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Rural Organisations in Latin America

Some Lessons for South Africa

by

Laurine Platzky

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RURAL ORGANISATION IN LATIN AMERICA - SOME LESSONS FOR SOUTH AFRICA

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("We have the right to work ... to education ... to an opinion")
GLOSSARY

Portuguese
abertura  'opening' (easing of repression)
boias frias literally, a cold lunch pack of humble food, by
extension, rural pieceworkers, often migrants
grileiro landgrabber
machete pick-axe
posseiro land occupier/peasant

Spanish
barrio neighbourhood (often informal settlement)
campo countryside/rural area
campesino countryman/peasant/small farmer
campesina countrywoman/peasant/small farmer
companero companion/comrade (male)
companiona companion/comrade (female)
'contra' counter-revolutionary
hacienda estate/large farm/ranch/plantation
latifundio large estate
latifundista owner of a large estate
minifundio small estate
This paper emerges from a three month fieldtrip to Latin America. I found a number of parallels with the situation in South Africa particularly in the rural areas where I tried to spend more time. For example, people are forced off the land by agribusiness and state-subsidised projects designed to benefit wealthier peasants. In Brazil rural violence is increasing as the landless who have invaded abandoned land try to defend themselves against land grabbers. The establishment of large-scale state projects such as the building of dams like Itaipu on the border of Argentina and Paraguay or the clearing of the Amazon forests, forces thousands of people to move. Although apartheid policy is absent, unrepresentative and undemocratic governments have implemented some plans similar to those which have forced people in South Africa to move.

Organisations and individuals active in rural organisation were visited and interviewed. Their comments and experiences were fascinating and interesting for those involved with similar issues in South Africa. I have tried to draw out lessons but because South African knowledge of Latin America is so limited, it has been necessary to provide more background than would usually be necessary.

Because the trip was informal, a working holiday, the information collected is uneven. People were not always available for long discussions. Some of the contacts were away on field trips. But more important, the idea of collecting systematic information only developed during the trip. By the end of the three month period, more direct questions were asked and they are reflected in the specific case studies. Initially there were some problems of orientation and unfamiliarity with language, customs and presentation. A further problem with data collection was the uncertainty of the atmosphere particularly in Nicaragua: how would a South African asking so many questions be received? But the people were open and welcoming. Despite their overwhelming friendliness, I felt reticent about asking too many detailed questions of respondents when they were clearly so busy fighting for their survival. They also have so many claims on their time from foreign visitors interested in their struggle to reconstruct their country.

Most of the material collected was in Spanish or Portuguese and my comprehension of both languages is very basic, so that there may be some errors in translation or interpretation. I have tried as far as possible to avoid such mistakes, but the Latin American expert will notice them and I would be grateful to be informed of
them.

I want to thank all those who helped me compile this paper, particularly those busy people I interviewed in Latin America. I thank them for their time, patience and insights. Among them I would particularly like to mention David Harding, Betty Munoz Valdivia, Ewa Dahlin, Sandra Aliaga Brug, Carmen Avila, Jan Rocha, Moyra Ashford, Sonia Carvalho, Frances Rubin. I would also like to thank the Second Carnegie Inquiry into Poverty and Development in South Africa for giving me the opportunity to digest the material I brought home and to present it. I am particularly grateful to my colleagues in SALDRU.

Finally I want to record my solidarity with Vanderley Caixe, co­ordinator of the Human Rights Centre in João Pessoa whose life has been threatened by hired armed thugs. In July 1984 I was privileged to interview him about the work of the Centre. He and his wife also kindly entertained me. I was very impressed with his understanding of the legal role in community struggles and his deep commitment to justice and rural development despite attempts by some to have him removed.

INTRODUCTION

This is not an academic paper. It is intended to raise issues relevant to rural organisation in South Africa. While there are a number of rural development projects, so far there has been little attempt to organise rural people or even to stimulate an awareness of the socio-economic system amongst rural people, which is an integral aspect for any programme both now and in a future South Africa under a different political dispensation.

Initially I planned to write a paper on rural development in Latin America but after careful thought, it became clear that I needed to step back and ask what rural development has meant so far. If, as I believe, the aims of rural development are:

(i) to eradicate poverty
(ii) to establish a happy society with material and mental well­being for all,
then the vast majority of those in rural areas have not benefitted from rural development projects to date. The reason is that these projects are perceived within a socio-economic system which benefits some at the expense of many. For rural development to improve the living standards of the masses, there has to be basic social change. Until that change comes about, it is more useful to examine rural organisation, (i) to bring about that change, and (2) to prepare for future programmes in a democratic society where everyone participates in the socio-economic and
political life. Only then can (rural) development, growth, distribution of food and wealth be realistically discussed.

A basic question in the assessment of rural development in Latin America or the bantustans of South Africa, is: what is the real aim? Is it merely stabilisation for the maintenance of the existing political and economic order? Most of the land reform in Latin America, like the recommendations of the Riekert Commission in South Africa, aim to create a privileged middle class, to divide the masses and to give some people a stake in the status quo. This strategy only delays the process of social change while the majority become aware of their relative deprivation and increased poverty. In South Africa, like Latin America, there is a growing proletarianisation, not urbanisation, of the majority as more and more people find themselves landless yet confined to rural areas. This is a result of the government's policy of settling millions of people in closer settlements in bantustans, sometimes within commuting distances of the cities.

Although such issues as the structure of food production, food distribution and export crops which mitigate against feeding the poor cannot be changed under the existing order, it is crucial to understand how these factors cause poverty. Agrarian reform, more than simple land reform, must be planned for the long-term if real change is to occur in South Africa. This paper examines, therefore, rural organisation (i) as a tool for bringing social change about, and (ii) as a precondition for the participation of the rural poor in a future South African society.

This paper focuses on Nicaragua, Peru, Bolivia and Brazil. Of the countries I visited, these four offered the most directly relevant lessons for South Africans. A brief description of each country will be presented.

The three main themes are:
1. Agrarian reform,
2. Rural organisation, and
3. Popular education.

The three themes are closely linked. Over the last fifty years Latin America has seen major mass movements demanding an end to feudal land and labour relations. Over the past 30 years in all four countries forms of agrarian reform have been undertaken with different motives and different results. In some cases reforms were introduced as a direct result of demands from peasants and agricultural workers. In most cases, however, the various states changed the pattern of land ownership to defuse mass rural mobilisation in an attempt to stave off radical change. The types
of agrarian reform and the present situation will be examined. Rural organisation is directly related not only to land but to health, education, welfare, wage employment and all other aspects of daily life as well. Some examples of such organisation will be described. Popular education will be examined as the media through which rural organisation strategies are disseminated and debated. Various forms used will be discussed and their success or failure assessed.

Employing these three themes I shall attempt to elucidate the roles of the church, activists and women's organisations: how they became involved, what issues they raised and how they work together. External influences, particularly the extent of repression employed by the government in power, change these roles from time to time.

Case studies, photographs and sketches are included to give a sense of place, a feeling for the area, a view of the people and, as Lindqvist put it, 'a smell of the soil'.

Like South Africa rural development in Latin America is not only an issue for people who do not live in urban areas. The pressures for change in industrialising societies are likely to come largely from urban workers but in most of these countries industrial workers are a minority group. Half the population is of working age; half live in the rural areas. Unemployment and underemployment are high. Rural workers are isolated, but their awareness is growing and they are beginning to organise against underdevelopment. Their struggle in the countryside is complementary to that of their urban brothers and sisters. Nowhere in Latin America is there a system quite like influx control, but there are structural ways of keeping people living in rural areas and there certainly is unlegislated apartheid. Most of the poorest people in Latin America are black or indigenous. Their struggle for rights as indigenous people is very similar to the struggle of all rural people - for a better quality of life and basic human rights.
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<td>Area (km sq)</td>
<td>1 221</td>
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<td>8 512</td>
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<td>Population (mid-82) mil.</td>
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<td>Projected pop. by 2000</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>9</td>
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<td>Ave. annual pop. growth %</td>
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<td>3.9</td>
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<td>5.4</td>
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<td>Life expectancy at birth (years) (1982)</td>
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<td>58</td>
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<td>Adult literacy % 1980 (1975)</td>
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<td>GNP (US$ 1982)</td>
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<td>Ave. annual GNP growth (1960-82)</td>
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<td>Ave. annual inflation (1970-82)</td>
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<td>% distribution of GDP (1981):</td>
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<td>20</td>
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<td>Current a/c balance of payments (mill $ 1982)</td>
<td>-2855</td>
<td>-92</td>
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<td>-1644</td>
<td>-16332</td>
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* Average for all population groups in South Africa. Life expectancy for whites is much higher than for blacks; infant mortality for whites is much lower than for blacks. (Infant mortality was given as 94 in 1981 for S.A. by World Bank.) (Dept of Statistics)
BOLIVIA

Position: Bolivia is landlocked between Peru and Chile in the west, Brazil in the north and east, Paraguay in the east and Argentina in the south. It lies between 10\degree and 23\degree south. There are three distinct geographical areas - the Altiplano or high plateau, the western high Andean mountain region and the low-lying jungle area to the east.

Population: More than half the people live in rural areas. The majority of them speak Quechua, Aymara or Guarani. The urban population is largely Spanish speaking.

Capital: Sucre is the official capital but La Paz is the largest city, the commercial and industrial centre, with a population of more than one million.

History:
1535 Spanish conquest of Peru/Bolivia area
1545-1825 Struggle against colonialism
1781 Tupac Amaru led revolt in Cuzco, Peru
1825 6 August: Republic of Bolivia founded
1898-9 Willca Zarate revolt in Chayanta
1921 Revolt of Jesus de Machaca
1927 Revolt of Pocoata
1932-6 Chaco war between Bolivia and Paraguay
1935 Violent repression of revolt at Santa Clara hacienda, Cochabamba
1936 3 April: First rural trade union founded at Santa Clara
1952 9 April: Popular insurrection followed by reforms:
   - universal franchise
   - land reform
   - nationalisation of the mines
   - education reform
1953 2 August: 100,000 witnessed signing of land reform decree
1970 Banzer dictatorship installed with U.S. support ('National Security Doctrine')
1977 National (and international) hunger strike forced Banzer to flee
1978 Elections called but two coups intervened
1979 Popular Democratic Union (UDP) won elections with unclear majority. Another coup and 15 day civil war - army massacred workers, bombed mines. General strike.
1982 Military & U.S. realised they could not maintain control so they persuaded a moderate, Siles to take power. Enormous economic problems (inflation 400% according to local press)
1984-5 Bolivia's choice: return to military regime or maintain shaky democracy unable to respond to working class demands in view of International Monetary Fund restrictions.
BRAZIL

Position: Brazil is the largest country in South America, a little smaller than the United States (9 363 000 km sq) with a population just over half that of the U.S.A. (120.5 million). Brazil has a coastline of 7 400km. The greatest river in the world, the Amazon is nearly 8 000km long. Brazil lies between 4°N and 33°S. Distances are enormous: 4 320km from north to south and 4 328km from east to west.

Population: Half of all South Americans live in Brazil and half of all Brazilians are under 25 years old. A large proportion of Brazil's population is black. There is a strong African influence particularly in the north-east, while the west is sparsely populated (many of the indigenous people have been killed or have not survived modern 'civilisation'). The Portuguese colonised Brazil and their influence is most strongly found in the more developed and wealthier southern part of the country.

Capital: Brasilia is the federal capital with 1.1 million inhabitants but Sao Paulo is the largest and most important city, with 14 million people.

History:
1500 Portuguese landed on coast of Brazil
1624-54 Dutch invasion of Salvador and Recife
1698 Gold discovered
1720 Coffee introduced
1729 Diamonds discovered
1763 Rio declared sole capital of Brazil
1789 First unsuccessful revolt against Portuguese rule
1822 Brazil gains independence, part of the Portuguese empire
1888 Slavery abolished
1889 Republic declared
1930 Vargas came to power - first social reformer, then dictator
1943 Labour Code (control and restriction of trade unions, still enforced today)
1946 Liberal republic - economic progress and social advances
1962-4 Mass unrest and strikes
1964 April 1: Military coup
1968-74 Heavy repression
1974 Abertura - 'the opening'
1978 Folded Arms Strike of thousands of metal workers in ABC region, Sao Paulo
1980 Over 1 million workers on strike, union leaders harassed. PT (Workers' Party) formed.
1983 Aug 12: Magarida Alves, rural unionist killed by landowners hitmen
1985 Military handover of power to civilian government, still no direct election of president (elected by electoral college)
NICARAGUA

Position: Central America between Honduras in the north and Costa Rica in the south. The 130,000 km sq stretches from the Pacific in the west to the Atlantic in the east.

Population: 2.8 million (comprising Spanish descendants who live mainly in the west, Miskito, Sumo and Rama 'indians' who speak their own languages and descendants of runaway black slaves from the Caribbean who speak English)

Capital: Managua (650,000 people)

History:
1502 Columbus arrived in Nicaragua
1821 Independence from Spain after 300 years of colonialism. Slavery abolished. Nicaragua part of Mexican empire.
1824-38 Part of Federation of Central American States
1855 William Walker and his band of Yankee mercenaries arrived. Walker declared himself president and reintroduced slavery.
1856 Walker defeated in battle of San Jacinto.
1893 Liberal leader Zelaya assumed power.
1927 Augusto C. Sandino and patriots began guerilla war to oppose U.S. occupation.
1933 Marines expelled; U.S. National Guard left in control.
1934 General Sandino assassinated on orders of Chief Director of Nicaragua National Guard, Anastasio Somoza Garcia
1936 Somoza assumed economic, military power and presidency. Vicious dictatorship for next 43 years.
1956 Somoza assassinated, succeeded by elder son Luis Somoza.
1961 Carlos Fonseca Amador founded FSLN (Sandinista Front for National Liberation)
1972 Earthquake destroyed much of Managua; 30,000 people killed. Somoza's profiteering from international aid given for earthquake victims alienated local business elite.
1976 Fonseca killed.
August: FSLN seized National Palace taking many hostages.
1979 July 19 Insurrection and FSLN assumed power.
1980 Literacy crusade: raised adult literacy from 57% to 90%
1981 U.S. cut loans for development & purchase of food, began to train former Somoza guards; preparation for invasion of Nicaragua.
1984 November 2: National elections, FSLN won 67% of vote.
November: U.S. threatened invasion.
1985 Daniel Ortega elected president.
**PERU**

Position: Peru lies between the equator and 18° S latitude on the Pacific coast. The country comprises three distinct zones which are geographically and culturally very different:
- **Pacific coast:** the narrow, dry desert plain on which Lima the capital city is located. Sugar, cotton and rice grow under irrigation.
- **Andean Highlands or the Altiplano:** the chain of very high mountains running the length of South America. Potatoes, maize and wheat are grown for the domestic market in the valleys. Sheep and alpaca are kept for wool on the ridges and highland plains.
- **Jungle or selva:** to the east of the Andes are the lowlands of the Amazon basin. Cocoa, coca (for the thriving cocaine industry) and coffee are grown on the eastern slopes.

Population: 44% of the population live on the narrow coastal ribbon (11% of the land) while only 5% live in the jungle which comprises 62% of Peru. About 10% of the population speak Quechua and no Spanish, but most 'indians' speak some Spanish, particularly those who live in urban areas.

