

POLITICS AND LAND REFORM: THE CASE OF ESPERANZA,
THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

by

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(ABSTRACT)

The case of Esperanza in the Dominican Republic illustrates graphically that land reform is used by governmental leaders as a political tool; although land reform is continuously promised in the Dominican Republic, it is rarely delivered. The state has realized autonomy from class factions by alternately appeasing different class factions (Grindle 1986). The promise and occasional delivery of land reform in the Dominican Republic is one of the most powerful tools the governmental leaders have to appease the Dominican peasantry. Through the promise of reform, governmental leaders are able to control the rural campesinos while the economic position of the peasantry is continually compromised; campesinos are increasingly forced to live dualistic lives as wage laborers and farmers (de Janvry 1981; Grindle 1986).

This thesis centers attention on Esperanza, a small village in the northwestern part of the country. The sugar mill there has been closed, and the Dominican President

Joaquín Balaguer has promised much of Esperanza's land to land reform. As I have shown, the promised land reform has been unsuccessful. Further, I suggest that the promise of reform in Esperanza was made more for pragmatic political reasons than for humanitarian ones. Balaguer was lacking support in his 1990 bid for reelection, and he used land reform in Esperanza both to bolster his weak standings at the polls and to stifle rumbling complaints about the other closed sugar mills whose land had gone exclusively to large land holders, Dole Pineapple for one, at the expense of the rural dwellers. Moreover, recipients of land in Esperanza were from Balaguer's political party.

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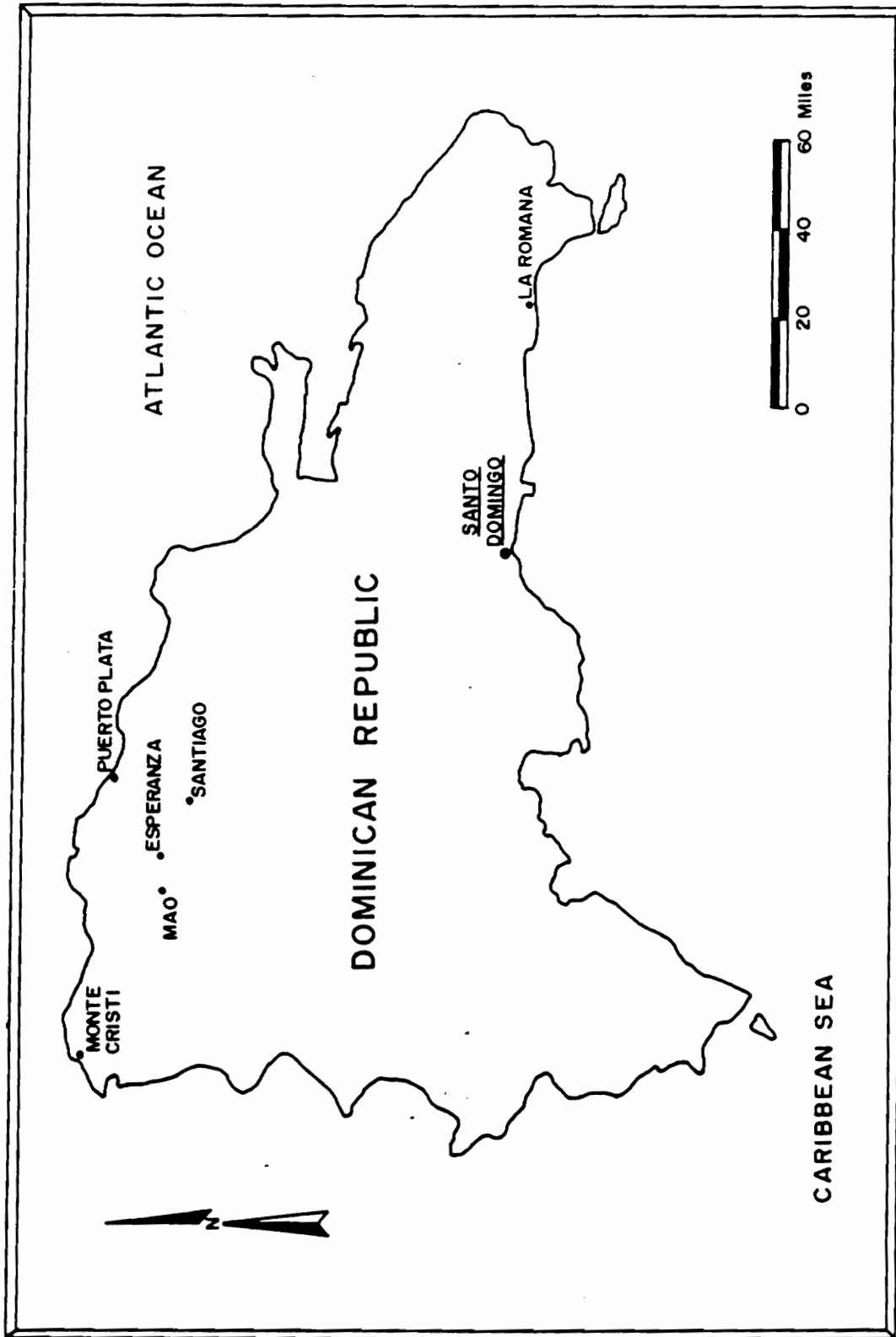
one and the willingness of the Dominicans to discuss the present situation helped me to understand the area and how it fits into national politics. While in the Dominican Republic, Carlos and Rosanna Read y Ruiz were generous enough to open their home to me.

