



seven interpretive essays on

PERUVIAN REALITY



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AUTHOR'S NOTE

I bring together in this book, organized and annotated in seven essays, the articles that I published in *Mundial* and *Amauta* concerning some essential aspects of Peruvian reality. Like *La escena contemporánea*, therefore, this was not conceived of as a book. Better this way. My work has developed as Nietzsche would have wished, for he did not love authors who strained after the intentional, deliberate production of a book, but rather those whose thoughts formed a book spontaneously and without premeditation. Many projects for books occur to me as I lie awake, but I know beforehand that I shall carry out only those to which I am summoned by an imperious force. My thought and my life are one process. And if I hope to have some merit recognized, it is that—following another of Nietzsche's precepts—I have written with my blood.

I intended to include in this collection an essay on the political and ideological evolution of Peru. But as I advance in it, I realize that I must develop it separately in another book. I find that the seven essays are already too long, so much so that they do not permit me to complete other work as I would like to and ought to; nevertheless, they should be published before my new study appears. In this way, my reading public will already be familiar with the materials and ideas of my political and ideological views.

I shall return to these topics as often as shall be indicated by

the course of my research and arguments. Perhaps in each of these essays there is the outline, the plan, of an independent book. None is finished; they never will be as long as I live and think and have something to add to what I have written, lived, and thought.

All this work is but a contribution to Socialist criticism of the problems and history of Peru. There are many who think that I am tied to European culture and alien to the facts and issues of my country. Let my book defend me against this cheap and biased assumption. I have served my best apprenticeship in Europe and I believe the only salvation for Indo-America lies in European and Western science and thought. Sarmiento, who is still one of the creators of *argentinidad* [Argentine-ness], at one time turned his eyes toward Europe. He found no better way to be an Argentine.

Once again I repeat that I am not an impartial, objective critic. My judgments are nourished by my ideals, my sentiments, my passions. I have an avowed and resolute ambition: to assist in the creation of Peruvian socialism. I am far removed from the academic techniques of the university.

This is all that I feel honestly bound to tell the reader before he begins my book.

Lima, 1928

José Carlos Mariátegui

for the protection of the Indian. The hacienda owner, the *latifundista*, is a feudal lord. The written law is powerless against his authority, which is supported by custom and habit. Unpaid labor is illegal, yet unpaid and even forced labor survive in the latifundium. The judge, the subprefect, the commissary, the teacher, the tax collector, all are in bondage to the landed estate. The law cannot prevail against the *gamonales*. Any official who insisted on applying it would be abandoned and sacrificed by the central government; here, the influences of *gamonalismo* are all-powerful, acting directly or through parliament with equal effectiveness.

A fresh approach to the problem of the Indian, therefore, ought to be much more concerned with the consequences of the land tenure system than with drawing up protective legislation. The new trend was started in 1918 by Dr. José A. Encinas in his *Contribución a una legislación tutelar indígena*, and it has steadily gained strength.² But by the very nature of his study, Dr. Encinas could not frame a socio-economic program. Since his proposals were designed to protect Indian property, they had to be limited to legal objectives. Outlining an indigenous homestead act, Dr. Encinas recommended the distribution of state and church lands. Although he did not mention expropriating the land of the latifundium *gamonales*, he repeatedly and conclusively denounced the effects of the latifundium system³ and,

² González Prada had already said in one of his early speeches as an intellectual agitator that the real Peru was made up of the millions of Indians living in the Andean valleys. The most recent edition of *Horas de lucha* includes a chapter called "Nuestros indios" that shows him to be the forerunner of a new social conscience: "Nothing changes a man's psychology more swiftly and radically than the acquisition of property; once his viscera are purged of slavery, he grows by leaps and bounds. By simply owning something, a man climbs a few rungs in the social ladder, because classes are divided into groups classified by wealth. Contrary to the law of aerostatics, what weighs the most goes up the most. To those who say schools the reply is schools and bread. The Indian question is economic and social, rather than pedagogic."

³ "Improving the economic condition of the Indian," writes Encinas, "is



The Problem of the Indian

A New Approach

ANY TREATMENT OF THE PROBLEM of the Indian—written or verbal—that fails or refuses to recognize it as a socio-economic problem is but a sterile, theoretical exercise destined to be completely discredited. Good faith is no justification. Almost all such treatments have served merely to mask or distort the reality of the problem. The socialist critic exposes and defines the problem because he looks for its causes in the country's economy and not in its administrative, legal, or ecclesiastical machinery, its racial dualism or pluralism, or its cultural or moral conditions. The problem of the Indian is rooted in the land tenure system of our economy. Any attempt to solve it with administrative or police measures, through education or by a road building program, is superficial and secondary as long as the feudalism of the *gamonales* continues to exist.¹

Gamonalismo necessarily invalidates any law or regulation

¹ Because of the length of this note, it has been placed at the end of the chapter. *Ed.*

thereby, to some extent ushered in the present socio-economic approach to the Indian question.

This approach rejects and disqualifies any thesis that confines the question to one or another of the following unilateral criteria: administrative, legal, ethnic, moral, educational, ecclesiastic.

The oldest and most obvious mistake is, unquestionably, that of reducing the protection of the Indian to an ordinary administrative matter. From the days of Spanish colonial legislation, wise and detailed ordinances, worked out after conscientious study, have been quite useless. The republic, since independence, has been prodigal in its decrees, laws, and provisions intended to protect the Indian against exaction and abuse. The *gamonal* of today, like the *encomendero* of yesterday, however, has little to fear from administrative theory; he knows that its practice is altogether different.

The individualistic character of the republic's legislation has favored the absorption of Indian property by the latifundium system. The situation of the Indian, in this respect, was viewed more realistically by Spanish legislation. But legal reform has no more practical value than administrative reform when confronted by feudalism intact within the economic structure. The appropriation of most communal and individual Indian property is an accomplished fact.⁴ The experience of all countries that have evolved from their feudal stage shows us, on the other

the best way to raise his social condition. His economic strength and all his activity are found in the land. To take him away from the land is to alter profoundly and dangerously the ancestral tendency of his race. In no other place and in no other way can he find a better source of wealth than in the land." *Contribución a una legislación tutelar indígena*, p. 39. Encina says elsewhere (p. 13): "Legal institutions related to property are derived from economic necessities. Our civil code is not in harmony with economic principles because it is individualistic. Unrestricted property rights have created the latifundium to the detriment of Indian property. Ownership of unproductive land has condemned a race to serfdom and misery."

hand, that liberal rights have not been able to operate without the dissolution of feudalism.

The assumption that the Indian problem is ethnic is sustained by the most outmoded repertory of imperialist ideas. The concept of inferior races was useful to the white man's West for purposes of expansion and conquest. To expect that the Indian will be emancipated through a steady crossing of the aboriginal race with white immigrants is an anti-sociological naïveté that could only occur to the primitive mentality of an importer of merino sheep. The people of Asia, who are in no way superior to the Indians, have not needed any transfusion of European blood in order to assimilate the most dynamic and creative aspects of Western culture. The degeneration of the Peruvian Indian is a cheap invention of sophists who serve feudal interests.

The tendency to consider the Indian problem as a moral one embodies a liberal, humanitarian, enlightened nineteenth-century attitude that in the political sphere of the Western world inspires and motivates the "leagues of human rights." The anti-slavery conferences and societies in Europe that have denounced more or less futilely the crimes of the colonizing nations are born of this tendency, which always has trusted too much in its appeals to the conscience of civilization. González Prada was not immune to this hope when he wrote that "the condition of the Indian can improve in two ways: either the heart of the oppressor will be moved to take pity and recognize the rights of the oppressed, or the spirit of the oppressed will find the valor needed to turn on the oppressors."⁵ The Pro-Indian Association (1900-1917) represented the same hope, although it owed its real effectiveness to the concrete and immediate measures taken by its directors in defense of the Indian. This policy was due in large measure to the practical, typically Saxon idealism of Dora Mayer,⁶ and the work of the Association became well

⁴ González Prada, "Nuestros indios," in *Horas de lucha*, 2nd ed.

⁵ Dora Mayer de Zulen summarizes the character of the Pro-Indian Asso-

known in Peru and the rest of the world. Humanitarian teachings have not halted or hampered European imperialism, nor have they reformed its methods. The struggle against imperialism now relies only on the solidarity and strength of the liberation movement of the colonial masses. This concept governs anti-imperialist action in contemporary Europe, action that is supported by liberals like Albert Einstein and Romain Rolland and, therefore, cannot be considered exclusively Socialist.

On a moral and intellectual plane, the church took a more energetic or at least a more authoritative stand centuries ago. This crusade, however, achieved only very wise laws and provisions. The lot of the Indian remained substantially the same. González Prada, whose point of view, as we know, was not strictly Socialist, looked for the explanation of its failure in the economic essentials: "It could not have happened otherwise; exploitation was the official order; it was pretended that evils were humanely perpetrated and injustices committed equitably. To wipe out abuses, it would have been necessary to abolish land appropriation and forced labor, in brief, to change the entire colonial regime. Without the toil of the American Indian,

ciation in this way: "In specific and practical terms, the Pro-Indian Association signifies for historians what Mariátegui assumes to be an experiment in the redemption of the backward and enslaved indigenous race through an outside protective body that without charge and by legal means has sought to serve it as a lawyer in its claims against the government." But, as appears in the same interesting review of the Association's work, Dora Mayer believes that it tried above all to create a sense of responsibility. "One hundred years after the republican emancipation of Peru, the conscience of the governors, the *gamonales*, the clergy, and the educated and semi-educated public continued to disregard its responsibilities to a people who not only deserved philanthropic deliverance from inhuman treatment, but to whom Peruvian patriotism owed a debt of national honor, because the Inca race had lost the respect of its own and other countries." The best result of the Pro-Indian Association, however, was, according to Dora Mayer's faithful testimony, its influence in awakening the Indian. "What needed to happen was happening; the Indians themselves were learning to do without the protection of outsiders and to find ways to redress their grievances."

the coffers of the Spanish treasury would have been emptied."⁶ In any event, religious tenets were more likely to succeed than liberal tenets. The former appealed to a noble and active Spanish Catholicism, whereas the latter tried to make itself heard by a weak and formalist criollo liberalism.

But today a religious solution is unquestionably the most outdated and antihistoric of all. Its representatives—unlike their distant, how very distant, teachers—are not concerned with obtaining a new declaration of the rights of Indians, with adequate authority and ordinances; the missionary is merely assigned the role of mediator between the Indian and the *gamonal*.⁷ If the church could not accomplish its task in a medieval era, when its spiritual and intellectual capacity could be measured by friars like Las Casas, how can it succeed with the elements it commands today? The Seventh-Day Adventists, in that respect, have taken the lead from the Catholic clergy, whose cloisters attract fewer and fewer evangelists.

The belief that the Indian problem is one of education does not seem to be supported by even a strictly and independently pedagogical criterion. Education is now more than ever aware of social and economic factors. The modern pedagogue knows perfectly well that education is not just a question of school and teaching methods. Economic and social circumstances necessarily condition the work of the teacher. *Gamonalismo* is fundamentally opposed to the education of the Indian; it has the same

⁶ González Prada, *Horas de lucha*.

⁷ "Only the missionary," writes José León y Bueno, one of the leaders of Acción Social de la Juventud, "can redeem and make restitution to the Indian. Only he can return to Peru its unity, dignity, and strength by acting as the tireless intermediary between the *gamonal* and the resident hacienda laborer and between the *latifundista* and the communal farmer; by preventing the arbitrary acts of the governor, who heeds solely the political interests of the criollo cacique; by explaining in simple terms the objective lessons of nature and interpreting life in its fatality and liberty; by condemning excesses during celebrations; by cutting off carnal appetites at their source; and by revealing to the Indian race its lofty mission." *Boletín de la A.S.J.*, May, 1928.

interest in keeping the Indian ignorant as it has in encouraging him to depend on alcohol.⁸ The modern school—assuming that in the present situation it could be multiplied at the same rate as the rural school-age population—is incompatible with the feudal latifundium. The mechanics of the Indian's servitude would altogether cancel the action of the school if the latter, by a miracle that is inconceivable within social reality, should manage to preserve its pedagogical mission under a feudal regime. The most efficient and grandiose teaching system could not perform these prodigies. School and teacher are doomed to be debased under the pressure of the feudal regime, which cannot be reconciled with the most elementary concept of progress and evolution. When this truth becomes partially understood, the saving formula is thought to be discovered in boarding schools for Indians. But the glaring inadequacy of this formula is self-evident in view of the tiny percentage of the indigenous school population that can be boarded in these schools.

The pedagogical solution, advocated by many in good faith, has been discarded officially. Educators, I repeat, can least afford to ignore economic and social reality. At present, it only exists as a vague and formless suggestion which no body or doctrine wants to adopt.

The new approach locates the problem of the Indian in the land tenure system.

⁸ It is well known that the production—and also the smuggling—of cane alcohol is a profitable business of the *hacendados* of the sierra. Even those on the coast exploit this market to some extent. The alcoholism of the peon and the resident laborer is indispensable to the prosperity of our great agricultural properties.

NOTE 1

In my prologue to *Tempestad en los Andes* by Valcárcel, an impassioned and militant champion of the Indian, I have explained my point of view as follows:

"Faith in the renaissance of the Indian is not pinned to the material process of 'Westernizing' the Quechua country. The soul of the Indian is

THE PROBLEM OF THE INDIAN

not raised by the white man's civilization or alphabet but by the myth, the idea, of the Socialist revolution. The hope of the Indian is absolutely revolutionary. That same myth, that same idea, are the decisive agents in the awakening of other ancient peoples or races in ruin: the Hindus, the Chinese, et cetera. Universal history today tends as never before to chart its course with a common quadrant. Why should the Inca people, who constructed the most highly-developed and harmonious communistic system, be the only ones unmoved by this worldwide emotion? The consanguinity of the Indian movement with world revolutionary currents is too evident to need documentation. I have said already that I reached an understanding and appreciation of the Indian through socialism. The case of Valcárcel proves the validity of my personal experience. Valcárcel, a man with a different intellectual background, influenced by traditionalist tastes and oriented by another type of guidance and studies, politically resolved his concern for the Indian in socialism. In this book, he tells us that 'the Indian proletariat awaits its Lenin.' A Marxist would not state it differently.

"As long as the vindication of the Indian is kept on a philosophical and cultural plane, it lacks a concrete historical base. To acquire such a base—that is, to acquire physical reality—it must be converted into an economic and political vindication. Socialism has taught us how to present the problem of the Indian in new terms. We have ceased to consider it abstractly as an ethnic or moral problem and we now recognize it concretely as a social, economic, and political problem. And, for the first time, we have felt it to be clearly defined.

"Those who have not yet broken free of the limitations of a liberal bourgeois education take an abstractionist and literary position. They idly discuss the racial aspects of the problem, disguising its reality under a pseudo-idealistic language and forgetting that it is essentially dominated by politics and, therefore, by economics. They counter revolutionary dialectics with a confused critical jargon, according to which a political reform or event cannot solve the Indian problem because its immediate effects would not reach a multitude of complicated customs and vices that can only be changed through a long and normal evolutionary process.

"History, fortunately, dispels all doubts and clears up all ambiguities. The conquest was a political event. Although it abruptly interrupted the autonomous evolution of the Quechua nation, it did not involve a sudden substitution of the conquerors' law and customs for those of the natives. Nevertheless, this political event opened up a new period in every aspect of their spiritual and material existence. The change in regime altered the life of the Quechua people to its very foundations. Independence was another political event. It, too, did not bring about a radical transformation in the economic and social structure of Peru; but it initiated, notwithstanding, another period of our history. Although it did not noticeably improve the condition of the Indian, having hardly touched the colonial economic infrastructure, it did change his legal situation and clear the way for his political and social emancipation. If the republic did not continue along this road, the fault lies entirely with the class that profited from independence, which was potentially very rich in values and creative principles.

"The problem of the Indian must no longer be obscured and confused by the perpetual arguments of the throng of lawyers and writers who are consciously or unconsciously in league with the *latifundistas*. The moral and material misery of the Indian is too clearly the result of the economic and social system that has oppressed him for centuries. This system, which succeeded colonial feudalism, is *gamonalismo*. While it rules supreme, there can be no question of redeeming the Indian.

"The term *gamonalismo* designates more than just a social and economic category: that of the *latifundistas* or large landowners. It signifies a whole phenomenon. *Gamonalismo* is represented not only by the *gamonales* but by a long hierarchy of officials, intermediaries, agents, parasites, et cetera. The literate Indian who enters the service of *gamonalismo* turns into an exploiter of his own race. The central factor of the phenomenon is the hegemony of the semi-feudal landed estate in the policy and mechanism of the government. Therefore, it is this factor that should be acted upon if the evil is to be attacked at its roots and not merely observed in its temporary or subsidiary manifestations.

"*Gamonalismo* or feudalism could have been eliminated by the republic within its liberal and capitalist principles. But for reasons I have already indicated, those principles have not effectively and fully directed our historic process. They were sabotaged by the very class charged with applying them and for more than a century they have been powerless to rescue the Indian from a servitude that was an integral part of the feudal system. It cannot be hoped that today, when those principles are in crisis all over the world, they can suddenly acquire in Peru an unwonted creative vitality.

"Revolutionary and even reformist thought can no longer be liberal; they must be Socialist. Socialism appears in our history not because of chance, imitation, or fashion, as some superficial minds would believe, but because it was historically inevitable. On the one hand, we who profess socialism struggle logically and consistently for the reorganization of our country on Socialist bases; proving that the economic and political regime that we oppose has turned into an instrument for colonizing the country on behalf of foreign imperialist capitalism, we declare that this is a moment in our history when it is impossible to be really nationalist and revolutionary without being Socialist. On the other hand, there does not exist and never has existed in Peru a progressive bourgeoisie, endowed with national feelings, that claims to be liberal and democratic and that derives its policy from the postulates of its doctrine."



