

Protestantism, Ethnicity, and Class in Chimborazo

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Although discussion of the folk Catholicism of Andean Indian peasants has a long tradition in the anthropological literature, only a few social scientists¹ have dealt with the problem of Protestantism in South America. Their studies have focused either on large urban centers in Brazil, Chile (Willems 1967, Lalive D'Espinay 1969), and Colombia (Flora 1976) or on relatively small Indian populations in the Brazilian tropical forest (Ribeiro 1973) and the Argentine Chaco (Miller 1971, 1974, 1975).

This paper examines the emergence and development of evangelical Protestantism among a group of Indian peasants in the Ecuadorian highlands. These Indian peasants still preserve fundamental aspects of their culture and social organization, although they have been for more than 400 years an integral part of a class society as semiserfs and now as freeholders. Consequently, I will discuss the effects of the adoption of Protestantism on both ethnic and class consciousness. Furthermore, since the previous religious ideology of Catholicism professed by the peasants was closely tied to the hacienda system of domination, it is necessary to analyze how the breakdown of that system made possible the penetration of Protestantism, which now operates in the context of changing social and economic conditions in the highlands.

The transformation of the traditional hacienda system of the Ecuadorian highlands gathered momentum after the first and rather lukewarm agrarian reform law of 1964 and the abolition of *precarismos*² in 1970, and after the new agrarian reform law, passed in 1973, eliminated rent in labor and gave the peasants legal ownership of their plots. Concurrently, the decade of the 1960s witnessed an important ideological change in the position of the Catholic church vis-à-vis social and economic issues. These developments played a significant

role in undermining the hegemony of the landowning class traditionally legitimized by the Catholic church, and they must be taken into account in order to understand how a new religious ideology "interacts" with the new relations of production. In order to clarify this last statement, I will say that I do not assume that ideologies occupy a secondary role in social life or that they may be explained by reducing them to a passive reflection of economic or other aspects of society. The ideological sphere has a certain degree of autonomy and articulates in complex ways with the productive activities in a concrete social formation (see Williams 1977:55-71, 75-82). This paper is an attempt to understand some of those complexities.

The peasant population to be discussed is primarily that living in a region known as Colta, which comprises several Indian peasant communities located around or near the Colta Lake in the province of Chimborazo. Riobamba, the capital of the province and an important market town, is located about 22 kilometers from Colta.³

Because this area, and particularly the community of Majipamba, where I was stationed, is the major center for the diffusion of Protestantism in the highlands, other peasants frequently visit the area, and references will be made to them in the course of the argument. All Protestant peasants discussed are known as *evangélicos* or "Quichuas" and have been converted by the Gospel Missionary Union, which includes missionaries from a variety of Protestant denominations.

CATHOLIC IDEOLOGY AND HACIENDA: THEIR TRANSFORMATIONS

In the hacienda system the landowning class had the actual monopoly of the land and granted the peasants usufruct of small plots known as *huasipungos*. Consequently, as direct producers the peasants had effective possession of the means of production necessary to meet their subsistence needs and thus reproduce themselves as a labor force. Under these conditions the extraction of surplus by the landowning class was possible only through forms of extra-economic coercion over the direct producers (Marx 1962:771, Guerrero 1975:28-35 et passim). This surplus appropriation was accomplished effectively first because the landowning class had political control of the state. Its members occupied the highest political offices in the country and could call the police and the army to impose order in the hacienda whenever there was peasant unrest. Moreover, appropriation was ac-

complished effectively because the existing social relations of production were legitimized by the ideological apparatus of the Catholic church.

Until the first decades of this century the Church was one of the largest landowners and shared with the rest of the dominant class the control of the state. Priests could hold political offices as legislators and state councillors. Even more important, the Church had a dominant ideological role in the state, recognized in the Constitution of 1830, which accepted Roman Catholicism as the official religion of the state, excluding all others (Hurtado 1977:66–67). In addition to its specific religious functions, the Church had control over all levels of the educational system and the exclusive right to register births, marriages, and deaths. Catholic ideology regarded the hierarchical order of the universe as ordained by God; poverty existed in the world as a blessing to be accepted with resignation, thereby transforming the existing class structure of the hacienda into a “sacred” order. Furthermore, the belief in the racial inferiority of the Indians—taken for granted in colonial times and still prevalent in the nineteenth century—contributed to the disguising of class relationships, legitimizing the social order of the hacienda as “natural.” The link between these two components of the ideology was recognized as part of the legal order. The Constitution of 1830 put the Indians under the control of the Church, ordering that parish priests be nominated “tutors and natural fathers of the innocent, servile and miserable indigenous race” (Hurtado 1977:69). Ethnicity, defined in these terms, was appropriated by the dominant ideological apparatus to set the conditions under which the Indians were incorporated and reproduced as a labor force within the existing class structure.

Furthermore, the state used this same ideological justification—the definition of the Indian population as a special race—to impose on the peasants the payment of the tribute, abolished only in 1857 (Jácome and Llumiquinga 1977:115). On the same grounds the Church could expropriate part of the Indians’ surplus primarily through the tithe and *primicias*—a form of rent in kind. The local priest could also extract rent in labor through the *minga*—a form of collective work—and in cash or kind in payment for the religious services of baptisms, marriages, and funerals. One of the main methods of the local priests for extracting surplus from the Indians was the fiesta complex, in which the *priostes*, sponsors, had to pay for all the necessary religious services. The fiesta complex of Andean Indian communities has been extensively discussed in the anthropological literature. The only aspect I would like to examine here is the way in

which the fiesta actually helped, directly and indirectly, to increase the different forms of surplus extracted from the peasants by the Church and the landowners.

In order to pay for the religious services of the fiesta, the peasants asked the landowners for advances in money, *suplidos*, and in kind, *socorros*. These advances were difficult to repay and frequently resulted in a form of labor contract that tied the peasant permanently to the hacienda (*concertaje*; see Peñaherrera and Costales 1964, Moreno Yáñez 1977:313-16), unless he accepted imprisonment for debt. The following statement about *concertaje* by a member of the landowning class, quoted by Hurtado, is revealing: "What would be the fate of the agricultural class if suddenly the bases of *concertaje* are destroyed? The most horrible misery, a proletariat worse than the one produced in Europe by large industry" (1977:65). *Concertaje* was abolished only in 1918, but debt peonage continued to be enforced. Furthermore, the fiesta guaranteed the landowners that part of the surplus produced by the peasants in their *huasipungos* would be consumed rather than marketed. Then the peasant family would have only the necessary means for its own reproduction, and some of its members would be forced to sell their labor power for wages to the haciendas.⁴

Casagrande and Piper's study (1969) conducted in Chimborazo province provides an interesting example of the collaboration between Church and *hacendados* in using the fiesta complex to tie the Indian peasants to the hacienda. In 1908 the bishop of Riobamba intervened to grant the ecclesiastical status of "parish" to a *población*, hamlet, next to a large hacienda. Having the status of a parish, the *población* could be the center for the yearly cycle of fiestas. Thus the peasantry did not have to leave the area for days, and even weeks, to attend the celebrations somewhere else. The *hacendado* could then have more effective control of his Indians and their labor, and the new parish could benefit through the above-mentioned forms of extracting surplus from the peasantry.