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Politics and Land Reform: The Case of Esperanza,
The Dominican Republic

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Map 1. The Dominican Republic.

GLOSSARY
Spanish words and Acronyms

- CAESA - Corporación Agrícola Esperanza, S. A.
Agricultural Corporation of Esperanza
- campesino- Spanish equivalent of peasant
- CEA - Consejo Estatal Del Azúcar
State Sugar Agency
- DACEA - Dirección General De Operaciones
Agroindustriales Consejo Estatal Del Azúcar
Agency for the Diversification of State Sugar
Lands
- IAD - Instituto Agrario Dominicano
Dominican Agrarian Reform Agency
- INDRHI - Instituto Nacional De Recursos Hidráulicos
Institute of Water Resources
- ingenio - Spanish word for sugar mill which includes not
only the industrial plant by also the land
producing sugar
- tarea - Common unit of land measurement in the Dominican
Republic. 6.47 tareas equals one acre.
- USAID - United States Agency for International
Development

Politics and Land Reform: The Case of Esperanza, D.R.

Introduction

The case of Esperanza in the Dominican Republic illustrates graphically that land reform is used by governmental leaders as a political tool; although land reform is continuously promised it is rarely delivered. Through the promise of reform, governmental leaders are able to control the rural campesinos.

The promise of land reform in the Dominican Republic has been used since the mid-1960s to pacify rural campesinos while the land is held increasingly in the hands of large land owners, who tend to produce crops for export to the United States. Cries for land reform have been a powerful and persistent voice in the island nation. Just under 50% of the population is rural, and historically this segment of the population has made its living on the land. These people are at a crossroad, many having opted to migrate to the cities in both the Dominican Republic and the United States.

This thesis centers attention on Esperanza, a small village in the northwestern part of the country. The sugar mill there has been closed, and the Dominican President Joaquín Balaguer has promised much of the mill's land to the land reform agency through which the land should have been

given to campesinos. As I will show, the promised land reform has been unsuccessful. Further, I suggest that the promise of reform in Esperanza was made more for pragmatic political reasons than for humanitarian ones. Balaguer was lacking support in his 1990 bid for reelection, and he used land reform in Esperanza both to bolster his weak standings at the polls and to stifle rumbling complaints about the other closed sugar mills whose land had gone exclusively to large land holders, Dole Pineapple for one, at the expense of the rural dwellers. Moreover, recipients of land in Esperanza were from Balaguer's political party.

Methodology

I obtained the information forwarded in this thesis in three stages. The first was from October 1989 to May 1990. During this period, I read and collected background information on the Dominican Republic and the Caribbean. During this initial stage, I studied historical, political, economic, and social aspects of the country while at Virginia Tech.

The second stage was during the summer of 1990. From June 13th to August 1st, I was in the Dominican Republic. While there, I read through Dominican newspaper articles, books, and Dominican academic publications on land reform, land tenure changes, and the changing sugar industry and its impact on the local economy. I originally intended on

studying the Dominican sugar industry. However, once I was in the country, the Director of the Center for Urban and Regional Studies (CEUR), Pedro Juan del Rosario, and I decided that the current situation with the closing state-owned sugar mills was much more timely and interesting. I concentrated my efforts on Esperanza because it was the most recent mill to be closed and because some of the mill's land had been promised to the country's land reform agency. After gathering background information, I interviewed local residents in Esperanza and governmental officials in both Esperanza and Santo Domingo about the recent changes in Esperanza. I also visited other areas of the country with researchers from the Center for Urban and Regional Studies (CEUR). I compared the promised changes in Esperanza with the actual changes using both information gathered in interviews and maps obtained from the Agency for the Diversification of the State Sugar Lands (DACEA).

During the final stage, from September 1990 to December 1991, I continued to read material on the Dominican Republic and land reform while I wrote this thesis at Virginia Tech.

Chapter Outline

Chapter one reviews past work on the political and economic uses of land reform in Latin America. I also

discuss the autonomy of the state, the dual lives that most campesinos live, and the impact of debt on Third World countries.

Chapter two outlines the history of the Dominican Republic from its colonial days to independence to the present. I discuss the changes in the land tenure system from mainly small agriculture settlements to today's skewed land and income distribution. Political and economic aspects of the country are also outlined in detail.

Chapter three reviews the promise of reform made in the 1960s and the creation and the success and failures of the Agrarian Reform Agency (IAD).

Chapter four details my case study of Esperanza. I discuss Esperanza's experience in the economic transition currently taking place, from sugar cane into a variety of other export based crops. Using Esperanza, I discuss the political role of land reform and the ultimate failure of the agrarian reform agency to distribute land and to reverse the agrarian trends in the country. I conclude that land reform in the Dominican Republic has served as a "quasi-lottery" pacifying the rural population and endearing many campesinos to politicians who are quick to promise change and land but slow to deliver.

Politics and Land Reform: The Case of Esperanza, D.R.

Chapter One: Literature Review

Cries for agrarian reform have been persistent in Latin America. The agrarian crisis in Latin America stems from unequal access to land. The increased dominance of large scale capital-intensive producers has forced many traditional subsistence farmers from their land. Large scale export production requires a large amount of land and capital and a cheap labor force. Frequently in Latin American countries governmental agricultural policies favor the wealthy land owning class, thus reinforcing the status quo through favorable tax and credit policies.

