The Social and Economic Structure of the Indian Communities of the Andean Region

by
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The Andean high plateau, from 2,000 to 5,000 metres in altitude, is situated between the two main ranges of the Andes ; some 3,000 kilometres from North to South, its width varies from 150 kilometres in Ecuador to as much as 600 kilometres in certain parts of Peru and Bolivia. Here several millions of Aymara and Quechua Indians have for centuries lived in such complete isolation as to be entirely cut off from the economic and social life of their respective nations. But today the authorities of Bolivia, Peru and Ecuador, with the technical assistance of the United Nations and the specialised agencies, are engaged in an attempt to improve the conditions of these peoples by giving them direct material aid and more particularly by showing them how to use their resources and awakening in them the will to contribute to their own revival and to find their place in the national communities of which they are members.

In the following pages the well-known anthropologist, Alfred Métraux, of the Department of Social Sciences of U.N.E.S.C.O., who has been associated with the Andean Indian Programme [1], briefly describes the conditions of life and the social and economic organisation of these peoples.

[1] The Andean Indian Programme was undertaken as a result of a resolution adopted by the I.L.O. Committee of Experts on Indigenous Labour (La Paz Session, January 1951). Following the exploratory work of a mission of experts which visited Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru from July to October 1952 (see Ernest BEAGLEHOLE : " A Technical Assistance Mission in the Andes ", in *International Labour Review*, Vol. LXVII, No. 6, June 1953), the programme was put into effect in the second half of 1954. Essentially experimental and limited to a few selected regions, its aim is to discover the most effective methods of restoring the Indian communities and in this way to provide guidance for national Indian policy. The expert staff of the programme comprises agronomists, technical instructors, anthropologists, specialists in fundamental education, doctors and medical personnel, veterinarians, etc. The projects undertaken include the construction of schools, model dwellings and apprentice workshops ; the training of Indian community leaders, directors of co-operatives, schoolteachers, etc. ; the revival of traditional handicrafts ; and, in some cases, the transfer of whole communities to more hospitable regions.

THE aim of this article is to provide a general picture of the social and economic conditions of the Indians in Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia who are now benefiting by the technical assistance of the United Nations and the specialised agencies. Lack of space, and in many cases of documentation, have prevented me from attempting to enter into details or enumerating the differences between the Indian communities in the three countries. I have instead endeavoured to bring out the common aspects of their culture which justify the regional orientation of the Andean Indian Programme.

THE CONCEPT OF INDIAN

Estimates of the density of the Indian population in the three Andean republics have always varied within wide limits depending on the period at which they were made and even more so on the political ideas of the persons studying the question. Where a conservative writer would do his best to reduce the number of Indians to an insignificant quantity, the " Indianist " would exaggerate the importance of the Indian masses by including persons whom an anthropologist or a sociologist would hesitate to recognise as of Indian " race " or culture.

The results of censuses, though apparently more precise, have proved equally disappointing. Take, for instance, the classic example of Peru. According to official figures, the number of Indians was 2,847,196 in 1940 and 3,121,071 in 1948. The divergence of these two figures should not surprise us since no attempt was made to establish rigorously whether any individual should be classed as " Indian " or " Mestizo ". In many cases the census-takers must have come up against the same difficulties that faced legislators and anthropologists when establishing a criterion for distinguishing an Indian from a non-Indian. The physical type, which might seem at first sight to be the simplest indication, proves instead the most difficult to use. Given the mixture of races that has occurred and continues to occur in the Andean region, it would take a bold man to place a person in one category or the other merely on the basis of physical features. Even in the stratum of the population that considers itself as belonging to the white race one comes across a very large number of individuals whom an anthropologist would classify as mestizos without a moment's hesitation. In some cases pure-bred Indians and mestizos who have succeeded in making a fortune claim to be " white ". Inversely, in the Indian villages one finds individuals who, judging by their physical characteristics, are mestizos or very nearly " whites ".

If the physical type is not a sufficient standard for distinguishing an Indian from a mestizo or even from a " white man ", could the fact of speaking a native language be employed as a basis of classification ? The odds are that an individual who speaks nothing but Quechua or Aymara is an Indian, but the rule is unfortunately far from absolute. In the region of Ayacucho and the Jauja valley very many mestizos prefer Quechua to Spanish and at Chucuito they take more naturally to Aymara than to Spanish. On the other hand a great many Indians are perfectly bilingual. Consequently all we have left to distinguish mestizos from Indians is their way of life and type of culture. But even the cultural elements overlap excessively and it is only thanks to an extremely thorough analysis that a series of valid indications can be obtained. They too vary from one region to another. A detail that denotes the behaviour of an Indian in one place may be that of a mestizo in another. What distinguishes the two categories is the relative proportion of elements of Spanish or Indian origin typical of the culture of each category. The Indians can also be recognised in that they form the lowest class of Andean society. They are indeed well aware that they belong to a social stratum with special traditions and structure. The antagonism between mestizos and Indians is so marked that the term " caste " has been used in this connection. Wrongly, however, because there is no unsurpassable barrier between Indians and mestizos.

