Brigitte Simón, Barbara Schuchard, Barbara Riester and Jürgen Riester

I SOLD MYSELF; I WAS BOUGHT
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Cover: A harvester from Izozog (Photograph by Barbara and Jürgen Ries-
Brigitte Simón, Barbara Schuchard, Barbara Riester and Jürgen Riester

I SOLD MYSELF; I WAS BOUGHT - a socio-economic analysis based on interviews with sugar-cane harvesters in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia

Copenhagen 1980
As members of an inter-disciplinary research group, the authors spent two years with the Izozéno-Chiriguanó. This joint research project is being financed by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft. The central theme is the cultural identity of this Indian group who are guarani speakers and number some 60,000 persons. The Chiriguanó, one of the last groups to be brought into the national society, has a long history of struggle against domination by the whites. "I sold myself; I was bought" is one result of this research and is based on testimonials volunteered by Chiriguanos themselves. The group will soon publish a biography of Bonifacio Barrientos entitled "A life of struggle for land" and studies on employment experiences in Argentina and Santa Cruz de la Sierra.

Brigitte Simón is a sociologist living in Santa Cruz. She has been responsible for editing this particular work.

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This study was written especially for the IWGIA Document Series. Its original title is "Me vendi; me compraron" and it has been translated from Spanish and German by Charles Jones.

The views expressed in IWGIA Documents are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the organisation.

Copenhagen, November 1980
The Documentation Department of IWGIA
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INTRODUCTION

A lot has been said about the development of the Bolivian Department of Santa Cruz; most assuredly, quite a bit has been achieved in this area. The establishment of new types of industry and the extension of existing ones have led to a demographic development which, percentwise, tops the list of Bolivian departments. The official census figures for 1950 and 1976 reveal the following growth:

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<th>1950</th>
<th>1976</th>
<th>Annual Increase</th>
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<tr>
<td>Department of Santa Cruz</td>
<td>244 658</td>
<td>710 724</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Santa Cruz</td>
<td>41 461</td>
<td>256 946</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolivia</td>
<td>2 704 165</td>
<td>4 612 986</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
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The prodigious ten per cent annual growth of the population of Montero, the second-largest aspiring economic centre in the north of the department, illustrates the attractiveness of
Eastern Bolivia, largely isolated until 1950. Since that time, the officially promoted* as well as spontaneous immigration from other departments has resulted in Sta. Cruz being the only Bolivian department with a positive rate of immigration, while those of the other departments are mostly stagnant or even show negative balances. Likewise, it is the department with the highest per capita income: a sign of economic prosperity?

Very little has been said of the reverse side of the coin in the development of Sta. Cruz; and certainly very little has been done to impede the development of underdevelopment. A sign that this problem is hidden in the shadow of statistically supported boom euphoria is the very lack of detailed statistics, which would show that the establishment of a few types of industry with a low rate of employment - or with seasonal employment, which only complicates the problem - leads to the accumulation of capital in the hands of a few persons. The consequence is a growing proportion of the population of the department whose income is far below the average:

"It must be insisted that the index of per capita income does not reflect the standard of living in countries such as ours in which peasants constitute the majority of the population..." (Presencia, 18 August 1978).

An example from the calculations of an employee of the Public Works Authority of the department serves to illustrate how misleading statistics can be: by excluding the incomes of 3,200 families (approximately 12,000 persons), whose wage-earners were employed in the petroleum industry, from the...

* Immigrants come mostly from the highlands and the Valle area; by their resettlement, the Government has attempted to solve economic problems, and especially to tackle the violent social conflicts which have resulted from the agrarian reform.
total income of the 544,000 inhabitants of the Department in 1970, he reduced the average annual per capita income of the remaining population from 3,751 pesos to 2,646 pesos.

"One must keep in mind the regional distribution of income, which is quite unbalanced. The bulk of the income generated benefits a minority of sugar-cane and cotton producers and a few industrialists. The majority of the population lives in poverty; its standard of living is not substantially different from that of other regions of the country. Finally, one must note that the apparent "prosperity" applies to less than 10% of the area of the Department; the rest of its territory has not yet been incorporated into the process of development. All this allows one to draw the conclusion that the enormous advantage of Sta. Cruz over other departments with respect to per capita income is a fiction which can be refuted by an analysis of the actual situation." (COOPP 1975: 14-15).

The truth is that the various booms: the sugar boom, the cotton boom, and last but not least, the oil boom, which have created the economic miracle in the East of Bolivia, are limited to a tiny region in the north of Sta. Cruz, covering but eight per cent of the total area of the department, but with 80 per cent of its total population. This population density, high for Bolivia, is primarily due to the population growth of the cities in the economic centre. How cities manage annual rates of growth of 7.3 per cent or even 10 per cent without sufficient employment opportunities for their inhabitants, can be seen in other South American cities in their suburbs, spreading out like a belt of poverty: their barriadas, favelas and pueblos jóvenes. The situation in Sta. Cruz and Montero is not yet comparable to that of Lima and Rio de Janeiro, but the rings of poverty around Sta. Cruz are growing at the pace of the socially and economically marginal popula-
tion. Is Sta. Cruz going the same way as other South American cities?

Research and statistics dealing with the reverse side of the coin in the development of Sta. Cruz, the development of underdevelopment, are lacking. But the odd warning has been expressed about ominous tendencies:

"The Development Corporation of Sta. Cruz suspects that the dizzy population growth of Montero (10%) and Sta. Cruz (7.5%) results from farmers abandoning the land, a situation which breeds under-employment and marginality, with all their characteristics..." (Presencia, 18 August 1978).

"The bulk of the population growth of the city during the past 15 years consists of unskilled persons from the interior or the provinces; they have swelled the army of the unemployed, from a production point of view; that of the socially marginal, from a social point of view; and from an urban point of view they have caused the suburbs to grow..." (Debate 5, May 1978).

This development is aggravated by a further aspect of the migration of labour: seasonal work. Every year seventy to eighty thousand peasants migrate to the cotton and sugar-cane harvest. Three to six months later, these workers are no longer needed; but they are dependent on their cash income from the harvest because their living and economic conditions, materially and ideologically created by the economic boom of a tiny fraction of the population of the Department, are ever worsening. The number of those who remain after the harvest is on the increase, but not their opportunities for finding employment.

This important aspect of the development of underdevelopment, seasonal employment in the sugar-cane harvest, is the object of the present study.
METHODOLOGY

The methodology and goals of our interdisciplinary work group have had to be simple, corresponding to the limited means at our disposal. We have attempted to illustrate the consequences of the sugar boom in Sta. Cruz directly from the point of view of those affected.

In order to show that sugar production entails a structural problem for the agricultural economy of Eastern Bolivia, bringing thousands of small peasants to the edge of their subsistence level, we shall first present a short analysis of the sugar boom in the department of Sta. Cruz.

It is not our ambition to furnish an economically exact analysis, but rather to sum up the socio-economic data and translate them into a language accessible to non-specialists, to whom we address ourselves. We shall do this primarily by transmitting the immediate experiences of those concerned, supported, when possible, by the small amount of statistics available.

The bulk of this work is thus based on experiences and reports, especially of sugar-cane harvesters and others participating directly and indirectly in the harvest. During a period of two years, in which our work group lived among those involved in sugar-cane harvesting, we recorded approximately 280 hours of material (conversations, informal interviews, discussions and work reports), made field sketches and took photographs. The abridged material reproduced in the main body of this work is filled out by more extensive and detailed statements in the Appendices.

The sugar-cane harvesters who prepared the present material with us come from the "Camba" group; they are
Chiriguanos (see APCOB 1979, Introduction) for whom the harvest, since the start of sugar-cane cultivation in Sta. Cruz in the early fifties, has become an annually recurring routine. The employment relationships and work habits of the "Collas", who come from the interior of the country, are quite different. The sugar-cane harvest does not form a part of their rhythm of life; i.e., they are not exposed to the vicious circle of the harvest to the same extent as the Cambas. This must not be taken to mean that their conditions of life and work during the harvest itself are different.

Instead of over-generalizing theoretical assertions, for which there is as yet insufficient basis, or statistical gymnastics, which at present would inspire little confidence, we have here limited ourselves to presenting the far more credible testimony of those personally affected. The representativity of our material, which cannot be reproduced here in its complete extent, is guaranteed first of all by the intensive cooperation of those involved: we have recorded statements from approximately 500 persons in camps and autochthonous areas. It is also guaranteed by the two-year period we spent with the Chiriguanos, which gave us the opportunity to check our recorded material in countless daily conversations.
"THEY DON'T GIVE A DAMN ABOUT THE FUTURE"

In 1952 Bolivian President Víctor Paz Estenssoro published his Plan Inmediato de Política Económica de la Revolución Nacional (Plan of the Immediate Economic Policy of the National Revolution). This was a reaction to the enormous indebtedness of Bolivia to foreign countries, which amounted to approximately five hundred million US dollars. The small amount of foreign exchange possessed by Bolivia was being eaten up by expensive imports, including foodstuffs such as rice and sugar. This economic decline was the start signal for the boom in the department of Sta. Cruz de la Sierra; the Plan recalled the as yet forgotten eastern region of Bolivia, which in spite of the richness of its natural resources, was isolated from the rest of Bolivia and the rest of the world and economically speaking, lived in another century. A directed policy of development in this area could make expensive imports such as rice, sugar, cotton, wood and especially petroleum unnecessary, and help to save foreign exchange. The lack of means to implement such a policy was compensated for by massive American aid; the government at the time estimated the aid necessary on the order of five hundred million US dollars.

The Plan specified two goals for this region:
1. to create urgently necessary means of communication: roads and railways;
2. to extend agricultural production.

The influx of American money and direct technical assistance helped realize both these goals, and initiated the booming process of development in the Department of Sta. Cruz de la Sierra. The road between Sta. Cruz and Cochabamba, previously passable only in the dry half of the year, was asphalted. In 1953, 5 927 trucks used this road annually; the figure for 1972 is 41 855 (COOPP 1975). A network of asphalt roads was likewise built in the most important agricultural area in the north of the Department. Finally, railways were completed between Sta. Cruz and both Argentina and Brazil; these were not, however, significant until the second phase of the process of development, with the beginning of production for export; until then they mostly served as vehicles for smuggling, from both countries.

In fact, dollars and technical assistance set the desired process in motion within a very short time. Emphasis was first placed on sugar, which increased the negative balance of trade from 1950 to 1957 by US $ 42 780 377.14 (Taboada Calderón de la Barca 1959). Landowners were given liberal credits for the extension and modernization of their production. The Interamerican Agricultural Service (IAS) set up several experimental stations to advise landowners. A machine pool, also financed by the IAS, was placed at their disposal in Montero, the sugar production centre; since that time, however, it has passed over to private ownership. The Bolivian Development Corporation, financed by American money, built a state-owned sugar factory at Guabirá for five million US dollars and granted liberal assistance for enlarging and modernizing the two small previously existing refineries.

These steps, along with high prices set for sugar, were sufficient stimuli for the landowners to improve their primitive production techniques and methods and to cultivate previously unexploited land: i.e., to increase their pro-
duction. In 1958, 5 800 hectares of sugar cane were cultivated; in 1966, 30 000 hectares under cultivation satisfied local demand and for the first time led to sugar exports. In 1978, almost 70 000 hectares were cultivated and approximately one hundred million pounds of sugar were produced over the amount needed to satisfy local demand.

"Sugar: a development towards disaster"? (Presencia, 25 August 1978). How did the disaster begin? Was it an integral part of the development?

We will leave a short analysis of the reasons for the difficult Sta. Cruz sugar crisis, which first became public in 1978, to competent persons involved, and will ourselves contribute but a few explanatory notes.*

How was it possible that surplus production in 1978 was so excessive?

Was this the fault of CNECA (Comisión Nacional del Estudio de la Caña, the National Commission of Sugar Cane Studies), the planning and control instrument of the sugar business? This body is composed of representatives of the Government, the landlords and the sugar refineries; its task is to plan and control the entire sugar production of Bolivia.

"According to legal provisions, any increase was to be previously authorized by CNECA. But various governments neglected to exercise this control by means of CNECA, and increases were made without any authorization by this body. The state itself set an

* The following statements are based on conversations with persons involved in the sugar business and technically qualified personnel. The material is authentic, but the names of those interviewed have not been mentioned, in order not to compromise them.
example, leading the irrational race of increases and expansions. This was all done under the slogan of development, although we now see that it was actually a question of development towards disaster. A disaster which is reaching catastrophic dimensions this year." (Presencia, 25 August 1978).

In spite of world market prices, which have been falling for years, and the predictable sugar crisis, both the state-owned refineries, at Guabirá and Bermejo, have doubled their capacity; the privately-owned factory at San Aurelio increased its capacity by 50 per cent; and a fourth new refinery, UNAGRO, was set up in the department by the Sugar-Cane Producers' Corporation. Further refineries are being discussed for La Paz and Cochabamba.

"Regionalism is so powerful in Bolivia that the central government is in no position to have a decisive say."

"UNAGRO (at Sta. Cruz) should never have been built; it was total insanity. But there's no planning here, just private interests, connections, and money."

"The President of the Development Corporation is a previous legal advisor of the CNECA. Of course he knows something about the business, and will continue to do so in La Paz. Last year the Bolivian government asked Great Britain to send two or three specialists to study the possibility of cultivating sugar-cane in Buenaventura. They came: a graduate economist and an economist from the Ministry of Labour in London. Their report said clearly and concisely that Buenaventura would be a good area for sugar cane, but that from an economic point of view, they urgently advised against building another refinery. President
Banzer received the report, but then the Paezanos made so much trouble that he ordered another study, regardless of the cost. Then the English said that if the government wouldn't accept their report, which it itself had commissioned, they would withdraw, that is to say, provide no more assessments from the British Mission. That's all right for the underlings to say, but afterwards, when the governments intervene, they will probably do it anyway... If the other sugar refineries open up there, then we'll go bankrupt here in Sta. Cruz."

"The people that are pushing the case for building a refinery in La Paz say that the situation will change by the time it can finally start working. At present such a refinery costs forty million US dollars. The custom here is for X or Y Company, whichever gets the contract to build the refinery, to pay a commission, from around six hundred thousand US dollars up to a million, to be divided among the big shots. That's a lot of money, so they keep pushing, since they'll get their share when everything is signed and sealed. They say: 'I want my money, whatever happens. The people will pay.' This is the main reason for this entire business of the refinery at La Paz. Then they make a lot of speeches and hold a lot of conferences to explain everything. 'La Paz consumes so much sugar; sugar from Sta. Cruz is too expensive; people here are poor and should have cheaper sugar, etc.' The government will finally have to give in. I hope it doesn't. If it does, it'll be very, very bad for Sta. Cruz. We here can't permit it, but we don't have much influence on the government. The government is sitting in La Paz and is under the influence of all the industrialists and the people who'll get their share
afterwards."

"The second reason for the surplus this year, besides the best harvest in years, due to the weather, is that we planted much too much. Everyone thinks he'll be able to dispose of his cane somehow. Three or four years ago, when it was obvious that the price of sugar was falling on the world market, the CNECA should have said 'Stop! Don't plant any more.' But the sugar-cane producers are also in CNECA! Not until May 1978 did they prohibit planting more sugar cane. But what happened? They're still planting away, and that's stupid."

How is this expansion possible, if CNECA determines the amount that each sugar-cane producer is to deliver to the refinery? I.e., if a delivery last year was set at one thousand tons, it would not exceed one thousand tons this year.

"Theoretically the CNECA is supposed to have everything under its control: permission to plant, distribution of delivery quotas, how much the refineries are to grind, etc. But it all gets manipulated. This year they closed the gate on me at Guabirá because someone else surreptitiously was allowed a larger quota. There's nothing you can do about it. Where could I protest? Guabirá belongs to the State."

"We have here between three and four thousand farmers, but if you look more closely, there are really perhaps under 1,800. The big farmer makes one delivery, his wife makes another one, then his sons, his mother-in-law and his grandmother. But all the land belongs to him! No one has ever looked into who is a real farmer and who is only a paper
According to CNECA statistics there are 3,895 sugar-cane farmers in the Sta. Cruz area. In addition, there are 1,517 middlemen, who are assigned delivery quotas but have no sugar cane. 2,265 farmers, or 58 per cent of the total number, cultivate from 0 to 10 hectares of sugar cane. Only 3.6 per cent of the total number cultivate more than 90 hectares. Calculating from the CNECA statistics, we figure that the total area cultivated by those who cultivate from 0 to 90 hectares is approximately 29,700 hectares. If we subtract this figure from the total area cultivated, given by CNECA as 60,800 hectares, we come to the conclusion that 31,100 hectares of sugar cane, more than half of the total area cultivated, is the property of 3.6 per cent of the sugar-cane producers (approximately 140 persons).

"For example, a man who had made a lot of money as a merchant planted 250 hectares without having any quota assigned! Later he was suddenly assigned one. Things aren't done in a straightforward manner here. Sometimes people also have a big minister behind them, or maybe the minister is the owner, etc., then of course he gets a quota afterwards at the refinery."

"Next year, if they let us assign the quotas, we at CNECA want them to correspond to the sugar-cane area of each producer. We'll make a clean sweep and do it all over again according to the sugar-cane areas. Anyone who doesn't have an area measured by CNECA will not be assigned a quota. Up to this year, the quotas have been assigned according to previous deliveries: a man who delivered 300 tons last year would be assigned the same this year, whether he had any sugar cane or not. So we're going to change all
this and start from scratch. Of course this is completely utopian, it's purely theoretical; but it can't be done any other way. That's the way it's done at Bermejo, and there's no problem. That way, there are not even waiting lines at the refineries. Here, on the contrary, there are hundreds of trucks lined up in front of the refineries. Because here there are a lot of people who don't have any sugar cane, but they have a delivery quota which they take to the refinery and wait in line. The 3895 sugar-cane producers correspond to the farmers. There are also 1571 persons who deliver sugar cane to the refinery without having any sugar-cane fields or any sugar cane. They're the middle-men, who in one way or another have been assigned a delivery quota; they buy the cane from small farmers who haven't any quota. It's a good business. There are others: for example, a sugar-cane producer, in order to deliver more cane than his quota, will make deliveries in the name of his wife, his daughter, his foreman, etc. So that there are actually 5466 suppliers to the refineries. That's why there are waiting lines. The 1571 go and wait in line to the prejudice of the producers. That's the picture."

Do the refineries also play a role in assigning delivery quotas?

"Not the refineries, but the employees who tend the scales. For example, at X refinery - I can't prove this, but I have it from friends who were there - several persons together bought the scale attendant a jeep, worth 340 000 pesos, to get quotas. I can't do that; I can't afford it."

"Connected with the delivery quota corruption, there
1. "... hundreds of trucks lined up in front of the refineries."

2. "... the refinery can also cheat at the scale..." (p. 27)
is the entire irrationality of transportation. Sugar cane is transported from one end of the region to the other. Often a producer has quotas at all four refineries except the one closest to his land. This may require transportation of up to 100 kilometres and more. Some of the kilometres here should count double because of the bad roads. In other countries they say 25 to 30 kilometres are the limit of profitability. But as long as the refineries also keep paying different prices for the same raw material*, nothing will change."

CNECA: "Quotas? There's a lot of business involved. There are people who have quotas and purchase cane from the producers as middlemen. We're trying to cut this out. This year the producers wanted the refineries to assign the quotas. Everything is conducted through personal contacts. There has never been any change. The leading producers are satisfied, they never have any sugar cane left over; they rather prefer to work with the refineries, because there are agreements between the refineries and the large producers. So they asked for the refineries to assign the delivery quotas. Of course this is against the interest of the small producers. They are the ones who have had a lot of sugar cane left over this year. The small grower has been the most hurt; the large ones have delivered almost all their cane, with the help of the refineries."

In the quota game, what happens to the small producers, the peasants and the peasant cooperatives? Do they have a chance to get a quota large enough to bring them out of a subsistence economy?