Additionally, export crops (like sugar, coffee, cacao, and bananas) form the basis for the national economy. In 1989, 17.9 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP) in the Dominican Republic consisted of agricultural products (United Nations Economic Survey 1990); sugar, the export crop on which the country is most dependent is produced almost exclusively by state-owned ingenios and by large land owners. In 1989 the Dominican Republic produced 7,856,000 tons of sugar and only 129,000 tons of coffee, the next largest export item (United Nations Economic Survey 1990). However, with the exception of sugar, small- to medium-sized farmers, holding less than 3 hectares, produce the bulk of

both exported food and foods for local consumption. Over 80% of the coffee, cacao, and tobacco produced in the Dominican Republic is produced by small and medium sized producers (Vargas-Lundius 1988). Farmers with less than three hectares also produce almost all of many locally consumed crops: onions, pigeon peas, sweet potatoes, corn, potatoes, and tomatoes (Vargas-Lundius 1988). However, governmental agricultural policies work against these small producers and for large land holders and state-run industries.

Exports have increased the Gross National Product (GNP); GNP is one of the measures of development used by USAID, the World Bank and other influential international development organizations, and therefore increasing exportation has been viewed as a stimulus for development.

The increasing GNP does not necessarily translate into increasing standards of living for many. A small percentage of the population, usually the large land holders and the exporters, reaps enormous economic and political rewards while the majority of the population is marginalized, some to the point of absolute poverty. Further, the traditional small farmers are worse off economically because they have been displaced from their land.

Several interrelated socioeconomic problems result from this export dependence: export dependent economies are extremely vulnerable to market fluctuations; small changes in the world price of export items, like sugar, can make

local economies either boom or bust; food production for the local market is reduced in order to increase export production. The reduction in locally produced food for the home market results in a need to import foods. These foods, especially grains, are cheaper than the locally produced ones. The importation of cheap food products necessarily undercuts small producers who frequently cannot compete. Ultimately many campesinos are forced either to sell their land or to combine working as wage laborers and farming. As a result, the imported foods maintain the supply of low-priced labor needed by the large producers.

Cheap imports, the political and economic strength of large land holders, and governmental policies all work against the campesino's traditional role as subsistence farmers. The need for monetary income often forces rural campesinos of Latin America into a "dualistic" role, farming and working as wage laborers. Merilee Grindle (1986) cites this dualism as the outcome of 40 years of changes in the Latin American agricultural structure. According to her, campesinos have gone through a four-step process: 1) incorporation of the peasant household into the market, either through buying or selling; 2) the elimination of the traditional forms of land tenure and farming techniques; 3) the inability of the peasant to compete with large land owners for land; and 4) peasants turning to wage labor to supple-

ment or replace their farming income (Grindle 1986: 21-23). She believes the dualistic role of campesinos was neither planned nor expected by governmental leaders and that it is a temporary point in the evolution of the Latin American political economy.

"Functional dualism" is the term Alain de Janvry (1981) uses to describe the dual lives of campesinos. He argues that functional dualism serves to provide a cheap labor force for the export producing wealthy elite. Cheap food, imported from the developed countries, not only maintains cheap labor but also undercuts local markets. Further, the ability of the country to compete in the world system is aided by cheaper labor. He believes this new class is functional to the nation's economy. The Latin American state, he believes, is not in transition; this dualistic role will not fade away. "Functional dualism" is vital to the political economy of the Latin American state.

Latin American governments struggle to balance conflicting goals: economic and social. Economically, they are pressured to produce exports by their continual need for foreign exchange. On the other hand, pressure for land from landless peasants is omnipresent; geographically, the most pressing demands come from the rural areas. Of course, land reform and foreign exchange are only two factors in a vast number of factors with which Latin American governments must contend. However, pressure for land reform and pressure for

foreign exchange are still vitally important issues.

The role of the state in land reform is a contentious issue. The debate is divided primarily between structuralists and instrumentalists (Foley & Yambert 1989). Instrumentalists scholars argue that the state is merely an instrument of the elite, usually landed, class. Instrumentalists (Feder 1971; de Janvry 1981) argue that land reform is a means by which the upper class manipulates the state into co-opting the peasantry. Structuralists, on the other hand, believe that the state has a degree of autonomy from the influences of the elite class in determining the course of its policies. However, the extent of this autonomy fluctuates from state to state. Structuralists (Grindle 1986) express that land reform is a function of an autonomous state trying to maintain its control and credibility, while also extending its influence. The structuralist scholars believe that the state strives to balance the needs and demands of class factions.

Outlining the role of the state in general, Michael Foley and Karl Yambert (1989) assert that "the state structures all other occupants of the public arena" (Foley & Yambert 1989: 40); the state sets the rules by which all others must follow. They say, further, "that the state is a self-created buffer between the larger world and the people and the territory" (Foley & Yambert 1989: 40).

Instrumentalist Ernest Feder (1971) argues that the state is merely an extension of the wealthy landed elite, and that its policies favor this group. The government "works to a large extent in their favor. Government agencies are headed by estate owners or members of their families at the national or local level. Such agencies are effective instruments of counter-reform for the landed elite" (Feder 1971: 256). He believes the state does not operate for its own ends; it ultimately provides the legal framework and gives legitimacy to the latifundio/ minifundio dichotomy; the state in Feder's view is not autonomous.