Finally, the fiesta complex also contributed indirectly to the extraction of surplus from the peasantry for the benefit of the dominant class. The *alcalde*, an important authority in the peasant communities, was generally selected with the approval of the priest. One of his functions was to nominate the *priostes* and to organize the fiestas. But he also used his prestige and power to recruit Indian labor for the *mingas* called by priests, landowners, or state officials. An informant in Colta remembers how the police chief from Cajabamba helped the *alcalde* by jailing those who refused to be *priostes*, this in exchange for

the *alcalde's* influence in recruiting people from Colta to work in *min-gas* for him and his relatives.

At the beginning of this century the reforms of the liberal government of Eloy Alfaro started with a direct attack on the economic power of the Church in the highlands. In 1908 the liberals passed the mortmain law, expropriating some of the largest landholdings of the Church and the religious orders. Since these properties reverted to the state and were rented to powerful landowners from the region, this policy did not particularly affect the power of the landowning class.

Most of the legislation passed by the liberals, such as public education, civil marriage and divorce, and the formal separation of church and state, can be regarded as attempts to destroy the ideological domination of the Church over the state apparatus and to create the juridical conditions of a secular bourgeois state. None of these policies directly affected the highland Indians, nor did they weaken the ideological control of the Church over them. As I will show later, at the beginning of this century the Church had the power to prevent the introduction of Protestantism among highland Indians despite the freedom of worship supposedly established in the liberals' 1906 Constitution (Hurtado 1977:120).

The possibilities of proletarianization for the highland peasantry started with the abolition of *concertaje* in 1918. In the 1950s, under the presidency of Galo Plaza Lasso, the introduction of capitalist agriculture on the Coast and the improvement of the country road network created conditions for a large migration of manpower. Some highland landowners were then forced to pay regular wages to their peons and to rationalize the use of the labor force by introducing various technical changes. Nevertheless, the great majority of the landowners continued to extract surplus from the peasants by the traditional means already described. Only the agrarian reforms of the 1960s and 1970s created structural conditions for the disappearance of forced labor.

In the decade of the 1960s the encyclicals of popes John XXIII and Paul VI inspired significant changes in the social and political ideology of the Latin American Catholic church. The new orientation called for the liberation of the poor from social injustices and for an active role of the Church in helping them to change the structure of exploitation. In 1963 the Ecuadorian Church demanded agrarian reform and soon after started to implement it in its remaining highland properties. In Chimborazo, Leonidas Proaño, bishop of Riobamba,

initiated a series of social action programs directly concerned with improving the material and social conditions of the peasantry (see Proaño 1974).

Although in 1977 there were still many "traditional" parish priests left in the province, the new social and political action of the Church finally broke its holy alliance with the landowning class. At present, some of the worst indictments against the new Catholic clergy come from the remaining landowners, who see the action of the Church as "class treason." Having lost their main source of ideological legitimation, only their remaining influence on the state apparatus allows the landowners to block the action of those peasant groups who try to have their rights recognized through the implementation of the agrarian reform law.⁵

The liberalization of Catholicism was decisive in opening up the area for the Protestant churches. Systematic action against Protestantism by the Catholic church no longer exists. Nevertheless, there are still conflicts between Catholic and Protestant peasants, sometimes involving violence. Religious factionalism brings about ideological antagonism *within* the Indian peasantry, weakening class unity and hindering the development of ethnic and class ideologies which might challenge the existing political and ideological relations of domination.

Changes in the Social Relations of Production

In Chimborazo the hacienda system has been succeeded not by full-fledged agrarian capitalism but by an economy increasingly dominated by small peasant freeholders, *minifundios*. Still, sharecropping, traditional and modernized haciendas, and communally owned land coexist with peasant freeholders in complex interrelationships. The data I will discuss here refer specifically to the Colta area. What is happening there is similar to developments in many other areas, however, as I found in discussing aspects of the agrarian reform law with peasants from other parts of Chimborazo and in following several land disputes in the Institute of Agrarian Reform and Colonization (IERAC) offices in Riobamba.

The fact that peasant *minifundios* are further subdivided by inheritance results in a constant demand for more land to meet subsistence needs, bringing about an increase in land prices. As a consequence, the number of sharecropping arrangements has increased, primarily between peasants who bought or were granted land after the

agrarian reform and those who do not own enough land to produce for subsistence. Besides, many peasants still maintain old sharecropping arrangements with landlords from Cajabamba, Sicalpa, and Riobamba. Under the new agrarian reform law arrangements with these landlords are illegal. In order to legalize this situation with IERAC and the Ministry of Labor, peasants are spending huge sums of money on lawyers, and many are ridden with debts (Muratorio 1976).

The Colta peasants have always preferred the common Andean pattern of having several small plots of land located in different ecological microzones in order to minimize risks and diversify production. However, given the increasingly smaller size of the plots and land erosion in the Colta area, some peasants are now producing in as many as six or seven scattered tiny plots which do not add up to an acreage large enough either to engage the labor power of the whole family or to produce its total subsistence requirements. Young and adult male members of these families are then forced to seek employment outside the area. Some become itinerant merchants; others work as *cargadores*, carriers, or as unskilled construction workers in the urban areas; still others work as wage laborers in the sugar mills of San Carlos and Milagro or on the coastal plantations, thus becoming incorporated in marginal occupations or into the dominant capitalist mode of production as cheap seasonal labor, because part of their own reproduction still takes place in their family plots.

The seasonal migration of part of the labor force leaves agricultural production mostly in the hands of women and older members of the family. This creates a demand for additional labor, generally performed for wages, by those landless people who did not migrate. The fact that these peons are landless puts them outside the forms of reciprocal labor exchange that are still quite prevalent in the area and highly valued by the peasants. However, because most peasants are short of cash, the peons' wages are, to a large extent, paid in kind.

On the one hand, by consolidating the *minifundios* the new agrarian legislation favors inequalities, competition, and individualism. On the other, in order to subsist, the peasants resort to reciprocity in goods and labor as the prevalent form of mutual help in the relations of production. As I will show later, they have even adapted the new religious ideology to the old ceremonial practices which strengthened reciprocity.

