rather than looking for a permanent home. The colonists were given the right to use the Indian population for the hard work involved in gold searching activities. The system called encomiendas or repartimientos became the principal factor in the extermination of the natives who were not accustomed to the hard labor imposed on them by the conquerors. With the development of the encomiendas, a land distribution pattern started to emerge: the land grants or mercedes, given by the principal councils or cabildos, were described in terms of circles with a specified radius of "n" leagues. This type of rural property gradually evolved into haciendas comuneras or communal properties in which land was held without subdivision by a number of claimants.

Two systems were used for clarifying the possessions of each of the owners; the first was to brand each individual's cattle with a specific brand; the other was to give each one so-called pesos de posesión or pesos de tierra which were an early version of shares of stock in a modern corporation. The breakup of the communal haciendas began in the early 17th Century, following the internal strife existing among the owners of the pesos de posesion. The introduction of sugar cane cultivation and later of tobacco commercial farming contributed to the gradual disintegration of the communal farms, by providing different opportunities for those having poor returns in the cattle business and prompting them to ask for a division of the communal farm in order to get full control of their own part. Another important factor was the policy followed by the Spanish Crown which encouraged

such subdivision with a series of Royal Ordinances, especially during the early 19th Century.

In the 1830's, the establishment of large productive units in the European sugar beet industry showed the feasibility of producing sugar in large-scale factories.

The new central sugar mills called centrales, with their larger capacity and efficiency, furthered the growth of the sugar production.

Many small growers, without capital to contribute toward the creation of the central found it more profitable to abandon their trapiches and grow cane as their sole endeavor.³ In this way, the grower class or colonos surged into the Cuba economy. This independent cane farmer sent his canes to the central for grinding. The mill owner kept a certain percentage of the sugar obtained as payment for his services, while the farmer received the balance and disposed of it in the fashion more convenient to his interests. Throughout 1877 the colono had a large degree of independence which became smaller as the central grew and its railroad extended farther from it. Once their holdings were crisscrossed by a particular central's railroad, it was very difficult to attain a satisfactory bargaining position.

The cultivation of tobacco also became very important to the Cuban economy. Though controlled by the official Spanish Crown Monopoly, its growth was very rapid due to the increasing demand and the excellent quality obtained from the Cuban soil.

The production of tobacco was characterized by the relatively small

³Trapiche is a minute sugar mill.

area of land which it occupied and by the low use of slave labor. Tobacco farming was considered one of the few types of hard work a man could do without losing his good name and honor.

The cattle industry was also one of the bases of the Cuban economy, together with sugar, coffee, and tobacco. Since the beginning of the colonization, the Spanish Government aimed to develop the island cattle resources. In fact, the cattle industry was the most important industry until the development of the sugar industry in the 19th Century. The Independence Wars destroyed most of the cattle sector.

B. The Formation of the Sugar Latifundia

1. The Concentration Process

By 1870, the trend toward concentration of production in the centrales was well under way and the use of steam-driven machines was becoming the rule rather than the exception. The invention of the railroad also helped the potentialities of the sugar industry by widening its sphere of action and lowering transportation costs while increasing its efficiency. The railroad capability was a basic need of the new centrales in order to provide the needed supply of cane.

While concentration occurred, a parallel development was taking place: the smaller and less efficient trapiches were going bankrupt after failing to meet the competition offered by the larger mills. The larger the capacity of a central, the more certain it had to be of having ready sources of supply; for this reason, they extended their railroad lines as far as possible, until the lines from competing centrales met each other. This started a process of competition among them that was finally to lead

to mill ownership of the land. The first step of this process was the bidding for the cane of particular growers by more than one mill. This caused the percentage of yield offered by the central to increase, resulting in a short-run benefit for the colono or grower.⁴ A shortcoming of this extension was the fact that, when a particular grower's lands were served by the railroad of one mill, he had little choice but to sell to this mill which had a monopoly on transportation. This situation was less severe when the railroad serving the area was a public one.

To secure its supply of raw materials, the central mill turned then to "harsher" ways: either it had to dominate the grower so as to secure his supply, or it had to buy lands upon which to grow its own cane by using sharecroppers or direct administration. The acquisition of land by the mills led outright to latifundism by destroying the small property system existing at the time and by creating a much larger class of landless sharecroppers. This process, which had started to take place in the 1870's did not receive its principal impetus until the last part of the 1890's. Two reasons may be mentioned for this slow down: first, the Independence Wars which had not only liberated the slaves, but also destroyed many sugar fields and mills; second, the need for increasing amounts of capital to install machinery needed for the new centrales, and for the modernization of the older ones, limited the number and size of them to the amounts of capital available. With the end of the Independence Wars and the advent of the United States Military Intervention, a period of political stability,

⁴Sugar growers were paid for their canes on the basis of the sugar yields of their individual harvests.

unknown during the past thirty years of war, started; at the same time, the campaigns begun under the command of General Leonard Wood produced a substantial improvement in the degree of health of the population and in the general sanitary conditions. In addition, other social measures resulted in an increase in the social capital of the country. Political stability brought foreign capital not only from the United States, but also from Canada, France, and even Spain. This capital was attracted by the sugar industry's need and by the opportunities offered for it. The Platt Amendment to the 1901 Cuban Constitution was to contribute even more to the peace of mind of foreign capital, especially that from the United States. This amendment limited the independence that Cuba had won after 30 years of struggle by giving the United States Government the right to intervene in Cuba when the situation demanded it. In addition, Cuba received preferential treatment in its trade with the United States amounting to a 20 percent reduction in the United States Tariff on Cuban imports; at the same time, all of the export taxes levied by Spain on Cuban exports were cancelled.

The Military Intervention and later the qualified independence gave Cuba a rebirth in which the only condition limiting the otherwise uncontrollable growth of the sugar industry and the latifundist system was the shortage of labor existing at the time.

As Cuba became a republic, the restrictions on the influx of cheap labor faded away and with them one of the last limitations to the growth of sugar latifundia.

With the advent of foreign capital, the concentration process

was accelerated giving the final touch to the destruction caused by the war. Between 1904 and 1914, the price of sugar advanced very rapidly thus increasing Cuba's attraction for foreign capital; the number of sugar mills decreased from 1,190 in 1877 to 207 in 1899,⁵ and to 171 in 1902.⁶ The benefits secured by greater efficiency were not shared with the laborers and administration colonos, who were sharecroppers working on the sugar mill's lands. The lack of credit institutions favored the change of land ownership. Whenever a grower or producer was in financial difficulties, he could not find a place from which to borrow money, but he was always able to find a willing foreign buyer.

In 1925-26, sugar mills controlled more than 22,931 square kilometers, or 170,873 caballerias, which represent roughly 20 percent of the area of Cuba. This land was in the hands of 171 mills which were in operation, but many mills were owned by one company; for example, the Cuban-American Sugar Company owned six mills with 14,867 caballerias of land; the Cuba Cane Sugar Company, twelve mills with 10,844 caballerias; the General Sugar Company, nine mills with 8,972 caballerias; and the United Fruit Company, two mills with 8,578 caballerias. These four companies owned about 25 percent of the land, in the hands of the sugar mills.⁷ It is obvious that the concentration of property is higher than indicated by the number of mills in operation. The figure is also misleading in that it does not show the

⁵Ramiro Guerra, op. cit., p. 91.

⁶"Anuario Azucarero de Cuba," Cuba Económica y Financiera, Vol. XXIII (Havana, 1959), Appendix I.

⁷Ramiro Guerra, op. cit., pp. 94-95.

amounts of lands controlled by the mills through leasing contracts or plain monopsonistic position. Considering the probable area of lands that cannot be cultivated in Cuba, such as swamps, mountains, and semi-desert regions, the power of these and other sugar corporations was considerable, due to the control of a great percentage of the better lands of the country.

The intense development of the Cuban sugar industry during this period had transformed Cuba into the largest sugar exporter of the world. It also tied up the domestic grower to a triple bond to the mills they were dependent upon it for land to rent, for the milling of the cane, and for credit.⁸ Cuba was led toward the role of a gigantic island plantation with all its sectors dominated by the "decision-makers" of the sugar industry.

It is strange to find a nation which has to be grateful for an economic crisis. To a certain extent, Cuba has to be grateful for the economic crisis of the late 1920's. This crisis brought much suffering, misery, hunger, unemployment, and insecurity to the Cuban people, but it also was instrumental in stopping the further expansion of the latifundist process. It is doubtful that any measure taken by the Cuban government of the time could have produced the same results as the economic crisis. The political power of the big sugar companies was too great to let the government, any government, do a thing to stop latifundism, but this political power was incapable of stopping the disastrous fall in sugar prices. Price per pound fell to an all-time low of 0.57 cents in June, 1929.⁹

⁸H.E. Frienlander, Historia Económica de Cuba (Havana: Cultural S.A., 1944), p. 471.

⁹Ramiro Guerra, op. cit., p. 287, Appendix 5.

2. Government Intervention: The 1937 Sugar Coordination Law¹⁰

The growth of the agricultural sector in general and the sugar sector in particular took place with a minimal amount of government intervention. It was not until the post First World War period that the government started its first attempts to affect the land tenure and tenancy relationships in the country. This era of intervention resulted in a large amount of legislation designed to regulate the major sector to overcome the effects of the late 1920's economic depression. The most important piece of agricultural legislation during this period, preceding the 1959 Land Reform, is the 1937 Sugar Coordination Law.

This Law was one of the fundamental steps toward the application of justice in the Cuban countryside, as it very explicitly defined the rights and obligations of both the growers and the mill owners. The assigning of production quotas, the price to be paid for grinding, the wages to be paid for labor, the amounts of rent to be paid for the use of the land, and the procedures for administration and arbitration are scrupulously detailed. The relations of the grower with the mill are defined in terms of sugar yield, the price of labor is set at a minimum both in monetary terms and in the value of 50 pounds of sugar of 96° polarization.¹¹

These regulations applied even during the tiempo muerto or dead season, when sugar production is stopped. These dispositions were ratified later by the 1940 Constitution which also declared illegal the importation of cheap labor. The price paid by the land renters to the mill

¹⁰This section is based on the following sources: Lowry Nelson, Rural Cuba, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1951), pp. 98-103; Ramiro Guerra, op. cit., pp. 286-290; Alvarez Díaz, et al., op. cit., pp. 449-457 and 616-677.

¹¹Lowry Nelson, op. cit., p. 101.

for the use of the land was related to the price of sugar on a semi-monthly basis. Likewise, the growers were guaranteed a fixed schedule of prices to be paid for grinding, set according to different levels of sugar yield, that is, the grower paid a price which depended on the sugar yield from his cane. But the more far-reaching effect of this Law can be found in the disposition giving the grower the right of permanency for as long as he meets the quota assigned to his respective holdings. This, in fact, transformed the character of the Cuban land tenure system. The grower was given the assurance of protection against arbitrary action by mill owners. The Law also describes the conditions under which the land owner could evict the tenant. The Coordination Law also tried to encourage the small independent colono by guaranteeing him the right of grinding up to 30,000 arrobas of cane, thus practically exempting him from the quota system. This was an exempt to strengthen the small grower and in this way obtain a better socio-economic balance in the Cuban rural sector. This Law amounted to an agrarian reform, in that it gave the tenant grower control of the land he tilled at a reasonable rent with the assurance of receiving a fair price for his product; it also gave small growers who owned their land the security of having a market for their crops up to the limits set by the Law. This Law was felt to be necessary due to the absolute control that the mills had over large areas of land. Table 1 shows the amount of land controlled by the sugar companies by provinces in 1939.

The Constitution of 1940 emphasized even more the policy outlined in the Sugar Coordination Act. Its Article 90 says textually:

Large landholdings are proscribed, and to do away with them, the maximum amount of land that each person or entity can have, for each kind of exploitation to which said land is devoted, and bearing in mind the respective peculiarities, shall be specified by law. The acquisition and possession of land by foreign persons and companies shall be restrictively limited by law, which shall provide 12 measures tending to restore the land to Cubans.

These Government actions were able to insure two things: first, they gave sugar production a higher degree of stability, and second, they gave the small grower and the tenant grower a new security by securing a market and a fair price for his crop insuring the second the right against arbitrary eviction. However, these actions could not stop the undue weight that the sugar industry was attaining in the Cuban economy and exports. Another aspect of this fact was the unemployment caused by the shortness of the production process of sugar which only required an annual average of three months. As the zafra started, the country burst into activity; when it was over, a long dying began until the next crop. Most of the best lands were controlled by the mills which, in spite of having large areas of idle land on reserve, were not interested in any other type of agricultural production. In this way, they underemployed their land resources and contributed to the unemployment of the sugar workers during the dead season. This reserve land was supposedly used when sugar prices went up. In 1945, 54.5 percent of the total value of agricultural production was represented by sugar cane, coffee, and tobacco.¹³ In 1958, these three activities accounted for 47.1 percent, a decrease of 7.4 percentage points during the period in which rice, potatoes, and cattle production advanced fairly quickly, though

¹²Rubén Iglesias, Land Reform as a Pre-requisite for Economic Development in Cuba (Le Hague: Institute of Social Studies, 1963), p. 94.

¹³Leví Marrero, op. cit., p. 184

Table 1

Land Owned or Leased by
Sugar Companies, 1939
(In Caballerias)

Province	Lands Owned	Lands Leased	Total Lands
Pinal del Rio	4,396	2,914	7,310
Habana	8,092	2,771	10,863
Matanzas	15,255	4,876	20,131
Las Villas	23,601	10,540	34,141
Camaguey=	44,300	19,529	63,829
Oriente	<u>61,695</u>	<u>11,439</u>	<u>73,134</u>
Total	157,339	52,069	209,408

Note: A caballería equals 13.4 hectares

Source: Dirección General del Censo, Informe General del Censo de 1943
(Habana: P. Fernández y Cia., 1945), cited by Alvarez Díaz, et al.,
op. cit., p. 651.

not enough to displace to a larger extent the traditional crops.¹⁴

¹⁴Computed from table published in Jacques Chonchol, op. cit., p. 78.