Capital: Lima (5 million people)

History:
- 1450 Inca conquest of Peru and Ecuador completed
- 1527 Spaniards arrived; discovered rich Inca empire (capital Cuzco)
- 1535 Lima founded
- 1572 Spanish defeated last reigning Inca
- 1780 'Indian' revolt - Túpac Amaru tortured and killed
- 1814 Another 'indian' revolt, supported by locally born Spanish
- 1822 May 24: Independence from Spain, led by Bolivar
- 1830s Temporary confederation between Peru and Bolivia
- 1850 end of importation of negro slaves for sugar plantations
- 1866 Peruvian-Spanish war
- 1875 end of importation of Chinese slaves for sugar plantations
- 1879-83 Pacific War (Peru & Bolivia defeated by Chile; Peru lost southernmost territory to Chile)
- 1919 Introduction of 8 hour work day
- 1932 Trujillo revolt led by middle class; military killed 5000
- 1945 Popular movement invaded urban land, settlements built
- 1950 Devastating earthquake
- 1968 October: Left-wing military coup: land reform, nationalisation of basic industries & worker participation in industry
- 1972 Disastrous earthquake
- 1975 Military coup (right-wing)
- 1980 Transfer to civilian government
- 1985 APRA (American Popular Revolutionary Alliance) elected
AGRARIAN REFORM

"Agrarian reform must not be given as an outlet for the capitalist economic system to allow continuation of its development and accumulation and concentration of wealth in the hands of a few (now) from the industrial, commercial and financial sectors. Nor must it return the peasant to sleep and hinder organisation or his growing political, economic and social participation. (Finally, Salvadorean) agrarian reform must have a broad perspective, not only oriented to the redistribution of land without social resources. There must be doctors, schools, hospitals, electricity, water, etc for all rural and poor people. In a word, spread integrated human development."

- the late Archbishop Romero translated from CEPA: "La Liberacion y la Tierra"

Independence for Latin American countries meant that the local bourgeoisie took political and economic control from their Spanish and Portuguese counterparts. Conditions for the mass of people differed little as their oppressors changed in name alone. Large tracts of land were still held by very few people; so demands for agrarian reform* grew.

Two early attempts at land reform resulted in little progress:
Between 1811 and 1820 Jose Artigas led an agrarian revolution in the area now known as Uruguay and the eastern provinces of Argentina. Their 1815 agrarian code for "free land, free men" was the most advanced articulation of the need for economic and social justice Uruguay has ever experienced. But from 1820 onwards foreigners intervened to evict those struggling for reform and in the process prevented it.

In Mexico the struggle for land identified the latifundistas, ie those who monopolised the land, as the enemy. For a brief period of peace in 1914 radical agrarian reform was implemented. But the Mexican nationalist revolution did not result in socialism and the agrarian reform implemented stopped far short of popular demand.

No Latin American government can afford to neglect demands for agrarian reform. Most have invoked a kind of reform to avoid *

* Agrarian reform is more than land reform. It is a restructuring of the whole agricultural system including the distribution of land, availability of credit, technical aid and selection of products grown.
equitable distribution of the land. Unproductive or abandoned land was distributed but latifundias remained in the hands of rich landowners. Landless peasants who occupied vacant land were evicted.

Basically there are two kinds of agrarian reform — the reform which results from popular peasant struggle and that which is implemented by the state in an attempt to avert popular struggles resulting in mass mobilisation. Along a continuum Nicaragua exemplifies the former and Brazil the latter, with a number of variations in between such as Bolivia where a popular struggle occurred and Peru where a 'top-down' process took place.

CAMPAHNA NACIONAL
PELA REFORMA AGRARIA

National Campaign for Agrarian Reform
NICARAGUA

Distribution of the land has been an important issue in Nicaragua for over 50 years. In the 1930s Sandino encouraged peasants to form co-operatives and occupy land that was not farmed productively. Nicaraguan plantation owners had begun to replace food crops for internal consumption with sugar, cotton and coffee for export to the U.S.A. This process continued in the 1960s when the U.S.A. needed to secure cash crops previously imported from Cuba before the revolution. In response more and more people were displaced and forced off their land to work on the plantations as seasonal workers. Some had sharecrop agreements, others were labour tenants while many were migrant workers moving from one harvest to another, with no permanent home.

According to official documents between 1964 and 1973 there were 240 land invasions in the provinces of Chinandega and Leon alone. Landless peasants were desperate to grow food. How they organised themselves to take over and cultivate the land will be discussed later. Before July 1979 it was regarded as revolutionary to seize land but this is no longer the case. People soon learned that the FSLN would weigh their demand for land against the national good. Anger and confusion grew.

While land reform has deep roots in the struggle and is seen as a means of re-ordering the national economy, giving rural workers dignity, the chance to participate in politics and in management, it has been implemented very cautiously by the FSLN. In order not to alienate investors, there has been a trade-off. No real change of land distribution except for the expropriation of Somoza family land, has occurred. No other land owners were evicted, only the land of those who fled the country was confiscated (and they have the right to reclaim it should they return to Nicaragua).

The reasons for the trade-off include:
- The incoming Government of Reconstruction was young and inexperienced. Earthquake and war had destroyed the economy. All they had, according to Comandante Tomas Borge, were titles, no desks, no files, let alone vehicles for travelling to remote rural areas. They simply could not have administered large state farms.
- The government had to provide the food and basic necessities which the people expected. With the U.S.A. refusing to sell Nicaragua food and embargoing Nicaraguan exports, the government had to encourage landowners to increase production of basic foods as well as export crops to earn desperately needed foreign exchange.
The FSLN Government of Reconstruction thus stressed productive use of the land. The measure was whether resources were used for the benefit of society as a whole rather than simply the eradication of private ownership or the imposition of a ceiling on the size of landholdings. The big growers are a strong lobby and they generally fulfilled the new government's production requirement so that their land was not expropriated. This policy did not satisfy land hungry peasants.

With the slogan "land to whoever works it" the Sandinistas mobilised thousands of peasants and rural workers in the last two years of the Somoza dictatorship. But the slogan was more of a rallying point for mobilisation for the national liberation struggle than a direct achievement for the people. On 20 July 1979 the Government of Reconstruction passed a 17-page decree which expropriated nearly 800,000 ha comprising some 2,000 farms and ranches which belonged to Somoza's extended family. This accounted for about 20% of the cultivated land. A further 18.7% is organised into co-operatives and 8.5% is owned by small-scale farmers (up to 31 ha each). This leaves 53.5% in the hands of medium- and large-scale individual landowners, five years after the revolution.

The 800,000 ha that were seized in July 1979 became the People's Property Area (APP). These now comprise the large state-owned farms on which farm labourers work for the state. At first the government found great difficulty in maintaining production levels. The major difference for workers on the land is that they are now employed all year round, rather than on a seasonal basis as they were before. Production dropped as there were more people on the state farms, producing at best, the same quantity. The working day was reduced from twelve to eight hours. Productivity also dropped because the only factor over which workers had control was the effort that they put into their work.

As a result of the new policy, wages and working conditions were improved. Minimum wages were introduced. Evictions were prohibited. Schools, health and day care facilities were built to serve the area, not only those who worked on the state farm. People were taught to read and write. For the first time the rural poor benefitted from social services.

The large state farms grow export crops while food production comes mainly from the smaller privately and co-operatively owned units. Permanent and seasonal workers on the old latifundias have been given permanent jobs on the farms on which they worked previously, but they have little experience in running such
enterprises. So worker participation in management, budgeting and subsidisation are major problems. Some of the more remote and marginal state farms have been converted into co-operatives for use by landless peasants because state farms have proved too much for the central ministry to handle.

Plots on state land that were not in use were loaned out. Out of harvest time private owners followed this example and let their seasonal workers use marginal land.

The main means of implementing the land reform is the promotion of co-operatives so that the peasants receive more land, credit and equipment. As they produce more, the peasants can keep and eat more of what they harvest. The government encourages co-operatives as part of the slow transformation to a better society. No force is used. People are helped to work together to try to limit exploitation and conflict based on differences in wealth. On the practical side, resources are pooled and used more economically; and participants in co-operatives defend their land against aggressors (the contras) more effectively than individual farmers. Thus co-operatives have become more than merely collective production units.

There are two kinds of co-operatives:
1. The CAS (Sandinista Agricultural Co-operatives) where land and the means of production are pooled and loans are given to the co-operative. Members are paid by the co-operatives.
2. The CCS (Credit and Services Co-operatives): Co-operatives of individually owned land where farmers come together to organise loans, seed, use of equipment and marketing.

The government set up PROCAMPO for technical assistance to small landowners and to the landless who have fewer skills and less experience in working with credit. Building trust is a slow process. Many peasants believe that if they pool their meagre resources to work co-operatively, the state will take their land. Small-scale farmers tend to see the benefits of co-operatives if they are loaned machinery rather than being expected to pool what little they have.

Co-operatives receive better terms for loans - 8% interest rates, while individuals have to pay 11% interest. Co-operatives are also promoted as a precondition for land being granted to the rural landless.

The land reform programme is more popular in some areas than others. For instance, when he realised he was losing the war, Somoza tried to co-opt certain campesinos to his side by giving
them some land. In these areas Association of Rural Workers (ATC) had more difficulty in mobilising support. Now these people are worried that their land will be expropriated for co-operative use.

In 1981 ATC forced a change in the land reform laws. Very little had been done to redistribute land after 1979 and the landless peasants and rural workers were angry. The government was hesitant both to alienate investors and to give more land to rural workers. (If the government redistributed land to all rural people, who would harvest the export crops or work on state farms? Already, without extensive redistribution, the government has to mobilise urban people to fulfil its guarantee of labour to the growers of export crops, because rural people want to work their own land.) So ATC organised marches and rallies to pressurise the government into preventing plantation owners from decapitalising their farms. The government conceded and introduced a law to control decapitalisation. Then they told the workers that the only way this law could be implemented was if the workers themselves policed it and reported any export or destruction of farm equipment. If landowners were found to have decapitalised and/or not used their land productively, their land was expropriated and reallocated.

In 1982 200,000 small farmers on 14% of Nicaragua's farm land produced 60% of the country's staple diet of corn and beans. This was the group that benefitted most from the new credit schemes. The FSLN recognized the importance of helping small farmers with credit for other reasons too:
- no longer having to import corn and beans meant more foreign exchange
- 'spilling credit in the countryside', as Jaime Wheelock put it, together with the literacy campaign fulfilled pre-liberation promises
- credit helped counter the loss of wages on cotton plantations with decreased production
- spreading credit was an organising tool

There were major problems in administering the credit including reaching the remote campesinos in time for planting, and then transporting the harvest to markets before it perished. Credit benefitted the slightly better-off peasants rather than the very poor who spent the cash on basic necessities such as shoes and kerosene.

Early in 1982 MIDINRA decentralised its operation with the regionalisation of the agrarian transformation programme. Each regional unit included some 200,000 people or about 30,000 families. There was a quicker response to local needs, more
popular participation in monitoring the state programme and more effective defence of cooperative land from attack by the contras.

Basic food production - corn, beans, rice and sorghum - has increased. Production of export crops has also increased. Consumption of basic foods has soared. Both the urban and rural poor are eating more. Infant mortality has been cut by a third. Food self-sufficiency is within reach in the future. Since 1979 the most dramatic improvement for any segment of Nicaraguan society has been experienced by the 70 000 campesino families who received credit and more than 40 000 previously landless rural families who have received land for producing food.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LAND OWNERSHIP IN NICARAGUA</th>
<th>1978</th>
<th>% of cultivated land</th>
<th>1984</th>
<th>% cult. manzanas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(thousands of manzanas*)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property sector</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Individuals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>more than 500Mzs</td>
<td>2 920,0</td>
<td>36,2</td>
<td>932,5</td>
<td>11,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200-499 Mzs</td>
<td>1 311,0</td>
<td>16,2</td>
<td>1 001,0</td>
<td>12,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-199 Mzs</td>
<td>2 431,0</td>
<td>30,1</td>
<td>2 391,0</td>
<td>29,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-49 Mzs</td>
<td>1 241,0</td>
<td>15,4</td>
<td>560,5</td>
<td>6,9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>less than 10 Mzs</td>
<td>170,0</td>
<td>2,1</td>
<td>127,0</td>
<td>1,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Co-operatives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credits &amp; Service</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>804,3</td>
<td>10,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Co-operatives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>699,3</td>
<td>8,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Agrarian Reform</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enterprises</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1 557,4</td>
<td>19,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>8 073,0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>8 073,0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1,6 manzanas = 1,0 hectare
(Source: MIDINRA-Ministry of Agricultural Development and Agrarian Reform quoted in PATRIA LIBRE No. 29, Mar/Apr 1984)

The land reform in Nicaragua has resulted in: (1) state farms with an emphasis on a social wage i.e. education, health, nutritional, housing and other facilities, and (2) the establishment of small farms for formally landless peasants and further development for small landowners. BUT redistribution
after liberation has been limited. The FSLN priority has been to maintain and increase production in the face of enormous odds. In the process conditions in the countryside have improved but the former agricultural structure remains basically intact. With the world recession and the national debt, the serious problems in Nicaraguan agriculture are unlikely to change in the foreseeable future. Whether a transformation from capitalist agriculture will evolve in the future depends on whether internal pressures for change or U.S. pressure for counter-revolution prevail.

Titles to land for formally landless peasants

29
BOLIVIA

Since the 1781 campesino uprising led by Tupac Amaru in Peru there have been a number of land movements throughout Latin America. The peasants resisted Spanish colonists' attempts to force them to offer their services freely on the silver mines. They also resisted their land being taken over. Tupac Katari, one of the leaders of such land movements in Bolivia, was brutally killed by the colonists to whom he had appealed on behalf of the indigenous people. Later the movements not only resisted these attempts, but also began to question Spanish authority and the legitimacy of the regime.

Even though the indigenous people fought in the wars of independence, when Bolivia became a republic the creoles came to power and the indigenous people were then subjected to local feudalism. In 1866 President Melgarecho even sold all communal Indian-owned land to create the new land-owning class. Indigenous people found themselves working as labour tenants on land which they no longer owned. While there was general submission, revolts did occur.

The 1932-6 Chaco war between Bolivia and Paraguay was the turning point. By then, Bolivia was controlled by an extremely powerful group of three families who owned most of the land, all the mines and most of the capital. In the war peasants, clerks and miners were required to fight side by side to defend Bolivia. Peasants were denied access to education - they were not allowed to learn to read or write. They were forbidden to learn Spanish, which kept them in isolation and ignorance. But the campesinos who were denied citizenship and the vote in their own country, were exposed to new ideas. People soon saw that this was a war over British versus U.S. interests in Latin America, rather than a matter of pride between Bolivia and Paraguay. They also learned to mix and discuss the situation with members of other classes.

Since 1900 the miners have influenced the campesinos and encouraged them to organise. This influence increased during the Chaco war and led to the formation of the first rural trade union in 1936. It was formed at Santa Clara hacienda, Cochabamba where a revolt in the previous year had been brutally repressed. The main demand of the union was for the right to education. Unions mushroomed and were violently repressed. The peasants resisted with folded-arms strikes, go-slow, hunger strikes and with stayaways in which they locked themselves into their houses. Hundreds were killed or put in concentration camps.

In May 1945 an Act was introduced which would abolish the pongaje (special chores - whole families had to serve the patron, loan
animals and sell their produce exclusively to the patron) or free-service slavery-type system, and landowners were instructed to build schools. But the leader of the movement was hanged in 1946 and the laws were never implemented. Political and organisational movements continued despite repression until the 1952 revolution when the MNR (Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario) came to power with a shaky alliance of peasant, miner and middle class support.

Before 1952 4.5% of landowners controlled 75% of the land while 80% of the rural population had access to only 1% of the land. Three quarters of the entire rural population only had usufruct property rights and the indigenous communities had access to 22% of the land.

The MNR introduced an extensive land-reform plan which allocated thousands of peasants their own small plots. According to Martinez the 1953 Agrarian Reform Law had six objectives:
- to provide land for landless peasants by expropriating the large haciendas
- to return indigenous communal lands
- to make non-remunerated peasants into landowners
- to stimulate agricultural production through small and medium-sized holdings and co-operatives
- to conserve natural resources
- to promote internal migration

The campesinos thought that these reforms catered for their interests and as a result peasant organisation declined from the mid 1950s. The National Land Reform Council claimed to have distributed 75 million acres to 500,000 families but this was misleading. Only the largest haciendas were expropriated with the peasants being given title to the plots they already farmed. According to de Janvry (p. 209) only 1,441 of the 11,246 properties eligible were partially or totally expropriated. Thousands of families remained landless. They are share-croppers and labour tenants enjoying no more than the temporary use of the land.