The Problem of Land

The Agrarian Problem and the Indian Problem

THOSE OF US WHO APPROACH and define the Indian problem from a Socialist point of view must start out by declaring the complete obsolescence of the humanitarian and philanthropic points of view which, like a prolongation of the apostolic battle of Las Casas, continued to motivate the old pro-Indian campaign. We shall try to establish the basically economic character of the problem. First, we protest against the instinctive attempt of the *criollo* or *mestizo* to reduce it to an exclusively administrative, pedagogical, ethnic, or moral problem in order to avoid at all cost recognizing its economic aspect. Therefore, it would be absurd to accuse us of being romantic or literary. By identifying it as primarily a socio-economic problem, we are taking the least romantic and literary position possible. We are not satisfied to assert the Indian's right to education, culture, progress, love, and heaven. We begin by categorically asserting his right to land. This thoroughly materialistic claim should suffice to distinguish us from the heirs or imitators of the evan-

gelical fervor of the great Spanish friar, whom, on the other hand, our materialism does not prevent us from admiring and esteeming.

The problem of land is obviously too bound up with the Indian problem to be conveniently mitigated or diminished. Quite the contrary. As for myself, I shall try to present it in unmistakable and clearcut terms.

The agrarian problem is first and foremost the problem of eliminating feudalism in Peru, which should have been done by the democratic-bourgeois regime that followed the War of Independence. But in its one hundred years as a republic, Peru has not had a genuine bourgeois class, a true capitalist class. The old feudal class—camouflaged or disguised as a republican bourgeoisie—has kept its position. The policy of disentanglement, initiated by the War of Independence as a logical consequence of its ideology, did not lead to the development of small property. The old landholding class had not lost its supremacy. The survival of the *latifundistas*, in practice, preserved the latifundium. Disentanglement struck at the Indian community. During a century of Republican rule, great agricultural property actually has grown stronger and expanded, despite the theoretical liberalism of our constitution and the practical necessities of the development of our capitalist economy.

There are two expressions of feudalism that survive: the latifundium and servitude. Inseparable and of the same substance, their analysis leads us to the conclusion that the servitude oppressing the indigenous race cannot be abolished unless the latifundium is abolished.

When the agrarian problem is presented in these terms, it cannot be easily distorted. It appears in all its magnitude as a socio-economic, and therefore a political, problem, to be dealt with by men who move in this sphere of acts and ideas. And it is useless to try to convert it, for example, into a technical-agricultural problem for agronomists.

Everyone must know that according to individualist ideology, the liberal solution to this problem would be the breaking up of the latifundium to create small property. But there is so much ignorance of the elementary principles of socialism that it is worthwhile repeating that this formula—the breaking up of the latifundium in favor of small property—is neither utopian, nor heretical, nor revolutionary, nor Bolshevik, nor avant-garde, but orthodox, constitutional, democratic, capitalist, and bourgeois. It is based on the same liberal body of ideas that produced the constitutional laws of all democratic-bourgeois states. In the countries of Central and Eastern Europe—Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Poland, Bulgaria, et cetera—agrarian laws have been passed limiting land ownership, in principle, to a maximum of five hundred hectares. Here, the Great War razed the last remnants of feudalism with the sanction of the capitalist West, which since then has used precisely this bloc of anti-Bolshevik countries as a bulwark against Russia.

In keeping with my ideological position, I believe that the moment for attempting the liberal, individualist method in Peru has already passed. Aside from reasons of doctrine, I consider that our agrarian problem has a special character due to an indisputable and concrete factor: the survival of the Indian "community" and of elements of practical socialism in indigenous agriculture and life.

If those who hold a democratic-liberal doctrine are truly seeking a solution to the problem of the Indian that, above all, will free him from servitude, they can turn to the Czechoslovakian or Rumanian experience rather than the Mexican example, which they may find dangerous given its inspiration and process. For them it is still time to advocate a liberal formula. They would at least ensure that discussion of the agrarian problem by the new generation would not altogether lack the liberal philosophy that, according to written history, has governed the life of Peru since the foundation of the republic.

Colonialism—Feudalism

The problem of land sheds light on the Socialist or vanguardist attitude toward the remains of the vicereignty. Literary *perricholismo* does not interest us except as an indication or reflection of economic colonialism. The colonial heritage that we want to do away with is not really the one of romantic damsels screened from sight behind shawls or shutters, but the one of a feudal system with its *gamonalismo*, latifundium, and servitude. Colonial literature—nostalgic evocation of the vicereignty and its pomp—is for me only the mediocre product of a spirit engendered and nourished by that regime. The vicereignty does not survive in the *perricholismo* of troubadors and storytellers. It survives in a feudalism that contains the germs of an undeclared capitalism. We decry not our Spanish but our feudal legacy.

Spain brought us the Middle Ages: the Inquisition, feudalism, et cetera. Later it brought us the Counter Reformation: a reactionary spirit, a Jesuit method, a scholastic casuistry. We have painfully rid ourselves of most of these afflictions by assimilating Western culture, sometimes obtained through Spain itself. But we are still burdened with their economic foundations embedded in the interests of a class whose hegemony was not destroyed by the War of Independence. The roots of feudalism are intact and they are responsible for the lag in our capitalist development.

The land tenure system determines the political and administrative system of the nation. The agrarian problem, which the republic has not yet been able to solve, dominates all other problems. Democratic and liberal institutions cannot flourish or operate in a semi-feudal economy.

The subordination of the Indian problem to the problem of land is even more absolute, for special reasons. The indigenous race is a race of farmers. The Inca people were peasants, normal-

ly engaged in agriculture and shepherding. Their industries and arts were typically domestic and rural. The principle that life springs from the soil was truer in the Peru of the Incas than in any other country. The most notable public works and collective enterprises of Tawantinsuyo were for military, religious or agricultural purposes. The irrigation canals of the sierra and the coast and the agricultural terraces of the Andes remain the best evidence of the degree of economic organization reached by Inca Peru. Its civilization was agrarian in all its important aspects. Valcárcel, in his study of the economic life of Tawantinsuyo, writes that "the land, in native tradition, is the common mother; from her womb come not only food but man himself. Land provides all wealth. The cult of Mama Pacha is on a par with the worship of the sun and, like the sun, Mother Earth represents no one in particular. Joined in the aboriginal ideology, these two concepts gave birth to agrarianism, which combines communal ownership of land and the universal religion of the sun."¹

Inca communism, which cannot be negated or disparaged for having developed under the autocratic regime of the Incas, is therefore designated as agrarian communism. The essential traits of the Inca economy, according to the careful definition of our historical process by César Ugarte, were the following:

Collective ownership of farmland by the *ayllu* or group of related families, although the property was divided into individual and non-transferable lots; collective ownership of waters, pasture, and woodlands by the *marca* or tribe, or the federation of *ayllus* settled around a village; cooperative labor; individual allotment of harvests and produce.²

Colonization unquestionably must bear the responsibility for the disappearance of this economy, together with the culture it

¹ Luis E. Valcárcel, *Del ayllu al imperio*, p. 166.

² César Antonio Ugarte, *Bosquejo de la historia económica del Perú*, p. 9.

nourished, not because it destroyed autochthonous forms but because it brought no superior substitutes. The colonial regime disrupted and demolished the Inca agrarian economy without replacing it with an economy of higher yields. Under the indigenous aristocracy, the natives made up a nation of ten million men, with an integrated government that efficiently ruled all its territory; under a foreign aristocracy, the natives became a scattered and anarchic mass of a million men reduced to servitude and peonage.

In this respect, demographic data are the most convincing and decisive. Although the Inca regime may be censured in the name of modern liberal concepts of liberty and justice, the positive and material historical fact is that it assured the subsistence and growth of a population that came to ten million when the conquistadors arrived in Peru, and that this population after three centuries of Spanish domination had fallen to one million. Colonization stands condemned not from any abstract, theoretical, or moral standpoint of justice, but from the practical, concrete, and material standpoint of utility.

Colonization, failing to organize even a feudal economy in Peru, introduced elements of a slave economy.

The Policy of Colonization: Depopulation and Slavery

It is easy to explain why the Spanish colonial regime was incapable of organizing a purely feudal economy in Peru. It is impossible to organize an economy without a clear understanding and sure appreciation, if not of its principles, at least of its needs. An indigenous, integrated economy develops alone. It spontaneously determines its own institutions. But a colonial economy is established on bases that are in part artificial and foreign, subordinate to the interests of the colonizer. Its normal development depends on the colonizer's ability either to adapt himself to local conditions or to change them.

The Spanish colonizer conspicuously lacked this ability. He

had an exaggerated idea of the economic value of natural wealth and absolutely no idea of the economic value of man.

With the practice of exterminating the indigenous population and destroying its institutions, the conquistadors impoverished and bled, more than they could realize, the fabulous country they had won for the king of Spain. Later, a nineteenth-century South American statesman, impressed by the spectacle of a semi-deserted continent, was to prescribe an economic principle for his epoch: "To govern is to populate." The Spanish colonizer, completely alien to this criterion, systematically depopulated Peru.

The persecution and enslavement of the Indian rapidly consumed resources that had been unbelievably underestimated by the colonizers: human capital. As the Spaniards found that they daily needed more labor for the exploitation of the wealth they had conquered, they resorted to the most antisocial and primitive system of colonization: the importation of slaves. The colonizer thereby renounced, on the other hand, an undertaking that the conquistador had thought feasible: the assimilation of the Indian. The Negro race he imported had to serve, among other things, to reduce the demographic imbalance between white and Indian.

The greed for precious metals—entirely logical in a century when distant lands could not send Europe any other product—drove the Spaniards to engage principally in mining. Therefore, they sought to convert to mining a people who had been essentially agricultural under the Inca and even before, and they ended by having to subject the Indian to the harsh law of slavery. Agricultural labor, under a naturally feudal system, would have made the Indian a serf bound to the land. Labor in mines and cities was to turn him into a slave. With the *mita*, the Spaniards established a system of forced labor and uprooted the Indian from his soil and his customs.

The importation of Negro slaves, which supplied laborers and

domestic servants to the Spanish population on the coast, where the viceregal court was located, helped mask its economic and political error from Spain. Slavery was injected into the regime, corrupting and weakening it.

In his study of the social situation in colonial Peru, Professor Javier Prado, whose premises I naturally do not share, reached conclusions that deal with an aspect of precisely this failure of colonization:

The Negro, considered as commercial merchandise and imported to America as a human labor machine, was to water the earth with the sweat of his brow, but without making it fruitful. It is the pattern of elimination followed by civilization in the history of all peoples. The slave is unproductive in his labor, as he was in the Roman Empire and as he has been in Peru. In the social organism he is a cancer that erodes national sentiments and ideals. In this way, the slave has disappeared from Peru, leaving behind barren fields and having taken revenge on the white race by mixing his blood with the latter's. By this vicious alliance, he debased the moral and intellectual judgment of those who were first his cruel masters and later his godfathers, companions, and brothers.³

The colonizer was not guilty of having brought an inferior race—this was the customary reproach of sociologists of fifty years ago—but of having brought slaves. Slavery was doomed to fail, both as a means of economic exploitation and organization of the colony and as a reinforcement of a regime based only on conquest and force.

Coastal agriculture still has not rid itself of its colonial defects, which derive largely from the slave system. The coastal *latifundista* never has asked for men, but for labor, to till his fields. Therefore, when he ran out of Negro slaves he found their successors in Chinese coolies. This other *encomendero* type of importation, like that of the Negroes, conflicted with the normal for-

³ Javier Prado, "Estado social del Perú durante la dominación española," in *Anales universitarios del Perú*, XXII, 125-126.

mation of a liberal economy consistent with the political order established by the War of Independence. César Ugarte recognizes this in his study of the Peruvian economy when he states flatly that Peru needed "men," not "labor."⁴

The Spanish Colonizer

Colonization's inability to organize the Peruvian economy on its natural agricultural bases is explained by the kind of colonizer that came to Peru. Whereas in North America colonization planted the seeds of the spirit and economy then growing in Europe and representing the future, the Spaniard brought to America the effects and methods of an already declining spirit and economy that belonged to the past. This thesis may seem overly simplified to those who look only at its economic aspect and who are, unknowingly, the survivors of old-fashioned scholarly rhetoric. They share the common weakness of our historians: an incomprehension of economic reality. For this reason, I was glad to find in José Vasconcelos' recent book, *Indología*, an opinion that has the virtue of coming from a philosopher who cannot be accused of too much Marxism or too little Hispanism.

If there were not so many other causes of both a moral and physical order that amply explain the apparently reckless spectacle of the enormous progress of the Saxons in the North and the slow, aimless pace of the Latins in the South, a mere comparison of the two property systems would suffice to explain this contrast. In the North, there were no kings to dispose of another's land as though it were their own. Without any special favors from their monarchs and in a sort of moral rebellion against the king of England, the colonizers of the north proceeded to develop a system of private property under which each one paid the price of his land and occupied only as much as he could cultivate. In place of *encomiendas*, there were farms. In place of a military and landed

⁴ Ugarte, *Historia económica del Perú*, p. 64.

that time, it was very difficult to find capital; for the monks it was a simple matter. Donations from wealthy families rapidly furnished them with great quantities of precious metals, thereby facilitating primitive accumulation of capital. On the other hand, monasteries spent very little and their rules required them to practice a strict economy that recalls the frugal habits of the first capitalists. For a long time, monks were in a position to engage in operations that would increase their fortune." Sorel tells us how, "after having rendered distinguished services to Europe that are universally recognized, these institutions swiftly declined," and how the Benedictines "stopped being workers gathered together in an almost capitalist workshop and became bourgeois retired businessmen who thought only of a life of pleasant leisure in the countryside."⁷

This aspect of colonization, like many others of our economy, has not yet been studied. It has fallen to me, a convinced and declared Marxist, to point it out. I believe this study is essential to the economic justification of any measures adopted by future agrarian policy concerning the properties of monasteries and religious orders, because it will conclusively establish that their right of ownership, along with the real titles on which it rested, has actually expired.

The "Community" Under the Colonial Regime

The Laws of the Indies protected indigenous property and recognized its communist organization. Legislation relative to Indian "communities" did not attack institutions or customs that were not opposed to the religious spirit and political character of colonization. The agrarian communism of the *ayllu*, once the Inca state was destroyed, was not incompatible with either one. To the contrary. The Jesuits took advantage of indigenous

⁷ Georges Sorel, *Introduction à l'économie moderne* (Paris: Marcel Rivière, 1911), pp. 120, 130.

communism in Peru, in Mexico, and, on a still larger scale, in Paraguay, for purposes of religious instruction. The medieval regime, in theory and practice, reconciled feudal property with community property.

Recognition of the "communities" and of their economic customs by the Laws of the Indies not only shows the realistic wisdom of colonial policy but is absolutely adjusted to feudal theory and practice. The provisions of the colonial laws on "communities," which maintained the latter's economic mechanism with no trouble, reformed customs contrary to Catholic doctrine (trial marriage, et cetera) and tended to convert the "community" into a cog in the administrative and fiscal machinery. The "community" could and did exist for the greater glory and profit of king and church.

We know that this legislation was mostly on paper. Indian property could not be adequately protected because of colonial practices. All evidence agrees on this. Ugarte makes the following statements:

Neither the farsighted measures of Toledo nor other measures that were tried out on different occasions prevented a large part of indigenous property from falling legally or illegally into the hands of Spaniards or criollos. One of the institutions that facilitated this plunder was the *encomienda*. By law, the *encomendero* was in charge of collecting taxes and of the organization and conversion to Christianity of his tributaries. But in actual fact, he was a feudal lord, owner of lives and haciendas, for he disposed of Indians as if they were trees in a forest and, if they died or disappeared, he took possession by one means or another of their land. In brief, under the colonial agrarian regime, many indigenous agrarian communities were replaced by individually owned latifundia farmed by Indians within a feudal organization. These great feudal properties, far from being split up over the years, became concentrated and consolidated into few holdings, because real estate was subject to in-

numerable encumbrances and perpetual assessments that immobilized it, like primogeniture, religious bequests and payments, and other entailments on the property.⁸

Feudalism similarly let rural communes continue in Russia, a country that offers an interesting parallel because in its historical process it is much closer to these agricultural and semi-feudal countries than are the capitalist countries of the West. Eugene Schkaff, in his study of the evolution of the *mir* in Russia, writes:

Since landlords were liable for the taxes, they wanted every peasant to have approximately the same area of land so that each one would contribute with his labor to pay the taxes; to make sure that these taxes would be paid, they established joint responsibility, which was extended by the government to the rest of the peasants. Land was redistributed as the number of serfs varied. Feudalism and absolutism gradually transformed the communal organization of the peasants into an instrument of exploitation. In this respect, the emancipation of the serfs brought no change.⁹

Under the system of landlords, the Russian *mir*, like the Peruvian community, was completely denaturalized. The area of land available for community families became more and more inadequate and its distribution increasingly faulty. The *mir* did not guarantee the peasant enough land to support himself; on the other hand, it guaranteed the landlord a labor supply for his latifundium. When serfdom was abolished in 1861, the landlords found a way to replace it by making their peasants' lots so small that they could not raise enough food to live on. Russian agriculture thus kept its feudal character. The latifundium owner turned the reform to his advantage. He had already realized that it was in his interest to assign lots to his peasants, provided that they were less than subsistence size. There was no surer

⁸ Ugarte, *Historia económica del Perú*, p. 24.

⁹ Eugene Schkaff, *La question agraire en Russie* (Paris: Rousseau, 1922), p. 118.

means of shackling the peasant to the land and, at the same time, of keeping his emigration down to a minimum. [The peasant was forced to work on the landlord's latifundium not only because of the miserable existence he wrested from his miniscule plot of land but also because the landlord owned pastures, woods, mills, water, et cetera.]

The coexistence of "community" and latifundium in Peru is, therefore, fully explained both by the characteristics of the colonial regime and by the experience of feudal Europe. But the "community," under this system, was tolerated rather than protected. It was subject to the despotic law of the latifundium, and the state could not possibly intervene. The "community" survived, but in a condition of servitude. Previously, it had been the very nucleus of the state, which assured it the energy necessary to the welfare of its members. Colonialism petrified it within the great property that supported a new state, alien to its destiny.

The liberalism of the laws of the republic, powerless to destroy feudalism and create capitalism, later denied the "community" the formal protection that it had been granted by the absolutism of colonial laws.

