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PEASANT POLITICS IN CHILE: A CASE STUDY

by

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#### Introduction

The farm "Culipran" is located in the municipality of Melipilla in the province of Santiago, in the fertile Central Valley of Chile. It lies less than two hours from the capital. In October 1965, after a series of encounters with the landowner and fruitless attempts to have their problems rectified by the public authorities, peasants seized control of the farm, armed themselves, and prepared to resist forcible removal.

Under pressure from the peasants and the left-wing opposition, the Christian Democratic government expropriated the farm and established a land colony (asentamiento) within which the peasants would work the farm collectively for three years. At the end of this period they would vote for either individual ownership, collective ownership, or a combination of the two.

This illegal violent action by the peasants and its affect on their behavior and political and social attitudes is the subject of this paper. Accelerated social change was preceded by activities of an irregular, uneven, and yet cumulative character. The major concern of this case study, however, was to describe and analyze the formation of a new structure of authority and the process of change from capitalist oligarchy to pluralistic collectivism--an aspect of political development.

Data collection proceeded through interviews with twelve peasants: four leaders of the revolt, six followers, and two peasants (employees) who opposed the action. Utilizing open-ended questions, we conducted interviews which were taped and later transcribed. The study was designed and data were collected during the period January 1966 to June 1966. Interviews averaged two hours in length, varying from one to three hours.

#### Political Change: The Formation of a New Structure of Authority

The process of change at Culipran was cumulative and complex. Long-established norms were challenged indirectly and through devious means. Protest was repressed: the protestors were deprived of their livelihood and expelled from the community. New movements began and old leaders went into other activities or were co-opted. The old structure continued, bearing within it members whose memories of older struggles continued dormant. Discontent became latent, awaiting propitious moments to express itself. Yet minor changes in the structure of agriculture accumulated over time and isolation lessened; mass communications expanded and penetrated the farm; external political agencies looking for means of gaining power fanned the desire for land and justice; a new literate generation of young peasants emerged, nourished on the ideas of equality and not yet having experienced the defeats and humiliations of their fathers. These periods of slow change were characterized by informal discussions

and interchange of ideas--stories told by relatives, friends, or those on the farm who visited outside were related and passed on by word of mouth.

Traditional relations based on deference and obedience had been subject to popular resistance in the past, though repression and sanctions usually limited it to desperate moments or times when external forces appeared capable of neutralizing the weight of official violence. Interviewee 5 recalled the peasant mobilization of an earlier period. He described the emerging resistance, the subsequent defeat, and the recent resurgence:

Politics here ended some years ago, at the period of Pedro Aguirre Cerda, when there was a revolution in the farm leaving us in conditions in which we couldn't make politics. In these times, I am speaking of the year 1940-41, a Socialist Party was organized here and since that time the idea has remained, the fighting idea, of taking advantage of the right time to take the land. Between ourselves, we always have had the intention of searching for a better life, of ameliorating life a little bit. Pedro Aguirre Cerda was the presidential candidate supported by the Socialist Party; how many was there, some 150 more or less were found throughout the farm--it was the Socialist "product." When the party was organized we began to go to Santiago, to San Antonio and to Noviciado also in order to propagandize for don Pedro. We went to several places. I became head of the militia--because there were militias in all the socialist parties--it was a separate group that had to protect order in case there was some question. In Melipilla there was not much propagandizing because there were many rightists, so they came looking for us, the peasant comrades. Isn't that a joke? If in Melipilla they were smaller than a match light, here in the farm we had three truck loads of people. When we arrived in Melipilla they had everything set from billy clubs to rubber stamps; we divided up the work: some stood guard while the others wrote and others handed out the propaganda....By the time we

were finished the whole town, the whole plaza, all the major streets were covered with slogans. It was then that the Socialist Party was organized here on the farm and that three comrades were kicked into the street, the owner booted them out because they never would quit the party. The owner came around and advised them and he offered them a thousand and one things in order to see if they would quit but since they didn't want to he came and threw them into the street. And wasn't my father-in-law one of those that was thrown out also?...Yes, the owner threw them into the street over there in Puerta, he fired two, and others in Bajo. And they had to leave, nothing more to be done, because he kicked them all out. What happened afterwards...There was a change of President. We began to take heart when Mr., how is he called that...Mr. Eduardo Frei came forth, that had to help us..."Now Mr. Frei will help us" we told each other. At the same time in this period the leaders of the Socialist Party didn't come around any more. Only the Christian Democratic and Communist parties came around, they came around propagandizing for the election of deputies and senators. Thus we took further courage and we said: "Now we have to organize ourselves anew again."

