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LAND REFORM IN BOLIVIA

BY

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## A C K N O W L E D G M E N T S

This paper draws heavily upon parts of a past study--"An Evaluation of the Bolivian Land Reform"--undertaken during 1965-1968, and co-directed by Ing. Celso Reyes P. of the Bolivian National Agrarian Reform Service and Ronald J. Clark, Land Tenure Center, University of Wisconsin. That study was financed by the Land Tenure Center, University of Wisconsin; the Inter-American Committee for Agricultural Development (CIDA), Washington, D.C.; USAID/Bolivia; and the Bolivian Government. The more complete study is now in pre-publication revision.

I wish to express my gratitude to Miss Katherine Barnes, Lic. Hugo Romero, and Ing. Celso Reyes P., all employees of the Bolivian National Agrarian Reform Service; they have written substantial sections of this paper, and if it had not been for their help, the paper would never have been finished in the short time allowed. Of course, final responsibility for the contents of the paper must rest with me. Also, I wish to thank those of the Land Tenure Center, University of Wisconsin, who have read the paper and helped with their comments and suggestions; the Land Tenure Center also provided the necessary editorial and typing assistance on the final copy.

Bolivia and Cuba are the only countries in Latin America which have recently carried out large-scale, rapid programs leading to the redistribution of property rights in land.

The 1953 Bolivian Land Reform was only a part of the Bolivian National Revolution of 1952, which also 1) nationalized the three largest mining interests in the country, 2) enfranchised all Bolivians, including the masses of rural peasant families, and 3) undertook a large-scale program of rural education. All these measures taken together comprised the program of the National Revolutionary Movement Party (MNR) and were aimed at drastically restructuring existing institutions and power bases within Bolivia.

In the area of land reform, the principal objectives were:

(1) to eradicate the larger landholdings owned primarily by absentee landlords; and (2) to eradicate the colonato system which maintained the masses of peasant families in semi-feudal conditions under which peasants were obliged to render farm labor and personal services to landlords in exchange for usufruct rights to a parcel of land. By accomplishing both these objectives, the Bolivian Government created the basic conditions in the rural sector within which new institutions could take form. These conditions were the exploitation of farm lands by individual owner-operator peasant families in accordance with the private initiative and managerial ability which either resided in or could be developed among peasant families. In this sense Bolivia is an important case of a recent Latin American movement which has taken quick and forceful steps to integrate the majority Indian

population into the national society, economy, and policy. The successes and failures of Bolivia's experience are relevant not only for their historical interest, but also in relation to the basic problems of modernization which face most underdeveloped countries today.

#### THE PRE-REFORM PERIOD

##### Economic and Political Background

The principal geographic areas in Bolivia are the highlands, the valleys, and the tropical lowlands (James, 204-232; see Map 1). At the time of Bolivia's land reform, 90-95 percent of the population was concentrated in the highlands and valleys, which make up about one-third of the land area. These had traditionally been areas of population concentration since before the Spanish Conquest, and after the Conquest the major mining and urban centers grew up in these two areas. The need for foodstuffs for these consumption centers provided incentives to Spaniards and to native peasant leaders for becoming landholders, and especially for organizing work relations between themselves and the indigenous populations already settled on lands so that incomes in cash and in kind to landlords were maximized and cash expenditures in the agricultural process were minimized. As the markets for foodstuffs grew, lands of freeholding Indian communities were usurped in one way or another, or purchased and incorporated into the private holdings of an increasing number of landlords. These measures increased the number of Indian families who were obligated to

work the lands of landlords. This process continued until the Revolution of 1952, but the period when it reached its maximum was between 1860 and 1910.

#### Landholding and Land Tenure Structure

The Bolivian Agricultural Census of 1950 (Dirección Nacional de Estadística y Censos, Ministerio de Hacienda, p. 2 ff), reported a total of 82,598 private holdings for the country as a whole, of which 7,924 or approximately 9.6 percent were farms of 200 hectares or more, together holding 74 percent of the total area reported. These same large farms also reported 62 percent of the land that was being cultivated that year. At the other extreme were 50,483 farms, or 61 percent of those reported, which were smaller than 5.0 hectares and altogether held 0.28 percent of the total area reported and 8.1 percent of the cultivated lands. The landholding structure in Bolivia before 1952 thus had one of the more extremely concentrated structures in Latin America (Clark, 1968:153).

The 1950 Census established the number of Indian freeholding communities (communities where title to lands resides in the name of the community) as 3,783 but did not show the area occupied or cultivated by such communities.

It has been estimated that on the highlands, 90 percent of the large landowners were absentee landlords who lived in urban centers or abroad and left operation of their farms to managers. It has also been estimated that over 50 percent of the valley and subtropical farms were owned by those who worked them.

Not only was most of the cultivable land concentrated in the hands of a few landowners, but land tenure relations--the work relations between landlords and Indian families--were also contrary to most social criteria of a modern society. In almost every case of the large holdings described above, the predominant tenure relation was the system called colonato. The landlord granted usufruct rights to small parcels of land to the Indian families or colonos; in turn, these families were each obligated to provide the landlords at least three and as much as twelve man-days of labor per week, without compensation, depending on the quantity of land the colono family received. The colonos also had to use their own tools, bags, and animals in working the landlord's lands, as well as providing other farm labor services such as harvesting and transporting landlord produce to market. Colono families were also obligated to render personal and domestic services (pongueaje) to the landlord and his family in their homes on the farm and in the towns and cities, as well as to the farm managers who remained on the farm.

Thus landlords always had access to a pool of labor services provided by the colono families for farm and personal purposes. Since these services were unremunerated, except in terms of the opportunity costs of the parcel of land exchanged for them, the landlord's real investments in the production process in terms of working capital were generally limited to seed kept from one year to another, natural fertilizer from farm animals, and the farm animals themselves which were reserved exclusively for the landlord's use. This agricultural

system maximized income flows in cash and in kind to the landlord, given the existing opportunities for selling agricultural produce. However, this system did generally preclude investments favoring the adoption of more productive inputs, as well as the adoption of different tenure relations with the Indian labor force. For example, on most of the larger landholdings, the colono was virtually a slave to the absentee landlord. He was so tied to the land that even when properties were sold, they were listed as including "300 colonos." Naturally, some properties were sold between landlords, not for the purpose of acquiring additional land resources, but also for obtaining additional labor of the colonos to work on other properties already owned by the landlord. If sufficient labor could not be acquired this way, it was not uncommon for landlords to "rent" colonos for specified periods from other landlords.

Given the character of this system, one can readily understand why the landlords generally prohibited colono families from having schools in the rural areas on the landholdings; this prohibition contributed to a high rate of illiteracy (estimated at 80 percent before 1952) for the country as a whole. Similarly, colonos were not permitted to organize on the landholdings, even though national legislation allowed such organizations. If organizations were discovered by landlords, the peasant leaders, their families, and organization members were usually forced to leave the landholding, and under these conditions it would be difficult to work elsewhere. Literacy and property requirements were such that the mass of rural population was not allowed to vote. Lastly, infant mortality was

high and life expectancy low. Obviously, tenure relations and the resultant social conditions made this agricultural system quite inefficient.

The rural sector had undergone significant change between 1860 and 1910, especially during the government of General Melgarejo (1864-1871) when the rapid process of massive alienation of the Indian freeholding communities and lands and their incorporation into privately held landholdings began. This process was a result of late 19th century laissez-faire liberalism combined with the rise of new rich groups in Bolivia and increasing opportunities to earn income from the land by producing wheat, coffee, and coca. These changes did not induce the state of flux which might have allowed peasant families freer access to land; in fact they led to the final and general institutionalization of the landholding structure and the tenure system described above, involving by far the large majority of peasant families (estimated at 70-80 percent of the rural population).

There were, nevertheless, some small regions where the traditional landholdings were being broken up and sold to peasants before 1952. This occurred in a few of the valleys (Cochabamba and Tarija) where landholdings were small to begin with and peasant population pressure was high. Landholdings were also sometimes broken up and sold to peasants when inheritance disputes occurred, or when the quantities of land each of the children of a landlord was to receive were too small to continue working. However, the number of these cases was insignificant, for landlord associations usually exerted pressures

on individual landlords not to sell or rent lands to peasants. It was generally preferred to keep a landholding intact and within a family; if this was not possible, then generally the entire holding was sold to another landlord.

Until 1952, then, one could characterize the agricultural or rural sector in Bolivia as static, for no new innovations in work relations between landlord and peasant had taken place, and there had been no general acceptance of new agricultural techniques. The Villarroel Government (1943-1946) had tried to modify tenure relations by legally prohibiting personal service obligations of colonos, but farm labor obligations did not change because of this law. Whatever changes in personal service obligations did occur were made by marshalling peasant support at the First National Indian Congress, to which peasant leaders came from all over Bolivia. However, upon Villarroel's death, personal service obligations were quickly re-instituted and drastic reprisals were taken against the peasant leaders who had attended the Congress. Dominant landlord interests dictated a continuance of the status quo.

#### Land Resource Information

##### 1) Land availability

Agriculture engages approximately 70 percent of the population in Bolivia but accounts for only about one-fourth of the gross national product. A UN survey, based on estimates of the Bolivian Ministry of Agriculture, reports that 40.8 percent of the total area of Bolivia is covered by forests, 37.7 percent is wasteland, 21.0

percent provides natural pastures, and 0.5 percent is in actual agricultural cultivation. Wide variations in altitude and climate, combined with vast unused arable acreage, provide an agricultural potential which could easily feed the country's population and possibly leave a surplus for export. Agricultural output is so low, however, that the country must use foreign exchange earnings to import food (wheat and wheat flour) and other agricultural commodities such as edible oils and lard.

The highlands or altiplano comprise approximately 16 percent of the total area of the country, covering some 37.8 million acres. Of this it is estimated that 370,000 acres are cultivated mostly by subsistence farmers.

The valleys comprise about 14 percent of the total land area of Bolivia, while the lowlands or oriente cover about 70 percent of the national territory. Of this approximately 190 million acres, only an estimated 140,000 acres are under cultivation.

One of the fundamental problems of the peasantry in pre-1952 Bolivia, and a key factor for explaining the continuance of the colonato system, was the limited availability of access to cultivable lands. Land resources were controlled by a minority of the population. Customs and tenure relations varied somewhat throughout Bolivia, but in the traditional hacienda areas of the highlands and valleys, where subsequent land reform would be felt most, the peasantry was almost absolutely limited in access to land. They were confined to their usufruct parcels and were not permitted to use the landlord's

pasturelands or unused cultivable lands. The landlords reasoned that even colonos might one day claim squatters' rights to these lands (a custom centuries-old which is still widespread). This attitude prevailed in most areas--the highlands, Cochabamba, and even the arid desert hacienda lands of Potosí and Chuquisaca.

However, basic work obligations did vary to some degree from one area to another. Depending upon the region and topography, land resources were either at a premium for landlord and colono alike, or abundant. For example, the Yungas of La Paz--the subtropical, eastern watershed of the Andes--were relatively underpopulated compared to the highlands, and the peasants were permitted de facto access to virgin jungle lands in many zones. This occurred primarily on the large coca holdings where landlords demanded only that colonos work on the landlords' lands used for growing coca. This concession to the peasants was made so they would remain on the hacienda. Also, in eastern Bolivia's tropical lowlands, which make up two-thirds of the country, virgin lands awaited anyone; the fundamental problems of exploitation and utilization were lack of infrastructure and the non-existence of substantial population centers and markets for agricultural produce.

No pre-reform or recent data exist to show the relative endowments of land per inhabitant on either a community, regional, or departmental basis. No general population census, and not even any specific regional censuses, have been carried out in a fashion which would allow man/land ratios and other calculations to be made.

## 2) Classification

Before 1952 there was no comprehensive soil and water survey, nor was there some common base by which to judge the relative agricultural value of different plots of land. Only in the more important agricultural regions such as Cochabamba, parts of the highlands, and the Yungas was qualitative information available. These data were supplied by the national Sociedad Rural (national society of landlords) composed of the regional landlords' societies of the Yungas, of Cochabamba, etc. They supplied information about isolated efforts for development either regionally--in the case of irrigation for the wheat producing pampas of Lequezana of Potosí, or La Angostura Dam of the Upper Valley of Cochabamba--or on a particular hacienda such as La Angostura canal in Tarija. Only here were there some indications useful in compiling a standard classification of land and water for an area. Unfortunately, many of these records were destroyed when the revolutionary government declared the societies illegal and sacked their archives. For this and other reasons, planners at the time of the 1953 Land Reform found themselves confronted with almost a total lack of vital information and data which may have assisted them in designing more detailed procedures for expropriating land and redistributing it.

### 3) Identification and Titling

Before 1952 there existed a rural land tax (catastral rústico) based on the landowners' sworn statements of the values of their properties. Relative values of properties were determined largely by the market at the time individual properties were sold, though this value was many times influenced by the number of colono families and the quantity of labor available. All property rights or transfers were registered in Derechos Reales, but there was also a law of use and custom called the Thirty Year Right--anyone residing thirty years or more on one piece of land was its legally recognized owner.

One of the interesting qualifications of property rights and considerations was the position of the Indian. In pre-1952 law, the Indian was considered a minor, and he was only allowed to sell his lands (if he had some) in public auction supervised by the Ministry of Finance. The expressed purpose of the ruling was to prevent land-grabbers from exploiting the Indians, but such a public auction was also a way of advising area landlords, or would-be landlords, that additional lands were available.