Most communities in the area have some acres of land in the *páramo* for pasturing sheep and cattle. When animals have to be left

to pasture for longer than a day, peasants in Colta enter into reciprocity arrangements with other peasants living in higher-altitude communities where pasture is better and more abundant.

The development of a capitalist market is increasingly creating new needs for manufactured goods. Synthetic textiles are displacing many of the traditional peasant crafts such as *bayeta*, handwoven woolen cloth, and woolen ponchos. Peasants of the Colta area are still able to sell *esteras*, mats, woven with the *tatora* reeds which grow in the lake. To a large extent the transportation and marketing of agricultural produce are controlled by *mestizos* in the Riobamba market (see Burgos Guevara 1977). Peasants try to avoid dependence on the *mestizo* market by diversifying production in their own plots rather than specializing in cash crops. They increase the output for market purchases mostly by intensifying family labor. Part of the output of barley, potatoes, and *quinua*, for instance, is sold in the market but not in large quantities. The reproduction of the peasants' means of production and the maintenance of their plots do not depend primarily on the market.

As far as the peasant 'freeholders are concerned, the national agrarian policies of prices, credits, and technical aid favor the accumulation of capital not in their hands but rather in the hands of the largest agricultural capitalists (Báez 1976:260, Hurtado 1977:244). The highland peasants are not turning into effective small capitalist farmers but instead are increasing the size of the proletariat and subproletariat in the cities. The recent policy of emphasizing colonization in the Amazon region at the cost of undermining agrarian reform and the role of IERAC in the highlands (see LAER, 28 Apr. 1978, 6 (16):125, and 10 Nov. 1978, 6 (44):347) is not likely to help change that situation.

HISTORY OF PROTESTANTISM IN THE COLTA AREA

When the first members of the American Bible Society arrived in Ecuador in 1838, they were banished for circulating the Scriptures. It is reported that, rejecting a cargo of Bibles, a customs officer declared: "Protestant Bibles shall not enter into Ecuador so long as Chimborazo stands" (Nickel 1965:12). Well, Mount Chimborazo still stands, and right in the highland province with the highest rate of growth of Protestant converts (Reed 1975:5). It is in front of Colta Lake in Chimborazo where the Gospel Missionary Union (GMU) has its main headquarters for the highland provinces.

The GMU opened its first missionary station in Caliata, south of Riobamba, in 1902. Two American missionary women were chosen to work among the Quichuas because it was thought that it would be easier for women to gain the confidence of the Indians. They encountered strong resistance from the local priests, who even organized processions sprinkling holy water along the roads to scare away the missionaries' "evil spirits" (Nickel 1965:25-27). The Protestant pioneers in the Colta area were the Seventh-Day Adventists (SDA). A married couple arrived there from the United States in 1921, rented a peasant hut, and started their missionary work preaching, treating the sick, and opening a school. None of these strategies proved to be very successful. The Indians viewed the missionaries' modern medicine as a form of miracle healing from the "white witchdoctors," *viracocha yachaj*, and prayed in front of their Ford T-model car, debating among themselves if the devil or an angel was responsible for making it run. Besides, the priest had threatened with excommunication anyone who dared ask for a ride (Westphal 1962:35-43). Catholic opposition to the missionaries' work was consistent and effective. They were accused, among other things, of being "heretics" and "white devils" and of "causing local droughts." After five years in Colta they were able to baptize only two men. One of them, presently living in Colta, still remembers those days: "I went to the missionaries' school only during rainy days when I was not working with my father. I felt proud because Indians did not go to school then. But everybody went to (Catholic) church on Sundays, and I was praying on Saturdays. I felt very lonely."

The SDA abandoned their work among the Quichuas and sold their Colta station to the Christian and Missionary Alliance in 1933. Because of lack of personnel, this mission had to sell to the GMU in 1953 (Nickel 1965:77). The Canadian missionary couple who started the GMU mission 25 years ago is still in charge. Since, like many other peasants, the Indians of the highlands distrust outsiders, this stability of the core personnel has been a great asset in the success of the mission in Colta and in other areas. Its missionary work was also greatly facilitated by the medical mobile teams who visited different communities ministering to the sick. In 1958 the mission opened a hospital where, for the first time, Indians could receive medical attention from physicians fluent in Quichua. The importance of this step cannot be overemphasized. In 1976, when I accompanied many Quichuas to the local state hospital in Cajabamba, I witnessed their fear and apprehension because no member of the staff spoke Quichua. The American physician of the mission hospital and some of the Qui-

chua assistants he trained preached the Gospel to the Quichua patients.

In 1961 the mission started the operation of the radio station HCUE-5 in Colta, now called *La Voz de la Laguna de Colta*, "The Voice of Colta Lake," broadcasting in Quichua. Pretuned receivers were sold to the Indians for a nominal price. Some of the older people in Colta still remember the feeling of awe when they listened to the radio for the first time, and in their own language. No wonder Nickel reports one Indian as saying: "I want to belong to Jesus Christ as that box says" (Nickel 1965:100).

Another strategy used by the GMU to reach the Indians was education. In 1956 the missionaries started basic literacy night classes for women. In 1957 they opened a boarding school where regular classes were taught in Spanish by an Ecuadorian teacher and Bible classes were taught in Quichua by the foreign missionaries (Nickel 1965:107). Many of the children became converted and taught their parents the new religion. The indigenous churches, which may be considered one of the most important strategies for the diffusion of Protestantism in the area, were started by the GMU in 1961. Missionary work by native preachers using a 1954 Quichua translation of the New Testament helped considerably to attract Quichua peasants to the new faith, but resistance from the Catholics was still strong. By 1966 there were only 330 baptized members of the GMU church in all of Chimborazo, 480 in 1967 (Klassen 1974:105), and 8,054 by 1977 (H. Klassen, personal communication). Converts have increased at the rate of nearly 33% per year for the last ten years. The present (1977) figure of 8,054 baptized members would mean an evangelical community of around 24,000 members, if we accept the GMU calculation of at least two believers for every baptized member, or 16% of the Quichua population of the province as estimated by GMU.⁶

I have mentioned the implementation of the agrarian reform and the ideological changes in the Catholic church in accounting for the growth of Protestantism beginning in the late 1960s. Its further growth in the 1970s may be explained, in part, by the fact that a new translation of the New Testament into the Quichua dialect of Chimborazo was published in 1973. As reported by one of the missionaries, the reaction of the Quichuas was: "This is our language, God is speaking to us. God actually loves the Indian as well as the Spanish" (quoted in Klassen 1974:72).