What is an Indian exactly ? He may be defined as an individual who speaks a native language, wears a certain costume and belongs to a community having a peculiar type of tradition and institution. Risking a tautology we may say that an Indian is an individual who is recognised as such by the society in which he lives and accepts that qualification. The number of Indians living on the plateaux and in the valleys of the Andean chain between northern Argentina and Ecuador may be estimated at 5 or 6 million. Most of them speak Quechua, which was the language of the Inca conquerors and led to the disappearance of the other native tongues, with the exception of Aymara, still spoken by almost 800,000 Indians concentrated round Lake Titicaca and on the Bolivian plateau. Despite the differences of vocabulary and grammar, Quechua and Aymara are beyond any doubt kindred languages.

The word " Indian " often makes us forget that the Quechuas and Aymaras are peasants who have a great many more features in common with the rural masses in certain parts of Europe and Asia than with their ancestors of the pre-Hispanic era. The Latin American authors who compared the Indians with the moujiks in Czarist Russia are very close to the truth. This observation is

not without importance. We let ourselves be far too easily hypnotised by the word "Indian", drawing inferences that distort the data of the problem. We attribute to the Indians sentiments or mental attitudes that are less those of a "race" than of people belonging to a certain type of culture. We forget that the colonial period constituted a deep hiatus between the Inca civilisation and that of the Indians of the present day. First of all, the Spanish conquest and colonisation were accompanied by far-reaching demographic upheavals. Many communities disappeared; others were created artificially; whole populations were transported from one place to another; lastly, the urbanisation imposed by the Spanish régime had a very marked impact on the demographic distribution. Wars, epidemics and cruel exploitation reduced the Indian population by half, if not by two-thirds, and it was only in 1822 that the demographic curve turned upwards again. The Indian population has never ceased increasing since then and is now perhaps slightly greater than the total number of inhabitants of the Inca empire. It must be borne in mind, however, that for the periods preceding the nineteenth century it has only been possible to estimate the density of the Indian population on the basis of a documentation that is both fragmentary and unreliable.

The Indian Community

Since the Spanish conquest the Andean civilisation has undergone profound transformations that have completely altered its physiognomy. The modern Indians are very different from those described by the chroniclers of the sixteenth century and the social structure of their communities has been so greatly modified that it is now very difficult to establish its original form. Despite the survival of many pagan beliefs and practices, the victory of the Church is complete because the Indians say and think they are good Catholics. It is in the economic field that the changes produced during the last three centuries are most impressive. Agriculture has been improved by the introduction of new crops, in particular wheat and barley; livestock breeding has also developed through the addition of large and small cattle of European origin to the llamas, alpacas and guinea-pigs that used to be the only domestic animals.

But this enrichment was accompanied by an impoverishment in other fields. The arts that were cultivated during the pre-Hispanic era have disappeared or are only preserved in a decadent and coarse form. The extent of this decline can be judged by comparing the products of contemporary Indian industry and the

specimens brought to light by the archæologists. It is true that an effort is being made to revive the arts of weaving and pottery, but it would be naive to believe that an exhausted creative spirit can be restored to life simply by copying the motifs and forms of the past.

An over-all picture of the present-day Indian society that only spotlighted its archaic forms would tend to perpetuate this illusion of " primitivism " which is the cause of so many errors and prejudices. No doubt the Indian communities still maintain the appearance of a traditional peasantry, fiercely attached to the soil and governed by common law. But the development of communications and the advances of industrialisation and urbanisation are fast breaking down the barriers that enclose these small groups ; soon they will be but relics of an ancient order. Thus, in Bolivia the agrarian reform has entirely upset the system of land tenure and this revolution is destined to transform the whole social and economic organisation of the Indians. Already at the present time it would be a mistake to apply to Bolivia the classical descriptions of the social condition of the Andean Indians. The evolution observed in Peru and Ecuador is far more gradual. There the *comunidades* are still very numerous and the condition of the *colonos*—the landless Indians who work in the haciendas—has hardly improved at all. Nevertheless, side by side with these representatives of the old society we find thousands of Indians who, though still farmers or stockbreeders, no longer form part of the old *comunidades* or have established new ones that are better suited to the needs of modern life. The big towns have an extremely large indigenous population which has severed its ties with the land. These urbanised Indians are proletarians in no way different from those of other parts of South America.