Land claims as well as land titles often date to the Spanish Crown's dominion, in the case of freeholding communities to Crown Decrees in 1591 (Maldonado, 1956). Historically, these claims were recorded in Los Archivos de las Indias at Sevilla, Spain, and in the Colonial Offices of Derechos Reales in Lima, Buenos Aires, or Caracas, depending upon the vice-regal seat of the period. These claims, as well as any emanating from the Thirty Year Right, were registered in Derechos Reales before 1952 for purposes of taxation. Presently, an

entirely new public organization is charged with the responsibility of expropriating and titling lands; the título ejecutorial, issued by the National Agrarian Reform Service, is the only legally valid land title which can be used for agricultural credit, for transferring lands, etc.

#### Rural Production and Productivity

The pre-reform rural economy of Bolivia had two different sectors: the landlord and the peasant. The former was primarily market-oriented while the latter was subsistence-oriented. The subsistence or peasant sector, to satisfy family consumption needs, diversified their production more than many operations did in the landlord sector, which often produced a single crop (coca, wheat, coffee, meat) for the market. After the turn of the century domestic production continued to supply the demand for potatoes, barley, quinoa, meat, coffee, vegetables and fruits, but covered only a small fraction of the demand for wheat, barley and chili peppers, which were imported in large quantities. Official price policies and the prevailing land tenure system provided little or no incentive for farmers to increase output by improving the soils or their farming techniques. Uneven distribution of the agricultural population aggravated these conditions.

In the years before 1952 there were concerted efforts on the part of SAI (Servicio Agrícola Interamericano) to increase wheat production through large inputs of farm machinery and the organization of landlord cooperatives. At the same time, the period following

the Chaco War saw the expansion of the domestic market for wheat with a higher consumption of bread by the peasantry. However, this did not increase domestic cultivation of wheat but accelerated imports.

Rural Population, Employment and Underemployment

In 1950 the rate of growth of Bolivia's population was estimated at 1.7 percent, one of the lowest in Latin America. There is no available data showing pre-reform sectoral population and population growth rates, nor is there specific information on rural employment and underemployment prior to 1952. The 1950 census cannot help provide any of these indicators. However, some inferences can be made from the general conditions prevailing before 1952.

Only in the more marginal areas, where there was less population, was the landlord forced to make the colonato arrangement relatively attractive to the Indian family (in the Yungas of La Paz, regions in Chuquisaca, Tarija and Potosí). There was probably little underemployment on the larger landholdings since colono family labor could be used throughout the year for constructing and maintaining roads, buildings, etc. At the same time there was a great deal of idle labor on the 50,483 farms (61 percent of all farms reported in the 1950 census) which were smaller than five hectares. In the densely populated valleys where these small farms were located, peasants would commonly approach landlords and farm managers, offering so many days work per week in exchange for a parcel of land. Many peasants who were owner-operators of privately held small plots also worked as colonos for landlords to gain access to more land. The small farms

were apparently too small to meet the needs of their peasant family owners, and there was probably, therefore, underemployment on these small farms.

Before the Revolution, rural-urban migration was minimal, not only because the peasant was virtually tied to his usufruct parcel and was occupied a good many days per week working for the hacienda, but also because the economy of Bolivia was so underdeveloped that it neither demanded nor absorbed rural workers from the farms. However, those who did migrate either permanently or temporarily to the larger cities, especially from free-holding communities during the Chaco War, could find jobs as carriers, carpenters, masons, etc. The need for a large number of carriers existed because there were few trucks and very few roads, and most transport in the cities and in rural areas was done by peasants and their mules.

#### Income Distribution

No specific data on income distribution in the agricultural sector, or between the agricultural sector and other sectors of the economy, exist for the pre-1952 years. However, it is not difficult to infer from the landholding structure and tenure relations what the differences in levels of living were between the owners of large farms and the colono families, and to describe some of the actual differences.

The housing of colono families was substandard by any measurement. It was usually a one-room dwelling (sometimes two) made of earth or adobe brick. There were no windows or chimney, and the door was so

low that one had to stoop to enter; homes were constructed this way to conserve heat. Few families wanted to invest much time or money in home construction because they were not sure how long they would remain on that site. The roof was made of thatched straw. All cooking and sleeping facilities were inside the house. The kitchen consisted of a small clay stove located on the ground which burned wood, straw, or dung. Cooking and eating utensils were of wood and clay. The rest of the house was used for storing belongings, for housing a few hamsters (for food), and for sleeping. No wooden or metal beds were used, but a raised sleeping area was constructed from adobe, upon which the colono families placed sheep, llama or other hides, and excess clothing and ponchos to keep warm.

Meat, cheese, eggs, and milk were seldom consumed. The daily diet consisted of cereals (barley, wheat, corn, quinoa), starches (potatoes, oca, etc.), and broadbeans, all of which were made into different kinds of soups. Pieces of dried mutton were used at times for seasoning. Variation in diets came on special holidays, religious fiestas, etc.

Clothing and textiles for other uses were all made on the farm from homespun wool. Visits to doctors and education for children were almost unknown.

The world of the colono was largely the landholding; here the major decisions affecting his life were made by the landlord--decisions determining how much land he was to have, where it was to be located, and questions of justice between him and other colonos, or between him

and the landlord. The major contacts that a colono family had with others off the farm were at the rural markets, usually held weekly. To these markets the colono and/or his wife carried agricultural produce to exchange or barter for weekly household needs: condiments, grease or fat for cooking, wool, hides, etc. Sales of agricultural produce such as meat, cheese, and eggs for cash were infrequent; usually the cash from any such sales was used to purchase farm animals (mules, cows, etc.), farm implements, or new articles of clothing for the annual carnival. Table I, presented later, shows how little a colono family of five became involved in the cash economy during the year (this table does not include the infrequent cash purchases of farm animals and implements, or purchases made for special occasions).

Approximately 25-30 percent of the rural families lived in freeholding communities. The conditions under which these families lived were better if they lived near markets or transport routes. They were free to come and go as they pleased, to sell and buy where they wanted, and to have a school in the community. However, most of the freeholding communities throughout Bolivia were isolated and hard to reach. Also, the land resources were generally poor, and if this were not the case, then population pressure was very high. As a result of past efforts by outsiders to usurp freeholding community lands, most of these communities were generally closed to outsiders; this closure was reinforced by very rigid organizational structures and rules in the communities. The combination of these physical and

social conditions assured to some extent the continuance of the community as a whole.

It is not easy to generalize about the level of living of the owners of large holdings worked by many colono families. Those holdings located near important consumption centers were very profitable to the owner, so profitable that he usually did not live on the farm but had it managed by others while he lived in town and worked at some profession. Among these landowners trips abroad were frequent, and usually their children were educated outside Bolivia.<sup>2</sup>

However, landholdings located in the valleys in the departments of Tarija, Potosí, and Chuquisaca were generally managed by their owners. These same owners suffered from a general lack of market opportunities and from poor transportation and communications facilities. By present-day standards many of these landlords would be considered poor. However, control over land resources, and especially over the labor time of colono families, provided even these landlords a lifestyle based on large homes, many servants, and a life of leisure. Another writer has termed this "conspicuous consumption" of colono labor (Erasmus, p. 361).

#### Supplementary Services and Supplies

It goes without saying that research on local crops and livestock, the work of research stations, extension services, and landlord associations, as well as the available agricultural credit, improved seeds, fertilizers, machinery, and irrigation and transport services were almost exclusively destined for the large landholdings. Any new

opportunities from such services and supplies arising in the agricultural sector primarily benefited landlords by reducing either costs or production or by increasing their output; both measures increased income flows to landlords, thus widening the income differences between landlords and their colonos.

Agricultural services and supplies, as well as infrastructural improvements, were concentrated in the areas closer to the larger markets--the urban centers and the mines. In the northern highlands which provided foodstuffs for both La Paz and the mines, lands were scarce in relation to population settled in this area, and some of the larger properties in Bolivia, oriented almost exclusively to commercial sales of agricultural produce, were found here. This was also the region where income differences between landlords and colonos were the greatest except for the Yungas and Cochabamba areas; in the La Paz and Cochabamba areas, both regions of population pressure, the exploitation of the colono was one of the most extreme in Bolivia. Agricultural services and supplies were concentrated in these three relatively market oriented areas before 1952.

1) Information

There were only sporadic and isolated attempts at agricultural research on local crops and livestock in Bolivia before 1952. This kind of work usually needs a heavy input of public resources over a long period to get worthwhile results. The attempts that were made in Bolivia before 1952 were undertaken by the Ministry of Agriculture, and included studies of wheat and livestock as well as several case studies of highland haciendas.

An agricultural extension service under the Ministry of Agriculture also existed before 1952; it had several large experiment stations in the following areas: Chinoli on the Pampas of Lequezana (Potosí) for work on wheat; La Tamborada in the Valley of Cochabamba for work on wheat; Belen on the northern highlands near Lake Titicaca for work on sheep and potatoes; and Tarija for work on wheat. There were approximately thirty extension agents who were responsible for nearly one million square kilometers, a circumstance which demonstrates to some extent the commitment of public assistance to the rural sector.

## 2) Credit

Before 1953 demand for farm credit was small, but so was cash income to most landlords. Farming was not considered a business enterprise. Land served as prestige capital which secured proper social standing and leisure to the proprietor and his family. Hence, investment in agriculture was low, and agricultural credit was scarce and expensive. Even the few progressive farmers who produced for the market did not turn their profits back into their land, but rather invested them in other sectors of the economy. Hazards of frost, hailstorms, and tempests which destroyed one out of five harvests in the northern parts of the highlands and a higher proportion toward the south, contributed to the reluctance of landlords to invest in agriculture.

Before World War II landowners who sought a loan had to obtain it through business or family contacts. The first and rather inadequate provisions explicitly for agricultural credit were made in the early 1940's when the Central Bank was expanded to include a Department of

Rural Credit. In 1942 the Agricultural Credit Bank (Banco Agrícola) was created as an autonomous government agency to assume the functions of the Department of Rural Credit. As a result of inflation and mismanagement, credit was extended mainly to serve political or commercial purposes, and the Bank had little impact on agriculture. In 1955 the Inter-American Agricultural Service initiated a supervised farm credit program for the purpose of mechanization, crop and livestock improvement and marketing.

The Inter-American Agricultural Service was organized in 1948 as a joint undertaking of the U.S. and Bolivian governments to provide assistance in agricultural research, extension, mechanization and credit. It has been the most active and best endowed organization in the field and had, at the peak of its operation in 1958, some 60 U.S. specialists and 800 Bolivian employees.

### 3) Supplies

Improved seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, and farm machinery generally were not used in Bolivia before 1952. In the relatively more important areas of commercial agriculture there were exceptions. For example, the Association of Yungas Landowners brought improved citrus trees, coffee plants, sheep, and apiculture to the Yungas region. Also, this group alone was responsible for two experiment stations in Coroico and Chulumani which distributed both information and seed to Yungas landowners. Improved coffee plants and citrus trees were also given to colonos.<sup>3</sup>

There were also instances of cooperatives of landowners organized by the Ministry of Agriculture, but no specific data are available.

#### 4) Infrastructure

Little specific information is available on transport and irrigation facilities in the period before 1952. However, good roads were few, and systematic road maintenance from public funds was insignificant. Most access roads to landholdings were built and maintained by the peasant labor available to landlords. The Association of Yungas Landlords built and maintained all of the roads which exist today in the Yungas region with revenues collected by the Government on Yungas agricultural produce. Then and now throughout Bolivia, each Bolivian male is responsible for two days of work on national roads per year, in lieu of which they may also pay a sum of money.

The only irrigation facilities in existence were supply and distribution canals to channel seasonal waters to and within landholdings. These were located primarily in the valley regions. Obviously, those who had first claim on water supplies were the landlords; they used them primarily on the lands reserved for their exclusive use. Any excess water was then distributed among the colono families.<sup>4</sup>

#### 5) Crop procurement and marketing

Marketing in the pre-reform period (on the northern highlands) can be characterized, on the one hand, by the commercially-oriented, large-volume, direct transactions of the landlords whose production was destined for the urban market of La Paz or the mines, with little return flow of investment goods or funds to the rural sector which could have stimulated development there. On the other hand, the market

system of the colono families was made up of labor exchanges, barter and small cash transactions among the many peasant families in markets located primarily in the provincial and cantonal capitals. Peasant sales were commonly staple goods and barter transactions were more frequent. The most important characteristic of this subsistence-oriented marketing system was that, because of the low income of the peasants, the peasantry was excluded from participation at a higher level in markets and in a money economy and there were relatively few sales of simple manufactured goods.

The tenure system, with its peasant farm labor and personal service obligations to the landlord, as well as outright prohibitions as to what the peasant could produce and sell, was the main cause for the low level of his participation in markets on a cash basis. The effects of these obligations was to diminish the opportunities available and capacity of the peasant family to earn a cash income. In the case of some of the obligations, eggs, for example, the landlord appropriated for himself the peasant production of these high-value, protein-rich products, which he knew had a good market and which he could sell directly to consumers in his store in La Paz. As a result, the subsistence base of the peasant family, that is, potatoes and cereals, had to be used even to a greater extent to meet the cash expenditures of the peasant family. (Clark, 1968, p. 161).