The War of Independence and Agrarian Property

We shall now examine the problem of land under the republic. In order to define my points of view about this period as regards the agrarian question, I must emphasize an opinion that I already have expressed about the character of the War of Independence in Peru. Independence found Peru to be backward in the formation of its bourgeoisie. The elements of a capitalist economy were less developed in our country than in other countries of America, where the struggle for independence could count on an emerging bourgeoisie.

If the War of Independence had been a movement of the indigenous masses or had championed their cause, it would neces-

sarily have had an agrarian cast. It is already clearly demonstrated that the French Revolution especially benefited the rural class and depended on it to prevent the return of the old regime. This phenomenon, furthermore, seems in general to be true of bourgeois as well as Socialist revolution judging by the more precise and enduring results of the overthrow of feudalism in Central Europe and czarist Russia. Although mainly the urban bourgeoisie and proletariat have directed and carried out both kinds of revolution, the peasant has been the immediate beneficiary. Particularly in Russia, the rural class has gathered the first fruits of the Bolshevik revolution, because there was no bourgeois revolution to destroy feudalism and absolutism and to initiate a liberal democratic regime.

But achievement of these objectives by a liberal democratic revolution presupposes two conditions: the existence of a bourgeoisie that knows where it is going and why; and the existence of a revolutionary spirit in the peasant class and, above all, of a declaration of the peasants' right to land, in defiance of the power of the landowning aristocracy. In Peru these conditions existed even less than in other countries at the time of the War of Independence. The revolution had triumphed because the peoples of the continent had been obliged to join together against Spanish rule and because world political and economic circumstances were in its favor. The continental nationalism of the Spanish American revolutionaries and the enforced association of their destinies combined to bring the most backward abreast of the most advanced peoples in their march toward capitalism.

In his study of the Argentine and, therefore, of the American revolution, Echevarría classifies society in the following manner:

American society was divided into three classes with conflicting interests and without any moral or political bond. The first class was comprised of the lawyers, clergy, and authorities; the second class was made up of those who became rich through monopolies or good luck; the third class contained the workers, known as *gauchos* and

compadritos in the Río de la Plata, *cholos* in Peru, *rotos* in Chile, and *léperos* in Mexico. The Indian and African castes were slaves who lived outside of society. The first class, with the power and privileges of the hidalgo, produced nothing and enjoyed a life of ease; it was an aristocracy largely composed of Peninsular Spaniards and included very few criollos. The second class also lived in comfort, peacefully engaged in industry or commerce; it was the middle class that sat on the municipal council. The third class was the only one that contributed manual labor to production and it was made up of artisans and every kind of proletariat. American descendants of the first two classes who had received some education in America or in Spain were the ones to raise the banner of the revolution.¹⁰

The struggle for independence in many cases united the landholding nobility and the bourgeois merchants, either because the former had been indoctrinated with liberal ideas or because it regarded the revolution as only a liberation movement from the Spanish crown. The peasant population, which in Peru was Indian, did not participate directly or actively in the war, and the revolutionary program did not represent its claims.

But this program was inspired by liberal ideology. The revolution could not exclude principles that supported agrarian reform founded on the practical necessity and theoretical justice of freeing the land from its feudal shackles. The republic introduced these principles into its statutes. Peru did not have a bourgeoisie to apply them in accordance with its economic interests and its political and legal doctrine. Although the republic—following the course and dictates of history—was established on liberal and bourgeois principles, the practical effects of independence on agricultural property could not help but be limited by the interests of the large landowners.

Therefore, the disentanglement of agricultural property required by the basic policies of the republic did not attack the latifun-

¹⁰ Esteban Echevarría, *Antecedentes y primeros pasos de la revolución de mayo*.

dium. And if, on the one hand, the new laws in compensation ordered the distribution of land to the Indian, on the other hand they attacked the "community" in the name of liberal precepts.

Thus was inaugurated a regime that, whatever its principles, made the condition of the Indian to some extent worse instead of better. And this was not the fault of the ideology that inspired the new policy, which, rightly applied, would have ended feudal control of land and converted the Indian into a small landowner.

The new policy formally abolished the *mita*, the *encomienda*, et cetera. It included a series of measures that signified the end of the Indian's serfdom. But since it nevertheless left the power and force of feudal property intact, it invalidated its own measures for protecting the small landowner and farmer.

Although the landholding aristocracy in principle forfeited its privileges, in fact it maintained its position. It continued to be the dominant class in Peru. The revolution had not really raised a new class to power. The professional and business bourgeoisie was too weak to govern. The abolition of forced labor, therefore, never became more than a theoretical declaration because it did not touch the latifundium, and servitude is only one of the aspects of feudalism, not feudalism itself.

The Agrarian Policy of the Republic

During the period of military caudillos that followed the War of Independence, a liberal policy on agricultural property obviously could not be developed or even be formulated. The military caudillo was the natural product of a revolutionary period that had not been able to create a new governing class. In this situation, power was taken over by the military leaders of the revolution, who, on the one hand, enjoyed the prestige of their wartime achievements and, on the other, were in a position to keep themselves in the government by means of armed force. Of course, the caudillo could not remain aloof from the influence of

class interests or of opposing historical currents. He was supported by the spineless liberalism and rhetoric of the urban demos and by the colonial conservatism of the landowning class.

He was sanctioned by the city's lawmakers and jurists and by the writers and orators of the latifundium aristocracy. In the contest between liberal and conservative interests, there was no direct and active campaign to vindicate the peasant, which would have compelled the liberals to include the redistribution of agricultural property in their program.

A true statesman, not one of our military bosses of this period, would have heeded and dealt with this basic problem.

The military caudillo, furthermore, seems organically incapable of so sweeping a reform, which first and foremost requires an informed legal and economic mind. His tyranny creates an atmosphere that is hostile to new legal and economic principles. Vasconcelos makes this observation:

On an economic level, the caudillo is always the main support of the latifundium. Although he sometimes declares himself to be an enemy of property, there is almost no caudillo who does not end up as an *hacendado*. The fact is that military power inevitably leads to land appropriation, whether by soldier, caudillo, king, or emperor; despotism and the latifundium go together. This is natural. Economic, like political, rights can only be preserved and defended with a regime of liberty. Absolutism always means poverty for the many and opulence and abusive power for the few. Only democracy, with all its defects, has been able to take us closer to the best achievements of social justice—at least, democracy as it is before it degenerates into the imperialism of republics that are too wealthy and that are surrounded by decadent peoples. In any event, among the caudillo and military government have cooperated in the development of the latifundium. Just a glance at the property titles of our great landowners would reveal that almost all owe their wealth first to the Spanish crown and later to concessions and illegal favors granted to the influential generals of our false republics. Benefits

and concessions have been granted over and over again without any regard for the rights of entire Indian or mestizo populations, who were helpless to assert their ownership.¹¹

A new legal and economic order must be, in any case, the work of a class and not of a caudillo. When the class exists, the caudillo acts as its interpreter and trustee. His policy is no longer determined by his personal judgment but by a group of collective interests and requirements. Peru lacked a middle class capable of organizing a strong and efficient state. Militarism represented an elementary and provisional order that, as soon as it could be dispensed with, needed to be replaced by a more advanced and integrated order. It could not understand or even consider the agrarian problem. Elementary and immediate problems absorbed its limited action. Castilla was the military caudillo at his best. His shrewd opportunism, slyness, crudeness, and absolute empiricism prevented him from adopting a liberal policy until the very end. Castilla realized that the liberals of his time were a literary group, a coterie, not a class. Therefore, he cautiously avoided any act that would seriously oppose the interests and principles of the conservative class. But the merits of his policy lie in his reformist and progressive leanings. His acts of greatest historic significance—the abolition of Negro slavery and of forced tribute from the Indians—expressed his liberal attitude.

Since the enactment of the Civil Code, Peru has entered a period of gradual organization. It is hardly necessary to point out that the Code signified, among other things, the decline of militarism. Inspired by the same principles as the republic's early decrees on land, it reinforced and continued the policy of disentanglement and redistribution of agricultural property. Ugarte,

¹¹ Vasconcelos, "Nacionalismo en la América Latina," in *Amauta*, No. 4. This opinion, which is true as regards relations between the military caudillo and agricultural property in America, is not as valid for all periods and historical situations. It cannot be subscribed to without making this specific qualification.

taking note of the progress made by national legislation on land, remarks that the Code "confirmed the legal abolition of the Indian communities and of the entailments; it introduced new legislation establishing occupation as one of the means of acquiring ownerless land; in its rules on inheritance, it tried to favor small property."¹²

Francisco García Calderón attributed to the Civil Code effects that it actually did not have or, at least, that were not as drastic and absolute as he believed. "The constitution had destroyed privileges and the civil law dividing up properties ended the unequal division of inheritances. This provision resulted, politically, in the death of the oligarchy, the aristocracy, the latifundium; socially, in the rise of the bourgeoisie and the mestizo; economically—by dividing inheritances equally—in the formation of small properties, previously blocked by the great estates of the nobility."¹³

This was undoubtedly the intention of the codifiers of rights in Peru. However, the Civil Code is merely one of the instruments of liberal policy and capitalist practice. As Ugarte recognizes, the Peruvian legislation "proposes to encourage the democratization of rural property, but by the purely negative means of removing obstacles rather than by giving the farmers positive protection."¹⁴ Nowhere has the division, that is, redistribution, of agricultural property been possible without special expropriation laws that have transferred ownership of the land to the class that works on it.

Notwithstanding the Code, small property has not flourished in Peru. To the contrary, the latifundium has been consolidated and extended. And only the property of the Indian "community" has suffered the consequences of this twisted liberalism.

¹² Ugarte, *Historia económica del Perú*, p. 57.

¹³ Francisco García Calderón, *Le Pérou contemporain*, pp. 98, 199.

¹⁴ Ugarte, *Historia económica del Perú*, p. 58.

Large Property and Political Power

The two factors that kept the independence movement from taking up the agrarian problem in Peru—the extremely rudimentary state of the urban bourgeoisie and the extra-social situation, as Echevarría defines it, of the Indian—later prevented the governments of the republic from developing a policy aimed in some way at a more equitable distribution of land.

During the period of the military caudillo, it was the latifundia and not the urban demos that grew stronger. With business and finance in the hands of foreigners, the emergence of a vigorous urban bourgeoisie was not economically possible. Spanish education was absolutely incompatible with the ends and needs of industrialism and capitalism; instead of technicians, it trained lawyers, writers, priests, et cetera. Unless the latter felt a special vocation for Jacobinism or demagoguery, they joined the clientele of the landowning class. In turn, business capital, almost exclusively foreign, had no choice but to deal and associate with this aristocracy, which, moreover, tacitly or explicitly continued to dominate political life. In this way, the landholding aristocracy and its adherents became the beneficiaries of the fiscal policy and the exploitation of guano and nitrate. In this way, this group was compelled by its economic role to assume the function of the bourgeoisie in Peru, although it did not lose its colonial and aristocratic vices and prejudices. And in this way, the urban bourgeoisie—professionals and businessmen—were finally absorbed by *civilismo*.

The power of this class—*civilistas* or *neogodos*—was to a large measure derived from ownership of land. In the early years of independence, it was not exactly a class of capitalists, but a class of landowners. As a landowning rather than an educated class, it was able to merge its interests with those of foreign businessmen and creditors and by this token to negotiate with the state and to traffic in the country's natural resources. Thanks to the

properties it had received under the viceroyalty, it possessed business capital under the republic. The privileges of the colony engendered the privileges of the republic.

Therefore, this class naturally and instinctively held the most conservative views on land ownership. The continued extra-social condition of the Indians, on the other hand, meant that there were no peasant masses ready to fight for their rights.

These have been the principal factors in the preservation and development of the latifundium. The liberalism of republican legislation was passive in its attitude toward feudal property and only took action against communal property. Although it could do nothing to the latifundium, it could do a great deal of damage to the "community." When a people are traditionally communist, dissolving the "community" does not help to create small properties. A society cannot be transformed artificially, still less a peasant society deeply attached to its traditions and its legal institutions. Individualism has not originated in any country's constitution or civil code. It must be formed through a more complicated and spontaneous process. Destroying the "communities" did not convert the Indians into small landowners or even into free salaried workers; it delivered their lands to the *gamonales* and their clientele and made it easier for the *latifundista* to chain the Indian to the latifundium.

It is claimed that the key to the accumulation of agricultural property on the coast has been the need for an adequate water supply. According to this argument, irrigated agriculture in valleys formed by shallow rivers has caused large property to flourish and medium and small property to wither away. But this is a specious argument, with only a grain of truth. The overrated technical or material reasons on which it is based have affected the accumulation of property only since the establishment and development of large-scale commercial agriculture on the coast. Before coastal agriculture acquired a capitalist organization, the factor of irrigation was not important enough

to determine the accumulation of property. It is true that the scarcity of irrigation water, because of the difficulties of its widespread distribution, favors the large landowner. But this is not what has kept property from being subdivided. The origins of the coastal latifundium go back to the colonial regime. The depopulation of the coast owing to colonial practices was at the same time one of the consequences of and one of the reasons for large property. The labor problem, which has been the only problem of the coastal landowner, is rooted in the latifundium. Landowners sought to solve it with the Negro slave in the colonial period and with the Chinese coolie in the time of the republic. A vain effort. The earth cannot be populated and, above all, made fruitful with slaves. Thanks to their policy, the great landholders own all the land possible, but they do not have enough men to till it and bring it to life. This is the defense of the large property; but it is also its misfortune and its weakness.

The agrarian situation in the sierra, on the other hand, shows the fallacy of the above argument. The sierra has no water problem. Abundant rainfall allows the latifundium owner and the communal farmer to grow the same crops. Nevertheless, property is also accumulated in the sierra. This circumstance proves that the question is essentially a socio-political one.

The development of commercial crops for an export agriculture in the coastal plantations appears to be wholly dependent on the economic colonization of the Latin American countries by Western capitalism. British businessmen and bankers became interested in these lands when they saw the possibility of using them profitably for the production of sugar, first, and cotton, later. From a very early date, a large part of agricultural property was mortgaged to foreign firms. *Hacendados* in debt to foreign businessmen and lenders served as intermediaries, almost as sharecroppers, for Anglo-Saxon capitalism in order to guarantee that their fields would be cultivated at minimum cost

by wretched laborers bent double under the whip of colonial slave drivers.

But on the coast, the latifundium has reached a fairly advanced level of capitalist technique, although its exploitation still rests on feudal practices and principles. The yields of cotton and sugar cane are those of the capitalist system. Enterprises are heavily financed and land is worked with modern machines and methods. Powerful industrial plants operate to process these products. Meanwhile, in the sierra, yields are usually not higher for latifundium lands than for communal lands. And if we use an objective economic standard and judge a production system by its results, this fact alone hopelessly condemns the land tenure system in the sierra.

The "Community" under the Republic

We have already seen how the formal liberalism of republicanism can legislation only acted against the Indian "community." The concept of individual property has had almost an antisocial function in the republic, because of its conflict with the existence of the "community." If the latter had been dissolved and expropriated by a capitalism in vigorous and independent growth, it would have been considered a casualty of economic progress. The Indian would have passed from a mixed system of communism and servitude to a system of free wages. Although this change would have denaturalized him somewhat, it would have placed him in a position to organize and emancipate himself as a class, like the other proletariats of the world. However, the gradual expropriation and absorption of the "community" by the latifundium not only plunged him deeper into servitude, but also destroyed the economic and legal institution that helped safeguard the spirit and substance of his ancient civilization.¹⁵

¹⁵ Because of the length of this note, it has been placed at the end of the chapter. *Ed.*

During the republican period, national writers and legislators have shown a fairly uniform tendency to condemn the "community" as the residue of a primitive society or the survival of colonial organization. This attitude sometimes has been due to the pressures of *gamonalismo* and sometimes to the individualist and liberal thought that automatically dominated an overly literary and emotional culture.

Dr. M. V. Villarán, an able and effective representative of this school of thought, has written a study that indicates the need to carefully revise its conclusions concerning the Indian "community." Dr. Villarán theoretically maintains his liberal position by advocating the principle of individual property, but he accepts in practice the defense of the "communities" against the latifundium by recognizing that they have a function that the state should protect.

But Hildebrando Castro Pozo's book *Nuestra comunidad indígena* demonstrates that the first integrated and documented defense of the Indian "community" had to be inspired in socialist thought and be based on a concrete study of its nature carried out according to the research methods of modern sociology and economics. In this interesting study, Castro Pozo approaches the problem of the "community" with a mind free of liberal prejudices and prepared to evaluate and understand it. He reveals that, despite the attacks of a liberal formalism serving the interests of a feudal regime, the Indian "community" is still a living organism and that, within the hostile environment that suffocates and deforms it, it spontaneously shows unmistakable potentialities for evolution and development.

Castro Pozo maintains that "the *ayllu* or community has conserved its natural peculiarity, its character as an almost family institution that continued to harbor, after the conquest, its main constituents."¹⁶

¹⁶ Hildebrando Castro Pozo, *Nuestra comunidad indígena*.

In this he agrees with Valcárcel, whose statements about the *ayllu* appear to some to be too colored by his ideal of an Indian renaissance.

What are the "communities" and how do they operate at present? Castro Pozo classifies them in the following way:

First—agricultural communities. Second—agricultural and livestock communities. Third—communities of pasture lands and watering places. Fourth—communities that have the use of the land. It should be borne in mind that in a country like ours, where a single institution acquires different characteristics according to the environment in which it has developed, no one type is actually so distinct and different from the others that it can be held up as a model. On the contrary, all the types have some characteristics in common. But since circumstances combine to impose a given kind of life in customs, work systems, properties, and industries, each group has predominant characteristics that make it agricultural, livestock, livestock with communal pastures and water, or usufructuary of the land which unquestionably belonged to the *ayllu*.¹⁷

These differences have developed, not through the natural evolution or degeneration of the ancient "community," but as a result of legislation aimed at the individualization of property and, especially, as a result of the expropriation of communal lands for the latifundium. They demonstrate, therefore, the vitality of the Indian "community," which invariably reacts by modifying its forms of cooperation and association. The Indian, in spite of one hundred years of republican legislation, has not become an individualist. And this is not because he resists progress, as is claimed by his detractors. Rather, it is because individualism under a feudal system does not find the necessary conditions to gain strength and develop. On the other hand, communism has continued to be the Indian's only defense. Individualism cannot flourish or even exist effectively outside a

¹⁷ Ibid., pp. 16-17.

system of free competition. And the Indian has never felt less free than when he has felt alone.