* cf. p.22.
"That's the worse case, the small producer! Mostly, the small producer has more or better sugar cane than assigned in his quota, if he has any quota at all. Then he has to sell his cane to someone whose quota is not filled, at a much lower price, of course. So he gets hoodwinked. The worst people are those who buy it from him. The small producer comes to the refinery with a rented truck. They tell him: 'All right, Sir, your quota is filled.' What does he do? Throw the cane away? After paying for harvesting and transportation? Someone comes up to him and says, 'I'll give you 100 pesos; your cane is pretty bad quality!' The small farmer has to sell; he has no choice. But the buyer makes a good profit, 185 pesos, without doing any work! And this takes place right in front of the refinery! Of course, the purchaser knew in advance that someone had used up his quota; he's acquainted with the scale attendant. He stays there the whole day drinking coffee, just waiting for such people. Everybody knows this, so why is nothing done about it? Because a lot of people are involved in it. They even say the manager of the X refinery has sold cane to middlemen."

What influence do the cane growers' federations have; can't they provide for better control?

"Everyone's playing against everyone else; they're continually fighting, but the big fish eats the little one. The federation sees to everything; it pays very strict attention that new cane producers don't turn up. But even here a lot of exceptions are made, especially when the situation is good."

"There are three federations: the Sta. Cruz Cane Growers' Federation, with a total quota of 1,500,000"
metric tons; the Departmental Federation of Peasant Cane Growers and Agricultural Producers, with 204,000 tons; and the Colonias Cane Growers' Federation, with 240,000 tons*. The big producers belong to the Sta. Cruz Cane Growers' Federation: the ones who've been there from the beginning. Naturally, they carry more weight. One year, for example, the federations found out that the refineries had cheated them. The three federations fought together, with the help of the government, to make the refineries pay them back. Finally they did pay back two million pesos, which they had withheld surreptitiously. It was under the Banzer government, so of course the Sta. Cruz Cane Growers' Federation got all the money, since they were his friends and had helped him get power. They didn't pay the other federations their share. They said, 'We'll spend it for the common good.'"

The Departmental Federation of Peasant Cane Growers:

"We've been fighting the large sugar-cane producers for years, that is to say, the Sta. Cruz Federation of Cane Growers. They try by all means to keep the small producers from getting bigger. Or rather, they want to eliminate them. One method is the assignment of delivery quotas; this is pure business; CNECA has nothing to do with it. And even when we do have quotas, we have to wait at the refinery; the big producers always precede us, and we just have to wait. This year they prohibited the expansion of fields for the first time. So what are the refineries doing? Expanding their fields! We wanted to renew our fields, to buy seed and replant fields where the same cane had been growing for seven years or more. They tried

to keep us from doing this, saying that expansion was forbidden. Just imagine, it's absurd! We had to wait months to get permission to replant. Up to now our federation has had no vote in CNECA; all decisions were made without our consent and against our interests. We fought for five years for the recognition of our federation. Just recently this year we were accepted as a federation with the right to vote."

What is the influence of banks on the sugar business?

"In Bolivia, agricultural credit, whether granted by the Bolivian Bank of Agriculture or by private banks, is given in the first place only for a few products, and then only to medium-sized and large operations. Small peasants are completely excluded."

"The credit, the one most farmers need, that is a disaster. Often it never arrives. A member of my party was a manager of the Bolivian Bank of Agriculture; he told me that often agricultural credit is given to people who don't even have any land, who have never been farmers. They get money and import automobiles and so forth. Most large debts, such as in cotton, for example, are not owed by farmers at all."

"Credit usually arrives too late, and in agriculture you can't wait or the time to sow has simply passed. And then, the interest rates are much too high: 16 to 18 per cent! Even in the U.S.A., they're at the most six to eight per cent in agriculture. This is the way it works: the State gets credit from the Interamerican Bank at a rate of two or three per cent. This is passed on
to the Central Bank, the Central Bank passes it on to the State Bank, the State Bank to the Bank of Agriculture, and the Bank of Agriculture finally passes it on to farmers. And each bank takes a big bite for passing it from one desk to another, so that we get the credit, which is supposed to help us, at 18 per cent interest. And if you're a bit late with your payment, you have to pay a high penalty rate which the employees of the bank pick up directly. So, of course, they hope to high heaven that you don't pay, so they can make more money!"

"The banks grant credit; sometimes you get it in time, but usually after the time you need it. Then you give the refinery an order by virtue of which the refinery discounts from the price of the cane you deliver a certain amount to be paid to the bank. Sometimes the refinery is late in paying; the delay can be very great. Then the bank which granted the credit charges the cane grower penalty rates, although it was not his fault. Other things happen too: for example: a cane grower received a loan from the Bank of Agriculture and delivered his cane to the refinery. The refinery made a discount and paid the money to the Bank of Agriculture in Warnes. But the loan had been granted by the Bank of Agriculture in Montero, ten kilometres away. The refinery started discounting in May, but not until November, just recently, did the Bank in Warnes advise the Bank in Montero that it had received payment. Meanwhile, for six months the Bank had been charging the cane producer penalty rates. This is absurd, but it takes place, to the benefit of the bank employees."

"... Abelardo Suárez, a sugar-cane manager,
asserted that there is still a lack of planning in the payment of pre-harvest credit. This credit is payed too late, causing serious problems for the producers. It is never payed on time, not because of lack of funds, but through negligence and excessive bureaucratic obstacles." (Presencia, 18 October 1978)

"However good a farmer you are, you can't farm with a 16 per cent interest. It's hopeless; you can't make a profit. Those who make a profit are the refineries."

**What influence does CNECA have on sugar refinery profits?**

"They've abolished CNECA now; they're going to put up another institute, the Bolivian Sugar and Alcohol Institute (Instituto Boliviano de Azúcar y Alcohol, IBAA), but I don't think they'll succeed. Look, in September, a symposium will be held with the participation of the industry, the producers, CNECA and the ministries; but the industrialists are sabotaging the symposium. They don't want to participate. They're not giving the symposium any economic support or doing anything else for it. It's not in their interest. I don't think anything will result. Changing CNECA into IBAA? It'll be the same; what the industrialist is interested in is a weak institution; he wants an institution, but one he can blame for everything and that doesn't have the power it should! If it had power, neither the industrialists nor the big sugar-cane managers would be able to do anything, because the institution would clean things up. But as soon as there's a weak institution, they can do as they please. And in the end, the industrialists pass the blame for all the disorder they create themselves for their
own benefit onto CNECA or whatever institution they set up, because it's weak; no result will come out of this symposium. If it does, it will be an institution like this one; the name will change, that's all. The Bolivian economy will remain in debt, wasting a lot of government and state money. The industrialists make a profit anyway. Do you know what the refinery makes a profit on? On the production of alcohol and derivatives. Maybe it loses on sugar or comes out more or less even, but it makes it all up on alcohol, molasses and all the other products. That's how it makes a profit. Those who lose the most are the sugar-cane growers, especially the small growers, and, of course, the harvesters."

"CNECA determines the quantity of sugar cane to be milled: i.e., the total amount of sugar to be produced in Bolivia, distributed among the various refineries; and it determines the price to be paid by the refineries to the farmers per ton of sugar cane with a sugar content of 12 per cent. That's the average sugar content; less sugar content gets a lower price. 'Rules are made to be broken,' they say here: CNECA does determine the price, but at the scales the farmer can simply be cheated in determining the sugar content. The farmers' representatives, who are supposed to check the procedure, don't understand what it's all about, or are also paid off..."

"You can say that Guabirá, as a state-owned refinery, states the correct sugar content. Two years ago, Guabirá started up late, after San Aurelio and La Belgica had already begun. At both these refineries the sugar content had continually been between 10 and 11 per cent. As soon as Guabirá started up, it rose to 12 per cent: the very same cane!"
"The refineries' margin of profit is not exactly known. Last year at the CNECA General Assembly, for example, they said they wanted to station people where the dry sugar comes out of the machine and is put into sacks. Then Mr. X. said, 'You can just as well control my bedroom!' Of course the government didn't allow such controls; it's always on the side of the industrialists."

"The quantity and quality of the sugar cane that goes into the refinery is more or less known. Not exactly, because the refinery can also cheat at the scale. What is not at all known, is how much sugar leaves the refinery. Usually a ton of sugar cane will yield about two hundred pounds of sugar, but it all depends on the quality of the cane. This year, for example, the yield was much higher. There is always some of what they call 'black sugar' left over; this isn't listed in the books, but is sold. Of course the refinery only makes a profit in good years, for example 1974 and 1975. Today we get about US $6.00 per hundred pounds; in 1974 we got almost US $70.00: the same sugar! Of course, there was a big business in 'black sugar.' Then there's the alcohol, which commands a very good price here. But this year, where we have a lot more sugar cane than foreseen, the refineries don't want to buy any more: with the low prices, there's no profit in it. This year, all the refineries, including the state-owned one, are selling their sugar cheap: i.e., under the price set by the government, just to get rid of the sugar and get some money in the bank."

What is the position of Bolivia on the world market?

"The world sugar market is no real market. An
Englishman once said, 'The world sugar market is a sewer.' Every country produces too much, and this naturally leads to dumping. We Bolivians are completely under the thumb of the U.S.A.; they determine how much we may export."

"Specialists from Argentina told me recently that they didn't expect the situation to change for five or six years. In 1976 we had a surplus of 20 million tons; in 1977 it was 25 million; and this year we'll have 30 million. Until we get down to a 12 to 18 million ton surplus, nothing will change. The people here knew this as well as everybody else, but they expanded anyway!"

"The world sugar market is split into I don't know how many markets. One of these is the United States market. The U.S.A. have artificially high sugar prices to protect their farmers, as in the Common Market. To keep foreign competition from destroying their domestic prices, they set quotas for imports from sugar-producing countries. Bolivia can't do anything about this; it has a quota of 70 000 tons, no more and no less, and then we have to store 15 per cent of our total production in Bolivia as a reserve, and that's expensive! These quotas are purchased at a set price, which is not the price of the free world market, but a bit higher, at least in the present crisis, but it keeps changing. The U.S.A. practically set the price. Then there's the entire free market, where everyone is desperately trying to get rid of his sugar at any price. Then there's Cuba, which sells its sugar to the U.S.S.R.; but the U.S.S.R. has its own beet-sugar production, and re-sells the Cuban sugar on the free world market. It's a crazy set-up."
"Bolivia is unable to compete on the free world market. In July and August of 1978, the market price was just over US $6.00 per hundred pounds. Meanwhile, the production cost of Bolivian sugar keeps rising; right now it's about US $15.00 in sacks at the refinery. Packaging, transportation, insurance and stevedore expenses add another US $5.00 per hundred pounds." (Presencia 25.8.1978).

CNECA:

"Production costs and profits? Hard to say. Because the industrialists put up a defence. Naturally, they present studies they've had made, but I can't say if they're accurate. We have to accept them, because there aren't any others. But US $15.00 seems a bit exaggerated to me."

The Secretary of a sugar-cane growers' federation:

"It's not fair: the production costs of the cane growers are known exactly: 187 pesos per hectare. The industrialists, on the other hand, publish nothing; they put up a good defence. They never lose money, as we do. I calculate the production cost of sugar at about US $12.00 per hundred pounds."

This means that Bolivia spends - if these figures are correct - US $10.00 to 20.00, in order to make US $6.00. In addition we have the production costs plus storage costs for an indefinite period for the calculated surplus this year of one hundred million pounds of sugar, as well as around 250 000 tons of sugar cane which remained on the fields. Who pays for this loss?

"The policies of the government, the refineries and the farmers these last years have not been dictated by economically rational criteria. Private interests
and regionalism have led to an irrational expansion of the sugar industry, the consequences of which have been huge losses for the Bolivian economy. At present the State subsidizes sugar cane at the rate of 17 pesos per ton." (Presencia 25.8.1978).

In this way the Department of Sta. Cruz is losing a secure buttress of its economy. Without a doubt, the poor world market situation is one reason for the Sta. Cruz sugar crisis; equally significant, however, are internal problems, which, if they are not solved soon, will darken the future prospects of this branch of the economy to an even greater degree.

"Approximately 68 000 hectares of sugar cane are cultivated at present. Considering economic conditions alone, this figure should be reduced to about 35 or 40 thousand hectares; this would more or less yield the quantity of sugar which can be disposed of. Anything over this quantity is a losing proposition for Bolivia. But of course this is a problem, especially a social problem; for the people who would thus be ruined are the thousands of small producers, peasants and peasant cooperatives, whose operations are unprofitable and who have no means. How are they to subsist? The government has no interest in the small peasants, so the solution of the problem is constantly postponed. The large producers have mostly simultaneous investments in several businesses, and have backing in the money they have taken abroad instead of investing it sensibly in Bolivia, to help the country to its feet." (Ibid.)

"Bolivia produces too much sugar; what can be done? For example, in Sta. Cruz we have an estimated annual per capita consumption of 30 to 40 kilogrammes of sugar. We like sugar. The Collas, the Indians of the
High Plateau, consume no sugar at all; that's 2,500,000 persons. If they could only consume 10 kilogrammes per capita, we could sell our entire surplus and produce even more. But they have no money, and what can we do to help them earn more? That's a hard question, and an even harder answer."

Not only is too much sugar produced in Sta. Cruz, but it is produced too expensively, in comparison with other countries. The reasons for this, which have been elucidated in the above interviews, can be summarized as follows:

- In Sta. Cruz, sugar cane is not always cultivated in the most suitable soil: the area of cultivation is limited by the small number of asphalt roads; otherwise transportation would be even more expensive.

- Poor terrain conditions and the small size of operations make mechanization difficult.

- Traditional cultivation methods and poor treatment of the soil cause poor yields. Until 1977, the average yield in Bolivia was around 37 tons per hectare; in 1978 it jumped to 42 tons, but in other countries considerably more than 100 tons has been achieved.

- The lack of irrigation exposes the harvest to climatic risks.

- As a consequence of the irrational system of assigning delivery quotas to cane producers, transportation from the cane field to the refinery sometimes mean covering distances up to 120 kilometres. In other countries transportation of sugar cane for more than 25 kilometres is considered inefficient.

- A poorly functioning credit system delays and impedes the work of the producers and makes it expensive.

- In Bolivia, planning and control of the sugar industry as a whole is neglected.

Therefore CNECA was in September 1978 abolished and re-
placed by the Bolivian Sugar and Alcohol Institute.

All the above factors, plus the incomparably high cost of transporting sugar to the nearest navigable harbour, impede the ability of Bolivia to compete on the world sugar market.

"In Sta. Cruz, sugar, the foundation of the "economic miracle" of Eastern Bolivia, is no business any more, and God knows when this will change."

The economic miracle, however, is not based on one foundation, but on five. It remains to be seen how stable the other four are. These are cotton, wood, rice, and petroleum and natural gas. In the late sixties, while sugar was in a temporary crisis, a cotton boom started in Sta. Cruz, following the favourable winds of the world market. Influenced by tempting credit and even more tempting prospects for profit, many cane growers switched over to cotton, or cultivated both at the same time. The area cultivated in cotton rose precipitously from 4,800 hectares in 1968 to 67,000 hectares in 1973 and 1974, but fell just as precipitously to between 25,000 and 36,000 hectares when world market prices fell. The reasons for and consequences of such a reaction are obvious, and seem to repeat themselves: prospects of quick profits stimulate production irrationally; the domestic market is small and quickly satiated; due to above-average transportation costs, export is profitable only in times of high world market prices; when they fall, Bolivia is no longer able to compete. Small establishments are pushed out of business; large ones switch over to other and more promising types of business; thousands of hectares of land around Sta. Cruz are laid waste.

"The erosion of the farm land which is most advantageous from an infrastructural point of view, in terms of roads, communications, human resources, etc., due to spontaneous colonization and boom-steered agri-
business, has laid waste more than fifty thousand hectares; in the medium run, this could lead to the conversion of this area into one of the hottest and most sterile deserts of the world." (Debate 7, September 1978).

The wood industry, one of the most promising aspects of the economy of Sta. Cruz, due to the rich resources of wood available, is steadily pulling the rug out from under its own feet. In a few years, export production will be more than double that for the domestic market; but quick profits command more attention than investments for the future:

- An inventory of the quantity and quality of wood available has never been made.
- All the various kinds of wood are simply cut, with no thought of reforestation.
- The employment of unqualified personnel in sawmills and the use of unsuitable equipment give rise to disproportionate losses in quality.
- The lack of opportunities for further processing entails the impossibility of creating urgently necessary jobs and solid profits.

The rice industry, 90 per cent of which is carried on by colonists who came from the Valle (lowlands) and the Altiplano (highlands) in the early fifties at the behest of the government, satisfies domestic consumption but has no export opportunities and is struggling with overproduction. A consequence is the movement of colonists, who work under the most severe conditions, into the cities of the Department, Sta. Cruz and Montero, where they increase the quickly growing proportion of unemployed and socially marginalized persons.

Finally, petroleum and natural gas, euphorically feted as the saviours of the Bolivian economy, have, through "oil privileges," turned the dusty village of Sta. Cruz into a city and brought the state an ever growing amount of foreign exchange. However,
"On October 15, Bolivia will cease to be a petroleum exporting country." (Presencia, 8 October 1978).

It will rather, for the foreseeable future, belong to the club of petroleum-importing countries. Is there really no more oil left, or is Bolivia, like other South American states, being kept as a reserve for emergency use by a greater power? Along with a great loss of foreign exchange, this entails for the department of Sta. Cruz and especially for the city of Sta. Cruz, with its explosive population growth, a precipitous loss of the "oil privileges," i.e., the stagnation of investment in electricity and water, in streets and housing, etc., in coming years. This gap is especially to the disadvantaged of the already deprived suburbs, i.e., the marginal population of the city (cf. Prado et al., n.d.).

Natural-gas?

"During the Banzer régime the petroleum was exhausted, and the present one wants to finish off the natural-gas resources of this country... Millions of dollars were used to bribe presidents, ministers, undersecretaries, generals and members of parliament, in order to achieve the denationalization of the petroleum and natural-gas resources of this country." (Presencia, 24 August 1978:12).

One can no longer ignore the voices which sharply condemn the natural-gas contract with Brazil, concluded too hastily and at a disadvantageous price, only to save the present government. These voices warn that the consequences will be that the far too high export quantity will hinder the development of domestic industry and lead to an exhaustion of natural-gas resources within approximately 15 years.

The goals of the Plan Inmediato de Política Económica de la Revolución Nacional (Plan of the Immediate Economic Policy of the National Revolution) of the Paz Estensoro MNR* govern-

* MNR: Movimiento Nacional Revolucionario. (Editor's note)
ment have been attained: by the mid-sixties, the department of Sta. Cruz satisfied the domestic consumption of sugar, cotton, rice, wood and petroleum. These goals have even been exceeded, by the growing export tendencies of the various industries. However,

"the 'bottling' of the economy of Sta. Cruz has suddenly checked this 'boom' of less than 25 years." (Presencia, 18 October 1978:3).

This is the fault not only of the much-blamed world economic crisis, but also of structural problems in the economy of Sta. Cruz, which are based on obvious irrationalities. A specialist familiar with the economic life of Sta. Cruz summarizes the situation thus:

"The government here is subsisting on factors which are based on unstable foundations: petroleum income? That's over now. Whether there's no more left or the Americans are starving us at arm's length is all the same at present. They're cutting down their valuable woods so irrationally that in a few years they'll be a rarity and will disappear. They treat their farming soil like dirt! In 10 or 20 years the entire Sta. Cruz area here will be laid waste and destroyed by wind erosion. Their rice production satisfied domestic consumption; but they can't export it, and they produce too much. Cotton can yield huge profits one year and take a loss the next. Then they have such pitiful sugar cane; it looks like straw. They cultivate several thousand hectares too much of it, too. There's no future in it as an export business. Everything here is based on speculation! They don't give a damn about the future. Speculative profits, which are taken abroad: that's a pretty weak foundation!"
"HOW MUCH DO YOU WANT?"