Alain de Janvry (1981) also follows the instrumentalist interpretation of the state. De Janvry agrees in theory with Feder; he argues that the state originally was a tool of the landed capitalist class, but recently the state has become a tool of international capital. De Janvry argues that the modern Latin American state serves as an agent for international capital by importing cheap foods and using other means to keep labor costs cheap. However, he believes governmental policies, in an ideal situation, reflect class struggle. Ideally, de Janvry believes that the state is a mediator between the conflicting class needs within the society.

"These groups compete on an egalitarian footing for access to and control over public institutions. And it is this political equality that gives meaning to majority rule. Implicit in

the 'citizen sovereignty' interpretation of the state is a Jeffersonian-style petty bourgeois society where economic and social power are fairly evenly distributed" (de Janvry 1981: 187).

De Janvry believes that in reality it is the lack of economic and social parity among competing classes in Latin America that compromises the Jeffersonian-style role of the autonomous state. De Janvry feels that in the periphery the state becomes a direct instrument of the class alliance in power. He argues that the state ultimately becomes the authoritarian agent of international capital (de Janvry 1981). Land reform, according to de Janvry (1981), is state intervention that originates in crisis. For example, land reform eliminates the need for military repression, and it is short of a revolution.

Nicos Poulantzas (1978) postulates that initially the state takes over the political interests of the bourgeoisie but by doing so the state ultimately gains some autonomy of its own. Poulantzas concludes that "all measures taken by the capitalist State, even those imposed by the popular masses, are in the last analysis asserted in a pro-capitalist strategy or are compatible with expanded reproduction of capital" (Poulantzas 1978: 185).

Merilee Grindle does not agree with Feder or de Janvry; she emphasizes the growing autonomy of the Latin American state in relation to the wealthy elite. Grindle, a structuralist, feels that the role of the state has expanded.

She stated that

"once (the state) armed with legal, organizational, and legitimate presence, state agencies seem to have taken on their own rationales and orientations, which guided their subsequent activities and helped shape their relationships with elite and nonelite social groups. Moreover, their actions were in pursuit of a variety of goals and often worked at cross-purposes. Thus, issues of bureaucratic autonomy, conflict, and control might also usefully be explored from a perspective that does not assume that state policy necessarily originates in class relations" (Grindle 1986: 15).

She disagrees with de Janvry, and argues that the state is more than an extension of the elite class or a neutral organization. She believes that the Latin American state has taken on a life of its own. "In terms of the Latin American state, it is often argued that the state and its policies represent not the interests of a specific hegemonic class, but rather an ongoing form of compromise and coalition among dominant classes and class factions" (Grindle 1986: 13). Further she argues that emergence of state-sponsored economic activity, like the Dominican sugar industry, has made the goals of the state more complex. The Latin American state may operate simply to perpetuate itself and its industries. Frequently, employees of governmental industries have personal profit goals to pursue, which are often sought at the expense of not only the industry but also the state and country.

She argues that the autonomy of the state varies over time and within different situations. "State elites are always constrained to some degree by political and economic realities" (Grindle 1986: 18).

Grindle's argument begs the reader to look at the complexities present in the political economy of the Latin American state. Reasoning must be expanded beyond the simple dichotomies of core and periphery and bourgeois and proletariat. She argues that the "previous policy, experience, ideology, and expectation must be considered " (Grindle 1986: 18) before fuller understanding of the Latin American state can be reached.

Henrique Cardoso (1979) agrees that the state is not merely a neutral organization. According to him, the state is capitalist and it represses socialist movements, but the state is a complex and dynamic entity that is not motivated by only one goal. Cardoso states that "it is a hopeless effort to look at political events from the narrow point of view of economic factors alone" (Cardoso 1979: 54). Theorists advocating detailed studies instead of simplistic generalizations stress "the importance of fine-grained historical analysis" vis-a-vis generalizations about class or economic relations and systems (Foley & Yambert 1989: 53).

One way that Latin American governments have obtained autonomy from local elites is through internationally based loans and grants. Governmental agencies and growing govern-

mental bureaucracies have been built with borrowed money resulting in relative autonomy from the local elite, but much of it by incurring an external debt. This process has made Latin American governments both stronger and weaker, stronger because they have built up a governmental infrastructure to support their goals, and it has made them less subject to influences from local elites. But they are weaker because the debt they have incurred has made them more vulnerable to the wishes and demands of the developed world. This may be a moot point, once you consider that this has been the de facto relationship; they were already susceptible to the pressures of the developed world. Nevertheless, this newly acquired debt has compromised the fiscal autonomy of the state, because payments, at least of the interest, must be made on a regular basis. These payments take away from much needed social and infrastructural programs locally. Payments further force governments into desperately trying to increase exports to gain the much needed foreign exchange to pay on their debt. With the increased dependency on foreign exchange and the subsequent need to increase exports, governments are much less likely to implement land reform. It is within this crisis management mode of the Latin American state that land reform plays a major role. Land reform in a debt-burdened state is only possible when governments face an unstable situation in the

countryside. Land reform in this case is used to stabilize the countryside.