Therefore, in Indian villages where families are grouped together that have lost the bonds of their ancestral heritage and community work, hardy and stubborn habits of cooperation and solidarity still survive that are the empirical expression of a communist spirit. The "community" is the instrument of this spirit. When expropriation and redistribution seem about to liquidate the "community," indigenous socialism always finds a way to reject, resist, or evade this incursion. Communal work and property are replaced by the cooperation of individuals. As Castro Pozo writes: "Customs have been reduced to *mingas* or gatherings of all the *ayllu* to help some member of the community with his walls, irrigation ditches, or house. Work proceeds to the music of harps and violins and the consumption of several quarts of sugar-cane *aguardiente*, packages of cigarettes, and wads of coca." These customs have led the Indians to the practice—incipient and rudimentary, to be sure—of the collective contract. Instead of individuals separately offering their services to landowners or contractors, all the able-bodied men of the cooperative jointly contract to do the work.

The "Community" and the Latifundium

The defense of the "community" does not rest on abstract principles of justice or sentimental traditionalist considerations, but on concrete and practical reasons of a social and economic order. In Peru, communal property does not represent a primitive economy that has gradually been replaced by a progressive economy founded on individual property. No; the "communities" have been despoiled of their land for the benefit of the feudal or semi-feudal latifundium, which is constitutionally incapable of technical progress.¹⁸

¹⁸ After writing this essay, I find ideas in Haya de la Torre's book *Por la emancipación de la América Latina* that fully coincide with mine on the

On the coast, the latifundium has evolved in its crop cultivation from feudal routine to capitalist technique, while the communist farming of the Indian "community" has disappeared. But in the sierra the latifundium has preserved its feudal character intact and has put up a much stronger resistance than the "community" to the development of a capitalist economy. In fact, when a "community" is connected by railway to commerce and central transportation, it spontaneously changes into a cooperative. Castro Pozo, who, as head of the Section of Indian Affairs of the Ministry of Development, collected a great deal of information on the life of "communities," points to the interesting case of the Muquiyauyo "community," which, he says, combines the characteristics of producer, consumer, and credit cooperative. "As the owner of a magnificent electric plant on the banks of the Mantaro River, which furnishes light and power to the small industries of the districts of Jauja, Concepción, Mito, Maqui, Sincos, Huaripampa, and Muquiyauyo, it has become a communal institution par excellence. Instead of neglecting its indigenous customs, it has utilized them to carry out the work of the enterprise. It has purchased heavy machinery with the money saved on labor done by the cooperative, which even used women and children to help cart building materials, just as in the *mingas* that worked on communal construction."¹⁹

The latifundium compares unfavorably with the "community" as an enterprise for agricultural production. Within the capitalist system, large property replaces and banishes small agricultural property by its ability to intensify production through the employment of modern farm methods. Industrialization of agriculture is accompanied by accumulation of agrarian property. Large property seems to be justified by the interests

agrarian question in general and the Indian community in particular. Since we share the same points of view, we necessarily reach the same conclusions.

¹⁹ Castro Pozo, *Nuestra comunidad indígena*, pp. 56-57.

of production, which are identified, at least in theory, with the interests of society. But this is not the case of the latifundium and, therefore, it does not meet an economic need. Except for sugar-cane plantations—which produce *aguardiente* to intoxicate and stupefy the Indian peasant—the latifundium of the sierra generally grows the same crops as the “community,” and it produces no more. Lack of agricultural statistics does not permit an exact estimate of partial differences; but all available data indicate that crop yields of “communities” are not on the average less than those of latifundia. The only production statistics for the sierra are in wheat and they support this conclusion. Castro Pozo, summarizing the data for 1917–1918, writes:

Communal and individual properties harvested an average of 450 and 580 kilos per hectare, respectively. If it is taken into account that most fertile lands are in the hands of the large landowners, since the struggle for land in the south has reached the point where the Indian owner is gotten rid of by force or by murder, and that the ignorance of the communal farmer induces him to lie about the amount of his harvest in fear of new taxes or assessments by minor political authorities or their agents, it can readily be inferred that the higher production figure for individual property is not accurate and that the difference is negligible. Therefore, the two types of properties are identical in means of production and cultivation.²⁰

In feudal Russia of the last century, the latifundium showed higher yields than small property. The figures in hectoliters per hectare were as follows: for rye, 11.5 against 9.4; for wheat, 11 against 9.1; for oats, 15.4 against 12.7; for barley, 11.5 against 10.5; and for potatoes, 92.3 against 72.²¹

As a factor of production, the latifundium of the Peruvian sierra turns out to be inferior to the execrated latifundium of czarist Russia.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 434.

²¹ Schkaff, *La question agraire en Russie*, p. 188.

The “community,” on the one hand, is a system of production that keeps alive in the Indian the moral incentives that stimulate him to do his best work. Castro Pozo very correctly observes that “the Indian community preserves two great economic and social principles that up to now neither the science of sociology nor the empiricism of great industrialists has been able to solve satisfactorily: to contract workers collectively and to have the work performed in a relaxed and pleasant atmosphere of friendly competition.”²²

By dissolving or abandoning the “community,” the system of the feudal latifundium has attacked not only an economic institution but also, and more important, a social institution, one that defends the indigenous tradition, maintains the function of the rural family, and reflects the popular legal philosophy so prized by Proudhon and Sorel.²³

²² Castro Pozo, *Nuestra comunidad indígena*, p. 47. The author has some very interesting comments to make about the spiritual elements of the community economy. “The vigor, industry and enthusiasm with which the communal farmer reaps and sheaves wheat or rye, *quipicha* (*quipichar*: to carry on one’s shoulders. A widespread indigenous custom. The porters and stevedores of the coast shoulder their loads), and rapidly proceeds to the threshing floor, joking with his companion or with the man tugging on his shirt from behind, present a profound and decisive contrast to the indolence, indifference, apathy, and apparent fatigue with which the *yanacones* do the same or similar work. The former mental and physical state is so evidently more desirable than the latter that it raises the question of how the work process is affected by its results and concrete purpose.”

²³ Sorel, who has examined carefully the ideas of Proudhon and Le Play on the role of the family in the structure and spirit of society, has made a penetrating study of “the spiritual part of the economic environment.” If anything has been missing in Marx it has been an adequate legal spirit, although this aspect of production did not escape the dialectician of Trèves. “It is known,” he writes in his *Introduction à l’économie moderne*, “that the family customs of the Saxon plain made a deep impression on Le Play when he started his travels and that they decisively influenced his thought. I have wondered if Marx was not thinking of these ancient customs when he accused capitalism of turning the proletarian into a man without a family.” Returning to the comments of Castro Pozo, I want to recall another of Sorel’s ideas: “Work depends to a very large measure on the feelings that the workers have about their task.”

The Work System—Serf and Wage Earner

In agriculture, the work system is chiefly determined by the property system. It is not surprising, therefore, that to the same extent that the feudal latifundium survives in Peru, servitude survives in various forms and under various names. Agriculture on the coast appears to differ from agriculture in the sierra less in its work system than in its technique. Coastal agriculture has evolved rather rapidly toward a capitalist procedure in farming and in the processing and sale of crops. But it has made little progress in its attitude and conduct as regards labor. Unless forced to by circumstances, the colonial latifundium has not renounced its feudal treatment of the worker.

This phenomenon is not altogether explained by the fact that the old feudal lords have kept their properties and, acting as intermediaries for foreign capital, have adopted the practice but not the spirit of modern capitalism. It is also due to the colonial mentality of a landholding class accustomed to regard labor with the criteria of slave owners and slave traders. In Europe, the feudal lord to some extent represented the primitive patriarchal tradition, so that he naturally felt superior to his serfs but not ethnically or nationally different from them. The aristocratic landowner of Europe has found it possible to accept a new concept and a new practice in his relations with the agricultural worker. In colonial America, however, the white man's arrogant and deeply rooted belief in the colored man's inferiority has stood in the way of this transition.

When not Indian, the agricultural worker of the Peruvian coast has been the Negro slave and the Chinese coolie, who are, if possible, held in even greater contempt. The racial prejudices of the medieval aristocrat and the white colonizer have combined in the coastal *latifundista*.

Yanaconazgo and indenture are not the only expressions of feudal methods that still persist in coastal agriculture. The ha-

cienda is run like a baronial fief. The laws of the state are not applied in the latifundium without the tacit or formal consent of the large landowners. The authority of political or administrative officials is in fact subject to the authority of the landowner in his domain. The latter considers his latifundium to be outside the jurisdiction of the state and he disregards completely the civil rights of the people who live within his property. He collects excise taxes, grants monopolies, and imposes sanctions restricting the liberty of the laborers and their families. Within the hacienda, transportation, business, and even customs are controlled by the landlord. And frequently the huts that he rents to the laborers do not differ greatly from the sheds that formerly served as slave quarters.

The great coastal landowners are not legally entitled to their feudal or semi-feudal rights; but their position of dominance and their vast estates in a territory without industries and without transportation give them almost unrestricted power. Through indenture and *yanaconazgo*, the large proprietors block the appearance of free-wage contracting, a functional necessity to a liberal and capitalist economy. Indenture, which prevents the laborer from disposing of his person and his labor until he satisfies the obligations he has contracted with the landlord, is unmistakably descended from the semi-slave traffic in coolies; *yanaconazgo* is a kind of servitude in politically and economically backward villages that has prolonged feudalism into our capitalist age. The Peruvian system of *yanaconazgo* is identified, for example, with the Russian system of *polounischestvo*, under which crops sometimes were divided equally between landlord and peasant and sometimes only a third was given to the latter.²⁴

The coast is so thinly populated that agricultural enterprises constantly face a labor shortage. *Yanaconazgo*, by giving the scanty native population a minimal guarantee of the use of the

²⁴ Schkaff, *La question agraire en Russie*, p. 135.

coast and in the sierra according to regions, practice, or crops. They also have different names. But within their diversity, they can generally be identified with precapitalist methods of farming observed in other countries of semi-feudal agriculture, for example, czarist Russia. The system of the Russian *otrabotki* presented all the ways that exist in Peru of paying rent—by work, money, or crops. This can be confirmed simply by reading what Schkaff has to say about this system in his documented book on the agrarian question in Russia:

Between servitude based largely on violence and coercion and free labor based on purely economic necessity there extends a whole transitional system of extremely varied forms that combine the features of the *barchtchina* and the wage earner. It is the *otrabototschnai* system. Wages are paid either in money, where services are contracted, or in produce or in land. In the last case (*otrabotki* in the strict sense of the word), the landlord lets the peasant use his land in return for the latter's work on his estate. . . . Payment for work in the *otrabotki* system is always less than the wages of capitalist free contracting. Payment in produce makes landlords more independent of price fluctuations in the wheat and labor markets. Since nearby peasants supply them with cheaper labor, they enjoy a real local monopoly. . . . Rent paid by the peasant takes several forms: in addition to his labor, the peasant is obliged to give money and produce. If he receives a *deciatina* of land, he agrees to work a *deciatina* and a half of the landlord's estate, to give ten eggs and one hen. He will also deliver his cattle's manure; for everything, including manure, is used for payment. Frequently, the peasant is even required "to do all that the landlord demands of him," to transport crops, cut firewood, and carry loads.²⁸

In the agriculture of the sierra exactly those features of feudal property and work are found. The free labor system has not developed there. The planation owner does not care about the

²⁸ Schkaff, *La question agraire en Russie*, pp. 133, 134, 135.

productivity of his land, only about the income he receives from it. He reduces the factors of production to just two: land and the Indian. Ownership of land permits him to exploit limitlessly the labor of the Indian. The usury practiced on this labor—translated into the Indian's misery—is added to the rent charged for the land, calculated at the usual rate. The *hacendado* reserves the best land for himself and distributes the least fertile among his Indian laborers, who are obliged to work the former without pay and to live off the produce of the latter. The Indian pays his rent in work or crops, very rarely in money (since the Indian's labor is worth more to the landlord), and most often in mixed forms. I have before me a study made by Dr. Ponce de León of the University of Cuzco that gives first-hand documentation of all the varieties of tenant farming and sharecropping existing in that huge department. It presents a quite objective picture—in spite of the author's conclusions about the privileges of the landlords—of feudal exploitation. Here are some of his statements:

In the province of Paucartambo, the landlord grants the use of his land to a group of Indians on the condition that during the entire year they do all the farming needed on the hacienda lands reserved to the owner. The tenants or *yatacones*, as they are called in this province, are obliged to transport the plantation crops to this city on their own animals and do domestic service in the hacienda itself or more usually in Cuzco, where the landlords prefer to reside. . . . In Chumbivilcas, there is a similar arrangement. Tenants farm as much land as they can and in exchange must work for the owner as often as he requires. . . . In the province of Anta, the landlord grants the use of his land on the following conditions: the tenant furnishes the capital (seeds and fertilizer) and all the labor needed to bring the crop to harvest, when he divides it equally with the landlord. That is, each one collects fifty percent of the produce, although the landlord has contributed nothing but the use of his land, without even fertilizing it. But this is not all. The tenant farmer is

required to attend personally to the work of the landlord, receiving the customary wages of twenty-five *centavos* a day.²⁹

A comparison of the foregoing with Schkaff's report on Russia demonstrates that none of the dark aspects of precapitalist property and work is lacking in the feudal sierra.

The "Colonialism" of Our Coastal Agriculture

The industrialization of agriculture in the coastal valleys under a capitalist system and technique has reached its present level of development thanks mainly to British and American investment in our production of sugar and cotton. Landlords have contributed little in industrial ability and capital to the expansion of these crops. Financed by powerful export firms, they grow cotton and sugar cane on their lands.

The best lands of the coastal valleys are planted with cotton and sugar cane, not exactly because they are suited to these crops, but because only these crops are important at present to English and American businessmen. Agricultural credit—absolutely dependent on the interests of these firms until a national agricultural bank is established—does not promote any other crop. Food crops intended for the domestic market generally are grown by small landowners and tenant farmers. Only in the valleys of Lima, because of the proximity of sizable urban markets, do large estates grow food crops. Often cotton and sugar cane haciendas do not raise enough food to supply their own rural populations.

Even the small landowner or tenant farmer may be driven to plant cotton by these interests that do not take into account the special needs of the national economy. One of the most evident causes of the rise in food prices in coastal towns is the displacement of traditional food crops by cotton on the farmland of the coast.

²⁹ Francisco Ponce de León, *Sistema de arrendamiento de terrenos de cultivo en el departamento del Cuzco y el problema de la tierra*.

Commercial aid is given to the farmer almost exclusively for raising cotton. Loans are reserved, at all levels, for the cotton farmer. The production of cotton is not governed by any consideration of the national economy. It is produced for the world market, with no control to safeguard this economy against possible drops in prices due to periods of industrial crisis or of overproduction of cotton.

A cattle rancher recently told me that whereas a loan extended on a cotton crop is limited only by price fluctuations, a loan on a herd or ranch is entirely *ad hoc* and uncertain. A cattle rancher on the coast cannot obtain a substantial bank loan for expanding his business, and unless a farmer can put up as security either a cotton or sugar-cane crop, he is no better off.

If domestic consumption were met by the country's agricultural output, this would not be such an artificial situation. But the country still does not produce all the food that the population needs. Our heaviest imports are in "foodstuffs": *Lp. [libras peruanas]* 3,620,235 in 1924. This figure, within total imports of eighteen million pounds, reveals one of the problems of our economy. Although we cannot stop importing foodstuffs, we can eliminate its leading items, for example, wheat and flour, which reached more than twelve million *soles* in 1924.

For some time, the Peruvian economy has clearly and urgently called for the country to grow enough wheat for the bread of its people. If this had been accomplished, Peru would no longer have to pay twelve or more million *soles* a year to foreign countries for the wheat consumed in its coastal cities.

Why has this problem of our economy not been solved? It is not just because the state has failed to work out a policy on foodstuffs. Nor, I repeat, is it because sugar cane and cotton are the best crops for the soil and climate of the coast. A single valley, a single Andean tableland, if opened up with a few kilometers of railway or roads, can supply the entire Peruvian population with more than enough wheat, barley, et cetera. In the early

colonial years, the Spaniards raised wheat on that same coast until the cataclysm that changed the climatic conditions of the littoral. Subsequently, no scientific and integrated study was made of the possibility of reestablishing its cultivation. The diseases that attack wheat grown on the coast went unchecked by the indolent criollo until recently, when experiments carried out in the north on the lands of the "Salamanca" demonstrated that there are varieties of wheat resistant to disease.³⁰

The obstacle to a solution is in the very structure of the Peruvian economy, which can only move or develop in response to the interests and needs of markets in London and New York. These markets regard Peru as a storehouse of raw materials and a customer for their manufactured goods. Peruvian agriculture, therefore, obtains credit and transport solely for the products that benefit the great markets. Foreign capital is one day interested in rubber, another in cotton, another in sugar. When London can obtain a commodity more cheaply and in sufficient quantity from India or Egypt, it immediately abandons its suppliers in Peru. Our *latifundistas*, our landlords, may think that they are independent, but they are actually only intermediaries or agents of foreign capital.