The tradition and history of deference was thus accompanied by a certain popular resistance: inarticulate and inchoate attempts by peasants to "better their lot." The countryside appeared in many ways as it was a century ago, yet it was possible to discover among individual peasants the mode by which "traditional" relationships were imposed and retained. The periodic use of selective violence and the everyday absolute control over conduct in social relations are variables which have only infrequently been considered in discovering the sources of established authority in the countryside. Socialization of the peasantry into a repressive society which is paternalistic and authoritarian was the outcome of a system of authority which

more frequently than not possessed the means to enforce its "will" through violence--with or without the approval of constitutions and laws. Usually, in fact, the State itself assumed the duty and obligation of enforcing the authority of the owner. In some cases the owner himself was the lawmaker.

The peasants did not merely passively accept the "law of the lord," but formed their own ideas of right and wrong, of what they received and what they should receive in exchange for their labor. The earlier "moral economy," the semi-religious idea that each man should earn enough to maintain his family, still was held against the "modern" idea of individual profit maximization. Traditional relations were viewed, at a minimum, as means to secure a livelihood. Alongside this "traditional attitude" there also sprang up from time to time the desire to "work for oneself" rather than to be exploited by the owner. This latent desire turned the peasant's eyes toward the land that he worked for someone else.

Because the set of obligations and responsibilities between peasant and owner were intricately interconnected, rapid changes in one area were liable to set in motion a whole series of other changes. The final result could mean basic shifts in values and perception of status, and in some cases, revolutionary activity. The disintegration of the traditional structure of authority in Culipran was thus neither a cataclysmic action nor the result of purely autonomous impersonal social and economic factors.<sup>2</sup>

Uneven Development and Social Change

The process of modernization has been uneven in Chile, largely by-passing rural society, but in recent years deep inroads have been made in certain areas previously influenced by "traditional" modes of behavior. Agriculture has been commercialized and oriented toward the market; owners are oriented toward maximizing profits. Traditional social relations served as a convenient mode of controlling the labor force and preventing disruption of the productive process. The landowners frequently calculated their production and marketed their goods in accordance with market prices while usually maintaining payments in kind and other devices of the earlier "natural economy." Within the farm, traditional deference patterns and paternalism persisted; externally the owner sought to maximize his gains as any "modern capitalist."

The owner was able to maintain traditional social relations and his modern commercial activity by isolating his labor force from the outside world--preventing the peasants from experiencing the external world. External contacts led the peasants to make comparisons which reflected unfavorably on their social situation.

For a long time the owners were successful in maintaining their authority, largely because of support from official governmental agencies and policies. In recent years, however, modernity has been introduced through several combined processes, all of them tending to undermine the traditional pattern of authority and parallel social relations. These processes are: 1) increased communication among peasants and between the

peasants and sources promoting agrarian reform; 2) growth of corporate ownership in agriculture; 3) mechanization of production and specialization of labor; 4) cash payments replacing payments in kind; 5) rural-urban migration; and 6) commercialization of agriculture.

In Chile today, as in the past, the fundo is the predominant social and economic unit of the countryside. Its internal relations conform rather closely to the typical model of the traditional and patriarchal hacienda society. The fundo, managed either by the owner (patrón) himself or by an administrator fulfilling a similar social role, tends to be a particularistic world within which the patrón exercises quasi-absolute authority.

In Chile, foreign economic investment in agriculture has never been predominant nor even of major importance until recently, so that the Chilean landlords were not weakened or displaced by a foreign absentee-owner class (as was true of Cuba, for instance, where any genuinely landed elite could not exist because of United States capital's penetration of agriculture). The pattern of economic development in Chile was also such that the agrarian social structure and, therefore, the base of the terratenientes (landlords) as a class was left largely intact. Isolated, localized, and few in number within the fundos themselves, the peasants formed a secure base for the power of the terratenientes.

The fundo's major work force is composed of inquilinos--peasants who work the landlord's fields and contribute other types of labor in return

themselves and their families, a ration of land, usually from a fourth to half an acre, and the right to graze their animals on the patrón's land. The inquilinos until recently rarely left the fundo, and their lives centered within the world bounded (literally) by its walls. They were more or less completely under the rule of the patrón, who constituted the law, rarely if ever challenged from within or without, in the fundo. Their values, their ideas about the world, even their sense of individual worth, have been intimately tied to the values and preferences of the patrón. He, in turn, regarded his inquilinos and the peasantry in general as children in his charge, to be disciplined, guided, and occasionally indulged. Under the rule of the terratenientes as a class and the domination of the patrón as an individual, the inquilino has been the crux of Chilean stability in the countryside, with an essential, albeit asymmetrical, congruity between his ideology and that of the patrón. When the inquilino voted--if at all--he voted as his patrón told him.