How many persons are directly dependent on the well-being of the sugar industry? What is the configuration of this dependence? How does the interplay of the various levels function in the organization of the sugar-cane harvest? In answering this question, above all the harvesters themselves should be heard, their analyses and judgements of relations, institutions and persons be made clear.

According to approximative estimates (Asociación de Consultores, Ltda 1976) - exact statistics are lacking - the cultivation of the sugar-cane fields in the off season from February to April requires about 400 workers; but in the main harvest months, this figure increases rapidly to 62 000. If we subtract the number of truck drivers and steadily employed personnel of the refineries, there remain around 35 000 to 40 000 workers, sugar-cane harvesters, who must be contracted in other provinces and departments. They are exclusively indigenous peasants; in the first place, because this seasonal work in the refineries and cutting sugar cane is difficult, poorly paid, and despised by the mestizo population; also because cotton or sugar-cane harvesting is for this part of the population, which otherwise has a purely subsistence economy, the only opportunity to acquire cash.
Approximately 20,000 Collas, i.e., especially Quechus, come from the Valle area, fewer from the Altiplano, and about 20,000 from the department of Sta. Cruz itself: Chiquitanos, Guarayos, and mostly Izozeño-Chiriguanos and Ava-Chiriguanos from the province of Cordillera. How is it possible at the exact beginning of the harvest, when the refineries start up at the beginning of May, to assemble an army of 62,000 persons from distant parts of the country?

"How much do you want?" the boss asks the contractor.

With this question, year after year, the first link in the "advance system" chain starts in motion. The boss, as the harvesters call him, the farmer, calls his contractor or contractors, who see to it that his workers are present on time and in sufficient numbers. During the harvest, the contractor receives, without performing any physical labour, a percentage on each ton of sugar cane cut by "his" harvesters. His task is to organize and supervise the work and keep in contact with the farmer. In addition to this percentage, he often receives a payment per "head" of contracted harvester; and further benefits before, during, and after the harvest.

"The contractor makes money. He watches the harvesters; he doesn't work. Just watching, he gets his salary. How much does the contractor make? I heard the contractor say five pesos each, each man per ton! Just walking around. He brings the workers and is sure to make money. Just sitting down he makes money, and we wear out our lungs."

"They make money; that's why they never quit this work. They eat well, are well dressed, and we do the work."

99 per cent of the contractors are members of communities
in the areas of origin of the harvesters. The only difference between them and the harvesters is that they mostly have recognized the advantages of the competitive economy and made use of them. Most of them are "displaced persons," i.e., indigenous persons who are not totally rooted in either culture, but know how to use their knowledge of both systems to their own personal advantage. The money of the white boss gives the contractor power, economic power which functions as a bridgehead of the capitalist society but is insignificant within the framework of the autochthonous culture, which has other values, communal values. This gives rise to the ambivalent attitude of the Chiriguanos towards their contractors. On the one hand, the contractors are still Chiriguanos: they live with the others, speak their language, and to a great extent submit to the community in the course of daily life during the six "bossless" months of the year. On the other hand, the personal economic advantages of the contractors, expressed in material goods also coveted by other Chiriguanos, are acquired in a manner contrary to the basic socio-economic values of the group. The critical attitude is unconcealed, but rarely expressed in words; the state of economic dependence seems insurmountable.

It is no coincidence that many contractors are evangelists, i.e., supporters of a puritanical-capitalist ideology planted throughout Latin America by preachers from North American sects who consider individual economic success as a sign of the mercy of God, of predestination. The contractor is chosen by the boss and installed as a middleman. He speaks the language of the harvesters and knows their reactions; he settles dissensions, calms dissatisfaction, and prevents revolts from arising. He makes propaganda for the "good boss" and the dirty work; this is what he is paid for. Mostly the boss never shows his face, but remains an anonymous force in the background. This tactic allows him to preserve the image of the giver, looking after his harvesters, an interest which must necessarily also be that of the contractor who
wishes to maintain his economic advantage. A former contractor says:

"First I was a contractor. I earned well; I ate well. But I left that work; I know it very well. The contractor steals a lot, from everybody. He becomes a liar, gets mad at people, when he is a contractor. I left that work voluntarily because I want to serve my people and not deceive them."

In March or April the contractor receives from the boss the order to engage the necessary number of harvesters. The date of arrival and price per ton are agreed upon, and above all, the advance is settled. "How much do you want?" the boss asks the contractor, knowing quite well that by this season the proceeds of last year's harvest have been spent and that hunger and poverty prevail in the Izozog, from which the harvesters come. The contractor has previously calculated how much advance he wants, and the boss gives him this sum as a matter of course because it guarantees him the labour force he needs. The contractor then returns to his home area and distributes the advance to the harvesters engaged, according to their need.

The advance serves to allay immediate need, and especially to help the members of the harvester's family who do not accompany him to the harvest: during the harvest, irregular payment or even lack of payment from the boss often leads to hunger on the part of these members of the harvester's family. We estimate that about 70 per cent of the harvesters take their families along, at least their wives and children, but in any case, old and sick people remain at home.

Just before the beginning of the harvest, the boss sends his truck to pick up the harvesters. According to contract and custom, payment is made for the trip; this payment is usually collected by the contractor.
"The truck comes in May. It takes two days to get from here to there; the trip is nasty, the roads are very bad. They take us crowded together like cattle. There we set up our tent; someone goes to buy groceries. The boss doesn't pay us yet. When there's work, then he pays. If there's no shed, we make a shed. Then we lose a week, more or less. If the refinery blows its whistle, then the harvest begins."

One week of expenses without earnings! The harvester must take this into account when he asks for his advance.

The advance is, however, only a debt, which the harvesters must work off: a part of the vicious circle which usually keeps them in debt for life. This advance system functions perfectly, at least in the case of the harvesters from the province of Cordillera, the Izozenos, who have often been working for the same boss for twenty and more years. The Collas, whom we wish to exclude from our study, draw no greater advance than they can work off during the harvest. Nor can we take into account the seasonally contracted refinery workers.

The economic link between the boss and the Chiriguanos of Izozog, however, is much stronger. One example is a community which for decades has worked almost exclusively for the same boss. The inhabitants of the village of I. have set up a consumers' cooperative: a small grocery store to provide them with the most necessary foodstuffs and household articles such as salt, sugar, oil, soap, kerosene, etc. Since in this area there is no opportunity to earn cash, most of the villagers buy on credit. Most of the goods are supplied by the boss for whom they work during the harvest! The boss sells groceries to the cooperative on credit - making a profit of tenfold and more - and has the individual debtors work off their debt in the harvest. In addition to the advance, debt number one, there is also debt number two, credit granted to
the cooperative. The head of the cooperative explains the situation thus:

"This cooperative work isn't making any progress... There's a lot of debt! The boss just sends sugar, rice, coffee, and flour. A harvester comes and gets some sugar, but doesn't have any money. So he has an account here, and the boss sends more groceries. The people owe 34 000 pesos (US $1 700). Now that contractor takes the accounts to the boss: the list of how much eachpeson has bought. For this he has to work."

During the harvest the harvester is paid his so-called "weekly", i.e., a set sum per week to allow him to provide himself and his family with groceries. This sum, averaging 200 pesos (US $10.00), is usually not sufficient, so the harvester has to go into debt again. He can only get credit, however, at the shop of his boss or that of his boss' relatives or friends, at extra high prices. This is debt number three, which enters into the settlement.

"How much do you want?" the boss asks the harvester at the end of the harvest.

The harvester's total debt, composed of debts number one, two and three, has eaten up and often even exceeds his earnings from the harvest. The goal and meaning of his work in the harvest was to earn money, to have cash at his disposal, in order to buy clothes for his family; books and notebooks for his children; household articles such as pots, dishes and cups; and goods valued by the consumer society, such as a radio, a bicycle, or corrugated tin for his house.

If the harvester's balance, then, is not positive or is insufficient, he will need further credit from his boss, an advance on the next harvest. This will be given to him in the form of a check with which, in a shop indicated by the
boss - usually owned by the boss or his family - he will be able to buy the articles he needs or desires. This is **debt number four**. Harvesters sum up:

"I never got cash from the harvest."

"You work, it's hard work, but you don't make anything. The harvester comes and usually has a balance against him. We're in debt."

"We almost never take money home. We come poor; each year we come to pay off on our account until the end of the harvest. So this way, we have to keep returning to the harvest."

"The harvester doesn't make anything. Look, last year the poor Izózeños left in debt: 3,000, 4,000, 5,000, some still owed up to 10,000 pesos. And they keep returning to the harvest. Why? Because the harvest doesn't pay. The harvester loses, but the contractor doesn't lose. The boss doesn't lose either, because the boss owns the money; he doesn't pay well. If we're in debt, we have to return, and pay and pay and keep paying."

Often the indignation of the harvesters is directed towards the contractor; the tactic of the boss bears fruit:

"I've got 30 harvesters; they've all been debtors for 3,000 pesos: a total of 90,000 pesos. So the people got mad at me: 'We're in debt because of you! they said, 'because you didn't ask for a raise. You're just working for the boss!' the people were protesting. You know what I told them? 'You don't keep accounts of your work. You borrow 5,000 pesos. Every peasant owes 5,000 pesos when he
comes, doesn't he? Then he asks for 200 pesos a week for groceries. He spends 800 pesos a month, in four weeks, doesn't he? How much does this amount to? He works four months, that's 3,200 pesos. How much is that altogether? 8,200 pesos. So maybe a peasant makes 6,000 pesos working. So what money can you have when you leave? They have to get another advance, and they'll still owe. See how they talk! They attack me because they didn't keep accounts themselves, that's their mistake. So they still all owe the boss their advance of 3,000 pesos. The boss had made up his mind; it was good for him to be sure of having harvesters next year. The boss came and said: 'How much advance do you want, boys?' 'We want 3,000 pesos.' Another very poor harvester said, 'Why don't you give me 4,000 pesos again?' The boss was satisfied because now he has harvesters. That's why the Chiriguanos that live in Izozog are poor, certainly poor."

How can four to five months of the most strenuous piecework only give the harvester debts?

The bosses say:

"Because they're like children; they don't know how to handle their money. If we didn't save for them, they'd waste everything. They're big drinkers, they spend everything on alcohol. They don't have any culture, they live like animals; that's why they don't have any money."

The harvesters say:

"Because the harvest doesn't pay. Because he doesn't pay his workers well. The boss gets rich on the harvest with our work."
"Because the bosses cheat us. Some of them are quite practical at cheating. They've got a machine (a calculator) and how do we know? They figure it out in a moment. How do we know? Look, if we send off a truck with 7450 kilogrammes of cane or 9700 kilogrammes, he won't pay us for the 450 or the 700 kilogrammes, just for 7000 or 9000 kilogrammes. I think they do it that way."

And in fact, although many harvesters can add and subtract, they cannot follow the complicated payment system used by the boss. The harvester is paid according to a contract, if there is one, or according to an agreed rate per ton of sugar cane cut. In 1975 the average rate was 50 pesos (US $2.50) per ton. Earnings are not paid regularly, however. In the first place, deductions are made for debts. In the second place, the boss illegally withholds 30 per cent of the earnings as savings for the harvester, so that he does not return home without money, as he says. It is seldom that any of this 30 per cent ever turns up in the final account, especially if the harvester for any reason, such as his own illness or death, or illness or death in his family, quits his work before the end of the harvest. The harvester is only paid a weekly sum which averages 200 pesos (US $10.00) for groceries. Keeping account of his various debts, his "weekly" and the 30 per cent withheld, is such a complicated operation that no harvester can figure it all out at the end of the season, much less keep a running check on his account.

In addition there is the illusion of piecework: earnings are always hopefully estimated higher than they actually are.

All the risks of piecework are to the disadvantage of the harvester. Every rainy day - and rainy days are quite frequent at the beginning of the harvest season - means a loss of earnings. Truck problems and accidents, quite common because of the poor roads, poorly maintained trucks and overloading, entail a seven to ten ton loss for the harvester, if
a trailer is used. Trouble at the refinery frequently entails a loss for the harvester. If the boss has been assigned a smaller quota, this can mean a loss for the harvester. If the harvester falls ill, he loses his earnings as long as he is unable to work. Poor quality cane and unclean fields cost the harvester twice as much work and more for the same payment. The piecework contract or agreement raises the hope in the harvester of earning perhaps 100 pesos (US $5.00) a day, but this is only possible under ideal conditions, although it is an illusion nourished by the boss and the contractor.

On the contrary, calculations of various work groups in various camps arrived at a weekly average earning of around 150 pesos. Food, however, costs the harvester 250 pesos a week: i.e., he had to pay 100 pesos more than he earned just to survive. In other camps earnings were somewhat higher, and covered the cost of food or even exceeded it a little. Still, wages were disproportionate to working time. An average of 14 to 16 hours a day of strenuous physical labour for barely a survival wage, with no social or legal security for the worker, recalls the situation of previous centuries.

Many harvesters are aware of their condition and have analysed the relationship of exploitation. These analyses are, however, limited to personal experience and offer no way out. They are continually weakened by the ideology, constructed by the boss and the contractor, of the "good boss," who takes better care of his harvesters than others do.

"The peasants don't know much, they're easy for the whites to cheat. There are some whites who cheat the worker a lot: sometimes they don't pay him well, sometimes they don't pay him at all; and in this way they get rich. Or rather they make more money and pay their workers less. This way they don't let us get ahead. The people are aware of this. Now there's a boss by the name of X. People from Izozog
have been working for him for almost five years; this boss is rich now because he doesn't pay his workers well. The boss gets rich on the harvest, with our work. He has a ranch now near I., for his 4,000 head of cattle. He's had a bookstore for three or four years, too. He's got a big workshop, too. He just treats us well; we work well with him; that's why we have never changed; every year we keep on working with him. I left with little money, because I had a big debt here. Sometimes because of illness you have to get money, and then you have to go to work to return the money; this way, I had a bad account and got little money."

The clear analysis of the relationships of exploitation breaks off where the ideology of the "good boss" becomes effective: the "good boss" who isn't like the others. The contractor has done a good job. "He just treats us well..." Through the contractor, the boss sells the minimum of care for the harvester, so that he can work at all, as a privilege. Water in the camp is a privilege, because not every camp has water. Four beams topped by a palm roof, built by the harvesters themselves, is a privilege, for many others sleep with their families under the open sky. A headache pill for tuberculosis is a privilege, since other bosses don't pay for medicine at all. And so on and so forth.

The paternalism which has been practised for centuries is not always successful, however; it is losing terrain as the economic contradictions become more extreme from one year to the next:

"The boss only wanted to pay 40 pesos for the har-
vester. What would be left for the harvester? Every-
thing's getting dearer. When we came an arroba of
flour cost 80 pesos; now it costs 95 pesos. 80 in
June; now in August 95. What about a ton of sugar?"
"I came recently this year to work for this boss. For two years I worked there for this boss who has a straw house. First the boss tells me, 'Stay. I'll pay you 1,500 pesos to take care of the house, plus your daily wages.' But later, in February, when we settled accounts, he didn't want to pay me anything: neither the 1,500 pesos nor my daily wages. He'd told me, 'You're going to stay to take care of the house, and I'll pay you 1,500,' so he got me to stay, but when account time came, he didn't want to pay me one cent. He's got good cane, but he's well known as a cheater; but the Izozoeños keep falling in his trap. He cheats everybody, even the people, rich people; he even cheats his friends. I have worked for him for two years, but I didn't get a cent. This year too, we had a bad time with this boss; his cane is no good. Many times it took a group of five a day and a half to load a truck. What can we earn that way? Nothing! I got 800 pesos a month, and I work all hours, all day and all night, too. Really we work all hours.

Here we don't sign any agreement; they don't give us a contract. That's how they get their way. Of course, they work with us for twelve or nine years, that's why they don't even think of signing a contract. And they tell us, 'We're friends,' but if you get sick or want a raise, then there's no friendship. Where's the friendship? They keep saying 'Friends, friends, friends!"

"How much do you want?" the boss asks the regional Inspector of Farm Work and Peasant Justice.

"I'm the Work Inspector. The regional Inspectorate of Farm Workers was rightfully set up to defend farm
workers... This is my task: to see the contract, to see how the people work, the personnel, how the bosses work their labourers, and when necessary make them pay according to the law."

"Is a contract obligatory?"

"Well, there's a decree. In addition we have the Supreme Decree No. 5740 of 1971 which says that the employer is to engage personnel by means of a written contract. And we have to go by that. The boss has to pay only one peso for the contract. This is because we have to buy it. And our salary is low, so the Ministry authorizes us to look for assistance..."

This assistance for the guardians of the Labour Law consists, according to many of those familiar with the situation, in a steady wage collected every month from influential cane growers. "How much do you want?" The path of the harvester cheated by the boss is a farce!

"Listen, the inspectors almost never decide in favor of the poor; they're bought by the bosses. I don't remember what year, it must have been about 14 years ago, I had just come out of the service and worked in the sugar cane. There was a work inspector who went to the harvesters and looked at their contracts. He said, 'Tell me if the boss doesn't pay and in three days we'll put him in. You have the right to complain. If the bosses don't come through, tell me.' He was a good guy; his name was Bonilla. So when the bosses didn't come through, the inspector went to the bosses and got them to come through in a jiffy. This was in the time of the MNR government. Now, nothing of the kind."
Rather, if you go to the inspector to complain, he'll tell you 'I'm sure you're not fulfilling your part of the contract. Just go away and don't complain. The boss is right.' What he means is, 'I'm sure you're not fulfilling your part. You're underneath, underneath the bosses.' Is this the law? Is this the way it is for the poor? I don't believe it! Of course, we don't understand very well what the law says. Sure, sometimes they sign contracts; sure, we understand the words well enough, but no more. We don't understand what the contract says. Sure, we can read, but we don't understand what the contract says. What this, and this, and this means, we don't understand. And when the employee (the contractor) goes to complain, the boss says, 'I'm sure you haven't fulfilled your part in the work.' And what can we say?

How could we sign a contract? In Izozog we speak Spanish, but we don't know the law. Not even the chiefs talk about the law either; they don't know the law either. The only thing we need in Izozog is to know the law.

Look, when they held the last elections, we didn't go. Sure, the bosses don't want us to. Do you know what the boss said? 'That's for rich people.' The elections were for everybody, but the bosses don't want us to go. Sure, the rich people hold the elections; they've got good money. We don't have papers, so of course they'll make us pay a fine when we go to Izozog. They say the fine is 60 pesos. Is it our fault that on election day they didn't let us go and vote? Those who take our money say 'The law says this, the law says that.' What can we say? Like on election day, when the boss tells us, 'Just keep on working; the election is for rich people, not for people that work. The
best thing for you to do is to work and nothing else."

The harvesters are right when they say, "We don't understand what the contract says." How could they understand what rights the contract gives them? It took a good lawyer more than four weeks to find out first, that there are no specific laws pertaining to seasonal work; and second, that all the rights and duties enumerated in the contract either distantly relate to laws valid in other fields, or only entail a kind of common law, with no legal foundation. So even if the boss signs a contract with the harvester, which in many cases he does not, he is doubly safeguarded. In the first place, if the harvester complains to the Work Inspector, almost certainly nothing will be done, for the inspector collects his "wages." Secondly, the legal basis of the contract is so confused, so full of traps for the harvester, that it is hopeless for him to refer to the text of the contract.

"Rich people are like a cooperative; they help each other!"

The various provisions of the contract, such as those relating to firewood, water, and medical care, will be dealt with in detail in other chapters. Here we shall only mention paragraph No. 13 of the contract, which quite obviously violates the law in force. It says:

"Payment will be made to workers weekly or fortnightly up to a maximum of 70 per cent of balance, with 30 per cent remaining at the disposal of the employer to be paid on the day of settling accounts when the contract expires."