The Indian *comunidad* has always held the attention of investigators who view it as the heir to the Inca *ayllu* or the forerunner of the present-day co-operative or even of the kolkhoz. The relationship between the *comunidad* and the *ayllu* is not quite clear ; at times the two terms are synonymous, at others the *ayllu* is described as a different organisation of the community. For instance, some Bolivian groups embrace a large number of *ayllus* whose relationship to the community as a whole is not well defined. On the other hand, we are far from having a clear notion of the nature of the Inca *ayllu*. Some authors define it as a territorial, patrilinear and patrilocal clan ; others reject this definition and describe it as a group of blood relations who venerate a common ancestor and occupy and exploit a common tract of land.

The modern *comunidad* is constituted by several " extended " or " domestic " families which do not claim a common descent but

each of which preserves the memory of its own ancestors. Some communities were formed by the aggregation of families that arrived at different dates ; the descendants of the most recent are treated with less respect than the others, who consider themselves as autochthonous. The territory of a community is deemed non-transferable, but the proprietary rights of the various families are recognised and every individual is free to dispose of his land within the group. Pasture land and wooded areas are exploited collectively. The *comunidad* is governed by the authorities it appoints and renews each year. It is characterised, too, by various forms of collective work. One of its distinctive features is the solidarity of its members whenever they are threatened with the loss of their land. There is no doubt that the necessity to resist the encroachments of the great landed proprietors and the mestizos has strengthened the ties that bind the communities and enabled them to survive despite all the legislative measures taken formerly for their destruction.

Since the promulgation of the Constitution of 1920 the Peruvian communities have had legal personality. Article 209 of the 1933 Constitution provides that " the property of the communities is imprescriptible and inalienable except in the case of expropriation for reasons of public utility, after indemnification ". Nor can it be sequestrated *(embargada)*. Article 73 of the Civil Code prohibits the rent or sale of the lands of the community to neighbouring landowners. The Peruvian Constitution also provides that where the land belonging to a community is insufficient for its needs the estates of private individuals may be expropriated for the benefit of the community.

In Peru there are *comunidades* that have no commons and whose members may dispose of their land at their pleasure, even selling it to outsiders. These are communities that were created artificially for the sole purpose of being entered as such in a register and enjoying the protection of the State. Some communities that are too poor to preserve their structure end up by losing their cohesion and disappearing. Those of their members who stay on in the same locality turn into independent peasants without any traditional social unity.

Many communities are divided into two sectors whose names have as a rule the meaning of " high " and " low ". No doubt these are relics of a dualistic organisation still very widespread in South America. In the case of the Andean Indians, these " moieties " tend to be endogamous. Their function is not always very clear and as a rule only shows itself in religious festivals. On those occasions a certain rivalry asserts itself between the two groups, which may lead to actual fights. Strangely enough, the social significance of the

moieties is far more marked for the inhabitants of towns and villages than for the country people. In an urban environment they tend to create among their members ties corresponding to those that unite the members of a *comunidad.*

Lastly, among the typical attributes of the *comunidades* mention should perhaps be made of certain psychological attitudes. All those who have studied them closely have observed the defiance and hostility of these groups not only towards white men and townsfolk but also towards the members of other Indian communities. The entire community takes a stand against any intruder who attempts to settle in its midst. Anyone who sells a piece of land to a foreigner is ostracised and forced into exile or to live the life of a pariah. Very often the members of a *comunidad* show the same distrust of any innovation. This xenophobic and ultra-conservative spirit is due to the internal equilibrium that the communities have succeeded in creating. If the group is to maintain its cohesion it must resist anything that might disrupt it.

Political Organisation

Neither the Spanish régime nor that of the republics that followed it have suppressed the annually appointed local authorities. In Peru, the term *varayoc*—a hybrid word derived from the Spanish *vara* (cane) and the Quechua suffix meaning " master of "—is given to these officials, who also bear the titles of *alcalde, alguacil, segundo,* etc. The fact that most of the words employed to designate these offices were taken from Spanish is a clear indication that we are dealing with a type of organisation reflecting the European influence. The authorities are appointed by the heads of families. The latter constitute a sort of council which has no legal status and never sits. Their decisions are taken following private conversations and more or less casual meetings. The *alcaldes* are confirmed in their office by the Governor or some other national official. At once justices of the peace, police commissioners, mayors and economic advisers, they perform extremely varied functions; their orders are executed by subalterns called *alguaciles* or *segundos.* The honours paid to the *alcaldes* and the prestige they enjoy cannot compensate them for the unpleasantness of their office. They are more exposed than others to the demands of the authorities of the towns and villages ; they are held responsible for the conduct of their subordinates and must incur enormous expenses in order to consolidate their prestige and authority. The centralisation that occurs in the Andean republics as their administration improves and communications develop has increased the powers of the state officials at the expense of the local authorities.

But, however much most Indians would prefer not to accept these offices, they do not always find it easy to escape them. The pressure of public opinion, the displeasure of the Governor or Sub-prefect soon break down their resistance. In Peru the *alcaldes* are chosen from among the Indians who have shouldered the cost of the feast of their community's patron saint. This is a very costly privilege which usually ruins those on whom it falls; nevertheless, the Indians accept it without kicking too hard, for it gives them a chance to win prestige and cut a brilliant figure.