There was no organisational back-up for technical aid or credit facilities for small farmers because the MNR was not really concerned with peasants' interests. The actual aim was to industrialise Bolivia and this required a powerful middle class. Thus the MNR could not permit peasant organisation. It even managed to persuade the peasants to join the government and the military to defeat the mine workers unions, claiming that the unions were communist and if they came to power they would collectivise the land the peasants had just gained. The church
opposed the unions which, it maintained, were communist. The MNR claimed that stability to build up the country was required before a long term revolution could be considered.

Some land was handed over to the traditional communes to be used communally but because there was no technical aid, credit or help in marketing their produce, the land was cut up and worked individually. Thirty years later this is still causing severe pressure on the land and people have had to migrate to the towns and cities where they swell the ranks of the urban unemployed.

Agribusiness in cotton, sugar, cattle and lumber has been officially encouraged particularly in the eastern lowlands around Santa Cruz. Technical aid and credit have gone to agribusiness, mainly to Banzer's allies during his presidency between 1971 and 1978. Lack of aid has forced small farmers to become agricultural workers on the plantations. Another strategy the government used to overcome the shortage of labour facing agribusiness was colonisation projects: landless peasants were taken from the dry Altiplano and settled in the hot, wet lowlands. Not only do they have no experience of farming in jungle conditions, but the promised aid does not materialise. So they, like the local indigenous people, are forced to offer their labour to agribusiness. Instead of making non-remunerated peasants into landowners, the implementation of land reform has turned them into cheap wage labour.

Bolivian land reform has resulted in the reinforcement of the minifundio system. The average landholding has decreased in size from 6.4 ha to 3.4 ha per family since 1952. In the densely populated Altiplano more than half the peasant farms consist of only 1.5 ha. They have no technical aid or access to credit. The peasants who have land have been turned into small capitalist farmers who are unable to compete with agribusiness. According to informants while the cash crops produced for agribusiness are growing, production of food for the internal market is declining. There is a shortage of food at prices people can afford and the struggle for land is growing once more. According to de Janvry (p 216) between 1953 and 1974 in the reform sector the per capita increase in potato production was 2.3% and cereals only 0.5%; while in the non-reform sector, production of sugar cane rose 37.1% and of cottonseed 94.6% in the same period.

In the section on rural organisation, the campesino union is examined. As a result of the growth of this organisation among peasants the First Peasant Congress on Agrarian Reform was held in January 1984. Demands were adapted into a new manifesto which was to have been brought before the Bolivian Congress to
transform minifundios and latifundios into collective organisations. According to Martinez the proposed law contains six essential points:

1. The integration of minifundios into communal organisations and the creation of a peasant owned and operated Peasant Agricultural Corporation, which could provide essential services such as credit and technical assistance to the new land associations and promote rural development projects;

2. The elimination of the latifundio system that exploits cheap farm labour: 'business that continues exploiting the campesino through sharecropping, tenant farming, permanent debt, and other forms of rural bondage...will lose their right to the land.' The new law recommends substituting these capitalist enterprises with agricultural co-operatives that would have an equal or greater productive capacity, while maintaining worker control;

3. The use of farming methods that would strengthen communal organisations;

4. The systematic review of land concessions made by previous military governments, and the recognition of land rights for all peasants;

5. The elimination of marketing through intermediaries;

6. Full peasant participation in formulating and conducting national agricultural policy.

Although the land reform of the 1950s was a result of peasant struggle, the process has included counter-reform and corruption and the creation of minifundios in the countryside. This was because the peasants were not yet powerful enough to defend their gains in the face of the MNR. Now that an articulate peasant movement has emerged 30 years later, it is determined to introduce fundamental land reform through economic and political restructuring. But once more the general political climate might intervene to dilute and co-opt the campesino struggle.
"In 1968 a military government was formed to initiate a revolution which was meant 'to bring about a more just society, without privileges, free from all economic, social, political and cultural marginalisation and discrimination, which would make possible the complete and integral development of the human capacities of each person and secure an authentic national culture' (National Development Plan 1968-1975).

"The government attempted to destroy the economic and political power of the oligarchy. They initiated a quite radical programme of reforms:
- an agrarian reform, to break the back of 'landlordism' and give the land back to those who worked it;
- a labour reform, by forming working communities in which the workers were to participate fully in the ownership, profits and running of businesses;
- the presence and participation of the state in the production and distribution of goods and services. Many firms were nationalised.

"This 'revolution' began a process of looking for new ways and means of building 'a society of full participation for everyone, neither communist nor capitalist'.

"The second phase of this military government saw an end to many of these reforms and began a process of looking for more political stability and a solution to the economic crisis under the guidance of the International Monetary Fund. This was characterised by a return to a 'free' economy and the election of a civilian government. At present, this civilian government, under President Fernando Belaunde Terry, is struggling to salvage the economy of Peru, with inflation, which may rise to 70 or 80% this year, at the present rate - and a tragic devaluation of the money, again the insistence of the International Monetary Fund. What was attempted by the 'revolutionary' government has practically disappeared into history, and Peru is once again returning to a situation of injustice and marginalisation of the popular (majority) classes, and consciously or unconsciously creating structures that
defend and promote the interests of a minority. This responds to what looks like a new world economic order that is a concentration of wealth in a few hands, mostly multinational firms (300), with headquarters in the USA, the UK and Japan. This new economic order requires the services of a new political order - 'democracy', yes, but a strong, authoritarian government, 'guided' democracy - some form that safeguards and strengthens the authority of the state and 'national security'."

(Alban Quinn O.Carm, Bishop of Sicuani, Southern Peru, June 1982)

The agrarian reform introduced by the military in 1969 was not an immediate culmination of a long rural struggle but rather a political programme upon which the diverse elements within the government could agree to. There had been some organised rural resistance to latifundia but this was not spread nationwide. The coast was the most politically active yet complex area because economic conditions there were most developed in the lucrative sugar industry.

A brief review of the struggles and compromises may explain how Peru's land reform came to be introduced:

In the 1890s sugar prices were high. But by 1902 they had dropped by 50%. Wages fell and a new water law was introduced which meant that the peasants could no longer draw water for agricultural purposes. They were forced to sell their land to the three sugar barons who controlled the water. Without land and with poor wages, dissatisfaction grew. Then the introduction of German technicians to improve production methods resulted in the sugar disturbances of 1910. By 1912 protests exploded - sugar fields, grocery stores and recruiters' offices were burned. The military quelled a revolt and killed 150 workers at Casa Grande which was the biggest sugar estate owned by an immigrant German family. Casa Grande then opened its own stores and charged very low prices, thus undermining small commercial interests. The traders allied themselves with the old estate owners who had previously been taken over by Casa Grande where government loans supported the monopoly.

In 1917 when food prices increased and wages decreased, there were more disturbances and the Workers' Association for Mutual Help and Savings was started.

In 1921 when sugar prices dropped suddenly, one of the estates cut wages to pay for new imported equipment. A huge strike followed. Workers demanded their old wages, an 8 hour working day, the abolition of corporal punishment, the dissolution of
private estate police and the recognition of their union. Casa Grande bought out the other two estates which united the whole society against it. The agricultural proletariat, former small peasants and shopkeepers, the urban middle class and the landless aristocracy allied against Casa Grande. And in 1924 they formed Peru's first political mass movement, APRA (the American Popular Revolutionary Alliance)*, which won 90% of the votes in the 1931 election but was banned.

In 1932 the middle class of the northern port of Trujillo led a revolt of sugar workers which was suppressed. Five thousand protesters were executed. APRA continued to attract popular support. It won every presidential election over the next 30 years but was never permitted to take power.

Over the years APRA moved from illegality to acceptability in the most reactionary circles. The Casa Grande sugar barons influenced the party. The post war sugar booms occasioned by the Second World War, Korea in 1956 and Cuba in 1963 paid for improved mechanisation of the estates, and the spread of benefits along the coast. In the 1930s it had called for agrarian cooperatives. Over the years APRA changed radically. By the 1960s it opposed even the U.S. 'Alliance for Progress' conservative land reform proposals.

In June 1969 the military occupied, expropriated and handed Casa Grande over to its workers. Lindqvist suggests five possible reasons for the rapid military action on land reform:

1. Since the Trujillo revolt of 1932 APRA had been inimical to the military and so by introducing the very agrarian socialism APRA had proposed, APRA was undermined.

2. The military government was nationalist so it struck at the foreign controlled estates - it did not want a foreign role in the economy or in local politics.

3. The military attacked the centre of landowner power to clean up the cause of rural unrest.

* "APRA's five-point programme was: action against Yankee imperialism; the unity of Latin America; industrialisation and land reform; the internationalisation of the Panama Canal; and world solidarity of all people and oppressed classes. APRA later degenerated into a liberal, anticommunist, procapitalist reform party, and as such it continues to play a role in Peruvian politics." (Blanco, p 159)
4. The military wanted to modernise the economy and land reform was needed to alter the balance of power from estate owners to the state which would build up urban elites.

5. Land reform was one of the few common programmes upon which the different elements within the military could agree.

Within 24 hours of the proclamation of the 1969 agrarian reform law, sugar plantations on the north coast were expropriated. These became show pieces under the new system: working conditions improved for those few working on the highly mechanised sugar estates which were now run by the same technicians as before. But profits went to the government, instead of to the landowners.

Relations between agricultural workers and their bosses underwent little change. The workers were made partners in the co-operatives along with the technicians who were still in charge. They maintained the same attitudes and salaries. Some unions on the coast became less militant as conditions improved on the large coastal co-operatives or CAPs (Agrarian Production Cooperatives). Other unions have become more militant as disparities between landless rural workers and co-operative participants have grown. By defusing the workers' struggle on the land, it has in fact divided the broader working class struggle.

In the sierra the situation was different. The agrarian reform law which forbade ownership of agrarian land by those not directly engaged in working it, changed the pattern of ownership dramatically. Land belonging to absentee landowners was confiscated and distributed to those who worked it.

Peru had learned from Bolivia that fragmented plots do not give peasants a subsistence base in the long term. Therefore large-scale operations could not simply be divided between individual peasants. The state thus established companies called SAIS (Agrarian Societies for Social Interest). These were enterprises in which peasants had undivided shares. Essentially peasants became workers under central management even though they received shares in the profit rather than wages. This amounted to a difference in terminology rather than practice.

Apart from co-operatives being completely foreign to Quechua-speaking peasants, they were not satisfied with their small plots and only a stake in the company. They wanted title to their own land. They wanted year-round income, employment and security. The peasants found themselves working on land controlled by the co-operative, in exchange for the use of land – a kind of labour tenancy.
The co-operatives forced people with long-standing antagonisms to work together. It was difficult to resolve conflicts because the co-operatives were too big. Because the co-operatives were centralised and somewhat inflexible, productivity and quick decision making became more important than feedback and participation by the people.

During the land reform period (1969 to 1976) there was a shift in emphasis from 'land to the tiller' to land for production co-operatives. It was easier to demonstrate how to increase productivity than how to structure and manage a co-operative democratically when the majority of participants had no experience of controlling their own lives. Some graduate and skilled agrarian reform administrators were determined to maintain and expand pre-reform production levels at the expense of worker participation. Others were concerned with social change and in some areas they went to great lengths to explain agrarian reform. They recruited individual peasants to the co-operatives, as opposed to taking over whole estates and having ready-made participants. A radio programme was produced in Quechua for illiterates but the content of the programme was too complicated and confusing. At one stage 'brokers' were trained to bridge the cultural gap and interpret information from the government for the people. Brokers were in a very powerful position and could perpetuate the Peruvian political tradition of patrons and clients.

Changes in the class structure resulted from agrarian reform as the large latifundistas who had been expropriated moved to the cities and joined the new urban elite to become entrepreneurs. The richest of the large estate owners were foreign members of upper class families with investments in banking and mines. The smaller latifundistas had more time to decapitalise their farms as they were not expropriated overnight. Some took in sharecroppers on one to two year contracts. Share-croppers and smallholders bought their land slowly,* increasing the number of minifundistas. This process of cutting up small individual plots is known as "parcelacion". Many had to find part-time work for cash wages in order to buy food to supplement their diets.

There were some benefits for peasants who had suffered from feudal conditions such as the abolition of pongaje.

* The rural unions bitterly opposed having to buy the land that in many cases the people had been working for years. They felt that if the landowners needed to be compensated, the state should have paid them.
According to Lindqvist, 40% of the economically active rural population are smallholders in comunidades, mainly in the sierra, but some are on the coast and in the jungle. Less than 10% of the comunidades have benefitted from agrarian reform, and those only as attached to, rather than integrated into the co-operatives or SAIS. Part-time and seasonal labourers are excluded from agrarian reform benefits which heightened the contradictions between them and the beneficiaries as insiders and outsiders.

Another problem was one of labour: During sowing and harvesting co-operative participants had to work on communal land while they wanted to work their own plots. Seasonal wage labour has become necessary.

Basically the government wanted to transform the agricultural sector from a system of feudal landowners and patrons to modern economic agribusiness controlled by the national bourgeoisie, the state and industry. Instead of privately owned estates, the state would encourage capitalist agriculture, particularly on the coast. Where this large-scale plan would not solve the demand for land by the densely populated rural sierra, small capitalist agriculture was encouraged. The marginal sectors were allowed to collapse.*

In the meantime one result of 'parcelacion' was the rapid migration and urbanisation of thousands of landless peasants who could no longer subsist off the small plots. They received no technical aid or credit to help them survive in rural areas. Lack of credit and markets kept them dependent. They form the vast majority of the urban proletariat in the informal settlements surrounding Peru's cities and towns.

The Belaunde government was intent on keeping food as cheap as possible. It is thus not interested in intensive crops, extending seasons or appropriate technology which might help to employ surplus rural labour, unless it can be proved that low cost food for urban consumers (voters and international exporters) will be produced. Instead the government encourages more capital intensive, large-scale agribusiness, in the guise of co-

* Land reform in Peru could be compared to the agricultural projects of South Africa's bantustans eg Agricor in Bophuthatswana or Ciskor in Ciskei where a few relatively privileged farmers were brought in to projects which they were supposed to control while the vast majority was excluded and dispossessed of their land. The landless thus provide a vast labour reserve for those with land.
According to Lindqvist, completion of the agrarian reform programme will leave 70% of the agricultural population unaffected. In the four years of Belaunde's first presidency only 8.5% of the big estates were expropriated. They were mainly those that poor peasants had invaded. The landowners were thus compensated for a de facto situation. Land reform settlements were started in the desert where the state did not have to pay compensation or tamper with old families' properties.

Peru's agrarian reform has been characterised by the establishment of a new organisational system for agriculture, lending itself to speed and thoroughness of expropriation on the coast. The government tried to maintain capitalist control with socialist trimmings. Peruvian agrarian reform did not provide land and work for peasants or end their passivity and submissiveness. Because the agrarian reform was one of the military government's reforms and not a result of mass peasant struggle, there was no radical redistribution of land, mass mobilisation or progress to a representative democracy. The reforms were implemented where the pressure from organised peasants was greatest and where there was least resistance from landowners. The agrarian reform has left large co-operatives, highly mechanised on the coast, medium, more labour intensive co-operatives in the sierra, and 'parcels of plots' throughout the rural areas.

Unlike Bolivia, Peru is not dependent on agriculture for its exports. Peru's export economy is based on minerals and fishing, so it could afford to move away from the oppressive feudal land system. By introducing land reform Peru could modernise the economic system and stave off total revolution.
BRAZIL

The 1964 Land Statute clearly states the aims of the policy:

Land reform is considered to be a group of measures promoting better land distribution, through changes in occupation and usage, with the aim of implementing the principles of social justice and the raising of production.