The right to withhold 30 per cent of total earnings "for the benefit" of the harvester is supposedly based on Supreme Decree No. 05829, of June 21, 1961. In order to derive such a right from this decree, however, one would need a degree of
logical distortion difficult for even a lawyer to muster. For the Decree states that the employer is entitled to withhold two per cent of total wages in order to pay dues to the Labourers' and Farm Workers' Federation. From the simple fact that something is allowed to be withheld, although in an entirely different context, it is presumed that the cane grower has the right to "save" 30 per cent of the harvester's wages for him. It is dubious how much of these savings is ever collected by the harvester, as we have seen. The legal duty of the cane growers is to pay the worker his total wages, regardless of debts.

The Inspector of Work and the work contracts are, rather than instruments for the preservation and enforcement of the law, effective instruments in the oppression and exploitation of the seasonal worker.

"How much do you want?" the boss asks the head of the Federation.

The harvester's final recourse is the Labourers' and Farm Workers' Federation, founded to defend the rights of farm workers. It is supposed to get the two per cent which the employer is obliged to pay. A cane grower tells us:

"The employer is obliged to pay two per cent of the harvester's wages to the Labourers' and Farm Workers' Federation. This money is dedicated to assisting farm workers: building hospitals and so forth, social work in general. But then a Federation employee and the boss will meet and the boss will say, 'I figure that this year, out of total wages I have to pay you 30 000 pesos, more or less. I'll give you 15 000 pesos.' This goes into the pocket of the employee! Or the boss only gives 10 000 pesos and the Federation employee puts it in his pocket. Of course, if you don't belong to the same party,
it's harder: you have to pay. Then the boss says to his harvesters, 'Look how much I have to discount for the Federation!' And of course the harvesters don’t want this, because this money is only used to benefit the farm workers of the area, whereas they live in another area, where there is no Federation. They don't know that this money is supposed to go to the Federation in their area. But this is never done."

From an employee of the Federation, we hear:

"For some time the bosses have not been paying the two per cent. I'm sure they keep it for themselves. If there's any problem, of course we help out because they're farm workers, but they don't contribute. If the boss doesn't pay, we help out. This happens, it happens all the time. We know quite well who they are. As farm workers, we have to protect them, we have to help them. In any case, we have to oppose the bosses, but this is hard, because money makes the world go round. The boss can go and complain higher up. But we have some strength too, with the Federation in La Paz."

This Federation employee is himself a farm worker, and maintains the hope of being able to do something for his "brother farm workers" through legal channels. This hope has long been abandoned by influential church organizations working for the harvesters, as well as by the harvesters themselves.

"Here in Bolivia there is no justice," we hear from farm workers who, like thousands of Chiriquanos, before the sugar boom in Sta. Cruz worked many years in the harvest in Argentina. The harvester quoted below belongs to a cooperative which planted 20 hectares of sugar cane. The sugar crash
led to the complete ruin of the cooperative; its members are now again working as harvesters in the north of Sta. Cruz.

"In Argentina they make an effort: remember Perón! For example, there are no private cane growers. There are, but not many. All the cane belongs to the refinery, so that the workers as well as the harvesters work for the refinery. And if the refinery doesn't come through with pay, or a raise, right away the union goes, or rather, a leader of the field goes and reports to the union. Then the people who are unemployed assemble and they paralyze everything until they get a raise; that's justice.

Here it is different. For example, I think it was at Guabirá, they didn't pay them for a month, and they wanted to stop: 'On such and such day we're going to stop.' The refinery said, 'We're going to pay; we're going to pay on Thursday.' It was in the newspapers. They didn't pay, but the harvesters kept cutting cane, hoping to be paid, but in vain... Here, too, there's something like a union: there's the Federation, but it's sold, sold, sold to the bosses! For example, here in the city we have the Federation. We went to see them and said we wanted a common title for all of us. They didn't want to give it to us; they wanted to give each one a title to his parcel. We had the papers, everything: titles and plans; and the Federation here in the city wanted to give the land to someone else: a lawyer. If they give it to him, how can they do justice to others? This isn't their task. Knowing that we're now working, we've got a bank loan and everything. And they want to give it to someone else. I think they're just doing it for money. The federations are sold; they're sold!
unions before, but they abolished them. Now I think there's only the work inspectors, but no union. Because that was the time of Paz Estensoro. The whole union belonged to the party of Paz Estensoro. Until the government had enough and said, okay, now it didn't need the union any more."

Instead of concluding this chapter with a one-sided recapitulation, we prefer to expose the reader to the opposing opinions and judgments of those involved. The dialogue below is fictitious, but the characters are real. The authors have functioned only as intermediary interrogators. We have juxtaposed answers which can be heard on one harvest day. We leave it to the reader to draw his own conclusions.

**Boss:** "There's no profit in sugar cane: low prices, high costs! I've been selling off my land for years now, little by little. Recently I sold to some Yankees for 340 million pesos. I invested it all in cattle; I have my ranch. But I'll keep on growing a little sugar cane."

**Boss:** "Of course, but if you really work well - I bet in this entire area, out of 3000 cane growers, there are some 60 or 70 who are really good farmers, all the others... so if you work well, you can make, even now, up to 40 per cent of the refinery price. Looking at my books, I can say I'm making a profit, with no debts, no loans. Of course, for this you need good land, good weather, and you have to work yourself."

**Harvester:** "The boss gets loans. And what about us? How can we pay back a loan? He has sugar cane. We sow his cane; we cut his cane. We do the work
for him, the boss; he makes a profit, selling to the refinery. We've got good land, but we need help from the government. There (Sta. Cruz), they got help from the government; they gave them tractors for their work, loans. We get help, too, benches for the school, a pump for drinking water... but the boss makes a profit. The bigger quota he has, the more he makes (selling his cane) to the refinery. Just sitting in his house, looking at his money. The people of Sta. Cruz are rich!"

**Boss:**

"Of the 285 pesos which the refinery pays, at least half goes for transportation and the harvesters. That's the worst thing, those are the biggest expenses: transportation and harvesters!"

**Harvester:**

"The boss gets rich on our strength. He pays his workers badly. We work night and day, night and day, and we're still in debt."

**Boss:**

"They're lazy, drunken. They spend all their money on alcohol!"

**Harvester:**

"Yes, we come drunk, but from hunger, from lack of sleep. And exhausted by the work!"

**Harvester:**

"What alcohol? We can't even afford to eat: just rice and water; no meat, nothing. And that's what we work on."

**Harvester:**

"Tired out from the work, we still have to find firewood to cook with. Far away; there's none here. But the boss has to give us fire-"
wood, the contract says!"

**Boss:** "Some places where there's no firewood, they bring their little gas cooker. For this we pay them a per diem, not for the rest! We get them as much as we can: water, for example."

**Harvester:** "There's no water in the camp. The pump? Just mud! The contractor says the boss wanted to send a tank truck, but they say it had an accident on the way. We've been here for a month without any water. The boss isn't living up to the contract."

**Boss:** "Just think of all the expenses we have for the harvesters. You pay for a doctor and medicine for the harvester and the members of his family that accompany him to work. If he has an accident while working, and dies, logically you're stuck with all the expenses for the coffin, the burial and the wake, including drinks. That's fatal!"

**Harvester:** "Yes, at the beginning of the harvest he gives you medicine. The boss is still interested in you then. But now, after three months, now that we've ruined our lungs, why should he help us? He just kicks us out. And there's no place to complain. The contractor doesn't want to complain. If the boss breaks the contract, the contractor is supposed to complain to the work inspector. But he's just in favor of the boss."

**Boss:** "The problem is the contractors; they cheat
the people. And afterward, everybody says we're the ones that treat the people bad. But we can't treat the workers bad, since there's a shortage of manpower."

**Work Inspector:** "Well, listen, this is a problem we haven't been able to solve yet. Because we've had Chiriguano contractors that have even been able to deceive us right here. I've always considered people from the Cordillera to be less inclined to cheat. Here the people (the contractors) are accustomed to cheating the workers, cheating the employers. They're scoundrels. I tell you, in most cases, if there are any complaints, it's the contractors. They're no good! If we could throw them all down a well, our troubles would be over at once!"

**Harvester:** "Mr. Inspector, we have a problem: the boss is breaking the contract: he isn't giving us any medicine."

**Inspector:** "I'm sure you're not fulfilling your part of the contract; just go away and don't complain. The boss is right. I'm sure you're not fulfilling the contract."

**Harvester:** "But..."

**Inspector:** "You're underneath, underneath the bosses!"

**Harvester:** "Is this the law? Is this the way it is for the poor? I don't believe it!"
"WE LIVE LIKE ANIMALS"

"On his establishment the employer will furnish the worker with habitable living quarters..." (Contract, no.3)

The harvesters live in camps averaging 30 to 40 persons each, in the immediate vicinity of the cane fields: i.e., usually several kilometres from the nearest asphalt road or village. With the exception of the organized Sunday shopping trip, the harvester and his family can only leave the camp on foot. Even other camps are so far away that communication with other harvesters is impossible. The organization of small camps, certainly necessary from a work-technical point of view, renders communication with the goal of possibly organizing the harvesters on a broader basis impossible. Isolated from the outer world, they must rather cope with the numerous social problems of camp life, with no opportunities to get away. Work and living groups must be put together, and this, as well as living in crowded conditions, often causes friction: even when several families come from the same locality or the same area, and speak the same language, this does not always prevent the emergence of personal antipathies, rivalries, etc. Such a situation can become aggravated when people live in enforced crowded conditions and under indecent
3. Privileged are the inhabitants of brick houses with corrugated tin roofs.

4. "Here we live packed into our rooms like cigarettes."
circumstances.

Five different types of housing can be observed in the thousands of camps. Privileged are the inhabitants of brick houses with corrugated tin roofs: these are a kind of shed, often with partitions installed, but hardly ever with windows or doors. Since these houses are empty outside the harvest season, their construction is for the cane grower an unprofitable investment, so that seldom do harvesters live in brick houses. A boss tells us:

"That's just how these people live, on the ground, like animals. These people have no culture."

The house referred to had an area of forty square meters, and was intended for 28 harvesters, 11 women and 15 children, i.e., 0.7 square meter per person. There was not even room for the temporary beds which harvesters usually make from branches. The harvesters say:

"The bosses have us over a barrel. They have our work over a barrel. Here we live packed into our rooms like cigarettes."

The Chiriguanos are accustomed to living in roomy adobe houses, one to a family, with beds, chairs and a table. The camp situation, with all its organizational, social and hygienic problems, is a harsh contrast to their usual way of life.

"The wind took the entire roof. It was bad, really bad. We were scared; we ran out of the house like goats, some on one side and others on the other side. The tent where we are just flew away too; it flew away. The zinc fell on the arm of Y.'s daughter; it almost cut her arm off. A brick fell on somebody else. All the young people were very scared. I was
going to cut cane, and this wind got hold of me and I turned back. I could hardly walk: it blew me back and to one side and the other; I was really scared. And when we heard the zinc - it flew away, too - we had to hide. My back hurts a lot, because a piece of brick fell on me, too."

"It was two months ago this wind came, this wind that took the roof and the tent. We went to tell the boss so he would fix the roof. But what could we do? He didn't even come to look. It's rained, and we just get wet. Bricks are falling out, it's dangerous; that's what we told the boss. He said, 'Don't worry, boys, we'll fix it.' But he didn't do anything, and we've been living like this for two months. The boss doesn't care if we don't have any shade, if we get rained on. What does he care? It'll stay that way till the end of the harvest."

More common than brick houses are the traditional Eastern Bolivian tapique houses with roofs of straw or palm leaves. They are usually in poor condition and it is difficult to keep them free of vermin, but the main problem is that of overcrowding. The few hours of sleep allowed the harvesters are disturbed in rooms with 15 to 20 adults and children of all ages, where every night at least one or two work groups (five to ten workers) are roused by a truck horn to load sugar cane, and return after two hours to find their sleeping places, stepping over sleeping bodies.

Almost as common are four posts and a roof of palm leaves: a "shelter" which offers almost no shelter from the weather, which in this season is quite changeable. Within a few hours the thermometer can fall ten to twenty degrees Celsius. The cold, stormy South wind and rain is worst for those who have no shelter at all, but must live under the open sky.
"Now he's contracted more harvesters, but there's no camp. They just live there, under that tree. Look, we're just 40 metres from the spot where the refinery spews out its filth*. It stinks; it really stinks! We have to get used to this stench, like a latrine. It gives you a headache. We suffer a lot from the stench and from the vermin. The vermin are terrible. But we don't have any house, just this shed and the 'individual' houses, as the boss says."

Especially in the final months of the harvest, camps without houses are not hard to find. The cane fields around the main camps have been cut, and the harvesters are transferred to distant possessions of the boss or to fields which he has bought up from small cane growers.

"We're going somewhere else. We've already changed three times."
"Will there be houses?"
"We'll just live the same way."
"Won't you make yourselves a house if there isn't any?"
"It depends on the land owner, if he lets us or not. Sometimes they don't like us to make a house."
"Why are you sad?"
"I'm thinking of my family and my house in Izozog."

Three to four such changes during the final months of the

* The residue from sugar-cane processing is not purified, but just channeled into the nearest river as it is. It pollutes the environment for several kilometres. This sewerage leads to such a proliferation of vermin that even the cattle suffer.
5. Open house with roof of palm leaves.

6. "They just live there, under that tree."

7. "...the individual houses, as the boss says."
harvest, especially when working for big cane growers, are normal, and then the harvesters can't afford the time to build houses for themselves. Trees, if available, or truck tarpaulins, are supposed to offer shelter from cold, storm and rain - or from the burning sun.

"What do you want? The harvesters have a healthy life: lots of fresh air, a bit of physical labour, but especially fresh air,"

is the opinion, not ironical, of Europeans familiar with Bolivia.

"They just take us like cattle from one place to another; they pitch us out in the middle of the bush. There's no house; we live on the floor like animals and there's no water to wash with. The boss has just given us a little tank for drinking, but nothing to wash with; and then he says we're dirty. Dirty Indians! The mosquitos eat us up at night, but the boss says, 'Don't tell me the vermin bother you; you're used to them: you've got thick skin.' Even the cattle get bitten: are we less than cattle? The cattle can go and look for shade, but here there isn't even a tree, and the sun burns hard, all day long. He gave us a tent, one tent for everybody: there are thirty of us plus children and women. They just have to cook like this, and they have no shade; there's no shade. And at night the dew: everything gets wet. It's worse when it rains: the tent's no good, it lets the rain through. This is wearing us out; look how we are: the children are sick, the women are sick, we have backaches; but what can we do? They just pitched us off here."
"The employer will have at his disposal a medicine supply, a paramedic and in case his establishment is considered an "enterprise" also a physician whose services are to be free of charge." (Contract, no.4)

"In case of accident the employer will grant the employee a half day's wages for each day of disability as well as food throughout the whole duration of the disability." (Contract, no.7)

"The boss told me, 'I'm going to send you medicine to cure you.' I've waited a week. Now I'm not even strong enough to go to Montero to complain. But that's just the way they are. At the beginning of the harvest and even halfway through, it's still in their interest to send us some pills to keep us working well. But later that's over; now that's over. Why should he take care of us now? We'll be leaving soon. He'll just let us die. Once he gave me a bottle. 'This is good for everything,' the boss said, 'it's good even if you can't fuck, ha, ha, ha...,' he laughed, 'but you people can always do that, like animals, ha, ha, ha,' he said. Once I went to Montero and told the boss, 'Boss, I'm sick; I need some medicine.' 'Yes,' he said, 'here's an injection, boy. It'll cure you.' 'I've already had that injection,' I told him, 'but it doesn't work. The doctor told me it won't cure me. The doctor said you'll have to buy another one; this one for eight pesos won't work: you'll have to buy the tuberculosis injection that costs 60 pesos,' I told the boss. 'What?' he said, '60 pesos? That's too much. How can I buy my friends a beer afterwards? The other bosses only pay 30 or 35 pesos a ton; I give you 55 pesos. Go to another boss; you'll see how he'll treat you. 60 pesos 60 pesos for medicine, that's the last straw. That'll
ruin me. I can't afford it.' That's the way they all are; we know them."

"I cut my finger, real bad. The others in my group are working for me, so I can earn something, anyway. Do you think the boss would pay me a half day, and give me food, too?"

Strenuous labour, insufficient nourishment and indecent living conditions result in approximately 90 per cent of the harvesters, their wives and children returning home ill at the end of the harvest. Tuberculosis, acute and chronic bronchitis, influenza, intestinal infections, parasites, and eye and skin diseases flourish in an environment lacking even a minimum of sanitary installations. In no camp did we see a latrine. 99 per cent of the water available is from wells, the condition of which is the occasion of frequent complaints from the harvesters; the water is often salty and unsuitable for drinking.

"It's not even good for cooking. It's bitter; it's terrible."

Wells are also often muddy or full of parasites. Even when harvesters' complaints to the boss meet with success ("We haven't had any water for four weeks; we've complained five times, but he hasn't sent us any. He's breaking the contract"), and a tank is sent, it only just suffices as drinking water. People who are accustomed to bathing regularly, who are proud of wearing impeccably clean clothes, suffer physically and psychologically in such conditions of filth, vermin and disease, when they are deprived of all effective means to combat them.

"Look at the children; they're dirty. My boy has the itch and his eye is infected. What can the children
8. "Now I'm not even strong enough to go to Montero to complain."
do here in the camp all day? I don't like the harvest; I don't like it. We don't even have water to wash them with."

"Before, we worked in cotton, so the women could make some money, too, if possible; but not now; now we don't make anything. We're just here, shut up in the camp; we can't do anything. Cook and wash, that's all. There's no roof on the kitchen; we just have to cook outside in the sun and wind. It's dirty."

"When we came, little Juan could walk. Look at him now: skinny, skinny, skinny. With his belly swollen up. He isn't strong enough to walk any more. He almost died on me, of diarrhoea. And what can I give him now? The kids ask me for bread; they ask me for meat. But there isn't any, not even for the men, who have to work hard."

The harvest day begins early. Depending on the work rhythm of the men, the women get up between three and five o'clock in the morning to make a fire, make coffee or hierba mate, and fry tortillas of flour. The dough, prepared the previous evening from flour and water, is fried in lard.

"Those lumps that just make your stomach swell up. How can they give any strength? They're just flour But we have to work on them the whole morning!"

Sitting on boxes and tree stumps, the still-tired harvesters gather around the fire in the cold humid morning for their short breakfast: there is not much time left until sunrise, when the sun will mercilessly burn them until their heads and limbs ache. Around noon the harvesters return to the camp for a lunch which has not taken the women much time
9. "What can the children do here in the camp all day?"

10. "He almost died on me, of diarrhoea."
to prepare.

"We arrive drunk with sleepiness and hunger."

Day in and day out, for the five or six months of the harvest, the harvesters' menu consists of rice or dry rice or noodle soup made from water.

"What is most lacking here is meat. There's just rice. Sometimes not even coca can take the hunger away."

"The doctor told me I don't eat well. Because I've always got cramps in my arms and legs, he told me I have to eat better. But what? There's nothing here. Everything's very expensive. Everything's going up. When we got here, an arroba of rice cost 80 pesos; now it costs 95 pesos. 80 pesos in June and now in August 95 pesos. What about the ton of cane we cut?"

In general 200 pesos are paid out every week for groceries, but what can the harvester purchase for this amount?

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<th>Prices (in pesos)</th>
<th>Approximate weekly consumption per person Kg.</th>
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<td>1 Kg. sugar</td>
<td>8.-</td>
<td>2.3 Kg.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Kg. noodles</td>
<td>9.-</td>
<td>4.4 Kg.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Kg. rice</td>
<td>9.-</td>
<td>4.4 Kg.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hierba maté</td>
<td>20.-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coffee</td>
<td>24.-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lard</td>
<td>25.-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kerosene</td>
<td>3.-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coca</td>
<td>80.-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bicarbonate</td>
<td>5.-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soap</td>
<td>10.-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>201.-</td>
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The harvester receives 300 pesos for six tons of sugar
11. "Black coffee and those lumps that just make your stomach swell up."