The introduction in 1958 of a new voting system, pushed through parliament by an alliance of the center and left, made it easier for the inquilinos and other peasants to vote for the party of their choice, while the emergence of the Christian Democratic movement as a major political force brought issues to their attention that were not legitimate subjects of public discussion and debate in the recent past. These factors in turn facilitated Socialist and Communist political access to the inquilinos and the peasantry in general. More important, however,

in the emerging political support for the Frapistas among the peasants are the small but cumulative changes that have been occurring in the Chilean countryside. Electrification, the transistor radio, and improved roads and other means of transportation have facilitated communication between the peasants in different areas of the country and have made it possible to reach many of them simultaneously with new interpretations of their conditions of existence and with exhortations to change them. The large fundos have apparently become increasingly devoted to production for the market, and new economic forms of agricultural enterprise are also beginning to change the face of the countryside. Agricultural corporations have gained in importance relative to the large individual landowner, and these corporations now own a significant (though unknown) proportion of the arable land, especially that held in large fundos.<sup>3</sup>

The production of crops for industrial purposes, the growth of lumber and sugar milling into important though still small industries, and increasing mechanization of the fundos have all contributed to changes in the external environment and internal social relations of the fundos, tending to undermine their traditional structures. A great many of the children of inquilinos, as well as of other peasants, have left the countryside for the cities to find work in industry and construction. Through contact with their friends and relatives still in the countryside, these migrants have described experiences which soon become part of the cumulative pressures for change in the peasants' ideas.<sup>4</sup>

The rapidly shrinking rural population and the penetration of urban influences into the once isolated countryside has also meant that even those peasants who stay on the land can visit the city and experience a different way of life. The possibility of leaving the fundos for the city also gives the inquilinos a greater opportunity for independence vis-a-vis the patrón.

#### Social Change, Political Development and Authority

We will here focus on several aspects of the Culipran situation which will allow a better understanding of the nature of political life in a rural setting. One aspect concerns the pattern of decision-making and the mode by which problems are resolved. Another is the process by which traditional political authority is displaced; another, the forms of authority which can replace it. Such an investigation raises a number of key questions. Is grass roots political activity among peasants possible, and what circumstances "activate" peasant activists? Is popular rule possible? What are the experiences that produce citizens with a high level of interest and participation, and a sense of political efficacy, confidence, and optimism about the future? Are peasants merely passive instruments of manipulative external elites or are they capable under certain circumstances of manipulating politicians to serve their own ends? How effective is negotiation and bargaining in producing change, and in what circumstances is mass mobilization, illegal activity, and the willingness to practice violence a prerequisite for producing necessary changes? What is the relationship between civility and revolution--is the latter a prerequisite for the former? Is a civic culture a post-revolutionary phenomenon?

Political development in Culipran was a process in which representative organizations and peasant leaders emerged who articulated the interests of previous undifferentiated social forces. Political experience was important in shaping responses of emerging citizens; this fact suggests that continuity of historical grievances and the presence of older members of previous struggles were important agencies of change. Alongside these traditional historical factors which facilitated change was a new factor: younger members of the community whose frame of reference and alternatives were derived from outside the farm through contacts with the "modern world." The interaction of the traditions and experiences carried by the few older peasants and the new modern values and sources of legitimacy expressed in the younger groups produced the dynamic fusion that led to conflict with the traditional mechanisms of social control.

Conflict and development must be seen in relational terms; the growth of class consciousness was the outcome of inter-class relationships. In Culipran political awareness among the peasantry developed in direct response to the negative policies adopted by the traditional authority figures toward the peasants' demands. Rigidity and inflexibility of traditional authority in the face of new demands was an important determinant of the direction and development of political consciousness among peasants. Unresponsiveness and ineffectiveness of official governmental channels in mediating demands and solving immediate problems became a determinant of peasant political radicalism. The relationship of the peasants to urban based political groups contributed to the

development of peasant political skills--the formulating, articulating, and publicizing of issues and problems.

### Traditional Authority and Class Struggle

The structure of authority of the fundo exhibited many of the characteristics of quasi-absolutist rulership: the decisions were made by the owner, or by administrators whose decision-making power was delegated by the owner to whom they were solely responsible. Interviewee 1 recalls that "before the takeover, my problems were taken care of by the administrator don Ligualdo; we met with him, and if something was going wrong for an inquilino, if it was more serious like a crime, it went before a judge. But he (administrator) took care of each individual's problem. If it was a problem that necessitated money, one went and spoke to the owner to see what he would do."

Nevertheless, the history of quasi-absolute rule was punctured by social conflict. In the case of Culipran peasant informants revealed that intense social strife and political mobilization occurred in 1920, 1935-40 and again in 1946-47, prior to the present upsurge (1962 to the present). Interviewee 1 recalled: "I was ten years old when Arturo Alessandri was elected (1920) and this hacienda was the first to rise to strike; it was called by the Chilean Workers' Federation and we followed with a march in Melipilla." He pointed to the gains achieved through struggle: "At the end of the struggle my father's earnings increased from 80 cobres to 120, an increase of 40 cobres."