While the above conclusions referred only to the northern highlands of Bolivia, an area of extreme land concentration in Bolivia before 1952, subsequent research in all the major departments of Bolivia in highlands and valleys where landholdings were smaller than the average has shown that few significant differences existed

before 1952. Landlords carried on direct large volume transactions between the rural sector and consumption centers; colono families produced little for the market because of work obligations due the landlord (thus less time for their own use), because their access to land was limited, and because of direct prohibitions by landlords in some areas as to what they could produce.

There were no official procurement authorities or marketing cooperatives, and prices paid to landlords were entirely determined by the market.

#### Peasant Associations and Power

##### 1) Cooperatives and other associations

To preserve the status quo, peasants working for landlords were generally prohibited from having local organizations of any kind on the large landholdings. There were no cooperatives of any kind among peasants, and while peasant unions were not illegal, landlords generally tried to see that no one assumed a position of leadership and that local peasant union organization did not take place. The prohibitions did not mean, however, that there was not substantial activity in this area--and general unrest--in the rural sector.

##### 2) Political power

The thirty year period prior to the Revolution was definitely marked by a political movement in the rural sector. As early as 1921 there were sporadic uprisings; these continued with more frequency through the presidency of Gualberto Villarroel (1947). In addition,

by 1936 two peasant unions (sindicatos) had been formed on two haciendas at Vacas and Cliza (Ucureña) in the Upper Valley of Cochabamba by astute rural school teachers and veterans of the Chaco War (Romero, 1970, 76ff.). That this earliest activity should have developed in Cochabamba is due to several reasons: 1) the degree of economic development of the region, which was an important producer of wheat and other produce supplied to the mines; 2) continual contact between local peasants and the activist workers from the mines as many young men from rural areas in Cochabamba went to work in the mines because no land was available to them; 3) a level of social integration not found in other rural areas of Bolivia; and 4) the fact that public agencies or institutions such as the Church and the City of Cochabamba were the legal owners of certain haciendas throughout Cochabamba (respectively, el Monasterio Santa Clara y Vacas). Rural school teachers made a test case of some of these holdings when they tried to have lands sold to peasants. Romero describes events on these haciendas:

The objectives sought as much by the peasant union in Vacas as by the one in Cliza [Ucureña] were similar; both wanted to directly manage the haciendas on which the peasant union members lived. While the peasants of Cliza succeeded in buying a part of that hacienda's lands, the peasants of Vacas were not able to do so, and they continued working them in the traditional manner until the Land Reform, even though the local school teacher organized a cooperative and distributed the lands among the peasants. In the case of Cliza, the act of peasants buying land brought such a reaction from landlords that any further purchases were made impossible. As a result this peasant union began to work more closely with the school and with the more militant element of the PIR. This signified a radicalization of the peasants which was to become evident during the period April 9, 1952 to August, 1953, the period of the agrarian revolution. This area in the

Cochabamba Valley, together with Achacachi on the northern highlands [near La Paz] became the focal points of activity which was to spread throughout the agricultural sector (Romero, p. 78, translation mine).

Also the period before 1952 is marked not only by uprisings and violence and the formation of the earliest peasant unions, but also by another tactic called "huelga de brazos caidos," or farm-workers' strike, actually resistance in the form of work slowdowns. Persistent and organized strikes throughout traditional Bolivia called attention to agricultural conditions. Finally, in 1945, after much conflict between peasant and landlord groups, the Primer Congreso Nacional Indigenal was called by President Villarroel. The result--the eradication of personal household services (pongueaje)--was a hollow victory for the peasants, and the 1947 to 1952 years following the overthrow of the national socialist government of Villarroel were full of repression for peasants who had taken part in the Congress. There was violence and a reinstatement of pongueaje under various guises, as well as reprisals toward peasant leaders who had attended the Congress.

There is no doubting Romero's conclusion:

The principal participants in the events during the 1940-45 period were the peasants, mining and factory workers, artisans, and university students. They began to join the new [political] parties which were just being organized; it was they who possessed new political ideas....

These years had witnessed the laying of a foundation of peasant power in the form of peasant union organizations in the rural sector, most often clandestine. Also, the principal peasant leaders from

small rural towns were willing to go into hiding, or to otherwise await a more propitious time for their actions.

One result of the invasions, strikes, and the measures taken by the government of Villarroel was that these actions forced urban workers and intellectual and political groups into one of two opposing positions: support of the changes which peasants and some political leaders and authors were proposing, including the expropriation and distribution of lands to peasants; or the forceful reinstatement of the conditions existing before Villarroel. In the 1947-1952 period after Villarroel, those who wanted a continuance of the previous rural conditions controlled the government. Opposing political and intellectual groups, and to some extent workers and peasants, decided to take the issues to the rural areas. There is no other explanation for the radical activity of peasants and their leaders once the MNR

came to power in April, 1952. The centers of this activity were the Upper Valley of Cochabamba and Achacachi, to the north of La Paz on the highlands. Both were strategic political centers, and around them land invasions took place on a large scale between April 1952 and August 1953, when the Land Reform Law was finally decreed. During this period peasant leaders, peasant union organizations, and land invasions were directly aided by the new revolutionary government in power.

## THE BOLIVIAN LAND REFORM PROGRAM

The Bolivian Revolution of 1952 was carried out by the MNR Party. The MNR had been elected to office in 1951, but the results of the election were ignored and President Urriolagoitia stepped down and turned the government over to a military junta (1951-1952). Only after parts of the armed forces rebelled in favor of the MNR did the new government take office on April 9, 1952. The masses of peasant families in the rural sector played no role in unseating the military junta or installing the newly-elected government.

Some writers have expressed different viewpoints as to whether or not the MNR Party was intent upon carrying out a radical land reform, or whether or not original intentions were merely to curb some of the more blatant abuses of the hacienda system (Heath, 1965; Patch, 1960, 1961, 1963 ).

A period of sixteen months elapsed between the MNR's installation and its promulgation of the Land Reform Decree of August 3, 1953. During this period, land invasions began in the Upper Valley of Cochabamba and on the northern highlands. The peasants were armed in these areas, and peasant unions were organized on a regional basis. Emissaries of the government or regional leaders visited most landholdings urging the formation of peasant unions and promising land reform. Various mining and urban workers' unions helped the government in this task.

### Legislation

After the Revolution, but not until after land invasions by peasants began, a commission was formed to draw up a land reform decree (January 20, 1953). There were long deliberations as well as marked differences of opinion between members of this commission.<sup>5</sup> In relation to the insignificant attempts at tenure modifications before 1953, the Land Reform Decree of 1953 was to be a landmark, for it made a bold break with the past and created many future conditions which had not even been contemplated. In this process the MNR Party was purposefully creating and relying upon the political support of the masses of Indians in the rural sector by giving peasants and their leaders in certain key areas what they wanted--access to and ownership of land.

### Institutional Arrangements

Without changing the Constitution or modifying the threefold organization of the Government into executive, legislative, and judicial branches, the MNR began to immediately incorporate into the Government the new power of the peasants by creating the Ministry of Asuntos Campesinos on May 22, 1952. This change not only recognized the socio-political and economic changes already underway in the rural sector, but also demonstrated the Government's determination to carry on with those changes.

The promise of land reform in combination with arms to the peasants and the fact of land invasions, occurred in the context of a rapidly

spreading national peasant union organization. It was through these organizations at the community, provincial, departmental, and national levels that the peasant sector expressed its voice. The peasants were and are now also heard via: 1) the Ministerio de Asuntos Campesinos (Rural Affairs), which represents the peasants before the executive (sometimes the minister is a national peasant leader or a member of CNTCB, the Confederación Nacional de Trabajadores Campesinos Bolivianos); 2) representatives of the peasantry as members of the legislative chambers; 3) the one representative of the CNTCB in the National Agrarian Reform Service, which is empowered to expropriate and distribute land along with its other functions; and 4) the peasant union organization, which reaches directly to the level of the rural community.

The National Agrarian Reform Service is an autonomous unit responsible directly to the President of Bolivia; also, it is the body responsible for all interpretations of the Land Reform Law. The Service's position is on the same level as that of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Asuntos Campesinos. Within the body itself, there are three divisions: the executive (Presidencia), the legislative (Asesoría General, or legal advisors), and the judicial (divided into three courts: Sala Primera, Sala Segunda, and Sala Plena). Besides the national office in La Paz, there are also departmental offices, each of which has its set of judges and topographers, and there are additional offices in provincial capitals.

The following duties were assigned to the Service at its inception:

- a) national planning and integration in agrarian and peasant matters;
- b) development of cooperatives and systems of agricultural credit;
- c) organization of projects of colonization; and
- d) provision of technical assistance to guarantee the rational utilization of soils and the eventual mechanization of the agrarian sector (Thome, p. 22).

In practice, however, the Service has retained only its legal functions. All other complementary functions of the Service--extension, colonization, land recovery, conservation of natural resources, community development, and economic planning--have been divided among various fiscal and ministerial agencies. These agencies have their own policies and carry out independent programs with little or no coordination among them, and with no direct relation to the land expropriation and titling done by the Service. There is no national agrarian policy, nor is there an effective mechanism to coordinate or relate these functions and complementary services.

The legal functions of the Service are to initiate expropriation decrees, distribute land to peasant families, and draw up and implement the legal aspect of title distribution to all landholders. Although the Service has legal powers to initiate independent suits, in practice it functions like a system of agrarian courts, before which all cases dealing with land conflicts are brought. The majority of the suits are initiated before an agrarian judge with a judicial review in the

courts, the Sala Plena acting as the supreme court in all matters. The Service has jurisdiction over all rural lands in Bolivia, including those in the public domain.

Program Objectives

The basic objective of the Land Reform Law was to transform the feudal land tenure system by promoting a more equitable distribution of land, raising production, and integrating the rural population into the national economy and society. More specifically, it had the following objectives:

a) To give to peasants that had little or no land adequate parcels with the condition that they work the land; to expropriate underutilized lands, extremely extensive holdings (latifundia), and those lands not worked personally by the landlord but by peasant labor.

b) To restore to the original freeholding communities all lands usurped since 1900.

c) To change the predominant system of work relations.

d) To stimulate the production and commercialization of agricultural products.

e) To protect the nation's natural resources.

f) To encourage the emigration of the highland population to the underpopulated tropical regions.

The Law made no more specific statement of objectives than the above, and no aspects were specifically quantified.

Program Implementation and Enforcement

Implementation of the Law got off to a slow start because of the confusion existing in the post-revolutionary era, not to mention the time necessary for setting up the National Agrarian Reform Service, recruiting personnel (topographers, lawyers, etc.), and getting peasants to present their cases for expropriation of the lands which they worked. Despite this slowness, no other Latin American country has expropriated and redistributed lands and distributed land titles to peasant families on a scale similar to Bolivia's effort.

1) Redistribution of land ownership

Of approximately 15,332 cases of reform initiated since 1953, only 7,322 have been concluded at this time. Each case corresponds to one property and can affect from one to one hundred peasant families or more.

Nearly 8,000 cases are still pending, and these cover some 165,000 families and some 5.3 million hectares. Many of these cases were begun eight, nine, or ten years ago. Although peasant families are in possession of the land, they remain in a precarious position until their legal rights are defined.

In addition, there are still many properties which have as yet not been affected by any reform process. Considering the only information available, the Census of 1950, and without counting the original, freeholding communities which are subject to a different process, one arrives at a figure of approximately 67,276 properties which remain to be processed by the Service. It is important to

point out that these figures cover all rural Bolivian properties and, according to the Reform Law, all rural property must be processed by the National Agrarian Reform Service in order to determine whether or not it is subject to partial or full expropriation, or in the contrary case, to consolidate its rights with new titles (Thome, p. 3). Most of these properties not yet subjected to the Land Reform Law of 1953 are either small holdings or holdings in the tropical lowlands; in both cases little expropriation will likely be carried out.

Maximum areas which could be possessed in a landholding were set by the Land Reform Law; these were determined according to stated categories of geographic location of the holding and type of exploitation. For example, the maximum extension for a small property along the shores of Lake Titicaca is only ten hectares, while that in the sub-tropical region of Santa Cruz is fifty hectares. Surplus land on such properties is subject to expropriation and redistribution.

In most cases new owners--called dotados, or those given lands--are ex-colono families from the hacienda period or relatives of ex-colono families. However, all of the cases studied show an increase when the number of ex-colonos is compared with the final lists of dotados. This increase is due to some abuse in the application of the law, for many people who were not colonos on that landholding were shrewd enough to acquire a parcel for themselves. In some cases the parcel was a political payoff; also, some peasants from the highlands went into the more fertile, less populated sub-tropical areas such as Yungas, and were able to have themselves put on the lists of dotados.

Moreover, it must be remembered that colonos' sons, while they may have worked for the hacienda in some way, many times did not figure as real colonos with usufruct parcels, but when the reform came they too were entitled to receive lands.

The actual redistribution process, with all its abuses and legal intricacies, is highly complicated and varies from region to region. Its primary nature was political and many times it was determined in the provincial and departmental capitals rather than in La Paz and the reform tribunals. For this reason, the redistribution process will be discussed in its political context later.