II. Economic and Social Effects of the Structure of Land Ownership and Production in Cuba

A. Land Tenure

The historical development of Cuban agriculture shows how the process toward concentration of land ownership took place during the first decades of the 20th Century. It also shows some of the efforts made by the Government to stop that process through the use of measures which legalized the situation of the share cropper and squatter and structured some of the largest sectors such as sugar through the use of internal production quotas.

According to the 1946 Agricultural Census, there were 159,958 agricultural farms in Cuba covering an area of 9,077,155 hectares. Table 2, which shows how these farms were distributed according to their size, indicates that 2.8 percent of the farms, each with more than 402.6 hectares covered 57 percent of the total farm area. At the other extreme, 89.0 percent of the farms, each of them with less than 67.1 hectares accounted for only 24 percent of the total farm area. A basic shortcoming of the Census tenure classification is the large area indicated as the upper limit for smaller farms. There is no information available to the writer on the structure, by farm size, of the farms within this broad category. The average size of these holdings was, however, 15.3 hectares, compared with an average farm size of 1,167 hectares for the very large farm group.

The 1946 Census also offers data on the administrative set-up of the farms: 30.5 percent of the farms, covering 32.4 percent of the farm area, were administered directly by the owners; 5.8 percent of the farms were run by administrators and covered 25.6 percent of the total farm area,

Table 2
Distribution of Farms by Size, 1946

Size in Hectares	Farms		Total Area	
	Number	Percentage Distribution	Hectares	Percentage Distribution
Less than 67.1	142,385	89.0	2,185,072	24.0
67.1 to 402.6	13,150	8.2	1,728,241	19.0
Over 402.6	<u>4,423</u>	<u>2.8</u>	<u>5,163,842</u>	<u>57.0</u>
Total	159,958	100.0	9,077,155	100.0

Source: Agricultural Census of 1946, Memoria del Censo Agrícola Nacional de Agricultura (Havana, 1946).

1 hectare = 2.5 acres approximately.

Table 3
Distribution of Farms by Type of Management, 1946

Class	Number of Farms	Percentage Distribution	Percent of Farm Area	Farm Area in Each * Class
Owners	48,792	30.5	32.4	2,959
Managers	9,342	5.8	25.6	2,320
Renters	46,048	28.8	30.0	
Sub-renters	6,986	4.4	2.4	3,481
Sharecroppers	33,064	20.7	6.1	
Squatters	13,718	8.6	2.7	
Others	<u>2,007</u>	<u>1.2</u>	<u>.8</u>	<u>317</u>
Total	159,957	100.0	100.0	9,077

Source: Agricultural Census of 1946, op. cit.

*In thousands of hectares.

as shown in Table 3.

The Census criteria permitted the inclusion, in the managers' class, of farms which were being actually exploited by renters, sharecroppers, and squatters, thus qualifying these figures to a certain extent. The rest of the land was worked by non-owners operating under different legal arrangements. It can then be said, in fact, that only 30.5 percent of the farms in 1946 were in operation under the owners' direct management. These data can be used to show a fairly large degree of absentee ownership. At the same time they can be used to prove that the degree of concentration was not as large as seen in Table 2.

The main factor in this affirmation is the 1937 Sugar Coordination Act, which gave the non-owner operators of sugar land the right of permanency. The apparent concentration was further undermined by similar laws, such as Law-Decree No. 7 of November 25, 1948, which gave the right of permanency to tenants and sharecroppers in other sectors.¹ This Law also made leasing compulsory for lands left idle by the owner, but this section of the Law was never enforced. Legislative Decrees No. 4,139 of November 29, 1950 and No. 247 of July, 1952, also dealt with the security of tenants and sharecroppers.²

The last census was in 1946. The next available data on the tenure structure of Cuban farmland were obtained as a result of the application of the Agrarian Reform Law of 1959. All those persons affected by this Law had to sign sworn statements declaring their lands. From these declarations,

¹Carlos Seigle, La Reforma Agraria Cubana y Castro (Union City, N.J.: Ramallo Bros. Printing), p. 5.

²Rubén Iglesias, op. cit., p. 32.

the National Institute of Agrarian Reform (INRA) tabulated the results shown in Table 4.

Table 4
Distribution of Farms* by Size, 1959

Size in Hectares	Farms*		Total Area Covered	
	Number	Percentage Distribution	Hectares	Percentage Distribution
Less than 67.1	28,735	68.3	628,673	7.4
67.1 to 402.6	9,752	23.2	1,641,440	19.3
Over 402.6	<u>3,602</u>	<u>8.5</u>	<u>6,252,163</u>	<u>73.3</u>
Total	42,089	100.0	8,522,276	100.0

Source: Departamento Legal del INRA, cited by Chonchol, op. cit., p. 75.

*Includes only those farms initially affected by the 1959 Agrarian Reform Law.

At the time of these figures' release, INRA estimated the total Cuban farm area as about 10,086,090 hectares, more than a million hectares more than in 1946.³ Taking into consideration these two sets of figures, it is found that 3,602 farms, accounting for 8.5 percent of the affected farms covered 62 percent of the total farm area of the country. On the other hand, 68.3 percent of the farms accounted for only 6.2 percent of the total farm area.⁴ This shows an apparently very high degree of concentration, but it should be kept in mind that many of these lands were "affected" among other things because of the existence of sharecroppers or squatters within

³Jacques Chonchol, op. cit., p. 72

⁴Computed by the author from Table 4 and total farm area in 1959.

their boundaries and these had won practical control of the land through the right of permanency guaranteed by Law. This control was weakened by the lack of credit facilities which made the small farmer dependent upon the credit made available by the large agricultural firm and/or some intermediaries who took full advantage of their monopsonistic position. Since these figures do not show the percentages of the affected lands occupied by those enjoying the right of permanency, they do not offer a clear picture of the land tenure concentration problem. This concentration becomes clearer when the data on the land tenure in the sugar and in the cattle sector are studied, and these figures show the first signs of the accompanying problem of large areas being underemployed and/or left idle.

The sugar companies owned or controlled around 2,483,000 hectares of farm land in 1958,⁵ of which only 1,342,000 hectares were planted with sugar cane.⁶ The rest of the land was either left idle, in reserve, or used for extensive grazing on natural pasture. This land was partially utilized when demand for sugar and prices went up or when land resting schemes were followed. The general idea seems to have been that sugar companies were in business only to produce sugar for the export market without engaging in any other type of agricultural production on a commercial scale. The 22 largest companies, 13 of them American owned and 9 Cuban owned, controlled a total of around 1,800,000 hectares, almost 20 percent of the country's total estimated farm area in 1959.⁷ These were some of the best lands in the country. These 22 companies are listed in Table 5, which shows that some of

⁵Jacques Chonchol, op. cit., p. 75

⁶"Anuario Azucarero de Cuba," op. cit., p. 111.

⁷Antonio Nuñez Jiménez, Geografía de Cuba (Havana: Editorial Lex, 1961).

Table 5

Area Controlled by the 22 Largest Sugar Companies, 1959

	Area in Hectares	
American Owned Companies		
Cuban Atlantic Sugar Company	284,404	
Cuban American Sugar Company	143,862	
American Sugar Refining Company	136,750	
United Fruit Company	109,480	
West Indies Sugar Company	109,146	
Vertientes-Camaguey Sugar Company	106,595	
Manatí Sugar Company *	78,252	
Francisco Sugar Company *	71,703	
The Cuba Company	68,388	
Punta Algre Sugar Company	46,594	
Cuban Trading Corporation *	29,148	
Guantánamo Sugar Company	12,695	
Central Soledad	11,998	
Total		1,173,015
Cuban Owned Companies		
Julio Lobo	164,543	
Administración de Negocios Azucareros Sucesores de Falla Gutierrez	144,265	
Gomez Mena	84,707	
Central Cuba	65,946	
Fernando de la Riva	38,556	
Jesus Azqueta	36,127	
Manuel Aspuru	34,610	
Garcia Díaz	30,168	
Mamerto Luzarraga	21,083	
Total		620,005
Grand Total		1,793,020

Source: Antonio Nuñez Jimenez, op. cit., cited by Chonchol, op. cit., p. 77

*Controlled by Cuban Trading Corporation.

them were controlled by a single company also included in the list.

The cattle sector data also show a fairly large degree of concentration. The livestock census of 1952 reported the existence of around 90,000 cattle farms of which 75,000, or 83 percent of the total, had less than 50 head of cattle each and accounted for only 25 percent of the total number of head; on the other hand, 2,817 cattle farms, around 3 percent of the total, had more than 250 head each and accounted for 43 percent of the total number of head in the country.⁸

The system used in Cuba for cattle raising shows how this structure was maintained. Generally, cattle farms were of three types: first, the cattle breeder or criador; second, the grazing farmer or mejorador; and third, the fattener or cebador. The criador's function was to produce the calves on this small farm and sell them, when they were around one year old, to the mejorador, who had better farms and pastures and kept the calves until they were two or three years old, when he, in turn, sold them to the cebador, who generally had the best pastures and larger farms and fattened the animals until they were ready for the market at 36 to 40 months of age.⁹

It was estimated that as of 1959-60, there were 4,562,800 hectares planted with pastures of different qualities,¹⁰ and nearly six million head of cattle in 1959.¹¹ From these two figures, the ratio of 1.3 head of cattle per one hectare of pasture can be determined.¹² This indicates the non-intensive character of cattle production in Cuba.

⁸Computed from Table No. 385 in Alvarez Díaz, et al., op. cit., p. 1019.

⁹Marco Antonio Durán, "La Reforma Agraria en Cuba," El Trimestre Económico, Vol. 27, No. 107 (Julio-Septiembre, 1960), p. 423.

¹⁰Five Year Plan 1961-65 Project by INRA, cited by Jacques Chonchol, op. cit., p. 72.

¹¹Alvarez Díaz, et al., op. cit., p. 1013, Table 381.

¹²Computed by the author.

In 1958, sugar cane production amounted to 36.5 percent and cattle production to 15.4 percent of the total agricultural production in the country. Sugar cane and cattle production amounted to 51.9 percent of the total agricultural production.¹³

How did the concentration of land affect the national economy? How did it help or hamper the process of economic development? The effects on the national economy and its development were felt in more than one way.

B. Degree of Agricultural Self-Sufficiency.

The degree of agricultural self-sufficiency of a country is measured by its ability to supply, from domestic production, the farm products demanded in the country. This ability is limited by the composition of the local demand which depends, among other things, on tradition and tastes. A more useful definition is the ability to satisfy the existing demand for goods which are economically feasible to produce in the country.

It is evident that no country in the world can achieve a perfect degree of agricultural self-sufficiency. For example, Cuba's climatic conditions did not permit the growing of wheat which had to be imported to satisfy the country's demand for it. However, the country was importing large amounts of farm products which could have been produced locally.

The relative abundance of idle lands and the large degree of unemployment of the labor force, together with favorable climatic conditions and a ready market, were all conditions favorable to the local production of these foodstuffs. Table 6 shows a comparison between total imports and foodstuffs imports, together with an estimate of those foodstuffs which were imported although locally produceable.

Table 6

Foodstuffs and Total Imports, 1952 - 1958

Year	Value (thousands of dollars)			Percentage of:	
	Total ^a Imports	Foodstuffs ^b Imports	Locally Produceable Foodstuffs ^c	Foodstuffs Imports to Total Imports	Locally Produceable Foodstuffs to Total Imports
1952	\$618,314	\$177,800	\$111,100	28.8	62.5
1953	489,733	162,100	112,200	33.1	69.2
1954	487,889	149,900	100,300	30.7	66.9
1955	575,126	132,800	69,700	23.1	52.5
1956	649,006	134,400	75,000	20.7	55.8
1957	772,855	157,900	n.a.	20.4	--
1958	777,093	173,300	n.a.	22.3	--

^aBanco Nacional de Cuba, Memoria, 1955-56 and 1958-59, p. 185.

^bMinisterio de Hacienda, Comercio Exterior de Cuba (Havana, 1957-1958).

^cAnuario Estadístico de Cuba, 1952-56, cited by Alvarez Díaz, et. al., op.cit., p. 1147.

n.a. = not available.

An average of around 25.5 percent of the country's total imports for the period shown in Table 6 was composed of foodstuffs and beverages. Since the dollar value of imports was very high, this percentage represented an average of about \$150 million annually. According to the available data, an average of 61.4 percent of these foodstuffs imports could have been efficiently produced locally. Had this been so, a large amount of foreign exchange could have been freed for use in financing imports of capital goods needed for the nation's economic development.

The abundance of labor to undertake this substitution was guaranteed by the high rate of permanent unemployment which reached higher levels during the dead season, as seen in Table 7.

Table 7

Seasonal Fluctuations of Unemployment in Cuba, May, 1956 - April, 1957

Periods	Thousand Unemployed	Percent of Labor Force
May - June	435	19.7
August - October	457	20.7
November - January	357	10.6
February - April	<u>200</u>	<u>9.0</u>
Averages	362	16.4

Source: Consejo Nacional de Economía, Symposium de Recursos Naturales de Cuba (Havana, 1958).

Why, then, did diversification of farm production not take place on a large scale?

Habit, experience, and capital, as well as credit and marketing facilities, all favor continued dependence on sugar; other crops, except for tobacco, have few of these long-established advantages.¹⁴

It is fair to say that efforts were made to encourage diversification. Several semi-government institutions were created to increase the availability of credit and marketing to the small farmers with the emphasis placed on non-sugar crops. These institutions also made available various types of equipment and technical advice and encouraged the creation of marketing and production cooperatives among small farmers. Some of them also engaged in price maintenance as an incentive to these farmers.

The more important of these institutions were the Agricultural and Industrial Development Bank (BANFAIC); the National Executive Committee on Mining and Farm Cooperatives (CENCAM); the Cuban Institute of Coffee Stabilization (ICECAFE); and the Rice Administration.¹⁵ The great majority of these types of agencies, including the above mentioned, were created after 1949, so that they did not have enough time to be judged on their long-run development function, however, some of them were singularly successful in their short existence.