The Indian Family

Wherever urban influences or the lack of land have not disrupted the traditional social structure the Quechua or Aymara family is composed of several households grouped round a head, who is usually an old man and holds sway over his juniors, his children and his grandchildren. These " extended " or " domestic " families are more or less numerous according to the quantity of land at their disposal. At the present time young couples unable to build their house next to that of their parents or elders are forced to settle in a different part of the village and sometimes even on a vacant lot far from the family home. The cohesion between households that constituted the strength of the " extended family " is destroyed by the dispersal of its members. Thus, in communities where there is little available land, only isolated households are to be found today.

Under customary law the land was divided among the " extended families ". Each holding was subdivided into plots which were distributed by the head of the family among the various households. In some cases they became the property of the family that exploited them; in others they reverted to the community. Relatives gave each other mutual assistance in agricultural work and, even where the ties that bound them tended to weaken, they put up a common front whenever the property of any one of them was threatened. Nowadays this type of family organisation seems to have lost much of its social and economic importance. H. Tschopik[1] gives a telling description of its decline among the Aymara of the Chucuito region in Peru. Even during the colonial era the Spanish Government had resolved to establish personal property on a firm basis and displayed a systematic hostility to the maintenance of the communal lands; but it was only after independence was won that the family system was breached by the Civil Code, which granted every heir, including the women, an equal part in the

[1] *The Aymara of Chucuito, Peru.* Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History, Vol. 44, Part 2 (New York, 1951), pp. 160-162.

estate. The splitting up and dispersal of the plots has destroyed the spirit of mutual assistance among the members of a family. Where land has become scarce close relatives are at daggers drawn over the setting up of boundaries. The " extended family " has really only survived in the regions where the Indians still have plenty of elbow room. It very often happens that a father is unable to give any land to his sons, so that if they do not emigrate they are forced to stay under the family roof in a state of dependence that is often distressing and humiliating.

The dissolution of the " extended family " is also due to the impact of economic factors in addition to the influences of a type of society based on the conjugal home. Its unity, though less strong than formerly, survives in the authority conferred upon its head and in certain services its members are obliged to render him, such as days of unpaid work. It is true that custom limits the duration, but the system of *ayni*, i.e. of mutual aid, can easily become a duty which no member of the vast family would think of shirking. There is close co-operation between father and son, uncle and nephew, and even between cousins, and no one would dare to avoid the tasks imposed upon him by tradition, even if they run counter to his interests. One often observes—particularly among the Aymara—a conflict between tradition and the requirements of an economy in full development. Many individuals would be glad to be free of their responsibilities towards their family, but tradition is strong enough to keep them in check and punish any attempt at evasion. Disputes, quarrels and ill-concealed resentments are often due exclusively to the frustrated efforts of those who endeavour to escape family duties. This antagonism frequently shows itself in charges of sorcery or simply in lawsuits.

Through an inverse process, the collapse of the *comunidad* sometimes consolidated the ties that bind the members of an " extended family " making it a unit that no force can break. Let the interests of one individual be infringed, especially his rights of ownership, and his whole family rises up against that of the despoiler. Hostilities will range from magic spells to pitched battles. But with this one exception the big family has lost much of its importance and no longer holds the social, economic and religious position it occupied in the past.

The Indians in the Haciendas

In Peru and Ecuador part of the Indian population has been despoiled of its land by the haciendas and reduced to a state very close to serfdom. The lot of these Indians—*colonos*, *huasipungueros* or *yanaconas*—is particularly miserable. It has been so often

described by novelists and sociologists and denounced by politicians that it is better known than that of the Indians who have preserved their independence thanks to the system of the *comunidad*. A *colono* is bound to his master by a tacit contract which obliges him to give his labour in exchange for the right to build his house, farm a few meagre plots and pasture his flocks on land belonging to the hacienda. The details of these contracts vary from one region to another but they nearly all oblige the Indian to work five days a week without pay or at a ridiculously cheap rate and to perform other duties such as carrying the crops from the hacienda to the town or serving the master as a domestic.

As a rule the haciendas have gained possession of the most fertile land, relegating the Indians to the less favoured regions. Some estates cover vast areas—up to 125,000 acres in certain regions. Here, by way of example, is the labour system in force in 1954 in a hacienda of some 25,000 acres on the Andean plateau. About one-third of the land was farmed by some 400 Aymara families which were divided into three categories according to the area allotted to them. The first category, termed " of one person ", was never more than 10 acres and required the families classified in this group to supply six farm hands every day of the week (except Saturday and Sunday) for the whole period of the big annual works. If the farmer could not find the requisite number of hands among the members of his family he was obliged to hire labourers, whom he paid out of his own pocket. Since a great many Indians in that region could not live on the produce of the plots allotted to them, the *colono* in the " one-person " class had no difficulty in finding help. The " half-person " category comprised those who had been given a piece of land whose rental was the labour of four farm hands during the same periods. During the rest of the year the farmer had to work five days a week for the hacienda. As for those registered as " quarter-persons ", they had to supply three farm hands during the sowing and reaping seasons and give half the week to the master. The *colonos* had to use their own draught animals and their own implements. Under these conditions the Indians had little time to tend their own farms and livestock and hardly earned enough to feed themselves, even during the good season, and the landowner was sometimes forced to distribute food in order to avoid a famine.