- Article 1, paragraph 1 of Law 4504 of 30 November 1964

Land reform seeks to establish a system of relations between people, rural property and the use of land, capable of promoting social justice, progress, the welfare of the rural worker and the economic development of the country, with the gradual extinction of the unviable smallholding (minifundio) and the large estate (latifundio).

- Article 16 of Law 4504

Prior to the military coup of 1 April 1964, President Goulart had realised that growing rural organisation needed to be restrained and controlled. On the one hand he sought rural support by enfranchising illiterates and encouraging the peasant leagues and syndicates, and, on the other he introduced the Rural Labour Statute in 1963 to divide and control rural people into workers and employers. But this division did not reflect the reality: sharecroppers, tenant farmers and small producers who work on their own and other's land. They are both workers and owners of the means of production. Strikes were declared illegal. Arbitration councils were introduced and rural workers' demands were ignored. Goulart tried to nationalise large unused lands and oil refineries but the industrial bourgeoisie and the agrarian elite reacted to this. Additional opposition came from the middle class, worried about runaway inflation, which supported the military coup and a decade of oppression ensued. It was not until two years later that the military managed to control congress which passed the Land Statute in November 1964.

Land reform was seen as a means of transforming rural workers, labour tenants and sharecroppers into a middle class with small properties and co-operatives. It was intended to modernise the feudal plantation system in an attempt to ward off communism. (This was a concern throughout Latin America in the wake of the Cuban revolution.) This has not been a successful strategy. Land speculation remains rife and increasingly larger areas have been concentrated into fewer hands. Small producers are being squeezed out by local and foreign agribusiness.
The military government has done everything to avoid the implementation of this law. It has used land tax, colonisation and various forms of agricultural policy as substitutes for real land reform.

The pressures which forced the Land Statute through twenty years ago are building up again and a nationwide agrarian reform campaign has been launched by six organisations: CONTAG (National Confederation of Agricultural Workers), CPT (Pastoral Land Commission), the Indigenous Missionary Group, part of the National Conference of Bishops, the Brazilian Association of Agrarian Reform and IBASE (the Brazilian Institute for Social and Economic Analysis). The campaign exposes what is happening in rural areas. It is intended to educate the public and support those who have occupied unused land. Other aims of the campaign are:

- to express the support of Brazilian society for the immediate implementation of Agrarian Reform, reinforcing the struggle of rural workers' organisations
- to mobilise society as widely as possible around activities that promote the cause of Agrarian Reform
- to call on people, organisations and institutions which are committed to the construction of a more just society to act in support of Agrarian Reform"
(from "Land for those who till it" slide-tape show)

"On Brazilian television, government propaganda shows smiling families setting off into the setting sun, heading for new homes on land provided by the official land agency INCRA. "The biggest land reform programme in the world", the propaganda says.

General Danilo Venturini, the Minister for Land Affairs, recently told an international workshop on land tenure that seven million acres* had been confiscated for land reform and 730 000 land titles distributed since 1979." (The GUARDIAN 16 September 1984)

According to the Agricultural Censuses of 1960 and 1970 120 million hectares were expropriated. This could have given four million families plots of 30 ha each. Instead 100 million hectares were appropriated by establishments of more than 100 ha

* = 2 834 008 ha which would give 100 000 families fewer than 30 ha each while estimates in recent years have it that 10 of the 12 million rural families do not have their own land or have been driven off the land.
each and 20 million hectares by those under 100 ha each. Less
than 1% of rural families have been helped by land reform in the
past five years because of the deliberate failure to implement
the policy through expropriation and compensation with long term
government bonds.

Most of the land distributed by the state did not come from
privately owned plantations. It was state land far from main
roads and consumer markets where the government introduced
colonisation projects. These have proved both uneconomical and
unpopular with those resettled there.

In Brazil there are basic laws which control land ownership and
size but the government has chosen to ignore them. It claims that
thousands of hectares of land have been allocated to landless
peasants over the past years but most of that land has already
been occupied by landless people and all the land titles mean is
that the de facto situation has been recognised.

In 1970 the government set up INCRA (the National Institute for
Colonisation and Agrarian Reform) to replace three previous
institutions which were meant to implement agrarian reform. INCRA
channelled its efforts into colonisation along the Transamazon
Highway and ignored agrarian reform.

In 1971 PROTERRA was established to redistribute land. It
reintroduced cash compensation for expropriation rather than the
long term government bonds which were intended to discourage
speculation. PROTERRA's aims included the stimulation of agro-
industry.

In 1976 the National Security Council passed resolutions which
contained the most far-reaching breaches of land reform thus far.
Previously up to 100 ha could be expropriated provided family
labour brought the land into production. In 1976 this limit was
extended to 72 000 ha. This land was obviously not intended for
small producers, but for agribusiness. In 1979 land tax
amendments allowed landowners to undervalue their land and
overvalue their produce. In this way they could obviate
expropriation.

Directly contrary to the spirit of agrarian reform, the
government introduced various incentives which encourage the
concentration of large tracts of land in national and
transnational agro-industry. Foreign companies such as Volkswagen
or Toshiba have the choice of paying 50% company tax, or of
investing the 50% in land in the Amazon area. They can obtain
central bank loans for an equal amount, or more, than the tax paid. With inflation running over 200% p.a. and bank interest rates of only 80%, they cannot lose on this investment. For example, one of Volkswagen's five or six farms of 650 000 ha cost the company nothing - part of the price was paid instead of tax and the rest was a bank loan at interest less than the rate of inflation.

One of the results of the government's refusal to implement agrarian reform, by building agro-industry and dividing and controlling the rural poor, is that the difference between the haves and the have-nots has increased dramatically since 1964. Particularly in the rural areas, the richest 5% increased its share of GDP from 23.7% to 44.2% and the poorest 50% decreased its share from 22.4% to 14.9% between 1970 and 1980 (CONTAG, etc, p 12).

According to the Agricultural Censuses incentives and subsidies have increased average landholding size from 60.0 ha in 1970 to 64.9 ha in 1975 and to 71.1 ha in 1980. Land has been taken away from small producers and concentrated:

- 1950: 34.4% of land holdings were smaller than 10 ha (average 4.4 ha)
- 1980: 50.3% of land holdings were smaller than 10 ha (average 3.45 ha)
- 1950: 1,611 landholdings (more than 45 million ha) were larger than 10 000 ha (average size 28 000 ha)
- 1980: 2,410 landholdings (63.5 million ha) were larger than 10 000 ha (average size 26 500 ha)

Millions of people have been forced off the land. As in South Africa, there are various categories of removals. One affected migrant workers. According to CONTAG etc there were 18 million recently urbanised people dispossessed of land in 1960 and 24 million ten years later. By the 1980s there were an estimated 40 million such people. The small, agricultural producers have suffered the most in losing their land. Forty years ago these small-holders were respected as pioneers, known as 'posseiros'. Although they did not necessarily have title to the land they have been dispossessed and uprooted by land grabbers or 'grileiros' who claim they have title and frequently fabricate faded documents to prove ownership. Forced off the land, many posseiros migrate to the shanty-towns of the cities to join the ranks of the unemployed where they are reduced to violence and crime in order to survive. Others stay in the rural areas and become bolas frias daily workers (literally 'cold lunch' workers because they have no facilities to prepare the customary hot midday meal). (The urban reserve army transported daily to the countryside is also known as Bolas frias.)
Another group affected by the concentration of landholding is the indigenous population. In 1973 the Indian Statute provided for "relocation of the Indians out of their traditional tribal territories for reasons of national security and development." (Davis, p 160) This Statute also enabled the government to lease their land for mineral, timber and agricultural use. The indigenous people either lose their land to ranchers producing meat for export or to plantations growing export cash crops. They try to resist expropriation by killing cattle or blocking trucks but they cannot beat the grileiros' guns. The survival of the indigenous people is severely threatened. In the Amazon Basin, in 1970 alone, 300 000 ha of virgin forest was cleared (Davis p 145). Landless rural workers are recruited and taken to remote areas, promised good salaries, free medical attention and free transport. On arrival they find appalling living and working conditions; they have to pay for their own transport and tools. Once they have cleared an area, they become redundant.

Because the whole ecosystem has been disrupted by deforestation and monoculture, drought is a major problem, particularly in the North-east. This was brought about by agro-industry. Small farmers are forced to migrate because they cannot survive. Drought has triggered off further crises because the government has embarked on large projects including building dams which have displaced an estimated 2.5 million people (Cadernos Terragente, p 2) Brazilian rural organisations have denounced as anti-social the relocation of people for the building of dams and large projects which benefit agribusiness alone. They demand fair compensation and better facilities in the places to which they have to move.

Agricultural development in Brazil thus is hampered by agribusiness. The 1975 Agricultural Census indicated that although landholdings of over 500 ha comprise 57% of Brazil's cultivated area and those under 100 ha constitute only 20%, the latter produce 89% of the cassava, 83% of the dry beans, 78% of the potatoes, 72% of the maize, 60% of the coffee, 55% of the soya and 49% of the rice. Cline noted that the intensity of land use declines as farm size rises. This decline is not caused primarily by declining land quality. Therefore redistribution of land from large farms to small farmers and landless workers would increase land utilisation and therefore agricultural production.

According to CONTAG, family landholdings of fewer than 10ha grow 50% more than the average size, and 200% more than the large landholdings of 10 000ha. Landless rural people are ignored by government. Even minimum wage legislation is not implemented. According to CPT in 1980 66.4% of those working in rural areas
received wages below the minimum salary.

Desperation drives people to occupy unused land and plant food. In the period August to December 1981 there were 142 separate clashes over land-ownership and 16 people were killed. From January to December 1983 the number of clashes had risen to 315 involving 38,507 families (217,171 people) and 4,553,273 ha. In the 1980s alone 200 people, including seven lawyers, have been killed in land clashes. Landowners employ their own gun squads to intimidate and control people while the police do little to prevent this. They may investigate for a short time until the dust has settled. In 1985 a well-known lawyer, the co-ordinator of a human rights and legal aid centre in the north-east state of Paraíba, was threatened with assassination by hired armed thugs. At the time of writing the local communities and international human rights organisations were calling for official protection for human rights workers. In the areas where foreign investment is important, the authorities control the area carefully because investors require conflict-free zones. Repression occurs therefore in areas such as the colonisation projects where it is particularly severe to ensure a docile exploitable labour force.

Now that land in the far west has been appropriated for agribusiness there is little option for those displaced from land nearer urban centres. They can no longer move 'west'. There is no alternative to the occupation of unused land which sometimes belongs to speculators, who usually react violently to their presence.

Government policy encourages mechanisation and technical inputs to increase production for export crops, such as cereal crops for Japan - parts of Brazil are known as 'Japan's back garden'. This policy boosts sales of Brazilian machinery, pesticides and fertiliser.

According to the campaign document on agrarian reform, in order to feed the urban population efficiently, it is crucial not to interrupt production and productivity of basic food. If a highly mechanised farm produces more than the average amount for that region, as long as the rights of workers are respected and the land is treated well, the farm should not be expropriated.

Delays in the implementation of the 1964 Land Statute have impoverished the rural masses and amount to counter-reform. The state opposed the campaign demanding the implementation of the existing law because this conflicts with its interests and those of agribusiness. Agrarian reform will not be handed out as a gift from the government. It will be won through the mobilisation and
organisation of rural workers together with landless and small producers. Agrarian reform would raise rural living standards and would bring idle land being held by speculators into production of food and raw materials which would increase both internal and international trade. Further it would extend democracy and political participation to the rural areas through the organisation of co-operatives, credit and technical assistance. Agrarian reform would have to restructure agro-economic policies to improve wages and living conditions for rural workers and the prices of their products for small producers.

Only when the country is mobilised and civilian democracy exists can real agrarian reform be implemented. Meanwhile the organisers of the campaign are calling for the whole of Brazilian society to rally round the call for agrarian reform to further the struggle and organisation of rural workers.
RURAL ORGANISATION

Some of the different forms of rural organisation found in Latin America will be examined in their historical context. In some cases their role has changed over the years, e.g. APRA in Peru, the advent of ATC and UNAG in Nicaragua and CPT in Brazil. Two of the main institutions discussed will be rural trade unions and the church in rural areas. The role of women's groups, co-operatives, health and literacy groups, indigenous awareness groups, such as MITKA in Bolivia, and the black consciousness movement in Brazil will also be mentioned.

Another aspect to which attention is given is the difference between organisations which represent wage workers as opposed to (small) landowners, and their different problems including wages and working conditions for the former and marketing of produce in the case of the latter.

NICARAGUA

In 1976 Agricultural Workers' Committees were started among the coffee workers in the Carazo and Masaya regions. Their initial demands for better wages and working conditions soon gave way to political demands when the landowners called in the National Guard (notorious for its methods of torture, murder and violence) to control dissidents. The Workers' Committees spread to the cotton and sugar plantations. The workers became very militant.

In 1977 the ATC (Association of Rural Workers) was formed. During the harvest when seasonal workers were employed and the bosses were vulnerable to pressure, ATC organised rallies to denounce National Guard repression and to demand better wages and living conditions. Members barricaded roads and cut communication lines during a national strike. In March 1978 ATC participated in a national march and hunger strike together with student and women's groups.

ATC was well organised. It published a newspaper 'El Machete' which remains its mouthpiece. ATC became one of the two mass organisations (with AMPROC, the women's organisation) in the FSLN. ATC concentrated on land issues and mobilised thousands of people to fight Somoza. Currently ATC is strongest where Somoza did not manage to co-opt peasants by giving them small pockets of land. These co-opted peasants have received the same health care and services as all other people. But these benefits have been granted from above; they are not a result of struggle as the recipients are thus less likely to defend these gains.
ATC began to organise those peasants who had been forced off their land by sugar barons. These peasants worked mainly as migrants seasonally on the plantations. They earned low cash wages for six months of the year and for the rest they were hungry and unemployed. ATC mobilised these workers in their home bases, promising them land, capital and credit after liberation.

Some ATC recruits occupied land, particularly around Esteli and Managua. Others took over land, started co-operatives and planted food rather than cotton to feed people in the liberated areas. ATC organised sabotage incidents, for example, highjacking lorries with food and burning cash crops such as cotton. Migrant workers were particularly attracted to ATC as they had no land, little work and no place to live. Today about 90% of the rural labour force is still migrant. These people do not want to work on the large farms (whether state or privately owned) because they are eligible for land of their own.

ATC describes itself as a mass-based Sandinista organisation of rural workers. It is not a government organisation, nor dependent on the government. It is not a political party and it is separate from the agrarian reform administration. ATC sees itself as an organisation of the masses which directly represents rural workers' interests.

ATC plays a major role in conscientising, organising and promoting land reform in the rural areas. According to the 1979 proceedings of the ATC National Assembly, its objectives are to:

a. deepen development of agrarian reform
b. deepen links with the FSLN
c. propagate commitment to the defence and promotion of values and national interests of the Nicaraguan working class
d. affirm that imperialism is the traditional enemy of the people
e. develop the alliance between workers and peasants
f. strengthen organisation and extend bases in the country
g. deepen class consciousness of rural workers to expand their understanding of objectives and strategies of the Sandinista revolution
h. raise agricultural production in general, and especially on state farms - an important strategy for agrarian reform
i. guard against and quash the counter-revolution
j. co-operate with state structures for social benefits and to raise cultural, health and literacy levels

In 1981 UNAG, the national union of small producers, was established as a separate organisation from the ATC because the interests of rural wage workers in ATC were different from those
of the small peasant farmers. While ATC and UNAG work closely, they no longer serve the same immediate groups. UNAG members mainly grow basic grains and vegetables for internal consumption, while export crops are grown by the large state and privately owned estates.

ATC has organised farm workers. They earn a living and enjoy health, education and other services. They are literate and involve themselves in national campaigns. But many of their more powerful leaders are fighting the contras, so production and organisation at home suffers.