The case of rice production is outstanding. The Rice Administration with the help of BANFAIC and CENCAM facilitated an increment in the production of rice from 913,000 quintales of 100 pounds each in 1948 to 2,800,000 quintales in 1959, after having reached even higher levels, as seen in Table 8. However, although this increase in production decreased the need for imports, it was not sufficient to supply the national demand and imports and imports remained at a very high level.

¹⁴U.S. Department of Commerce, op. cit., pp. 29-30.

¹⁵BANFAIC was created by Law No. 5 of December 20, 1950; CENCAM was created in August 1954; Rice Administration was created by Lwa Decree 2026 of January 27, 1955.

Table 8

Domestic Production and Imports of Rice, 1948 - 1959
(In Thousands of Quintales)

Year	Domestic Production	Imports
1948	913	5,075
1949	905	5,886
1953	1,800	5,539
1956	3,693	2,963
1957	3,624	3,824
1958	3,390	3,866
1959	2,800	3,440

Sources: Ministerio de Hacienda, Dirección General de Estadística, Resúmenes Estadísticos Seleccionados (Havana: P. Fernández y Cía., 1959), p. 76 for the data from 1948 to 1956, and José M. Illán, Cuba, Datos de una Economía en Ruinas (Miami: Editorial AIP, 1964), p. 107 for the data from 1957 to 1959.

20 quintales = 1 short ton.

Coffee production is another case in which domestic production increased to the extent that no imports were needed after 1956 and some exports were made.¹⁶

In spite of the increased production of rice and coffee, the effort was not great enough, or maybe enough time had not elapsed, to obtain the desired results. On the other hand, it may have been that the incentives were not sufficiently attractive. In any case, as seen in Table 6, substitutable food imports were still large.

This question of incentives should be pursued further. A simple direct answer could be that the large land owners, who had the idle resources available, obtained a profit from their farm holdings large enough to satisfy them fully.

The large supply of land and relatively cheap labor made an extensive cultivation system highly profitable. The existence of secured markets, guaranteed nationally by the various internal quota systems and internationally by agreements and treaties, made the monocrop system simpler than any type of diversified farming operation in which the conditions existing in several markets had to be considered. It can be said that this was a backwardly bent supply curve of farm entrepreneurship, or that the land owners had a fixed profit goal which made them stop further efforts once this goal was reached.

The extensive cultivation system did not require a large level of technical and capital inputs. Fertilization was used on only 20 percent of

¹⁶Resúmenes Estadísticos Seleccionados, op. cit., p. 71.

the total cropland as of 1958,¹⁷ and sugar fields were replanted only after several years of exploitation. A more intensive exploitation would have required increasing amounts of capital inputs and a larger supply of expensive skilled labor and technicians who were in extremely low supply or non-existent.

Under these conditions, the land owners did not attempt to maximize their profits in line with the resources they had, but were contented with the situation. As it was, it allowed them to achieve very high standards of living.

A possible solution could have been found if the compulsory leasing of idle lands, written into Law Decree No. 7 of November 25, 1948,¹⁸ had been enforced, but it was not.

Diversification was found in the very small type of subsistence farm, the so-called minifundia, but the small farms were, for all practical purposes, outside of the national money economy.

The combined picture of idle lands and idle men gave meaning to the old saying: "land without people and people without land".

C. Distribution of Income and Balance of Payments

It is very difficult to analyse the distribution of income among the population due to lack of statistical material. Although figures are available on the level of income per capita for the population as a whole it is clear that this type of indicator does not offer any clues as to the actual distribution of income.

¹⁷Alberto Arredondo, Cuba, Agriculture and Planning (Miami: Editorial AIP, 1965), p. 70.

¹⁸See footnote 2 of this section.

The central bank also offered data on the distribution of income by economic sectors, such as wages and salaries, profits, etc., but the lack of data on the number of people within each sector made these figures misleading as to the actual per capita income by sector and the intra-group distribution of the shares received by each group.

Several authors observed the wide differences existing between the standards of living enjoyed by the urban sectors and the rural sectors, and the upper and upper-middle classes on one side, and the lower and lower-middle classes on the other, within the urban communities.¹⁹

While the upper-class groups enjoyed most of the comforts found in a fully developed society, the lower-class groups, in many cases, lived in great poverty. The majority of the farm laborers and small subsistence farmers, as shown in the next section, lived at a subsistence level.

The existence of a highly sophisticated upper-class, in contrast to a large mass of very low income people has one of its bases in the existence of a large concentration of ownership of the agricultural resources of the nation.

However, it was not only the concentrated land holdings which bred these sharp differences in levels of income, but also the structure of the productive process with its low level of resource utilization.

It is helpful to turn back to Table 7 to examine the seasonal fluctuations in unemployment. During the February-April period, coincident with the sugar harvest, the unemployment rate was 9.0 percent of the labor

¹⁹Such as Lowry Nelson's Rural Cuba; the IBRD Report on Cuba; Clifford E. Barnett in Twenty Century Cuba, and the Agrupación Católica Universitaria in Por Qué Reforma Agraria.

force; during the height of the dead season, the August-October period, the rate rose to 20.7 percent, a tremendous rate. The country's economic activity followed the sugar sector's seasonal fluctuations very closely, evidencing the lack of compensatory activity during the dead season.

The seasonal labor requirements of other sectors, such as coffee, were not large enough to absorb the large mass of unemployed laborers at the end of the sugar harvest. As seen in Table 7, even during the harvest the rate of unemployment held at 9.0 percent of the labor force.

The number of farm workers in the sugar industry covered by the Sugar Worker's Pension Plan was 345,385 in 1959 and only a very small percentage of this number was gainfully employed for more than four months of the year.²⁰

The political power of existing rural unions, especially sugar, was directed towards obtaining certain guarantees for their members, such as, a fair level of salaries when there was work, and the previously mentioned laws on sharecropping and tenancy, but they did not apply sufficient pressure to obtain the needed changes in the structure of the agricultural sector. Rural unemployment was, then, one of the results of the underutilization of vast areas of land.

The lack of diversification curtailed any efforts to diversity the export side of the balance of trade. Since 1917, when sugar accounted for 85 percent of the total exports, to 1958, when sugar exports were 81 percent of the total, it is impossible to find any year when sugar exports accounted for less than 71 percent of total exports. In some years, such as 1948,

²⁰"Anuario Azucarero de Cuba," op. cit., p. 155.

sugar's share went up to 90 percent. Taking total exports for all of the Republican life of Cuba, that is, 1902 - 1958, both inclusive, sugar exports averaged 82 percent of the total exports.²¹ To a certain extent this could be recognized as a consequence, among others, of lack of farm production diversification.

These figures are evidence of the enormous importance of sugar production and export to Cuba and the great political and economic power held by the minority who controlled the majority of the sugar lands.

The reflections on the import side were even more pronounced. Reference is made in Table 6 to the fact that 25.5 percent of the imports, on the average, were composed of foodstuffs of which an average of 61.4 percent could have been produced locally but were not.

Another pressure on the import side of the balance of trade resulting from the unequal distribution of income was the operation of the "demonstration effect". The upper-class was constantly emulating the standard of living of the upper-class in more developed countries, mainly the United States. They had acquired a sophisticated taste in clothing, housing, transportation, etc. This attitude had, at least, two main economic effects: first, it directed funds to finance conspicuous consumption rather than productive investment; and second, it used foreign exchange, which was needed to finance capital imports, for the importation of luxury goods. It was very easy to see the magnificence of the houses in the upper- and upper-middle class sections in most cities, but mainly in the Capital, where these areas were generally crossed by Government-built graceful avenues on which highly

²¹ Ibid., p. 25

priced imported cars rode as moving symbols of foreign exchange waste.

The political influence of the land owner groups, together with others in the upper-class, influenced the public works policy of the government which built these avenues, tunnels, and monuments to satisfy the esthetic desires of the influential groups, and many times went along with their speculative schemes,²² while giving little attention to the expansion of credit facilities to small farmers or to implementing extension work and education.

Foreign travel revealed another aspect of this problem. According to the available data, the tourist account of the balance of payments had a negative balance up to 1955 as seen in Table 9. From 1956 to 1958, it showed a positive balance, due to a large increase in the influx of foreign tourists to Cuba, however, Cuban tourists' expenditures abroad for the period increased every year. Obviously, only the upper- and upper-middle classes could afford foreign travel.

Table 9
Tourist Account of the Balance of Payments
1951 - 1958

	1951	1952	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958
Revenue	19.2	19.2	24.0	27.8	38.1	62.1	56.9
Expenditures	29.4	32.2	31.6	30.8	33.8	36.2	37.5
Balance	(10.2)	(13.0)	(7.6)	(3.0)	4.3	25.9	19.4

Source: "Anuario Azucarero de Cuba, op. cit., p. 21.

Note: Numbers in parentheses are deficits.

²²The Havana Bay Tunnel construction designed to open the eastern section of the Havana Bay was considered one of the largest speculative transactions in Latin America.

D. Social and Economic Situation of the Cuban Rural Population

The living standards found in the urban areas were extremely high when compared with those endured by the rural population.

There has not been, in the past, enough research on the social and economic conditions of the Cuban countryside and rural sociology was practically unknown. However, there are two serious research papers which help to clarify the situation of the Cuban rural people: first, Lowry Nelson's study, *Rural Cuba*, which was made, with the cooperation of both the Cuban and the United States Governments, in 1945;²³ and second, the University Catholic Association's study, Por Qué Reforma Agraria, conducted in 1956 and published in 1959.²⁴

The primary purpose of both research studies was to obtain and evaluate data on the social and economic conditions of the farmer and rural dweller in Cuba. A comparison of the results of both surveys on the general housing conditions is shown in Table 10. Striking similarities are found despite the difference of eleven years.

The general condition of rural housing was classified largely medium, mediocre, or bad, this last category being as high as 42.3 percent in 1956.

In both instances, a great number of families, from 60 to 64 percent, did not have any form of sanitary facility.

More than 80 percent of the sampled families' water supply came from wells which were in many cases polluted with human waste.

²³Lowry Nelson, op. cit.

²⁴Agrupación Católica Universitaria (ACU), Por Qué Reforma Agraria (Havana: Editorial ACU, 1959)

Table 10
Living Conditions in the Cuban Countryside

Item	1945 ^a (In Percentage)	1956 ^b (In Percentage)
Houses, Condition of Buildings		
Good	29.7	22.10
Medium	37.2	35.56
Bad	<u>33.1</u>	<u>42.34</u>
Total	100.0	100.00
Source of Water		
Well	80.9	88.50
River	16.0	0.30
Cistern	3.1	5.42
Piped	<u>--</u>	<u>5.78</u>
Total	100.0	100.00
Source of Lighting		
Kerosene	80.3	89.8
Electricity	9.5	7.3
Acetilene	9.1	0.7
None	<u>1.1</u>	<u>2.2</u>
Total	100.0	100.0
Existing Sanitary Facilities		
In or outdoor privy	33.4	26.3
In or outdoor toilet	6.1	9.7
None	<u>60.5</u>	<u>64.0</u>
Total	100.0	100.0

^aLowry Nelson, *op. cit.*, Chapter XI, pp. 201-219. Size of sample: 704 families in 11 sampling areas.

^bAgrupación Católica Universitaria (ACU), *op. cit.*, Size of sample: 1,000 families in 126 sampling areas.

In addition to this, the ACU survey reported that 82.6 percent of the houses did not have any form of shower or bathroom, 11.62 percent had an outside shower or tub, and only 5.72 percent enjoyed an inside bathroom or shower.

In 1956, 89.8 percent used kerosene as a lighting source, while only 7.3 percent used electricity, and 2.2 percent did not have any source of lighting.

In 1956, 60.35 percent of the houses were built with lumber, dirt floors, and palm leaf roofing; 19.49 percent were built with lumber, palm leaf roofing, and cement floors; the rest were built with better materials.

The educational situation was equally poor; 43 percent of the rural family heads were complete illiterates and 44.11 percent of the rural family heads had never been to school.

Under the sanitary and educational conditions described above, the health situation could not be much better.

Apparently, 14 percent of the interviewed farmers had suffered or were suffering from tuberculosis; 13 percent had suffered typhus; 36 percent declared that they knew they had intestinal parasites; and 31 percent had had paludism.²⁵

Both surveys made detailed references to the diet of the Cuban farmer stressing the importance of rice, beans, and tubers in their diet, and calling attention to the absence of meat, milk, eggs, chicken and green and yellow vegetables in the rural people's diet.

Lowry Nelson reports that around 75 percent of the diet was composed of rice, beans, tubers, and plaintain banana.²⁶ This fact is found

²⁵Ibid., pp. 26-29.

²⁶Lowry Nelson, op. cit., p. 210.

again in the ACU report which states that rice constituted 24 percent of the total diet; beans, 23 percent; and tubers, 22 percent. The ACU survey also reports that meat was mentioned by only 4 percent of those interviewed; fish, by less than 1 percent; eggs were only consumed by 2.12 percent of those sampled; and only 11.22 percent of them drank milk. Bread was eaten by only 3.36 percent of the sample, and corn meal, by only 7 percent. Green vegetables such as lettuce, celery, etc., were never mentioned by those sampled.²⁷

The absence of all these types of food made a very dull and monotonous diet which was rich in starches and, fortunately, very rich in vegetable proteins, but lacking in caloric content which was probably supplemented by the consumption of an unknown amount of raw sugar and sugar cane.

The results of the ACU inquiry into the level of income received by the families sampled follow: 50.64 percent of the total number of families sampled earned less than \$500 per year; 41.15 percent, between \$500 and \$1,000; and 7.21 percent, between 1,000 and 1,200. The average size of the families sampled was six persons. The average income per family was \$548.75 per year, which resulted in a per capita income of \$91.46 per year or around \$.25 per day per person. These income figures include an estimation for consumption of self-produced goods.