Contact with the outside through military conscription and the political experience of registering to vote may have prepared some of the Culipran peasants for social struggle and political leadership during the 1930's. "Later I grew older, was drafted into military service and later registered to vote. Then with the election of Pedro Aguirre Cerda the Peasant League was formed and I became its leader. We gained an increase from 2.50 to 3.20. But later the owner threw several peasants out into the street for being involved in the union."

Two important conditions were related to the earlier peasant movements: conflict and mobilization within the farm coincided with national political mobilizations organized by insurgent, urban-based, leftist movements which sought public office. The long periods of quiescence coincided largely with periods in which the urban insurgents were holding ministerial offices when parliamentary activity predominated, or when the laws proscribed radical political groups. Popular mobilization during the 1920 presidential election of the middle class insurgent Arturo Alessandri was followed by agricultural policies which differed in no significant fashion from those of traditional rulers. After his election the President and his party "demobilized" the peasantry. Repressions and isolation of the peasants returned. Contacts with urban political forces were broken; the external supports vanished. The administrative authorities continued to pursue policies buttressing the power of the landowners. The landowner imposed his quasi-absolute authority on the peasants. This pattern of rural mobilization and demobilization was repeated with little variation in the 1930's and 1940's.

Because of these reversals little if any change occurred in the status of the peasant and in the structure of authority on the farm. However, marginal gains within the farm's basic system were obtained. More important, the class struggle created a tradition which was passed on by word of mouth; experiences were shared with the younger generation; repressed demands were related to future action. This cumulative process eroded established authority. Because all the individuals involved were not eliminated, they were able to pass onto the next generation the quest for change through struggle as an alternative to the paternalistic way of problem-solving. The older peasant rebels became the "experimental storehouse." Their experiences and the traditions they established legitimated the apparently "non-legitimate" activity of the young militants. The eruption of violent activity for "illegal ends" was not a cataclysmic event that appeared for the first time. It rested on the experience of self-mobilization and the "expertise" of older peasants who were active earlier.

#### Contract in an Authoritarian Setting

A built-in instability accompanied each "settlement" that occurred within the system of owner-dominance. The "contract" agreed to between owners and peasants in the years of peasant upsurge, whether verbal or written, was obligatory on the owner only so long as the "movement" itself lasted. Later, with the "isolation" of the peasantry and the re-establishment of official channels sanctioning paternal authority, the "rights" of the peasants and obligations of the owners disappeared. Collective

bargaining resulted at a particular moment in history when urban forces supported peasant initiatives and movements: the system of power was interdependent. Sustained self-mobilization depended on external support. Effective collective bargaining of local units, such as existed at Culipran at certain times, appeared only when external political support countered the strength of the "right"-- the administrative regulations and traditional authority of the landowners. The short duration of collective bargaining rights and the limited gains which they brought did not promote peasant confidence in organizations and channels for problem solving within the traditional structure. The failure of pragmatic reformist methods prepared the ground for attempts at more basic changes.

Culipran farm's inability to institutionalize stable mechanisms for gradual change, and the accumulation of experiences of class struggle within the structure of traditional authority were two major factors that led to the seizure of the farm.

#### Communication and Political Development

Communication with the outside world reinforced and accentuated existing sources of revolt, it did not create them. Communication with outsiders played an important role in shaping the perspective of the peasants and heightening their sense of exploitation. For example, a peasant who was a veteran of earlier struggles read in a newspaper that the government proposed an Agrarian Reform. He informed the other peasants. The Agrarian Reform project stimulated his desires and hopes

for change. Interviewee 1 recalled the incident: "In the recent period it was five years ago when we first began to organize again. It was when I read in a newspaper of the Agrarian Reform of Alessandri. Then I began to meet with the compañeros [comrades] and they didn't believe me; they never believed me. I called them to meetings and told them 'this is happening, compañeros, and we are going to have to do this;' and we came together slowly, and I went on telling them; thus some came to believe in what I was saying and others didn't believe."<sup>5</sup>

While skeptical of the report that the government would actually take a hand in affairs on the farm on which they worked, the news activated the peasants. It encouraged them to organize, to implement what they perceived as government sanctioned activity. In Culipran the mass media's penetration of the farm served to stimulate latent feelings. The media encouraged the peasants to go beyond "sub-political" desires for change; they shaped a political perspective. The mass media and the information it introduced did not create new desires so much as they aroused and reinforced existing desires, products of earlier experiences. Mass communications were one input in the process of political change, dependent on the existence of traditions and experiences which facilitated acceptance or rejection of change.