Because of the economic instability and the deteriorating standard of living in the countryside, many rural dwellers in the Dominican Republic migrate to Puerto Rico and the United States. This process has siphoned excess workers from the countryside and reduced tension and instability. Saskia Sassen outlines a compelling hypothesis in her book The Mobility of Labor and Capital (1988). She states that the traditional explanations of world migration need to be reevaluated due to the emerging transnationalization of capital; Sassen argues that laborers are affected by capital investment. Sassen postulates three forms of capital internationalization that cause labor migrations: 1) the proliferation since the 1960s of export production in Third World countries; 2) the development of major cities, i.e. New York and Los Angeles, as management nodes of the global economy; and 3) the emergence of the U.S. as the largest beneficiary of direct foreign investment (Sassen 1988: 3). Further, she argues that poverty and unemployment as explanations of migration are useful but not solitary. Many countries have high poverty and unemployment but do not have high migration rates. She states that only when there have been military or economic direct links displacing the traditional workers, is there emigration. The U.S. intervention in the Dominican Republic in 1965 induced Dominican emigration and created

close economic links between the two nations. Accordingly, there has been a vast migration of Dominicans into the United States; over 700,000 Dominicans, equal to 10% of the Dominican population, reside, legally or otherwise, in the United States. Most have fled the countryside because of the consumption of land by large landholders growing products mainly for export to the United States. They do not see a future in the traditional method of farming and believe that success can only be found in the U.S. Sassen asks whether "people displaced because of commercial developments by U.S. corporations abroad [should] be entitled to indemnities" (Sassen 1988: 5). In this case, such an indemnity would be legal entry into the U.S.

The Dominican peasants that do not migrate are a significant group during election time. They pressure the government for a more egalitarian society. The elite, wealthy class, on the other hand, pushes for the maintenance of the status quo. Now there is also an increasing number of impoverished urban residents; these people want jobs, education, health care, etc. They are a new faction but also rooted in traditional Latin America because many of them have migrated from the rural areas.

How do governments balance the social needs of the poor and the needs of the economic system? The two seem to be mutually exclusive. As governments face these opposing

demands, what compromises are made to maintain not only their power but also their legitimacy?

Oftentimes, land reform, or the promise thereof, is essential in the compromise. Hence, land reform has been advocated for decades in Latin America.

Land reform is used as a political tool to stabilize countries by incorporating the peasantry into the political process (de Janvry 1981). Land reforms usually do not change the fundamental socioeconomic relations within countries. While in some countries land reform has been regarded as successful, most of the land reform projects in Latin America have done little to combat the unevenness of the societies. But has the promise of reform resulted in significant changes for the rural population in the region? The answer among most scholars is "no" (Vargas-Lundius 1988; de Janvry 1981; Grindle 1986; Gutierrez-San Martin 1989). Why has agrarian reform not had positive and tangible results in a region so desperately in need of them? Was the "real" goal of agrarian reform to change radically the agrarian structure? What is the role of the state and how autonomous is the state to act as it wishes in relation to land reform?

Alain de Janvry stated that "the primary role of the reform sector [in Latin America] is political. By giving land to peasants, the reform sector creates a conservative agrarian petty bourgeoisie and thus reduces the threat of

social instability in the countryside" (de Janvry 1981: 218). Reduction of social instability in the countryside is not the only motivating factor of agrarian reform; police action and repression are the last alternatives and, once used, the damage to the regime can be irreparable oftentimes fatal. Land redistribution, or the promise thereof, offers kernels of hope.

Indeed, distributing land to a few lucky peasants increases the belief in the government's ability to make a difference. This "quasi lottery" heightens the hopes of landless rural dwellers that more land will be distributed. This political patronage legitimizes governmental leaders, and peasants often accept promises during election time although they are rarely carried out.

Rosemary Vargas-Lundius (1988), a Dominican scholar, stated that agrarian reform was not intended to change the Dominican agrarian structure and thus has had little impact. In the Dominican Republic the primary role of land reform is political; it has been used to incorporate the peasantry into the political system. With the exception of the police and the military, all Dominicans have been permitted to vote since 1942; all male Dominicans have had suffrage since 1844 (Dominican Embassy 1992). The peasants' vote is their voice. The demographics of the country easily explain why the promise of reform is so ubiquitous especially at elec-

tion-time. Historically the majority of the country's population was rural. For this reason, the rural vote has been able to make or break a candidate. During election time Dominican politicians cater to the rural population, because it is politically expedient to do so. Many, if not all, use promises of land reform to gain the loyalty of the rural populous. Political leaders become political patrons. Dominicans have traditionally been controlled by one group or another. Historically, caudillo leaders controlled as much of an area as they could manage, although many times they did not control the land -- but they controlled the people. They were at once the heavy hand of the law and the fatherly patron. These regional lords gave way to central authority in the early 1900s. Trujillo, in fact, is considered to have been a regional caudillo who was able to translate his authority onto the national scale. The hierarchy is reinforced by the present day Catholic Church, the economic and the political systems.

Merilee Grindle said that the

"state emerged as a 'patron' of the rural poor in a way that allowed it to continue to encourage capitalist expansion on large landholdings. At the same time, the state attempted to use rural development policies to alleviate some of the economic and social problems created by the development of the large farm sector" (Grindle 1986: 24).

Indeed, this has been seen in the Dominican Republic as in

other Latin American countries. The growth and evolution of the semi-independent state has led to a governmental body that verbally supports alleviating the plight of the peasantry and verbally supports the large land holders while governmental leaders do what is expedient to continue and increase their power. Oftentimes, governmental policies do favor the large land holders because they are an economically and politically stronger group than is the peasantry.

Land reform, while it sometimes does not change socio-economic relations, endears the rural population to their political leaders. These politicians become the patrons who can save even the darkest day. And if politically astute, they can mold themselves into a modern day "Concho Primo." Concho Primo is a mythical Dominican campesino who roamed the countryside, at least until the time of Trujillo, protecting campesinos from evil and injustice. This "knight in shining armor" mentality is alive and well in the rural areas, and politicians catering to campesinos know it; with the right words and gestures a politician can win a lot of support.