Table 1 shows the quantities of land distributed in Bolivia since the Reform, and the number of families which have received land titles. To date, the process has distributed titles to approximately 40 percent of the peasant and other families who should receive titles. However, the Bolivian Government, with help from the U.S., is now implementing a program to finish all titling by 1975.

## 2) Changes in tenancy systems

The reform abruptly changed land tenure relations between landlords and colono families. Even before most of the expropriation procedures were begun, virtually all peasants were made de facto owners of their usufruct parcels and no longer continued to provide landlords unremunerated farm labor or personal services; the end of unremunerated obligations was one of the provisions of the Land Reform Law. Nevertheless, even in some of the more politicized zones, peasants continued to work for their ex-landlords for a wage. In a

TABLE 1

Land expropriated and area and titles  
distributed in Bolivia, 1953-1959

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Total number of expropriated properties	11,971
Total number of titles distributed	434,893
A. Individual titles	288,201
B. Collective titles	206,692
Heads of families in receipt of titles	266,066
Total land expropriated	12,037,722 (Hectares)
Total land distributed	11,671,874 (Hectares)
A. Cultivable land included in individual titles	3,039,911 (Hectares)
B. Land included in collective titles	
1. Cultivable land	1,180,345 (Hectares)
2. Pasture land	4,719,115 (Hectares)
3. Incultivable land	699,216 (Hectares)
4. School land	6,720 (Hectares)
5. Sports areas	610 (Hectares)
6. Land held in cooperatives	55,781 (Hectares)
7. Colonization areas	29,130 (Hectares)
8. Urban areas	9,849 (Hectares)
9. Land returned to the state	365,848 (Hectares)

way, this appears to contradict the idea of a "revolution" in the rural areas, yet it is not so incongruent when one recalls that even the Minister of Asuntos Campesinos in 1953 was imploring the peasantry to tone down the land reform and work for the landlord for wages. The Ministry also tried to make the rural peasant unions responsible for keeping hacienda lands under cultivation and for marketing produce. In this way the Ministry of Asuntos Campesinos deliberately attempted to minimize the effects of land reform on production levels and on quantities of produce reaching consumption centers. This paradoxical situation of continued work for the landlord in the midst of political upheaval in the countryside, with landowners and farm managers seeking refuge in towns and cities, was to continue until 1957-58 in many areas.

### 3) Colonization

The settlement of virgin lands in the lowlands was an integral part of the Bolivian land reform program. However, the idea was not new, for at different times before and since the Land Reform, colonization has been regarded as the panacea for the ills of rural Bolivia.

To date colonization has only complemented the large-scale reform carried out in the traditional highlands and valleys. With Point Four assistance, roads have been opened into the Caranavi-Alto Beni and Choquechaca zones close to La Paz, and these roads were later extended farther inland. Here, both planned and spontaneous colonies were established, and most were occupied by peasants from freeholding communities of dense population around Uyuni, Charaña,

and the shores of Lake Titicaca. Many ex-colonos from nearby Yungas also took advantage of their proximity to the lands to settle there.

Other roads were also built or improved to open up the areas of the Chapare, and the Yapacani-Puerto Grether area northwest of Santa Cruz. This area was to be settled eventually by Quechua speaking Indian families from the Departments of Cochabamba, Potosí, and Chuquisaca.

During the decade 1962-1971, the Government's objective was to settle 100,000 peasant families in areas of colonization. As of 1970, only an estimated 30,000 families have actually been settled in these areas, and most are spontaneous settlers. This limited number of successfully resettled families indicates that the absolute number of peasant families in traditional areas of the highlands and valleys has been growing each year since the land reform.

#### 4) Consolidation and enclosure

In Bolivia the major effects of the Land Reform Law were to change the predominant tenure relations between landholders and peasants, and to expropriate the lands in excess of legally stated maxima for the various geographical regions. Nothing approximating enclosures has taken place; in fact, the reverse has actually occurred, with increased fragmentation and increased numbers of peasant families settled on the land. No consolidation measures have been taken to alleviate these problems.

5) Classification, identification, and titling

The revolutionary government had very little information which could be used to carry out a well planned land reform. At the same time there was a political need to fulfill peasant demands; during every month the Land Reform Commission worked, its members witnessed more land invasions and more de facto distribution of lands among peasants.

Immediately following April, 1952, but prior to the Decree of August, 1953, the Ministry of Agriculture called together all its agronomists and told them to attempt some rational scheme by which to judge land and parcel size. This they did for virtually all of Bolivia, coming to good theoretical conclusions as to ideal plot size for a peasant family of five according to geographical zone. In practice their judgments did not work out, however, as seen in the case of the hacienda Taraco in the northern Altiplano, the second hacienda expropriated. Each family was to receive ten hectares of land, but in fact this size was impossible because of the number of colono families claiming land. The same was true on many other landholdings, especially in the densely populated valleys. The only recourse of the National Agrarian Reform Service was to divide the existing lands among all "rightful" claimants, and to recognize the de facto distribution which had already taken place elsewhere. It was neither possible, nor would it have been politically expedient if it had been possible, to meet the criteria of the Law in terms of minimum size of parcels in each geographical area. Furthermore, it

would not have been possible financially to resettle so many families on lands elsewhere, as colonization experience shows.

At the beginning of the Land Reform the Instituto Geográfico Militar (Army Corps of Engineers) attempted to control all technical aspects of the agrarian reform implementation, such as surveying and drawing of plans. Since the revolutionary government had nearly eradicated the national army in favor of peasant militias, the Army Corps of Engineers could not be used in the countryside; as a result the National Agrarian Reform Service came to oversee every phase of expropriation, including its technical aspects. However, the Service was able to exploit the talent and training of previous military men, who went to work for the Service and were incorporated into the survey teams. At the same time, the Service began several courses in topographic work for non-commissioned officers.

No matter what steps were taken, it was not possible to build up the Service rapidly enough. In the more distant provinces of Bolivia the instances of mistakes from inadequate training and abuse from political or monetary payoffs were common, and the problems which remain today from this initial period are sometimes extreme. For example, the difficulties arising from the de facto vs. de jure distribution of land are critical. In one case, a peasant occupies a plot which is thirty-two hectares, but his title reads only sixteen hectares. As a result other members of the community insist that this peasant has encroached on common pasture lands and want him to give up half the land he is working. This kind of problem, where

peasant land titles read more or less than the actual quantity of land received under the Law, is common in Bolivia and results from using untrained personnel. In such circumstances, the peasants seem to face continual disputes with their neighbors.

### Financial Aspects

#### 1) Valuation procedures

Compensation for all lands expropriated in Bolivia was provided for in the Land Reform Law by stipulating that all landlords would be paid five times the land values which landowners declared in 1950 for tax purposes.

#### 2) Program financing

This compensation was to have been paid in bonds maturing in twenty-five years. Even though this stipulation continues, no official compensation has ever been paid; nor have the agrarian bonds been issued. Notably, the ex-landlords have not tried to enforce this provision, probably because the compensation and bonds were to be based on the landlord's own declaration of the properties' values for tax purposes. This basis, together with the enormous inflation after 1952, signifies that any attempt to gain compensation would not be worth the efforts, since nothing stipulated that the bonds would carry a clause protecting landlords against inflation.

The peasants who received lands under the Reform Law were never obliged to assume part of the costs for compensating landlords, since the Government never acted on this matter. However some

peasants did pay landlords for land outside of official channels; such payments have not been general, however. Presently, the dual issues of compensating landlords and peasant payment for lands are not important.

In the period 1953-1968, peasants have usually assumed the direct costs of expropriation and topographic work. They have been responsible for sending representatives to the provincial or departmental capitals to begin expropriation procedures, for pleading their case with lawyers and against landlords, and for bringing agrarian judges and topographers out to the property. These were considerable expenses in most cases, particularly when a complicated legal battle was contested by the landlord and revised many times. Because of the nature of Bolivia--poor roads and communications, underpaid civil servants, etc.--the peasant union organization proved very successful in pushing the process from the level of the rural community. If each member of each union had not contributed time, produce, and cash, there would have been little land reform to date in Bolivia.

The budget of the National Agrarian Reform Service is one of the lowest among public offices of the Bolivian Government, representing 0.6 percent of the national budget. Also, the amount set aside is reduced the moment the government lacks funds, as it is with other public offices. From 1960 to 1966, the budget approved for the Service was approximately \$250,210 annually (from a minimum of \$150,048 in 1960, to a maximum of \$323,581 in 1965, making a total of \$1,501,262 for a period of seven consecutive years). But the funds received

during this period were actually \$1,335,041, or a reduction of \$166,221 from the allotted total. As is usual, when funds received are less than the budgeted totals, operating expenses suffer the greatest, for salaries cannot be reduced and it is difficult to reduce personnel. When the Service's annual budget is compared with that of the Institute of Colonization for the same 1960-1966 period, the latter received about four times as much yearly--an average of \$989,833. It is ironical that an agency with duties not unlike those of the Service should receive as much as \$700,000 per year more in funds. Perhaps this difference is due to the influence of international agencies, which lend large sums to support colonization, consequently motivating the national government to publicly support the same programs.

#### Supplementary Measures

The specific institutional changes effected by the new revolutionary Government to incorporate the peasant sector in the government and to carry out the land reform have been described. The one area in which the government was not able to act was in providing new services and setting up new supply arrangements by which peasants could exploit their new parcels of land more efficiently. This lack of services included extension and credit services, the provision of fertilizer, pesticides, and improved seeds, and the organization of irrigation and transport facilities. Likewise, there was no institutional arrangement for procuring and marketing surpluses, nor were there price stabilization policies.

The adequate provision of these supplementary measures during the period of most rapid land reform, from 1953-1956, would have been difficult if not impossible for the central government. First, there was a general shortage of resources and foreign exchange earnings, especially with the drop in metals prices during and after the Korean War. The Government could not have financed these supplementary measures except by resorting to printing even more currency than it did during this inflationary period (1952-1956).

Second, conditions in the rural sector were so chaotic in general, and in some areas so explosive, that it would have been impossible to make these new inputs available to peasants. It must be remembered that peasants were armed and organized into peasant militias. In some areas the short run political objective was to defend newly won rights to land; at that time the more efficient exploitation of those lands held secondary importance.

Third, the few available agricultural services were made ineffective by rural conditions, by fear among non-peasant groups of going to rural areas, and by the emigration of many technically qualified people. Even had there been national resources, or aid from international agencies, it would have been impossible to mount any of the programs necessary for more efficient exploitation of land.

#### Mobilization of the Peasantry

##### 1) Economic aspects

There was some spotty organization of cooperatives after 1953, but generally these were not successful. The level of education,

dedication, and instruction of members and leaders was too low to reasonably assure success. However, there were areas where peasants began to strike out on their own, rather than wait for Government aid or institutional services. These actions were implemented through the peasant unions. The principal types of local rural community action were building and staffing community schools, building and/or maintaining access roads to the community, building and/or maintaining small irrigation facilities, determining peasant rights to irrigation waters and resolving disputes over them and over the land itself. These areas of action the peasants and their organizations took upon themselves without waiting for outside programs to mobilize them.

## 2) Political aspects

In the past the role of the peasant union organization in Bolivia, at the level of the local rural community, has been primarily political. The policy chosen by the MNR to channel and, to some degree, to control the socio-political process of change in the rural sector was the adoption of a Land Reform Law in combination with the creation of party cells (comandos campesinos) at the local level. These cells were given the task of controlling any peasant unions which did not follow the MNR Party line.<sup>6</sup>

There was also an additional rural organization of a strictly military nature: the regimientos campesinos or peasant regiments. These were initially created as an armed peasant contingent during the same time that the national army was being disbanded. The two

centers of the largest of these regiments were Cliza in Cochabamba and Achacachi in La Paz, and in both areas they were commanded by strong peasant leaders loyal to the MNR Party. These regiments constituted a permanent armed force used by Paz Estenssoro as leverage against other sectors (miners and urban centers) and political parties. By adroit use of this leverage, at times threatening both the cities of Cochabamba and La Paz with armed invasions, and by taking economic and political reprisals against anyone not joining the MNR Party or at least not cutting old political ties, the MNR Government assured its own continuation. Opposition political parties became powerless, but not until after two attempts at overthrowing the MNR Government failed.

In the rural sector peasant unions were very important because they provided organization to rural communities which would have been left in an organizational vacuum with no landlord or resident manager on the farm. Before 1952 any kind of local organization other than that chosen by the landlord or his manager was severely repressed. After 1952 the major function of the local peasant union, besides providing a local apparatus within which the rural community could function, was to begin to process the papers necessary for the expropriation of the property on which the peasants resided. Early in the process of reform, peasant unions were made the legal representatives of the community in its dealings with the government, with landlords, and with outside entities. With considerable justification, one can say that the peasant union is the only local community

level organization with a majority--usually--of the community members or at least heads of families participating, particularly on expropriated landholdings.

#### The Politics of Implementation

Much of the preceding discussion touches upon the ways in which the Revolution of 1952 and the Land Reform of 1953 were implemented. As a result of Government measures, few political parties continued to be effective, least of all in the rural sector, and few social or economic sectors continued to oppose the Government. There was one political party, the FSB (Falange Socialista Boliviana), which decided on armed opposition. However, armed peasant activity in the Valleys of Cochabamba during February and March, 1953, and threats of sacking the city of Cochabamba, were so strong that the FSB had no chance of carrying through with its original plans. For all intents and purposes, once the FSB was defeated, little stood in the way of the MNR in carrying out the multiple objectives of the Revolution, only one of which was land reform.