Economic Organisation

Until the agrarian reform introduced by the Bolivian Government in 1953 the shortage of land was the fundamental problem of practically all the Andean Indians. Few communities possessed a

large enough area to give a growing population the necessary means of subsistence and the surplus that has become essential to an economy which is no longer closed and depends more and more on the market. In regions where the Indians' lot has not improved as the result of an agrarian reform land hunger sometimes assumes the form of an obsession. It gives rise to interminable lawsuits between Indians to the advantage of the notorious *tinterillos*—shady lawyers, who since the colonial era have earned a living by exploiting the Indians. The chronic revolts of the Indians that occurred till a few years ago were due, as a rule, exclusively to the spoliations of which a community or the members of a community were the victims. The scarcity of land is the greatest obstacle to economic progress, and a more equitable distribution of the land is the condition *sine qua non* of all the improvements that governments and international agencies plan to introduce. As long as the Indians suffer from land hunger all the advantages and advice they receive will be mere palliatives.

It is difficult to estimate, even within wide limits, the average area owned by an Andean Indian. It varies from one region to another and the investigations carried out so far have been quite inadequate, besides giving only very vaguely approximate results. It could not have been otherwise in view of the Indians' deep-seated reluctance to speak of their property and the imprecise systems of measurement employed to determine its area. The size of a field is estimated on the basis of the number of days needed to till it with the help of a yoke of oxen *(yunta, yugada)* or with the hoe *(masa)*. Taking the *yugada* as roughly the equivalent of one-twenty-fifth of an acre we have calculated that in the most densely populated districts of Titicaca the average Indian's property was not more than $1^1/_4$ acres. This figure is confirmed by the very thorough investigations made by Dr. Tschopik at Chucuito, where he found that the owners of $2^1/_2$ acres or more were considered rich, while the poor held plots totalling less than half that area. The average holding of the Quechua in the Cuzco Valley was about $2^1/_2$ acres.

These holdings, which are already too small to permit the development of a healthy economy, are never all in one piece. The Indians do their best to farm plots located in different zones. For instance, they endeavour to have some fields in the plain and others on the slopes of the mountains. The subdivision due to the quality of the soil has the advantage of reducing the risk run by a farmer in a climate where the inclemency of the weather destroys the harvest in one place and spares it in another. On the other hand, the constant growth of the population and the effects of the inheritance laws have resulted in the fragmentation or, better still, the pulverisa-

tion of land holdings. To quote one example, in the Conima region on the east shore of Lake Titicaca the peasants told me that there is not a single holding that is not broken up into 15 or 20 plots. Many Indians complain that they only own isolated furrows located a great distance apart.

The crops (potatoes, barley, *quinua*, etc.) that the Indians grow on their plots seldom match, either in quality or in quantity, the care and efforts bestowed on them. At such high altitudes agriculture is exposed to many more risks than in the plains. The climate is severe and notoriously inconstant; a single night of frost can compromise the harvest; and hail storms—brief but extraordinarily violent—are a constant menace. The low output of the fields may be due to bad farming methods, though experts are far from agreeing on this point. Manuring is only used for potatoes and even then quite inadequately. The Indians use the rotation system but many of them own so little land that they find it difficult, if not impossible, to give it a rest. They exploit it up to the point where it becomes totally unproductive and are then forced to leave it fallow for four, five, or even ten years and find other resources in the mean time. There is no selection of seeds or cuttings and, what is worse, malformed grains and underdeveloped tubercles are used for sowing. The Indians are powerless against the parasites that attack their crops and, as everyone knows, their implements are rudimentary.

According to Dr. Tschopik, Chucuito, a seemingly prosperous village with a mild climate, counts only fifteen families that can live entirely on the produce of their land. The rest of the population must find other means of existence outside agriculture.