Of this income, 69.30 percent was spent on food; 10.06 percent, on clothing; 7.51 percent, on services; 7.44 percent, on miscellaneous; and 1.69 percent, on shelter.²⁸

²⁷ACU, op. cit., pp. 21-23.

²⁸Ibid., pp. 57-61.

The per capita income for the average rural person was less than 30 percent of the national income per capita for the total population, which was reported to be at a level of \$333 for the year of 1956.²⁹ This is another indication of the sharp inequality in the distribution of income. The expectation and desires of the rural population were also surveyed by the ACU study. Paramount among them was the obtention of permanent, around-the-year employment, 73.46 percent of the family heads interviewed mentioned permanent work as the solution for their problems.³⁰ Education was another solution, mentioned in one/fifth of the answers.³¹

Permanent work meant that the structure of production had to evolve toward more efficient utilization of resources, both human and physical, in order to increase production and employment. It meant, not the downgrading of the sugar industry, but the upgrading of other sectors which would complement it.

The relative lack of political power enjoyed by small farmers and rural laborers is evident in the lack of confidence displayed by the farmers in their class organizations, such as rural unions. In spite of the fact that unions are pressure groups with political power, only 6.82 percent of the farmers thought that unions could bring any solution to their problems, while 69.0 percent expected the government to solve their plight.³²

³⁰ACU, op. cit., p. 33.

³¹Ibid.

³²Ibid., p. 35.

III. The Land Reform

In 1903, a law was proposed by Manuel Sanguily, a Cuban patriot, to make illegal the transfer of land to foreign hands. This proposal did not pass which left the door open to the concentration process which took place along with the sugar boom of the first two decades of the century, during which large areas of land passed into foreign hands.¹

In 1933, farmers and rural laborers staged a rebellion in the Realengo 18, following a controversial distribution of public lands, in which private lands were also occupied.

A. The 1940 Constitution

The desire and need for land reform was recognized by the Constitutional Convention which drafted the 1940 Constitution.² Several articles of the 1940 Constitution pointed out general solutions for the existing problems in the rural sector, as follows:

a. Article 90 proscribed the latifundia and directed the Legislature to set maximum size limits for rural properties taking into consideration the type of exploitation and its respective peculiarities. This Article also called for laws to limit and restrict the acquisition and/or possession of land by foreign persons or companies, together with measures to revert the land to Cubans.

b. Article 91 guaranteed tax exemption to rural family property up to 2,000 pesos making it inviolate before the courts.

¹Jacques Chonchol, op. cit.

²Cuban Constitution, 1940.

c. Title VI of the 1940 Constitution established the obligation of the State to distribute its own lands, when such property was not required for its own use, giving preference to those farmers who had been directly working the land under any arrangement. The distributed land was to have an upper-limit value of 2,000 pesos or a maximum area of 26.4 hectares. However, the lack of congressional action in passing the proper laws made the constitutional provisions inoperative.

d. Article 275 regulated the planting and harvesting of administration cane, which is planted directly by the sugar mill, reducing the area to be so planted to the minimum imposed by the economic and social need of maintaining the sugar industry on the basis of a division between its industrial sector and its agricultural sector.

e. The First Transitory Provision of Title VI, First Section, established that within each municipality a cooperative of land and dwelling distribution would be established for the purpose of acquiring tillable land and building low cost dwellings for farmers, workers, and low-income employees. The government began to comply with this measure which was finally discredited due to bureaucracy and politics.

f. Article 87 stated that the Cuban State recognized the existence and legitimacy of private property in its widest concept of social function and without any other limitation than those established by the law because of public necessity or social interest.

The Constitution of 1940, which could not go any further into the detailed implementation of these problems, directed the legislature to issue the necessary complementary laws to carry out the constitutional

provisions. However, the Legislature never passed the required laws.

With the cessation of the constitutional processes after the Batista coup d'etat in 1952, it was even more hopeless to expect any fruitful legislation on these problems. However, during the Batista regime the First Agrarian Reform started, although it was not the Batista Government which passed the law. It was passed by the rebel leaders in the mountainous eastern province of Oriente in 1958, and applied in those territories held by them in their quasi-civil war against the Batista regime. It was Law Number 3 of the Sierra Maestra.³

B. Law Number 3 of the Sierra Maestra⁴

Law Number 3 of the Sierra Maestra, called "On the Rights of the Peasants to Land," was promulgated on October 10, 1958. It stated the apparent objectives of the Revolution for the rural sectors and became immediately applicable "in all fronts dominated by the rebel forces."

This Law followed closely the 1940 constitutional provisions for it acknowledged the existence and legitimacy of private property, encouraged private initiative, and pursued the goal of establishing an extended number of independent farmers as owners of their own land.

In its various provisions, Law Number 3 granted property of the land to the farmer renter, subrenter, sharecropper, or squatter cultivating land without ownership. This land would have a minimum limit of 26.8 hectares and a maximum limit of 67.1 hectares and it would be transferred to the farmer free of charge, the State paying the proper indemnity to the owner.

³The Sierra Maestra is a mountain chain located in the southwestern part of the Oriente Province. It includes Cuba's highest mountains.

⁴Rubén Iglesias, op. cit., pp. 95-97; and Alvarez Díaz, et al., op. cit., p. 1384.

Those cultivating more than 26.8 but less than 67.1 hectares could demand from the landowner the sale of land in excess of the minimum area, up to the maximum legal limit, this land to be paid for by the purchasing farmer. Indemnity and purchase price would be determined by the declared value in the tax assessment rolls.

Eviction of farmers was prohibited, and all land not duly registered in the Property Register would be considered State owned. Farmers living on government-owned lands would have the same rights as those cultivating privately owned land.

The contracts for milling sugar cane and the right, when existing, to milling quotas, were to be kept intact.

The property received through this Law could only be transmitted, undivided, by inheritance or under special authorization of the State which, in any case, would keep the property undivided. This provision was objected to because it limited the right of property. It was intended to stop a return to a family minifundio through subdivision by successive heirs.

The Law recognized the Government's obligation to assist the new farmer-owners with credit, seeds, equipment, and advice, and pointed out the role of adequate prices as incentives to production.

Apparently, the first Agrarian Reform Law was intended only to attract public opinion and secure the effective help of the farmers in the rebel territory, for it was never enforced nor its precepts carried out when the Revolution took power on January 1, 1959.⁵

The Revolutionary Government also did not put into effect, upon its

⁵Alvarez Díaz, et al., op. cit., p. 1384.

victory, the 1940 Constitution, but instead adopted a modified version, called "Ley Fundamental," which contained modifications to the original constitutional text but was similar in many other aspects.

The new text permitted the Government to expropriate the lands needed for the Land Reform without previous cash payment, as was required in Article 24 of the 1940 Constitution, but through other payment arrangements that would offer a reasonable guarantee.⁶

C. Law Number 87 of February 20, 1959

The hope given to farmers during the rebellion together with the euphoria produced by the victory produced some land occupation in the provinces, but on a very small scale.

So rooted in the mind of the farmers was the conviction that the tenants of land were not evicted in the last years, that they thought that once they had obtained the tenancy, the property was assured, or at least, the right of permanency on the occupied land.⁷

The Revolutionary Government reacted promptly to these arbitrary occupation by issuing Law Number 87 of February 20, 1959, which provided

Land cannot be distributed in an anarchic and disorganized way, but in accordance with an order or priority that the law will establish, according to the necessities of the farmer's family.⁸

The Law also established that those who had occupied land between January 1, 1959, and Law Number 87's promulgation date, had not obtained any right to the land occupied on this basis, and caused those who occupied land after the date of the Law to lose any right or benefit to the Land

⁶Modified by the Third Transitory Disposition to Section First, Title IV, of the Fundamental Law.

⁷Rubén Iglesias, *op. cit.*, p. 98.

⁸Third "Whereas" of Law Number 87 of February 20, 1959.

Reform Law to be enacted.

D. Law of Agrarian Reform of May 17, 1959

Before entering into a detailed analysis of this Law, the social, political, and economic thought of the Revolution, as published in the years before the take-over of power, are considered briefly.

In 1957, Fidel Castro stated:

The provisional government would establish the basis for an agrarian reform that could distribute uncultivated land and would convert into proprietors the existing farmers cultivating land under several legal arrangements but without any ownership title, whether this land belonged to the State, or to private individuals, who would be paid an indemnity.⁹

In addition, the Economic Thesis for the 26 of July Movement stated:

In agriculture, to lay the basis for agricultural reform, it was previously necessary to settle with property rights the rural families to be benefitted by a land distribution plan. They should also receive technical and financial assistance.¹⁰

Basically, then, the idea of land reform, as expressed in the 1940 Constitution, and the political and economic "platform" of the Revolution was directed toward the strengthening of private property, to the creation of a large class of small land owners who would be assisted by the Government with credit and technical aid as a means of incorporating them into the economic life of the country and destroying the pervasive influence on the rural conditions of the existing productive and land ownership structure.

⁹Fidel Castro, Primer Manifiesto Político-Social del 26 de Julio (Sierra Maestra, Oriente, Julio 12, 1957), reported in Pensamiento Político, Económico y Social (Havana: Editorial Lex, 1959).

¹⁰Regino Boti and Felipe Pazos, Tesis Económica del 26 de Julio (Oriente, 1958), reproduced in Pensamiento Político, Económico y Social, *op. cit.*

The Law of Agrarian Reform of May 17, 1959, was not in response to a profound revolutionary desire by the farmers to occupy and distribute land, but to the recognized need of a higher level of social justice in the countryside and to make the rural sector more dynamic in view of the needs of economic development. However, this Law does not include that provision, found in Law Number 3 of the Sierra Maestra, which referred to "the creation of an ample layer of independent agricultural workers".¹¹

The principal provisions of the Law follow:

a. Article 1 proscribes the latifundia. The maximum area which a legal person can own is 402.6 hectares. Lands owned in excess of this limit will be expropriated and distributed among farmers and agricultural workers without land.

b. Article 2 makes some exceptions to the first Article, in that sugar cane and rice farms whose yield surpasses the national average by at least 50 percent and other products, such as cattle, which would meet a predetermined level of yield, set by INRA, would not be affected.¹² These yields were never set. The maximum limits for these exceptions were set at 1,342 hectares.

c. Article 3 includes Government and Municipal lands among those to be distributed.

Article 6 states that all rural properties up to 402.6 hectares shall be excepted from expropriation, unless they are occupied by lessees, sharecroppers, and squatters, with parcels of land not larger than 67.1

¹¹Alberto Arredondo, op. cit., p. 216.

¹²INRA is the National Institute of Agrarian Reform created by the same Law.

hectares, in which cases they will also be the object of expropriation in the manner defined by this Law. Once the land affected is expropriated, the landowner will be able to keep the remainder when this does not exceed the maximum area authorized in Article 1.

e. Article 11 prohibits the signing of sharecropping contracts.

f. Article 12 states that any corporation cultivating sugar must have registered stock with Cuban national stockholders.

g. Article 15 prohibits the acquisition of Cuban rural land by foreigners without special permission from INRA.

h. Article 16 established a "vital minimum" of 26.8 hectares as the minimum area to be given to a farmer's family.¹³ The minimum is defined as fertile land, without irrigation, far from urban land and dedicated to average return crops. However, INRA was given power to change the concept of the vital minimum depending on the circumstances.

i. Article 17 provides INRA with the choice of distributing expropriated lands either to a beneficiary or to cooperatives created by the same law.

j. Article 18 concedes the ownership of the land below the vital minimum to the operating farmer without charge, adding that, if possible, he will have the right, when his land area is below the vital minimum to receive the difference, also without charge. If the land occupied by lessees, sharecroppers, and squatters exceeds the vital minimum, they have the right to force the landowner to sell them the land in excess of the

¹³The vital minimum concept had already been included in the 1940 Constitution.

26.8 hectares (vital minimum) up to 67.1 hectares. The same rights are given to sharecroppers, lessees, squatters, etc., who occupy public lands.

k. Article 22 establishes the order in which the expropriated land would be distributed: first, to farmers who had previously been evicted from their lands; second, to landless local farmers or those owning below the vital minimum; and third, to agricultural workers who live and work within the area, etc.

l. Articles 29 to 31 establish the indemnification procedures after acknowledging the constitutional rights of the land owners to receive such indemnification. Valuation of the lands is based on the assessment value declared by the owners for municipal tax purposes before October 10, 1958. Building and equipment would be valued independently of the land. Assessments were a small fraction of the market value though this was illegal according to the Law.

Indemnification was to be paid with redeemable 20 year bonds earning 4-1/2 percent per year, fully guaranteed by the State, to be amortized and their interest paid by budgetary allocations. Indemnity revenue were exempted from Income Tax when it was invested in new industries.

m. Articles 33 to 36 establish the same limitations and prohibitions to the transfer or sale of the redistributed lands found in the Law of October 10, 1958.

n. INRA also received the authority to divide the national territory into Agrarian Development Zones (referred to in this study by its Spanish initials ZDA) which would supersede the existing political division into Provinces and Municipalities and depend solely on INRA for their direction.

Each Zone is a basic administrative unit through which INRA is to obtain the statistical data needed and to regulate the process of the land reform.

o. Articles 43 to 47 establish that, whenever it is possible, INRA will develop rural production cooperatives on areas of land chosen by it. These cooperatives would be directed by INRA which would also appoint their managers while allocating enough funds to finance all their needs for credit and capital.

p. The Law gave INRA a broad range of power, including advising on the level of tariff protection needed to best develop rural production, and proposing fiscal measures to stimulate adequate savings or consumption.

Although a strong institution is needed to conduct a land reform, the importance to the economy of the Cuban agricultural sector would make INRA a state within the State.

One of the most interesting features of the Law is the allowance in its Article 2 for exceptions to the limits set in Article 1. These exceptions mean, to the writer, that the law makers realized that the dangers of latifundism were more from the underemployment and idleness of large sectors of land rather than from the mere existence of large farms, though the political perils of the latter were clearly recognized. By allowing farm sizes up to 1,342 hectares whenever they fulfilled and maintained certain productive levels, the Law attempted to reward the efficient exploitation of the land. However, these provisions of the Law were totally ignored by INRA, whose delegates "occupied" farms with disregard for the Law and each one's level of productivity.