In a society like Ecuador, where the mass media are directed exclusively at a white or *mestizo* audience, a Quichua radio station becomes a very powerful form of ideological penetration among the Indian

population. *La Voz de la Laguna de Colta* broadcasts for eight hours a day, five days a week. Every peasant family in the area, Protestant or Catholic, listens to it. Only two and a half hours of the programs are in Spanish, consisting of musical, educational, and evangelical programs. Except when it plays Ecuadorian music, attention decreases, especially among women, when the radio turns to Spanish. Through the transmission in Quichua, everybody is kept informed of local, national, and international news. A good deal of time is used to broadcast readings and explanations of the New Testament performed by groups coming from the different native churches in the province. All the programs, however, are preceded by everybody's favorite show—known locally as *saludos*, greetings—in which every member of the group participating in the program greets every member of his or her extended kinship network by name and kin term wherever they may be. Given the amount of internal and external migration, this program certainly helps to keep the kinship network alive and serves as a bond among small and isolated communities. Quichua songs, hymns, and singing lessons constitute the second most popular program. The majority of these songs have been written by Quichuas from the Colta area using native tunes. "Witness bands," usually composed of young people, use music and dramatization to spread the Gospel. The popularity of the new music has attracted many converts and has begun what the Quichuas define as "a revival of our own music." The periodic Bible conferences, which assemble hundreds of Quichuas from Chimborazo and other provinces, are another important source of new converts and help cement bonds among the congregation of believers. I will have more to say about those conferences later.

Two institutions—the Leadership Training Institute and the Association of Evangelical Indians of Chimborazo (AIECH)—are crucial to an understanding of the more formal organization of the GMU church in the area. Training of lay leaders is done at the institute five or six times a year. One week at a time, designated leaders from each of the Quichua churches attend classes that deal primarily with the interpretation of the Bible and with local church administration. The classes are taught by the missionaries and by some of the older Quichua pastors. The emphasis is on training lay people who can "witness" in their own communities and through the radio. The foreign missionaries see their role now as that of advisors or consultants. The hospital has been replaced by a mobile clinic and the elementary school has been turned over to the state authorities.

The native churches, once organized, join the AIECH, which is the

most important political organization in terms of the relationship of the evangelical peasants with state authorities and other national institutions. The AIECH was constituted in 1967, so that the church could legally demand or purchase land for the church building and for the Colta Protestant cemetery. It was instrumental in defending the religious rights of the *evangélicos* when they were harassed and persecuted in the 1960s. By 1977 there were 137 churches in AIECH and three other similar associations in the provinces of Bolívar, Cotopaxi, and Pastaza. The goal seems to be to constitute a national association of evangelical peasants (president of AIECH, personal communication).

Finally, the GMU church is extending its scope in order to reach those highland Quichuas who migrate to the cities. It now has two organized churches in Quito and Guayaquil. These churches serve as meeting places and as centers of information for new and old migrants. In fact, the network of GMU *evangélicos* reaches the eastern jungle of Ecuador and even Colombia, mostly through the Quichua commercial peddlers, who travel continuously, spreading the Gospel, and who become the trusted carriers of money, letters, and greetings for other highland Quichuas who are already living there permanently.

PROTESTANTISM AND ETHNIC IDENTITY

Although the majority of the Protestant Quichuas in Chimborazo belong to the GMU church, there are other Protestant churches active in the province.⁷ It is beyond my competence and the scope of this paper to discuss the theological complexities which distinguish the GMU from the other versions of Protestantism. I will therefore limit my comments to the aspects of the GMU version of Protestantism which seem to play a significant role in the on-going process of social, economic, and political transformation in Chimborazo and, in particular, to the ways in which elements of this religious ideology articulate with the dynamics of ethnic and class ideologies among the Indian peasantry.

Even to a lay observer, there are some characteristic beliefs and religious practices introduced by Protestantism that distinguish it from the version of folk Catholicism professed by the Quichuas before conversion. Those beliefs and practices center around the doctrine of "religious individualism," which Lukes defines as "the view that the individual believer does not need intermediaries, that he has the primary responsibility for his own spiritual destiny, that he has

the right and the duty to come to his own relationship with God in his own way and by his own effort" (1973:94). Other important articles of faith are: salvation and justification only by God's bestowal of faith in Christ, as opposed to salvation by works and observances; the Bible as the sole reliable authority for the knowledge of God; the universal priesthood of all believers, as well as the idea of the individual's intrinsic worth and dignity under the will of God; and the belief that the secular government is ordained by God (see Dickens 1966, Chadwick 1964). The ethical principles involved derive from the Calvinist tradition, or what is commonly known as the "Protestant ethic." The moral precepts strongly emphasize discipline and abstinence from alcohol, tobacco, premarital and extramarital sex, and from all "excesses" believed to be sinful. Finally, the Quichua Protestants have enthusiastically adopted the congregational hymn, that "greatest liturgical innovation of the reformation" (Chadwick 1964:439).

In addition to presenting itself as a way of knowing and explaining reality, religion implies a series of social practices as ways of acquiring power to influence postulated supernatural forces with the purpose of transforming the world (Godelier 1977:179). When they were Catholics, the Quichuas used the cult of the saints and the different folk versions of the Virgin as the main social practice by which they attempted to reach those extrahuman powers which they perceived as dominating them. Prayers, ritual drinking, and dancing with lavish costumes were practices performed to exert pressure on God's intermediaries.⁸ The fiesta was a community affair, staged mostly with the purpose of obtaining benefits for the entire group, such as good harvests, rains, and protection for domestic animals.

In contrast, Protestantism emphasizes an individualized religious experience. The Quichuas have been taught about the "inadequacy" and "powerlessness" of the old intermediaries. The saints are now nervously laughed at and regarded as "mere wooden idols" or "senseless painted dolls." The Virgin Mary is acknowledged as the mother of Christ but has lost her powers as an intermediary. The individual is alone with his God. In order to acquire influence with the supernatural, the believer has to become worthy of God's mercy by inflicting on himself or herself a series of taboos and prohibitions to transform his or her body into a "clean temple" where God can dwell. Consequently, the emphasis is put on external cleanliness and on internal purity by avoiding drinking and by observing sexual taboos. These practices transform the Quichuas' "presentation of the self" (Goffman 1959). Changes are particularly evident among young Protestant women; unlike other women in the area, they do not cover

their faces with the *baita*, woolen shawl, and are more willing to initiate face-to-face interaction with whites and *mestizos* and to speak and sing in public places.

Giving public "testimony," a ritual in which the new believer recounts his previous life as a sinner, is a regular feature of *conferencias*, meetings, and other *cultos*, religious services. It serves as an example to other participants. The community becomes a witness of these "testimonies," but as a group it cannot influence the supernatural powers—only the individual can.