In the entire Andean region livestock breeding is complementary to agriculture. Every Indian family, no matter how poor, owns at least a dozen sheep, a pig, hens and guinea-pigs. The Indians who live at high altitudes depend for their livelihood on their flocks of llamas, alpacas and sheep. Many farmers in sore straits rely on livestock to make up for the insufficient produce of their fields. That is the reason for the rapid increase in the flocks observed in many parts of Peru, where the scarcity of land is most severe. Nevertheless, the development of this activity is hindered by the shortage of pasture. Indians whose flocks have increased are often obliged to graze them on land belonging to the haciendas at a high cost in kind or personal services. On the other hand, those living on the shores of Lake Titicaca are extremely ingenious at making the most of the resources of the lake. They buy puny oxen cheap, paying from 1,200 to 1,500 soles a head, and picket them close to their houses, where they feed them reeds from the lake, which they gather in *balsas* (reed rafts), or with barley in the blade. They

stimulate the animals' appetite by moistening the forage with salty or sweetened water. After six months the oxen are fattened up and can be sold for as much as 2,500 soles. With this money the breeder buys more animals and recommences the cycle. In this way he makes a good profit, which he uses to buy foodstuffs and clothing.

Along the roads and tracks that cross the Andes in all directions there is a constant flow of Indians—proof of an intense commercial activity. This is promoted by the differences of altitude and the resultant great diversity of agricultural produce, by specialisation among the handicraftsmen and, most of all, by the existence of urban centres which depend on the surrounding countryside for their food supply. The peasants sell or barter on the nearest market the foodstuffs that the family does not use and the few articles—textiles, ropes, wooden utensils—made in the home. For a great many Indians trade has become a full-time occupation. Most of those engaged in it are people who have lost their land or own too little to afford them a livelihood. The mountain populations export dried meat *(chalona)* and dehydrated potatoes *(chuño)* to the warm regions from which the pedlars return with fruit, maize and coca. There was a time when shops were kept by mestizos, but now the Indians have begun to take their place and even establish commercial enterprises of some importance.

Indian markets are extremely lively, especially those held on the feast day of a patron saint. But there is little variety among the products and articles offered and the margin of profit is very small indeed. It is only after spending a long time weighing and examining an article that an Indian decides to accept it in exchange for a product of his own. As a rule barter is confined to local produce and most manufactured and imported articles are always sold for cash. This applies in particular to coca, a commodity in which there is a lively trade.

Internal Migrations

The economic conditions that I have briefly described explain the extent of the internal migrations in the whole Andean region. Part of the Indian population is forced to work away from home in order to earn a living. The growth of the population and the industrialisation of the towns have so greatly speeded up the move from the land that the authorities are beginning to be seriously alarmed. This trend, which affects in particular the valleys and the highlands of southern Peru, is especially intense in the over-populated Titicaca region. The focal points of these migrations are the coastal towns, particularly Lima, the mining centres and,

most of all in recent years, the sites of the great public works undertaken by the Government. In Peru and Bolivia the mining industry has always employed a large number of Indians from the Sierra. Except for a small body of specialised workers this labour force is floating. Most of the miners return to their homes at seed and harvest times, but there are many who give evidence of greater perseverance and stay long enough to save up a small capital with which to purchase land and stock. These frequent stays in the mines—a custom that dates from a long time ago—have given the Indians the habit of leaving their villages for more or less lengthy periods in order to supplement their meagre earnings from agriculture.

These migrations are nearly always seasonal in character. The men aged 20 to 40 go off in search of work during the dead season, namely from January to March or from June to November. It is amazing how many Indians, though isolated in their mountains, are well informed of the possibilities of finding work in the most distant regions.

In the towns the Indians work as labourers in the factories or on the building sites. Many are employed as domestic servants. Some of them return to their villages, but others settle in the towns, where they end up by being absorbed into the mestizo population.

Though the Indians have nothing good to say about the hot lands that stretch along the foot of the eastern slopes of the Andes, they travel there in a steady stream to get the tropical products they need. In the last few years many Quechua and Aymara Indians have settled in these regions. Despite reports to the contrary, they adapt themselves well enough to the conditions of life in a tropical environment. Those who say that for physiological reasons the mountaineers of Peru and Bolivia are incapable of helping to populate the tropics forget that it was the Aymara of Moho and Conima, on Lake Titicaca, who colonised the warm valleys of the Yungas and have settled in ever greater numbers during the last few years in the Tambopata basin, while the Quechua occupy those of the Apurimac, Huallaga and Ucayali.

The Organisation of Work among the Andean Indians

Many authors have described the day-to-day activities of the Indians, both male and female, but we lack information on the rhythm of their work outside agriculture. Observations made in this connection show that the Indians do not like to devote all their time to one task but prefer to drop it repeatedly for other occupations. In Ecuador, however, where a rural weaving industry

has been developed, Beate R. Saltz [1] has noted the existence of domestic workshops in which a regular discipline is imposed on the workers. In that country, and no doubt throughout the entire region of the Andes, the custom is to pay workers by the job and not by the day.

The analysis of the Aymara Indian's personality given us by Tschopik [2] contains some very pertinent remarks on the lack of method and even of order he shows in his work.