INRA became even more the center of centralization when the

Revolutionary leaders began to create within INRA, or dependent upon it, all the new institutions of the Revolution such as the Department of Industries, the Cuban Petroleum Institute, Rural Housing Department, and others.¹⁴

At the same time, INRA's authority to designate the geographical limits of the Zones of Agrarian Development and its power to control local conditions actually changed the whole political-administrative structure of the country.

¹⁴Jacques Chonchol, op. cit., p. 97.

E. Program Implementation

1. First Phase: 1959 - 1960

a. Land Occupation and Distribution

The development which took place between 1959 and 1960 made clear that the concepts defined by the Law of Agrarian Reform had not been adhered to. Although a large area of land was expropriated through the legal framework of the land reform, this only amounted to 27.0 percent of the total land which passed into the States' control during the period, as shown in Table 11. One of the legal ways by which the Revolutionary Government bypassed the exceptions authorized by the Law was through confiscatory laws which represented policy decisions outside of the land reform process, as was demonstrated later when the socialist mode of ownership was officially accepted. Table 11 covers the period from May 1959, to May 1961, and shows the amounts of land confiscated and expropriated and the different laws used to this effect.¹⁵

In September, 1959, Law Number 576 was passed, ordering the First Issue of bonds to pay the indemnities. There is no evidence, however, that these bonds were ever printed.¹⁶

At the end of the period under consideration, INRA controlled 4,438,879 hectares, which represented roughly 50 percent of the Cuban agricultural lands.¹⁷ Table 12 shows the lands occupied by the private

¹⁵Expropriation is a process of forced change in ownership, in which any indemnification is received while confiscation is a forced change without any indemnification.

¹⁶Rubén Iglesias, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

¹⁷Computed by author from totals in Tables 11 and 12.

Table 11

Estimated Lands Confiscated and Expropriated Between
May, 1959, and May, 1961
(In Hectares)

Law	Affected Area	Percentage Distribution
Recovery of Misappropriated Properties ^a	163,214 ^b	3.7
Law of Agrarian Reform of May, 1959 ^c	1,199,184	27.0
Voluntary donations to INRA	322,590	7.3
Voluntary sales to INRA	581,757	13.1
Law of Nationalization No. 851 of July, 1960 ^c	1,26,587	28.1
Law of Nationalization No. 890 of October 1960 ^c	910,547	20.5
Amendments to Article 24 of the Fundamental Law ^a	<u>n.a.</u>	<u>n.a.</u>
Total	4,438,879	100.0

Source: Departamento Legal del INRA.

^aConfiscation.

^bAccepted as underestimation.

^cForced expropriation.

rural sectors by farm size groups as of 1961.

As of May 10, 1961, INRA had delivered 31,425 titles of property to as many farmers, covering parcels with a minimum area of 26.8 hectares each. The same source adds that the delivery of the titles was "a mere formality, for small farmers are de facto, the owners of the land."¹⁸ It could be said that in the pre-revolutionary Cuba, the "right of permanency" also amounted to property rights and that the acquisition by those farmers of property titles was also a formality, but the truth is that the small farmers who were sharecroppers, renters, and squatters did want effective property as represented by a legal title. Alvarez Díaz mentioned that the Revolutionary titles were mere diplomas, not registered with the Property Registrar.¹⁹

b. New Institutions in the Cuban Rural Sector

Not much can be added to what is already said about the ZDA's. It was through the action and administration of these zones that the land was redistributed after confiscation. Four sub-sectors were structured as rural enterprises: 1) Sugar Cane Cooperatives; 2) Other Cooperatives; 3) Direct Administration Farms; and 4) Small Private Farmers.

(1) Sugar Cane Cooperatives

Sugar Cane Cooperatives were an outgrowth of the massive confiscation process which took place during 1960 when all of the large sugar farms were confiscated. From the beginning they were regulated by a common code titled General Regulation for Sugar Cane Cooperatives issued by

¹⁸Antonio Nuñez Jiménez, Informe al Pueblo (Havana: Imprenta del INRA, 1961), p. 4.

¹⁹Alvarez Díaz, et al., op. cit., p. 1394.

Table 12
Private Agricultural Sector, 1961

Size in Hectares	Number of Farms	Area in Hectares
Up to 67.1	154,703	2,348,151
67.1 to 134	6,062	607,532
134 to 268	3,105	610,321
268 to 402	1,456	507,551
Over 402	592	377,456
Total	165,918	4,451,011

Source: Instituto Nacional de Reforma Agraria, quoted by Alberto Arredondo, Cuba, Agriculture, op. cit., p. 234.

INRA in May, 1960. They were managed by INRA. The principal reason for encouraging the formation of cooperatives instead of redistributing the land was that of not breaking up the sugar cane plantations. The advantages found in the large exploitation were said to be better than those in the small plots. It is now clear that the government simply did not want to encourage private ownership and thus took advantage of the cooperative mentality found in the sugar farmer and worker after so many years of being unionized.

The cooperatives were directed to diversify as much as possible production while making for intensive cultivation. A distinction between members and temporary workers was made, the first receiving \$2.50 per day as advance payment, with the right to obtain their share of the cooperative's profits, the second receiving a daily salary of \$3.00 without any rights as to benefits. This distinction was the main argument used to abolish the Sugar Cane Cooperatives and transform them into State Farms, in 1962.

Some authors who worked in Cuba during this period state that some times production costs were several times higher than the market value of the production.²⁰

At the end of 1960, there were 622 Sugar Cane Cooperatives covering 809,454 hectares with 122,500 members and 46,600 temporary workers. Sugar cane was cultivated on 75 percent of this land, which represented 45 percent of the total area planted with sugar cane in 1960. These lands

²⁰Jacques Chonchol, op. cit., p. 106.

were the best lands in Cuba.²¹

All of the cooperatives' production would be bought solely by INRA. Sweezy and Huberman commented that the Cuban cooperatives closely resembled the Soviet sovkhoses and kolkhoses.²²

The Sugar Cane Cooperatives were finally transformed, in 1962, into State Farms, a rural enterprise completely owned by the State, similar to the Russian sovkhoses. All pretenses of redistribution of land to the farmers were abandoned. One of the reasons given for the change was that the cooperatives were practicing, without realizing it, the exploitation of men by men, referring to the temporary workers or hired hands. Carlos Rafael Rodriguez mentions that "Fidel Castro conceived the cooperative as a step towards the State Farm."²³

(2) Other Cooperatives

Many other sectors were organized in cooperative form, each one receiving the name of its most important product. On May 17, 1960, one year after the Law of Agrarian Reform was passed, there were 550 agricultural cooperatives, 220 agricultural and livestock cooperatives, 10 livestock cooperatives, 10 charcoal cooperatives, and one timber cooperative.²⁴

These cooperatives did not have any organization comparable to that of the sugar cane ones. They were also managed by INRA through an appointed administrator who was also the link with the local ZDA's manager.

²¹ Ibid., pp. 110-111.

²² Paul Sweezy and Leo Huberman, Cuba, Anatomy of a Revolution (New York, 1960), p. 122.

²³ Carlos Rafael Rodríguez, Four Years of Agrarian Reform, Political Documents No. 6 (Havana: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1964), p. 11.

²⁴ Jacques Chonchol, op. cit., p. 106.

Most of them were formed by farmers within a farm which had been confiscated and maintained a distinction between permanent and hired workers. These cooperatives were the first to be absorbed by the late State Farms in 1961.

(3) Direct Administration Farms

The Direct Administration Farms were formed from the cattle and rice farms which had been confiscated. The decision to maintain these large farms as units was made at the end of 1959. INRA's officials, including Fidel Castro, who was its first president, thought that division of the land would mean decreased production. Another reason to maintain these areas under the direct control of INRA was, according to Chonchol, a matter of social justice.²⁵ Since these farms had very few employees, it was thought that so few men, owning so much land, would constitute a new privileged class. The inclusion of hundreds of landless farmers in such a distribution scheme was dismissed as dangerous to the existing level of production which had to be maintained in order to assure the supply of meat to the population.

In May, 1960, there were 605,000 head of cattle on around 500 livestock farms covering 845,460 hectares under the direct administration of INRA.²⁶ The number of farms increased when the nationalization acts of 1960 were passed later in the year.

(4) Small Private Farmers

This group did not form a new structure but was the balance

²⁵Ibid., p. 114.

²⁶Ibid., p. 115.

after the other three groups were formed. In it, there were small farmer owners, including those who had received a title from the Government and others who had merely stopped paying rent for the land they worked. Some of them were organized in rural cooperatives created by BANFAIC before the Revolution.

2. Second Phase: 1961 - 1964

a. New Institutional Set-Up

The first half of 1961 brought profound changes to the rural structure created by the Revolution. New structures were substituted for some of those existing during the first two years of the regime. All cooperatives, with the exception of the sugar cooperatives which remained as such, and the direct administration farms became the so-called "Granjas del Pueblo," or "People's Farms." The third new structure was the National Association of Small Farmers (ANAP). Farms not covered by this institutional set-up were just referred to as private sector, though ANAP was part of this sector, too.

In order to administer and control these institutions, INRA created the General Administration of People's Farms, continued the General Administration of Sugar Cane Cooperatives, and made ANAP its Administrative arm with respect to small farmers owning up to 67.1 hectares. The rest of the private sector, that is, those owning more than 67.1 hectares, were left alone, at least, for the time being. The creation of these centralized administrations marked the end of the Zones of Agrarian Development.

With regards to land redistribution to individual farmers

Seers, reports that, between February and December 1961, only 203 new titles were granted covering 2,832 hectares and that, according to INRA, few additional titles had been granted up to August, 1962.²⁷

(1) The State Farms (People's Farms)

The State Farms or People's Farms were started by consolidating the agricultural cooperatives other than Sugar Cane Cooperatives, and the Direct Administration Farms, formerly the cattle latifundia. Their structure is similar to that of the Russian sovkhoses and they are the result of the communist emphasis in creating a rural proletariat without any attachment to the land they cultivated. The farmers become salaried workers whose salaries are fixed without regard to the economic returns of the exploitation.

These farms were managed directly by INRA through the General Administration of People's Farms, although since 1963, a new criterion of decentralization has been followed to the effect that the country has been divided into basic groups which have three basic administrative units; Economic Department, Technical Department, and Machinery Department, complemented by Supervision, Organization, Stores, Supplies, Sales, and Construction units, and by a Sections and Administrative office. All the groups would plan their activities by using an investment plan, a production plan, and product supply and delivery plan. The new set-up was aimed at attaining self-financing of each regional group.²⁸

²⁷Dudley Seers, et al., Cuba, The Economic and Social Revolution (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1964), p. 405, footnote 62.

²⁸"Regulations of Government Farms," Newspaper Hoy (Havana, Marzo 18, 1964), cited by Alberto Arredondo, Cuba, Agriculture, op. cit., p. 238.

Each People's Farm comprised the area of several of the former large farms resulting in units of large area. An administrator and an accountant were appointed for each farm. Since before 1963, People's Farms have been financed through INRA's budgetary allocations. In May 1961, there were 266 Farms totalling 2,433,449 hectares, the average size farm being around 9,000 hectares though wide differences are present for there are some with less than 4,000 hectares while many have as many as 20,000 or 25,000 hectares or more.²⁹ In many cases, a Farm is not a physical unit as its parts are separated by other farms. In 1961, there were 96,498 worker-farmers on these farms of which 27,321 were permanent employees and 69,177 were temporary ones.³⁰ Chonchol points out the low ratio of land per worker found in the People's Farms when compared with the Sugar Cane Cooperatives. The former have 25.2 hectares per worker and the latter have 4.8 hectares per worker including both permanent and temporary workers.³¹

Due to the fact that the Farm workers' salaries were set without regard to the rentability of each farm, it was reported that productivity was far below that of private farms, subsidies being necessary, in many cases, to cover the large deficits between market value of the output and cost of inputs. In September 1963, Dumont, a French agricultural economist reported among other things.

The People's Farms have a productivity lower than that of private farms. A private farm in the vicinity of sugar mill 'Ecuador' has a productivity five times higher than that of a nearby People's Farm called "Lidiel Hernandez."³²

²⁹Jacques Chonchol, op. cit., p. 118. The Gramma Farm, in Oriente Province had 47,000 hectares.

³⁰Antonio Núñez Jiménez, Informe al Pueblo ..., op. cit., p. 121.

³¹Jacques Chonchol, op. cit., p. 119.

³²Rene Dumont, "Los Principales Obstáculos para una Expansión Mas Rápida de la Agricultura Cubana: Estructurales, Técnicos y Económicos," Unpublished report to INRA (Havana, 1963), p. 13.

The very large size of each farm is another disadvantage which can play a critical part in the allocation of investments which may go to one sector of the farm at the expense of another part of it.

The problem of efficiently managing these large farms constitutes a bottle neck in the Cuban economy. It is somewhat utopian to think that a huge farm, with a great degree of diversification, can be managed by individuals who, in many cases, have been chosen for their political value rather than their administrative skills. Centralization of decisions add to the administrative problems inherent in such a large size farm. As Seers mentions:

The manager of a State Farm had to waste valuable time simply travelling between the different units under his control, vital decisions were delayed, and direct supervision was made difficult.³³

In addition, as Dumont points out, "The Farms are an administrative organism financed by the budget and thus they do not have any interest in being profitable,"³⁴ and adds, "each Farm worker loses more than an hour a day, on the average, even in Havana, at INRA's offices, where the secretaries go to the beauty parlor during working hours."³⁵

The decentralization process started in 1963 formed regional groups to increase managing efficiency, but there is no evidence to support such a development. A further inquiry into the efficiency of the State Farm is made later in this report. As of August, 1961, the People's Farms controlled 26.4 percent of the farm land in Cuba.³⁶

³³Dudley Seers, et al., op. cit., p. 139.