One example of limited consciousness, is the traditional attitude to women. Male farm workers considered that female workers should be paid less and do different jobs from men such as working in the kitchens, not driving tractors. In Nicaragua because women were only mobilised to support the liberation struggle, they did not demand that their own issues be incorporated into the struggle. They organised as mothers and soldiers. They rallied against the National Guard. They kept 'safe houses' for the guerilla fighters. Today they find their position has changed little since the fall of Somoza. While there are more women in the army and there are more child care facilities, machismo has not changed. Until women organise themselves against machismo, it will continue to flourish at their expense.

The church in Nicaragua is divided in its support of the liberation. An examination of the history of CEPA (Centro Estudio y Promocion Agricultura) illustrates the contradictions in the churches' response to the revolution.

CEPA was established in 1967 by middle class rural leaders. From 1973 to 1977 they invited Jesuits to run workshops and training courses. The lay ministers produced were called 'Delegates of God'. By then the Bishops of Nicaragua had formalised rural lay ministers for the Catholic Church. They produced popular educational material on land tenure and poverty which was condemned by the church as too radical. In 1976 the Jesuits withdrew from El Salvador because one of their priests was killed. In 1977 the Bishops' Conference withdrew its support of CEPA. So the Jesuits also withdrew from Nicaragua. CEPA was left to the laity. The Archbishop even persuaded the wealthy woman who had donated land and buildings to CEPA, to withdraw her gift. So in 1977 and 1978 CEPA went underground.

In 1978 CEPA even stopped holding 'spiritual retreats' or workshops when Somoza's troops bombed them. CEPA began to work with the FSLN and set up a hospital. At that point there were
only four members of CEPA left: an agronomist who was killed in 1979, someone currently working elsewhere, Salvador Mayorga (now Director of Agrarian Reform) and Ricardo Zuniga who rebuilt CEPA and is the present Director.

Today CEPA consists of a group of Christians who work in teams to conscientise and train people technically in rural areas. Among its projects is a cultural campesino movement where they work with popular theatre, music, art and poetry (with those who learned to read and write during the literacy campaign). There are 45 theatre groups with nine or ten promoters who move from village to village studying the situation. Then they produce a play to raise the issues observed in the area and this leads to community discussion.

CEPA also works with various government ministries helping with popular education and training courses. For example, CEPA helped devise a programme on racism for the Atlantic Coast* where they explained how exploiters try to keep people divided by talking of black and white people instead of dividing them into oppressed and oppressors. CEPA is a resource centre for other organisations as well as running its own programmes.

One of the difficulties with organising in rural areas is the growth of the evangelical sects since 1979. They discourage political participation. It requires much personal and political awareness to counter such arguments. Their followers are potential recruits for the counter-revolution.

Another difficulty in rural organisation is the left-wing attack on the ATC for its role in diluting workers' demands for higher wages, nationalisation of the land and complete control over production. The ultra-left party Frente Obrero organises workers to confront the state at each available opportunity. But the ATC and the FSLN explain the slow transformation of the political economy to workers. Previously they were ignorant of such factors.

* The FSLN has been criticised for moving 8,000 Miskito 'Indians' from the northern border with Honduras for security reasons. Ms J Kirkpatrick, then U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, accused the Nicaraguan government of moving 250,000 Miskitos whereas there are only 62,000 in existence. The FSLN have admitted to handling the situation badly (because of a long history of Spanish-speaking neglect and poor understanding of eastern Nicaragua). They are trying to integrate the Miskitos and others into the political and economic life of the country by promoting co-operatives, the literacy campaign and the provision of education and health facilities.
as production costs, inflation and the threatened invasion by the U.S.A. Because the ATC has had grassroots support over the intensive period of struggle, rural workers tend to trust it. The FSLN realises that unless this mobilised constituency makes gains from the revolution, at some point it will reorganise to fight for its own interests.

With the popular insurrection of 9 April 1952 the Bolivian people changed the situation in their country. Rural mobilisation forced the government to give 'land to those who work it' in terms of the decree signed on 2 August 1953 in front of 100,000 peasants.
BOLIVIA

As was mentioned, the Chaco War (1932-6) was the watershed for the rural struggle. It proved Bolivians could work together and learn from each other. Peasants emerged with a new consciousness and determination to join other classes in wresting power from the tin mineowners and large landowners.

When universal franchise was introduced after the 1952 revolution in which the MNR took power, 70% of the Bolivian electorate was rural. To survive the MNR desperately needed rural support. It had to introduce land reform rapidly to satisfy militant peasant demands. To prevent mass peasant mobilisation the MNR distributed individual plots rather than collective units. It gave each family its own individual stake in the land and thereby prevented solidarity with the landless or with the wage workers on the mines and in the cities. The MNR spent little on rural education and today illiteracy in the countryside is still 70-80%. The MNR attempted to keep the campesinos isolated yet content with small land holdings. The middle class section of the MNR was determined to dominate, to override peasant interests and change Bolivia into a modern capitalist state.

In the 1950s and 1960s the MNR successfully co-opted the peasants in an alliance against the working class, but that is no longer possible. Peasants now perceive the 1953 land reform as at best a partial solution only. In reality it has worked against their interests. Presently, thirty years later, the situation is critical - thousands of uneducated and unskilled people are forced to migrate in search of work as they can no longer live off the highly fragmented plots. They have no option but to join the unemployed and exploited workers on the mines or in the towns. The peasants' movement required in the 1950s to complete the 1952 revolution has emerged in the 1970s. The same peasants who maintained stability for the conservative and military governments in the past, have become the main allies of the working class in the 1980s.

The COB is the powerful federation of Bolivian trade unions. Although it operates virtually as the official opposition, it is not a political party but a united front of workers and the unemployed, both urban and rural. The CSUTCB (Confederacion Sindical Unica de Trabajadores Campesino de Bolivía), the peasant organisation and Bartolina Sisa (the peasant women's organisation named after Tupac Katari's wife) are affiliated to the COB. They are not strong members both for historical reasons and because their own organisation needs to be strengthened. But today peasants are united with workers, for the first time in Bolivian
history. When a general strike is called, as it often is in Bolivia, peasant support is crucial.

Superficially workers and peasants have conflicts of interests: the peasants want the highest prices possible for the food they produce; the workers want to pay the lowest prices possible. The government tries to keep wages down (to attract foreign investment) and food prices too, maintaining that they do not have the funds to subsidise food. Peasants and workers together find themselves victims of the same economic system.

The campesinos have had to fight to join the COB and align themselves with the workers. The unions believed that they were the vanguard of social change and they felt that in their alliance with the military in the recent past the peasants had betrayed the workers. The unions also felt that the peasants were theoretically and organisationally incapable of joining the working class struggle. While the campesino union is reported to be bureaucratic and slow, it has proved itself quite capable of mass mobilisation. When, for example, the COB calls general strikes Bolivia comes to a standstill. The campesinos set up road blocks and no food or fuel is allowed through to the urban areas. Peasants can hold the cities to ransom by not delivering food, but thus far the government has not intervened in the peasant/worker alliance. The campesino union was formed under the progressive military leadership of the 1971 coup. It resisted the 1979 coup strongly and survived subsequent military repression. The CSUTCB is different from the rural unions of the mid-1930s to 1940s. Affiliated to the COB, it sees its role as strengthening the campesino movement in particular and the broad liberation movement in general. The struggle is based on re-owning the land, but it has joined the miners and working class in demanding political power in Bolivia.

The CSUTCB claims a membership of 3 million. It is organised around the land reform units of 'pueblos' (more concentrated villages) and 'comunidades' (more dispersed settlements). The pueblos are further divided into neighbourhoods. Pueblos and comunidades form cantons, then sub-centrals then provincial units: they in turn form the nine departmental units or federations, which comprise the confederation, the CSUTCB which is affiliated to the COB, at which point the peasants are formally linked to the working class.

The campesino unions are organised in this geographical structure to include both landed and landless. They deal with all issues such as land, credit, marketing and community aspects including education and health. Everyone in a community is a member of a
union; their problems, rather than a boss, unite them. The CSUTCB's task is very difficult because its membership spans different levels of education, party political affiliation and class consciousness. The MNR encouraged a petty bourgeois consciousness among the peasants, while reality for most landless, unemployed oscillating migrants attracts them to working class consciousness. The CSUTCB has to deal with a wide range of issues from the barter system to culture, to explanations of inflation, agribusiness and the debt to the International Monetary Fund. It educates its membership on all issues in order to mobilise the peasants to change Bolivian society.

Some campesinos form specific federations for sectors with special problems eg land owning peasants, agricultural wage workers on sugar, rice and cotton plantations, and women.

Like South Africa, there are a number of divisions in Bolivian society: Urban/rural, rich/poor, indigenous/'white'. Most of the rural people are poor and not 'white', they are uneducated and suffer discrimination. A new class known as the 'sandwich' class of 'cholos', or urbanising indigenous people, is emerging. They are not workers or members of the middle class, they have urban capitalist aspirations, yet they encounter race discrimination and unemployment. Race discrimination is not confined to South Africa. Some people in Bolivia change their names in an attempt to be selected for university entrance or to apply for a licence for a small business. In April 1984 the president of the women's campesino movement was told to leave a La Paz restaurant because she looked too 'indigenous'.

The majority of Bolivians speak Aymara or Quechua and live in the rural areas. There are two approaches to organising them:

1. MITKA (Movimiento Indio Tupac Katari) is an indigenous consciousness group. It aims to transform Bolivia into an Indian country under majority rule. It has one or two representatives in the Bolivian Congress. It is split into a number of tendencies.

2. CSUTCB and the COB try to integrate self-confidence and a cultural revitalisation with class consciousness, by building and adapting values from the ancient culture. For example, the unions stress the similarity of the Aymara commandments 'ama sua'(do not steal), 'ama bella'(do not kill) and 'ama llulla'(do not lie) and the Christian commandments. They try to show the campesinos how racism, inferiority complexes and exploitation interact to reinforce control and maintain oppression.
The CSUTCB is stronger in the valleys, where people speak Quechua, than on the Altiplano where the Aymara-speaking people were not subjugated to the same extent. Quechua traditional community structures were broken by the colonists and people were forced to accept new ways. Today Aymara people have more difficulty adapting to new structures. The union tries to focus on particular issues not only to draw them in, but also to link them to a broader vision - an alternative democratic society.

Women are organised in the campesino federation called Bartolina Sisa. At first they were organised in mothers' clubs but in 1980 they formed their own federation - 'not a feminist but a class movement', as they described it. They see it as very important to have women in the struggle. Women are crucial in rural production and, of course, in the home. Women's organisations have mushroomed since the formation of Bartolina Sisa. Traditionally women participate better in meetings with other women, but some of these organisations have chosen to be part of what were formally men's organisations. The women want to be active. It is no longer strange to see a woman stand up and address a meeting. In fact, they participate vigorously. They say they are beginning to realise how the system oppresses them, as rural women in capitalist society.

The church in Bolivia is involved in rural organisation. The Methodist church, for example, gives money and administrative aid to the CSUTCB. Eighty percent of Bolivian Methodists are peasants so church members are involved in the road-blocks when there is a general strike, for instance. These actions have determined the church's stand - not WHETHER but HOW to be involved in bringing about social change. The Methodist Church is run like a labour federation with similar democratic structures. So it is not an unusual target for repression. After the 1980 right-wing coup a quarter of the ministers were either in jail or in exile. While some denominations are involved in more technical aid in the rural areas, the Methodist church is more politically orientated. It was even asked to write material for the leadership training courses for the campesino union. It refused to provide the content of the courses but agreed to work closely with the union.

In conclusion, the 1953 land reform programme freed the peasants from traditional feudal social relations. For the first time the majority of Bolivians participated in national life. They won universal franchise and education but they gained too little land. For the first time since 1953 peasants at the grassroots level have had a chance to discuss land reform. This debate has led to the new law currently before Congress. It has politicised peasants. Whether it is implemented or not, it will have enormous
Methods of Struggle

The history of the rural movements show that there are many methods of struggle. Yes, because sometimes there are particular ways of gaining respect for our rights. - What methods of struggle have we recorded? - Rebellions, folded arm strike(s), go slow(s), traffic blockade(s), hunger strike(s)

History shows us what special conditions for success or failure of struggles there are; for this we must discuss democracy before we examine methods of struggle. (extract from Khana booklet; Bolivia)
Rural organisation has a chequered history and profile in Peru:

- the political parties offer the rural masses little

- the guerrilla movement, Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path), at best confuses and at worst massacres rural people

- the campesino unions have problems of periods of co-option, division and confusion in direction, particularly since 1968, but they have extensive grassroots support

- the church and agencies contribute to social change through their work and resources

The history of APRA, the political party with the longest history in the rural areas, was outlined in the land reform section. From the most radical party, 50 years later, APRA turned more conservative. Recently it has changed again in a more populist direction and has won overall political power.

In the 1970s the left-wing military influenced the urban working class to organise into base communities in their neighbourhoods. Together these neighbourhoods elected left-wing municipal councils in Lima and Cuzco. And in the 1980s IU (Izquierda Unida or United Left) was formed to unite all left-wing parties. But the municipal councils finance from the central government is too limited to implement their programmes. IU support does not extend to the rural areas. As a result of years of government repression the left is weak and divided. Therefore the 1985 general elections did not return an IU government.

The rural based guerilla movement Sendero Luminoso follows the 1928 ideology of the Peruvian Socialist Party, Mariategui. Sendero Luminoso derives from the 1964 division of the Communist Party between the Peking and the Moscow factions. Two groups formed: the bigger Patria Rojo (Red Fatherland) in which teachers predominated, and Bandera Roja (Red Flag) with more influence among farmers. Patria Rojo affiliated to IU.

In 1974 one faction of Bandera Rojo became Sendero Luminoso under the leadership of Abimael Guzman in the Ayacucho region of Southern Peru. By 1982 the movement was still small and regionally based. It comprised students and intellectuals, the children of poor farmers from the region who had gone to study. Sendero Luminoso has been described as a more messianic than leftist movement.
Meanwhile the political parties on the left, including IU, have problems with Sendero Luminoso. They may admire them for their commitment to their cause and denounce government brutality against them, but the political parties condemn Sendero's political analysis and methods of resistance. Sendero defines the struggle as rural. They have little understanding of or relationship with urban areas and organisations. Their guerrilla fighters are indiscriminate: villages are destroyed and they once even killed a team of left-wing journalists.

It seems that the confusion on the left, the repressive political/military situation and the deteriorating economy may feed Sendero Luminoso with young, rural recruits.

Having experienced hacienda control, state enterprises and latterly 'parcelacion' of land, it is unlikely that the campesino would become counter-revolutionary. There is little danger of a large-scale takeover by the patrons, unless a fascist military dictatorship comes to power. The rural people's enemy has shifted from the patron to the agricultural bureaucrat and the co-operative beneficiary. One of the weaknesses of agrarian reform is that it does not affect agro-industrial production: plot owners have to sell their products to the big owners. With the new left-wing municipalities in Lima and Cuzco, markets could be created. A new alliance between plot holders, excluded from the agrarian reform, and the urban poor could be forged.

Rural organisation is controlled by the state. Mass mobilisation is actively discouraged and often broken. But government action like the killing of Tarapoto farmers in order to break the blockades of those who wanted higher prices for their maize, radicalises the rural population.

The most established rural union is the CCP (Confederacion Campesina del Peru) which was founded in 1947. Because it was too radical for the government, they created the CNA (Confederacion Nacional Agraria) from the top down in 1972. CNA was intended to strengthen government control over campesinos and reduce the power of the leftist CCP. But from mid-1976 even CNA opposed government appropriation of land. When the government tried to abolish its own creation, CNA joined CCP in CUNA (Congreso Unitario Nacional Agrario).