In relation to implementing land reform in Bolivia, one must try to comprehend the significance of distances, poor roads, and poor communications, and hence the varying influences of the Revolution in different geographical areas. In fact, much of the actual formation of peasant unions and the land reform process itself, postating the Revolution but prior to the passage of the Land Reform Law (April 1952-August 1953), was determined by communications, roads, and

proximity to market centers; in addition, certain already politicized zones attracted organizers because of accessibility. For example, Otavi in Potosí was a focal point because it was the center of a region of large wheat-growing latifundia which were potentially expropriable; moreover, it was the center of a pre-Villarroel uprising. The organizers who visited the region in September, 1952 were sent out by the MNR Government--through the Ministry of Asuntos Campesinos--to form peasant unions. They came to Otavi down the easiest access route from Potosí, forming unions and telling the peasants to continue working the land because the reform was coming soon. Within a year these teams were 600 miles to the south of La Paz in Nor Cinti, Chuquisaca. Other more isolated areas, such as most of Nor Chichas in Potosí, were skipped, as were the Pampas of Lequezana, all areas off the main road and small in size.

To accomplish the nearly impossible job of implementation, there was need for a quick source of committed workers. Consequently many peasant union organizers were miners since no others were trained in union organizing. There was also an immediate need to fill administrative posts, and virtually the only persons with administrative experience were the mestizos and the elite who had held posts in departmental and provincial administration. These people filled positions in the more isolated departmental capitals such as Potosí, Chuquisaca, and Tarija, and they began to exercise a relatively conservative influence over the process of land reform implementation. In Potosí the elite was able to occupy positions in the new revolutionary organization,

as they were in some of the provinces of La Paz. In many areas the landholding elite--men who had always lived on their haciendas and run local town affairs themselves--quickly assumed the guise of staunch MNR supporters, and they were able to retain power in the small provincial towns of Bolivia. Thus, in some regions landlords were able to keep the peasants working on the haciendas for a wage and have the majority of properties declared medium-sized, a status which meant they would not be entirely expropriated.

Just what was the degree of political adjustment demanded of the peasants? With the exception of the Upper Valley of Cochabamba and a few isolated examples, there were virtually no pre-revolutionary peasant leaders who rose to the news of Revolution on April 9, 1952. This is not to say no leaders existed; only that they were astute enough politically to wait and see. On haciendas in Potosí and Yungas where peasant leaders had fought during all the years of Villarroel and withstood the subsequent reprisals, they accepted the news of revolution without excitement and, in some instances, with fear. The rebellious few of Otavi (leaders of a pre-reform insurrection) say they feared continuing reprisals by the landlord and the new government so much that they could not risk immediately embracing the Revolution. They waited to see whether it would fail, and when the organizers came, peasants were able to join the peasant union because every hacienda was being organized at the same time.

In Potosí organizers combined haciendas into single unions, perhaps to give the peasants some assurance that they were not alone.

In Yungas--particularly Coroico--representatives were called from each hacienda and told that their haciendas would soon be organized individually. In both these regions the one striking characteristic is the moderation which apparently prevailed among the organizers. In Yungas they called for the "oldest and most respected" members of the communities to become their union leaders; in both Potosí and Yungas they told the peasants to continue working for the landlord because the reform would soon come. Even in the very politicized area of Ucureña (Cochabamba), where land invasions had been undertaken by peasants, the government feebly tried to preserve order. The little radicalism that existed--radicalism defined as violence and occupation of hacienda lands--was limited to areas around Achacachi, Sorata, Totora (Cochabamba), and the city of Sucre. Understandably, the fringe areas and those regions harder to get into and communicate with reaped the least of the early proselytizing and union organizing, and the subsequent impulse of reform.

#### EFFECTS OF THE LAND REFORM

##### Land Tenure Structure

Bolivia's land ownership structure at the present time has the mass of peasants working their own land as individual owner-operators. This is so whether the peasants are ex-colonos who have received land from the haciendas or are members of freeholding communities.

The number of peasants without access to land (or who do not stand

to inherit land from their parents) is insignificant in relation to the total number of peasants in Bolivia and in relation to the number of landless peasants in other countries. The real differences in Bolivia show up between peasant families who own differing quantities of land. The difference between minimum and maximum amounts of land received by peasants within a given geographical area where land quality is comparable is impressive. This situation has arisen because differential access to land, based on work obligations, was customary before the 1952 Revolution. The Land Reform Law as well as the National Agrarian Reform Service distributed lands to peasants based on the pre-reform customary differences. Thus the present land ownership structure is characterized not only by peasants working their lands as individual owner-operators, but by considerable differences between peasant families in their command over land resources.

Despite the individual owner-operator status of most peasants, certain groups in areas of population pressure must gain access to land by largely customary means. For example, it is quite common for a peasant community to begin to subdivide land--usually pasture land--held by the community in common among newly created families so that these families can have at least a minimal customary access to land upon marriage. This subdivision occurs especially in those communities where the fathers of both the man and wife are not able to bequeath a parcel of their own land to the new family. As can be expected, this is most common in areas of population pressure,

especially in the valleys and the northern highlands. If a community does not have land which it can divide between newly created families, the new family takes up residence with one of the parents and seeks off-farm seasonal employment either in the cities or in other agricultural areas for certain periods during the year. It may be that this situation leads to the eventual migration of some of these younger families to the cities or to the areas of colonization. However, what usually occurs is that a peasant family without sufficient access to land resources will work out some kind of an arrangement with other peasant families in the community or neighboring communities; i.e., peasants will fall back upon one of the customary arrangements practiced for decades among these people. In other words, the present land ownership structure, as well as the tenure system, is a composite of a legally-prescribed landholding system based on the Land Reform Law and of the customary traditions of these peoples (LTC MSS, X:29-34).

#### Production and Productivity

Within the context of the revolutionary situation after 1952, it would be completely erroneous to reason that land reform--the division of large one-owner farms into many small individually worked farms--led to a decline in agricultural production. In the case of Bolivia it would be less incorrect to reason that a popular revolution which led to universal suffrage, to expropriation of the three larger mining concerns, to the creation of peasant unions and armed militias in the countryside, and, finally, to a land reform law, could not have helped but have immediate repercussions on the agricultural system, and

possibly the level of agricultural production--especially the quantities of agricultural produce delivered to urban centers. To alter tenure relations between the landowning minority and the non-landowning majority required the organization of peasant unions to undercut the power of the landlords and their efforts at counter-revolution. In this context, the temporary effects on agricultural production or the movement of the agricultural products to the cities should be a secondary but still an important consideration. This was the price of beginning to create a new agricultural system and a new popularly based government.

Seventeen farms (of fifty-one) in one study were idled largely as a result of the political situation created by the Revolution. The lands of the landlords on these farms were left unworked for varying periods of time, beginning in October, 1952 or in 1953, and ranging from two years to the present. Seven farms were idle for two years, five for three years, four for four years, two for five years, one for seven years, and one for fourteen years. A total of seventy production years were lost. On these farms no subdivision of lands occurred during the periods they were idle; the decline in agricultural production was not a result of the subdivision of large farms into small peasant holdings but occurred for other reasons.

Many conflicting reasons were given why lands were left idle. In the one case where lands have not been worked for fourteen years the landlord was particularly abusive and the peasants say that he still wants them to work for him under the same system as before the

land reform on the lands which he still has. In other cases the peasants say that either their local or regional union leaders prohibited them from working the landlords' lands where the owners had been abusive, or where the new peasant union leader was trying to ensure that the landlords would not return. In some cases the peasants did not work the lands "on orders from La Paz," without specifying from where the orders came. Peasants say also that they were waiting to see to what extent the lands would be expropriated before beginning to work them; that is, they were awaiting official pronouncements from the National Agrarian Reform Service before they dared to work the lands of the landlord. All these reasons conflict with what happened on other farms during the years right after the land reform and with the policy of the Ministry of Rural Affairs, which will be shown later. It seems that confusion within the ranks of the peasant unions on the one hand, and peasants who would not appropriate for themselves what was not yet theirs on the other, resulted in these lands remaining unworked.

On two of the fifty-one farms in this study the landlords had large areas of pasture lands. The only cultivable lands which they had were parcels worked for their benefit within the holdings of each peasant family. This peculiar situation existed because these two farms had recently been usurped by means of loaning money to individual peasant landholders and neither landlord had reorganized the farm, i.e., consolidated his own holdings. In these two cases the peasants appropriated the parcels belonging to the landlord and

worked them once again as their own, cultivating the same crops as before and without leaving any lands idle. In a third case the lands were restored immediately by the government to the peasants from whom they had been taken a few years before, without any effects on production.

The work relations on a total of seven other farms were adjusted very rapidly, in accordance with directives from the Ministry of Rural Affairs. On these farms, as in those cases above, the lands were never left idle. Instead, the landlords were willing to divide the agricultural produce from their lands with the peasants, allowing them half, with the other half to be brought to the landlords in La Paz, as prescribed in a decree issued by the Ministry of Rural Affairs. If the peasants did not sell their shares in urban areas, it would have appeared to residents in La Paz that agricultural production had decreased. These sharecropping arrangements lasted only two years on two farms and three years on the other five. The main reasons given by the peasants for terminating these arrangements in two cases were that they did not have the supervision they needed to work the landlords' lands as a unit (as before the land reform) and therefore preferred to work them individually; and in three cases that the lands were declared latifundia, meaning that the peasants had rights to all the lands, leaving the landlord with none. No matter which reason prevailed, these lands were subsequently divided among the peasant families (after 1955 or 1956) to be worked individually.

On eight of the fifty-one farms, lands were subdivided among the peasant families in 1953, usually with the peasant unions playing an

important part in the subdivision. The peasant union leaders had interpreted the Revolution and the talk of land reform as meaning that the peasants now had rights to all the lands. The lands were divided among the peasant families (not always evenly) to be worked individually. These are the only cases of large farms which were subdivided immediately after the Revolution of 1952.

In a total of thirty-four cases out of fifty-one, all cases except the seventeen where lands were idle, the lands were worked continually from 1952 to the present. A few were divided immediately among members of the local peasant union while the rest were worked as a unit under sharecropping arrangements or by the peasant union. In the latter case, lands of the landlord were worked as a unit but the total product was divided between the families who worked the lands. At times the peasant union reserved some of the product for the expenses of the school which the members wanted to construct, or to pay expenses of the peasant union, topographers and agrarian judges which were necessary to begin the land reform process according to the Land Reform Law. On all these thirty-four farms the peasants say that the same agricultural products were raised and sold after the Revolution as before the Revolution, and in all cases the peasants willingly say that they withheld a part of the products from the landlords' lands for their own consumption, but sold the rest.<sup>7</sup>

A decline in production of agricultural goods may have taken place on all these thirty-four farms where lands were not idled

because of several adjustments begun shortly after the land reform. For example, the peasant family was no longer obligated to work a disproportionate amount of time on the landlords' lands. Some may have decided to take some time off. In the first years after the reform, peasants spent much time at local and regional peasant union meetings. This may have been at the expense of working landlords' lands as intensively as before. The extent to which peasants were unable to work the land of the landlord as "efficiently" (in terms of the exploitation of their own labor), either individually or as a group, as under the agricultural system before 1952, would have reduced agricultural production. Also, the use of natural fertilizers on the landlords' lands may have declined, since peasants were not obligated to use them. This was the case especially on those farms where the landlord had sold some or all of his animals, fearing the coming land reform. In other cases peasants were obligated before the land reform to go to other properties to work for the same landlord or were rented to another landlord. This would not have taken place after the land reform. This created a shortage of labor on some properties and did not allow the full utilization of the landlords' lands in some areas. In the northern highlands regions all of these were major adjustments and probably affected agricultural production temporarily. This should be expected when land reform is undertaken rapidly during a period of political change.

There is evidence that the Bolivian government was aware of the above adjustments and tried to take some steps to avert a decrease

in agricultural production and a disruption in the flow of agricultural produce to the cities. Peasant unions and inspectors from La Paz were asked to enforce Supreme Decree 03375 of April 30, 1953,<sup>8</sup> which made the peasant unions and their leaders specifically responsible for the harvest (from February through May) during that year, and for the planting and harvesting of lands in the succeeding years. There were nineteen cases out of the total thirty-four farms that were not idled by the land reform where peasants took the landlords' share of production (50 percent) to the Ministry of Rural Affairs in La Paz for varying periods of time after April 30, 1953. This shows that the government was trying to use the peasant unions as a channel of communication to assure that no farm lands would be idled. However, because of the political situation, as well as confusion and lack of communication during that period, it was surely very difficult to enforce this decree. Also, peasant unions were not equally organized in all areas at that time.

It has been shown that the greater number of farms included in the study continued producing after the land reform, and that little of the landlords' lands were left idle for long. Besides problems of reorganization and adjustment on the farms stemming from the absence of the landlords or their representatives, the other major adjustment which had to be made by the peasants was in marketing a much larger quantity of agricultural produce than previously. Immediately after the Revolution there remained only a part of the pre-reform marketing structure, that is the weekly, subsistence-oriented fairs based on the

exchange of small quantities of agricultural staples for other consumption items. Landlords did not dare return to their properties in their own or rented trucks in order to bring agricultural produce to the city as they had done before 1952. As a result the large-volume cash sales made directly by the landlords in La Paz or the mines diminished. The effect of this was that the stores of landlords ceased to function, and the major sources of supply of agricultural staples to La Paz markets and middlemen was reduced substantially.