#### Modernization and Political Change

The peasants of Culipran made contact with the outside world through the small scale commercialization of crops which they raised to supplement their meager earnings as wage hands for the landowner. The revolt

of the peasants against the owner resulted partly from the growth of small scale commercial agriculture and the concomitant values of individual self-improvement. The unused land and the speculative practices of the owner aggravated a situation where the peasants, as aspiring market-farmers, were confined to tiny plots, unable to fulfill their entrepreneurial desires. The seeds of revolt were present in the form of the nascent individual capitalist producers created within the fundo. The peasants' desire for economic expansion conflicted with the social relations and norms of the fundo and its restrictive structure of authority. These latent values are revealed in the comments of Interviewee 1: "I have always been an inquilino, but all the time I have been thinking; I have had other desires: it appeared to me that I could do something more. My desire was to make money and live a better life; and to have a little plot of land that would be one's own, for one to run with its eight cuadros that one could work with his sons and to have some money in order to work the land. I already have some possibilities, because a compañero who is also a close friend told me he would...open a bank account for me." The peasant's interest in commercial exploitation of agriculture was evident by his wish to obtain machinery to assist him: "If I had a little tractor and it worked five cuadros, I can assure you that with five cuadros, if it is good land, they will soon earn something like 15 million pesos and figuring expenses at five that leaves 10 for me."<sup>6</sup>

Contact with the outside world was somewhat restricted. Transportation and visiting were generally limited. Those peasants who became

local leaders were usually among the minority which had more frequent interaction with the outside world. The quantity of peasants who were isolated held less significance than the existence of a significant minority of peasants who carried the experiences of commercial and urban society back to their brethren in the closed system of social control.

The high proportion of peasants in Culipran who were literate and the high percentage of eligible voters who actually cast ballots indicated the existence of an available audience for the impersonal media and for the mobile political organizations.<sup>7</sup> The transistor radio and less frequently the newspaper were the media through which the generally literate peasantry became aware of the news. The peasants interpreted the news according to their perceived needs, choosing to remember news items of particular relevance to their immediate "local" situation. The absence of many personal contacts with the outside world was no great obstacle to political mobilization.

The existence of mass rural literacy and mass political participation even on the minimum level of voting suggests that the passivity which underlay the traditional structure of authority was already being undermined. The mass media were "effective" in weakening further a system of authority which already contained the seeds of its destruction through the growth of mass literacy and voting.

The modernization favored by the owner class itself became a key instrument in awakening the peasantry from traditional passivity, in activating struggles that destroyed the owners' authority. The owners' decision to change from payments in kind (regalias) to payments in cash contributed to the politization of the peasantry. The withdrawal of traditional payments in kind was perceived by all the peasants as a threat to their daily existence. Interviewee 3 underlined the importance of the loss of these perquisites in producing the peasant revolt:

Now I am going to tell you how it came about that the land was taken over....The owner, May 1 [1965], took away the traditional payments in kind [regalias]. He gave us a fourth of land and a half to be rented, the rest was taken away. He charged us. Nine thousand pesos were to be discounted from our salary. Three thousand for a carload of firewood. And for bread we had to pay 600 pesos. Then we remained to starve. We said: What are we going to do with the family? Here we are twelve in the house, two grown-ups. We would have to starve. What were we to do with a fourth of land to clothe and sustain the family? It was not sufficient to eat. This was on payday--Saturday. Then we came together around here: This is going to happen. It's going to happen that we are going to starve. What are we going to do? Are we going to stop-work on Monday? Well, we did it. All of us joined the stoppage; and we asked him that he should give us more payments and that he shouldn't deduct these interest payments. Nothing was done. Nothing. Nothing. So he left us on the same old terms.

The alienation of the peasant from his ancient moorings on his tiny plot of land--the attempt by the owners to rationalize one dimension of social relations at the expense of traditional benefits--brought forth a series of counter-responses that went far beyond the original issues. Payments in cash and the charges imposed by the owner for traditional benefits

made the system of mutual obligations inoperative and "impersonalized" relations. The peasant-owner relation became more strictly instrumental. "Affective" particularistic relations which served as a buffer and which tended to undermine collective demands were eliminated. Capitalist modernization and rationalization served to alienate the peasants and to activate them toward collective action.

#### The Traditional Basis of a Modern Revolt

What began as a protest against the violation of traditional norms became a challenge to the traditional structure of social control. Once the struggle broke out, the goals of the peasants changed. They were not oriented toward restoration of the old obligations but toward taking over the profit-maximizing position of the owner and establishing themselves as individual capitalist farmers. The expropriation and division of the land was the "revolutionary" means of extending and deepening the process of modernization and individuation.

The owners' practice of manipulating the marketing of produce in order to maximize profit orientation of the owner contrasted sharply with the traditional norms which he held before the peasants as ideals, and the peasants were aware of this contradiction. They mentioned that the owners stored crops and meats in order to obtain higher prices even while the peasants were hungry. The contrast between the individual gain of the owner and the social needs of the peasants was viewed by many as a particular personal vice of the owner. For the peasant leaders this contrast was

instrumental in creating an awareness of the different interests of both the peasants and owners. As the peasants pursued their self-interest in conflict with that of the owner, the farm became further polarized. Conflict no longer revolved around a return to traditional obligation and rights, but around interest politics.