To give an indication of the level of awareness and debate in the CCP the report of one of the committees of the VI Congress of CCP in July 1982 attended by 65 delegates, the 'Commission on Women and Youth', is presented here. This was one of twenty committees.
Others were on children, culture, religion, the state and the economic plan, state enterprises and organisation, pricing, marketing and production of various products. No more recent assessment of CCP work could be found and contact with the organisation was unfortunately not made due to language problems. The 'Commission on Women and Youth' made the following recommendations:

"1. Integrate women into the base, not only on women's issues, but all rural concerns
2. Integrate the new base organisations - the coast, mountains and jungle
3. Build a united working class in the city and country
4. Promote equal working conditions for men and women, urban and rural
5. Pressurise for a law for rural women for social rights: social security, pension on retirement, infant and maternity attention, better education, adult education centres
6. Form an organisation for rural women to advance politicisation and conscientisation and to direct the demands of their struggle. This is a priority for CCP - 40% of budgeted resources to go to organising better development and organisation of rural women.
7. Call a convention of campesina women of Peru for united analysis and the understanding of global alternatives
8. Form a Popular Women's Front to advance the struggle of all women workers against oppression and exploitation
9. Campaign for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to apply to rural women
10. Position women in the economic, social, political and cultural context, and of oppression and exploitation, so that women would be represented (as they constitute 50% of the population) and to revive the memory of the rural women martyrs."

A number of church and independent support networks are available for rural organisations in Peru. An example in Cuzco is a Centre called after Bartolome de las Casas which is attached to the Collegio Andino. The Centre researches and publishes the history
and possibilities of development of the region. It introduces university students and professionals to basic issues related to agricultural and urban development, planning, organisation and structures. The Centre also serves popular organisations and trade unions with courses, workshops and publications.

The most recent project is a centre for rural organisations: the Casa Campesina. This is intended to create a base for rural people in a provincial capital, Cuzco, to represent their collective interests, to let them share experiences, to provide counselling and legal aid. The Casa will be a venue for people from different regions and organisations to meet. This should help support and build rural organisations and trade unions. As in other places, the Casa had difficulty in persuading lawyers to give their services.

**DEMOCRACIA SINDICAL**

**DISCIPLINA SINDICAL**

UNION DEMOCRACY
Listen to & respect the opinions of others
Accept criticism Delegates not autocrats Accountability to the base

UNION DISCIPLINE
All accept what the union agrees Delegates speak for the union We cannot divide our organisations only our wishes

If we do not agree, we discuss it in the union
"One stalk of a cane is nothing, but together they make a field"
- FETAPE (Federation of Agricultural Workers in the state of Pernambuco)

The eviction of tenants by landowners who were no longer willing to exchange plots of their land for rent and labour in the 1950s led to the formation of the first rural organisation. Peasants organised benefit societies in which they collected small sums of money to help their members when evictions occurred. This led to fundraising to employ schoolteachers and the formation of co-operatives to buy seed, tools and manure. In those early days there was no attempt to discuss structural issues such as agrarian reform or unfair labour practices. The members were concerned with their living and working conditions only.

As was the case in South Africa, it is still common and functional for both small landowners and landless peasants to enter agreements with landowners for use of their land in exchange for a share in the crop or free labour. Landowners do not have to lay out cash for wages and sharecroppers or labour tenants do not have to pay consistently high rent. In good years, the landowner gets a larger share of the crop, in poor years, a smaller share. And the price of workers' labour need not increase if they did not have to buy food or pay rent. Even on the larger plantations many workers have some access to plots. So when people in Brazil were denied access to land, they became desperate and began to organise peasant leagues.

Forman has identified two forms of rural organisation:

Firstly, peasant leagues in which politicians and student organisers worked with smallholders, peasant farmers and sharecroppers to pressurise redistribution of land. Francisco Julião, a populist leader of the leagues, saw peasants with some access to land as the sector of the rural population with most potential for mobilisation. The leagues met weekly at market places. There they organised for legal and medical benefits. They were kept in touch with each other by troubadors who travelled from farm to farm. While the leagues had radical potential, their leadership was charismatic and rather paternalistic. Their motto was 'within the law, or by force'.

Secondly there were the rural syndicates run by the Roman Catholic Church, partly to counter secularisation of the countryside but mainly to work with rural landless workers. The syndicates were highly centralised and reflected enlightened
clerical ideas. Issues addressed were better wages, extension of labour legislation to rural workers, legal aid, education and medical and burial funds. Within the syndicates there were differences of opinion. Some priests argued that the church had such historical links with landowners that it would be impossible to change that image quickly. It would need more extensive grassroots organisation to address basic contradictions within the church. Those priests also favoured working with the peasants themselves rather than with trained union leaders.

New political alliances began to emerge as the disenchanted united. As landless workers, labour tenants, and share croppers began to occupy unused land they were confronted by the landowners and armed guards. Pressure grew. The government was obliged to make concessions and the 1963 Rural Labour Statute was passed. A strike of 200 000 rural workers who insisted on the implementation of the provisions of the new legislation to improve wages and working conditions ensued. But their legal gains were soon eroded.

The 1964 military coup prevented the implementation of the Rural Labour Statute as well as the spread and democratisation of trade unions. The government appointed its stooges to lead the unions. The result was predictable - the interests of the state and large landowners took priority over peasants and landless workers. Instead of the unions continuing projects such as literacy and education, the emphasis was shifted to skill training for middle level trades in urban centres.

People poured into the urban areas as they were forced off the land. The government tried to stem rural-urban migration by setting up road blocks and even giving airfares to those who would return 'home'. A spiral of dislocation, relocation and colonisation set in as peasants were evicted and moved to the new remote project areas.

The church began to play a more direct role once more. Not only was it the only network left relatively unscathed by the military, but the people are deeply religious. Forman refers to the peasants' 'culture of silence' which, he argues, makes peasants see problems either as divine providence or personal failure - 'peasants seem unable to objectify and externalise problems'. But, he claims, when the patron/landowner, like the deity, lets them down by taking their land, they react. They found the church ready to explain their class positions but they maintained their dependency on the church as an authoritarian institution. Religion could be used either for social control or to mobilise the masses. From the late 1960s the two elements in
high fees. A percentage of costs won in cases is put into a fund to defend other communities.

Cases taken by the lawyers include those on labour and land tenancy and land invasions. For example, a community of 55 families in the Northeast had been living and working as labour tenants and sharecroppers on some land for generations. The owner wanted to evict them and extend his fields. The people wanted to stay but they had no legal right to do so. They could, however, claim compensation. The owner offered cash for the loss of the use of the land but the lawyers advised the people that they would be entitled to more if they claimed for the free labour they had given to the landowner over the years. During the impasse, the owner ordered his gunmen to plough up the peasants' plots. In defiance the people planted seed in the ploughed fields. Then the owner demolished the house of an old man who was peripheral to the resistance. The rest of the community rebuilt his house and planted his plot. At each stage the lawyers told the people that they, the workers, were the only ones who could defend their right to the land as a group. They should not depend only on the law or the lawyers.

The people took cases of assault, the destruction of the old man's house, and claims in terms of labour law, to court. Meanwhile they organised a donation of seed and continued to cultivate the land. (The outcome was not available at the time of the interview. LP)

The lawyers and the people have learned much about landowners' tactics of division and confusion. Another case in the Northeast illustrates this: about 15 families invaded some unused land two to three years ago. It was not clear who owned the land but local large landowners wanted that land to extend their own sugarcane plantations. The invaders were unemployed rural workers, not peasants. They approached a human rights centre, took the case to court and won security of tenure and the right to land title. But the lawyers were not aware of their clients' precarious financial position. One plantation owner offered some members of the group money. This split the community. So the centre tried to offer support in the form of credit but the situation deteriorated. Some people left the land; others were bought off and the legal victory was reversed. The centre learned the importance of coupling education with the legal process, because it was useless to win a case unless the people could cope with the result. The plantation owners had simply found another way to defeat the people.

Associated projects have arisen from legal work, for instance the
establishment of seed-banks, particularly in times of drought. Another example is the revival of interest in traditional medicine as a result of a women's group complaining about the high cost of medicines and the monopoly of the drug companies.

Unless there is an immediate threat, it is difficult to sustain people's interest, so human rights groups run workshops and disseminate information on land and labour rights. People learn about the law and who makes it. Some communities have even started to write their own law. Posseiros of the Amazon state of Pará wrote their own seven-point manifesto which operates as law in their area. Sections cover strategies for immediate and long term defence of their land including the use of weapons in the short-term to resist landgrabbers, publicising the violence and injustice, and working with other groups for help and solidarity; in the longer term, planting food for subsistence and 'dying for the land'.

Land ownership is communal, the land may not be pledged to a bank and land use must be decided by the community: 'Land for those who work it' - subsistence cultivation being the priority. Produce may not be commercially sold but canteens and co-operatives may be organised. There are three levels of organisation:

- **Community** - men, women and children to do collective construction work on a chapel, medical clinic and school.
- **Trade union** - organise all workers, educate them and join the struggle to build CUT (the central union of workers) from the base.
- **Political** - to build political opposition.

Administrative regulations were also laid down.

The military was successful in replacing most of the militant leaders of the Brazilian union movement with docile stooges more interested in promoting the welfare functions of the unions than in conflict with management or the state. Over the last eight years, however, union members have reasserted themselves and demanded that their interests be represented once more. They are electing real leaders and dismissing the stooges. This national trend has affected the rural unions as well. Although technically the law still prohibits the unions from forming national organisations, the 2 500 rural unions have united into 21 federations and a single confederation of agricultural workers: CONTAG.

* 'For our land we shall die' read a placard at the funeral of Saul Mkhize, assassinated leader of Driefontein, a black spot in the Western Transvaal threatened with removal.
The church, and CPT in particular, have helped to ensure that elections are not manipulated by stooges. The process started at municipal level and has reached the national. It is a long slow process which only really began in 1977/8 among the cane cutters of the Northeast. There workers have moved from a state of fearfulness to one of strength. In September and October 1983 300,000 cane cutters in Rio Grande do Norte and Pernambuco in the Northeast struck for better working conditions.

There are many difficulties in organising in rural areas besides distance, time and lack of resources. Because people are so isolated, they are easier to control: cane cutters, for instance, live in compounds and are recruited daily for work. When union meetings have been held the night before, the next morning the boss boys or 'gatos' (cats) do not recruit those who attended. With support from the church, however, the cane cutters have found that they can challenge this victimisation.

In some areas CONTAG is still controlled by stooges while in others such as São Paulo state, the church is very conservative. Attempts to co-opt and divide workers in these areas are often successful. For example, in São Paulo orange pickers were dissatisfied. Strike action was discussed and a strike during the harvest when workers would be able to negotiate from a position of strength was planned. Somehow a strike was called before the harvest when the workers were unprepared. The union and the bosses made a deal in São Paulo city. The bosses even provided rations for the strikers. Although it initially appeared that the workers would be paid more, the 'deal' actually meant that the workers would have to work on Sundays to reach the quota to attain their wage demand.

At the third National Congress of rural workers, 1,500 delegates noted that:
- implementation of agrarian reform cannot be delayed to integrate the landless into a just and human society, to make them an active and productive force with political participation
- latifundios are expanding with government incentives
- national and international groups are speculating in land
- a scandalous quantity of public land is going to the private companies, mainly foreigners
- this turns legitimate owners and squatters into cheap labour
- colonisation projects are a smokescreen for not undertaking agrarian reform to get landless people into remote areas to exploit resources
and called for the implementation of the family landholding as the ideal because while it occupies only 20% of the land, it gets
25% of rural finance and produces 60% of agricultural production. The Congress encouraged co-operatives and stated that 215 million hectares should be expropriated for social reasons in terms of the 1964 Land Statute.

Demands by the rural movement include an end to extraordinary legislation, the re-establishment of law and order in the countryside, trade union freedom and autonomy, an agriculture policy favouring the interests of the small producer and the internal supply of food, and the extension of urban social security to the rural areas. Although during abertura the direct force used against opposition groups in the urban areas decreased, it made little difference to the rural areas. Where their organisation was tight and publicity was good, opposition movements managed to force the government to retract. But, like South Africa, the system now controls the growth and spread of these movements through the creation of contradictions, confusion and division.

**RELATIONS BETWEEN THE UNION & OTHER ORGANISATIONS**

In the rural areas there are many other organisations, part of the union: Mothers' clubs, Sport clubs, Cooperatives, schools, projects. All work with the union for the community.
Popular education may be differentiated from traditional education by an examination of who teaches what in whose interests. In other words are people taught what those who control them need them to know for the maintenance of the society as it is, or is their awareness raised to that extent where they will challenge their position in the society?

Throughout Latin America there are centres of popular education. Some confine themselves to particular aspects and projects such as preventive health care or growing vegetables. Others function as resource centres which produce material for community organisations and trade unions upon request. The church, especially certain Roman Catholic orders, is often involved, even when it is not the initiator.

To be effective popular education has to be rooted in organisations which work for social, economic and political change. Material cannot be produced in isolation for these movements or it will not be used extensively which contradicts the term 'popular education'. For this reason, it is useful to produce material requested by community groups and trade unions. Material which helps their organisations directly will be utilised. The examples discussed below were produced to help solve problems of organisation and lack of skills, e.g. "Meetings and Assemblies", "How to Draw Up an Official Letter" and "Accountancy". In these booklets issues such as democratic procedures during meetings and the importance of keeping minutes and financial records are discussed.

Space precludes a detailed discussion of popular education in this paper. The intention here is merely to raise the issue as an integral part of rural organisation, by examining what forms of education have been effective in Latin America and what might be useful in South Africa.

The most common form of popular education is literacy training. Nicaragua affords the best example of an extensive campaign which reduced the rate of illiteracy from 52% in 1978 to 12% in 1982. The country was mobilised; teachers, students and unemployed literates went into the countryside to teach people to read and write. In the process teachers and learners were exposed to different ways of life, new ideas and attitudes. For the first time the Spanish-speaking majority had positive contact with the indigenous and English-speaking people of the Atlantic coast.

In Bolivia the most successful form of popular education is the
radio, with supplementary material published and workshops organised. Today there are 13 non-commercial development-oriented radio stations. Khana, the only non-religious station began by giving technical help to people in rural areas, but as they had no tools or access to capital, this was useless. The causes of the deprivation had to be explained. Instead of technical aid, explained Khana staff, people had to be given 'tools to understand their position'.

In 1980 after the right wing coup the radio was controlled and had to close. There were also financial problems. Later it was decided to open a cultural and religious programme, called 'Khana' which means 'light' or 'brightness' in Aymara. Khana served the peasants playing their music and broadcasting religious items such as extracts from the story of the life of Christ. Little by little the programmes helped the resistance.

Until people had radios there was no contact between the valleys. People lived in remote areas where they barely heard news of the next village, let alone world events. There was conflict between the comunidades and the pueblos because the people in the pueblos often owned land and were relatively richer than those in the comunidades. Radio helped to explain issues such as these conflicts. Khana broadcasts mainly in Aymara to the Altiplano.

Khana has three types of radio programmes:
- information (health, farming, bookkeeping, news, features)
- social context (explanation of events reported in the news)
- people's participation

The context of the news is explained - what is inflation? What are the implications of the new (April 1984) economic package? What is the IMF (International Monetary Fund)? The National Debt? Imperialism? As a result today many rural Bolivians understand their position in the international arena.

Khana works in four areas:
- radio programmes
- production of educational material (background to programmes eg booklets on how to write an official letter, bookkeeping, etc)
- field workers visit the peasants (to find out what they need and want from the programmes and to encourage them to participate)
- seminars in two centres in Bolivia, for more intensive education

People come in from the rural areas to the Khana radio

* "Khanya" in Xhosa and Zulu means "light"
headquarters in La Paz to find out more about it, to ask for their interests to be covered and to talk on the air. During harvesting only 10-20 people come in each day, while at other times 40-50 people participate daily. Leaders come more frequently than the 'base' so the radio organisers try to encourage more local participation. Language is a problem for people unused to expressing themselves publicly because they lack confidence.