Some middlemen were accustomed to bringing produce from the rural fairs, but they were not sufficient in numbers to immediately replace the transportation and marketing functions which the landlord had performed previously. Also, there was not a sufficient number of vehicles owned by persons other than the landlords which could have gone to the rural areas to bring commodities to La Paz. Landlords would not risk their trucks or themselves to the regional peasant union leaders.

A major adjustment for the peasants was to become accustomed to dealing in larger quantities of produce or in cash on a regular basis at fairs. Most fairs were still distant and their numbers few, as was pointed out previously. The only sales outlets the peasants had were the local fairs at the provincial and cantonal levels, and La Paz. They were forced to work through the same few rural intermediaries which existed before the land reform. These were not sufficient in number to begin handling a larger volume of produce.

As a result of the land reform the full burden of getting agricultural products to urban markets in sufficient quantities became the responsibility of the peasantry and buyers from the rural areas and the city. Both were unable to meet the challenge rapidly enough without disrupting the flow of products to the city. This does not mean efforts were not made, for peasants began to come to the city more frequently than previously, and men with transportation and others with money combined to go to the countryside to buy products from the peasants, not only in established fairs but also by stopping along the road whenever a peasant appeared who wanted to sell products. This period of adjustment was necessary to begin the creation of a new marketing system based on the sales of peasants instead of landlords. This was the most important adjustment that had to be made in the post-reform period and was the major reason why agricultural produce marketed in La Paz decreased during the first three to five years after the Revolution of 1952.

It is unfortunate that a decrease in agricultural production is associated with the Bolivian Land Reform in the minds of so many. Such a decrease is not shown in indices of production distributed by the United States Department of Agriculture.<sup>9</sup> Neither has it been possible to find such a decrease officially registered elsewhere. This association between land reform and a supposed decline in production probably comes from three factors. One, some farms actually were idled and some lands under-utilized because of the political situation after 1952 and the adjustments which peasants had to make.

as have been seen above. Two, products were scarce in urban centers. And three, Bolivia had to import potatoes in 1956, and other staples--especially wheat flour--after 1952.<sup>10</sup> All these could have resulted from marketing adjustments, as reviewed above, and from weather changes. The year 1956 is the year of least rainfall on record in Bolivia since 1950 for the region around La Paz. The years 1957 and 1968 were also dry. This corresponds exactly with the need to import potatoes (the increased imports of wheat flour after 1952 were a substitution in large part for imports of wheat grain, which had been high for a long period before 1952). The "apparent" decline in agricultural production after 1952, while true in part, is better explained by marketing adjustments and transportation scarcity, and weather phenomena, with the former by far the more important bottleneck to be overcome during that period.

The peasants, their unions and leaders, as well as local officials and middlemen, responded to the bottleneck in marketing and transportation which had been created by the Land Reform by creating a large number of new fairs and markets and by rapidly increasing the number of trucks visiting these areas. Most of these new fairs have started out on a very small basis, with only one or two trucks coming once a week to bring buyers from the city of La Paz to deal with the peasants. In 1966, most of the fairs visited during this study had an average of five to nine trucks coming regularly. The agricultural produce sold in the new fairs and in the older ones consists mainly of agricultural staples, most of which are

destined for the La Paz market. These are the same products which were grown and taken directly to La Paz and sold there by the landlord before the land reform. The cash income which landlords received from the sale of these products is now received by the peasantry. Ex-landlords generally play no part in these newly created fairs on the highlands (Clark, 1968, pp. 162-167).

It is difficult to determine what has happened to the productivity of either land or labor since the land reform in Bolivia; there are no benchmark statistics which can be compared with more recent studies. Besides, too many changes have taken place in opposite directions to arrive at a clear conclusion. Many peasant families willingly admit that productivity per unit of land used exclusively by landlords before 1952 has diminished since the Land Reform. This is either because the landlord is not using what land still remains to him as efficiently as previously or because peasants are not using as much natural fertilizer on these lands as the landlord did. At the same time, peasants point out how much more they are producing on their own parcels because they work more land and work it more intensively. These opposite changes stem from redistribution of land and the breaking of old tenure relations--the redistribution of peasants' time.

Several regions have intensified agriculture dramatically by more extensive use of fertilizers and pesticides. This is the main reason why staple commodity production has been adequate from year to year in relation to population growth. However, increased

agricultural production has also come from substituting more intensive crops on plots of land. A general experience in all departmental, provincial, and other capitals, as well as in most rural markets, has been the increased supplies of vegetables, fruits, and flowers. All of these, especially vegetables and flowers, can be grown two or three times a year in the temperate valleys and along Lake Titicaca, where this type of intensification has occurred. Obviously, all these changes signify increased income for peasant families.

#### Rural Employment and Underemployment

In some areas of Bolivia landless youths have had to seek other opportunities as a result of over-population in their home areas. These changes are demonstrated in the creation of a more diversified occupational structure in the rural areas, in new peasant towns, and in the city of La Paz. Without doubt the reform provided the peasantry with a liberty of movement and an increase in free time which they never had before. They are free to market their products where they choose, and they are free to seek seasonal employment at their discretion. Yungas, particularly, has benefited from an increased influx of seasonal labor from the highlands, indicating the local small owners' increased production and ability to engage hired labor. Additionally, there has been a phenomenal increase in the activity of peasant traders, reflecting a basic change in the post-reform marketing structure. Within the countryside itself, a large segment of the rural labor force has been accommodated in this new marketing structure.

Population pressure and relative opportunities between the rural sector and city life, particularly in the northern highlands, are such that many leave their parcels of land for the city of La Paz, temporarily or permanently. The population of La Paz has grown from an estimated 300,000 in 1950 to 600,000-800,000 inhabitants presently. The majority of this increase came from the rural sector and now lives on the northern margin of the city and in the area of El Alto.

Finally, in the rural areas there is some empirical evidence that the reform has been responsible for an increase in the population growth rate. From a 1950 low of 1.7 percent, Bolivia's overall population growth rate is now estimated at 2.7 percent. While most of this increase is undoubtedly concentrated in urban centers, increased population growth has occurred in the rural areas due to better diets and easier access to medical facilities, both lowering the very high rate of mortality.

Presently, the number of peasant families working in Bolivia's rural sector is estimated to be at least 25 percent more than it was in 1952. There are no data which indicate increased underemployment or the gradual growth of a landless agricultural labor force. Peasant families are being accommodated on the land. This accommodation has been made by bringing new lands under cultivation in both the traditional highland and valley areas as well as in the lowlands, by intensifying agricultural production through use of fertilizers etc., and by switching from production of traditional staple crops to more labor intensive crops such as vegetables. In these ways the

increasing rural population has not only been able to feed itself but also has been able to meet the increasing needs for foodstuffs for urban centers.

#### Income Distribution

There are no quantitative data which can show increases or decreases in income to land reform beneficiaries in Bolivia. However, some idea of the change can be arrived at by inference.

The pre-1952 Bolivian peasant family had only the usufruct parcels of land given him by the landlord with which to sustain itself. As pointed out, peasant heads of families owed at least half of their labor time, if not more, to the landlord. Just the redistribution of these two factors--land and labor--in the land reform would have shifted the relative opportunities for earning an income in cash and in kind from producing and marketing agricultural produce away from the landlords and to the peasant groups. However, changes went farther than this; many landlords (20- 25 percent) lost all their land, for they possessed the largest holdings and held control over the largest number of peasant families. In these cases the peasants not only gained control over their pre-reform usufruct parcels and their labor, but they also acquired increased access to additional land resources, the same land resources which had represented income earning opportunities for the landlords; these opportunities were taken away from the landlords completely and redistributed to the peasants. On most of the other landholdings (75-80 percent), peasants

acquired access to some additional pasture or cultivable land; this also represented additional income earning opportunities. It is largely as a result of this redistribution of income earning opportunities from landlords to peasants, that so many additional peasant families have been accommodated in the rural sector, and at a higher level of living than before the land reform.

Today, in the traditional areas of the highlands and valleys, very little of the marketed agricultural produce is produced by landlords on relatively large extensions of land. By far the large majority of agricultural produce comes from peasant smallholdings. At the same time there is no shortage in staple food production and other food commodities, signifying that peasants have taken advantage of the new income earning opportunities which the land reform presented. The real barrier to increased production is not on the production side, but is presently a function of the limited demand for agricultural produce in Bolivia.

There are many farms where the peasant families barter little or nothing today. These farms are usually found close to the city of La Paz, especially in the lower regions where vegetable production is profitable for the La Paz market. Generally, most peasant families still barter the same products as before the land reform--agricultural staples in small quantities for the same consumption items as before the land reform. Bartering continues among the peasants for good reason, which cannot be expressed any better than by a peasant himself:

We use both barter and sale in our marketing now, just as before [the land reform]. Bartering is generally done by the women, and men deal in money. By means of barter one can exchange much smaller quantities [which would be difficult to sell for cash] for commodities for the kitchen and household.

In an agricultural economy such as that of the northern highlands, where the peasants make most production decisions based on subsistence criteria and where they have not yet been accustomed to keep or need ready cash in all of their day to day transactions, bartering has an important function and still is practiced. However, most peasants agree that now they or their wives barter less frequently than before the land reform.

Tables 2 and 3 indicate the type of change which occurs when income earning opportunities are redistributed from landlords to peasants via the redistribution of land. These tables show the quantities and present values of goods which were bartered and purchased most frequently before 1952 and in 1966 for a family of five during a one-year period.

Table 3 shows that the total value of goods purchased for consumption on a regular basis in markets for a family of five is \$100.95, or three times more than the pre-1952 value shown in Table 2. The quantity bartered now is \$5.05 of the total, while the regular participation of peasants now in a money economy is over four times what it was before 1952. This has been a direct result of the land reform and the concomitant redistribution of opportunities to earn a cash income in the rural sector.

Tables 2 and 3 do not show the entire change that has taken place, for these tables are based only upon the transactions made on a regular or weekly basis in local markets or in La Paz. Besides the above, the peasants also make certain infrequent purchases, such as farm tools, implements, and work animals. These have changed little in terms of quality, quantity, or in that they are acquired largely for cash. The infrequent cash purchases, which are more important now and which almost did not exist before 1952, are the purchases of corrugated metal sheets for roofs; also windows, cement, sewing machines, radios, and bicycles. Peasants are just beginning to purchase kerosene stoves and, more recently, records and record players.

One former large landholding can be cited to give an impression of the type of change one can expect to find on almost any of the landholdings which were expropriated by the land reform, namely, the increasing frequency with which the above products are being purchased. In this case there are approximately 200 families. In 1956 there was 1 house with a metal roof and 1 bicycle; now there are 40 metal roofs and 80 bicycles. In 1952 there were 7 sewing machines; now there are 120. In 1959 there was 1 radio; now there are 100.<sup>11</sup> In most areas of Bolivia this great a change has not yet taken place, but in the northern highlands region this would not be an exceptional case.

The above does not include the increased purchases of chairs, tables, beds, plates, knives, forks and spoons, cups, metal pots, etc.,

TABLE 2

Articles, Quantities, and Values (1966 Prices) of Most  
Commonly Acquired Goods among the Bolivian Peasants  
in the Northern Highlands before 1952

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<u>Bartered Articles</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Present Value</u>
Condiments	-	\$ .65
Cooking grease	3 pounds	.60
Noodles, etc.	15 pounds	1.50
Pots for cooking	5	1.65
Salt	3 panes	.75
Wool	4 hides with wool	<u>2.70</u>
	Total value of goods acquired by barter during the year on a regular basis	\$ 7.85
<u>Purchased Article</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Present Value</u>
Alcohol	3 quarts	\$ 3.50
Bread	30 pieces	1.25
Cigarettes	5 packages	.50
Coca	10 pounds	4.20
Dyes	2 pounds	.25
Hats	2	4.15
Kerosene	26 bottles	1.10
Matches	50 boxes (small)	.85
Pants	1 pair	1.50
Sugar	15 pounds	1.25
Tocuyo (cloth)	10 yards	<u>4.25</u>
	Total value of goods acquired by cash during the year	\$22.80
	Total value of all goods	\$30.65

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TABLE 3

Articles, Quantities, and Values (1966 Prices) of Most  
Commonly Acquired Goods among the Bolivian Peasants  
in the Northern Highlands: 1966

<u>Bartered Articles</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Present Value</u>
Condiments	-	\$ .65
Pots for cooking	5	1.65
Salt	3 panes	.75
Other food items in small quantities		2.00
Total value of goods acquired by barter during the year on a regular basis		\$ 5.05
<u>Purchased Articles</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Present Value</u>
Alcohol	5 quarts	\$ 3.50
Soft drinks	20 bottles	1.75
Beer	10 bottles	2.50
Cooking grease	3 pounds	.60
Cooking oil	3 bottles	1.25
Fruit and vegetables	various (in season)	2.50
Noodles	15 pounds	1.50
Bread	75 pieces	3.15
Flour (wheat and corn)	50 pounds	3.40
Rice	35 pounds	3.00
Sugar	25 pounds	2.10
Coca	5 pounds	2.10
Cigarettes	20 packages	2.00
Matches	60 boxes (small)	.95
Kerosene	26 bottles	1.10
Cloth of all kinds	15 yards	7.00
Dyes	-	.50
Shoes	2 pairs	12.50
Suits	1	12.50
Skirt	1	5.00
Sweaters	1	5.50
Pants	1	5.00
Shirts	2	2.00
Hats	2	8.00
Shawls	1	5.00
Soap	10 pieces	<u>1.50</u>
Total value of goods acquired by cash during the year		\$ 95.90
Total value of all goods		\$100.95

as well as the construction of larger houses, many with two stories, which the peasants now have. In terms of material comforts the northern highland peasant is much better off than previously. All these commodities have been acquired by cash over the years since the land reform.