12. "There's just rice. Sometimes not even coca can take the hunger away."
cane, which he can cut in six days. So that in order to afford the above minimum of groceries, the harvester must work six days. This calculation does not take into account several variables which would make the result even more extreme, such as the size of the family or group which eats together, the various market or shop prices, medical expenses, expenses for clothing worn out, etc. The actual expense for food per harvester is in any case over 200 pesos a week, and will also exceed the meagre 300 pesos if we consider the extra expenses of harvesters who occasionally treat themselves to a pack of cigarettes or a pound of onions; or their children to fruit, candy or lemonade.

"Two hundred pesos aren't enough; that's why we have to buy on credit. And we just buy rice, sugar, noodles, flour: things like that. No question of meat. And 'gasoline'* of course. Without 'gasoline,' your machine can't manage this hard work."

Meat, eggs, vegetables and fruit are all absent from the harvesters' menu; when they return to camp exhausted in the evening, they find the same food as for lunch: dry rice or soup from water, and a cup of coffee or hierba maté. For most of them, the work day is not yet over by a long shot.

* Coca.
"SUGAR-CANE PROCESSION"

The harvesters work an average of 14 to 16 hours a day. The irrational system of distributing delivery quotas means that the harvester must be prepared at all hours to load sugar cane. This generally means four to five times a week, in addition to night work, for which no extra compensation is made. We observed groups who worked 24 hours in a row without sleep. Insufficient nourishment and total physical exertion, in other words hunger and exhaustion, can only be assuaged by a massive consumption of coca; only thus can the harvester endure a super-human work rhythm for five or six months. The number of harvesters who do not chew coca is negligible: of the approximately five hundred with whom we were in close contact, only two did not use it. On the average, a harvester chews two pounds of coca a week: a fixed weekly expense of 80 pesos. Coca chewing has psychological and physiological effects. In the first place, the harvester feels a desire to work; work no longer seems so monotonous:

"Coca makes me want to work."

Secondly, coca conceals hunger, pain, and fatigue: it short-circuits the body's natural defense mechanisms. The
consequence is further damage to the harvester's health.

"We've all lost weight; we don't get enough rest. We come to eat for half an hour and then we have to go back and work hard and sweat without eating well, without resting, even at night. We're exhausted by work."

"We've been working about 13 hours already today, and the chauffeur says he's coming back tonight to load. Night and day we work, night and day. At any time the truck can come to be loaded, and we have to get up at night. Night and day, night and day. Six months, night and day, sometimes till dawn. It's exhausting."

For the organization of the work, the primary responsibility falls on the foreman, or the contractor*. In agreement with the contractor, the harvesters form work groups according to age, working capacity or friendship; each group is assigned an area in the sugar-cane field, to be cut in an approximately determined period. The size of the delivery quota, transportation conditions, and waiting time in front of the refinery determine the work tempo, taking no account of the limited work capacity of human beings.

The number of harvesters engaged is small, in proportion to the area under cultivation and the limited duration of the harvest. This is due to the scarcity of manpower and because in the present sugar crisis, each additional harvester is a burden on the strained profit margin of small and medium-

* When groups from the Cordillera work, the contractor who lives most of the time in the camp with the harvesters, also assumes the duties of a foreman.
13. A fixed weekly expense of 80 pesos: "Coca makes me want to work."
sized enterprises. Thus, as few harvesters as possible are hired, and those few must expend a maximum of effort to attempt to fill the determined quota.

In order to prevent losses, camp organization must function without friction. Whenever the truck, which runs night and day, returns from the refinery, sugar cane must be ready for loading. In the fields, the groups work forward in a line about 50 meters across. The cane is cut just above the ground, stripped clean of its leaves, and thrown backwards. When seven or eight tons of cane are cut, the cane is tied up in bundles. About 35 bundles of approximately 45 kilogrammes each, fall to the lot of a harvester in a group of five, if it is to load a truck with seven or eight tons of cane.

The harvesters calculate that if the cane is good (two to three years old) and the field has been regularly cleaned, five men require three to four hours to cut a truckload of cane. But these are ideal conditions, which the harvester rarely meets. As a rule the cane is five, six or seven years old, and the field poorly cleaned or not at all, so that the harvester must first cut his way through man-high scrub before he can begin his actual work. In addition this cane can be thinner, so that the harvester must cut more of it to get the same payment. For cane of medium quality it requires eight hours to load a truck; poor quality cane* takes twelve hours. One must add the time for bundling (approximately one hour) and loading (about one to two hours.) So that in order to make 50 pesos, the harvester must in the worst case - but excluding other hindrances such as rain, accidents, etc. - work around 15 hours. The hope of cutting on the average more than one

* If the condition of the field is very bad, it is burned before cutting: i.e., a fire of moderate size is set which burns the scrub, without damaging the cane too much. The cane does, nevertheless, lose weight and sugar content from this procedure, and must be quickly cut and shipped out, in order not to lose its entire value.
ton a day, for 50 pesos (US $2.50) is illusory.

"You see what my body's like: skinny! My face is yellow, my eyes are swollen from cane flower. My muscles are tense, my arm aches, my hands are cut. Look at the boys! They can hardly lift the bundles. It's the same thing every day: get up before sunrise, drink black coffee and eat these lumps that just make your stomach swell up, and cut and bundle, cut and load. Eat lunch without meat, just rice or noodles which don't give you any strength, then cut and bundle, cut and load. Eat dinner without meat and cut at night, even burned cane. We're like pigs in the mud when we come out of burned cane. During the day the sun burns so hot that you have a killing headache, and at night it's moist until the dew comes that racks your body with pain. We all have backaches. You see how we all cough. The boss doesn't come to see us here, here where we were thrown in the middle of the bush.

Yes, we're farm workers, farm workers making the bosses rich. Before, when I had just come here as a greenhorn, the boss was walking; now he's got good transportation. And on top of all our suffering, they laugh at us, call us lazy, say we don't cut at night.

How long can our strength last when we work all day? Without gasoline and oil*, we wouldn't even have enough strength for the day. Don't the bosses know anything, or don't they want to know? I think they realize our suffering, but since they don't want to help us, they close their eyes."

If one or even two harvesters are absent from their

* i.e., coca and bicarbonate.
14, 15, 16 and 17: "The same thing every day:

...cutting...

...bundling...
...cutting...

...bundling...
group because of illness, the groups help each other out so that those absent don't lose their income and that of the group is not decreased. The sick benefit provided for by the contract is hardly ever paid.

"There are three of us left in the group. One went to Izozog because his father died; the other is sick. But the others just help us. Tomorrow M. will be working again; at least cutting; he still can't load. His stomach hurts; his leg feels numb. That comes from loading; it's very heavy. The other day when he tried to lift his bundle, he just fell down; he just fell down, crying out in pain, and couldn't move. Now he's a bit better. What will happen next?"

Sugar-cane harvesting is not only difficult; it is also dangerous:

"You have to cut fast, like a machine; but sometimes you cut your finger, too."

"When we cut at night, there are some bad snakes. If a snake bites you, you just die. How can we get to a hospital? It's far away. There's no medicine or first aid station. How could there be?"

"When we burn the cane, it's like hell: the earth is hot afterwards. My brother-in-law didn't see a hole and stepped in it. It was all on fire and he burned his whole foot."

"Sometimes at night with the dew or when it rains, it's dangerous to load. The ladder's wet and you can't hold on with the bundle on top of you, and if you slip..."
Even more than the adults, the children suffer from the working conditions we have described. At the age of eight or ten years, the sons of harvesters begin working as day labourers. They clean the fields after the cane is cut, burn, dig ditches, weed, etc. Unlike the harvester, a day labourer works a fixed eight hours a day and is paid a fixed wage of 50 pesos (US $2.50) a day. At the age of 13 or 14, these youths are promoted to harvesters, as they are more needed in that job.

"A day labourer makes more than we do: he works six days and makes 300 pesos. We work even at night, loading in the rain, and we work harder than they do, but we make the same and sometimes less. Sometimes we're lacking a truckload because the cane is bad or the truck has had an accident or the refinery has had a shut-down or whatever, and we just have 20 or 25 tons for a week: that's 200 or 250 pesos. And they make 300 pesos.

We're not allowed to work as day labourers because the boss doesn't want us to: he needs harvesters. He doesn't want any day labourers; he just wants harvesters. There are just a few day labourers: two old men and three children."

Few harvesters comprehend the relation between working hours and money as well as the twenty-year-old quoted above. He benefits from his experience working in the city. The general rule is, rather, the piecework ideology propagated by the cane growers, according to which good work gets you high earnings.

A random sample of monthly earnings gave us an average of 1,600 pesos (US $80.-). Deducting food expenses, which we have calculated at 1,200 pesos, we have net earnings of 400 pesos (US $20.-) per month for an average 14 to 16 hour
18. A bundle of sugar cane weighs 45 to 50 kg.

19. It takes an hour and a half to load a truck with up to nine tons of cane.
20. "What happens if you slip?"

21. A few minutes' pause after loading.
working day.

The average harvester is incapable of making such a calculation, and is continually prey to the hope of being able to earn more. The 13 to 15-year-olds thus strive to become harvesters. Even twelve-year-old boys are already cutting sugar cane as piecework. The laws governing child labour, which is permitted in Bolivia within certain limits, are violated in the cane harvest. According to the law, children over 14 may be employed, but not in dangerous or unhealthy work, nor on Sundays and nights. They may work a maximum of 40 hours a week. Not even these basic conditions - not to mention further obligations on the part of the employer, which cannot be detailed here - are respected in the sugar-cane harvest; juvenile harvesters perform the same work as adults.

"I was nine or ten when I came to work for the first time. I was working then. As a day labourer, weeding, watching, and the like. Since I was working every day, I had pains all over my body: at night I couldn't lie on my side. Later it got better; I learned how to work. I just turned 14, and this year the boss saw me working and said, 'All right, boy. They're going to teach you how to cut cane, so you'll learn to do a good job,' he said. So when next year comes, God willing, I'll return to the harvest, but as a harvester. I'll know how to cut cane, I'll be in. My brother told me, too..."

One year later:

"Now I'm working as a harvester. My brother - I've got a brother - taught me. He taught me how to cut cane; I didn't know how to cut it. I cut it too high. 'Cut it real low,' he said. Okay, I cut it
22. "I had pains all over my body."
this low. 'Lower, lower yet!' I got down to the
ground. 'That's good. That's the way to cut.' I
had a backache all morning. 'Lower, lower!' The
sweat was running off me; my hands were opened.
Cane is hard, hard to cut. Early in the morning,
at around five, my brother brought me; and since
I was hungry by 10 o'clock, I couldn't do any more
work. I went to sit down under the motacú. 'What's
the matter?' my brother said, 'Come on and work.'
'No, I'm tired,' I told him. 'Is that why you wanted
to cut cane?' he said. 'No, no,' I said, 'I didn't
want to cut cane; I just came to look!' 'Come on and
work.' And I went back to work; I worked until five.
When I got home I was tired, really tired! I hurt
all over; I couldn't go to the field. The next day
they brought me by force. Yes, that's how they
brought me. I worked and fell asleep in the cane. I
woke up in the field. I couldn't take it; I just went
to sleep right in the middle of the cane. But later
when I knew how to cut, it was easier; I could cut.
Cut, strip, bundle, load, cut, strip: it's the same
over and over. Loading is even harder. When I tried
they made me a little bundle, but I couldn't lift it.
The cane was heavy, real heavy, I couldn't lift it;
you need a lot of strength.

We don't rest here; we work night and day, night
and day. Every week, night and day: we hardly rest on
Sundays. So I tell you, I won't be able to get used
to this: it's a lot of work. For example, when the
truck comes you have to go; whether you're tired or
not, you just have to go; even if it's at night,
you just have to go; even if it's raining, you just
have to go.

In Izozog we work too; we work hard; but if you're
tired you don't go to the field right then. But when
23. "You have to cut it real low!"

24. "Lower, lower yet!"

25. "The cane is heavy; I couldn't lift it."
you've rested well, five or six hours, I don't know, then you go to work. So you yourself can say: 'Now, I'm going to work.' 'Now I'm not.'

Here in the harvest you always have to work, all the time. That's the way it is. We worked all night over there: from dawn to evening to dawn to evening again: two nights without sleeping. I can't take it any more: I'm tired of it. But I have debts: 5,000 pesos of debts. Tomorrow we'll rest a bit, do some shopping. I like to sit a while in the square and watch the trucks and the people walking around. I return for half an hour and then go back to the market. We spend an hour or two there and then return to the camp. Sometimes I stay at the camp, I stay there to sleep, you know. When the others come back we go back to work. I wanted to see the procession in Montero*, but I've never seen it. It's supposed to be nice, but what can I do? I don't have the time. We have the sugar-cane procession!"

* On August 6, the national holiday.
26, 27, and 28:
"On Sunday we rest and do some shopping."
"I'm tired of talking to dogs."

The previously quoted statements by harvesters illustrate their clear analysis of factual circumstances and relationships, to the extent to which these are perceived, on the basis of the harvesters' own experiences. It remains for us to see how they react to a situation which they themselves describe as exploitation.

"I went by myself to see the boss; I was head of the group at that time.

'Pardon me, Dominguito, boss; you're the boss,' I said, 'come look at your cane. Not even the cattle will eat it. Because you just stay here, boss, you haven't been to see your cane, Dominguito... We've been cutting for two days and a half and we've just got enough for a truckload. We won't even have enough for cigarettes. We're not going to lose any more, Dominguito. I stayed here to make something; now it's better that I go. Better settle my account, Dominguito. I don't want to fight with my boss, I want to get along with my boss, I want to get along with you. Pardon me, settle my account. Here's your machete, Dominguito; and if you want, go
and get yourself another harvester. That's right, Dominguito; I'm just sorry I've wasted my life around here, I'll tell it to your face, GOOD-BYE, Dominguito.'

I went down the road at least 160 metres, and when I got to the curve I saw my boss coming, fast.

'Tomasito, come here,' he said, 'where are you going Tomás? Don't be a bore, Tomasito; don't be a bore, man. Aren't I the boss?'

'You're the boss,' I said, 'but you're very false.'

'No, no. Don't contradict me, Tomás, not anymore. Do you need some 'gasoline'?' he said.

'No, I've got some at home,' I said, 'I don't need anything, boss; no, thank you.'

'No, no, Tomasito, now be good,' he said, getting out of his car, 'you can't do this, you have to be good. All right, we'll give you more money; we'll leave that bad cane. Over there, there's some cane; you can cut over there. Tomás, 25 pesos.'

'Why do you want to do this? I'm sure you're going to put it down on my account,' I thought, and I told him.

'No, no, Tomasito, I've got meat too. Three kilogrammes of goat meat for you. Let's go, Tomás, let's go.'

Well, I returned. I sold myself again; I was bought."

Individual protest is powerless; it gets intercepted by the boss and nothing changes. "I sold myself; I was bought. I had to," the harvester adds.

"One day the boss' truck driver came up to us and said:
'Hell, you haven't done any work; you haven't cut any cane, you lazy buggers! How can I make my money?'

We all got mad. I went over to him and told him, man to man:

'Little boss, patroncito, don't get mad. Don't forget the thorns; it's not our fault the cane is bad. Don't forget the bad wages; don't forget the diseases; don't forget the bad food; don't forget the salty water; don't forget the rain; don't forget the dew. Patroncito, patroncito, come live with us and cut cane, to see what the harvest is like.'

'No, you're lazy; and the boss does you all kinds of favours: on Sunday he takes you to Montero; he brings you from Izozog and takes you back; he's even given you a flag.'

'Yes, he's good: he doesn't even come to see us here, where we live on the ground like animals. He doesn't care if we get sick, if we have backaches, if our children die, if our women have coughs. He doesn't pay us more per ton when the cane is burned, or see that the cane isn't good and we're not making anything. Sure, the boss is good! More than twenty of us have been serving the boss for more than five years; some for more than ten years. What have we got to show for it? Do we have a truck, like the boss? He's got three. Do we have a shop, a workshop, cattle on a ranch: good cattle? There are more than twenty of us, and only one of him. Whom did he make his money on? He used to ride a bike and now he has a pick-up.'

'Well, look at the bold revolutionaries! Indians that want to be people. I'm tired of talking to dogs!'

He got into his truck and left. Did I say some-
thing bad? They call us dogs, treat us like animals. That's the limit. The truck driver went to the boss and said:

'It looks like the boys don't want to have anything to do with cane any more!'

The boss got really mad; he took the truck driver seriously.

'Hell,' I told my countrymen: 'let's strike!'

For three days we looked for transportation. There was no food left for our children, our women and us. Since we didn't have any money for the fare, I pawned my radio for 80 pesos. So we all went to Montero to talk to the boss. We stopped in front of his shop, and when he left his house and got into his car to go to Santa Cruz, he didn't even look at us: he started his car and almost ran over me, that's how mad he was. Hell, because of this dog of a truck driver, here we were on the street, far away from our land, without any money. Well, there was nothing to do in town. We went to the store and asked the lady to give us food and money to rent a truck to take us straight back to Izozog. We had to strike! We returned to the camp and packed our clothes. We rationed the food, so it would last us to Izozog. I pawned my radio again, this time for only 50 pesos, so our contractor could go to Montero and get a truck to take us to Izozog.

Early the next morning, the boss' car drove into the camp. We all came out of our house: the children, the women, and all the harvesters, to hear what the boss would say. The boss stopped his new car and got out of it.

'What's going on? Do you want to make money or not?'

Then I went up to him again and said:

'Your truck driver came to us and said, 'Hell, you haven't done any work, you lazy bastards.' He
called us dogs. Boss, we live like animals, thrown out here in the middle of the bush like animals; but we're not dogs. We were born of a mother and a father. You know your cane isn't any good, boss; it's eight to fifteen year old. It isn't any good: you have to burn it, and burned cane isn't any good. There are big thorns, you can't get through, you can't make any money. There's no kerosene to cut by at night. We've got backaches. You know, boss, we've served you for many years: year in and year out we keep coming and going, and make almost nothing. You know, boss, you're rich because of our muscles, but we're not dogs: we're just poor, but we're people.'

'All right, all right,' said the boss, 'let's not talk about rich and poor. If you want to go back to work, here's a pound of coca. Be tough boys and go back to work!'

So we stayed. We worked like we always do, but that year we all worked together to buy benches for our school. We asked the boss if he could take the benches to Izozog. 'All right,' he said. But when the harvest was over, he didn't want to take them. He said, 'You didn't do a good job this year.' So the benches stayed where they were, and the kids went to school with no benches. The next year the boss sent the benches in the truck he sent to pick up his harvesters. Naturally, the boss didn't want to send a truck just to deliver the benches. That's just the way the karais* are. We know them pretty well!'

Why do even group protests fail? Why is the idea of a strike against recognized injustice, once adopted, not

* Karai: white man (Editor's note).
carried out? Because of apathy or fatalism? The following will illustrate one of the main reasons preventing direct actions against the boss.

"At this time I went to the boss; the others sent me, to speak for everyone. The contractor didn't do anything, you see, and now he doesn't have any more people: he's finished.

'Well,' I said, 'look, Mr. X: your cane is old, it's bad, it's no good. We have to cut it because we're contracted, but we don't know how much the price should go up. This cane of yours is no good; there's nothing in the furrow. Mr. X,' I told him, 'go take a look at it first, before setting a price.'

'Just cut it,' he said,' I paid 50 and more.' No, he said 60, that's just what he said. 'All right, if you don't want to work, you'll see.'

'All right, Mr. X,' I said, 'I made an agreement with you and I have to comply because it's a contract. I'm not going to leave,' I said, 'because I just made an agreement: we made a contract with you. I signed a contract and I have to comply,' I said, 'like the law says. But now next year I'm not going to come, because this year will surely be a bad year for us - just so far it's been bad for us. You've got money, Mr. X,' I said, 'if you can't find people to do your cutting, bring a thousand pesos, a hundred pesos and put it in every furrow to get your cane cut,' I said.