³⁴Rene Dumont, op. cit., p. 24.

³⁵Ibid., p. 21.

³⁶Dudley Seers, et al., op. cit., p. 129.

(2) Sugar Cane Cooperatives

This type of organization is discussed earlier in this report. At the beginning of the reorganization, started in 1961, the Sugar Cane Cooperatives retained the same structure which they received when they were created.

If anything, 1961 brought more pressure to diversify production within each cooperative. The emphasis was placed not only in diversifying crops other than cane, but also in reducing the area planted with cane and utilizing the cleared land for other crops. To allow this diversification and expansion of production, 130,000 hectares of cane land were up-rooted following the 1961 sugar harvest.³⁷ The plan called for a large increase in the sugar cane yield from the remaining areas which would compensate for and surpass the lost production of the cleared land. This was a disastrous decision which caused the sharp decrease of the following year's sugar harvest from 6,767,000 Spanish long tons in 1961 to 4,815,200 Spanish long tons in 1962, 3,820,000 Spanish long tons in 1963,³⁸ and 3,538,000 Spanish long tons in 1964.³⁹ The failure resulting from this decision caused a reversal of policy, in 1962, when INRA decided to replant more than 200,000 hectares with sugar cane.⁴⁰

On August 18, 1962, the delegates from the Sugar Cane Cooperatives voted in favor of transforming the cooperatives into State Farms. The status of State Farm consolidated the control of INRA over this type of rural organization.

³⁷Ibid., p. 130.

³⁸Alberto Arredondo, Cuba, Agriculture, op. cit., p. 272, Table 126. Note: Nikita Jruchov Offered a figure of 3,120,000 Spanish long tons for the 1963 harvest.

³⁹U.S. Department of Agriculture, Indices of Agricultural Production for the 20 Latin American Countries, op. cit., p. 11.

⁴⁰Dudley Seers, et. al., op. cit., p. 143.

(3) National Association of Small Farmers (ANAP)

ANAP was not the first association of farmers in Cuba. Since the 1930's the Cuban farmers had banded together in associations, each one comprising farmers who specialized in the cultivation of a single crop. There were the Association of Cane Growers, the National Association of Tobacco Growers, etc. The purpose of these associations was to defend the right of their members and to improve their economic and social conditions.

The organization of ANAP included in its rule, not only economic but mainly political considerations. Differently from the former associations, ANAP was organized and run by the Government.

The ANAP was defined as an organism to support the Revolution and to band the small farmers together to apply the agrarian program of the Revolution.

Membership was restricted to farmers possessing no more than 67.1 hectares. Farmers owning more than this number of hectares had to prove their revolutionary background in order to be admitted. Credit facilities directed to the small farmers would be channeled through ANAP to its members, thus, non-members could not possibly obtain credit to operate their farms, which was a powerful reason for small farmers to join it. There are different estimates as to the number of members who had joined up to June, 1961, Nunez Jimenez mentions 150,000 farmers⁴¹ while Chonchol mentions between 80,000 and 90,000. Taking into consideration the evident credit disadvantage to the non-members, in all probability, the real figure

⁴¹Antonio Núñez Jiménez, Informe al Pueblo, op. cit., p. 12.

⁴²Jacques Chonchol, op. cit., p. 130.

is nearer 150,000 than 90,000. Table 12 shows that the area comprised by farms up to 67.1 hectares was 2,348,150 hectares and that the number of farms was 154,703.

The creation of ANAP was a recognition of the importance of small farmers in the development of rural production, and represented the first official step in the process of collectivization of this sector. ANAP was also made the channel for other services to the farmers, such as seeds, machinery, and advice. ANAP is managed by a general administrator appointed by INRA.

(4) The Rest of the Private Sector

According to Table 12, as of 1961, the rest of the private sector was composed mainly of farms with areas between 67.1 and 402 hectares, and also 592 farms whose areas were greater than 402 hectares, each. All these farms covered 2,102,860 hectares.

If the areas covered by the state sector or "socialist sector", reported by Carlos Rafael Rodríguez, are added, they total 3,903,300 hectares.⁴³ If 2,348,150 hectares, the highest possible area for ANAP farms, as reported earlier in this chapter, is added to this figure, the total area is 6,251,450 hectares which is subject to direct or indirect control by the Government. If, in turn, this total is deducted from the estimated total farm land area for 1959, which was 10,086,090 hectares, a balance of 3,834,640 hectares is obtained, and supposedly this should be the area classified as "the rest of the private sector". However, the area reported under such classification, in Table 12, is only 2,102,860 hectares. There-

⁴³Computed by the author from tables appearing in Carlos Rafael Rodríguez, op.cit., pp. 33-34.

fore, there are 1,731,780 hectares, the difference between the last two figures, which are not accounted for in any of the available publications.

The rest of the private sector was considered, by the Government, mostly counter-revolutionary. According to Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, they were:

The agrarian bourgeoisie that does not participate in the production process, that lives in the cities and exploits its workers through administrators. Among these groups we find the most consciously and obstinately counter-revolutionary elements.⁴⁴

Following these political criteria, they were left out of the agricultural development plans, which resulted in this group's inability to obtain any form of credit, machinery, seeds, and fertilizers. Carlos Rafael Rodriguez justified this by saying:

Nor can the Revolution aid them to strengthen their position, because in the long run there is an insurmountable (sic.) contradiction between the two, that is why we limit ourselves to upholding the revolutionary legality established in the 1959 Law.⁴⁵

This sector, according to Chonchol, controlled 77 percent of the cattle in the country, the largest share of the cattle in the private sector.⁴⁶ This explains the importance of their being excluded from INRA's plans.

Despite its exclusion from the economic plans, this sector was definitely included in the political one. As shown below, the Revolutionary Government confiscated some of this sector in 1961 and the rest in 1963.

⁴⁴Carlos Rafael Rodríguez, op. cit., p. 15.

⁴⁵Ibid., pp. 15-16.

⁴⁶Jacques Chonchol, op. cit., p. 134.

b. The 1961 Confiscations

The 1961 confiscations were a direct result of the Bay of Pigs Invasion and the guerrilla activities in the Sierra del Escambray, a mountain chain in southern-central Cuba. These confiscations were not widely publicized until later in 1962. While talking about the guerrilla operations mentioned above, Carlos Rafael Rodriguez wrote that:

Counter-revolutionary activity found a response in more than a few rich farmers in the southern area of Matanzas and the southwest of Las Villas⁴⁷ The Revolution decided to deal another blow, this time an economic one, to those collaborating with the bandit CIA agents. It, therefore, decreed the expropriation of the land of all farmers giving aid to the counter-revolution and of those holding land areas of 201 to 402 hectares who gave them indirect aid or in any manner promoted counter-revolutionary attitude. ⁴⁸

The total area affected by this measure has not been disclosed, but the importance of the measure resides in its political basis. Admittedly, the guerrilla found support in the countryside in a region that, contrary to Carlos Rafael Rodriguez's opinion, was not considered rich in Cuba. The confiscations of 1961 were, in fact, a strategic and military measure rather than one based on economic policy.

c. The 1963 Law of Agrarian Reform⁴⁹

The Law of October 3, 1963, was called by the Government the last law of agrarian reform. It nationalized farms having an area over 67.1 hectares. The Law states that these farmers were holding these farms "in detriment of the workers," while accusing them of speculating with their

⁴⁷Both of these provinces mentioned regions are located in the south-central part of Cuba.

⁴⁸Carlos Rafael Rodríguez, *op. cit.*, pp. 17-18.

⁴⁹Information on this Law was obtained from Oscar Salas Marrero and Rafael Rivas Vazquez, "Cinco Años de Reforma Agraria Comunista," *Cuaderno de la AIP*, No. 21 (Miami, Junio, 1964), p. 4; Newspaper *Revolucion* (Havana, October 4, 1963); Alberto Arredondo, *Cuba, Agriculture, op. cit.*, p. 234.

production and/or using it for anti-social and counter-revolutionary activities.

Article 8 of this Law extended the confiscation to all cattle, equipment, installations, and money which were part of the farms. The Law excepted farms worked by several brothers whenever the proportional share of each did not exceed 67.1 hectares, and it also excepted those farmers of proven revolutionary background. The owners suffering confiscations would be indemnified with a monthly payment of \$10 per each 13.4 hectares of uncultivated land and \$15 per each 13.4 hectares of cultivated lands if these were worked by the owner or his administrator. Payments, according to the Law, can not be lower than \$100 nor higher than \$250 per month.

According to Table 12, the area covered by farms larger than 67.1 hectares was 2,102,860 hectares, all of which area was affected by the Law. By this measure, the Government became the owner of 6,006,160 hectares, obtained by adding the areas under People's Farms, Sugar Cane Farms, other Government Farms, and the area affected by this Law; 2,348,150 hectares were indirectly controlled through ANAP. The October 3 Law affected; as seen in Table 12, 11,215 farm owners.

Since this Law technically violated the 1959 Constitutional Law of Agrarian Reform, it also was made a part of the Constitution (Fundamental Law). The confiscation of these farms required, to be economically sound, the availability of enough skilled personnel, at all levels, to manage them efficiently, but Cuba did not have such personnel in 1963, and does not have it in 1965 to date. In this manner, the confiscation added pressure to the INRA's bureaucratic apparatus which was

already strained with the management of the so-far inefficient People's Farms.

One of the first conclusions of the Dumont Report was that, as of September, 1963, "the agricultural situation of Cuba is serious and runs the risk of becoming catastrophic."⁵⁰ In the same report, he warned against a precipitated second agrarian reform advising that the socialist or state sector should be organized before it, and that this may take from three to six years.⁵¹

The Law of October, 1963, also reorganized the internal structure of INRA. With this reorganization, INRA became structured like a ministry and is directed by a Minister-President.

A decentralized system of farm administration was also started which grouped, on a regional basis, all farms owned by the state sector. The group is formed of farms under common management, each farm being an administrative unit in itself, but subordinated economically and technically to the group administration.⁵² These groups work on a self-financing basis, are given access to bank credit, and are supposed to pay their expenditures out of current revenues. They transfer their profits to the national budget at the end of the fiscal year.

⁵⁰Rene Dumont, op. cit., p. 40.

⁵¹Ibid., pp. 41-42. Note: When speaking about a "second agrarian reform he refers to the confiscation of the remaining farms with areas over 67.1 hectares.

⁵²Carlos Rafael Rodríguez, "El Nuevo Camino de la Agricultura Cubana," Cuba Socialista (Havana, 1963), cited by Alberto Arredondo, Cuba, Agriculture, op. cit., p. 236.

3. Third Phase: Developments After 1965

There have not been any major changes in the structure of land tenure in the post-1965 period. Changes which have occurred have been related to factors operating on the agricultural sector. The complexity of this phenomena makes it difficult to analyze in a brief description. The following comments merely introduce basic highlights.

One of the most publicized changes has been the development of labor shortages during the harvest season due to the alledged disappearance of unemployment in the country. This problem is very complex as it is tied up to several other developments. According to Jacoby, several reasons have been offered to explain labor shortages and full employment, such as:

- 1) large number of rural children are now being educated - primary education is effectively compulsory - who would have otherwise been members of the labor force;
- 2) expansion of the agricultural area coupled with expansion of labor intensive crops such as citrus and coffee;
- 3) absorption, by the army, of a considerable part of the labor force, which is made available for harvesting and other work;
- 4) the more or less general introduction of the 8-hour working day even during the peak seasons.*

An additional factor has been the increased migration to the cities which occurred during the first 6 years of the Revolution. Another important reason in creating labor shortages is the improper and partial use of the employed labor force. According to Miguel Martin, Secretary General of the Cuban Labor Federation (CTC), "The effective workday at the State Farms

*Erich H. Jacoby, Cuba: The Real Winner is the Agricultural Worker in FAO: Ceres, Vol 2, No. 4, July-August 1969, p. 29.

was four hours, instead of the legal eight hours".

In talking about the extensive use of unpaid labor in agriculture, Premier Fidel Castro declared that . . . "Often, they (the volunteers) are employed to fill out the shift of agricultural laborers that only work three or four hours a day".*

These statements seem to indicate the existence of artificial agricultural labor shortages resulting from widespread underemployment of labor resources. This paradoxical situation may be the partial result of the incentives and disincentives found in the new economic order. In effect, an increasing number of services have been expanded and made free for the population. Outstanding among these are education and health facilities. Hundreds of scholarships including room and board have been granted. Obligatory free primary education is enforced. Free medical attention is offered in the state hospitals including a large range of medicaments. Public phones, sports and certain kinds of entertainment are also free. At the same time, there exist a strict rationing system covering most food staples and consumption goods, such as meat, rice, beans, sugar, clothing, cigarettes, shoes, etc. Consumer durables are extremely scarce or unavailable. The combination of free services and strict rationing and/or unavailability would likely result in the diminished role of money as a means of exchange. This diminished role results in a disincentive to work in situations where the marginal utility of money is close to zero.

*Miguel Martín "Informe Central al XII Congreso de la CTC" Newspaper El Mundo August 26-66 in Mesa-Lago, Carmelo, Economic Significance of Unpaid Labor in Socialist Cuba, University of Pittsburg, Report No. 3, 1969, p. 347.

*Fidel Castro - Speech before the XII Congress of CTC, Newspaper El Mundo August 30-66, in Mesa-Lago, ibid., p. 347.

An institutional change of secondary importance has been the creation of communal farms, i.e., two formed by mostly young people (Isle of Pines, Mayari), another formed by a large number of families (San Andres). These efforts are essentially social experiments in purely communist societies where monetary remuneration is minute and essentially independent of production considerations. While communes were quite publicized in 1968, the latter results from these experiments have not been announced.

F. Agricultural Production During the Reform

1. First Phase: 1959 - 1960

It is very difficult to determine the level of agricultural and livestock production in Cuba since the take-over of the Revolution. Data and information on the performance of the Cuban economy is relatively scarce, frequently fragmentary and probably biased by the deep emotional and political undertones accompanying the Cuban Revolution. Data need to be carefully cross-checked as it is the only means of assessing the veracity of the figures.