Unlike the members of some revivalist sects, such as Pentecostals, these Quichua Protestants are looking not for an instant or even future ecstasy but rather for present tranquility, a type of conformity arrived at by avoiding excesses and searching for a new self-identity. There is a small group of Quichua Pentecostals in Colta. The *evangélicos* criticize them because "they act crazy, very much like ourselves when we were Catholics. They shout, clap, bang their heads against the wall, drink, and have more than one woman."⁹

Talking about their religious conversion, informants consistently identified their previous everyday life experiences as "animal behavior," with such expressions as "we were like dogs," "like brutes," "like beasts." Self-control and freedom from behavior which is now regarded as "degrading" are the bases for their newly acquired self-respect and dignity. As one informant expressed it: "If I don't behave like an animal I can love and respect myself and, therefore, reject those who despise me and call me Indian."

This new self-image is also a rejection of the previous exploitative relations in which the Indians were literally treated as "beasts of burden" and "less than human." These are not only images of the past; Protestant peasants—like other Indians in the area—are still subjected to discrimination and abuses by *mestizos* and whites. But the *evangélicos* are searching for a new identity to liberate them from a condition of humiliation. As Ribeiro says of Protestantism among the Xóbleng, "Conversion is a moving attempt to achieve ethnic transformation . . . a new consciousness as civilized Indians" (1973:302–3). But unlike the Xóbleng, the Quichuas are not trying to become non-Indians, i.e. *mestizos*. They are caught in a series of conflicts in which their religious experience and their relationship with the GMU move them both toward assimilation and toward efforts to define an ethnic consciousness in the context of a class society. What they wish is both to be and be seen as *gente*, human beings, and to be and be seen as Quichuas. They do not seek a *mestizo* identity as such—indeed, *mestizos* are despised by most Indians—yet the patterns of behavior in-

spired by Protestantism, the very basis of their self-perception as *gente* and of their new Quichua identity, may lead them toward assimilation. The situation is thus ambiguous.

The majority of Protestant Indians identify themselves as "Quichuas" rather than as *runas*, which means "men" in Quichua but is still used in a deprecatory sense by whites and *mestizos* to refer to all Indians and by some Indians to refer to themselves (see Burgos Guevara 1970:61). If the Indians of Chimborazo were originally Puruhá (Murra 1946:796-98), that is no longer a reality for them. First the Inca conquest and later the Spanish have contributed to the obliteration of an original ethnic identity, such as that which may still be claimed by members of tropical forest cultures of the Ecuadorian Oriente (e.g. Canelos Quichua, Shuara) and even by other highland Indian groups (e.g. Salasaca, Otavaleños, or Saraguros). More than any other, the Indians of Chimborazo were transformed into "generic Indians" (see Ribeiro 1973:16). Speaking the Quichua language, which clearly distinguishes them from *mestizos* and whites, has become the central means for enacting their ethnic identity. Furthermore, the Quichuas have several pejorative terms to refer to whites and *mestizos*, such as *tzala* and *toto*. The connotation of both terms is that whites and *mestizos* are "rude" and "vulgar" because, lacking competence in Quichua, they cannot convey the subtleties of respect, humor, and feeling that this language allows.

Protestantism has been of fundamental importance in reviving the Quichuas' interest in their language, and they talk about it with a renewed sense of pride. The revalorization of Quichua is also perceived by them as a form of strengthening their identity vis-à-vis the dominant elements of the national society as a whole, to whom the speaking of Quichua as the first language is a *de facto* sign of social and intellectual inferiority.

Although instruction in public schools is conducted exclusively in Spanish, the evangelical Quichuas are showing increasing interest in sending their children to school. Formal schooling is becoming a new symbol of prestige among Protestant leaders and young people. Adult men and women are making an enormous effort to teach themselves to read, and all listen to the basic education programs broadcast in Quichua through the local station. The major goal is to be able to read the Bible instead of merely learning passages by heart as they usually do now. When traveling, men and women carry their Bibles carefully protected in plastic bags. They do not use their Bibles as a fetish, as Miller (1974:396) reports the Pentecostalist Tobas of Argentina used to do, but they see the Bible as containing "the Word" and

as a "model for their new lives." As Reyburn has pointed out for the Protestant Tobas in Argentina (quoted in Miller 1971:156), it is also easier for the Quichuas to accept the impersonal authority of the Bible than that of another human being—such as a white Catholic priest—who might be perceived as coercing them. But, in addition, owning a Bible has specific social meaning for the Quichuas because it shows to the outside world that they now know how to read, and it gives them a special sense of dignity in front of all those who once had a monopoly of information, education, and religious interpretation. Through the reading of the Bible, the representation of biblical dramas, and the viewing of religious films, the Quichuas are beginning to understand other cultures and to see themselves incorporated into a common humanity of equals.

Burrige (1973:14) has pointed out the importance of the Bible as a means of breaking down cultural boundaries, thus bringing a variety of European communities into a common humanity. In one of the many *cultos* I observed, the pastor read parts of Paul's Epistle to the Romans on the equality of divine punishment and interpreted it to the audience by saying: "Whites, Quichuas, Mestizos, Blacks, and Gringos will be judged equally before God's law." Although it contrasts with the previous ethnic ideology as manipulated by the Catholic church, this interpretation of the Bible stresses only equality before God. Like many other religious ideologies, this version of Protestantism neutralizes actual antagonisms, postponing their resolution to an afterlife.

As Cardoso de Oliveira (1976:24) points out, in class societies ideologies of ethnicity develop out of relations of domination and subordination. The ethnic ideologies reflect this opposition and are manipulated differently by the various groups in conflict. As I have tried to show in the first part of this paper, in the traditional hacienda system ethnicity was a crucial element of the hegemonic ideology for the reproduction of the relations of production based on serf labor. However, especially during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, ethnicity was also used by the peasantry as the rallying ideological principle in the organization of Indian rebellions. The ideology of those rebellions took different forms—reformist, millenarian, nativist—but, insofar as the rebellions always made explicit the antagonism between Indians and whites, they expressed the reaction of the Indian peasantry against the existing relations of domination. In the context of those rebellions the ideology of ethnicity became a subversive element and was perceived as such by the dominant class, who used brute military force in punishing the Indian leaders and the

ideological support of the Church in bringing the Indian masses back into submission (see Moreno Yáñez 1977:353-79).

The crisis of both the hacienda system and the dominant ideology opened up the possibilities for the different social sectors in conflict to elaborate and re-elaborate their ideologies. Some sectors among the Indian peasantry have adopted a political ideology of opposition to the present bourgeois system of domination. For other Indian peasants, Protestantism has become an alternative ideology. The state has opted for an ideology of *mestizaje*, which legitimizes the present social relations of domination. It is only with Protestant peasants and the state that I am concerned here.