### Alienation and Revolt

The instability of contractual relations, the violation of traditional norms, and the covert collaboration of public officials with traditional authorities created a discontented mass available for and interested in radical change. The support of an active radical opposition created the necessary external counterweight to the official support for traditional authority. Interviewee 3 expressed the growing frustration of the peasants: "Then we went to Melipilla to seek a settlement; we went to the Labor Inspector, to the Governor, but we didn't get results there either. Because he has bought all of them, he bought all the authorities; afterwards we went to court, more of the same; we stayed in the same way, because the judge didn't rule in our favor....And those who were supposed to be looking after us, the democrats [the Christian Democrats], it must be made clear, didn't do anything, they did nothing for us. One could say that it was then that the local leadership from this fundo went and spoke with a socialist municipal councilman Matis Nuñez [of Melipilla]."

Within the farm the relationship of forces weighed heavily in favor of numbers: an active and organized peasantry easily overcame the owner

and his formal and informal clients. The structure of authority was topheavy, insofar as final authority was concentrated in the owner; in practice, however, considerable day-to-day decision-making power was delegated among the "employees"--the general manager (administrators), the foreman, and others. The social differences between the employees and the rest of the peasants were accentuated by the higher incomes and better regalias that the former received. The authoritarian quasi-absolutist structure of authority then had as its major internal support a strata of employee clients.

Situated in a relatively privileged status position, the employees depended on the system which maintained the peasants in subordinate position. The employees espoused a traditional paternal outlook and upheld these values for reasons of self-interest--the higher economic remuneration and social status which were their rewards. Deference to the owner was based on a sense of calculation and self-interest. By defending the prerogatives of the owner the employees were defending their own position and its privileges against the peasantry. Traditional deference was expressive and instrumental.

The values articulated by the employees were largely "traditional;" they stressed security, dependence, obedience, "natural" inequality, and trust in the economically powerful. The values of the employees blend traditional authoritarianism and the modern capitalist ethic, i.e., economic pursuits involving investing money in property and livestock. In practice the two sets of values were not incompatible since traditional authoritarianism did serve as a mechanism of social control for the

profitable exploitation of labor. Interviewee 6, an employee, expressed the dual attitude: "...the past year, during this month, I sold two truckloads of potatoes in the capital...and I sold two hundred bags in February. For this reason I am not in disagreement with the owner regarding regalias. The others don't have the same, they can't reach the same position because as you know... everything goes by hierarchy; in a farm not everybody can be equal. There are privates, first corporal, second corporal, sergeants, brigade colonels and a number of other ranks."

The political allegiance of the employees to the owner showed during the peasant takeover, when they opposed the takeover of the farm though they dared not express their opposition in the face of the overwhelming number of peasants mobilized against them. Even after the takeover the employees expressed their sympathy and support for the landowner. They continued to share his conservative political outlook and identified their superior status with the maintenance of quasi-absolutist authority. The employees had improved their material position through their loyalty to traditional authority and the owner never withheld his favors from his trusted employees who maintained the system. The owner's termination of traditional regalias did not affect the employees. The result of differential treatment sharpened the cleavage between the employees and the rest of the peasantry.

The peasants viewed employees as an alien privileged strata. During the period when peasant insurgents were planning their strategy, they

refused to take the employees into their confidence. The employees defended the concentration of authority vested in the owner, and stressed his importance in maintaining security and material benefits. An employee (Interviewee 6) noted: "From my point of view, the owner has been good to me because I was raised with him; he has always given me all the food; everything that I have is because of him; why should I speak bad of him? If some rebel it is because they have some vice, no? and others because they don't think and don't work, that is the other reason."

The employees deprecated decentralized democratic politics which developed after the owner was evicted, and stressed the "disorder" of democratic politics in comparison to the authoritarian "peace" of the previous period. Debate and discussion at public meetings were characterized by Interviewee 6 as "worse than a dog fight." He went on to lament the loss of discipline and respect. While he grudgingly acknowledged the skill of government agronomists, he criticized them for not commanding more "respect." The employees were hostile to most changes on the farm: they attacked independent voluntary associations like the trade union as well as the independence and politization of women. One employee boasted of the continuance of authoritarian patterns in his own household.

The employees explain peasant political activity as an outgrowth of their unwillingness to work. One contrasted his personal virtues leading to "success" with the vices of the other peasants and their

lowly position in the following manner: "I am a democrat and I voted for Frei and before I voted for Jorge Alessandri and before that for Carlos Ibañez del Campo. I <sup>8</sup> have worked with the twenty-five in my family. We give our votes to the right. And you ask why? Because that is the way to live a more orderly, more peaceful life; if you get along well with the owner, he will appreciate it. The future will be much easier for one..."