The various radio programmes have joined together to form ERBOL (Educacion Radiofonica de Bolivia) to co-ordinate their programmes. There are ideological differences between them. Some are more technical with their own development concepts. Others are more religious, with some conservative priests who censor content of programmes. Yet others are based on concepts of justice and have more political content to their programmes.

Peru produces the most advanced popular education material in Latin America. There are numerous booklets on subjects as varied as vegetable gardening, the rights of single mothers, papal encyclicals, struggles in other countries (including the history of the South African Industrial and Commercial Union), and detailed manuals on issues such as group motivation, leadership, the role of rumour, stereotypes, co-option, competence, drama and visual aids. There is at least one monthly journal on popular education, an issue of which, explains, for example, how to set up a library for 'workers and the popular movement', how to borrow films and resources from foreign consulates, what new publications are available and an assessment of the literacy campaign in Nicaragua.

Popular booklets in Peru do not deal only with practical day to day issues, but also explain how the economy works, how the church interacts in society and how land is allocated and used. There are booklets which analyse regionalism and centralism, and examine Peruvian literature as well as those which explain work. This deals with who employs whom, how wages and profits are earned, what costs of production are and how distribution is effected. In this way people with very limited formal education are able to begin to understand how society works. TAREA is one of the resource groups which provides popular education material for worker and rural organisations. It is a non-profit body, founded in 1974. TAREA, for example, believes skills should not be confined to intellectuals, but that people who are involved in active struggles in the community or workplaces should understand concepts such as class conflict and imperialism. In this way the cycle of fear and dependency which allows patrons and bosses to exploit and oppress can be countered.
TAREA's work takes two main forms: publication and "capacitacion" or active consciousness raising. It produces three categories of publications:

Firstly, popular publications for the barrios or urban informal settlements and the rural areas. These are mainly in Spanish which is a problem for 30% of the population, mainly rural, who speak only Quechua. When community organisations or trade unions come across a particular issue important to their constituency, they ask TAREA to produce popular material on the subject. For these groups TAREA has produced a comic series of worker history of Peru, youth stories analysing differences in education and life styles of rich and poor teenagers, material on TB, diarrhea and child care for health groups. For farmers, they have simplified laws and produced publications to explain their rights. TAREA also produces joint publications with women's, workers' and other groups. This involves workshopping the issues. This process improves participants' knowledge, their analytical abilities and their practical media skills. Once the publications have been distributed, TAREA organises evaluation sessions to assess their impact and usefulness, as well as to plan for future publications and further action.

Secondly, manuals are produced as resource aids for organisers on subjects such as how to organise a community or trade union library, how to organise a workshop, or how to carry out a community survey.

Thirdly, TAREA publishes more intellectual publications such as the writings of Juan H. Perez, founder of the CCP.

TAREA produces publications which compete with commercial media in design and layout. They believe the poor should not feel they get inferior quality or rejects from the middle class. So TAREA subsidises its publications with aid from foreign churches.

In 1984 TAREA produced a number of oral history publications. These included interviews with old people about peasant, worker and settlement struggles, with workers on strikes and with retrenched workers about their union. The interviewing process itself taught those interviewed a lot of social history by contextualising their personal stories.

There are a number of active women's groups in Peru which publish their own material, eg women as workers in which women's double load of formal employment and domestic work, lower wages, job insecurity because of pregnancy and sexual harassment, were
discussed. Women's groups have organised free legal services to deal with family issues, child maintenance, unfair labour practices and domestic violence. They have also helped to organise street vendors of whom the vast majority are women.

Movimiento Manuela Ramos is one of the women's groups in Lima. It runs courses to teach women to speak out, articulate their problems and organise. The courses last for twenty five days over five weeks. They begin with personal issues to which women can readily relate, then slowly move to issues outside the home. They find out what women want from the course. They also tell them about the women's movement and their rights. They also teach women silkscreening, printing, drawing and photography. Manuela Ramos has made a series of postcards from participants' designs. The women have made videos and slide-tape shows of their communities and issues such as domestic violence against women and children. They write stories and take photographs to present and interpret to their own communities.

Manuela Ramos organises focus days such as those for International Women's Day or Mothers' Day. They have talks, films and exhibitions exposing issues such as health, childcare, legal rights and domestic violence to the wider community.

As for TAREA, a major problem for Manuela Ramos is that very few activists speak Quechua so the courses and issues can only be taken to a certain level because many of the women, even in urban areas, have only a superficial knowledge of Spanish.

Radio is another medium of popular education used in Peru. It is not as widespread as in Bolivia, but programmes are similar. One station in Cuzco organised a series of assessments of their programme with listeners. The organisers wanted to raise questions and get listeners to reflect on the three forms of broadcast: news, information and comment. They examined what was reported, by whom, about whom, where, when and how. In this way people learned about objectivity, sensationalism and control of the media. Through interviews they learned both the skills of preparation of short, basic questions and how to order them, as well as the relationship between interviewer and interviewee, how not to impose ones own opinions, etc. Thus listeners were prepared for participation in programmes and, eventually, to run the radio as a community mouthpiece.

In Brazil the agrarian reform campaign has focussed much of the popular media produced for the rural areas. Using the national guidelines each group produces material for its local and regional needs. Focus days and weeks are used to highlight
particular issues, for example, the day of the migrant (17 June) or the week of the indigenous people (15-21 April). For the foci special material is collected and published in dossier, poster or newspaper forms. Buttons and t-shirts, banners and stickers are used. Booklets of stories told by workers in verse, some of which are sung, others recited, are produced. This tradition of popular poetry is a result of the troubadours' role in the peasant leagues where men travelled from farm to farm to entertain and to pass on the news.

Many Brazilian organisations produce popular material at the request of trade unions and community groups, using simple comic style. A wide range of issues are covered, for example, the tax position for the small producer, the history of those assassinated in land struggles, how to form and run a trade union. The history and political economic context is explained — why, for example, agribusiness needs to expand and evict people from land, why leadership is removed and how confusion and divisions serve those in power.

One of the main rural publications, SEM TERRA, publicises the CPT plan for action including objectives. It discusses how to gain land, how to build the movement, how to bring in new people, priorities for action, how to organise urban support for the movement, relationships with member organisations, how to organise on a regional and national level and the relationship with political parties.

Campaign material includes slide-tape-shows, films and videos not only for rural but also for urban groups to ensure links and support for the rural movement in urban areas.

In concluding the popular education section, it is useful to restate ERBOL's guideline: that popular education must be immersed in political action, not as a party, but with community organisations to promote social and economic change through constant investigation, analysis and action. Only through ongoing evaluation will communities and organisations learn from their experiences, which will inform future action.
CONCLUSION

While there is more of a tradition of mass rural mobilisation in Latin America than in South Africa, there is some history of isolated rural resistance in South Africa. Political organisations have not mobilised to any significant degree in the countryside. Even study of the rural areas has been neglected over the past 30 years. While poverty and desperation are more clearly visible in rural areas, these areas are also generally more difficult to organise than the urban areas. Distances are great, transport is expensive and infrequent; people are isolated and more easily intimidated. So in South Africa today almost all organisation and study is urban-based.

To date there has been too little debate on agrarian reform, food production, monopoly agri-business, mechanisation or increasing farm size. 'Rural development' is seen in terms of self-help projects for people who are structurally unable to pull themselves out of poverty. Only a change in the very socio-economic structure can improve their living conditions. Agrarian reform, not only land reform is necessary. The simple redistribution of land will not feed all the people. The whole agricultural system, as part of a new economic system, needs to be restructured. The vast majority of South Africa's rural population is landless as a result of government policy. So more land alone will not solve the problem. Most of the landless have been relocated into rural closer settlements; they have been moved off the white-owned farms and out of the 'white' urban areas. Influx control keeps them out of urban areas and dependent either on migrant labour or state pensions for survival.

From the four Latin American countries examined, it is clear that conditions in rural areas affected by land reform today depend on whether the demand for land reform came from the landless peasants themselves, or from the state in an attempt to co-opt the peasantry. Where the peasants spearheaded the process and took responsibility for development thereafter, they had more control of the process and therefore more interest in the outcome. Where the state introduced land reform divorced from peasant struggle, it intended to control the pace of change in the countryside and encourage the growth of a middle class, rather than promote the interests of all peasants. The Brazilian campaign is attempting to prevent 'top-down' reforms and demand structural change instead. We have seen how the extent of agrarian reform varies across the four countries by how much land was made available to peasants, by what happened to the landless subsequently, by what technical aid and credit beneficiaries
received, by how much incomes changed in form and amount, by productivity, production levels and aid in marketing.

It is too early to judge Nicaragua in these terms but the future seems bleak. Although the peasants struggled within a broad alliance to overthrow the Somoza regime, the new state comprising that alliance has delayed implementing full agrarian reform. Nicaraguans have the added disability of fighting a war of aggression openly backed by the United States. They are determined not to let their external problems deflect from their internal reconstruction but recent progress has been slow. The peasants expect more land. Soon the government will have to complete its agrarian reform programme to give all who work the land access to it, but it is cautious. Just as Mozambique warned Zimbabwe, Cuba warned Nicaragua against wholesale nationalisation of land. In Nicaragua the obligation to produce and distribute affordable food is more important than simply the principle of who owns how much land.

According to Lindqvist, meaningful agrarian reform must include:
- the transfer of power, not just tax reform or colonisation projects
- the restoration of stolen property where land has been unfairly taken
- the equal distribution of land
- better exploitation of the soil
- a rise in the standard of living of the beneficiaries
- a rise in agricultural output, cheaper food, fewer imports
- the creation of employment
- a speed-up of capital formulation, investment and technical innovation
- the creation of political support for a party or group

He goes on to say that the development of socialist or capitalist attitudes will occur depending on who instigated the reform and how it was carried out. Agrarian reform will either reinforce or overthrow a capitalist society. According to Kaplan, semi-proletarian labour is necessary to capitalist development to maintain both cheap food production and a reserve army of labour (as the bantustans have done until recently). In Peru, particularly, land reform stabilised both a pool of cheap seasonal labour for agriculture and an ongoing stream of migrant workers for industry and mining. Neither in South Africa nor in Latin America has agribusiness brought freedom from hunger. Agribusiness cannot be equated with agricultural development - what is grown is as important as who can afford to buy it and who makes profits from it.

Like South Africa prior to 1950 there was a shortage of farm
labour all over Latin America, so people were pushed off their land both to enlarge the area for capitalist agriculture and to supply labour from amongst the landless. From the late 1950s a surplus of labour developed. With little land for them to return to, the landless migrated to urban areas. Today in Latin America there seems to be a move back to the land. With high inflation and structural unemployment, people can no longer afford to live even in the squatter camps in the cities. They are moving to rural areas to occupy land and to grow the food they can no longer afford to buy. When inflation reaches 400% money becomes meaningless. So even those who are employed would rather have the use of land or be given rations instead of wages.* The only power people have is to occupy land and set up their own society. Then they change the relations between them, the authorities and the landowners. It is a long slow process but it will restructure the society.

As Latin Americans have learned, it is not enough to state that the land shall be shared. Without rural mobilisation and organisation, reformist governments have successfully managed to divide the land according to their own interests. This process divides and disillusion the people. Both the left and the centre demand land reform: the left want it to change the system, the right need it to defuse socialism. Unless the rural areas are organised into trade unions, women's, youth and other groups, as the Bolivians have done, there will be no demands from which to measure real structural change. Not unlike other countries, the basic mass demand in South Africa will be for cheap food. Before any longer term demands are considered, a new 'people's government' in South Africa will have to fulfil the masses' expectation of food they can afford. So agrarian reform will become a priority. Much work needs to be done in evaluating land use vs potential, planning of food production, pricing, marketing and distribution as well as compiling legislation to control land ownership and occupation. A thorough agrarian reform programme needs to be thought out by the opposition movements now. No existing demands adequately address the issue.

But, as we have seen, agrarian reform which will benefit the majority will not simply appear without struggle. For the million people threatened with removal from the white-owned farms right now, organisation is important. For the millions, mainly landless, in the bantustans at present, mobilisation is

* Not only does the cash devalue so quickly they cannot buy what they used to, but it becomes clear if the boss reduces rations or cuts back the size of land allocated, whereas cash wages may even be raised but their real value is less.
essential. But rural organisation does not merely happen. Ignorance and repression inhibit it. People need to develop confidence. Levels of awareness need to be raised.

The repression in South Africa is at least as bad as it is in parts of Latin America. But some areas are less repressive than others. For instance, since the abertura in Brazil it has been a little easier to organise and, although it was a middle class masterminded revolution in 1952 in Bolivia, the situation opened the way for the trade unions to organise and for the peasants to get their land reform. Despite the tough National Guard, Nicaraguans have finally been able to rid their country of Somoza. So irrespective of difficulties and hardships, societies do change; but how they change, depends on the form and content of the struggle. The issues around which Latin American rural organisation took place were of direct interest to rural people: particularly wages and working conditions for farmworkers and access to land for the landless. In South Africa old age pensions, as a crucial form of cash income, could be added.

From this paper it seems that the most effective rural organisation has involved the churches at some point. In the light of the Latin American experience, it should not be impossible to form rural trade unions in South Africa. Some of the many retrenched workers who return to the rural areas must be familiar with trade union organisation.

Where South African white farmers depend on seasonal rather than permanent workers, those workers brought in at peak harvest times could begin to organise to improve their wages and working conditions.

The church could become more directly involved with land issues such as developing cooperative farms on their own land and helping the landless to find unused land to grow food. Already there are a handful of church sponsored advice offices in rural areas. They could be extended into a network of human rights-type groups like the ones in Northeast Brazil. Their services could be extended from helping individuals with their problems, to helping run workshops for farmworkers or producing simple publications, for example. Rural people need help and information to fight their isolation and dependence. Support work could help them with resources and connections.

Unlike Latin America, workers and peasants in South Africa live longer and many are eligible for state pensions. This is a right which many people do not demand because they do not know the procedure or they are put off by bureaucrats who try to keep the
number of claims to a minimum. If small benefit groups were to organise for pensions, people would learn to demand their rights, learn to deal with bureaucracy and to organise themselves. Not only would this be a very practical way of increasing the cash income in the rural areas, but it would also encourage broader organisation as the early peasant benefit societies in Brazil did.

Because women are the majority of people left in rural areas while the men have migrated (often permanently) to town and because they have all the responsibility of bringing up children and providing for their families, they are an important focus for rural organisation. Even more than in Latin American countries, women are the majority of the adult rural population in South Africa, because they are prohibited from entering urban areas through influx control. It is not therefore surprising that they are the main participants in rural development projects.

The church has been seen to play a catalytic role throughout Latin America. Not only in dark times when repression was toughest, but also subsequent to the triumph, such as in Nicaragua where priests work to advance and defend the gains of the revolution. Some of them have even become members of the government of reconstruction. The church is the most pervasive network in the rural areas, often providing the only services which do exist. On the one hand, the proliferation of 'base' communities in Latin America has served to conscientise workers and peasants through the church to work for social and economic justice. And, on the other hand, the church's attitude that all who work the land are entitled to access to it, and that the land is for food production, rather than speculation has furthered the rural struggle.

In South Africa the churches have barely begun to debate a theology of land. To date the most progressive rural activity has been isolated development projects. Gradually the churches are starting to support the resistance of rural people threatened with removal, but direct action such as occupation of unused land has not yet been considered. At least one community is debating whether to return to the land from which it was moved. Another is discussing settling on an unused farm instead of being moved to a bantustan. Unless these groups organise themselves well, they will not be able to withstand the state reaction which is sure to follow.

Demands could be made of the existing government. For instance, small farmers, both black and white, could be helped with credit facilities, instead of only the large agro-industries which
benefit from state agricultural policies.