The items listed in Table 3 are usually acquired by peasants in the local fairs, whereas infrequent purchases are invariably made in La Paz. Most peasants say that these higher valued items can be purchased more cheaply there. When they make these purchases they usually take to La Paz a large quantity of agricultural produce to sell to middlemen or directly to consumers; for, as they say, they receive a better price and might as well do so if they are travelling to La Paz anyway. Other than on these occasions the peasants sell little directly to La Paz unless they happen to be located close to the city.

The new local fairs are even beginning to reflect the peasant demands for items purchased infrequently. For example, at one fair created after the land reform and located on a major transportation route, now attended by some twenty trucks once a week, one can find kerosene stoves, sewing machines, new and used bicycles, tires and all bicycle parts and accessories, as well as all kinds of tubes and batteries for radios. Besides these items the fair is filled with many stalls of ready-made clothing, plastic shoes, metal products such as nails, hammers, carpentry tools, and factory made materials--yardgoods, school supplies--in addition to the many small manufactured

consumption articles and the food products which everyone now takes for granted. It is not unlikely that the purchase of most of the larger infrequent items will be made with greater regularity in rural fairs in the future as price differences between the rural markets and La Paz become smaller and as the demand in the countryside increases.

The peasants on the farms visited in the northern highlands area are all in agreement that, in terms of increased market participation, the peasant women have experienced a greater relative change than the men as a result of the land reform. The men still deal in cash in the same products as before but on a higher level. However, the women have been brought out of a largely barter economy, taught how to deal in cash, and are gradually assuming a greater relative importance in terms of marketing than the men.

Women now participate more frequently on a cash basis in markets by means of the sale of eggs, cheese, and meat. As a result they have learned how to deal in a money economy. Most peasant men have concluded that the woman is better for this kind of activity, a judgment probably based on the greater number of women that they see coming from La Paz to the regional fairs to buy products for the La Paz market. Without the land reform, or with a more gradual revision of tenure relations, the dramatic increase in participation of the peasantry, and especially women, on a cash basis in many new markets would have been impossible (Clark, 1968, pp. 168-71).

One qualification should be added to the above description. All the conclusions are based on a study of fifty-one ex-haciendas and the peasants living on them in the northern highlands of Bolivia, a region where agricultural production is exclusively oriented toward subsistence needs and the markets of the city of La Paz and the mines. Therefore the conclusions should not be taken as indicative of changes throughout Bolivia. There are still many areas, isolated for want of better roads, communications, and transport links, where the effects of the land reform have not been so dramatic. Instead, peasants provide for their own subsistence needs and sell very little for cash because they lack markets for their produce. These same peasants still wear mostly homespun clothing, and purchase few consumer durable goods. However, they no longer work for a landlord, but work lands as individual owner-operators. There are still substantial differences between various regions of Bolivia, just as there were differences in income earning opportunities between regions and landlords before 1952, for the same reasons.

#### Services and Supplies

There are few services and supplies now present in Bolivia which have been set up as a result of, rather than as part of, the land reform. In fact, the only case that comes to mind is the increased use of fertilizers and insecticides in some valley areas where new, more intensive, cropping patterns have been adopted. These changes have resulted in increased sales of fertilizers and insecticides in the cities of La Paz and especially in Cochabamba.

This does not mean that the availability of services and supplies has not increased generally throughout Bolivia, but that the increase is attributed primarily to various types of foreign assistance.

Since 1952 Bolivia has been the recipient of large amounts of aid, loans, and technical assistance from the United States, as well as from other governments and various international agencies. One result of this aid has been the creation of a much better system of roads throughout Bolivia, and the construction of the roads needed to open the lowlands to colonization. There have also been loans and grants to meet the expenses of colonization and other agricultural services.

Without going into detail, the Bolivian Government has received loans and grants for bettering and expanding the extension service, the research service, and the agricultural credit bank. Technicians have been employed in the area of rice production and storage and in wheat and wool production and marketing. For a time an effort was made in the area of producing, transporting, and marketing tropical fruits for export. One of the largest community development programs in Latin America, reportedly touching 40 percent of the rural families in Bolivia, has been set up. More recently, the land reform program has been aided by both loans and grants to distribute land titles more rapidly to peasants. All of these programs have been initiated because of bottlenecks or development problems in the rural sector--because a lack of local resources showed the need for

international assistance. Perhaps the one question most relevant at this point is, what chances would any of these programs have had in Bolivia before 1952, if their objectives had been to increase peasant incomes, to involve peasants in voluntary community development organizations, to involve them to a greater extent in a market economy, or to increase output of staple commodities by the more extensive use of fertilizers and other inputs? The landholding structure and predominant tenure relations would have precluded anyone receiving benefit from such programs except the owners of land; the mass of rural peasants would not have stood to gain very much from these programs before 1952, but it is exactly toward these masses that all the above programs are presently oriented.

#### Peasant Participation in Decisions

A good example of the political activity of the peasantry and their degree of influence on an issue of national concern is the fate of a central government-proposed tax on all rural lands. This proposal was explained by government and ministry officials at the "First Economic Conference of the Bolivian Peasantry" held in La Paz in December, 1968. The peasant leadership "chosen" to attend the conference came only from national, departmental, and provincial levels; they were those leaders that the central government thought it could count on to approve the tax. There was no direct representation from local rural communities.

During discussions of the measure, these peasant leaders felt their economic and political interests were being threatened by the

proposal; however, with some changes in the text of the proposal and a reduction in the tax rates to be levied, the delegates approved the first draft of the government's land tax proposal.

But outside the conference the proposal lacked support in two important areas--Oruro and La Paz--at the local community level among members of freeholding communities. This discontent was voiced to the government by certain peasant leaders who subsequently formed the Bloque Campesino Independiente, or the Independent Peasant Block. This group in turn then signed a pact with university students in La Paz. These political machinations, in combination with the articulated discontent of peasants in rural communities, obliged the government to give up the tax proposal, even though it had been "officially" approved at the economic conference held in La Paz.

One example does not prove a point, but it is the opinion of many who work in Bolivia that there are few countries in Latin America where the peasants and their spokesmen are better integrated into the government. The extent to which every government since 1952 has relied on the support of the rural sector, and the extent to which each government has made a point of seeking that support, is indicative of the influence of the rural sector in the government.

#### Character of Rural Society

For purposes of analysis it is important to focus our attention on the three major components of the rural scene: 1) the traditional provincial towns, 2) the new (since 1952) primarily peasant towns, and

3) the rural ex-haciendas and free-holding communities where agriculture is still the primary source of income. These three units represent respectively at present 1) the pre-1952 social and political structure, with even some cases in which pre-1952 economic relations between peasants and townsmen exist; 2) the post-1952 material, political, and psychological changes which have taken place among the peasantry, with the new peasant towns a manifestation of these changes; and 3) the changes at the local level-- that is, in the ex-haciendas and freeholding communities since 1952--and their relations to and interactions with the rural towns. Around these three focal points in the rural sector the peasants organize their lives today, earn a living, and come into contact with ideas, development programs, and new values from outside their communities. At these three levels the peasants institute relations with people of non-peasant backgrounds and/or non-agricultural occupations; these are also the three focal points in the rural sector presently of greatest importance to the peasantry in terms of where development programs are initiated by government agencies and private groups.

Because of the revolution and subsequent reform, groups in the rural area have become polarized. There are encounters and outbursts between the old elites of the provincial capitals and the newly vociferous and organized peasantry. For example, on the provincial town level, the peasant is still treated as a second class citizen when he goes to town for those services not available elsewhere in

rural areas--hospitals, police, courts, market, high schools, etc. These services are administered by ex-landlords or traditional groups not of peasant extraction. The peasant is taken advantage of, and ex-landlords continue treating peasants according to old patron-client relationships practiced widely before 1952. The older peasants, as well as the ex-landlords, have not been able to change their own attitudes and ways of behavior toward one another rapidly enough to obviate the above problems. As they leave the scene and a new generation of peasants assumes more importance, provincial town relations with the surrounding peasant sector should change also. But presently, the one change which is indicative of the degree of integration of the peasant sector into the society and economy of Bolivia, as well as into the political-administrative structure of the country, is the rapid formation of new peasant towns in some regions.

Most basic to new town development, of course, are favorable geographic conditions, which since 1952 have been given new meaning. Most new town sites are located at the intersection of ex-haciendas or freeholding community boundaries, a factor allowing strong inter-community cooperation and organization. Such sites were utilized by the landlords before 1953 as loading sites for hacienda produce. Since 1953 truck stops and marketing centers have developed at these points. The formation of new peasant towns directly resulted not only from the restructured marketing opportunities, but also from newly conditioned socio-political aspirations directly implanted in the peasantry by the Revolutionary Government.<sup>12</sup>

One of the fundamental motives which peasant leaders in all of the new markets and new town sites had in establishing the town was to raise the area to the administrative level of canton. Within the national government system, the canton is entitled to officials-- a corregidor, a civil register, a judge, and a policeman. Also, the sooner any site gains such offices, the more influence it has in specifying a market day, which in turn attracts more peasants, merchants, and truckers.

To date, most new peasant town formation has taken place on the northern highlands because of its proximity to the city of La Paz, its government agencies, and the new marketing opportunities. However, the North also benefited from continual contact with government officials, union organizers, and others who infused the peasantry with the new revolutionary ideology and who immediately established one of the most important links between the local communities and the new national government--the peasant unions. Such new formal groups on the local level became a valuable tool of the MNR party. Peasants in most cases began to work through their newly organized unions to expropriate the landholdings on which they lived, to build schools and market places, and to begin development projects such as health stations, access roads, dams, and wells. At the same time union organizers consciously pushed for immediate construction of union headquarters and new buildings at new sites, exhorting the union members to stop living like animals in the countryside and to build their towns. Because the unions were able to amass power on an intermediate level, some of the

most important ideological aims of the Revolution were translated into reality. For example, there was and continues to be the constant desire to construct rural schools, particularly to serve the various communities and ex-haciendas making up a new town site. Due to the formal organization of unions and their expressed desire for rural schools, and to the revolutionary government's acknowledgement of this desire for progress, schools were many times one of the first reasons for building new towns.<sup>13</sup>

Many of these changes in rural society have significant implications. First, the organization of peasants at the local level around market and school districts, accompanied by political pressure for the administrative elevation of that unit to canton level, led to the ascendance of the outlying peasant-dominated regions around provincial towns. In many cases, the new towns gained gradual dominance over the old towns. In more politicized areas such as the Yungas, the highlands, the valleys of the North and of Cochabamba, the new towns supply alcaldes for the provincial capitals. And sometimes, even today, they show a threatening force which is sufficient to intimidate the provincial town dwellers.<sup>14</sup>

In order for the above changes in power relations to take place in the rural sector, the rural peasant union organization and generally the organization of peasants in new, outlying towns had to become more sophisticated and of course consolidated. Neither was possible without the support of the central government and the revolutionary changes effected by the government. The motive for new towns rising

and partially eclipsing traditional towns, and sometimes intimidating them, did not so much reflect a negative orientation among the peasants as it did a desire among the peasantry for new services distributed throughout the many new centers to a newly-powerful segment of society. Through the electoral process, more sophisticated peasant leaders are gradually moving into the political structures of the traditional provincial towns where they become mayors or other officials. Later, they become representatives to parliament. Such leaders no longer have to rely on naked power and threat to achieve their objectives; instead, they rely on their constituencies and allies in provincial towns and outlying rural areas to attain the same ends. Gradually, revolutionary political changes passed by decree on the national level following 1952 have been reflected at the local and intermediate administrative levels in the rural areas.

The point to be stressed when considering this rural picture is that a segment of the population heretofore isolated from the mainstream of national events has become restructured into functioning political groups and social units. Influence spreads not only downward to the surrounding rural peasant communities but also upward within the formal structure of provincial and departmental government. The fact that primarily peasant-dominated, peasant-organized and peasant-run towns are now accepted as part of this formal structure indicates the type of change which has occurred in the rural sector.

The Bolivian Land Reform of 1953 was just one part of the National Revolution begun in 1952. As such, its effects on the nation as a

whole cannot be separated from the total effect of the Revolution. But the preceding conclusions do suggest some of the ways in which the Land Reform lent itself to the change of Bolivian society, economy, and Polity.

#### CRITIQUE AND EVALUATION

A great deal of evaluation is implied in the above description and analysis of the Bolivian Land Reform; it would not do to try to repeat it or to summarize it. Therefore this section will focus on some of the more important features of the Bolivian experience.

1) Current land disputes between peasants and landholders in Bolivia illustrate the type of problems which arise when the rate of land redistribution to peasants exceeds the capacity of the government to officially sanction such redistribution by delineating boundaries and by distributing and enforcing land titles.