It is interesting to contrast the employee's confidence in the benignity of the owner to the peasants' distrust and hostility. Confidence in one situation is based on the granting of substantial rewards while suspicion in the other situation is based on the violation of rights. Because he was relatively satisfied with his previous position the employee held a constricted view of possible alternative modes of organizing society. "I have all my life been for the conservatives because if one does not live with the people who have money with whom is one going to live? It is evident that one must live with them."

Political polarization and alignment largely coincided with class divisions within the farm: the employees sided with the owner against the peasants. The socio-economic difference among the peasants--between the skilled workers and the poorest peasants--were less influential in shaping their political attitudes than were their common grievances with the owner. The deprivation they suffered at the hands of the owner more than offset the particular rivalries that existed among the peasants. The peasants perceived the transformation of social relations into cash relations as producing a general deterioration of their common situation. The

change of peasants into salaried workers (the loss of property status) was a key element generating a general radicalization and providing a common basis for collective action.

In the earlier period, exploitation and inequality had produced at times overt resistance to privilege and struggle for incremental improvements. Later, the withdrawal of payments in kind was a catalytic agent that propelled the peasants toward modern ideas of self-interest and group action. Once social action was proposed the peasants became open to the ideas of self government and representative institutions (trade unions) which could articulate their interest. Collective self-expression was embodied in their slogan at the time of the takeover: "The land for those who work it." Personal desires became social principles. Justice, once identified with the maintenance of loyalty to a paternalistic set of obligations, was redefined in terms of the peasants' own interests.

#### The Politics of Escalation: From Restoration to Revolution

The initial factors contributing to the disequilibrium of the social system (the withdrawal of the traditional payments in kind, the unmet demands of the peasants) provoked a series of related actions and reactions, each in turn escalating the level of conflict, leading from a strike to the expulsion of the owner from the farm. The intervention of the external forces (the left) hastened this process and provided the effective support which facilitated the transition. Interviewee 7 noted:

Before, the owner here was one of the worst possible, he didn't comply with his obligations to us. Of

regalias he didn't give us more than a cuarto of land and I had the right to one cuarto and a half, as a master carpenter on this farm...we were working just one cuarto and the salaries were small....We began to raise demands once don Eduardo [the owner--Eduardo Marín] began charging us money here, charging us for keeping our animals; it was then that the people put themselves in motion and began to demand; that a strike was called here against him. We didn't want to work....Thus he had to return all that money to us. Manuel Muñoz [a Socialist peasant leader] came from Santiago to organize that movement. Could we have done this alone? No. Later the comrades from the Socialist Party came from Melipilla.

For most rank and file peasants the breakdown of paternalism was an important event in the chain that led to the revolt; most peasants had lacked a clear idea of alternatives to the existing structure of authority. Once the revolt was underway and in the course of seizing the farm an alternative began to crystallize: peasants began to articulate and value their independence and to form ideas of individual proprietorship. For most peasants the values of "peace and security" were connected with owning their own plot of land. Agreements, because they were breached more often than not, and the owner's bad faith in bargaining and negotiating, produced great anxiety among the peasants. The peasants did not feel secure and repeatedly expressed their irritation with the untrustworthiness of the owner. The growth of social solidarity among the previously atomized peasants was an important outcome of their political activities. Solidarity in turn contributed to their success in achieving their goals. Those members of the work force whose actions tended to undermine solidarity were isolated and referred to in a derogatory fashion ("amarillos"--yellow).

The Civic Culture: A Post-revolutionary Phenomenon

After the peasants seized the land and the government expropriated it from the owner, there were a number of significant changes. Traditional subservience among the peasants was replaced by confidence in their ability to direct their economic and social activities. Interviewee 12, for example, was indignant with the government agrarian reform agency (CORA) because it considered retaining the former employees of the owner. He was insistent in keeping them out: "According to stories and nothing more, they told me that it [CORA] wants the foremen and all the employees that were here previously to remain; that CORA wants to direct them as its employees. We are not going to permit this under any conditions. We have struggled for this, we want people that work on the farm and we don't want to be pushed by anyone, we will get ourselves used to working for ourselves, to run the farm now; so we are not going to accept it..."

The peasants supported the idea of a new democratic authority based on the solidarity of the peasants and their involvement in directing the farm. One peasant noted:

I know now that the peasant has to be organized, because unity is the only force that the peasant has, he has no other force [fuerza]. And the trade unions are what are very important in a farm, because that is the workers' defense. Political parties also have importance evidently, because through the political parties comes the help of parliament. We here have had it [aid] and we are grateful to the parliamentarians of the Socialist Party, the Communist Party, and also some parliamentarians of the Christian Democratic Party.... I am here chairman of the union and

now I am vice-president of the peasant committee  
....we were elected by secret ballot by all the  
heads of family on the farm. All the offices do  
not yet function well because we are just beginning  
but until now we have not had trouble with the  
peasant committee, the problems have not been  
serious but I believe we will have problems from  
now on like this business with the employees....  
People come from other areas, as chiefs, and we  
have to accept them because of agreements and the  
agreements are laws, we all agree on that, all  
the people are united and we know we all have  
rights.