Presently in Ecuador, as in other Latin American countries, the state defines all members of the national society as *mestizos*, assuming that everyone has some Indian ancestry. If all are *mestizos*, by implication they can be equals in a homogeneous national society. The ideology of *mestizaje* denies both the existence of social classes and the possibility of incorporating the Indians with their own identity into the national society.¹⁰ Thus, by adopting this ideology, the state attempts to neutralize other ideological forms through which the peasantry may express its opposition to the existing relations of domination.

Earlier I discussed how among the Protestant peasants a new presentation of self, pride in their own language, a sense of belonging to a common humanity, and a desire for education became part of a new ethnic identity as a direct result of their conversion to Protestantism. The particular ways in which this identity is going to be manipulated or enacted will depend on the concrete situations of interethnic contact which develop out of the changing relations of production. Indian peasants, Indian proletarians, and Indian petty merchants, although all of them Protestants, may act out their ethnic identity very differently vis-à-vis non-Indians. Because the conversion of the peasants to Protestantism is still quite recent, and because the socioeconomic conditions in the rural highlands are changing from the increasing penetration of capitalism, I have indicated that the relationship between Protestantism and ethnicity is somehow ambiguous. Many of the "traits" and social practices which the Quichuas now value may actually lead them toward assimilation, that is, to the acceptance of a new identity that is not defined by them but is the whites' or *mestizos'* image of what "civilized Indians" should be.

However, among Protestant peasants religious ideology is not only a source of identity but also the main structuring principle of their

familial, economic, and political practices. This ideological role of Protestantism in the reorganization of important aspects of the peasants' lives, and the complex relations between Protestantism and ethnic and class consciousness, are discussed in the final sections of this paper.

Protestantism, Family, and Kinship: Relations among Equals

Although Protestantism stresses conversion as an individual religious experience, Colta is a peasant society where the social pressures that have always regulated peasants' lives, such as kinship, friendship, and community obligations, are still binding.

Recruitment of new converts takes place predominantly along kinship lines. Usually whole families become converted as a group, and then their extended kin are convinced to join. Several of the life histories of converts reveal the sense of relief they felt when they became converted because it meant re-establishing family and kinship ties with other members who were already believers. As Protestantism grows, fewer families want to be on their own.

Protestantism has had a strong influence on the Quichua family, mainly because it has reduced the level of mutual violence among its members. Both men and women informants reported how they used to beat each other when they were drunk. More peaceful family relationships have led to more egalitarian participation in domestic chores and in agricultural labor. It is now often possible to find husbands teaching their wives reading and some rudiments of arithmetic. Women informants pointed out that such knowledge gives them more independence when going alone to the market and more self-confidence when confronting *mestizo* merchants.

Commensality has always been an important factor in cementing family and kinship ties among the Quichuas. Most evangelical families insisted in pointing out to me that their meals are now more peaceful and enjoyable. The evening meal, when the whole family eats together, is always preceded by common prayers and singing. The Protestant Quichuas feel that this ritual helps to create an atmosphere of gentleness more conducive to family understanding.

What the Quichuas call the "family service," *culto familiar*, is the ritual that best expresses, in a new symbolic form, this renewed solidarity among family, extended kin, and neighbors. These *cultos* take place generally once a week and consist of singing, praying, and studying the Bible together. They are initiated by one family, which invites close neighbors and kin. The house is specially cleaned for the

occasion. Food is offered after the service. The *culto* is led by the household head, but he conducts it as a dialogue so that everybody can participate. The *culto familiar* and commensality help reinforce important ties with those who are in the network of reciprocal labor exchange. Besides, this *culto* transforms the peasants' hut into a sacred place, in contrast with the hierarchy of space created by Catholicism, in which the church was the only place of worship and the sacred was controlled by the priest. Now the peasants feel in full control of the sacred within their own homes. This "democratizing" effect of Protestantism over the religious experience is, of course, not peculiar to the highlands. It has been pointed out repeatedly by students of the European Reformation (see George and George 1968:158).

I have already said that for the Colta peasants reciprocity is still an important pattern in the relations of production. When the peasants were Catholic, they used relationships of *compadrazgo* as a way of extending their reciprocity network. Within the Catholic ideological system these relationships of *compadrazgo* were ritually made sacred, and therefore strengthened, mainly through the sacraments of baptism and marriage. Protestantism has eliminated the godparents for baptism, and usually the parents of the groom are selected as godparents for marriage. Need for labor beyond that of the family still exists, however, and Protestant peasants now use the relationship of "brother in the faith," *hermanos*, to engage others in the same social and economic relationships previously assumed by *compadres*. *Hermanos* are now preferred in sharecropping arrangements. They are also asked for help when building a house and in harvesting, threshing, and other agricultural tasks. *Hermanos* are sought after in areas near the *páramo* to take care of pasturing sheep and cattle. In exchange, those *hermanos* are housed and fed when they come down to Colta. *Hermanos* are also asked for money loans and to act as witnesses in lawsuits. The reasons formerly given by the Quichuas for these preferences are the same as those given for selecting *compadres* in traditional reciprocal arrangements: "they can be trusted," "they act like real brothers," and "they are willing to share." In addition, some of the "Protestant virtues" are now added to the explanation: "they are more honest," "they work harder," and "they don't drink and are more reliable."

Protestantism has also enlarged the reciprocity network of the Quichua migrants in the big cities and wherever their jobs may take them. They can obtain room and board cheaper—sometimes for free—if they lodge with *hermanos*. If need be, merchandise can also be left with them because "they can be trusted." Even those migrants

who work as wage earners in the coastal plantations or in sugar mills have established a system of "substitutes" between *hermanos* by which they will replace one another in the job while one of them returns to the countryside to take care of his plot. Thus, in a labor market where supply exceeds demand, the relationship of *hermano* has been transformed into a form of job security. It is then possible to say that in several ways the Quichuas are enacting the ideological relationship of "brother in Christ" as a social relationship of production. As fiestas and other rituals were used before to strengthen kin and fictive kin relationships, the *culto familiar*, conferences, and other forms of Protestant rituals are used now to confirm and sanctify the "new sibling" relationship.

Protestantism and Class Relationships

In the preceding section I discussed how the Quichuas have adapted aspects of Protestantism to maintain those relationships among equals which are meaningful within their culture. My data do not suggest that Protestantism is directly related to an internal differentiation of the peasant class in the region or that Weber's famous thesis on the relationship between Protestantism and the spirit of capitalism. (1958) is relevant in understanding the effects of Protestantism among highland peasants in Ecuador.