You should have seen the way he looked at me!

'We'll see who'll work your plot;' I said, 'up to now we're the only ones who have done your work, but next year you won't have any workers, so put a hundred pesos in every furrow, and see who'll cut your plot,' I said. He kept quiet.
'We'll just cut; no raise, but what can we do? We have a contract, and we have to comply until the end of the harvest.'

During the day the boss came and said, 'Cut that cane. Just cut it, boys; the refinery wants cane.'

'Are we machines?'

'Just work and if you need something just tell me,' he said.

'Do you know what I need, Mr. X?'

'What, boy?'

'Some relief!'

So we left this boss. We had worked for him for many years, and he had always been good, but no more. Now we work for another. We settled our account with Mr. X and got an advance from another boss.'

The main goal of all demands, which can lead to confrontations with the boss which are masterfully contrived from a rhetorical point of view, is a raise in wages: i.e., a higher payment for poor quality cane, which is even provided for in the contract (No. 10). If the boss' non-observance of the contract becomes too obvious - for the harvesters cannot see through the entire poorly founded legal basis of the contract itself - the harvesters give notice of quitting, as in the above quotation, but stay within the framework of the contract. The contract, which for the Cordillera harvesters is an unbreakable law, sets the limit of all their actions.

"Because of the contract we comply; it's because of the contract. That's how our ideas are. Once the boss behaved bad and we left him. We'll leave any boss; we don't want to fight with him again."
The sanction remains individual, although the harvesters realize that this law "which we are complying with like men, is in favour of the rich." The harvester is incapable of understanding the legal and total economic basis; his experience has only taught him that his fear of non-compliance with the contract is justified, that the boss, "as owner of the money," as well as with all the institutions at his disposal, is stronger. Is he really always stronger?

"Is this the way the law is for the poor? I don't believe it!"

The harvesters continually play rhetorically with this doubt:

"Let's see who'll cut his cane, tend his field, cut his cane!"

"Who'll do his work for him if we don't?"

The idea that the union of all harvesters would be a power against which the cane growers could hardly prevail, would put the problem on another plane, which would transcend that of individual conflicts. The experiences of older harvesters in the harvest in Argentina, and the example of the Collas, more experienced because of their socio-economic situation at home, are, as conditions in the harvest become increasingly inhuman, showing workers from the Cordillera a new path, which, however, has so far been recognized and advocated by only a few of them.

"Well, the Collas are really great. They're united. Not just two people go and complain: they all go, they all shout. I worked with them: 300 Collas and 65 of us, in cotton... the boss was cheating on the weight. The Collas got mad at the administrator. He
said:
'Well, I can't settle it; the boss can. I'll
tell the boss. Tomorrow we'll take care of it.'
The Collas said:
'If he doesn't give us a raise, we won't work.
Nobody! Everybody come tomorrow at four in the
morning.'
We went early and the Collas had a meeting:
'We're all going to complain. If he won't pay,
we'll leave him.'
The contractor went to the boss.
'Pardon me, Sir, the people want to talk to you,'
he said and just left. The contractor just stayed
there with the workers.
'Boss, we want a raise. The weighers cheat us...' The
boss got mad. 'How can I give you a raise. I
can't afford it...'
The Collas shouted: 'We'll cut off his balls!'
'What about the contract?'
'There's a contract, but it's a contract with a
good boss. We signed a contract, but not for you to
cheat us. We signed a contract for you to pay well.
If we don't settle this, we'll go to Sta. Cruz. We'll
be all right there; there are 400 of us. Go tell the
police to come and put us in jail for no reason and
you'll see,' they said.
Then the Collas got all worked up; they were all
shouting, 'He can't, he can't!' They got all worked
up about the boss; even I was shouting, yes, shout-
ing: 'Give it to him, damn it, put him up the post,
give it to him good.' All the Izozeños were shouting
with the Collas...
Some went over and started playing in the yard,
but the boss got mad. Then they got an idea, those
Collas, 'Let's play and get the boss mad, let's
get him madder!' And damn it, we played there. The
boss just looked on: what could he do? We were strong and united. Let him get mad for one day; let the boss get mad, damn it!.

We played all day that day. We bought our groceries; chipped in to buy food and played. Damn it, even old men were playing, and the boss got madder and madder.

The next day we rang a bell: 'Let's go and see him.' And again, 'If he doesn't come through in 24 hours, if he doesn't accept, then that's enough!'
The bell rang at six, The people were like ants.

'Okay, boys, I called you to offer 35 pesos.'
'It's too little, too little,' shouted the people.

'Thirty-eight!'
'It's too little, boss. Too little! We want forty, boss!'

'All right, I'll pay you forty.' And the people were satisfied.

Union is strength, don't you see? That's what the Collas have, and that time we were shouting with them; but alone we're cowards. They always have a union leader along. That's how they are, with a leader who knows: that's what we need."

"You can strike, but what happens is that you can't do it with the other boys. I could do it with several, but they wouldn't help me later and I'd be in trouble, I'd have to pay: he'd throw me out, he'd say, 'Because of this man my work is going bad.'

I told the boys, 'Let's strike; let's complain. Let's not fight with the boss. Let's speak calmly. You speak Guaraní, and I'll speak Spanish with the boss. You'll be there talking, chatting; but the boss doesn't understand Guaraní, what you're complaining about. We'll be talking away like parrots,
and that'll scare him,' I said. 'If I go by myself and complain, and you just keep quiet, I'll get in bad with the boss. He'll just blame me and we won't get anything. Nothing. We have to go all of us.'

Well, some of the boys can't speak Spanish, so they're afraid. And they're in debt; they don't want to lose their job. But can they get anything this way? I told them, 'The boss can't kick us out. He needs us. Otherwise, who'd cut his cane?' But they're afraid; they don't know.

That's why we want to set up a union, all of us. In Sta. Cruz we could set up a union with the Collas, agree with them on a raise. And if the bosses don't agree, along with the Collas we can close the refinery and shut the bosses down. First we ourselves have to be united, talk it over with our chief: he has the authority. We want to have a leader for all the harvesters of Izozog. Let's say, if we make a union like we think for workers and appoint a leader, each one of us can pay five pesos to the leader for his expenses; he can't pay out of his own pocket. For his travel. For him to go back and forth and represent us in Montero.

Here we can unite and this union can join the Federation, and we can get a paper, and when we show it to the boss, he'll know who the leader is. If the leader comes, he'll have authority, he'll discuss the price for the cane. He'll have to come and see the cane: he'll see some bad hectares and he'll have to go and say, 'Your cane's no good, we need a higher rate.'

The boss won't say anything, because the leader will have authorization. We won't go and fight with the boss; we don't want that, we just want to work with him.

Look, we've signed a contract; that contract is
for us, and it's for the boss, too. If the boss behaves bad, that's against the contract. Of course, the boss won't like us having a leader, because now everything will be signed and sealed, now the worker will be giving orders.

Even if the boss doesn't like it, it's in his interest, to keep from fighting. It'll be good."
What are the reasons for which the Izozeños leave their villages for almost six months every year, to work in the north of Sta. Cruz under the conditions described above: for a starvation wage, as farm workers without legal protection? What are the economic and socio-cultural consequences of this exodus?

The Izozeño-Chiriguanos are the only lowland Indians of Bolivia who have possessed titles to their land since the beginning of the twentieth century, due to their own efforts. Their conflicts with white cattle ranchers in the area remain within limits: the Izozeños are able to cultivate their fields undisturbed. They primarily cultivate maize and rice for their own needs: the nearest markets, at Sta. Cruz or Camiri, are 300 kilometres away. Their production is meagre, however, even for their own consumption, and is often insufficient: rice producers must purchase rice, and traditional vegetables are hardly cultivated any more, or not at all. The necessity of buying increases from year to year, and to such an extent that income from the sale of small animals - primarily goats - is no longer sufficient. Peasants must leave their area, in which there is no opportunity to earn money; the exodus to the harvest has become a necessary annual routine.
The above analysis seems obvious, but it does not take into consideration that development and underdevelopment are aspects of one and the same process, both aspects being causes and effects of each other. In other words, it is an oversimplification to assume that the increasing decline of the Izozeno economy is the reason for the migration of the Izozenos to the economic center of Sta. Cruz. Such an analysis excludes the question of how an economic and social system that has functioned for four centuries can be rendered unviable within four decades.

The precipitous boom of the Sta. Cruz economy, described in the first chapter, led within a few years to a need for manpower which far exceeded the potential at hand. In addition, the total of sixty to eighty thousand farm workers each year in cotton and sugar-cane harvesting are only employed seasonally; after the harvest there are no job opportunities for them, so that they must return to their places of origin. The process of growing mutual dependence between agriculturally marginal areas and the economic center was begun, but with opposite signs of development and underdevelopment. Increasing communication with the national society, and especially the penetration of merchants into the marginal areas, created needs and a dependence previously unknown. The ground was prepared for the contractors, who came later.

"I don't like the harvest, but we go out of necessity. You have to get all the nice things for your home. Here you can't get anything: nothing, there's nothing. Not the least little thing such as a pot, a pail, a bicycle, knives and forks for my wife, a radio, or clothes for my family. We have to buy all these things. Zinc for the roof. That's why we leave our village: to get something so we can live better. We have products we could sell, too, but where? There's no market. If I sell a goat, for example, I can get
80 or 100 pesos: a maximum of 120 pesos. This is just money to buy sugar, noodles, flour, fat, soap, things like that, you know? It isn't even enough; all the money goes. The merchants pay poorly; in Montero they'd sell the same goat for 400 pesos. And the more you lose your cattle, the more it hurts you. That's why we go to the harvest."

Thousands of peasants go to the harvest to help the agricultural economy of Sta. Cruz on its boom:

"The bosses get rich on our strength."

It remains to see the other side of the coin of development: the effect of the harvest on the area where the Izozeños live.
"WE RETURN RUINED"

Diseased, undernourished and exhausted, the harvesters return to Izozog in October, a time at which they need all their strength to prepare their fields for sowing before the rains come. But at first they have to repair the damage which has occurred during their absence: to fix up the house; to repair the fences around the fields, which have been broken into by cattle and wild animals; etc..

"The cattle do a lot of damage: goats get in everywhere. I have to fix the entire fence."

"Once my entire fence burned down. I built a new one with my friends. They helped me. Otherwise, there would have been no time to sow."

"We return in October; first we fix up everything. Not until November can we weed. We have to clean up the fields and sow, because the rains are coming. In father's time we used to work with an ox in September. Three hectares; we cleaned them and planted rice. When the first rain comes, the field is clean, so we can irrigate. Now we just cultivate one or two
hectares or less, and we're still poor. What is one hectare for a whole family? It lasts for three or four months. But we don't have enough time. We don't return until October, and we return ruined."

The economic analysis by the harvester of the consequences of the harvest is clear and unambiguous: six months spent away do not allow enough time to cultivate even for a subsistence level, let alone enough vegetables and fruit to improve his diet. The vicious circle closes, and the theory that economic development is the cause and effect of under-development finds its proof in reality.

"Sometimes when we go to the sugar-cane harvest, we also lose our own harvest, because the truck comes and we have to go. We sow late, so our harvest is late. Sometimes the women remain to do our harvesting, sometimes not; it's bad, anyway, and when we return from the sugar-cane harvest, we have nothing to eat. We buy something: rice or noodles, but it costs money, doesn't it?"

The economic situation of the harvester, which he attempts to improve by participating in the sugar-cane harvest, is actually harmed: his production at home decreases; his need for cash - for medicine and food, etc. - increases; and his indebtedness and dependence increase.

Another link in the chain of dependence is the useful and useless articles of the consumer society, which can only be acquired with money. These are symbols of the "progress of civilization" represented by white society. Furniture, previously made by the harvesters themselves, watches, bicycles, radios, cassette players, even record players, and especially clothes serve as a means of self-assertion towards white society.
"We're not barbarians any more; we're not like the old people. We're a little better. We wear nice clothes now, sleep in beds, and have chairs and radios. We don't live like barbarians any more."

The cost is further indebtedness, further dependence, and the further decline of the harvesters' own agricultural activities.

Along with the products of "civilization", however, the ideology of "civilization" threatens to invade a society whose organization is based on unity as a firm basic value. Without unity, the survival of the Chiriguanos, agriculturists in an environment unfriendly to man, would have been impossible. A strict but democratic system, communal work in all questions concerning the community, and an equalitarian distribution of goods are today still values whose violation entails an entire range of sanctions!

It remains to see the direct and indirect socio-cultural consequences of the harvest for such a social system. We wish to illustrate this comprehensive process with but a few outstanding examples, and attempt to indicate at least the trend of an undeniable social change.

"Do you know what I'm going to do this year? I'm going to Sta. Cruz to make money, as a bricklayer or whatever. I'll hire a man for my field. I'll pay him 50 pesos a day for his work, but I'll make more than 50 pesos, so I'll come out ahead. They keep on being poor here, just in debt. That's why the people who really live here, they never seem to be going to figure out how to live their lives, because that's their culture. Everyone has his way of life. I've noticed that here the culture is too much of a peasant culture, poor. I'm not going to blame the white; the peasant is to blame: he doesn't know how to think."
This statement by a Chiriguano who lives in a village 14 kilometres from Sta. Cruz reflects the trend of development in a ring of villages around Sta. Cruz, which have nothing left to oppose to the economic and ideological expansion of the city.

The situation in Izozog, the home of the Chiriguanos, where 7,000 people live at present, is not yet remotely comparable with the development indicated above, but similar indications can be observed. It is not rare for those who have more money, or have taken larger advances, to engage peones for fieldwork. The previously unknown concept that material possessions increase the value of a person creates envy and a competitive mentality. Generation conflict, at least latent in every society, is becoming more intense due to the economic situation: more than their elders, the young people strive for recognition in the white society, whose discriminating attitude they feel in the harvest, and especially in military service.

"Many times young people don't pay attention to their fathers any more; they don't help them. They just want to make money to buy clothes; they dress like karais."

"So I advise my son: 'Look, my son,' I tell him, 'you shouldn't be idle. We're going to work here because everything is very expensive. So we're going to work on our field; we're going to sow all we have. From this work we're going to get food for the kids, because we're poor; we don't have money to buy with. We have enough to eat; we have enough if we work well on our field every day, every year, because this is our work. Don't spend money, my son, you have to help your father. You're mature now, you're a man: you have to work.'"
The kind and courteous manner in which parents speak with their children hardly indicates a conflict, but consideration and respect for others are basic principles of Chiriguano behaviour, which they preserve even when criticizing, even when they have a different opinion. Advice politely given is more important and more effective than confrontation.

An example of the strength of conflict is the changing concept of the imbaekuá: a person with superhuman strength and abilities, which he exercises not for the good of the society, but in order to harm others. Jealousy is the main motive behind the behaviour of the imbaekuá: a concept which is opposed to the basic value of equality and must be sanctioned.

Previously imbaekuá were especially old people, eccentrics who were in some way on the margin of society; nowadays more and more young people are accused of being imbaekuá.

"They say this boy from G. is an imbaekuá; it's his fault it doesn't rain. The ipaye knows. It's those boys who wear watches and have gold teeth. They wander around drunk at night. They harm people out of jealousy."

All misfortune, such as lack of rain, disease, etc., is blamed on the imbaekuá: i.e., the one who violates the norms of the society. As soon as the ipaye, the moral authority and doctor, determines who is an imbaekuá, he sets the sanction according to the gravity of the case. The sanction can be as severe as banishment from the village.

The concept of the imbaekuá, here only briefly indicated in its social dimension, shows that the defence mechanism of the society against disturbing forces is still functioning, and can still adjust to new situations.

Graver than the symptoms of a competitive mentality and
the intensification of the generation conflict, causally connected with the introduction of a money economy into the area by means of the sugar-cane harvest, is the problem of the contractor. The contractor, a logical link in the chain of the new agrarian-capitalist system of exploitation, can, by the very nature of his function, no longer act according to the norms of the society in which he has grown up and was raised, even in the "bossless" season, as the Izozeños proudly say. It is in his own interest, if he does not wish to deprive himself of his economically privileged basis, to incorporate as many Izozeños as possible into the harvest system of dependency. One means of accomplishing this is, as we have seen, the advance. According to his skill, the contractor can also take personal initiatives: e.g., lending money liberally; selling to "his" harvesters and possible candidates on credit, if he has a shop, as many contractors do; or simply demonstrating how attractive it is to have money at one's disposition. Usually his house is the best in the village, with a corrugated tin roof and cement floor; his wife does not cook outside over a wood fire, but inside on a gas stove; he demonstrates and praises his radio and cassette player; a gas lamp has replaced his wick burner; his children play with plastic toys and are later sent to better schools, etc. His riches benefit only himself: the principle of equality, the social obligation to integrate himself into the common system of distribution, is violated.

As their economic situation gets progressively worse, the Izozeños are beginning to understand that they can solve the problem of the sugar-cane harvest only in common, on the basis of their traditional unity. This cannot be in the interest of the contractor.

"The contractors don't want a cooperative here: they want to take the people away; that's how they make their money."
Both alternatives at the disposal of the Izozeños are boycotted by the contractors: economic progress in their own area on the basis of common efforts, as well as the organization of a union, the representatives of which would assume negotiations with the cane growers and government offices for all the harvesters, control the observance of stipulated conditions, etc. Such functions would to a great extent make the contractor superfluous, and in any case interfere with his business.

The life and conduct of the contractor are necessarily determined by economic and ideological principles: those of competitive capitalism which are diametrically opposed to those of Izozeño society, as we have briefly seen. This leads to a cultural and social isolation which is repeatedly surmounted by affiliation with a new community whose ideology is compatible with that of the contractor, supports and develops it. A large percentage of contractors are members of the evangelist "church," introduced by North American preachers, which is steadily gaining influence throughout South America. This spiritual brotherhood, fanatically cultivated in preparation for the end of the world and the eternal life, lends the contractor the necessary strength and arrogance to enrich himself at the cost of his "brethren," for material progress is a sign of the mercy of God, whose eye rests benevolently on the chosen. Both contractors who become evangelists because of their isolation, and evangelists who become contractors on the basis of the ideology preached, can be observed. In either case, the contractors are displaced persons, products of white capitalist society, which by its very nature produces social inequality at all social levels.

The threat of destruction of the traditional Izozeño social order becomes even more obvious when the socio-economic factors mentioned above are united with traditional power: i.e., when a captain, the traditional head of a village, is at the same time a contractor. In this case, the tactics
employed are even more clever: the captain, the elected head of the community, inspires confidence by his agility in external relations with public and private institutions of the national society. These relations are both desired and considered necessary by the Izozeños. The successful "sale" of his own people as dependent wage earners, for his own profit, is all the easier for a contractor who is at the same time a captain. Small doses of help for the community, given personally or obtained from public institutions, give the appearance of further participation in communal life with all its social norms and values.

"X is a captain and a contractor. He takes advantage of the people and makes a percentage. But he doesn't give anything to the community, for the school, the orphans or the old people. Nothing at all; he just profits."

Distrust of the contractors and the condemnation of their behaviour have grown along with the realization of how the system functions, and along with the general worsening of the situation at home and in the harvest.

The consequences of the sugar-cane harvest in the home area of the Izozeños, which as we have shown are closely connected with the position of the contractor, range from the social isolation of individuals, over the splitting of communities by evangelists and the menacing destruction of the socio-economic balance, to open cheating and lying, not only on the part of the contractors, but also by harvesters, especially young harvesters, who themselves are attempting to make use of the present system. These harvesters deal with several contractors at the same time, and draw several advances without fulfilling their obligation to work the debt off.