It has been claimed that the Cuban Land Reform is the first in the world which did not cause a decrease in the level of agricultural production. While there are indications that production levels increased in 1959 and 1960, it should be kept in mind that the full impact of the land reform expropriation process was not felt until mid-1960 and that the Law offered substantial stimuli to increased yields during these two years by allowing very large sized farms in some specific crops provided they fulfilled the established yield levels. In any case, in reporting production for 1958, INRA's figures understated production levels as reported by the Economic Commission for Latin America thus making 1959 and 1960 levels both relatively higher in comparison. (Table 13)

The sugar sector of the economy did increase its level of production which reached, in 1961, the second highest level in Cuba's history. In 1958, production was 5,909,491 Spanish long tons of raw sugar, while in 1961, it was 6,767,000 Spanish long tons. There was no decrease in this sector during the first two years of land reform, but there the only thing that happened was the transfer of the title of the land from the

Table 13
 Agricultural Production, 1958
 (In Thousands of Tons)

Product	ECLA Estimates	INRA Estimates
Corn	190.0	146.0
Rice	200.0	204.0
Beans	56.0	10.0
Peanuts	15.0	3.7
Tomatoes	110.0	54.5
Coffee	50.0	30.6
Tobacco	44.0	41.0
Henequen	8.0	9.0
Potatoes	125.0	69.7
Cocoa	--	2.1

Source: U.N. (ECLA), Economic Study for Latin America (Mexico, 1958) and (Havana: INRA, 1961), cited by Alberto Arredondo, Cuba, Agriculture, op. cit., p. 262.

private owner to INRA, the lands were not distributed among the sugar rural workers and the farms were maintained undivided. In short, that which had been termed a feudalistic exploitation of the rural worker was maintained intact, except that now the owner was INRA. Carlos Rafael Rodriguez considers that this was an original contribution which Fidel Castro made to the "contemporary revolutionary process, that permitted us to take a bold leap towards forms of state agrarian ownership, which would be much closer to socialism."⁵³

Apart from the sugar statistics, the most complete set of production data for 1959 and 1960 was published at the beginning of 1961, in the form of a comparison covering the years from 1958 to 1960 and including estimates for 1961. Table 14 shows some of the principal production figures as reported by INRA.

Most of the 1961 production estimates were revised in a later publication, upward in most cases.⁵⁴ In some of the cases, such as oranges, the estimates increased as much as 50 percent from 1960 to 1961.

The figures in Table 14 were also published in Bohemia, a Cuban weekly magazine, on May 28, 1961. Boris Goldenberg points out that, in the very same issue, another economic report from INRA quoted completely different production figures for rice production. He quotes:

In 1958, Cuba produced 2,974,814 quintales of rice, while production in 1961 will be 4,450,650 quintales. In the same issue, Antonio Nunez Jimenez announced, "In 1958, Cuba produced 4,502,000 quintales of rice and will produce 9,511,000 quintales in 1961."⁵⁵

⁵³Carlos Rafael Rodríguez, op. cit., pp. 9-10.

⁵⁴Ministry of Labor, Cuba en Cifras (Havana, 1962).

⁵⁵Boris Goldenberg, "La Revolución Agraria Cubana," Cuadernos (Paris), No. 57, Congreso por la Libertad de la Cultura (Febrero, 1962), p. 55.

Table 14

Production of Selected Agricultural and Livestock Products
1958 - 1960 and Goals for 1961
(In Thousands of Quintales)^a

Item	Production			Goals
	1958	1959	1960	1961
Sugar cane ^b	4,235,234	4,225,714	4,187,298	5,000,000
Rice (unhulled)	4,502	6,148	6,664	9,511
Beans	220	300	806	2,446
Corn	3,220	4,200	4,651	8,688
Peanuts	82	103	549	976
Cotton	4	94	473	1,172
Potatoes	1,534	1,803	2,200	3,300
Malanga	4,906	5,214	5,581	6,492
Sweet Potatoes	3,473	3,984	5,011	5,039
Oranges	1,515	1,515	1,584	2,376
Beef	3,555	3,825	4,246	4,821
Pork	737	799	905	788
Chickens	360	432	665	1,653
Milk (thousand liters)	803,700	825,320	908,040	999,740
Eggs (thousand liters)	312,000	341,250	429,900	525,000

Source: Antonio Núñez Jiménez, Informe al Pueblo, op. cit., pp. 36-38.

^aOne quintal = 100 pounds.

^bIn thousands of arrobas of 25 pounds.

The little reliability of the official data is again demonstrated in the case of potato production. Table 15 shows the different production levels announced for the same years by two successive presidents of INRA on different occasions.

Table 15
Potato Production
(In Quintales)

Year	Data Offered by Antonio Núñez Jiménez	Data Offered by Carlos Rafael Rodríguez
1958	1,534,000	1,381,000
1959	1,803,000	2,118,000
1960	2,200,000	1,921,000
1961	3,300,000	2,008,000

Source: INRA, cited by Alberto Arredondo, Cuba, Agriculture, op. cit., p. 287.

Even if the figures quoted in Table 14 are accepted, the timing of the expropriation process should be kept in mind. According to Table 11, a very large part of the lands which passed into INRA's hands was confiscated during the second half of 1960 and in many cases, after the crops had been harvested or tended.

Table 16 shows the indices of agricultural production for Cuba as computed by the United States Department of Agriculture, which affirms an increase in production.

Table 16

Cuba - Indices of Agricultural Production
 Revised 1958 - 59 Through 1961 - 62
 (1952 - 53 and 1954 - 55 = 100)

	1952-53 and 1954-55	1958-59	1959-60	1960-61	1961-62	1962-63	1963-64
Agricultural Production Index	100	122	123	133	101	84	77
Per Capita Agricultural Production Index	100	110	109	115	86	69	63
Food Production Index	100	122	123	133	100	83	76
Per Capita Food Production Index	100	110	109	115	85	69	62
Population Relatives	100	111	113	116	118	121	123

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Indices of Agricultural Production for the 20 Latin American Countries (Washington, D.C.: ERS-Foreign 44, 1963), p. 11.

The heavy weight of the sugar sector in the Cuban economy, and even more in the rural productive sector, and its production increase during this period may have produced the increments shown by the indices. It is known that, at the beginning of 1961, there were shortages of commodities formerly produced locally. For example, at a discussion meeting held at INRA's Offices in Havana during the first half of 1961, Carlos Rafael Rodríguez is quoted as saying:

During the sessions of this assembly, it has been the joke of my comrades in the presidency to ask the 'responsibles' as soon as they have finished the explanation of their successes, 'Well, and where is the beef, and where is the rice?'.⁵⁶

In other cases, such as beef, production was maintained at high levels at the expense of the capital stock. Felipe Pazos maintains: "The supply of beef has been maintained at the expense of the stock, by slaughtering head of cattle which are well under marketable weight."⁵⁷ This affirmation is backed by Jacques Chonchol.⁵⁸

The author's own conclusions are that the increase in production during the first two years of the Land Reform was the result of the surprise redirectioning of the Revolution. Very few people, in 1959, thought that the Law of May 17, 1959, was only a preamble to a collectivization process, so many of them planted hurriedly to fall under the exceptions described in Article 2 of the Law. In this way, the Government got cultivated farms instead of sabotaged ones.

⁵⁶Obra Revolucionaria, official magazine No. 30 (Havana, 1961), p. 204, cited by Boris Goldenberg, op. cit., p. 25.

⁵⁷Felipe Pazos, "Desarrollo Insuficiente y Depauperación Económica," Cuadernos (Paris), Suplemento al No. 47, Congreso por la Libertad de la Cultura (Marzo-Abril, 1961), p. 52.

⁵⁸Jacques Chonchol, op. cit., p. 139.

2. Second Phase: 1961 - 1964

There are some indications that permit the assumption that the bonanza of 1959 and 1960 ended in 1961.

There has been, in the Cuban Government policy, an evident desire to diversify agricultural production, but the Government has not taken into consideration the time nor the difficulties involved in this process.

On October 20, 1961, the Economic Plan for the period between 1962 and 1965 was announced. This Plan set ambitious goals such as a projected Gross National Product growth rate of 23.5 percent per year, and an increase in the disposable national income of 13 percent per year.⁵⁹ The Plan detailed minutely the individual goals for each agricultural product for 1962. The Plan had to be cancelled 83 days after its starting date, March 24, 1962. Fidel Castro said that the cancellation was due to "happy figuring, erroneous data, subjectivism," and because the set goals were impossible to reach.⁶⁰

One of the first tenets of the agricultural policy of the Government was the anti-sugar cane policy. This policy consisted of decreasing the importance of sugar in the Cuban economy by agricultural diversification and by the Government's up-rooting of thousands of hectares of sugar land for the use of other crops. The cultivation methods used in the remaining sugar lands were not improved, resulting in the disastrous fall in the level of the sugar crop for all the years after 1961 as mentioned

⁵⁹Alberto Arredondo, "Estudio Comparativo de las Reformas Agrarias de America: La Reforma Agraria Cubana," Cuaderno de la AIP, No. 54 (Miami, Enero, 1965), p. 4.

⁶⁰Ibid.

before. As Seers mentions, the output of sugar in 1962 was so small that "it is necessary to go back to 1955 to find a smaller harvest".⁶¹ In 1963 and 1964, the harvests were successively smaller. The fact that the best lands were up-rooted, contributed to the problem since these lands had the highest yields and were the closest to the sugar mills.⁶² The sharp fall in sugar output proved that the diversion of sugar land into other crops was a hasty one, especially in view of the existing disorganization and inefficiency.

Another aspect of the Government sugar policy concerns the sugar mills. The Government considered that it was possible to produce as much sugar in a smaller number of mills, so to that effect, it had demolished nine mills up to 1963.⁶³ Another reason for demolishing certain sugar mills was the desperate need for spare parts which were not available due, in part, to the United States trade embargo.

During the second half of 1961, serious shortages developed in other domestically produced foodstuffs, malanga and other tubers were in a very short supply, and the production of rice and potatoes fell sharply, in the latter cases below the 1957-58 averages.⁶⁴ Eduardo Santos Rios, an INRA official wrote, "Tubers have been our principal failure. Their shortage has caused very serious problems."⁶⁵ While more land was being cultivated

⁶¹Dudley Seers, op. cit., p. 131.

⁶²Ibid., p. 132.

⁶³Alberto Arredondo, Cuba, Agriculture, op. cit., p. 88.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 135.

⁶⁵Eduardo Santos Rios, "Tecnificar Nuestra Agricultura es Hacerla Más Productiva," Cuba Socialista, No. 9 (Havana, May, 1962), p. 65.

with non-sugar crops, agricultural yields decreased in the most important items. Table 17 shows a comparison of selected crops' yields for 1945, and 1958 to 1962.

From 1958 to 1962, yields per hectare decreased in eleven cases, increased in six cases, and remained equal in one case, as shown in Table 17.

The failure of the 1962 sugar crop, together with the decreases in other sectors, brought a reversal in the policy toward sugar. Seers writes:

More realistic assessments indicated that it was not feasible to shift, in one year, from extensive to intensive cultivation of cane and at the same time to diversify in a large degree agricultural output. Faced with the impossibility of fulfilling existing international agreements with the Socialist Bloc, INRA officials realized that, up to sugar outputs of 7 million tons, comparative advantage recommended export promotion over import substitution.⁶⁶

Decreasing yields were apparently a result of the inefficiency of the state farms. Carlos Rafael Rodríguez wrote in August, 1961:

I have been very surprised that here nobody has talked about costs; I have not heard the word cost one single time, unless it was to say that costs did not matter, but costs do matter decisively.⁶⁷

This lack of concern over costs has led to deficits in most of the Government farms. The regional grouping ordered by the Law of October, 1963, to put the farms on a self-financing basis, was directed to decrease the waste of resources evidenced by the deficits and the low agricultural yields.

⁶⁶Dudley Seers, *op. cit.*, p. 147.

⁶⁷Carlos Rafael Rodríguez, "Intervención," Obra Revolucionaria, No. 30, p. 206.

Table 17

Cuba - Agricultural Yields For Selected Crops
(Tons Per Hectare)

Crop	1945	1958	1959	1960	1961	1962
Corn	0.92	0.88	1.10	1.13	0.86	0.88
Millet	1.10	1.20	1.26	1.32	1.37	1.09
Beans	0.60	0.62	0.63	0.44	0.51	0.53
Potatoes	6.77	9.47	9.89	11.09	8.58	8.71
Sweet Potatoes	3.06	3.07	3.29	3.92	4.50	4.30
Yam (Name)	3.32	3.31	3.46	3.94	4.17	5.30
Malanga	2.79	7.02	7.16	7.30	3.50	4.10
Yucca	3.22	3.70	3.84	3.85	5.15	6.80
Peanuts	0.95	0.94	1.01	1.05	0.94	0.91
Soybeans	--	0.96	1.01	1.10	0.61	0.66
Tomatoes	13.00	20.60	21.10	21.70	13.65	12.90
Garlic	1.40	6.72	6.72	6.92	3.31	1.00
Cocoa	2.40	5.28	5.52	5.83	4.50	4.00
Cotton	--	1.23	1.20	1.20	0.78	0.55
Coffee	0.36	0.36	0.58	0.38	0.31	0.38
Citrus	3.74	5.24	5.24	5.48	7.00	6.80
Rice	1.17	1.88	1.99	1.92	1.42	1.40

Source: Central Planning Board, Cuba, cited by U.N., Economic Analysis for Latin America, 1963, op. cit., p. 287.