Despite their militant solidarity and sympathy for the Socialists  
and Communists, most of the peasants were eager to divide the land. Justice  
was equated with each individual proving his worth in the market place. One  
peasant stated: "Sure we are better off now after taking the land. If we had  
a good owner like the one in San Manuel with good regalias, I would have  
liked it. But it is better to have a parcel of land, because on a parcel  
of land he who is lazy doesn't get any of the rewards, but he who had a  
plot of land and is not lazy can work it even at night. Each one has to  
work their own land."<sup>9</sup>

The militant peasant in Culipran combined militancy, revolutionary  
activity, and pragmatic support for Socialist politicians with the goal of  
establishing a private capitalist enterprise. Peasant political activity  
in this case thus defied the usual categories of conservative/radical.

FOOTNOTES

1. Parenthetically, the peasants appear unaware that one of the key reasons for the repression and containment of peasant insurgency in the late 1930's and early 1940's was the acceptance by the Socialist and Communist Parties of ministerial and parliamentary responsibility for a Radical government committed to the status quo in the countryside.

The political leaders referred to in the quote are: Pedro Aguirre Cerda, a member of the Radical Party supported by the Popular Front Coalition which included the Socialist and Communist Parties, whose term of office was from 1938 until 1941 when he died; and Eduardo Frei, a leader in the Christian Democratic Party, who was elected President in 1964 for a six-year period.

2. This study focuses on relations between human beings: the patterns of social control and deference and the process by which individuals undertook to change their situation.

Impersonal processes do play a significant role in facilitating changes in the structure of authority. What we mean to point up, however, is that these "processes" must be analyzed in terms of how they affect, how they filter through, human beings. The agency of change is living individuals; the activity of individuals is oriented and informed by their awareness of their particular situation and the larger environment which surrounds them. Human consciousness, more specifically political consciousness, itself becomes an important variable affecting the process of change. We will begin by identifying the overall changes taking place in the countryside and then attempt to describe some of the relevant political factors which contribute toward political change.

3. For instance, a still incomplete study by Maurice Zeitlin of economic concentration shows that of the twenty largest fundos (measured in hectares of first class land) in the ten agricultural provinces from Aconcagua to Nuble, six, with 29 percent of the land held by the top twenty, belong to corporations; another two, with 9 percent of the land, belong to limited partnerships by inheritance (comunidades); two more, with 10 percent of the land, belong to government institutions; the Catholic Church has one with 4 percent of the land; and nine individuals own the remaining nine fundos, with 49 percent of the land held by these top twenty fundos. Raw data from ICIRA, Santiago.
4. The trend toward urbanization in Chile is marked. The 1940 census was the first to note a greater urban than rural population; in 1940, the urban population was estimated at 52.5 percent; in 1952, at 60.2 percent; and in 1960, at 68.9 percent, according to the population censuses of

those years. This population growth, however, "has not been accompanied by a proportional increment in industrialization." CORFO, *Geografía Económica de Chile* (Santiago, Chile: Editorial Universitaria, 1965), pp. 376ff. Merwin Bohan and Morton Pom-eranz, authors of Investment in Chile: Basic Information for United States Businessmen (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1960), p. 40, comment: "The growth of cities in every section of the country gives evidence that the rural worker and his family are no longer satisfied to remain in an environment that gives little hope for advancement or improvement."

Our own investigation indicates an absolute drop in the number of landless workers (inquilinos and wage laborers), between 1935 and 1955. Taking the raw census figures presented for provinces, and summing them, we arrive at the following:

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All Provinces			Provinces: Aconcagua-Nuble		
<u>Inquilinos</u>	<u>Wage Laborers</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Inquilinos</u>	<u>Wage Laborers</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>1935</u>					
107,906	201,418	309,324	58,701	119,914	178,615
<u>1955</u>					
82,367	176,612	258,979	48,986	101,492	150,478

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These figures, to the extent that comparison between them is valid, indicate the vast migration of the rural workers to the city. Thus the indirect contacts that the rural workers who remain are having with the life of the city and of a politicized working class is obviously extensive.

5. Jorge Alessandri, an independent conservative, was elected in 1958, and served until 1964 when Frei was elected.
6. 5,000 pesos were roughly equivalent to one dollar.
7. Most political parties confined their visits to the rural areas to pre-electoral periods, and this habit did have some effect in slowing down the pace of political mobilization.

8. Carlos Ibañez del Campo, supported by a coalition of the right and the left, was President from 1952-1958. His policies generally favored the right and there was considerable repression of popular movements, especially after his first year in office.
9. San Manuel is a nearby farm. The owner maintained a very paternalistic system and had the general reputation of being quite generous with his peasants.