> Although supervision of the actual masonry construction may at times be intrusted to a *maestro*, or " master builder ", there is no over-all work plan. Various groups of men work independently, labouring haphazardly at carrying stones, hauling water, twisting grass cordage, and the like, usually with considerable duplication of effort. No one takes the initiative in directing the project as a whole, and there is much discussion and argument. Frequent loafing and intervals of time out for coca, as well as the quantities of alcohol consumed and the degree of intoxication achieved, do not make for heightened efficiency.

When we examine at all closely the articles manufactured by the Andean Indians we cannot help being struck by their slight attention to finish and their indifference to the aesthetic factor. Their technology is dominated by a strictly utilitarian attitude. It is really only in weaving that a certain feeling for decoration still finds expression.

The division of work between the sexes is not so clearly defined as in other societies. The women take a very active part in farm work, but are allotted the less heavy tasks. Nevertheless, a woman's work is considered equivalent to that of a man. The latter share in some of the activities usually associated with the other sex. The most typical example is weaving, with the only difference that women use the native loom while men only work on the European-type pedal loom.

The various forms of collective work in the Andean region have been described repeatedly. They are divided into two categories—*ayni* and *minka*. The former is furnished by an individual on a reciprocal basis. It consists in days of work on behalf of a relative or friend who is obliged to supply an identical service under similar circumstances. The mutual aid machinery comes into play chiefly in agriculture but extends to other activities as well. An Indian woman who lends her neighbour a hand can claim *ayni* when her turn comes to need help. A boy who agrees to watch over a flock while the other little shepherds go off to play, knows that he becomes their creditor by virtue of the same principle.

[1] *The Human Element in Industrialization. A Hypothetical Case Study of Ecuadorean Indians.* Memoir 85 of the American Anthropological Association, (Menasha, Wis., December 1955), p. 107.

[2] TSCHOPIK, op. cit., p. 184.

Ayni operates quite simply until, for some reason or other, there is no longer an exact equivalence between the service rendered and the compensation ensuing therefrom. It can happen that, owing to the difference in the size of their estates, a rich landowner becomes indebted to a poor peasant who has come to his assistance; in this case the difference must be paid in kind or cash. The fragmentation of the arable land and the diminution of the area of the plots has greatly reduced the usefulness of *ayni*. Nowadays families can till their soil without having recourse to it.

The few Indians who have managed to form an estate of any size much prefer to employ day-labourers, whom they pay by the job. They also have recourse to *minka*, which differs from *ayni* in that it does not involve reciprocity. It is a job done freely by a group of persons who are given food and drink in exchange for their toil. The host's liberality sometimes costs him dear and *minka* would have certainly died out if it did not involve an element of prestige. The term *minka* is also applied to the collective work demanded by the authorities. Some authors insist that *minka* is a custom that should facilitate the organisation of collective work and could therefore be utilised within the framework of industrial institutions. Dr. Saltz had no difficulty in proving that *ayni* and *minka* were suitable only for an agricultural society and that there was no way of integrating them in the type of work required for industrial production.

Conclusion

In my attempt to define the psychological attitude of the members of certain Indian communities I have alluded to their conservatism, their almost morbid distrust of foreigners, and their repugnance towards innovations. These traits of character, for which the Indians have often been blamed, have nothing whatever to do with atavistic instincts; they are merely the expression of the state of insecurity in which the Indians and their ancestors lived and of their physical and moral isolation. Today these Indian masses are animated by a great hope, which in some regions has assumed a definite shape while in others it is still no more than a rather vague yearning for a better state of affairs—an "uneasiness", to use a term dear to Latin American writers. The confidence and good will that the Indians manifested towards the Andean Mission seemed to me to be symptoms of a new attitude to life. These people have at last understood that there is a possibility of escaping from their humble condition and that they could aspire to something better than the status of a miserable and despised minority. They are well aware that education is

the most effective means of rising in the social scale, and the school is the concrete symbol of their hopes. The Indians are no longer willing to feel " different " or to continue to submit to the wrongs and injustices to which their ignorance has always exposed them. For centuries they were told that they were not " reasonable beings " because they did not " talk like Christians " and could neither read nor write. Today many of them repudiate the name of Indians and want to be called *campesinos* (peasants) until they can claim the status of citizens.

This thirst for education is not a recent phenomenon. Already 20 years ago I observed it among the inhabitants of Carangas, one of the poorest and most desolate regions of the Bolivian Altiplano. On their own initiative the communities had built simple schools and maintained the teachers at their own expense. Considering the scarcity of arable land and the bitterness with which the Indians defend every scrap of their holdings, the fact that so many villages sacrificed an area for a school is an eloquent demonstration of this blind, naive trust in the benefits of education. The following anecdote will possibly give an idea of the Indians' zeal for education and its symbol, the school. At Choco, in the Azangaro region of Peru, the teacher was on the point of hiring a lorry to transport the doors and windows for the school, when the Indians offered to carry them on their backs on condition that the sum saved was used for the improvement of the school. In another village, when the school burned down the Indians set to work to rebuild it at their own expense without even waiting for the arrival of the inspector. I could mention a quantity of cases of the same kind. Suffice it to recall that the hours of work contributed by the Indians to the school expansion programme would add up to millions of soles and bolivianos.