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Chapter Two: Dominican History

European colonization of the New World began with Columbus's voyage of discovery in 1492. The island of Hispaniola was henceforth incorporated into the emerging world economic order. It was to be used for the accumulation of bullion for the Spanish crown, but due to emerging conflicts, between loyalty to the crown and individualistic cries for personal profit, laws were enacted that enabled the colonists to own private property (Ratekin 1954).

However, Hispaniola was not to become an island dominated by scenic expanses of large plantations. Its destiny was altered by the discover of gold in Peru and Mexico. Rumors of the quick money that could be made in Mexico (New Spain) made Hispaniola's (or little Spain's) fertile soil and scenic countryside dull in comparison, and Hispaniola was not to have the hacienda (or plantation) imprint that most Latin American countries bear.

The Dominican Republic has its own unique history. Although there were large landed estates, by and large, the majority of the Dominican population owned and worked on their own plots of land, until the late 1800s.

Nevertheless, it is important to briefly discuss the early social and economic structures as they have left a

lasting imprint on the political economy of the region. The social divisions inherent in these structures created a self-perpetuating political machine. Leadership could be obtained through strength -- the caudillo form of leadership. The caudillo is literally a man on horseback or figuratively a strong man. The caudillo leaders were not limited only to the heads of haciendas, but local town toughs could claw their way to a leadership position by intimidating or eliminating the competition. They controlled as much territory as possible until they became too old or weak or until someone stronger usurped their territory.

Spain had a difficult time trying to keep the island adequately populated to maintain control. Eventually, Spain ceded the western third of Hispaniola to France. After the Haitian revolution ended in 1804, there were a number of border conflicts. In 1822, they intensified into a full-scale invasion. Haitians occupied all of Hispaniola from 1822 to 1844. Slavery was abolished in 1822 when the Haitians took over Santo Domingo, many wealthy white families left the country, and trade was slowed (Augelli 1960). The Haitians were finally forced out in 1844 by an organization known as "La Trinitaria." Juan Pablo Duarte organized "La Trinitaria" and led the revolt which began in 1843 (Bell 1981). Unfortunately, the emerging republic was not strong enough to thwart all of the Haitian's attempts; the Haitians tried to return in 1861. Spain assumed control of the

country again from 1861 - 65 to ward off another Haitian invasion. The country gained its independence in 1865 (Bell 1981).

After independence, the growth of plantations was encouraged by friendly governments and estates were created by powerful corporations and individuals. In the shift toward large export-producing farms, much of the Dominican land became controlled by foreigners (Calder 1985). Land was often taken at the expense of Dominican campesinos. The wave of foreign entrepreneurs began with Cubans who were fleeing Cuba because of political instability before and during Cuba's Ten Years' War. Land in the southeastern part of the Dominican Republic was considerably cheaper than comparable land in the United States or Puerto Rico (Bell 1981: 305). While the price of land in the Dominican Republic was a bargain for the Cubans, many Dominican peasants felt the price was generous.

The Cubans were soon joined by American, Italian, and Puerto Rican entrepreneurs. One of the first American entrepreneurs was General William L. Cazneau who founded the American West India Company in 1862. Cazneau had plans for the island nation; he proposed to the Dominican and American governments a project which would give Americans land interests in the Dominican Republic and give Dominicans security from their Haitian neighbors. Cazneau proposed that armed

Americans be permitted to colonize the Dominican-Haitian boarder. Cazneau was unable to keep American settlers interested and to raise sufficient funds to maintain his real estate venture, and the venture ultimately failed (Knight 1928).

Other individuals and corporation were more successful, for example, during General Heureau's dictatorship, 1882 - 1899, the holdings of an Italian family, the Vicinis, grew dramatically. Heureau was quoted as saying Vicini "is the real President of the country" (Vedovato 1986: 59).

Powerful corporations and individuals obtained desired lands legally and illegally. In the early 1900s, two laws were enacted that ultimately aided the growth of capital intensive large land holdings: the Land Title Reform of 1907 and the Agricultural Concession Act of 1911 (Knight 1928). The new laws "favored the sugar corporations and other entrepreneurs rather than the traditional holders of the land (Calder 1985: 44).

The early Land Title Reform Act of 1907 was originally enacted to protect "comunero" land holders from unfair division of their lands. It "forbade the alienation of 'comunero' lands without a survey by a licensed public surveyor" (Knight 1928: 47). This law was desperately needed because many land holders either had very old titles, some from colonial times, or they did not have a title at all but their family may have lived on the land for genera-

tions. The Land Title Law, therefore, required a public surveyor to survey the property before any division could take place. The repeal of the Land Title Law in 1911 made dividing land easy and, at times, unfair (Knight 1928).

The Agricultural Concession Act of 1911 facilitated encroachment by sugar interests. The act allowed for legal expropriation of land for the infrastructural and developmental needs of large sugar interests. Besides providing tax exemptions for the concessionaires, "the state exercised its right of eminent domain in the interest of the foreigner by legally expropriating the required land" (Knight 1928: 47).

The final land law that was passed before the Intervention of 1916 was the "Ley sobre Inscripción de la Propiedad Territorial" of 1912 (Land Registration Law). The law required all rural lands titles to be officially registered within one year (Calder 1984). This law tremendously increased the country's forgery business. The forgery business boomed, and many would-be entrepreneurs quickly obtained land through false titles. For instance, the Barahona Company, a New York - based corporation, became the second largest sugar interest in the country.