"They cheat other Izozeños. They're boys, and are
crazy to do these things. Instead of having one boss, some of them have four. Several do like that: they have another boss, draw another advance, and don't know how they'll pay the account. Then the contractor has to pay, because he guaranteed. Many people cheat their friends: I don't know why. Instead of having one boss, paying your account: if you want to go, go. That's the right way: you have to comply (with the contract), that's the only way you can be all right."

Truth, trust, and above all the unconditional fulfillment of an obligation entered into, even towards the contractor and the boss, who himself violates the stipulations, are traditional Izozeño norms. Their gradual decline is a consequence of the harvest, dependence on the karais.

"The whites cheat a lot; they don't comply. So there should be no whites here. Can't you see that the others (the Ava-Chiriguanos) were ruined by the whites? They went in there, and now there's nothing, there's no more unity. Several of them come here to Izozog, because we still have unity, we have the Great Captain."

Another result of the harvest which especially threatens the future of the Izozeños is the interruption of school attendance during the harvest. If a married Izozeño harvester goes alone to Sta. Cruz, this entails an annually repeated six-month separation from wife and children, which can disturb or even destroy normally close family bonds. Otherwise even children of school age are taken along, since they cannot remain in the village alone. The schooling offered in Izozog, poor and insufficient even without the absence of children taken to the harvest (it normally extends only to the second grade), thus becomes a farce. Children who attend
the same grade for four, five and six years are the rule; six months of interruption make it necessary for them to start all over again. This means that the nine to fourteen-year-olds must — exhausted after six months of strenuous labour in the harvest — return to the school bench. No camp affords children the opportunity to attend school; even when there is a school in the vicinity, the "retarded" peasant children will not be enrolled.

"We have to think of our children. They have to learn more than we, to take care of themselves. I don't know what to do with the kids: the harvest ruins us; it ruins us in every way. But I have to go; I'm in debt."

A 17-year-old Izozeño who shares the lot of thousands of harvesters' children who, because of the harvest, have not even finished the first grade, says:

"I've hardly gone to school at all, just to the harvest. The bosses cheat a lot, so I want to know more. Even just multiplication and division. I don't know anything; I can just add and subtract, that's all I know. But I can't multiply; that's why I want to learn more. Because I didn't do my classes well; I hardly passed the first grade."

The general economic situation in Sta. Cruz described above, especially in sugar production, shows that the sugar-cane harvest holds no vistas for the future of the Izozeños, or for harvesters in general. Structural crises, connected with a poor world market situation in the foreseeable future, make it clear that this economic alternative of the Izozeños is becoming less valuable for each passing year and is strengthening trends pointing to the total loss of economic, social and cultural independence by the Izozeños. The Izozeños
realize their situation and are desperately attempting, in spite of all the powerful impediments confronting them, to find a solution.

29. Children at the camp.
"BOSS, HOW LONG...?"

"Brothers, we who live off the soil must fight in order that this suffering may cease! The sugar cane is what is ruining us. The boss is rich from our muscles, and we are poor because we sell our strength cheap. Every day the boss grabs a bit more of our strength; little by little we get weaker, so that when we are old we are ruined and still poor, while the boss is so rich he doesn't know what to do with all his money. The rich man was not born rich: he knows how to take advantage of us. We must stop this. We're not politicians; we don't understand politics. Our politics are the spade, the axe and the machete. We should not go to harvest any more; we should work in unity: we should build a cooperative, that's what I think. We should not go to the harvest any more. A lot of the boys return ill: their lungs bother them and they're ruined. The boss ruins them. Here we live without a boss. That's why I'm advocating that we should work together so that we have something to sell; it's already encouraging. That's just what we do here. So we're searching for a way
30. The Grand Captain of Izozog, Bonifacio Barrientos:  
"We must fight in order that this suffering may cease!"
to work so that everyone can stay here and will no longer have to go to the harvest, because in the harvest only the boss wins and we lose. We have to advise everyone to work here, in unity, with all the members of the community, so that in the future there will be more work in Izozog, so that we will go forward."

These words of advice from the over eighty-year-old chief of all the Izozeños, Grand Captain Bonifacio Barrientos, who in 1948 procured for his people legal title to their land, carry weight with the Izozeños; they express the wish of the majority to be able to cultivate their own land as free peasants with no boss.

"Here it does not suit the people to have a boss, because here the people cultivate their fields well: the people don't want a boss. So the Grand Captain demands that we work to defend our land with our work, work on our own fields, because here there is no boss. In this entire area there is no boss; we are the owners, we are people, we are Izozeños. We all have our own fields in our land. If we are well united throughout Izozog and have a good contract to sell our field produce, then no one will return to the harvest. There is still no sale of our products. Scoundrels are always making contracts with us; that's why there's no progress in Izozog."

The problem of the Izozeños is first, just to get out of the vicious circle of harvest indebtedness; then to learn the necessary techniques and methods of cooperative work; and finally, to find markets, especially direct markets for their produce, in order to exclude middlemen from swallowing up any of the profits.
The qualifications for successful cooperative work are poor; the Izozeños know they need help from outside, from the whites. Their four hundred years of experience with white society has, however, led to a justified mistrust, which even well-meaning help must confront.

"We worked once with the priests: they wanted to help us to work collectively. They said, 'It'll be good for you; you won't have to go to the harvest any more; you'll be able to make money here in your own land, working in your own fields, on your own land; it'll be good for you.'

We sowed soya and the harvest was good, good. But then we couldn't sell it. Why couldn't we sell it? The priests didn't go and get a buyer for it. When they announced all this, they said, 'We ourselves are going to sell this soya. The Ministry of Agriculture can buy it, or Public Works.'

And what happened? Nothing! The soya was here for a year; rather, the rats almost finished it off. Now the priests didn't help us any more.

The second year we went back to work, and that was a failure, too. What could we do? Nothing. Rather, it all harmed us. That's also why the people are so mistrusting, that's why they doubt. We don't want to work with them any more. We still distrust them."

Here the concrete criticism expressed is of the poorly prepared soya experiment, but lying deeper is a basic mistrust, a fear of new bosses in the Izozeños' own area. The Catholic priests working in Izozog have no intention of personally getting rich, as expressed in the following interview. On the contrary, they step in where help is absolutely necessary. Such misunderstandings proceed from two basically
different, incompatible visions: the Christian version of help, its means and methods, are incomprehensible to the Izozeños, and meet with mistrust leading to rejection, on the basis of still-living historical experience with the world of whites.

"The priests, I don't see what obligation brought them here, what obligation they have now. Even now they are making us work. The first priest that came, came for four years; he came to baptize when there was no church at Y., baptizing children as far as at C., going on horseback, another time; and now the priests are again making us grab the shovel, instead of baptizing children. Don't you see, the priest is like a boss now. We don't know: is their work for this or just to baptize? How the priests play with us! Certainly they do their job: partly they teach, they take the ticket, but not, not like that.

We're not going to make a cooperative with them. Not at all, because we've seen. They're making one at Y., and we're watching. Just let them try, because we've tried. T. tried and failed. At T. the priests didn't treat them right.

What do the priests do with this money? I don't know. What do they do? They don't even help with this money. What help do they give us? None! And now there's going to be a big feast. It's of their virgin. They say this virgin is ours, but it's theirs. And now they'll hardly bring a toy, a tip, something instead of buying an animal for the people. This feast is on us, we have to make beer and roast meat. And they keep their money guarded, or certainly their head has sent some for the church feast's, surely, I believe, and they surely put it in their pockets. They haven't even bought
alcohol for the people. This is Christmas; Christmas they say their virgin's name is, don't you see? So every year they come and hold a feast here: there are games, there's everything, but nothing to eat.

Look, we're whitewashing the cooperative and we're going to celebrate. We're going to lay on beer and meat and everyone will eat. But here people are suffering. They hold their feast as cool as you please: they throw a caramel in the air for the people, like a chicken. I just stand there: am I supposed to grab it like a kid? They took out a sack and threw it, they threw it in the air like this. Poor people, crowded together, poor people. Do you think I'm going to go pick up a caramel? 'If I want to eat a caramel, I can eat one,' I said. Throwing it in the air instead of giving one to each one; distributing is too much. When it was over, he went away. We were like...

No, what do I say? No, at night he threw caramels in the air, the priest. Even big kids came. 'Why should I?' I said, 'I'm not going to die of desire for caramels.' 'You didn't get your caramel,' the priest said to me. 'What do you mean, Father? I'm no chicken, as I always... I'm not backward,' I just told him, deliberately. 'What do you mean, Father? I'm no chicken. Father, if you want to give me something, I'm not an animal.' 'But there's still Th.,' the priest said to my little sister. But me, I'm not a kid who doesn't know. I'm here, but no, I'm no kid. The kids come, but we others who are more or less ashamed, how can we jump? He threw good caramels.

So that's his virgin; they say she's from Izozog, but she belongs to those who brought her. And every year they don't bring anything at all for the people."
The arrogance bred in Europeans because of the "superiority" of their education and their knowledge, coupled with the Christian duty to convert, prevents the understanding of different socio-cultural concepts, and leads, instead of cooperation and real help, which the Izozeños desire, to paternalism, which they reject.

"'We're people, we're Izozeños, boss; we want to cultivate our fields,' I told the boss. 'I paid my debt and I don't want any advance; I'm not going to return to the harvest next year.'

'Here you are, my son: I'm going to give you 2 000 pesos. There'll be good cane next harvest: new cane. Don't you want to make money, my son?'

'Boss, boss, how long do you want to take advantage of us?' I thought. No more. No more. We're not going to return any more. Now we're going to work for ourselves. We don't want any more boss. We're peasants: we've got our own land. And now the priests come and treat us like peons. We're the owners of our land. We need help, but we don't want any more bosses. We're going to keep a close watch on what they do."

The proud defense of independence has its limits in reality, which will keep forcing the Izozeños to compromise. But such compromises do not entail for them the surrender of defense mechanisms which have stood the test of centuries. On the contrary: like no other tribe of the Bolivian lowlands, the Izozeños have been able to develop a perspective on the future which, while involving socio-economic changes in the Bolivian society as a whole, has its firm foundation in autochthonous socio-cultural values, norms and organizational structures. The rejection of paternalistic church attitudes, expressed in the above interviews, does not mean the refusal
to accept church help. Other cooperatives have been built and are being built. It is, rather, intended to show the whites their limits: "We're the owners of our land."

31. "Our land Izozog."
APPENDIX I

SUGAR-CANE HARVEST WORK CONTRACT

The present contract between Mr. .......................... manager of the establishment known as ....................... and the worker ....................... has been signed...........

1° - The worker ....................... agrees to work in the establishment known as ....................... in harvest work and other farm duties, from........... to ...........

2° - The employer agrees to defray the costs of transporting the worker from his place of origin to the property of the employer by the most suitable form of transportation.

3° - On his establishment the employer will furnish the worker with habitable living quarters, work tools, and will also have at his disposal a store to supply personnel with articles of greatest necessity, with maximum advances according to the law on invoices. He will also provide facilities for the worker to cut and transport the firewood necessary for his kitchen.

4° - The employer will have at his disposal a medicine supply, a paramedic and in case his establishment is considered an "enterprise" also a physician whose services are to be free of charge.

5° - The worker will be subjected to a medical examination at his place of origin. In case due to the omission of this requirement workers are brought who are incapable of work, the employer will defray the expenses of their treatment, and food until their total recovery.

7° - In case of accident the employer will grant the employee a half day's wages for each day of disability as well as food throughout the time the disability lasts. Any physical disability caused during work is considered an accident.

8° - In case the employer violates this contract or discharges the worker without sufficient cause, he will indemnify him 30 days' wages as well as his return fare.

9° - The worker can be discharged without right of indemnity if he commits the present acts: theft, sabotage, grave acts against his employers or foremen, etc., according to Supreme Decree 3289 of XI 1952 Art. 10.
10° - The price freely agreed upon for cutting, stripping and loading cane is ....... pesos per ton on plots yielding more than 40 tons per ha. ....... pesos per ton on plots yielding less than 40 tons per ha.

11° - In case for any reason the employer temporarily suspends the cutting of cane he shall give the worker other work recognized as farm work, for which the worker shall earn a wage of ....... pesos per 8-hour day.

12° - The worker is obliged to observe this contract, in which case he has the right to have his return fare paid by his employer. In case the worker leaves his work before completing half the time stipulated in this contract, the worker is obliged to pay the expenses incurred by the employer to bring him. If he leaves his work after having completed more than half of this contract, he shall only lose his right to return fare.

13° - Payment will be made to workers weekly or fortnightly up to a maximum of 70% of balance, with 30% remaining at the disposal of the employer, to be paid on the day of settling accounts when the contract expires.

14° - The employer should without fail settle his account with the worker at the latest three days after this contract has expired; otherwise he shall pay the worker half wages for every day of delay until the day of settlement.

15° - The employer agrees to make the 2 percent deductions and deposit them in the corresponding Bank, according to Supreme Decree 05829 of June 21, 1961.

16° - In case the employer does not observe all or part of this contract he will be subject to a fine of 300 pesos when the fact has been proven by this inspection.

17° - The worker declares that he has received on account as an advance the sum of ....... pesos which will be deducted from his balance.

Signed at ......... in three copies for one purpose only.

18° - In case the worker cannot read this contract will be read by the contractor.

REMARKS

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Worker Administrator Employer
APPENDIX II

CONTRACTOR (Evangelist):

"I worked in the harvest once, in fifty-eight, when I left the army. I needed clothes. The refinery had just been opened then. I left with a contractor called X.: his name. He gave me fifty pesos in advance. Fifty pesos was worth something. Then I took 25 pesos to my father. With these 25 pesos he bought me a goat when I came, at least I could maintain my work with it; or the meat, I could get food, too. My father bought it; I think a goat was worth around ten pesos at that time. All right, I left. At the work he paid us 400 pesos: no, no, no, I think it was 40 pesos or 50 pesos. I don't remember how much: it was old money. He paid us by the measure that year; meter by meter we had to stack the cane. What yields most in this job exhausts one. The foreman came up: 'If you do two measures of cane,' according to this he gave me work, he gave me food. And one day I figured things out. How could I owe money on the first fortnight? Then it's no good for me to work from six in the morning to six in the evening: six to six I had to work! So one day I said to the contractor,

'Mr. Contractor, it looks like it's no good for me to do this work, because I realize I'm working in vain. Look, I've already worked two months. We came contracted for four months.' Since my friend, too, was a contractor, a good friend of mine, I told him, 'Look, I came to make money. It's no good that I leave this place without money, that I leave as your debtor, that I don't even take a kilo of sugar for my mother, for my father. It's no good. Now I've been helping you for two months. I paid back my travelling expenses, my advance: all that I've paid back, so I'm going somewhere else to look for work that suits me.' 'All right,' he said.

I left and went to work at Warnes. They were cleaning
cotton and I worked there. In two months I made around 400 pesos. With 400 I went to Izozog; I bought sugar, I bought everything, a lot of things. Since these necessities were lacking in Izozog, I had the plan to sell them, to work this way. We wanted to sell something so as not to lose much of my work. I did that work all of 1958: a little selling. I worked with that money. The harvesters who just came, they've been working in Montero more than twenty years: every year, every year. And what do they do with this money? They come with this money, they come directly with this money, and you should see what they are going to bring to Izozog. They go to Montero and buy drinks or cigarettes or coca. They leave here as debtors and don't bring anything back with them. Those young boys: I've got a cousin, eighteen years old: he's got bad lungs, ruined. I'm still healthy - I'm older than he is - because I take care of my body. I know this hard work they do isn't suitable for me. They lift those bundles, they weigh sixty or forty kilos: this they lift.

In the cotton period people left here once: the captain made a contract with this boss and sent all the people to him. His foreman was a drunkard, and certainly the captain spoke to the boss. And the boss said, 'Don't you have any people from your place who...?' 'I do. I do.' I went. I didn't draw any advance, I just drew money there. Those from here left with advances. So the boss spoke to me: the next day he called me into his office:

'Look, my foreman is quite a drunk: he doesn't supervise well, he's a big drunk. But the captain told me you understand this. How much do you want?'

I already knew how much he made. I was driving people, 100 people, I made 1 500 with meals. Do you know how much the other foreman made? 800 pesos a month, without meals.

'If you want, I'll manage for you; if not, it's all right.'

'Look, I'll give you 1 500 and if you do well up to 2 000,' he said.
'All right.' And the next day at the same time I started. I worked three months, I think the cotton harvest lasts three months: it depends on the people, too, if there's more people they harvest more quickly...

I worked a fortnight and the boss said, 'It looks like you know what you're doing,' he said, 'Look, I'm going to pay you so much.' And he paid me 2 000 pesos, with meals. Every week I asked for money. At that time my wife lived here: she had a motacú house here. Since it was close by, I took my money and left it with her, 100 pesos: money was worth something before devaluation. On the same day she would buy groceries for two weeks. I had less expenses then, he was giving me meals. So I worked... working all three months for the boss, and the boss liked me a lot. And the people from here, you know, they left in debt. I made money there. There's one thing, one thing these Chiriguanos didn't realize: the boss had a shop. He had everything in the shop: he had cheese, meat, he had soda, everything. So they made a little money. Some people are not like me, they don't check up. The better you are the more you make, but some just make the daily wage, or less. So they went, taking groceries: cheese, soda, even bread. Finally the account mounted up: some owed a thousand pesos, others owed 1 500, 1 600. How foolish, I say, these people don't know better.

The boss was happy. He went to the captain and said, 'These people owe me so and so much. What can we do about this money? I don't think they'll return, with this account. I have work.'

Since the people here didn't know, the captain explained it to them in Guaraní; he told them, 'It looks like you're debtors and have to just keep working to pay the debt.' They went in order to work three months, but now they have worked seven months, with the 300 pesos they drew in advance. In the end they don't make anything, that's how it is. They don't make anything, and I worked three months and made money, that's all.'
APPENDIX III

TRUCK DRIVER:

"In three or four years I make 50,000 pesos. I've been driving for eight years. My mother lives well, has all the comforts, because every year I go and work, I buy something. So I'm paying off on a refrigerator, a television set, and I have my nice house in Montero.

The harvesters, on the other hand, hardly make a living from the harvest. But I do. For example, I'm a mechanic. When the harvest is over, I start working as a mechanic. I make the same wages and a percentage, too. I assemble motors. I get a percentage of two or three thousand pesos. That's how I make out.

Look, they're peasants that don't aspire to have anything. They want to have, of course, but they don't aspire, for example, to have profession, to do something bigger some day; they don't aspire. That's why they live like they do, just off this work. A person that comes from town, on the other hand, has three or four professions. For example, when I was 14 I worked as a professional cook. I worked almost three or four years in an Argentine restaurant, with five assistants. I got tired of working and went to a mechanics school. I went for nine months and learned a lot. They gave me a diploma, I left with my licence and all: I was all set, and I've been driving here for ten years. So I'm happy: I have three professions like everyone in town. Everyone always has three or four professions. If they lose one job, they go and look for some other work. People from the country, on the other hand, don't aspire to have any. Their children go to the school too but they don't aspire, they don't have aspirations. The situation is better. For example, if I don't have enough money, I go and complain to the boss. I demand and he has to pay me,
and if he doesn't pay me, the soldiers deport him and make him pay. So he won't have this problem, I get hold of him and I tell him, 'Look, Sir, I don't have enough. You have to pay me 4 000.' Because nowadays the rich are for the people. Any employee these days just asks his boss and gets good money.

Likewise the boss who violates his contract, they go to the, what is it, the Work Inspection, too; or what is it, uh, the Ministry of Defence. Why? Because they have a contract. The bosses have their union too, but they can't do anything. Every boss that has employees has to get along with them. Whether they get along well or bad, if the employee is unsatisfied and the boss doesn't want to give any cheque, he just asks for it, and right away goes to the Ministry of Defence. Because the bosses here are in the habit of paying money to the Work Inspector. So if he doesn't want to make the boss pay, you go to the Ministry of Defence and they make him pay. It's here in Sta. Cruz, and that's what the bosses are afraid of. In the first place the employee goes and makes a request, and they send a commission of five agents: the boss has to pay for all of this; he's afraid.