The efforts made by so many communities to build schools must be interpreted as the sign of an evolution in their cultural tradition, which the Indians are not only aware of but anxious to accelerate. We must not forget that in their eyes literacy is a means of social mobility and a system of defence. Actually this phenomenon is not apparent everywhere. In Ecuador the Indians resisted education until quite recently and school attendance was extremely low. There is no doubt that this indifference or, rather, hostility, was due to causes that an anthropologist would do well to analyse. Among them have been mentioned the family's reluctance to do without the children's contribution to its economic life ; the pupils' difficulty in learning to read and write a language they do not know ; and, lastly, the humiliations and bullying that the little Indians suffer at the hands of their mestizo or white school-fellows. But where the economic situation is better or

civilising influences are at work the attitude of the indigenous population is far less negative and tends to approximate to that observed in Peru and Bolivia.

The Indians' initiative, perseverance and business instinct have not been duly acknowledged. In the regions where they are not crushed by poverty, and competition with the mestizo has not raised insurmountable obstacles, they have succeeded in opening shops and even small businesses. The number of Indians who have achieved some degree of prosperity is certainly far greater than is generally believed, but it is difficult to obtain figures or even examples, for when an Indian rises in the social scale he ceases to be an Indian and becomes a mestizo.

After education it is medical assistance that has the best chance of being accepted, if not with gratitude at least without too much resistance. The Indians' health is bad, but not bad enough to justify what amounts to an obsession. They have a great many medicinal plants which are the object of thriving trade. Every native market has a section devoted to herbs and simples, where the most diverse products are sold, from roots and leaves gathered in the tropical regions to starfish and shells from the Pacific Ocean. Indian medicine is a blend of magico-religious practices and empirical treatments that can be really effective in certain cases. The whole Altiplano, from Ecuador to Argentina, is travelled by itinerant herbalists, the famous *callahuaya*, who form a veritable caste of dealers and healers. Their prosperity is a proof of the care the Indians take of their health. In Tschopik's extremely meticulous investigation of the causes of anxiety among the Aymara of Chucuito one-fourth of the replies received referred to health. Every community has its healers and magicians, who treat the sick and prescribe cures that are often both complicated and costly. The Indians place great trust in these " medicine-men " but that does not prevent their appreciating the remedies supplied by the regular chemists from whom they purchase specialities. This is another instance of the Indians' hesitating between two forms of civilisation and trying to reconcile the two. It would, however, be a mistake to attempt to make them abandon their own pharmacopeia by denouncing it as useless and even harmful. One must not forget that they attribute a large number of ailments to supernatural causes. Except for those that are too common to be suspect, they tend to ascribe their ills to the intervention of an evil spirit or the machinations of a sorcerer. When a magician is called in, his first task is to devine the cause of the ailment. If it is the loss of the soul, stolen by a spirit or sorcerer, he must, without wasting a moment's time, perform a ceremony for the deliverance and

recovery of the captive soul. It would be quite useless to attempt to convince a Quechua or an Aymara that the magician's diagnosis is wrong. Only a programme of education at once simple and methodical can dismantle the whole system of magico-religious beliefs. Instead of fighting the Indian magicians and healers it would be better to turn them into allies and collaborators ; they are only too glad to increase their knowledge and win the prestige due to notions received from the city.

Farmers all the world over have a reputation of being die-hard conservatives. So the Andean Indians might be expected to put up a strong resistance to any attempt at replacing methods employed for centuries if not for millenniums. It was therefore not without surprise that I learned that the Aymara, who are considered the most traditionalist of all the Andean Indians, prove extremely open to agricultural propaganda and very glad to follow advice. When the experimental station at Puno was set up in 1952 the entire province used only 350 sacks of guano ; in 1953 annual consumption had risen to 8,000 sacks. Many Indians buy not only fertilisers but insecticides and selected seeds as well, with the result that in some haciendas the land farmed by the Indians produces more than the owners' own plots.

No doubt it would be easy to find other instances of the desire for progress that is beginning to make itself felt among the Indian proletariat ; but the first signs of this revival must not make us forget the obstacles that still beset the path of the most zealous and optimistic technician. Despite all their good will the Indians have not lost their distrust of foreigners, and the rancour accumulated through the centuries tempers their enthusiasm and keeps them on the defensive. At the first broken promise, the first slight disappointment, all their backlog of hate flares up again. The Indians' confidence is not easily won ; even if they seem to be cordial they expect to be deceived, so it is only very slowly and after receiving serious guarantees that they grant their trust. They do not believe in promises because they have too often found them empty. This defensive mechanism has become a second nature, which they will not relinquish until the sincerity of the aid they are offered is proved beyond dispute.