An important aspect of the rural struggles is the attempt to link the urban and rural situation, to show how the one affects the other intimately. For instance, in Brazil with migration being reversed and people returning to the rural area to seek land and survival, an understanding of the connection is being built. There are so many people with interests in each area. Here in South Africa the Riekert Commission recommended and actively encouraged both a division between urban insiders and rural outsiders, and the formation of a black middle class with a stake in the economic system. The more connections made between all in South African, urban/rural, 'legal'/'illegal', and 'ethnically' different people, the quicker division will be overcome and change brought about. One of the goals of a campaign such as that for agrarian reform in Brazil is this linkage and education to overcome these artificially created divisions. In South Africa such a campaign could both raise awareness of the conditions in rural areas and help to generate interest in rural organisation.
BOLIVIA: INTERVIEW WITH THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF CAMPESINA WOMEN, 'BARTOLINA SISA', LUCILA MEJIA DE MORALES

(AQUI newspaper, La Paz, Bolivia 19-25 May 1984)

Q: Companera Lucila, is the COB* merely a union or also an organ of (political) power? What typifies the COB?

A: The COB is a trade union which is a union of all workers; it is also a political power. But at the moment the political parties want to run it. For example, the PCB is manoeuvring within the COB and not allowing discussion with those who are not in the party. Within the COB there is also an attempt to control other political parties.

Q: What are the principle tasks for the VI Congress of the COB?

A: At the VI Congress the workers will have to analyse the economic problems (of Bolivia), also the fact that the COB has never really taken up the rural question and the campesino sector has not really got anywhere through the medium of the COB. And, especially the question of rural women has not been tackled... not only as campesinas but as all women. Now, for example, a union of domestic workers has been formed. It struggles for a minimum living salary and other rights including proper working hours. They have to work any amount of hours. The COB must support the women who are organising themselves.

Q: Since, in your opinion, the COB does not adequately represent women, what measures must be taken to change this?

A: Well, at this point there is not even one woman on the Executive Committee of the COB. We want to participate at this level of power to give our opinions, to be better informed and also better to inform the bases of which the COB is constituted. Now, we, the campesinas, have direct representation within the COB, but there are other sectors which do not have that, for example, factory workers. Those companeras ought to be here, participating in the power.

We have presented a letter to the COB requesting better participation. We want to participate in this congress as an

*(Central Obrero Boliviano or Federation of Bolivian workers)
organisation of women. For four years we have been working and we must integrate that. In this way the power will strengthen the COB as well.

Q: What must be done to strengthen workers' democracy?
A: Well, first we must strengthen this parliamentary democracy so that there is no coup. For example, in the campesino section we have organised the campesinas; there is a conscious organisation. If there is a coup there is a danger that the organisation will be destroyed. To avoid a coup there must be dialogue with the government.

If there is a coup, we, the workers, are going to remain here and suffer the consequences. Those who speak of looking for an opposition to the government will go into exile. So those of us who want to remain, the rural worker sector, will have to rack their brains.

Moreover the organisation itself is going to break up. So we have to be very careful at this time. There has to be dialogue between the COB and the President. If there is no dialogue, there will be neither an understanding nor a solution. Now that the President is also meeting private enterprise, he must meet for dialogue with the COB protagonists. The assemblies have to analyse the problems and find a solution as to where to go from now.

Next the COB has to manage things with much caution. It cannot allow the political parties to control things. For example, if a party campaigns for votes for itself, divisions will be created and that is not good for us. There should be independent voting for parties.

The COB must also give more representation to the rural sector, since we are the majority in the country. This representation must be both for men and women.

Q: Some say that at this point the principal enemy is the UDP, others say it is fascism. What is the principal enemy?
A: Many people do not understand the increasing faults of the UDP. Of course, it is true that the UDP has not fulfilled its promises to us. The measures it has taken have affected many of us rural workers and the unemployed. But the fact is that the International Monetary Fund is forcing the government to take these measures. So our President is obeying the commands of the North Americans. Our principle enemies are the fascists and the North Americans.
Interview with Father José Domingos Bragheto, a 34-year old Catholic priest, co-ordinator of the 50 to 60 CPTs in Sao Paulo state, most of which are run by voluntary lay-workers. There are approximately 500,000 bôias frias in São Paulo state, the majority working in the sugar cane plantations which supply not only the sugar refineries but the vast, modern alcohol distilleries, producing 'gasohol' fuel.

Q: How did you become involved in the 'bôias frias' struggle for better conditions?

A: I've always been concerned, but my involvement really started in 1979, after a worker from the CPT in Goiania (the strife-torn region of Central Brazil where CPT was formed in 1975) came down to visit me in Dobrada, São Paulo. Up until then I had felt very alone in my region, not knowing where I was going. With no support I found the reality of the region anguishing, a very brutal reality, yet I didn't have a team.

At one point I almost left Sao Paulo for Goiania, but today I'm glad I stayed, we are beginning to reap the fruits of what we sowed.

Our intention was to set up a nucleus of bôias frias all over the region so that they could get together and talk about their problems. Our first idea was to work with the rural unions, but they were very weak. So the CPT started organising meetings and inviting union workers from surrounding cities in the hope that they would go back to their towns and organise. These meetings were usually held in the Jacobiticabal seminary, with 300 - 500 'bôias frias', consciousness-raising and showing them little by little how they could organize and what their rights were.

Q: What do you consider the role of CPT's today?

A: I don't think the CPT should be a substitute for specific organizations like the unions. We should accompany rural workers, support their organisations, raise consciousness --always based on Christ's liberating gospel.

At the present time, with rural unions in their infancy, we can help them set up --explain about union elections, labour laws so on. If the union has been formed by the workers themselves we try to work with them. If a union is controlled by stooges, we can help make them aware of the situation and sometimes form an
opposition front within the union. We are also concerned with cultivating faith through bible reading circles -- helping the countryman develop a "theology of the land" by seeking the biblical foundations of the meaning of land in man's existence -- that God gave land to be used by everybody.

Q: What triggered the recent revolt of the 'boias frias'?

A: Last year the plantation owners introduced the system of 'seven rows'. (Previously, each sugar cane cutter worked an area comprising three or five rows i.e. he, or she, worked a square area the breadth of three or five rows. As the cane was cut he carried it to a central point in the middle row, piling it up for the truck to load. The plantation owners wanted to extend the number of rows covered because the truck then makes fewer journeys, saving fuel and time. But for the cutter, carrying the cane a longer distance to pile up in the middle meant a more back-breaking, exhausting day.)

At a meeting of some 20 boias frias, one got up and explained this new system on the blackboard, warning that "a new dictatorship is on its way".

The CPT started denouncing the system to the press and some of the plantation owners appealed to the church to stop its campaign, saying that the "seven rows" represented progress. And, sure enough, when this year's harvest got under way in May, most plantations were using the seven rows. This was the last straw, allied to the misery and hunger running rife here together with the problem of the water company charging such high rates.

When it did explode, the revolt exploded uncontrollably. Nobody had predicted this-- at a meeting of the Guariba rural workers union a few days earlier, at which I was present, the workers talked about a strike but came to the conclusion that they didn't have the strength to carry one out.

Q: How did the plantation owners react? And did the revolt and the consequent gains of the "boias frias" in Sao Paulo have an effect on 'boias frias' in other regions?

A: The strike awakened a greater sense of class in the 'boias frias'. Before they didn't like to be called 'canecutters'--they thought that working in a factory, for instance was a proper job. Now they are proud of having forced the plantation owners to grant 90 percent of their demands.
And, particularly because of the press coverage, the strike spread to the orange pickers in Bebedoro, to other cane-cutting regions in São Paulo state (Monte Alto, Sertãozinho, Barretos and to parts of other states (Minas Gerais, Goias, north of Parana).

But while on the one hand the press coverage helped spread the strike, some of the press came looking for scapegoats—trying to put the blame on the church as agitators. They distorted many of the things I said.

Perhaps one of the seeds lies in the consciousness raising work of the CPT. But in Guariba, where the revolt exploded, there is no CPT group.

The plantation owners also think that the CPT is behind everything. Our relationship with them is distant because the church has made a class option, an option for the poor. The owners identify the CPT with the canecutters. There is very little possibility of dialogue with them. We believe that changes have to come from the bottom up.

At this point, they are frightened ... I think it will be very imprudent of them if they don't honour the agreements because the strikes will return twofold.

The federal government sees the CPT as an agent of subversion authentic land reform, but a type of colonisation. And it's not the type of land reform that the worker wants —— and we support the worker.

The state government (nb: in São Paulo, opposition government of the middle-of-the road PMDB party) has some land reform projects but they're bogged down in bureaucracy. The people cannot wait -- they're hungry and when they invade land the CPT must support them.

Q: Do you feel that the catholic church has gone into retreat in recent years — or, rather, in 1980, after the Brazilian Conference of Bishops (CNBB) issued a very strong statement on the need for land reform one felt that the church was taking a strong stand. But instead of going forward, it has seemed to stand still ---?

A: Well this hasn't affected the grass roots. Sometimes one feels a lack of support from the body of the church. Some churches try to sit on the fence. Some bishops don't support the CPT ... but this is more because of their individual formation. When it comes to action, one often feels that the church is still.
rather distant from popular struggles. But on the whole there is progress. I don't think that the retreat of the Vatican is affecting us on the grass roots level very much. Luckily, the CNBB is a very open group, very aware of the problems of the population.

However, one does feel that the church should have gone ahead faster and instead, is playing a waiting game.

CELAM is controlled by conservatives and this has its influence in the stagnation -- the links between the Vatican and CELAM are obvious.

You know, I see the influence of the United States at the bottom of this. The United States is scared by the progressive church in Latin America. It wasn't by chance that the United States recently decided to set up an embassy in the Vatican.

Q: Where does the CPT go from here?

A: I feel that there will be a strengthening of the unions. The 'bolas frias' are discovering that a union is an arm in negotiations. And the unions will feel that they have to respond to the concerns of the workers and keep improving labour agreements.

The CPT's role is to catalyse this strengthening, this consciousness. The CPT groups must discuss the agreements, see that they are being carried out....

But the final aim doesn't stop there. We have to fight with the worker in his struggle for land reform. In some regions of São Paulo state -- the northwest -- the peasants are losing their land because they can't afford fertilizers, seeds, tools etc. and interest rates are very high. But there is another type of 'blias fria', those who are second generation, whose parents were pushed off their land, and this worker wants a better salary so that he can pay rent, buy food, and to be registered by the plantation --- really, just like any industrial worker.
At 12.00 midday on the 20 June 1984 a determined group of some 200 people entered the grounds of the Velho Palace in one of the old districts of Rio de Janeiro. Armed with machetes (picks), they announced that they had marched from the railway station and that they had come to see Brizola, the Governor of the state of Rio de Janeiro. They had come from Campo Alegre, a 30 000 ha farm, 100 km north of Rio.

They had taken the train from the nearest town Nova Iguacu and had come to demand:
- the withdrawal of police from the land
- the cessation of violence and intimidation both by police and neighbouring land owners
- title to the land
- facilities such as credit

The group sent some representatives into the Palace to see Brizola. He was out but it was reported that he would return early in the afternoon. 'No hurry. We will all wait for him - as long as he provides us with sandwiches,' quipped someone. Brizola is one of the liberal governors of the 23 states of Brazil (although he calls himself a 'socialist' of the social democratic sort). Since 'abertura' from 1974 when the military controlled the country somewhat less repressively, political leaders like Brizola have become more approachable. His solution to the Campo Alegre problem, is typical of the ad hoc style. He conceded all their demands and even provided them with bus transport home at the end of the negotiations. Some would argue that this strategy is a more sophisticated attempt to halt the spread of popular organisation. Others see abertura as an opportunity to demand more basic changes in the social, economic and political structure of Brazil.

Having met some of the Campo Alegre members, it was a privilege to be invited to visit the area. Brazilianino, one of the leaders, took me on a guided tour of the farm and told the story of their struggle:

"I was born in the Northeast. I worked on the sugar plantations. I became an administrator which is not a popular position. It meant I had to see that the other workers did their work. I used to let them cultivate their own food between the rows of sugarcane. This was not allowed and when the boss found out, I was sacked. So I left the Northeast. There are no jobs there. It is dry and all the land is controlled by the big estates and the foreign companies. While I was there I had to sell one of my sons"
I could not afford to feed the children. A U.S. army official offered to take him to the United States. He is there and he is doing well. I still send him money sometimes. Although I have very little, I feel it is my responsibility. He is my son.

So I came to Rio. In the 1970s it was easier to get odd jobs, but today that is very difficult. Some of us were living in a favela (squatter camp) and we were all experiencing the same difficulty getting work. We had all come from the rural areas at some time, so we had farming experience. So we decided the only way we could feed our families was to find some land where we could grow food. We looked for land that was not being used. We found this place which we heard was bought a long time ago. They thought Rio would stretch out here and they could sell this land for a high price for housing. But Rio has not spread this far and the land has never been used, so we moved here.

"On the night of 8 January 1984 300 families came and settled here. We built our own shelters and we started to grow food. We had to clear the land with very simple instruments. It is virgin soil, fertile, so we had a very tough time. As a community we worked on the communal area to clear fields. We want to grow rice over there where it is marshy. We also each have our own small fields. The giant sweet potato I presented to the Governor last Wednesday was grown here by me on my plot.

"We worked very hard, day and night. We can feed ourselves and our families. The law says it is not our land but we believe the land should belong to those who work it. Not only will we grow food to feed ourselves, but soon we will be able to supply the markets. Today in Brazil with such high inflation, so many people cannot afford to buy food so we feel we can make a contribution to the nation if we provide cheap food.

"But we were not allowed to stay in peace. The surrounding grileiros (literally 'grabbers') want to fight us. They are scared the land they say is theirs will also be taken over. They do not use their land. It only lies there fenced in, waiting for a time when they can make money out of it. To us, land is for food, not money. So the grileiros and the nearby farmers got together to intimidate, or rather terrorise, us. They cut their fences so their cattle would stray on our land and eat our crops. They came at night with guns and sticks to beat us up. The police helped them. The police did not protect us. We were not fighting them. We only want to feed our families. The grileiros tried to get the Bishop to agree that the land was theirs. They took him papers. They said they were titles for the land, but the Bishop could see that they had just made the papers look old and brown and that they were not the real documents. We said we are not moving until
you prove to our lawyers that you own this land. We have some lawyers from the church who help us. But they never came with the papers. They only came with violence.

"We had a system of protecting ourselves. We had families living on each side of the land. As you can see it is quite hilly, so to communicate we have a system of flags high up on posts. When one side is attacked we signal with flags for others to come and help and then we pick up whatever we have, machetes and so on and go there.

"Then we had this problem of the fence. It was the other farmer's fence and he cut his own fence to let his cattle stray through to our land. If you come with me I will show you what we did. After many meetings and many discussions, after we discussed everything from killing the farmer to poisoning the cattle, we decided no, we do not want to fight, we only want to feed our families. So we built another fence this side of his fence and we kept that fence fixed. He could cut his own fence, but if he cut ours, we would take more serious action. It worked. He never cut our fence.

"How do we make decisions? Well, we have a community meeting where all the adults come. Then we have a 17 man executive to carry out the tasks. No, no women because they do not do the work."

On being asked the women said that they worked very hard looking after the children, keeping the houses, the chickens and cooking to feed the men when they came off the fields. They added that if they had a creche and school, they would be more free to work in the fields, to help the men. They wanted representation on the executive.

There were about 1,000 people with some form of interest in Campo Alegre. These included people who continued to live in the favela because they were nearer town and some still had jobs there. Others stayed for schools and facilities, saying that when Campo Alegre was formally organised they would like to move there.

The result of the visit to Brizola was that the community was given temporary rights to be there and that Brizola agreed to have the land expropriated by the state of Rio de Janeiro to be given to the people. The local mayor of Nova Iguacu donated a tractor for community use and promised them any other aid they needed. Police action ceased. The police maintained a presence on the border of the land, allegedly to prevent fights breaking out between Campo Alegre and its neighbours.
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