Final Propositions

To the basic propositions already stated in this story on the agrarian question in Peru, I should add the following:

1. The nature of agricultural property in Peru is one of the greatest obstacles to the development of a national capitalism. Large or medium tenant farmers work a very high percentage of land, which is owned by landlords who have never managed their own estates. These landlords, completely ignorant of and

³⁰ The Commission for the Promotion of Wheat Farming has announced the success of its experiments in different parts of the coast. It has obtained substantial yields from the rust-immune "Kappli Emmer" variety, even in semi-arid areas.

remote from agriculture and its problems, live from their property income without contributing any work or intelligence to the economic activity of the country. They belong to the category of aristocrats or *rentiers* who are unproductive consumers. Through their inherited property rights they receive an income that may be considered a feudal privilege. The tenant farmer, on the other hand, is more like the head of a capitalist enterprise. Under a true capitalist system, this industrialist and the capital financing him would benefit from his efforts to increase the value of his business. Control of the land by a class of *rentiers* imposes on production the heavy burden of maintaining an income that is not subject to the vicissitudes of agriculture. The tenant farmer generally is not encouraged by this system to improve the land and its crops and installations. Fear of a higher rent when his contract expires keeps his investments to a minimum. The tenant farmer's ambition is, of course, to become a property owner; but by his own industry he makes the property worth more to the landlord. The lack of agricultural credit in Peru prevents a more intensive capitalist expropriation of land for this class of industrialists. Capitalist exploitation and industrialization of land cannot develop fully and freely unless all feudal privileges are abolished; therefore it has made very little progress in our country. This problem is just as apparent to a capitalist as to a socialist critic. Edouard Herriot states a principle that is embodied in the agrarian program of the French liberal middle class when he says that "land requires the actual presence."³¹ In this respect, the West is certainly less advanced than the East, since Moslem law establishes, as Charles Gide observes, that "the land belongs to the one who makes it fertile and productive."

2. The latifundium system in Peru is also the most serious barrier to white immigration. For obvious reasons, we hope for

³¹ Edouard Herriot, *Créer* (Paris: Payot, 1919).

the immigration of peasants from Italy, Central Europe, and the Balkans. The urban population of the West emigrates to a lesser degree and industrial workers know, moreover, that there is little for them to do in Latin America. The European peasant does not come to America to work as a laborer except where high wages would permit him to save a great deal of money; and this is not the case in Peru. Not even the most wretched farmer in Poland or Rumania would accept the living conditions of our day laborers on the sugar-cane and cotton haciendas. His ambition is to become a small landowner. To attract such immigrants, we must offer them land complete with living quarters, animals, and tools and connected with railroads and markets. A Fascist official or propagandist who visited Peru about three years ago declared to local newspapers that our system of large properties was incompatible with a colonization and immigration program that would attract the Italian peasant.

3. The subjugation of coastal agriculture to the interests of British and American capital not only keeps it from organizing and developing according to the specific needs of the national economy—that is, first of all to feed the population—but also from trying out and adopting new crops. The largest undertaking of this kind in recent years, the tobacco plantations in Tumbes, was made possible only by state aid. This is the best proof that the liberal *laissez-faire* policy which has been so sterile in Peru should be replaced by a social policy of nationalizing our great natural resources.

4. Agricultural property on the coast, despite the prosperity it has enjoyed, so far has been incapable of attending to the problems of rural health. *Hacendados* still have not complied with the modest requirements of the Office of Public Health concerning malaria. There has been no general improvement in farm settlements. The rural population of the coast has the highest rates of mortality and disease in the country (except, of course, for the extremely unhealthy regions of the jungle).

Demographic statistics for the rural district of Pativilca three years ago showed a higher death rate than birth rate. Sutton, the engineer in charge of the Olmos project, believes that irrigation works may offer the most radical solution to the problem of marshes and swamps. But outside of the project in Huacho to use the overflow of the Chancay River (it is directed by Antonio Graña, who is also responsible for an interesting colonization scheme), the project in "Chiclin" to use ground water, and a few other undertakings in the north, private capital has done very little to irrigate the Peruvian coast in recent years.

5. In the sierra, agrarian feudalism is unable to create wealth or progress. With the exception of livestock ranches that export wool and other products, the latifundia in the valleys and tablelands of the sierra produce almost nothing. Crop yields are negligible and farming methods are primitive. A local publication once said that in the Peruvian sierra the *gamonal* appears to be relatively as poor as the Indian. This argument—which is absolutely invalid in terms of relativity—far from justifying the *gamonal*, damns him. In modern economics, understood as an objective and concrete science, the only justification for capitalism with its captains of industry and finance is its function as a creator of wealth. On an economic plane, the feudal lord or *gamonal* is the first one responsible for the worthlessness of his land. We have already seen that, in spite of owning the best lands, his productivity is no higher than the Indian's with his primitive farming tools and arid communal lands. The *gamonal* as an economic factor is, therefore, completely disqualified.

6. To explain this situation it is said that the agricultural economy of the sierra depends entirely on roads and transportation. Those who believe this undoubtedly do not understand the organic, fundamental difference existing between a feudal or semi-feudal economy and a capitalist economy. They do not understand that the medieval, patriarchal, feudal landowner is

the process of reform is not limited to a diplomacy of the initiated but is carried out by individuals who operate as revolutionaries by setting different standards."¹

I do not pretend to be an impartial or agnostic critic, which in any event I do not believe is possible. Any critic is influenced by philosophical, political, and moral concerns. Croce has proved that even the impressionistic and hedonistic criticism of Jules Lemaitre, which is supposed to be free of philosophical content, is related, no less than the criticism of Sainte Beuve, to the thought and philosophy of its times.²

Man's spirit is indivisible and it must be so to achieve plenitude and harmony. I declare without hesitation that I bring to literary exegesis all my political passions and ideas, although in view of the way this word has been misused, I should add that my politics are philosophy and religion.

Testimony of a Witness

THE WORD "TRIAL" in this case is used in its legal sense. I do not propose to present a discourse on Peruvian literature, but only to testify in what I consider to be an open trial. It seems to me that so far in this trial the witnesses have been almost entirely for the defense and that it is time to call some witnesses for the prosecution. My testimony is admittedly partisan. Any critic, any witness, has a responsibility that he must consciously or unconsciously discharge. Despite dark suspicions to the contrary, I am positive and constructive by temperament and I condemn the iconoclastic and destructive bohemian as unethical; but my responsibility to the past compels me to vote against the defendant. I do not exempt myself from discharging it nor do I apologize for its partiality.

Piero Gobetti, with whom I feel great spiritual affinity, writes in one of his essays: "True realism is devoted to the forces that produce results and it has no use for results intellectually admired *a priori*. The realist knows that history is reform and that

¹ Piero Gobetti, *Opera critica*, I, 88. This idea is entirely in accord with Marxist dialectics and in no way excludes those *a priori* syntheses so cherished by intellectual opportunism. Outlining the personality of Domenico Giulotti, Papini's companion in the cultural adventure of the *Dizionario dell'uomo scientifico*, Gobetti writes: "Individuals must take clear-cut positions. Compromise is the work of history and of history alone; it is a result." (*ibid.*, p. 82). In the same book, concluding some observations about the Greek concept of life, he states: "The new test of truth is a task in harmony with the responsibility of each person. Ours is an era of struggle (struggle between men, between classes, between states) because only through struggle can abilities be tempered and can each person, by stubbornly defending his position, collaborate in the life process."

² Benedetto Croce, *Nuovi saggi di estetica*, pp. 205-207. With relentless logic, this same collection disqualifies the aestheticist and historicist trends in artistic historiography. It declares that "the true criticism of art is certainly aesthetic criticism, not because it scorns philosophy as a pseudo-aesthetic criticism, but because it functions as a philosophy or concept of art; and it is historical criticism, not because it is concerned with what is extrinsic to art, like pseudo-historical criticism, but because, having availed itself of historical data for an artistic reproduction (and at this point it is still not history), once the artistic reproduction is accomplished, history is made by deciding what has been reproduced, that is, by characterizing it according to the concept and establishing precisely what has happened. Therefore, the two trends that conflict in the undercurrents of criticism coincide in criticism; and historical criticism of art and aesthetic criticism of art are one and the same."



This does not mean that I judge literature and art without reference to aesthetics, but that in the depths of my consciousness the aesthetic concept is so intimately linked to my political and religious ideas that, although it does not lose its identity, it cannot operate independently or differently.

Riva Agüero judged literature with the criterion of a *civilista*. His essay on "the nature of literature in independent Peru"³ is unmistakably colored, not only by political beliefs, but also by the sentiments of a class system. It is at the same time a piece of literary historiography and a political apologia.

The class system of the colonial *encomendero* underlies his

³ Although or perhaps because it was written in his youth, *Carácter de la literatura del Perú independiente* is a vivid and sincere reflection of Riva Agüero's spirit and feelings. His later literary criticism does not basically alter this thesis. In its praise of the talented criollo and his *Comentarios reales*, his *Elogio del Inca Garcilaso* could have presaged a new attitude. But, in fact, neither his erudite curiosity about Inca history nor his ardent efforts to interpret the sierra landscape have diminished Riva Agüero's loyalty to the colony. His stay in Spain, as we all know, has intensified his conservative and viceregal sympathies. In a book written in Spain, *El Perú histórico y artístico: Influencia y descendencia de las montañas en él* (Santander, 1921), he shows a deeper concern with the Inca society, but this is only a sign of a scholarly interest that has been influenced by the opinions of Garcilaso and of the most objective and cultured of the chroniclers. Riva Agüero states that "at the time of the conquest, the social regime of Peru aroused enthusiasm in observers as scrupulous as Cieza de León and in men as learned as the Licenciado Polo de Ondegardo, the Oidor Santillán, the Jesuit author of *Revelación anónima*, and Father José de Acosta. The social content and agrarian regulations of the vagaries of the illustrious Mariana and of Pedro de Valencia (disciple of Arias Montano) may have been influenced not only by Platonic tradition but by the contemporary data of the Inca organization that made such an impression on all who studied it." Riva Agüero does not try to excuse his mistakes, as when he acknowledges that in his early criticism of *Ollantay* he had greatly exaggerated the Spanish inspiration of the present version in his essay on the "character of literature in independent Peru" and that, in the light of recent studies, even if *Ollantay* still appears to have been reconstructed by a colonial writer, "it must be admitted that its design, poetic techniques, all its songs and many of its passages are in the Inca tradition and only slightly modified by the editor." Nevertheless, none of these demonstrations of scholastic integrity nullifies the purpose and criteria of his work, which is intensely Spanish in tone and which pays homage to the motherland by championing the "deep-rooted" Spanish heritage of Peru.

opinions, which invariably are expressed in terms of Hispanism, colonialism, and social privilege. Riva Agüero departs from his political and social preoccupations only to the degree that he adopts the standards of a professor or a scholar, and then the departure is merely apparent, because never does his spirit move more securely in the academic and conservative sphere. Nor does Riva Agüero bother to conceal his political prejudices when his literary evaluations are mixed with anti-historical observations about the presumed error of the founders of independence in their choice of a republic over a monarchy or when he violently attacks the tendency to form parties around principles in opposition to the traditional oligarchical parties, on the grounds that such opposition would incite sectarian conflict and arouse social enmities.

Riva Agüero could not openly admit to the political bias of his exegesis: first, because it is only long after the time of his writing that we have learned to dispense with many obvious and useless deceptions; second, because, as a member of the aristocratic *encomendero* class, he was obliged to profess the principles and institutions of another class, the liberal bourgeoisie. Even though it felt itself to be monarchist, Hispanist, and traditionalist, that aristocracy had to reconcile its reactionary sentiment with the practice of a republican and capitalist policy and with respect for a democratic and bourgeois constitution.

With the end of uncontested *civilista* authority in the intellectual life of Peru, the scale of values established by Riva Agüero, together with all affiliated and related writings, has undergone revision.⁴ I confront his unacknowledged *civilista* and colonialist

⁴ I prefer to discuss and criticize Riva Agüero's thesis because I consider it to be the most representative and predominant. Further proof of Riva Agüero's pre-eminence and influence is the fact that later studies aspiring to critical impartiality and untouched by his political motives are attached to his opinions and evaluations. In the first volume of *La literatura peruana*, Luis Alberto Sánchez admits that García Calderón wrote in *Del roman-*

bias with my avowed revolutionary and socialist sympathies. I do not claim to be a temperate and impartial judge; I declare myself a passionate and belligerent adversary. Arbitrations and compromises take place in history, provided that the opponents engage in long, drawn-out disputes.

The Literature of the Colony

Language is the raw material that unites literature. The Spanish, Italian, and French literatures began with the first ballads and tales, artistic works of enduring value written in those languages. Directly derived from Latin and still not entirely differentiated from it, they were for a long time considered dialects. The national literature of the Latin peoples was born, historically, with the national language, which was the first element to delineate the general limits of a literature.

In the history of the West, the flowering of national literatures coincided with the political affirmation of the nation. It formed part of the movement which, through the Reformation and the Renaissance, created the ideological and spiritual factors of the liberal revolution and the capitalist order. The unity of European culture, maintained during the Middle Ages by Latin and by papal authority, was shattered by the nationalist movement, which individualized literature. "Nationalism" in literary historiography is therefore purely political in its origins and extraneous to the aesthetic concept of art. It was most vigorously defined in Germany, where the writings of the Schlegel brothers profoundly influenced literary criticism and historiography. In his justly celebrated *Storia della letteratura italiana*—praised by

ticismo al modernismo, dedicated to Riva Agüero, what is really a gloss of the latter's book. Although years later García Calderón was to do more research for his synthesis of *La literatura peruana*, he did not add much information to that already noted by his friend and colleague, the author of *La historia en el Perú*, nor did he attempt a new interpretation or go to the indispensable popular sources.

Brunetière as a "history of Italian literature which I constantly quote and which is never read in France"—Francesco de Sanctis characterizes the criticism of the 1800's as "the cult of nationality, which so impresses modern critics and for which Schlegel exalts Calderón, a very nationalistic Spaniard, and disparages Metastasio, who was not in the least Italian."⁵

National literature in Peru, like Peruvian nationality itself, cannot renounce its Spanish ties. It is a literature written, thought, and felt in Spanish, although in many instances and to varying degrees the language is subject to indigenous influence in intonation and even in syntax and pronunciation. Indian civilization did not have a written language and therefore it did not acquire a literature; or rather, literature remained in the realm of ballads, legends, and choreography. Quechua writing and grammar are the work of the Spaniard, and Quechua literature belonged entirely to bilingual men of letters like El Luma-rejo until the appearance of Inocencio Mamani, the young author of *Tucuiyac Manashcan*.⁶ The Spanish language, more or less Americanized, is the literary language and intellectual tool of Peru's still undefined nationality.

In literary historiography, the concept of a national literature is neither timeless nor very precise. No systematization can keep

⁵ Francesco de Sanctis, *Teoria e storia della letteratura*, I, 186. Having already cited Croce's *Nuovi saggi di estetica*, I should mention that in reviewing Adolf Bartels and Richard M. Meyer for their preoccupation with nationalism and modernism respectively in their histories of literature, Croce asserts that "it is not true that poets and other artists are the expression of the national conscience, of the race, of the stock, of the class, or of anything similar." Croce's reaction against the inordinate nationalism that characterized the literary historiography of the nineteenth century—with the exception of the exemplary European, George Brandes—is, like all reactions, extreme; but the vigilant and generous universalism of Croce responds to a need to resist the exaggerations of works imitating the imperial German models.

⁶ See in nos. 12 and 14 of *Amauta* the news and comments of Gabriel Collazos and José Gabriel Cossío on the Quechua comedy by Inocencio Mamani, who had probably been exposed to the influence of Gamaliel Churata when he wrote it.

up with changing events. The nation itself is an abstraction, an allegory, a myth that does not correspond to a reality that can be scientifically defined. Commenting on Hebrew literature as an exception, De Sanctis states: "The idea of a national literature is an illusion. Its people would have to be as isolated as the Chinese are supposed to be (although the English have also penetrated China). The imagination and style now known as orientalism are not peculiarly of the Orient but of all the East and of all barbaric, primitive literatures. Greek poetry has Asiatic elements, Latin poetry has Greek, and Italian poetry has both Greek and Latin."⁷

The Quechua-Spanish dualism in Peru, still unresolved, prevents our national literature from being studied with the methods used for literatures that were created and developed without the intervention of the conquest. Peru is different from other countries of America where dualism is absent or does not constitute a problem. The individuality of Argentine literature, for example, expresses a strongly defined national personality.

The first stage of Peruvian literature could not escape its Spanish origin, not because it was written in the Spanish language, but because it was conceived with Spanish spirit and sentiment. Here, I see no discrepancy. Gálvez, high priest of the cult of the vicereignty in literature, recognized as a critic that "the colonial period produced servile and inferior imitators of Spanish literature and especially of Góngora, from whom they took only the bombastic and the bad. They had no understanding of or feeling for the Peruvian scene, except Garcilaso [de la Vega, el Inca], who was moved by its natural beauty, and Caviédes, who in his acute observations of certain aspects of national life and in his criollo malice should be considered the forefather of Segura, Pardo, Palma, and Páez Soldán."⁸

The two exceptions, the first much more than the second, are

⁷ De Sanctis, *Teoria e storia della letteratura*, I, 186-187.

⁸ José Gálvez, *Posibilidad de una genuina literatura nacional*, p. 7.

indisputable. Garcilaso was a solitary figure in the literature of the colony. He was the meeting ground of two cultures and two eras. But he was more Inca than conquistador, more Quechua than Spaniard. It is this circumstance, also exceptional, that accounts for his originality and greatness.

Garcilaso was born of the first fruitful embrace of conquistador and Indian woman. He was historically the first Peruvian, if by "Peruvianness" we mean a social formation determined by the Spanish conquest and colonization. The name and work of Garcilaso fill an entire period of Peruvian literature. The first Peruvian, he nonetheless remained Spanish. From a historical-aesthetic standpoint his work belongs to the Spanish epic. It cannot be separated from Spain's most heroic undertaking: the discovery and conquest of America.

The early period of Peruvian literature was colonial and Spanish even in style and subject matter. All literature normally begins with the lyric,⁹ as did the oral literature of the Peruvian Indian. The conquest transplanted to Peru, together with the Spanish language, an advanced literature that continued to evolve in the colony. The Spaniard had already developed the narrative from epic poem to novel. The novel is typical of the literary phase that begins with the Reformation and the Renaissance. It is basically the history of the individual in a bourgeois society and, from this point of view, Ortega y Gasset is not far wrong when he refers to the decline of the novel. The novel will be reborn, no doubt, as realistic art in the proletarian society. For the moment, however, the proletarian tale, as an expression of revolutionary deeds, is more epic than novel.