The majority of evangelical peasants do not have a standard of living drastically higher than non-Protestant peasants. The virtues emphasized by the Protestant ethic, such as "industriousness," "thrift," and "dedication to work," are not new to peasants who have always lived close to subsistence level. Generally, in order to increase his output, the peasant has no alternatives other than intensifying his labor by prolonging the working day, or what Chayanov (1966) calls the "self-exploitation" of labor power within the peasant economy. Furthermore, Protestant peasants do not save but, if possible, try to spend whatever cash they may have on education, modern medicine, zinc roofs for their houses, radios, and bicycles. What Protestantism has done is to remove the social pressures for ceremonial consumption. As Wolf (1966:14-15) argues, when the peasants can escape those demands, they may reduce ceremonial consumption as one of the possible strategies to achieve economic betterment for their families. The peasants changed their consumption patterns from what the new religious ideology defines as "pagan," "extravagant," and "wasteful" to what the same ideology regards as "responsible" and "proper" consumption. These patterns of consumption

may put Protestant peasants somewhat ahead of non-Protestant peasants in terms of their participation in the capitalist market for commodities. Differential consumption patterns, however, do not constitute a basis for class relations.

As I have shown already, in this area of Chimborazo there are structural limitations—lack of land, high land prices, scattered small plots, debts—that prevent the emergence of a class of small capitalist farmers, Protestant or other, who might start exploiting the labor power of poorer peasants. However, regarding the participation of Protestant peasants in the wage-labor market, my data show that landowners in the area are beginning to appreciate the value of a “puritanical” labor force. It seems that Protestants acquire everywhere (Willems 1967:177) a reputation for being “dependable,” “honest,” and “sober,” but, most important, they are also well known for not joining unions or other “troublesome” groups. Commenting on the fact that *evangélicos* comprise 90% of his labor force, the owner of one of the largest traditional haciendas still in operation in Chimborazo had this to say: “At first I was extremely upset about all my peons becoming Protestants and blamed the priest for not doing his job properly, but now I have come to realize that the Protestant Indians are more rational, more reliable than those in the hacienda X—for instance—who are organized, mutinous, and rebellious, that is; nonrational.”

Furthermore, if the situation that Willems (1967:177) describes for the Protestant urban migrants in Brazil and Chile is repeated in Ecuador, the “Protestant virtues” of the peasant migrants could be used by urban capitalists to keep a more “docile,” “quiet,” and “efficient” labor force.

Ethnic Consciousness and Class Consciousness

In most instances analyzed so far—individual, family, and kinship and relations among equals—the Protestant peasants have adapted the new religious ideology to social practices which revive and reinforce their cultural and social identity as Quichuas. In order to understand other aspects of Quichua ethnicity in relation to class consciousness, I will turn now to the analysis of two ritual occasions where evangelical peasants are mobilized to act as a group. When examined together, these rituals manifest the ambiguities which permeate the process of incorporation of the Quichuas—as an *etnia* and as a class—into the modern bourgeois state. Here the Quichuas are caught, along with other Andean and Amazonian native peoples, in

the predicament of asserting their ethnic identity while confronting the ethnocidal policies of the dominant elements of the national society. It is an intricate and difficult dilemma where, as Whitten has argued, "the complementarity of ethnocide and ethnogenesis exists in the most tenuous balance" (1976:285).

First, I want to examine the religious event known to the *evangélicos* as *conferencia*, a ritual occasion which assembles for a period of three days large numbers of Quichuas (200 to 3,000) from a multitude of peasant communities often from different provinces. They gather to pray, sing, listen to the message of the Gospel, and engage in enjoyable socializing and sports.

Because the Protestant leadership recognizes the competitive attraction which traditional fiestas may still have for recent converts, the largest conferences are scheduled to coincide with Catholic festivals such as Corpus Christi, Christmas, and Holy Week. The peasants themselves perceive the conferences as substitutes for the fiestas, without the hangovers or the large expenses. The improvement of the means of transportation in the region and the popularity of the Protestant radio have made these events possible.

Any community can hold a conference, thus becoming the "sacred" place of congregation for all the others. Conferences take place outdoors in a large tent provided by the missionaries. The community responsible for calling the conference is in charge of preparing the food for all the participants, although a minimal amount of around \$1.20 is paid by each person for the right to eat three meals a day and to sleep in the tent for the duration of the conference.

An experience of the sacred is expected to occur, and usually several people "receive the Lord" during the course of the three days. However, there are no sacred influential intermediaries to make it happen. The emphasis is on the inner transformation of the individual. Religious testimonials from old converts are heard in order to give confidence and encourage the newcomers. The new believers are assured that there is a "normative *communitas*" (Turner 1974:169) of the faithful to support them.

Through a complex system of formal ranked offices of ritual sponsorship, the traditional fiesta was an enactment of the social, political, and economic hierarchy that controlled the affairs of each peasant community. Ceremonial redistribution became the source of authority and power for those who could pay the expenses involved. In contrast, the conference creates that "ritual of inclusiveness" which Turner describes as part of religious pilgrimages, where "the other" becomes the generic human "brother" and "specific sibling-

ship is extended to all who share a system of beliefs" (1974:186). However, if in the more abstract ideological sense the "brotherhood of all mankind" is emphasized, the conferences are kept within the ethnic boundaries (Barth 1969:15-16) of the Quichua population. All aspects of the event, including praying, singing, preaching, and instruction, are conducted in Quichua. *Mestizo* merchants are conspicuously absent. For at least three days, during the conference, Quichua peasants remove themselves from those everyday social interactions where they are continuously being reminded of their "inferiority" as Indians by *mestizo* and white merchants, landowners, bus drivers, and local bureaucrats. In that sense conferences also create a kind of "ethnic *communitas*" by which a considerable number of peasants can experience a feeling of brotherhood and sisterhood as Quichuas and actually reinforce ties of kinship and friendship.

One could argue that, by generating this kind of solidarity, the conferences could be instrumental in overcoming the fragmentation and isolation of the peasantry which many scholars regard as one of the main sources of the "low classness" (Shanin 1971:253) of the peasantry as a class and, consequently, as an important obstacle for its political action (Marx 1963, Wolf 1969, Hobsbawm 1973). Nevertheless, the conference only *removes* the peasants from social situations where they are exploited as peasants and as Indians, and by clouding class solidarity into a religious experience, it conceals the oppressive nature of the larger system of social relations. In this sense we can say that the function of the ideology is resolving the contradictions by excluding them (Poulantzas 1975:208).

As Turner points out for religious sects and schismatic movements, in general, "when they attract great numbers and persist for many years, they often find it necessary to compromise with structure once again, both in their relations with the wider society and in their own internal concerns, both liturgical and organizational" (1974:267).