The Government has attempted to increase farm productivity in the sugar sector by intensifying mechanization. The first efforts were concentrated on the cane cutting operations, which involved the importation and/or manufacture of cutting machines which had been prohibited in Cuba up to that moment. None of the 115 machines manufactured for use in the 1963 sugar harvest could be used efficiently due to breakage and imperfections.⁶⁸

Efforts have also been made to introduce cane hauling equipment to pick up the canes after they were cut by laborers. At the same time, large numbers of "voluntary" workers have been utilized in cane cutting operations. In 1964, the Army sent 20,000 men to Oriente Province to participate in the sugar harvest.⁶⁹

Regarding the performance of the cane cutting and hauling equipment, Arredondo comments:

The disappointment experienced with two types of machinery used for cutting in the 1962 harvest and for hauling during the 1963 crop, coupled with the scarcity of skilled manpower, forced the Government to an all-out effort in trying to bring about that which the newspapers called the technical revolution. A combine had to be manufactured capable of cutting and hauling sugar cane. The Soviets stated that it would be manufactured by them.⁷⁰

The combines were tested on the 1964 crop and were termed a success by Fidel Castro.⁷¹ They were to be used extensively during the 1965 harvest, but no further press releases have been made on them.

⁶⁸Alberto Arredondo, Cuba, Agriculture, op. cit., p. 113.

⁶⁹Ibid., pp. 115-116.

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 116.

⁷¹Ibid., p. 117.

Table 18

A Comparison Between 1962 Rationing Quotas
And 1958 Average Consumption Per Capita
(Per Capita Per Week)

Items	1958	1962	Percentage Change From 1958 to 1962
Rationed Nationwide			
Oils and fats	0.75 lb.	0.5 lb.	- 33.3
Rice	2.50 lbs.	1.5 lbs.	- 40.0
Beans and all other legumes	224 grams	172 grams	- 23.3
Rationed in Metropolitan Havana			
Beef	2.2 lbs.	0.75 lb.	- 65.9
Tubers	5.0 lbs.	2.50 lbs.	- 50.0
Poultry	1.5 lbs.	0.50 lb.	- 66.7
Fish	1.0 lb.	0.25 lb.	- 75.0
Eggs	3 units	1 and fraction ^a	--
Butter	1.5 oz.	1 and fraction ^a	--
Milk	0.75 liter	0.2 liter	- 73.3

Sources: Cuba, Concejo Nacional de Economía, Ministerio de Agricultura, Junta Nacional de Abastecimiento, 1962, cited by La Economía Cubana, Hacia la Ruina Inevitable (Miami: Cuaderno de la AIP, No. 51, Enero 1965) and Alberto Arredondo, Cuba, Agriculture, op. cit., p. 38.

^aFigured on basis of monthly allotments.

Performance of Russian-made sowing and planting machines which would be used for the first time in the 1965 harvest has not been disclosed.

The decrease in agricultural production, other than sugar, and the chaotic situation in the Government organization can be ascertained by considering three specific elements: the 1962 and 1964 rationing; the Dumont report; and Carlos Rafael Rodriguez's speech in January, 1965.

On March 24, 1962, the Government started rationing several basic foodstuffs, in some cases taking into consideration the ages of the members of the family. Table 18 shows the initial foodstuff allotments, compares them with the 1958 average consumption per capita for the nation as a whole, and includes a percentage change figured on the basis of both years.

In order to enforce this rationing and to discourage black market operations, the Government passed a law on June 22, 1962, which established a penalty of 180 days in jail to those found guilty of transporting and/or keeping more than 25 pounds of agricultural products.⁷² In 1964, ration quotas were decreased and other products, such as sugar and coffee, were added.

The Dumont Report on the condition of Cuban agriculture, previously mentioned in this chapter, was presented to INRA in September, 1963. Its principal observations were among others:

"1. Cuban agricultural production, after the increase in 1960 and 1961, tends to decrease in spite of the new lands placed under cultivation. Some figure the general decrease in agricultural productivity as high as 37 percent and the importance of this decrease is undeniable.

2. The last report of Comrade Rafael Mestre, Head of the Department of Agricultural Production, dated May 8, 1963, is not optimistic reading. Besides the well-known decreases

⁷²Newspaper Hoy (Havana, Junio 24, 1962), cited by Alberto Arredondo, ibid., p. 39.

in sugar cane, the majority of the other important crops are also decreasing, including cattle production. Rice has gone down from 6.7 million quintales in 1959-60 to 4.5 million quintales in 1961-62. Millet decreased by 50 percent to 418,000 quintales in the state sector. Yields in the bean crop and peanut crop have also gone down. The peanut situation in Oriente is referred to, by Mestre, as a true scandal.

3. There exists an anti-technical spirit and frequent irresponsibility in the farms.

4. The decrease in crop yields is accompanied by high production costs, which further aggravate the situation. The best People Farm in Havana Province has spent \$1.26 to obtain \$1.00 of revenue and the worst has spent \$1.82 to obtain \$1.00 of revenue.

5. Almost all of the State Farms are in deficit. These farms pay neither rent to the Government nor interest for credits received. They do not amortize investments and frequently receive fertilizers, fodder, and other inputs at a subsidized price.

6. On the average, the rural worker produces about half of what he is paid (estimated by Comrade Bondarchouk). Absenteeism, people not going to work, is rampant. Everybody complains of lack of workers, but the cause of production decreases is very low productivity of labor and not the lack of it.

7. It seems that productivity in the Government sector is much lower than in the private sector.

8. Without accusing anybody, the administration structure of INRA is that of an inefficient Government Authority and not the one of a production enterprise.

9. It is time already, after two long years of costly economic stagnation, accompanied by a sensible reduction in the living standard, to take advantage of one's own experience rather than of foreign experiences. The problems of production are ill solved by the bureaucratic anarchy which has followed the romantic anarchy.

10. The Cuban Farms belong to the people, but this is something the mentality of the rural people can not grasp.

11. The agricultural situation is serious and runs the risk of becoming catastrophic." ⁷³

This diagnosis of the Cuban agricultural situation does not require any further comments. Table 19 shows a comparison between

⁷³Rene Dumont, op. cit.,

agricultural and livestock production in Cuba in 1957-58 and 1963-64 which substantiates the judgment of Rene Dumont.

Of the 26 products listed in Table 19, only cotton, whose commercial cultivation had started in Cuba just prior to the Revolution, shows a production increase.

The third element that must be considered is the speech delivered by Carlos Rafael Rodríguez, Minister-President of INRA, on January 27, 1965, before the Annual Assembly of INRA. This speech was profusely reproduced in the Cuban newspapers. On February 13, 1965, Carlos Rafael Rodríguez was removed from his position, which was again assumed by Fidel Castro. The highlights of the speech, which referred to 1964, are quoted, followed by the author's parenthetical insertions of pre-revolutionary data.⁷⁴

In general, agricultural yields were very low: the yield of rice was 518 qq. per cab.; beans, 124 qq. per cab.; sweet potatoes, 1,003 qq. per cab.; and malanga, 694 qq. per cab.

(Before 1959, the yield of rice was 6,061 qq. per cab.; beans, 406 qq. per cab.; sweet potatoes, 2,939 qq. per cab.; and malanga, 3,150 qq. per cab.)

Production levels also descended in 1964. Tobacco decreased 87,600 qq. since 1963; coffee decreased by 60 percent. Bananas were nearly gone due to hurricane Flora. Production of potatoes decreased 'brutally'.

Note: 1 qq. = 100 pounds = 1 quintal

1 caballeria = 13.4 hectares

⁷⁴This speech was reproduced together with the pre-revolutionary figures by: Economía (News Bulletin published by the Association of Cuban Economists), Vol. III, No. 13 (Miami, April, 1965), pp. 1-3.

Table 19
Agricultural and Livestock Production of Cuba

Products	Thousand Units	1957-1958	1963-1964
Agriculture			
Rice	Kilogram	172,500	163,630
Corn	"	246,879	150,000 ^a
Beans	"	36,936	32,272 ^b
Sugar	Tons	5,909	3,820 ^c
Tomato (salad)	Kilogram	105,000	38,000 ^d
Tomato (cooking)	"	8,750	6,000 ^e
Henequen	"	10,000	9,220
Cotton	Tons	*	15
Peanut	Kilogram	5,600	900 ^a
Garlic	"	3,026	1,363 ^f
Onion	"	1,290	1,136 ^g
Sweet potatoes	"	161,289	82,725 ^h
White malanga	"	191,206	47,270 ⁱ
Yucca	"	186,350	82,720
Potatoes	"	167,336	84,000
Banana	Bunch	4,760	2,100 ^j
Plantains	Thousands	431	84 ^k
Coffee	Kilogram	45,300	20,400 ^l
Tobacco	Kilogram	41,654	29,158 ^m
Cocoa	"	2,150	1,130

Note: Less than a thousand units.

Table 19--Continued

Products	Thousand	1957-1958	1963-1964
	Units		
Livestock			
Beef	Pounds	459,250	252,000
Pork	"	237,000	39,160
Poultry	"	79,000	50,220
Fish	"	70,000	60,000
Eggs	Dozens	26,978	16,186
Milk	Liters	959,946	583,000

^aRene Dumont, *op. cit.* ^bIncludes all types of beans. ^cThis refers to industrialized sugar, which is a more representative index than sugar cane production. ^dRationed to one pound per month. ^eSurvey conducted among Cuban refugees between January and July 1964. ^fInternal data of INRA obtained by the Association of Cuban Economists. ^gInternal data of INRA. It should be borne in mind that the largest consumption of onions proceeded in 1957 from imports. ^hIf the quota allotted by the rationing system should be fulfilled, production would have to amount to 165,450,000 kilograms. ⁱOne pound a week per person allotted to the aged, children and those with doctor's prescription, all totaling approximately 2 million persons. ^jEach bunch weighs on the average 80 pounds. INRE, bi-monthly public letter No. 4, October 15, 1955. ^kOne plantain per person per month is allotted under the rationing system. Each one weighs on the average 3/4 pound. "Gros Michel" bananas are not included, which average 50 bananas per bunch. ^lAfter the production decrease of 1962-1963 the government announced that production for 1964-65 would amount to 920,000 quintales (41,800,000 kilograms). ^mThe government has announced a production for 1964-65 of 67,545,000 kilograms. ⁿPig raising represented a marginal income for the rural family.

Source: National Economic Council; Ministry of Agriculture: National Institute of Agrarian Reform (INRA); Report prepared by Rene Dumont; and other sources contained in the bibliographical footnotes, quoted from Alberto Arredondo, Cuba, Agriculture...., *op. cit.*, p. 313.

"Malanga's production was 938,944 qq." (Compared with 2,653,000 qq. in 1957). "Name's (yam) production was 181,746 qq." (Compared with 2,074,600 qq. in 1957). "Yucca's production was 1,591,237 qq." (Compared with 4,099,700 qq. in 1957).

Carlos Rafael Rodríguez added:

"People keep asking, where are the oranges?, and I tell them, around here, we increased production by 10 percent. There were no mangoes in Havana due to excess consumption in Oriente Province. Production of papaya decreased greatly as pineapple did. The plan for green vegetables was not fulfilled, and we have lost at least 5,012 hectares of cane due to phytosanitary malpractices.

Rice and corn production have gone down, resulting from the application of the principle of comparative advantages which advised to plant cane and import rice. The plan was to decrease the rice area from 126,000 to 36,300 hectares, but I regret to say that we could not accomplish the planting of this latter figure.

I am not able to assure that the sugar crop of 1965 will reach the 5.5 million tons needed to fulfill international agreements.

We currently have 3.2 million head of cattle on 2,010,000 hectares.⁷⁵ We are obtaining only three liters of milk per dairy cow, last year Comrade Luis Bosh, together with Soviet Comrades Slava and Ivan toured Havana Province dairy farms and were horrified by the situation they found. According to a recent FAO report, made in Cuba by Engineer Ugued, we are destroying the last forest reserves in the country.

However, the private sector of our agriculture, ANAP, has accomplished in excess of their goals, with an excess of 66 percent in tomatoes, 43 percent in pumpkins, 62 percent in green vegetables, 54 percent in fruits, 33 percent in corn, 76 percent in beef, 73 percent in poultry, and 76 percent in eggs.

We have a disastrous situation in agricultural equipment. Regarding fertilizers, it is shameful for INRA that the figures offered by the Farms lacked all honesty. State agricultural and livestock enterprises lost more than \$86 millions. INRA, on the other hand, has won fame for not paying its debts. In 1963, each dollar's worth of production (revenue) cost \$1.47 to produce; in

⁷⁵Compared with 6 million head in 1958.

1964, it has been reduced to \$1.17, on the average. In general, we have accomplished only 67 percent of the plans, in spite of having received 7,217,144 man-hours of voluntary work."

As mentioned earlier, this speech was followed by the replacement of Carlos Rafael Rodríguez as head of INRA.

3. Agriculture Production After 1965

Perhaps the most significant development taking place during this period is the return-to-sugar policy followed by the Cuban Government. Top priority has been granted to expansion of sugar cane cultivation and sugar production. An official sugar production goal of 10 million tons have been set for the 1970 crop and the country is engaged in an all-out effort to reach that goal. According to Dumont, while expansion of sugar is an improvement over the mismanaged diversification existent in the State Farms, it has rapidly fallen into the other extreme where monoculture has become the absolute rule.* Expansion of several other productions have also been emphasized, especially coffee, rice, citrus, and livestock. The latter three of these are still under implementation. Data on production of these crops are hard to come by and usually contradictory. For example, rice production in Cuba was reported by FAO to have increased by 13 percent from 1964 to 1965. However, the Vice-Minister of the Cuban Central Planning Board had already reported to ECLA that the 1965 rice crop represented a decline of 36 percent relative to the 1964 crop.* Fragmentary data precludes a detail evaluation of other changes in production during this period.

*Rene Dumont "Les Cubains Trouvent le Temps Long" en Le Monde weekly Paris, December 11-18, 1969, p. 6.

*Quoted in Mesa-Lago, Carmelo "Availability and Reliability of Statistics in Socialist Cuba", University of Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, 1960, p. 55.

The future evolution of the land reform process in Cuba is not easy to discern in view of the drastic changes in agricultural production policy which have taken place during the last 10 years. The centralized control exercised by Premier Castro in economic and political decisions will make future agricultural production and tenure policies heavily dependent on the leadership political considerations as affected by internal and external variables.

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