⁹ In his *Teoria e storia della letteratura* (p. 205), De Sanctis says: "In art as in science, man's departure point is subjectivity and, therefore, lyricism is the earliest form of poetry. But subjectivity later turns into objectivity and subjective emotion in a narrative is secondary and incidental. Lyricism is the terrain of the ideal, narration is the terrain of the real. In the first, impression is purpose and action is occasion; in the second, the contrary is true. The first does not dissolve into prose except by destroying itself; the second is resolved in prose, which is its natural tendency."

The medieval epic, which was disappearing from Europe at the time of the conquest, was revived in Peru. The conquistador could feel and describe the conquest in epic writing. The work of Garcilaso falls between epic and history. The epic, as De Sanctis remarks belongs to the heroic days.¹⁰ After Garcilaso, the hopelessly mediocre literature of the colony offers no original epic creation. Although the writers of the colony generally repeated or continued the themes of Spanish authors, they lagged behind because of distance. The titles in colonial literature betray the pedantry and outdated classicism of the authors. It is a list that collects and copies, when it does not plagiarize. The only personal voice is that of Caviedes, who expressed the *limeño* bent for mockery and mischief. El Lunarejo, despite his Indian blood, was above all an admirer of Góngora. This attitude is typical of an old literature which, having exhausted its renaissance, becomes baroque and overly cultivated. The *Apologético en favor de Góngora* therefore follows the tradition of Spanish literature.

The Survival of Colonialism

Our literature did not cease being Spanish when the republic was founded. For many years it continued to be, if not Spanish, colonial—a tardy echo of the classicism and then of the romanticism of the mother country.

Because of the special character of Peruvian literature, it cannot be studied within the framework of classicism, romanticism, and modernism; nor of ancient, medieval, and modern; nor of popular and literary poetry, et cetera. I shall not use the Marxist classification of literature as feudal or aristocratic, bourgeois

¹⁰ De Sanctis writes: "In times of struggle, mankind ascends from one idea to another and the intellect does not triumph unless fantasy is shaken. When an idea has prevailed and developed into a peaceful exercise, the epic is replaced by history. Epic poetry, therefore, can be defined as the ideal history of mankind in its passage from one idea to another." (*Ibid.*, p. 207.)

or proletarian. In order not to strengthen the impression that I have organized my case along political or class lines, I shall base it on aesthetic history and criticism. This will serve as a method of explanation rather than as a theory that *a priori* judges and interprets works and their authors.

A modern literary, not sociological, theory divides the literature of a country into three periods: colonial, cosmopolitan, and national. In the first period, the country, in a literary sense, is a colony dependent on its metropolis. In the second period, it simultaneously assimilates elements of various foreign literatures. In the third period, it shapes and expresses its own personality and feelings. Although this theory of literature does not go any farther, it is broad enough for our purposes.

The colonial cycle is clearly defined in Peruvian literature. Our literature is colonial not only because of its dependence on Spain but especially because of its subservience to the spiritual and material remnants of the colony. Felipe Pardo, arbitrarily designated by Gálvez as one of the precursors of literary Peruvians, repudiated the republic and its institutions not simply out of aristocratic feelings but more out of royalist feelings. All his satire, second rate at best, reflects the mentality of a magistrate or *encomendero* who resents a revolution that, at least in theory, declares the mestizo and Indian to be his equals. His jeers are inspired by his class consciousness. Pardo y Aliaga does not speak as a Peruvian. He speaks as a man who feels Spanish in a country conquered by Spain for the descendants of its captains and educated class.

This same spirit, to a lesser degree but with the same results, characterizes almost all our literature until the *colonida* generation which, rebelling against the past and its values, declares its allegiance to González Prada and Eguren, the two most liberal writers in Spanish literature.

What kept this nostalgia for the colony alive so long in our

literature? It was not the individual writer's attachment to the past. The reason must be sought in a world more complex than that usually glanced at by the critic.

The literature of a country is maintained by its economic and political substratum. In a country dominated by the descendants of *encomenderos* and magistrates of the viceroyalty, nothing could have been more natural than serenades under balconies. The mediocre writers of a republic that considered itself heir to the conquest could only labor to embellish the viceregal heraldry. A few superior intellects—forerunners of future events in any country—were able to elude the fate imposed by history on the lackeys of the latifundium.

Without roots, our colonial literature was meager, sickly, and weak. Life, says Wilson, comes from the land. Art is nourished on the sap of tradition, history, and people. In Peru, literature did not grow out of the indigenous tradition, history, and people. It was created by the importation of Spanish literature and sustained by imitation of that literature. An unhealthy umbilical cord has kept it tied to the mother country.

For this reason, during the colonization we had nothing but baroque and pedantic clerics and magistrates whose great-grandchildren became the romantic troubadours of the republic.

Colonial literature, despite an occasional pale evocation of the empire, lacked any aptitude or imagination for reconstructing the Inca past. Its historiographer, Riva Agüero, precluded from criticizing this incapacity, hastens to justify it and cites in his support a writer of the metropolis. "The events of the Inca empire," he writes, "according to a famous literary critic (Menéndez y Pelayo), can be of no more interest to us than are the tales of the Turdetanos and the Sarpetanos to the Spaniards." He ends his essay with these words:

There is a theory, which I find limited and unproductive, that literature can be Americanized by going back to before the conquest and

bringing to life the Quechua and Inca civilizations with the ideas and feelings of the natives. Menéndez y Pelayo, Rubio, and Juan Valera all agree that this is not to Americanize but to romanticize. Those civilizations and semi-civilizations are dead and extinct. There is no way to revive their tradition because they left no literature. For criollos of Spanish blood they are foreign and strange and nothing links us to them; they are just as foreign and strange to the mestizos and Indians who have been Europeanized by education. Garcilaso de la Vega is unique among the latter.

The mentality of Riva Agüero is typical of the descendants of the conquest, the heirs to the colony, for whom the views of the scholars of the Corte were articles of faith. In his opinion, "there is much more material to be found in the Spanish expeditions of the sixteenth century and in the adventures of the conquest."¹¹

Even when the republic reached maturity, our writers never thought of Peru as anything but a Spanish colony. Their domesticated imagination sent them to Spain in search of models and even themes. The *Elegía a la muerte de Alfonso XII*, for example, was written by Luis Benjamín Cisneros, who was, nonetheless, within the graceless and heavy romantic style, one of the most liberal spirits of the 1800's.

The Peruvian writer has almost never felt any ties with the common people. Even had he so desired, he was not capable of interpreting the arduous task of forming a new Peru. The new Peru was vague; only the Inca empire and the colony were clearly defined, and he chose the colony. And between this fledgling Peruvian literature and the Inca empire and the Indian came the conquest, isolating them from each other.

After Spain destroyed the Inca civilization, the conquistador established a new state that excluded and oppressed the Indian. With the native race enslaved, Peruvian literature had to be-

¹¹ José de la Riva Agüero, *Carácter de la literatura del Perú independiente* (Lima, 1905).

come more criollo and coastal as it became less Spanish. For this reason, no vigorous literature could emerge in Peru. The mixture of invader and Indian did not produce a homogeneous type in Peru. To the Spanish and Quechua blood was added a torrent of African blood and later, with the importation of coolie labor, a little Asiatic blood. In addition, the tepid, bland climate of the lowland where these diverse ethnic elements were blended could not be expected to produce a strong personality.

It was inevitable that our motley ethnic composition should affect our literary process. Literature could not develop in Peru as it did in Argentina, where the fusion of European and Indian produced the gaucho. The latter has permeated Argentine literature and made it the most individualistic in Spanish America. The best Argentine writers have found their themes and characters in folklore. Santos Vega, Martín Fierro, Anastasio el Pollo were all folk heroes long before they became literary creations. Even today, Argentine literature, which is open to the most modern and cosmopolitan influences, reaffirms its gaucho heritage. Poets in the vanguard of the new generation proclaim their descentance from the gaucho Martín Fierro and from his bizarre family of folksingers. Jorge Luis Borges, saturated in westernism and modernism, frequently adopts the accent of the countryside.

In independent Peru, writers like Listas and Hermosillas and their disciples almost invariably disdained the common people. Their fantasy of provincial nobility was impressed only by the Spanish, the viceregal. But Spain was far away. Although the viceregalty survived in the feudal regime established by the conquistadors, it belonged to the past. All the literature of these authors, therefore, appears to be flimsy and weak, dangling in the present. It is a literature of undeclared emigrants, nostalgic relics.

The few writers with vitality in this weary procession of wornout dignitaries of rhetoric are the ones who somehow por-

trayed the people. When it ignores the authentic, living Peru, Peruvian literature is a heavy, indigestible miscellany of Spanish literature. The "ay" of the Indian and the pirouette of the *zambo* are the only notes of animation and veracity in this flaccid literature. The fabric of *Tradiciones* sparkles with the thread of Lima's gossipy lower class, which is one of the vital forces in traditionalist prose. Melgar, scorned by scholars, will outlive Althaus, Pardo, and Salaverry, because his melancholy songs will always give the people a glimpse of their sentimental tradition and genuine literary past. ←

Ricardo Palma, Lima, and the Colony

Colonialism—nostalgic evocation of the viceregalty—seeks to appropriate the figure of Ricardo Palma. This servile, mawkish literature claims to be of the same substance as *Tradiciones*. The "futurist" generation, which I have often described as the most backward of our generations, has dedicated most of its eloquence to assuming the glory of Palma. Here, for once, it has maneuvered adroitly and Palma officially appears as the foremost representative of colonialism. But a serious examination of the work of Palma, comparing it with the political and social process of Peru and with the inspiration of the colonialist genre, reveals that this appropriation is completely artificial. To classify the writing of Palma as colonialist literature is to diminish if not to distort it. *Tradiciones* cannot be identified with a literature that, in a tone and spirit peculiar to the academic clientele of the feudal class, reverently exalts the colony and its events.

Felipe Pardo and José Antonio de Lavalle, both avowed conservatives, are unctuous in their recollections of the colony. Ricardo Palma, on the other hand, reconstructs it with rollicking realism and an irreverent and satiric imagination. Whereas the interpretation of Palma is rough and lively, that of the prose and poetry writers of the serenade under the balconies of the viceregalty, so pleasing to the ears of the people of the *ancien régime*

it is never pure nonsense. It lacks hallucinatory incoherence and tends to be rational, logical nonsense. The revolutionary epic, which heralds a new romanticism untouched by the individualism of that preceding it, does not harmonize with his violently anarchical temperament and life.

His extreme individualism makes it difficult for Hidalgo to write short stories or novels, which require an extroverted author. His stories are written with introspection and his characters appear sketchy, artificial, mechanical. Even when his stories are most fanciful, they are still dominated by the intolerant, tyrannical presence of their author, who refuses to let his characters live in their own right because he puts too much of his individuality and purpose into all of them.

→ César Vallejo

César Vallejo's first book, *Los heraldos negros*, ushers in the dawn of a new poetry in Peru. Antenor Orrego is not speaking out of fraternal enthusiasm when he states that "this man originates an epoch of poetic liberty and autonomy, of the vernacular in writing."³³

Vallejo is a poet of race. In Vallejo, for the first time in our history, indigenous sentiment is given pristine expression. Melgar, stunted and frustrated, is still imprisoned by classical technique and enamored of Spanish rhetoric in his *yaravies*. Vallejo, on the other hand, creates a new style in his poetry. Indigenous sentiment has a melody of its own in his poetry and he has mastered its song. The poet, not satisfied with conveying a new message, also brings a new technique and language. His art does not tolerate the ambiguous and artificial dualism of substance and form. As Orrego observes, "to dismantle the old rhetorical scaffolding was not a caprice, but a vital necessity of the poet. When

³³ Antenor Orrego, *Panoramas*, essay on César Vallejo.

one begins to understand the writing of Vallejo, one begins to understand the need for an original and different technique."³⁴

In Melgar, indigenous sentiment is glimpsed only in the background of his verses; in Vallejo, it flowers in their very structure. In Melgar, it is the intonation; in Vallejo, the word. In Melgar, it is but an erotic lament; in Vallejo, a metaphysical undertaking. Vallejo is a creator; even if *Los heraldos negros* had been his only work, it still would have inaugurated a new epoch in our literary process. These initial lines of *Los heraldos negros* probably mark the beginning of Peruvian, in the sense of indigenous, poetry:

There are such heavy blows in life . . . I don't know!
Blows like the hatred of God; as if, before them,
the backwash of everything suffered
had drained into the soul . . . I don't know!

The blows are few, but they fall . . . They open
dark furrows in the boldest face, the strongest shoulder.
Perhaps they are the ponies of barbarous Attilas,
or black heralds sent to us by Death.

They are the precipitous falls of the soul's Christs,
of some adorable faith that Destiny blasphemes.
Those bloody blows are the crepitations
of some loaf of bread that burns in the oven's door.

And man . . . Poor . . . poor man! He turns his eyes
as when somebody taps us on the shoulder;
he turns his mad eyes, and everything he lived
wells up, like a pool of guilt, in his gaze.

There are such heavy blows in life . . . I don't know!

In world literature, *Los heraldos negros* would be classified, partly because of its title, as belonging to the symbolist school. But the symbolist style is better suited than any other to interpret the indigenous spirit. Being animist and rustic, the Indian

³⁴ Ibid.

tends to express himself in anthropomorphic or pastoral images. Vallejo, moreover, is not entirely symbolist. Especially his early poetry contains elements of symbolism, together with elements of expressionism, dadaism, and surrealism. Vallejo is essentially a creator, always in the process of developing his technique, a process which in his art reflects a mood. In the beginning, when Vallejo borrows his method from Herrera Reissig, he adapts it to his personal lyricism.

But the Indian is the fundamental, characteristic feature of his art. In Vallejo there is a genuine Americanism, not a descriptive or local Americanism. Vallejo does not exploit folklore. Quechua words and popular expressions are not artificially introduced into his language; they are spontaneous and an integral part of his writing. It might be said that Vallejo does not choose his vocabulary. He is not deliberately autochthonous. He does not delve into tradition and history in order to extract obscure emotions from its dark substratum. His poetry and language emanate from his flesh and spirit; he embodies his message. Indigenous sentiment operates in his art perhaps without his knowledge or desire.

One of the clearest and most precise indications of Vallejo's indigenous bent is his frequent attitude of nostalgia. Valcárcel, who probably has most fully interpreted the autochthonous soul, says that the melancholy of the Indian is nothing but nostalgia. Very well, Vallejo is supremely nostalgic. He evokes the past with tenderness, but always subjectively. His nostalgia, conceived in lyric purity, should not be confused with the literary nostalgia of the *pasadistas*. Vallejo's nostalgia is not merely retrospective. He does not yearn for the Inca empire in the way that *pasadismo perricholesco* yearns for the viceroyalty. His nostalgia is a sentimental or a metaphysical protest; a nostalgia of exile, of absence.

What might she be doing now, my sweet Andean Rita
of rush and fruit;

now that Bizancio suffocates me and my blood
dozes like flaccid cognac within me.

("Idilio muerto," *Los heraldos negros*)

Brother, today I am sitting on the stone bench in
our house,

where we miss you endlessly!

I remember how we used to play together at this
hour, and how mamá

caressed us: "But sons . . ."

("A mi hermano Miguel," *Los heraldos negros*)

I have eaten alone today, and have had
no mother urging me, no "help yourself," no water,
no father who, in the talkative family rite
of eating corn, would ask for the greater
claps of sound to make its image memorable.

(xxviii, *Trilce*)

The stranger is finished with whom you came back,
late last night, chatting and chatting.

Now I will have no one to wait for me,

to keep my place, in good times and bad.

The hot afternoon is finished;

your great bay and your shouting;

finished, your chats with your mother,

who offered us a tea filled with afternoon.

(xxxiv, *Trilce*)

At other times, Vallejo foresees or foretells the nostalgia that
is to come;

Absent! The morning on which, like a mournful

bird, I go to the shore of the sea of shadow,

the shore of the silent empire,

the white cemetery will be your captivity.

("Ausente," *Los heraldos negros*)

Summer, I am leaving. And I am grieved
by the submissive little hands of your afternoons.

You arrive devoutly; you arrive old;
and now you will not meet anyone in my soul.
(*"Verano," Los heraldos negros*)

Vallejo interprets the race at a moment when all its nostalgia, throbbing with a pain three centuries old, is intensified. But—and this also reveals a trait of the Indian soul—his recollections are full of that sweetness of tender corn which Vallejo savors with melancholy when he speaks to us of the "eloquent offertory of ears of corn."

Vallejo has the pessimism of the Indian in his poetry. His hesitation, his questioning, his restlessness, are summed up skeptically in a "What for!" Piety always underlies this pessimism. There is nothing satanic or morbid in him. It is the pessimism of a spirit that endures and expiates "man's affliction," as Pierre Hamp says. This pessimism is not of literary origin. It does not reflect the romantic despair of the adolescent troubled by the voice of Leopardi or Schopenhauer. He sums up the philosophical experience, he condenses the spiritual attitude, of a race and a people. There is no relationship or affinity between him and the nihilism or intellectual skepticism of the West. The pessimism of Vallejo, like the pessimism of the Indian, is not a belief or a feeling. It is tinged with an oriental fatalism that makes it closer to the Christian and mystic pessimism of the Slavs. But it can never be confused with the anguished neurosis that drove madmen like Andrejev and Artzybashev to suicide. Therefore, in the same way that it is not a belief, it is not a neurosis.

This pessimism is full of tenderness and compassion, because it is not engendered by egocentricity and narcissism, disenchanting and exacerbated, as is the case almost throughout the romantic school. Vallejo feels all human suffering. His grief is not personal. His soul is "sad unto death" with the sorrow of all men, and with the sorrow of God, because for the poet it is not only men who are sad. In these lines he speaks to us of the grief of God:

I sense God, who walks within me
with the afternoon and with the sea.
We leave together with Him. Night falls.
We greet nightfall with Him, Orphanhood . . .