In order to understand how the Protestant Quichuas "compromise with structure," we have to analyze another ritual performance, where as a formal organization the *evangélicos* confront the rest of the national society. This is the yearly meeting organized by the Association of Evangelical Indians of Chimborazo mainly to maintain their relations with local and national authorities. Evangelical peasants of the GMU from all parts of Ecuador congregate in Colta for a one-day event which is very similar in structure to the celebration of national civic fiestas, with music followed by speeches, parades, and a large display of banners. Usually children sing the Ecuadorian national anthem in Quichua. They present the authorities with "typical" gifts—

shigras, ponchos, sombreros—and offer them “typical” Quichua food. In the parade “typical” Quichua music is played, and participants wear their best “typical” dress. In this event ethnic consciousness is transformed into expressive folkloric consciousness. This form of ethnic consciousness does not conflict with the state ideology of assimilation, because ethnicity becomes just another commodity to be sold to tourists and provides the Indians with an alienated identity.¹¹ In a similar way the state has appropriated the Otavaleño Indians’ ability for handicrafts and personal characteristics of “cleanliness” and “industriousness,” transforming them into the trademarks of Ecuador’s tourist industry, which is, of course, not controlled by Otavaleños.

In the speeches addressed to the authorities during this celebration, the leaders present the demands of the Protestant peasants as a group. They ask for better roads, better schools, for drinking water supplies and sewage systems for rural communities, for modern medical care to do away with the Indian witchdoctors—who are satirized in sketches—and for better treatment of the Quichuas by the bureaucratic structure. None of these petitions implies an actual confrontation with the “modernizing” goals of the bourgeois state. On the contrary, those demands assure the representatives of the state that the Protestant Quichuas as a group want to become “acculturated” by working within the existing political institutions. No references are made to land claims and working conditions, which are the main problems peasants as a class are facing. This celebration can be seen as a stage where the Protestant Quichuas express their identity as “good citizens” demonstrating their adherence to the dominant national ideology.

I discussed earlier how, in a semifeudal class structure, the Catholic church legitimized an ideological definition of ethnicity that kept the Indians as servile labor. The version of Protestant political ideology manifested in the meeting described above legitimizes that aspect of the bourgeois political ideology in which the state appears as representing the general interests of equal and free citizens, concealing their distribution in the class structure (see Marx 1975:211–41).

However, not all Protestant peasants accept unconditionally that version of Protestant political ideology. Many Quichua informants with whom I discussed these problems described how, as members of the peasant class and as Indians, they enter into daily confrontations with a society that exploits them. The ambiguity between a Protestant political ideology of acceptance of the status quo and the perception by many Quichuas of their class position is already caus-

ing tension and actual conflicts within the Protestant peasant community. These conflicts take place mainly between Protestant leaders of peasant *comunias* (legal organization of peasant communities) and those of the indigenous churches. The former see the need to fight for land rights and against all forms of exploitation of the Quichuas as a peasant class; they give priority to the needs of the peasants over religious diversions, and they see their role as one of service to the peasant class fighting for its rights. The latter define most conflicts as "moral individual issues" so that they can be controlled within the church. When asked how they solve possible confrontations with the authorities, their answer is invariably an abbreviated version of Paul's Epistle to the Romans (chap. 13:1-2): "The authorities have been established by God and should be respected."

The ideological arguments intrinsic to the conflict between these two types of leaders reflect the ambiguities that I have tried to examine in this paper, ambiguities which involve the different levels of articulation of religious, ethnic, and class ideologies in a social formation where old modes of production still persist in complex relationships with capitalism.

NOTES

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1. There is, however, a substantial amount of literature on Protestantism in Latin America written by Protestant missionaries and Catholic priests. For

the purpose of this paper I only used some of the sources that deal specifically with Ecuador, and they are quoted in the text.

2. In the Ecuadorian highlands *precarismos* refer to those forms of land tenure by which the agricultural workers hold land in usufruct, paying for its use in labor, services, or produce, e.g., *huasipungo* (see Hurtado 1973:31-33).

3. In 1966 a team from the Department of Anthropology of Cornell University did fieldwork in the Colta area in collaboration with the Ecuadorian Institute of Agrarian Reform and Colonization. Their ethnographic work makes for interesting comparison because it deals with this area when a majority of the peasants were still Catholics, and just before the agrarian reform was actually implemented (see Maynard 1966 and Cornell University 1965).

4. For a good discussion of the use of wage labor in the highland haciendas, see Guerrero (1975).

5. In 1976-77 there were at least seven different agencies—from Catholic action groups to unions and associations connected with political parties—trying to mobilize the peasants of Chimborazo. Their efforts resulted in several political meetings of peasant unions and associations in Riobamba, in peasants' land claims, and in land invasions mostly to demand access to pasture land. The landowners retaliated by constituting the "Committee for the Defense of the Land." The peasants accused the local state authorities for allegedly backing the landowners by jailing peasant leaders and closing radio programs broadcast by peasant unions (see *El Comercio*, 30 Jan. 1976).

6. To the best of my knowledge, the GMU missionaries in the area are extremely careful in collecting statistics and cautious in their assessment of the growth of the church. Totally accurate statistics, however, are difficult to obtain because it is almost impossible for the missionaries to have full control over the number of conversions and baptisms performed by the relatively autonomous indigenous churches. The 1974 national census gives the total rural population of Chimborazo as 226,145. It is impossible to deduce from this figure how many are Quichua speakers, but a figure of 150,000, as estimated by the GMU, seems reasonable.

7. To the best of my knowledge, there were at least ten other Protestant missions working in Chimborazo at the time I did my fieldwork. It is difficult to have an accurate and up-to-date estimate of their success in converting the Quichuas, relative to that of the GMU, because the number of converts is changing so fast. All my data suggest that the GMU was better organized and much more visible to the peasants in the area.

8. The two major traditional fiestas in the Colta area were in honor of St. Michael and of the Virgin of Balvanera. The Catholic peasants from Colta do not hold these fiestas anymore because—as they explain—now that many of their relatives are *evangélicos*, they do not find the same incentives and support. It must be added that some of the "new priests" working in the area discourage peasants from holding traditional fiestas because of the costs involved.

9. This type of behavior during *cultos* is common among the members of Pentecostal sects. Nevertheless, the particular description quoted here portrays the *evangélicos'* own perception of the behavior of Pentecostals in the Colta area. I do not have independent evidence on their drinking behavior or their marital and extramarital practices.

10. For a detailed discussion of the ideology of *mestizaje* and its implications for the tropical forest Indians of Ecuador, see Whitten (1976:265-85).

11. Cardoso de Oliveira (1976:46-49) refers to "alienating ethnic ideologies" and to "alienated identities" in discussing the Tükúna of the Solimoës River, who identify themselves as *caboclos*, an ethnic category which presents them as "demoralized" and "lazy" Indians completely tied to the labor relations imposed by the whites. A *caboclo* is thus a Tükúna who sees himself only as the whites see him.

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