"By 1917 the company's titles to communal lands totaled 10 percent of the registered land in Barahona Province. Although it was of 'public notoriety' that many of these titles were false,

having been purchased from two men later indicted for forgery of titles, the company had hired the best lawyers in the country and continued to take what it wanted" (Calder 1984: 104).

Because of these new laws, peasants who lived

"without title to their lands ... might suddenly find themselves demoted to the third, or landless group, put off their land, whether they had title or not, by some large land owner or corporation, who through legal proceedings, proved their title insufficient or nonexistent. This happened with increasing frequency between 1900 and 1920 primarily due to expansion of the large sugar estates in the east" (Calder 1984: 18).

In 1900, the San Domingo Improvement Company was given temporary control of Dominican customs revenues. The San Domingo Improvement Company was to use the revenues to pay the Dominican Republic's creditors. However, foreign control of national customs revenues was locally unpopular and was rescinded in 1903. On March 31, 1905, the United States government assumed control of 55% of customs revenues; the U.S. government also paid \$4,500,000 to the San Domingo Improvement Company for the rights to the Dominican customs (Bell 1981). The land laws combined with the Customs Receivership resulted in a tremendous amount of social unrest cumulating in a quasi civil war.

The unrest continued. From 1911 until 1916 there were no fewer than eight Presidents. In the federal government,

politics and disputes, both ideological and personal, were polarizing the republic. The Dominican Republic's tenuous nationhood forged a mere 40 years earlier, was being pulled apart. Personal interests, regional conflicts, and a lack of social services all played a part in the increasing divisions.

In early 1916, the Dominican congress began impeachment proceedings of Juan Isidro Jiménez, who had been president since 1914. These impeachment proceedings were introduced by General Desiderio Arias (Calder 1984; Knight 1928). The United States had long been concerned, both economically and politically, with the Dominican Republic, and since the country had been drifting precariously close to civil war, U.S. Presidents Taft then Wilson concerned themselves closely with Dominican affairs, sometimes even on a day-to-day level (Calder 1984). American troops had landed near Santo Domingo to protect Americans. U.S. warships steamed into all the major ports, including San Pedro de Macoris and Puerto Plata (Calder 1984; Bell 1981; Knight 1928). Thus, the Dominican invasion began.

INVASION OF 1916

The intervention by the U.S. Marines into both the Dominican Republic in 1916 and Haiti in 1915 was intended to restore peace and a stable government to the countries. There were, however, not only regional geopolitical views

but also international ones lending themselves to the intervention. Across the Atlantic World War I was raging, and U.S. officials were concerned about German influence in both countries. George Black described this in The Good Neighbor;

"In Haiti, anxiety slipped over into delusion. Wilson saw the chaos there as an invitation for Germany to move in and build submarine bases. Marine Corps Commander George Thorpe was convinced that 'whoever is running this revolution is a wise man; he certainly is getting a lot out of the niggers It shows the handiwork of the German.' He told new marine recruits that the Great War would last long enough 'to give every man a chance against the Hun in Europe and the Hun in Santo Domingo'"
(Black 1988: 29).

The Marines planned to remake the society through three programs: education, public health and sanitation, and public works. U.S. governmental sources claimed these programs were very successful and had a wide impact. Other authors (Knight 1928; Calder 1984) state the impact of these programs was short-term and negligible. One thing the Marines did accomplish was the consolidation of the three branches of the military into one, the National Guard. This was the first united military force over the entire country, and ultimately enabled Rafael Leonidas Trujillo Molina to gain absolute power over the military and eventually the country.

Along with the consolidation of the military, the U.S. run Dominican government also imposed further land title reform and tax laws which assisted the growth of agro-industry. Even before the intervention U.S. officials had pushed for a cadastral survey to clarify land ownership. A U.S. official stated that "the uncertainty about titles ... was an obstacle to the country's economic development and especially to the expansion of the plantations of the large American sugar companies" (Calder 1984: 106). The first U.S.-imposed law was Executive Order No. 27; it simply extended the Land Registration Law of 1912. Because of the abundance of false titles, in the late 1910s there were titles claiming more land than the Dominican Republic holds, and the resulting pressure to resolve the land title problems the military government passed the Ley de Registro de Tierras (The Land Registration Law) Executive Order No. 511. The goals of Order No. 511 were the registration of all lands and the "demarcation, survey, and partition of the terrenos comuneros" (Calder 1984: 107). The law ordered a cadastral survey of the country, and established "a new system of land registration, and a new court" (Calder 1984: 107). The military government appointed two Americans and a Dominican to sit on the court. In remarking on the new law Francisco Peynado, a Dominican, said it was amazing "to ponder the losses which the landowners of this country,

especially the poor campesinos could suffer under the [new] system" (Calder 1984: 108). Executive Order No. 511 "was just what the sugar people had wanted for years" (Knight 1928: 140). The sugar companies and other large land owners used the law to obtain land.

"The large sugar companies and other corporations and individuals, using a tiny part of their comparatively vast resources, could hire the best lawyers and engage in extensive litigation to use the new law to their fullest advantage ... peasant landowners could hardly afford the cost of defending their own legal interests, and the military government provided no remedy for them" (Calder 1984: 109).