But there's no problem. The boss is good to his harvesters. They have a contract that says that from the beginning to the end he has to pay a certain sum, unless they ask for a raise. From the beginning of the harvest to the end, for example on Saturday or Sunday, the boss cannot say, 'There's no money.' He has to get it when he doesn't have it. Why? Because that's what the contract says. The day there's no money, they go and complain, demand it. The contractor has the contract paper, so they aren't afraid. Frankly, in the Ministry they tell them, 'Sir, you have to look at the contract. Here it is.' So the boss doesn't refuse, he's not supposed to refuse until the end of the harvest.

And like the contract says, when the last cane is finished, the account should be settled immediately and the harvester should be paid immediately, and transported from
the place of cutting to his home, with travelling expenses paid.

But he's good, this boss. On the other hand there are others, there are well-known persons who are bad. They hardly have any harvesters; people from Izozog don't go there - they know how they are. As far as the harvest is concerned all the truck and tractor drivers know who the bad people are, that don't like to part with their money, that insult the harvesters. We know. For example, there are some that don't pay the travelling allowance. The travelling allowance is 80 pesos per family, and they don't want to pay. But the people from Izozog complain. They're directed by the contractor. For example, now the harvest is over and if they want money on next year's harvest, they talk to the contractor and they go to the boss and say, 'Sir, we need money on next year.' That's what always happens here: every year when the harvest is over, they tell him, 'Sir, we want a radio, a record player,' and on the spot he signs a cheque and sends them off. The harvester goes and buys and this cheque or this money is on next year's account. On the other hand there are many who don't like to do this, but this boss always gives it to them.

There's a special shop, for example, X. The boss says, 'Well, look, son, I've got a current account with X., go buy a bicycle or a radio. It's a well-stocked shop.' Then the harvester goes and looks and says, 'Okay, boss, I like it.' 'Okay, that's fine.' He signs the cheque and that's all. So the harvester goes and presents his cheque and they give him his bicycle. That's the way it happens every year. So they like him: if the harvesters ask for something, they get along with him. He settles it up according to the balance the harvester has. If they have three thousand coming and ask for two thousand more, he gives it to them, he doesn't say no. They'll have to pay it back little by little, but he'll keep giving them money on next year's account, because he's almost sure of his people. There are some people that have been
working for him for 14 years. They've certainly never had any problem with him. They've always asked him for money and he's always given it to them.

If he has money, he gives it to them. Sometimes they ask for a fortnight's advance; they say, 'Well, look, Sir, the harvest is going to end, and I'm going to need this or that.' Then he looks to see if he can. If he can, he gives them money; if not, he gives them other things. He always gives them something. He's very good, very good.

The boss has six farms. Previously we worked over there and suffered a lot. Last year he sold it because the harvesters told him, 'Boss, it's very bad there.' He said 'Don't worry, boys, I'm going to sell it and buy another farm.' Well, he did buy another one, a real nice one.

Well, happily he's very sympathetic towards the people, really good, he has a lot of pity on the people; he's not like the others. For example, there are a lot of bosses: if you're sick, he's seated at the square and doesn't want a harvester to talk to him. But not him. Wherever he is, he tells his wife where he is and she says, 'Go look for him, son.' As soon as he sees a harvester he gets up and says 'What's the matter? What do you want, son?' He knows every one of his people; they've been working for him for years, too. Some of them for 14 years.
APPENDIX IV

YOUNG HARVESTER:

"I have almost no account. Since we settle up every month, there's almost no account. Sometimes we clear something: we don't clear much, just a little: about 400 pesos or so a month. For all the work we have about 1 400 or 1 500 pesos. The last time 1 430, that was the total sum. And the debt, the weekly credit: we get 1 030 pesos a month in weekly credit. That's 280 pesos a week spent on groceries. Cost of groceries: 1 030 pesos. So we clear 400 a month: 100 pesos a week. It's not much, is it?

We make 50 pesos a ton, but sometimes we don't even do six tons a week: sometimes just four or five, then you end up in the red.

We recently asked for a raise, just five pesos: other places are paying sixty pesos per ton.

Some bosses are like this: you never see the boss, you just see your account, that's all. But some bosses deal directly with their harvesters. We settle up directly with the boss or with the foreman.

There are just a few bosses that are good: they give you a raise; and there are some that are half-assed: they never give you a raise. The harvesters work more than the boss! He could give a raise, he could pay more. They make a profit, they get money.

If the boss has a small quota, his people don't make much. The big growers have big quotas. The bosses are like a cooperative: they help each other, and that's why they've progressed rapidly. And they say some of them at first worked at some kind of work and saved their money and started sowing one hectare. The next year he sowed more and the next more and more. Saving his money. But first they just worked."
Personally. They have more later; but if the boss, let's say, doesn't have much money, he has to rent someone else's truck, and spends money that way. He still doesn't buy much clothes; first he wants to save money to buy a truck. And he works seven or eight years or ten years, working and saving money, and can finally afford a truck, a used truck. He buys it and uses it to ship out his cane without paying. He himself can drive, or his son has to drive. So he can sow more cane now because he doesn't have to rent a truck. I think this one started that way.

Various bosses have told their stories. Once we worked for one and he told us, 'Before, I was a cowboy,' he said, 'a cowboy: I milked cows and worked like that. I sowed cane,' he said, with his father. 'My father helped me and I helped as a cowboy for another boss,' he said, 'who is bigger now and from him I made money and saved it,' he said.

And finally when he had worked about 15 years he bought his materials; he bought a thing — a machine. He had a brick-works; they made bricks and from this they saved money and so could afford to sow cane, he said. 'Before, I was a cow-boy,' he said, 'I milked cows and got my pay every month and saved it. I spent a little, bought my clothes, that's all, the rest I saved. We did the work and earned well. Finally we sowed cane, a little bit. The next year we sowed more, we increased a hectare every year, and we have saved money this way, and this way we bought a truck. And when we had 15 hectares, we shipped out the cane with our own truck. Now I've got good cane. Before, I suffered a lot,' he said, 'to have what I have. Before, I worked hard, but now I don't work any more. You yourselves see how well off I am now. Before, I was halfway a harvester, I harvested, milked cows, was a cowboy, had a brickworks. We made money there, selling bricks. From that we saved money and finally could afford to buy the truck, and now we sow cane.' That's what that boss told us.

I think he did it that way. If you save your money, you
can do the same thing. It's not in vain, just sowing and saving. Sow something worth more: for example, cane is valuable. And if you make good money in the city, it's possible to do that work even though you sow one or two hectares. You won't make fifty pesos, you'll make 250 pesos a ton then. If you can't afford it, your uncle or your father can help you. They can help you to clear the land, to weed, to sow cane, to buy plants, to sow two hectares. If you work in Sta. Cruz, you can come to cut cane on your vacation. You can ask permission to cut your cane and say you'll start working again on such and such a day. So it's possible to do this if you have a good job in Sta. Cruz: save money and buy plants, because you have to buy cane plants. Just pay for the clearing.

I know I work well; I want to do this. Because there's enough land here. The title's there already, just whoever wants to work can work. The cooperative doesn't occupy all the land; you can work for yourself. Because they're not working united. When you're working united, one person can do the work and make good money. But if not, you can only do it with your father, your family.

I'm not going to stay in Sta. Cruz; I'm going to return. I'm going to look for other work, because the harvest doesn't pay well at all. What you clear, 400 pesos, you can't use: the boss doesn't pay you once and for all. He doesn't pay your wages once and for all because he says he'll pay you next Sunday, then next week comes and he just gives you the allowance for groceries: instead of paying everything he keeps it.

That's not the way it is there; that's why we can't save any money. The harvest will never give us enough."

"Over there I met a Cochabambino: I knew him; I started my service with him.

'Come on,' he said, 'you can make good money. Come on. I know a boss,' he said.

I told him, 'Look, I know this boss well,' I said, 'he's bad. That's why he doesn't have anybody. So if we work for him, what will we get out of it?'

'But he'll get along with us. We're not like the Izo-zeños. It's a different matter with us. We're Collas. We're workers the same as you, but you lack the ability to stop work.'

All right, we cut cane: good cane, and we make 40 pesos. And we had to cut on the other side of the line. The cane there was bad, it was no good: 60 hectares of bad cane. The contractor came, looked at the cane and told the boys: 'Well, boys, everybody come, this cane should get you a higher rate.'

'It should;' said all the harvesters, 'it should get a higher rate!'

'All right, we'll ask the boss and see what he says. How much do you want?'

'Fifty pesos!'

'All right.'

The boss came and stopped close to them. 'I'm going to talk to him. Let's see. If he doesn't agree I'll call you: I want you all to come.'

He went up to the boss and stood in front of him, to ask about the rate. The boss was embarrassed. He was very quick. He got mad at him right away. This happened three years ago, I think.

The Colla had been working, and didn't have a knife.
He didn't have his machete, either. The boss always carried a gun. We were watching from far off. And he pulled his revolver and shot the contractor, just because he went to ask. He didn't say anything, nothing at all: he shot him. He just shot him: he didn't say anything. He shot the contractor and the Collas ran after him, damn it, with their machetes, and the boss got in his pick-up. The Collas ran after him with their machetes: we were among them: we were just a group of ten. We all had to go.

I was terribly sorry, I don't know how to say it: the boss was a bad egg. When he shot the contractor it made me furious, damn it, and we were far off and when we ran after him he got away. He had been going to kill that Colla; we had to follow him. We all went. Some truck drivers came, five truck drivers. The harvesters said, 'We have to go to the office, because the contractor is there in our midst.' He was covered with blood. 'All right, we'll pay for the petrol. Don't you worry, we'll pay. Here's some money; here's some money!'

They took the money. In six trucks we went to the Federation, all of us armed: some had revolvers. We went to the Federation.

The boss went to Montero and from there directly to Sta. Cruz. He fled. They called for him. 'He's not here.' 'He's in the field.' No one knew.

They sent a telegram to the police to come urgently. At kilometre 9 they caught the boss.

The judges, the authority went and talked to the contractor. The contractor was with us: nothing happened, it was just in his flesh.

'Well,' he said, 'you committed a great mistake with me.' 'A serious matter,' they said, 'because you shot him. You jumped on him first,' they told the contractor.

'No, Sir,' said the contractor, 'the boys just said they'd have to ask for a raise because there's sixty hectares of that cane that isn't any good. So I thought this boss was
good and I went to talk to him. I wanted to talk to him personally, man to man, but he got mad right away. I told him, 'Look, Sir, do us a favour: the harvesters are asking for a raise.' He said, 'A raise?! There's no raise here!' That's what he said, 'A raise?! Not here!' First he showed me that revolver and then he shot me.'

'There's nothing we can do now;' said the judges, 'it's forbidden to abuse the harvesters this way. Completely forbidden, because those harvesters do your work,' they said, 'and now you have hurt yourself, because no one will cut that cane of yours, because those harvesters will all leave. What will you do with your cane? You still have more than 500 hectares, and who will cut it? This accident is your fault. You'll have to pay still more: we still don't know how big a fine you'll have to pay, because we don't know yet. It has to come from La Paz, the government.'

'I'll just pay,' he said.

'This accident is your fault. The boys, the harvesters will be without food one day; that's your fault! You have the right to charge him.'

Well, the boss was scared.
"The boss hasn't at all complied with this contract we have. What kind of quarters do we have? A bad house, no water, no firewood. No medicine. The boss hasn't complied with the contract at all. There were several accidents, but he didn't pay. Illnesses, too.

My friend cut his finger and couldn't work for a week. Did he pay for the accident? For example, he's supposed to pay a half day's wages to somebody who's sick, but he doesn't.

No, he cheats us a lot. He hasn't lived up to the contract at all. That's why we don't get along with the bosses. We complain and they get mad at us.

I told the boss the other day, and he's mad at us. I told him, 'You haven't complied with the contract at all,' I said, 'you put the camp there: the house has no roof, we have no shade because you don't have it fixed.' I said, 'We don't have anything: a medical supply. Look: my friend, my boy cut himself. Did you pay for the accident? Here in the contract it says so!'

The boss kept silent, he didn't say anything: just silent. Because of course that's the way it is. 'I'm not complaining just in order to complain, but there's nothing, not even firewood,' I told him. 'There's no paramedic, none. There's nothing. We live up to our part but you haven't,' I said, 'because we're really suffering from lack of water. There's no water.' I said.

He kept silent. The next day he came. 'Who wants an advance?' We just kept silent. We won't go along with him any more. And the cane: he still hasn't changed that bad cane. But he makes money.

That's the way they are. All the bosses make more money
out of their workers: out of us. Look, now every boss has around 200 to 400 hectares of cane and money, and when harvest time comes, he gets a cheque: harvest credit. That cheque is for the poor, too, because he comes here and the people draw an advance and then they have to go there and work.

If the boss doesn't have people that know how to use a machete, his money alone won't work for him. Only people can work. So they make more money; they make money just in their houses. While the harvester really suffers from the sun, hunger and thirst. But we make less; they make more.

Then at the end of the harvest they get their cheque: it's because of the worker. That's how they make more: if it weren't for us...

It's because of the worker that Bolivia now has tractors, cars, machines: it has everything because of the worker.

The harvester's killing himself, working night and day: fifty pesos, it isn't much. It's not worth while to kill yourself that way. Now the harvest hurts us a lot. Worse every year.

This time when the harvest was over we lost two weeks: whether the harvest was over or not, two weeks without work, no earnings. We waited and waited and waited, but nothing happened: he didn't even come to see us; he didn't say any thing. He doesn't take pity on his people.

If we had work here in Izozog, nobody would go harvest any more. We'd just stay here.
APPENDIX VII

To the first meeting of Ayoréode Indians, held in September 1978 in Sta. Cruz de la Sierra, the Ayoréodes had also invited delegations from the Izozeños and the Aymaras.

"The idea of the meeting: the Ayoréodes met and invited interested non-Ayoréodes to discuss current problems and to hear the words and experiences of Ayoréodes of other communities and see how they had solved their problems. Also to listen to other indigenous brothers who have already spent a long time in 'civilization'."

SPEECH BY VICTOR VACA, REPRESENTING GRAND CAPTAIN BONIFACIO BARRIENTOS OF THE COMMUNITIES OF THE IZOZEÑO-CHIRIGUANOS:

Greetings, dear brothers who are present here: my Ayoréode brothers and my Aymara brothers.

Dear brothers, for almost a month now we have heard that there was going to be a meeting, but we didn't know how many kinds of people would attend: but thank God and thanks to our brothers who have come from all sides: because of them we could hold this meeting.

The first thing I can tell you, my Ayoréode brothers, is that at one time, not long ago, we were enemies. But what has happened now? Now we are united with you: I am not afraid of you and you are not afraid of us. That's how it seems to me. We are giving each other our hands.

You well know that before, we killed each other. You killed our fathers, and our fathers killed you. But now we can look each other in the face.

Dear brothers, let this meeting be to our benefit; let this meeting which we are holding here continue every year so we can consider our problems. You want to know so much
about us and we about you.

What I am going to tell you is the problem of the Izozog area. After the war*, this Izozog was lost: it was taken prisoner by the Paraguayans, but thanks to Grand Captain Bonifacio Barrientos, he remained alone with four hundred men, fighting in favour of Bolivia with the Izozeño people. But the women and old people were all taken by the Paraguayans.

Because of Bonifacio Barrientos, again after the war, the people were able to settle in the land of Izozog, to form their own nation. But after the war there were many killings: a lot of us died. But Bonifacio Barrientos fought hard to be able to defend his people, the Izozeño people. Bonifacio Barrientos was not afraid although his brother died from a gun. They killed him: the Bolivians killed him because his brother had had to go to Paraguay, with the Pilas. But the brother of Bonifacio Barrientos didn't know where Bolivia was because at that time no one was interested in where the peasant people were.

After they left the war, the Bolivians shot the brother of Bonifacio Barrientos in order to frighten the entire Izozeño people as well, but Bonifacio had to stand up like a man and went to La Paz. He went to La Paz to ask that we again be allowed to live in our country, Izozog. Now he has liberated us, and he placed our boundary stone so that we can live on our own land. This boundary stone means that it is our land, the land of the Izozeños. Now we are on our own land, but what is happening? The land is beautiful. The land is productive: it produces everything: yuca, camote, rice, cane: everything, and besides we have irrigation. The problem was that we do not have people to guide us: we don't know how to raise our families or progress. For this reason so many

* The Chaco War between Bolivia and Paraguay 1932-1938 (Editor's note).
Izozeño people have gone to Argentina, since at that time there was no work here in Bolivia. But later, when Paz Estensoro came in, he built the Guabirá refinery, and now we can all leave to work, leave to make money, and we don't have to go to Argentina any more. Those who are in Argentina are fifty per cent of our people. I have seen several communities of our people in Argentina, and they will not return any more.

Now the problem with our work here in Bolivia is that the bosses have bought us, all the Izozeños, by means of the advance, and we hardly work at all for our land, Izozog. Before, we did not have these advances, but now we are getting along very poorly because of these advances, because we don't have time to work for our land any more. There are some people who owe up to five and six thousand, and they cannot pay it back any more. And there are so many Izozeño people who remain here, near Santa Cruz de la Sierra, because of their debts. This year the bosses don't want to let the people go who owe a lot, and there remain few in Izozog to work in the fields. There is no time, and no strength left.

There are so many Izozeño people who don't want to come here to Santa Cruz any more, because they have so much debt, and there are also some Izozeños who owe ten or fifteen thousand. Only the boss now seeks their life, not to pay but their life. This year there was a boss who left here with soldiers to kill, just to kill an Izozeño.

May we from this meeting be able to draw some benefit for our problems, for our problems which you have as well as we.

This was my speech. Thank you, and I'll say more later. Thank you."

APPENDIX VIII

CAPTAIN:

"When the people returned from the harvest, I said, 'What are we going to do here now? Are we going to continue with the cooperative? Are you going to continue with this idea? Or what?'

'We can.'

Fine. So we're beginning: we had a meeting with everyone, with the women, too: they also left to pick cotton. From that we got some ideas, up to now: we're making a little progress now.

Of course, the contractors don't want us to have a cooperative here, because they want to take the people away; that's how they make money. When they take the people away, they make their percentage. For example, one has thirty people. How much percentage does he make? Fifteen pesos, that's right: he makes fifteen pesos per person on thirty people. And they leave for up to six months.

Montero has got rich off the arms of the harvesters, the arms of the peasants. The cane growers are rich because of our work. Because if the Izozeno peasants didn't go to cut the cane, who would go cut it? The bosses wouldn't get richer.

They have got very, very sick in the lungs. There are many young people, some of them very young. Not long ago a young man from here died of this. He was coughing up blood: it was blood. He was young, very young: less than 20 years old.

This is what the karais do, the bosses; because they're in their power, and on their land, too: their families, their children, too. In this way they make them work, whether they want to or not, because they know if they don't work, then the boss won't give them anything to buy food with, so
they have to obey their commands. If they don't pay attention
to their boss, then they'll see what they'll do to their
family, they can throw them right out of their house.

That's why I don't like the harvest. I like the people
to work here in the area, so they can live, so they can sleep
well. We can, but we have to have a good idea. So we've been
advising the people more and more to work on their own land.
We should just work among ourselves.

There are some who say they were born here, but they're
karais, whites. They have a different thought, they oppose
me now. So we can't work with them.

For example, tomorrow we're going to pay dues to the
cooperative. We're going to have a meeting, so that everyone
has to bring money. And some who are whites are going to say
among themselves: 'Why pay? These Cambas: I'm not going to
pay dues.' 'Me, neither!' 'Me, neither!' That's the way it
is.

These are not words which belong to us. That's why the
karais do not have the same thought as we do. We are
unity. Unity to do something, because with unity we are going
to be strong. But I don't like these words of the karais."
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