Two general types of conflict have resulted from the delay in affording legal title to peasant holdings created by the 1953 land reform. The first arises between displaced landlords and the new owners. Problems of this type occur: 1) when landlords intimidate peasants in order to retain title to, obtain payment for, or reassert traditional labor arrangements on part or all of their former holdings; 2) when peasant unions employ pressure tactics to intimidate landlords and force them to abandon or sell their lands; 3) when peasants and landlords attempt to work out compromise arrangements; and 4) when

peasants use existing agrarian legislation to try to obtain unused lands still belonging to landlords.

The second general type of conflict arises between new peasant owners, including such problems as: 1) land-grabbing by more powerful peasants; 2) competing claims to the land of deceased peasants, often based on emotional ties to the land; 3) disputes involving subdivision of individual and common lands; 4) competition between claims based on tradition and legal title; and 5) intimidation by peasant leaders and government officials.

Finally, various problems are emerging over land use: 1) the problem of the continuance, in some areas, of the pre-reform colono system; 2) the loss of lands to outsiders; 3) problems of the work contract; 4) the institution of a neo-colonato system in some areas, allowing peasants the usufruct rights to lands still belonging to landlords in exchange for stipulated labor obligations; 5) conflicts and problems over water rights; and 6) marketing and credit problems (Clark, 1969 and LTC MSS, CH. 10).

2) The Bolivian Revolution of 1952, the Land Reform of 1953, and the organization of peasant unions has resulted in a considerable degree of integration of the masses of peasants in the national economy, society, and polity.

In general, peasants have had to make astute adjustments--other than political--to counteract traditional forces in the rural areas and to take full advantage of the new opportunities offered by the

revolutionary government and land reform. To date the peasantry usually chooses to avoid confrontation on the provincial level, a fact which points up three important things: 1) peasants still feel cowed when facing the provincial scene in other than political contexts based upon group action, e.g., marketing and public services; 2) they not only have new channels (markets, transport, education, new towns) at their disposal, but they are aware of the existence of these new channels; and finally, 3) whether consciously avoiding contact with the provincial society or not, the fact remains that in isolating the old town and its traditional functions, the peasantry has completely restructured the rural scene, creating new lines to the national level, and at the same time forcing concessions from residents of traditional society.

3) As a result of rapid institutional modification and the creation of new institutions, virtually the same as revolution, considerable jurisdictional confusion now exists between pre-reform and post-reform authorities and institutions.

While problems of jurisdictional confusion and non-definition of official roles to avoid duplication have long been typical of Latin America, these problems have taken on additional complexity in Bolivia since 1952. First, with the entrance of the peasant sector into the national society there is effective but personalistic communication at the national level, despite the fact that there is virtually no direct, de jure voice via local rural units or unions.

The substantial power of the peasants and well-placed mouthpieces, such as Asuntos Campesinos and the Peasant Block, in parliament assures that the system functions--politically at least.

The non-definition of roles of institutions and the personalistic nature of high office holders has resulted in much of the chaos of interpretation of legal provisions governing work of contracts between peasants and ex-landlords, and between peasants. In this circumstance we see: 1) the national constitution obligating no one to work if he does not wish to; 2) the Minister of Asuntos Campesinos under two different regimes declaring peasants saboteurs if they do not work under contract for their ex-landlord; and 3) the President himself disregarding the ambiguity of these events.

4) There is a tendency in Bolivia (and elsewhere) to expect too much from land reform alone.

As a policy instrument, land reform (the redistribution of property rights in land) can only break down societal rigidities and lay the basis for a different organization of the agricultural sector. Land reform does not automatically or overnight make peasants market-oriented entrepreneurs, does not make them more literate or more willing to give up traditional values and ways of doing things (e.g., give up their subsistence orientation). These changes are all a part of the process of the creation of new income earning opportunities (that is, economic development), which in the case of the factors mentioned above is usually a process taking generation.

5) When a land reform program of the magnitude experienced by Bolivia is part of an overall revolution, it should be expected that some of the existing technical and managerial ability in the rural sector will be lost as people move to the cities or leave the country; also, a period of adjustment will have to be expected during which time agricultural production on the farm may decrease and/or quantities of agricultural produce reaching urban centers may decline.

6) When most lands are redistributed to peasant families, one should expect a considerable readjustment in marketing channels and relations.

Landlord-dominated functions will be taken over by many peasant families, leading to a greater involvement of these families in a cash economy. Another secondary repercussion will be increased national markets for light consumer goods and consumer durable goods.

7) The Bolivian Government has not been able to meet even the minimal service needs of the rural sector since the land reform and Revolution of 1952. This failure has been due largely to a lack of resources. Based on this experience, national and international agencies should be prepared to make these services available, providing that the revolution is not so severe that program efficiency is precluded.

8) At certain points it is not possible to settle all peasant families on quantities of land necessary for the creation of "economically viable" farms.

This argument applies to small regions of reform, defining "economically viable" as the quantity of land and agricultural services and other inputs necessary to reach a certain income target per farm family. However, this same argument does not hold for a country as a whole, for it usually fails to consider limitations on aggregate demand for farm produce, and whether or not alternatives exist for those families that have to be removed from certain areas. In the case of Bolivia these alternatives did not exist, so many peasant families have received parcels of land less than five hectares. These small parcels at least provide a subsistence base in the rural areas for peasant families.

9) To carry out and continue a massive land reform, a local, regional, and national peasant union organization must be set up, with direct access to various government channels.

If this is not done, it would be difficult for any government, no matter the extent of its will, to carry out a land reform as a policy instrument, to reach the masses and to involve them in the process. In the case of Bolivia this was done; in fact, the very success of this aspect of the revolution may have led to political excesses and abuses.

10) In the case of Bolivia, colonization programs have not been able to resist the natural increase in population in the traditional highland and valley areas.

It would probably be wrong to expect such resettlement to succeed in any country where the agricultural sector employs more than 50 percent of the population.

11) Despite far-reaching land reform, as in Bolivia, it is difficult to eradicate many of the work relations of the pre-reform period. Even today traditional tenure relations persist (sharecropping among peasants, tenant farming among peasants, reciprocal work arrangements), and others such as a neo-colonato system emerge.

12) It can be assumed by any government undertaking land reform that the results will be apartially invalidated, and the social aims undermined, if ex-landlords are permitted access to their previously-held lands and if they continue to hold influence in provincial pueblos.

While a radical one, the Bolivian experience has still been sadly complicated by ex-landlords exercising their pre-1952 social perogatives on all levels. This has been in the form of legal access to parts of their ex-haciendas; the selling off of these lands in illegal and exploitative ways (i.e., prices, measurements, intimidation, new usufruct conditions, credit and sharecropping provisions); the seeking of support for such moves from subsequent national governments preoccupied with production in the face of menacing peasant political activity; and finally, in more remote areas, the near-continuation of pre-1952 work and social conditions.

## F O O T N O T E S

<sup>1</sup>The preceding description portrays general conditions in Bolivia before 1952. It does not mean that there were not many individual landlords, writers, and others who realized the injustices of the prevailing tenure relations and the inefficiencies of the agricultural system. Also, a significant absolute number of landlords were genuinely interested in improving farm operations by importing machinery, animals, and technology to increase output per unit of land as well as quality of output. Many of these same people also personally managed their farms. However, these efforts were not significant enough throughout Bolivia to affect the above description substantially.

<sup>2</sup>For a satirical account of the aristocratic, provincial society of Sucre, see Tristan Maroff, La ciudad ilustre (La Paz: 1956).

<sup>3</sup>This same association was also responsible for building the roads into the Yungas, as well as for building and equipping one of the more modern hospitals in Bolivia at that time.

<sup>4</sup>The only exceptions were two small dams, one in Cochabamba and the other in Tarija. Both were used primarily to irrigate rich valley lands of landlords, and those of some peasants.

<sup>5</sup>The Commission which was to draw up the Bolivian Ley de Reforma Agraria was called in April, 1953, one year after the national Revolution. It was composed of numerous sub-committees such as History, Economics and Finance, Water Resources, Education, and Political Economy, with members drawn from most of the ministries and important sectors of society such as the Peasantry, the Sociedad Rural (landlords), and the universities. In general, members were selected for talent in certain fields and for their diverse political opinions.

According to our informant--who was a member of the sub-committee on Economics and Finance and an advisor to that committee--the basic problem was that of time. The revolutionary government had committed itself to the agrarian reform, having promised the peasants a land reform law by August 2, 1953--Dia del Indio. In addition there were many land invasions occurring in the valley of Cochabamba. Not only time but lack of important statistics and little knowledge of the national territory made the task more difficult.

According to various informants, it was the desire of most members of the committee to create a Law that was Bolivian, not one modeled after China, Russia or Mexico. The members of the committee were named by the new revolutionary government, and they were responsible

to it. For this reason they did not have major disagreements as to policy, and they were kept closely in touch with the new president, Paz Estenssoro. It appears that, due to the particular personality of this leader, there was little discord within the committee. The committee visited the Presidential Palace every Wednesday for discussion with the President; during these periods the cabinet showed a united front, supporting Paz Estenssoro. An informant has stated that perhaps the most important factor in this harmony, despite varying opinions and backgrounds of members, was that the revolution itself was already a reality; it was backed by the new president with undeniable national support from the mining and peasant sectors. Even the most conservative members of the committee could not oppose this.

Bolivia, immediately after April, 1952, was the center of a great influx of radicals and reformers who saw the chance for a creative and possibly a radical land reform. It is said that Che Guevara visited Bolivia; and Edmundo Flores, the Mexican expert on agrarian reform, was appointed a member of the committee. Furthermore, several Bolivian youths who had lived in Israeli kibbutzim and returned and were extolling the advantages of such rural cooperatives.

In drawing up the Bolivian Land Reform Law, all foreign land reform laws were read and analyzed, and the experience of the Mexican ejido was taken into strong consideration by committee members. However, the personality and ideas of Paz Estenssoro were to form the primary criteria, after close discussion with committee. According to the informant, it was Paz' personal opinion that all of the true latifundios had to be destroyed, while he continued to respect the idea of the medium sized properties because of the need for maintaining agricultural production. Finally, it was the belief of Paz that the agrarian reform law was only one step in a very dynamic process, and that there would undoubtedly have to be future agrarian reform laws in Bolivia.

<sup>6</sup>"Artículo 86º-Las células de campo reúnen a los militantes con ocupación en el agro, se organizan dentro de cada propiedad, comunidad cooperativa o sindicato. Varias células de campo, forman una célula central campesina y ésta tiene representación en el comando provincial.

Artículo 87º.-Sus tareas principales consisten en: 1.-Divulgar la línea política y programa del Partido. 2.-Estimular la organización del campesinado en las filas del MNR. 3.-Realizar activa labor procelitista, procurando el ingreso de nuevos campesinos. 4.-Obtener el control de las organizaciones sindicales campesinas, procurando que los dirigentes de estas sean los mismos que los del Comando."

See "Estatuto Orgánico-MNR" (1954), pp. 54-55.

<sup>7</sup>Military evidence bears this out to some extent; the height and weight of recruits into the Bolivian army from some areas have

increased since the land reform, indicating either higher levels of calorie consumption or a general improvement in quality of diet, or both, during the last decade. Data from Ministry of Defense, La Paz, Bolivia.

<sup>8</sup>Supreme Decree 03375, Articles 1 and 2, Ley de la Reforma Agraria en Bolivia: Leyes Conexas, Decretos Resoluciones y Circulares, Servicio Nacional de Reforma Agraria, Departamento de Relaciones Públicas (La Paz: 1966), p. 35. It is necessary to point out that this decree antedates the Agrarian Reform Law of August 1953 by three months, showing once again that farms had been abandoned as a result of the Revolution. Also, the decree is ample recognition of the existence of peasant unions before the Land Reform Law was passed.

<sup>9</sup>Indices of Agricultural Production for the 20 Latin American Countries (preliminary version), ERS-Foreign 44, Economic Research Service (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1966), pp. 10-11.

<sup>10</sup>Ministerio de Hacienda, Sección General de Estadística y Censos, La Paz, Bolivia.

<sup>11</sup>It is fully realized that price changes and increased availability of many of these commodities, especially radios, sewing machines, and metal roofing, would have induced some of the above changes. However, it is the author's opinion that the most important factor determining increased consumption of these articles is the higher level of income realized by the peasant families as a result of the land reform.

<sup>12</sup>Articles 101 ff, "De las formas de establecimiento de la población rural" and "De la fundación de pueblos y caserios," in Ley de la Reforma Agraria en Bolivia, *op. cit.*, pp. 60-61.

<sup>13</sup>Although such changes are observed throughout the northern highlands and Yungas, there are also negative examples of new town formation. In parts of the south of Bolivia many efforts at attracting trucks have failed, despite concerted tries on the part of individual ex-hacienda communities, because production is low and very precarious due to the threat of hail, frost and flood; under such circumstances truckers are not attracted, and peasants hardly have enough available cash to pay for rides to the market center.

<sup>14</sup>Specifically, in January, 1968 the sedate, aristocratic city of Sucre was temporarily invaded by hundreds of peasants from provincial Tarabuco. This move was sufficient to unseat the abusive alcalde and avoid similar abuses against peasants in other traditional towns.

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