But I sense God. And it even seems
that He dictates to me I know not what good color:
He is kind and sad, like a Hospitaler;
He emanates a lover's sweet disdain:
His heart must pain Him much.

Oh, my Lord, I have recently found myself,
today when I love so much in this afternoon: today
when, in the false balance of some breasts,
I see and weep for a fragile Creation.

And You, which will You weep for . . . You,
lover of such an enormous revolving bosom . . .
I consecrate You, Lord, because You love so much;
because You never smile; because always
Your heart must pain You much.

Other lines by Vallejo deny this divine intuition. In "Los dados eternos" the poet bitterly reproaches God: "You who have always been well, You feel nothing of Your creation." But this is not the poet's true feeling, which is always expressed with piety and love. When his lyricism, exempt from any rationalist repression, flows freely and generously, it is uttered in lines like the following, which ten years ago were the first to reveal to me Vallejo's genius:

The lottery vendor who shouts "Win a thousand"
contains I know not what essence of God.

All lips pass by. The tedium
blunts his "No more" in a wrinkle.
The lottery vendor passes by, who, perhaps
nominal like God, treasures up,
among tantalizing loaves of bread, human
impotence of love.

I look at that rag of a man. And he
could give us his heart;

but the luck he carries in his hand,
shouting it at the top of his voice,
will fly off, like a cruel bird, to perch—
where, this bohemian god
neither knows nor cares.

And I say on this warm Friday
that moves on sunlit shoulders:
Why has the will of God
dressed itself as a lottery vendor!

"The poet," Orrego writes, "speaks individually, he particularizes the language; but he thinks, feels, and loves individually." This great poet, lyrical and subjective, acts as an interpreter of the universe, of mankind. There is nothing in his poetry reminiscent of the egoistic, narcissistic lament of romanticism. The romanticism of the nineteenth century was basically individualistic; the romanticism of the 1900's is, on the other hand, spontaneous and logically socialist, unanimist. Vallejo, from this point of view, belongs not only to his race but also to his century, to his era.³⁵

His compassion is so great that sometimes he feels responsible for part of man's suffering. And then he accuses himself. He is beset by the fear, the anguish, that he too is robbing others:

All of my bones are alien;
perhaps I stole them!
I took for my own what perhaps
was assigned to another;
and I think that if I had not been born
another poor man would be drinking this coffee!
I am a bad thief . . . Where shall I go!

³⁵ Jorge Basadre believes that although Vallejo uses a new technique in *Trilce*, he continues to be romantic in his themes. However, as he observes in the case of Hídalgo, the newest of the "new poetry" is also romantic to the extent that it is subjective. Vallejo certainly conserves a great deal of the old romanticism and decadence up to *Trilce*, but the merit of his poetry is the way in which he transcends these residual influences. Moreover, it would be useful to come to an understanding about the meaning of the term "romanticism."

LITERATURE ON TRIAL

And at this cold hour, when the earth
transcends human dust and is so sad,
I would like to knock on every door,
and beg I do not know whose pardon,
and bake him little pieces of fresh bread
here in the oven of my heart.

This is typical of the poetry of *Los heraldos negros*. Vallejo gives his entire soul to the sufferings of the poor:

Muledriver, you are fantastically glazed with sweat.
The Menocucho Hacienda charges
a thousand vexations a day in exchange for life.

This art announces the birth of a new sensitivity. It is a new, rebellious art that breaks with the courtly tradition of a literature of buffoons and lackeys. The great poet of *Los heraldos negros* and of *Trilce*—that great poet who has been ignored and disregarded in the streets of Lima, where carnival mountebanks have been welcomed and praised—appears in his art as a precursor of the new spirit, the new conscience.

In his poetry, Vallejo is always avid for the infinite, thirsty for truth. Creation in him is at the same time indescribably painful and exultant. This artist aspires only to express himself purely and innocently. Therefore, he strips himself of all rhetorical ornament and of all literary vanity. In this way, he reaches the most austere, humble, and proud simplicity. He is a mystic of poverty who removes his shoes so that his bare feet will know the hardness and cruelty of his road.

Here is what he writes to Antenor Orrego after having published *Trilce*:

This book was born in a great void. I am responsible for it. I assume all responsibility for its aesthetics. Today and perhaps more than ever, I feel the weight, unknown until now, of man's most sacred obligation: to be free! If I am not free today, I shall never be free. I feel that the curse of my forehead gathers its most heroic force. I give myself as freely as I can, and this is my greatest artistic con-

tribution. Only God knows up to what point my freedom is sure and true. Only God knows how much I have suffered to prevent that freedom from degenerating into license. Only God knows what dreadful abysses I have gone to the edge of, filled with terror, fearful that everything is going to die so that my poor spirit may live.

This is unmistakably the voice of a true creator, an authentic artist. His confession of suffering is proof of his greatness. ←

Alberto Guillén

Alberto Guillén inherited the iconoclastic and egocentric spirit of the *colónida* generation. His poetry carries the paranoid exaltation of the ego to an extreme. But, in keeping with the new mood that was already developing, his poetry was virile in tone. A stranger to the poisons of the city, Guillén, like a rustic Pan, roamed the pastoral roads of the countryside. Obsessed with individualism and Nietzscheism, he felt himself to be a superman. In Guillén, Peruvian poetry repudiated, not very elegantly but emphatically, its sources.

This is the time when Guillén wrote *Belleza humilde* and *Promoteo*, but it is in *Deucalion* that the poet fulfills himself. I number *Deucalion* among the books that most nobly and purely represent the Peruvian lyricism of the early century. In *Deucalion* there is no bard who declaims from a platform, no troubador who sings a serenade. There is a man who suffers, exults, affirms, doubts, denies; a man bursting with passion, eagerness, longing; a man thirsty for truth, who knows that "our destiny is to find the road that leads to Paradise." *Deucalion* is the song of embarkation:

Where to?
No matter! Life hides
germinating worlds
not yet discovered:
Heart, it is time to leave
for the worlds that sleep!

This new knight errant does not watch over his arms in any inn. He has no horse, no squire, no armor. He walks naked and serious, like Rodin's John the Baptist.

Yesterday I went out naked
to challenge Fate;
for a shield, my pride;
for a helmet, Mambrino's.

But the tension of waiting has been too hard on his youthful nerves. And his first adventure, like Don Quixote's, has been unlucky and ridiculous. Furthermore, the poet reveals his weakness from that time on. He is not crazy enough to follow the path of Don Quixote, who was unaware of fate's mockery. He carries the ironic Sancho crouched in his soul. He is not completely deluded or altogether mad. He sees the grotesque and comic side of his wanderings. Therefore, weary and undecided, he pauses to question all the sphinxes and all the enigmas:

For what do you give yourself, heart,
for what do you give yourself
if you are never to find
your illusion?

But doubt, which gnaws at the poet's heart, still cannot conquer his hope. The poem thirsts for the infinite. His illusion may be damaged, but it is still imperious. This sonnet summarizes the whole episode:

At the midpoint of my journey
I asked, like Dante,
"Traveler, do you know
my destiny, my route?"
Like an echo, a donkey
gleefully answered me,
but the good pilgrim
gestured me onward;

and, for her, to be happy, ingenuous, a child,
as if all the bells of happiness
rang out their everlasting Easter in my heart.

Is all of Magda here in these lines? No, because Magda is more than a mother, more than love. Who knows out of how many dark powers, out of how many conflicting truths, a soul like hers is made?



Contemporary Literary Currents—*Indigenism*

The "indigenous" current typical of the new Peruvian literature is spreading and probably will intensify, but not as a result of the extrinsic or fortuitous circumstances that usually determine a literary fashion. Its significance is more profound. The fact that it coincides and intimately relates with an ideological and social current that daily gathers support among youth is sufficient evidence that literary indigenism reflects a state of mind and of conscience in the new Peru.

This indigenism, which is in germination and still needs time to flower and bear fruit, might be compared—allowing for all differences in time and space—with the "muzhikism" of pre-revolutionary Russian literature. Muzhikism was bound up with the first phase of social unrest that prepared and incubated the Russian revolution. Muzhikist literature performed a historical mission by putting Russian feudalism on trial and condemning it with no possibility of appeal. The muzhikist novel and poetry were prodromes in the socialization of land as carried out by the Bolshevik revolution. It does not matter that the Russian novelist and poet had no thought of socialization when they portrayed the muzhik, nor does it matter whether they caricatured or idealized him.

In the same way, Russian "constructivism" and "futurism," which delight in representing machines, skyscrapers, airplanes, factories, et cetera, belong to a period when the urban prole-

tariat, after creating a regime that still chiefly benefits the farmer, work to westernize Russia through industrialization.

The indigenism of our contemporary literature is linked to recent developments. If the indigenous problem is part of politics, economics, and sociology, it cannot be absent from literature and art. One would be mistaken to think of it as an artificial issue simply because many of those who advance it are novices or opportunists.

Nor should one deny its vitality because it has so far failed to produce a masterpiece. A masterpiece can only flower in soil that has been amply fertilized by an anonymous multitude of mediocre works. The genius in art is usually not a beginning but the end result of a vast experience.

There is even less reason to be alarmed by sporadic outbursts and reported excesses. They do not contain the key to historical fact. Any affirmation must be carried to extremes. To speculate on anecdotes is to remain outside history.

This current, moreover, is encouraged by the elements of cosmopolitanism that have been assimilated into our literature. I have already pointed to the interest of the American avant-garde in autonomous and local themes. In the new Argentine literature, no one feels more native to Buenos Aires than Girondo and Borges, or more gaucho than Güiraldes. On the other hand, those who, like Larreta, remain in bondage to Spanish classicism are basically incapable of interpreting their countries.

Some are stimulated by the exoticism that has invaded European literature as the symptoms of decadence in Western civilization intensify. César Moro, Jorge Seoane and other recent emigrants to Paris are expected to employ native and indigenous motifs. The art of our sculptress, Carmen Saco, has found its most valid passport in her Indian statues and designs.

This last, and external, factor has influenced such "emigrant" writers as Ventura García Calderón toward indigenism, al-

though they are not numbered among the avant-garde or thought to have been infected by the ideals attributed to the young writers who work in their own countries.

Criollo-ism has not flourished as a nationalist current in our literature, mainly because the criollo still does not represent a nationality. It has long been accepted that our nationality is in the process of formation and now a dualism of race and spirit is observed. In any event, we have not even begun to fuse the racial elements that make up our population. The criollo is not clearly defined. Until now, the word "criollo" has been little more than a generic term to designate a many-shaded mestizo group. Our criollo lacks the distinctive character of the Argentine criollo, who, unlike the Peruvian, can be identified anywhere in the world. This confrontation proves precisely that there is an Argentine nationality, whereas there are no traits peculiar to a Peruvian nationality. Our criollo in the sierra is different from our coastal criollo. In the sierra, the mestizo is made more Indian by his terrestrial surroundings; on the coast, the spirit inherited from Spain is maintained by colonial tradition.

Nativist literature in Uruguay, born of a cosmopolitan experience like its counterpart in Argentina, has been criollo because the population of Uruguay has a unity which ours does not. Nativism in Uruguay, moreover, is essentially a literary phenomenon without the political and economic undertones of Peru's indigenism. Zum Felde, who has promoted it as a critic, states that the time has come to liquidate it.

An autonomous native feeling was needed to oppose slavish imitation of the foreign. As a movement of literary emancipation, it achieved its end. The moment was ripe. Young poets turned toward national reality and saw that, in contrast with the European, it was more authentically American. But having completed its mission, traditionalism should yield to a lyrical Americanism more in tune with life's imperative. Today's sentiments feed on different

realities and ideals. Río de la Plata is no longer a gaucho domain. And gaucho folklore, having withdrawn to the most remote corners, is now being consigned to the silent cult of the museum. The advance of urban cosmopolitanism has completely transformed the customs and character of rural life in Uruguay.³⁶

In Peru, criollo-ism has not only been sporadic and superficial, but it has been nourished on colonial sentiment. It has not been an affirmation of autonomy. Until very recently, it has been content to describe local customs within the surviving colonial literature. Abelardo Gamarra is probably, the only exception to this domesticated criollo-ism without native pride.

Our nativism, which is also necessary for revolution and emancipation, cannot be a simple criollo-ism. The Peruvian criollo has not yet liberated himself spiritually from Spain. His Europeanization, in reaction to which he must find his own personality, has been only partly completed. Once he is Europeanized, today's criollo will become aware of the drama of Peru, recognizing in himself a bastardized Spanish and in the Indian the cement of nationality. (Valdelomar, the coastal criollo who returned from Italy imbued with the teachings of D'Annunzio and with snobbishness, had his most enlightening experience when he discovered—or imagined—the Inca.) Whereas the pure criollo generally conserves his colonial spirit, the Europeanized criollo of our times rebels against that spirit, even if only as protest against its limitations and archaism.

Undoubtedly, the criollo, diverse and numerous, can be the source of an abundance of characters and plots in our literature—narrative, descriptive, social, folkloric, et cetera. But what the genuine indigenist current subconsciously seeks in the Indian is not just character and plot, much less picturesque character and plot. Indigenism is not essentially a literary phenomenon, as is the nativism of Uruguay. It is rooted in another

³⁶ Alberto Zum Felde, *La cruz del sur* (Montevideo).

historical soil. The authentic indigenists, who should not be confused with those who exploit indigenous themes out of mere love of the exotic, deliberately or unknowingly collaborate in a task of redressing political and economic wrongs, not in a task of restoration or resurrection.

The Indian does not represent solely a type, a theme, a plot, a character; he represents a people, a race, a tradition, a spirit. It is impossible to consider and evaluate him from a purely literary standpoint, as though he were a national color or feature on the same plane as other ethnic elements in Peru.

On closer study, it becomes clear that the indigenist current is not based on simple literary factors, but on complex social and economic factors. Because of the conflict and contrast between his demographic predominance and his social and economic servitude, not just inferiority, the Indian deserves to be the focus of attention in present-day Peru. That three to four million people of autochthonous race occupy the mental panorama of a country of five million should not surprise anyone, especially in a period when this country is trying to find an equilibrium which to date has been denied it by history.

Indigenism in our literature, as may be gathered from my earlier statements, is basically aimed at repairing the injustices done to the Indian. Its role is not the purely sentimental one of, for example, *criollo*-ism. It would therefore be a mistake to judge indigenism as the equivalent of *criollo*-ism, which it neither replaces nor supplants.

The Indian is prominent in Peruvian literature and art, not because he is an interesting subject for a novel or a painting, but because the new forces and vital impulses of the nation are directed toward redeeming him. This tendency is more instinctive and biological than intellectual and theoretical. I repeat that the genuine indigenist does not concern himself with the Indian as a source of picturesque character and plot; if this were the case, the *zambo* would be as interesting as the Indian to the

writer or artist. Moreover, the indigenist current is lyrical rather than naturalist or *costumbrista* in character, as is demonstrated in the beginnings of an Andean poetry.

In making reparation to the autochthonous race, it is necessary to separate the Indian from the Negro, mulatto, and *zambo*, who represent colonial elements in our past. The Spaniard imported the Negro when he realized that he could neither support nor assimilate the Indian. The slave came to Peru to serve the colonizing ambitions of Spain. The Negro race is one of the human alluvia deposited on the coast by Spain, one of the thin, weak strata of sediment that formed in the lowlands of Peru during the viceroyalty and the early period of the republic; and throughout this cycle, circumstances have conspired to maintain its solidarity with the colony. Because he has never been able to acclimatize himself physically or spiritually to the sierra, the Negro has always viewed it with distrust and hostility. When he has mixed with the Indian, he has corrupted him with his false servility and exhibitionist and morbid psychology.

Since emancipation, the Negro has become addicted to his status of liberated slave. Colonial society turned the Negro into a domestic servant, very seldom into an artisan or worker, and it absorbed and assimilated him until it became intoxicated by his hot, tropical blood. The Negro was as accessible and domesticated as the Indian was impenetrable and remote. Thus the very origin of slave importation created a subordination from which the Negro and mulatto can be redeemed only through a social and economic revolution that will turn them into workers and thereby gradually extirpate their slave mentality. The mulatto, still colonial in his attitudes, is subconsciously opposed to autochthonism. By nature he feels closer to Spain than to the Inca. Only socialism can awaken in him a class consciousness that will lead him to a definitive rupture with the last remnants of his colonial spirit.

The development of the indigenist current does not threaten or paralyze other vital elements of our literature. Indigenism does not aspire to preempt the literary scene by excluding or blocking other impulses and manifestations. It represents the trend and tone of an era because of its sympathy and close association with the spiritual orientation of new generations who, in turn, are sensitive to the imperative needs of our economic and social development.

A critic could commit no greater injustice than to condemn indigenist literature for its lack of autochthonous integrity or its use of artificial elements in interpretation and expression. Indigenist literature cannot give us a strictly authentic version of the Indian, for it must idealize and stylize him. Nor can it give us his soul. It is still a mestizo literature and as such is called indigenist rather than indigenous. If an indigenous literature finally appears, it will be when the Indians themselves are able to produce it.

The present indigenist current cannot be equated with the old colonialist current. Colonialism, which reflected the feelings of a feudal class, indulged in nostalgic idealization of the past. Indigenism, on the other hand, has its roots in the present; it finds its inspiration in the protest of millions of men. The vice-royalty was; the Indian is. And whereas getting rid of the remains of colonial feudalism is a basic condition for progress, vindication of the Indian and of his history is inserted into a revolutionary program.

It is clear that we are concerned less with what is dead than with what has survived of the Inca civilization. Peru's past interests us to the extent it can explain Peru's present. Constructive generations think of the past as an origin, never as a program.

All that survives of Tawantinsuyo is the Indian. The civilization has perished, but not the race. After four centuries, the

biological material of Tawantinsuyo has proved to be indestructible and, to a degree, immutable.

Man changes more slowly than might be imagined in this century of speed, when his transformation has broken all records. But this is a phenomenon peculiar to the West, which is, above all, a dynamic civilization and the one that, logically enough, has investigated the relativity of time. In Asiatic societies, which are kindred to the Inca society, there is a certain quietism and ecstasy, periods when history seems to be suspended and a single social structure endures, petrified, for centuries. It can therefore be assumed that in four centuries the Indian has undergone very little spiritual change. Servitude has undoubtedly depressed his flesh and his spirit. But the dark depths of his soul have hardly altered. In the steep sierra and the jagged horizons still untouched by the white man's law, the Indian continues to abide by his ancestral code.

Enrique López Albújar, spokesman for the Radical generation, has written a book, *Cuentos andinos*, which is the first to explore these paths. In its harsh sketches, *Cuentos andinos* grasps the elementary emotions of life in the sierra and charts the soul of the Indian. López Albújar and Valcárcel both search in the Andes for the origin of the Quechua's cosmic consciousness. "Los tres jircas" by López Albújar and "Los hombres de piedra" by Valcárcel express the same mythology. The participants and settings of López Albújar have the same backdrop as the theory and ideas of Valcárcel. This coincidence is especially interesting because it is the product of different temperaments and methods. López Albújar wants to be a naturalist and to analyze, Valcárcel to be imaginative and to synthesize. López Albújar looks at the Indian with the eyes and mind of a coastal man, Valcárcel with the eyes and mind of a sierra man. There is no

³⁷ Luis E. Valcárcel, *De la vida incaica* (Lima, 1925).

spiritual kinship between the two writers, no similarity in the genre and style of the two books. Yet they listen to the same distant heartbeat of the Quechua soul.³⁸

Although the Indian was formally converted by the conquest to Catholicism, he has not really surrendered his old myths. His mysticism has been modified, but his animism remains. The Indian does not understand Catholic metaphysics. His pantheist and materialist philosophy has entered into a loveless marriage with the catechism. In his concept of life, it is not Reason but

³⁸ López Albújar sounds a note in his book that concurs with that of Valcárcel's book when he speaks of the nostalgia of the Indian. The melancholy of the Indian, according to Valcárcel, is nothing but nostalgia: the nostalgia of the man who has been wrenched from his land and his home to serve the military or pacific enterprises of the state. In *Ushanam Jampi*, the hero is destroyed by his nostalgia. Conce Mañlle is condemned to exile by the elders of Chupán. But the longing to feel his roof overhead is stronger than his instinct for survival. He furtively steals back to his hut, although he knows that the death penalty may await him in his village.

This nostalgia defines the spirit of the people of the sun as agricultural and sedentary. The Quechuas are not and never have been adventurous or wanderers. Perhaps for this reason, their imagination is not and never has been adventurous or nomadic. Perhaps for this reason, the Indian makes his natural surroundings the object of his metaphysics. Perhaps for this reason, the *jircas* or household gods of his region govern his life. The Indian cannot be monotheist.

For four centuries the causes of indigenous nostalgia have multiplied. The Indian has frequently been an emigrant. And since he has not been able to learn to live as a nomad in those four centuries, because four centuries is very little time, his nostalgia has acquired the tone of despair that is heard in the wail of the Indian flutes.

López Albújar looks deeply into the mute abyss of the Quechua soul. In his digression on coca, he writes: "The Indian, without knowing it, is a Schopenhauerist. Schopenhauer and the Indian have a point of contact, but with this difference: the pessimism of the philosopher is theory and vanity; the pessimism of the Indian is experience and disdain. If, for the former, life is evil, for the latter it is neither evil nor good, but a sad reality that he has the profound wisdom to accept as it is."

Unamuno finds this to be a correct judgment. He also believes that the skepticism of the Indian is experience and disdain. But the historian and sociologist can perceive other things that the philosopher and the writer may scorn. Is this skepticism not partly a trait of Asiatic psychology? The Chinese, like the Indian, is materialistic and skeptical. In China, as in Tawantinsuyo, religion is more a moral code than a metaphysical concept.

Nature that is interrogated. The three *jircas*, the three hills, of Huánuco weigh more heavily on the conscience of the Huánuco Indian than the Christian hereafter.

"Las tres jircas" and "Como habla la coca" are, in my opinion, the best chapters in *Cuentos andinos*, but neither is, strictly speaking, a story. "Ushanam Jampi," on the other hand, has a strong narrative context and, moreover, is a valuable document on indigenous communism. This tale describes how popular justice operates in small Indian villages isolated from government law. Here we find an institution that survives from the autochthonous regime, an institution that categorically demonstrates that the Inca organization was a communist organization.

In an individualist system, the administration of justice is bureaucratic and assigned to a magistrate. Liberalism, for example, fragmentizes justice and creates a caste, a bureaucracy, of judges of different hierarchies. In a communist system, the administration of justice is a function of society as a whole and, as in the Indian system, it is performed by the *vayzas*, or elders.³⁹

³⁹ In the prologue he wrote for *Cuentos andinos*, Ezequiel Ayllón explained indigenous popular justice in this way: "The substantive, common law, carried down from the most remote antiquity, establishes two penal substitutes that are aimed at the social rehabilitation of the delinquent and two punishments for murder and theft, which are the two crimes of greatest social significance. The Yachishum or Yachachishum is limited to warning the delinquent, making him understand the disadvantages of the crime and the advantages of mutual respect. The Alliyachishum is supposed to forestall personal vengeance by reconciling the delinquent with the injured party and his relatives, in the event that the Yachishum has not had a restraining effect. Application of the two substitutes, which are not unlike the procedures advocated by the penalists of the modern positivist school, is followed by the penalty of confinement or exile called Jitarishum, implying a definitive expatriation. It is the surgical removal of the diseased element that represents a threat to the security of people and property. If the one who has been warned, reconciled, and expelled, robs or kills again within the jurisdiction of the region, he receives the extreme penalty, with no hope of pardon, called Ushanam Jampi. This final solution is death, usually by beating, after which the body is quartered and thrown to the bottom of the river or to the dogs and birds of prey. This trial is held in a single session, orally and publicly, and it includes the accusation, defense, proof, sentence, and execution."

According to current predictions, the future of Latin America depends on the fate of *mestizaje*. In contrast to the hostile pessimism of the Le Bon school of sociology, a messianic optimism has exalted the mestizo as the hope of the continent. In the forceful words of Vasconcelos, the tropics and mestizo are the setting and the protagonist of a new civilization. But the thesis of Vasconcelos, which outlines a utopia—in the positive and philosophical meaning of the word—to the same extent that it attempts to predict the future, ignores the present. Nothing is more alien to his thought and purpose than a criticism of contemporary reality, to which he turns exclusively for elements to support his prophecy.

The *mestizaje* extolled by Vasconcelos is not precisely the mixture of Spanish, Indian, and African which has already taken place on the continent. It is a purifying fusion and re-fusion, from which the cosmic race will emerge centuries later. For Vasconcelos, the mestizo in his present form is not the prototype of a new race and a new culture, but only its promise. The reflections of a philosopher, of a utopian, are not bound by limitations of time or space. In his ideal construction, centuries are only moments. The work of a critic, historiographer, or politician is another matter. They must concern themselves with immediate results and be satisfied with nearby landscapes. The object of their research and the subject of their program are the real mestizo history, not the ideal of prophecy.

In Peru, because of the imprint of different environments and the combination of many racial mixtures, the meaning of "mestizo" varies. *Mestizaje* has produced a complex species rather than a solution of the dualism of Spaniard and Indian.

Dr. Uriel García discovers the neo-Indian in the mestizo. But this mestizo comes from the mixture of Spanish and indigenous races and is subject to the effects of Andean environment and ways of life. Dr. Uriel García has conducted his research in a

mountain medium that has assimilated the white invader. The crossing of the two races has engendered the New Indian, strongly influenced by regional tradition and setting.

This mestizo, who in the course of several generations and under the steady pressure of a single physical and cultural environment has acquired stable characteristics, is not the mestizo produced by the same races on the coast. The coast makes less impression; the Spanish factor is more active.

The Chinese and Negro complicate *mestizaje* on the coast. Neither of these two elements has so far contributed either cultural values or progressive energies to the formation of nationality. The Chinese coolie has been driven from his country by overpopulation and poverty. He introduces into Peru his race but not his culture. Chinese immigration has not brought us any of the basic elements of Chinese civilization, perhaps because these have lost their dynamism and generating power even at home. We have become acquainted with Lao Tse and Confucius through the West. Probably the only direct importation from the Orient of an intellectual order is Chinese medicine, and its arrival is undoubtedly due to practical and mechanical reasons, stimulated by the backwardness of a people who cling to all forms of folk remedies. The skill of the small Chinese farmer has flourished only in the valleys of Lima, where the proximity of an important market makes truck gardening profitable.

The Chinese, furthermore, appears to have inoculated his descendants with the fatalism, apathy, and defects of the decrepitude Orient. Gambling, which is an element of immorality and indolence and is particularly harmful to people prone to rely more on chance than on effort, is mainly encouraged by Chinese immigration. Only since the Nationalist movement, which has had wide repercussions among the expatriate Chinese of this continent, has the Chinese colony shown signs of an active interest in culture and progress. The Chinese theater, almost exclu-

sively reserved for the nocturnal amusement of people of that nationality, has made no impression on our literature except on the exotic and artificial tastes of the decadents. Valdelomar and the *colónidas* discovered it during their opium sessions, when they were infected by the orientalism of Loti and Farrère. The Chinese, in brief, does not transfer to the mestizo his moral discipline, his cultural and philosophical tradition, or his skill as farmer and artisan. His language, his immigrant status, and the criollo's scorn for him combine to act as a barrier between his culture and the environment.

The contribution of the Negro, who came as a slave, almost as merchandise, appears to be even more worthless and negative. The Negro brought his sensualism, his supersitition, and his primitivism. His condition not only did not permit him to help create culture, but the crude, vivid example of his barbarism was more likely to hamper such creation.

Racial prejudice has diminished; but the progress of sociology and history has broadened and strengthened the idea that there are differences and inequalities in the evolution of people. Although the inferiority of colored races is no longer one of the dogmas that sustain a battered white pride, all the relativism of today does not suffice to abolish cultural inferiority.

Race is only one of the elements that determine the structure of society. Vilfredo Pareto lists the following categories: (1) Soil and climate, flora and fauna, geological and mineralogical conditions, et cetera. (2) Other elements external to a given society at a given time; that is, the actions of other societies on it, which are external in space, and the consequences of the previous condition of that society, which are external in time. (3) Internal elements, of which the principal are race, the "residual" feelings that are manifested in propensities, interests, aptitudes for reasoning and observation, the state of knowledge, et cetera. Pareto argues that the structure of a society is determined by all the elements that operate on it and that once a society has

been determined, it operates in turn on those elements, so that it may be said that the action is reciprocal.⁴⁰

What is important, therefore, in a sociological study of the Indian and mestizo strata is not the degree to which the mestizo inherits the qualities or defects of the progenitor races, but his ability to evolve with more ease than the Indian toward the white man's social state or type of civilization. *Mestizaje* needs to be analyzed as a sociological rather than an ethnic question. The ethnic problem that has occupied the attention of untrained sociologists and ignorant analysts is altogether fictitious. It becomes disproportionately important to those who, abiding by the idea cherished by European civilization at its peak (and already discarded by that same civilization, which in its decline favors a relativist concept of history), attribute the achievements of Western society to the superiority of the white race. In the simplistic judgment of those who advise that the Indian be regenerated by cross-breeding, the intellectual and technical skills, the creative drive, and the moral discipline of the white race are reduced to mere zoological conditions.

Although the racial question—which has implications that lead superficial critics to improbable zoological reasoning—is artificial and does not merit the consideration of those who are engaged in a concrete and political study of the indigenous problem, the sociological question is another matter. The contrast in color will gradually disappear, but the rights of the mestizo are legitimized in his customs, feelings, and myths—the spiritual and formal elements of those phenomena that are called society and culture. In existing socio-economic conditions, *mestizaje* produces not only a new human and ethnic type but a new social type. The blurring of that type by a confused combination of races does not in itself imply any inferiority and may even presage, in certain ideal mixtures, the characteristics of the

⁴⁰ Vilfredo Pareto, *Trattato di sociologia generale*, III, 265.

cosmic race. However, because of a murky predominance of negative sediments, the undefined or hybrid nature of the social type manifests itself in a sordid and unhealthy stagnation. Chinese and Negro admixtures have almost always had a destructive and aberrant effect on this *mestizaje*. Neither European nor Indian tradition is perpetuated in the mestizo; they sterilize each other.

In an urban, industrial, and dynamic environment, the mestizo rapidly catches up with the white man and assimilates Western culture together with its customs, motivations, and consequences. Usually he does not grasp the complex beliefs, myths, and feelings that underlie the material and intellectual creations of the European or white civilization; but the mechanics and discipline of the latter automatically impose its habits and ideas on him. When he comes in contact with a mechanized civilization that is amazingly equipped to dominate nature, he finds the idea of progress, for example, irresistible. But this process of assimilation and incorporation is quickly accomplished only within a vigorous industrial culture. In the lethargy of the feudal latifundium and the backwater town, the virtues and values of racial intermixture are nullified and replaced by debilitating superstitions.

To the man of the mestizo village—portrayed by Valcárcel with a pessimism and passion tinged with sociological preoccupations—Western civilization presents a confused spectacle. Everything in this civilization that is personal, essential, intrinsic, and dynamic is alien to his way of life. Despite some external imitations and subsidiary habits, this man does not move within the orbit of modern civilization. From this point of view, the Indian in his native environment, as long as emigration does not uproot or deform him, has nothing to envy the mestizo. It is evident that he is still not incorporated into this expanding, dynamic civilization that seeks to be universal. The Indian has a social existence that preserves his customs, his un-

derstanding of life, his attitude toward the universe. The "residual" feelings and derivations described to us in the sociology of Pareto, which continue to operate in him, are those of his own history. Indian life has a style. Notwithstanding the conquest, the latifundium, and the *gamonal*, the Indian of the sierra still follows his own traditions. The *ayllu* is a social structure deeply rooted in environment and race.⁴¹

The Indian continues his old rural life. To this day, he keeps his native dress, his customs, and his handicrafts. The indigenous social community has not disappeared under the harshest feudalism. The indigenous society may appear to be primitive and retarded, but it is an organic type of society and culture. The experience of the Orient—in Japan, Turkey, and China itself—has proved to us that even after a long period of collapse, an autochthonous society can rapidly find its own way to modern civilization and translate into its own tongue the lessons of the West.

Alcides Spelucín

The first book of Alcides Spelucín includes the poetry that he read to me nine years ago in Lima when we were first introduced by Abraham Valdelomar in the office of the newspaper I worked on. Since then Alcides and I have seldom seen each other, but we have grown continually closer. Although outwardly dissimilar, our destinies are analogous. He and I belong not only to the same generation, but to the same time. We were born under the same sign. In our literary adolescence we were

⁴¹ In this regard, the studies of Hildebrando Castro Pozo on the "indigenous community" contain extremely interesting information which I have already referred to elsewhere. This information absolutely agrees with the substance of Valcárcel's statements in *Tempestad en los Andes*, which might be thought to be overly optimistic and apologetic if they were not confirmed by objective research. Furthermore, anyone can demonstrate the unity, style, and character of indigenous life. Sociologically, the survival of what Soré calls "spiritual elements of work" in the community are of utmost value.

→ *Provisional Balance Sheet*

I have not intended this very brief review of literary values to be a history or even a criticism, if criticism is understood to be limited to the field of writing techniques. My purpose has been to sketch the outlines or essential characteristics of our literature. I have tried to interpret its spirit, not to report its episodes; to present a theory, not an analysis.

This will explain the deliberate omission of certain works that undeniably would merit discussion in a history or criticism of our literature, but that are not significant to the literary process itself. In all literature, significance is measured by two criteria: the exceptional intrinsic value of the work or the historic value of its influence. The artist survives in literature either through his work or through his followers. Otherwise, he survives only in libraries and histories, where he may be of great interest to researchers and bibliographers but of almost no interest to an interpretation of the deeper meaning of literature.

The most recent generation, which is a movement well under way and still developing, cannot yet be studied in this manner.⁴³ National literature is put on trial in the name of the new writers; and the past, not the present, is judged. The new writers, who belong more to the future than to the present, are judge, attorney, lawyer, witness, everything but the accused. Furthermore, a table of standards that seeks to establish present or potential values would be premature and hazardous.

The new generation signifies, above all, the definitive decline of colonialism. It is now that the spiritual and sentimental prestige of the vicerealty, jealously cultivated by its heirs, sinks into oblivion. This literary and ideological phenomenon is naturally a facet of a much vaster phenomenon. The generation of

⁴³ I also recognize that this essay has omitted some ranking contemporaries whose writing must be considered as still continuing and developing. I repeat that my study is not complete.

Riva Agüero made a last attempt in politics and literature to save the colony. But the so-called futurism, which was only a neo-civilismo, has been liquidated in both areas because of the flight, abdication, and dispersal of its supporters.

In the history of our literature, it is not until this generation that the colony ends and Peru finally becomes independent of the mother country. Earlier writers had laid the groundwork. González Prada was the precursor of cosmopolitan influences when forty years ago, from the platform of the Ateneo, he urged young intellectuals to rebel against Spain. In this century, the modernism of Rubén Darío, although attenuated and counteracted by the colonialism of the futurist generation, contributed innovations in style that have permeated our literature and given it a French cast. And then the *colonida* movement incited the generation of 1915, which was the first to heed the admonition of González Prada to mutiny against Spanish academicism, which had been solemnly albeit precariously restored in Lima with the installation of the appropriate Academy. But colonialism, the intellectual and sentimental prestige of the vicerealty, remained in spirit if not in form.

Today the rupture is complete. Indigenism, as we have seen, is gradually uprooting colonialism. And this movement does not originate exclusively in the sierra. Valdelomar and Falcón, both coastal criollos, are among those who have first turned their attention to race, whatever the success of their efforts. From abroad we simultaneously receive various international influences. Our literature has entered a period of cosmopolitanism. In Lima, this cosmopolitanism is reflected in the imitation of corrosive Western decadence and in the adoption of anarchical *fin-de-siècle* styles. But under this swirling current, a new feeling and revelation are perceived. The universal, ecumenical roads we have chosen to travel, and for which we are reproached, take us ever closer to ourselves.