The cadastral survey proved expensive, and as a result the only lands surveyed were those either owned by large sugar interests of wealthy land holders or desired by them. One Dominican noted that the law was meant to "squeeze its natural riches as from a sponge, leaving only the remains to the Dominicans" (Calder 1984: 110).

In one case, the American Central Romana Company had secured titles for land that was two villages comprised of 150 families. The sugar company had the villages burned to the ground and the 150 families were left homeless (Vedovato 1986).

While the land title law assisted large sugar interests in obtaining land, other actions made by the military government were much less popular with the sugar corporations.

For example, the military government passed a Land Tax which replaced the old system which heavily taxed the poor with a tax of .5 percent for up to 2,000 tareas and 2 percent for landholdings exceeding 10,000. After much protest from wealthy land owners and sugar companies, Executive Order No. 545 was passed. It reduced the tax and eliminated the graduated rate (Calder 1984: 112).

Oftentimes the relationship between the military commander and the sugar interests were strained. For example, Lieutenant Colonel Thorpe issued an order in August of 1918; the guerrilla war was seasonally raging in the east and he proposed concentration camps be used to round-up the Dominicans, isolating the guerrillas. The owners of the sugar mills did not take kindly to this arrangement because it was inside their ingenios and bateyes (sugar mill and worker's housing) that the people were being concentrated. They complained to Colonel Thorpe and to contacts in Washington that the idea was unsuccessful and that it was only increasing anti-American sentiment. Thorpe, on the other hand, felt that they should be happy to use the supply of contained labor, and that the guerrillas could now be removed from the countryside (Calder 1984). The policy stopped because of the sugar companies protests; the guerrilla war continued.

Many of the new policies fueled the civil war. The

guerrillas were caudillo leaders from the eastern part of the country; they had lost their lands due to the new land laws. "During the U.S. occupation, 1916-24, various factors including fear of further loss of land to U.S. sugar corporations caused the [caudillos] to take an anti-occupation position" (Calder 1985: 20) -- this anti-occupation position was manifested through six years of guerrilla warfare. Guerrilla warfare frustrated the U.S. Marines who felt they should have been able to control easily any problem: with their frustration came increasing incidents of violence against civilians.

The guerrilla war ended in 1922, due to the combination of using Dominicans as agents to capture guerrillas and offering amnesty to guerrilla leaders. Also it was well known that the Americans wanted to stop the occupation. But more than any other factor, the guerrilla leaders realized that their way of life, as regional caudillo lords, was over: "in part, the guerrilla war had been the last gasp of a declining political system. In their surrender, the guerrilla chiefs paid obeisance to a new way of political life ... No longer would the central government be forced to negotiate with the eastern caudillos to gain the region's allegiance" (Calder 1984: 181). The Marines left the republic in 1924.

TRUJILLO 1930 - 1961

Rafael Leonidas Trujillo Molina came from modest middle class roots. He, according to Albert Hicks (1946), was not the hard working, diligent type as he would like to be remembered, but rather succeeded in the National Guard because he had "played the pimp to the chief of the constabulary" (Hicks 1946: 28). Through this role he had been introduced to the Colonel of the U.S. Marines. He worked for the Marines as a intelligence officer; he turned over members of the Dominican resistance (Hicks 1946). By doing so, he established himself as a friend of the Marines, and moved up quickly to the top of the National Guard. Other authors' (Espaillat 1963; Wiarda 1968) stories are less colorful; they simply credit his success in the National Guard to his seemingly endless supply of energy and his excellent organizational skills. Espaillat (1963) also notes that the upper class and more patriotic Dominicans would have nothing to do with the U.S.-formed National Guard, and Trujillo's willingness to assist the Marines led to fast promotions. At any rate, by the time the Marines left Santo Domingo, Trujillo was securely in charge of the military.

Trujillo was able to secure the Presidency in 1930 by helping to force Horacio Vásquez the U.S.-appointed interim president out of office. In 1930 Vásquez announced his intention to run for reelection, an ambition unfulfilled as

he was forced from office by a bloodless coup. The coup had been organized by Estrella Ureña and supported by Trujillo (hence the military). Soon after, Trujillo decided that instead of Ureña running for the Presidency with Trujillo as his running mate, the arrangement should be reversed, and it was (Bell 1981). Trujillo won the election unanimously: in fact, there were more votes cast than eligible voters in the country (Pulley 1965)! Trujillo's victory was a result of eliminating all political opposition, and stationing the military at all voting booths to insure that the Dominicans voted "correctly" (Espaillat 1963).

Once in office, Trujillo, a strict authoritarian leader, filled the traditional patriarchal role. Trujillo worked to gain the loyalty of the masses. He understood the family underpinning in the Dominican society. Arturo Espaillat stated that

"One of the techniques he used was baptism - baptism and hundred dollar bills. Trujillo became godfather to tens of thousands of children. And the parents of each child received a hundred dollars. Trujillo also reaped a dividend: it is considered poor form in Latin America to conspire against your compadre, the godfather of your child (Espaillat 1963: 25).

Using violence to oppress his enemies, Trujillo translated fear and intimidation into a 31-year totalitarian reign. Trujillo was a master of control through intima-

tion. He had thousands of Dominicans killed for reasons ranging from threats of coups to comments about him or his family. The people of the Dominican Republic lived in constant fear of Trujillo's secret service. Agents could be anyone and they were everywhere (Wiarda 1968).

At Trujillo's assassination in 1961, it was impossible to distinguish the difference between what belonged to the state and what belonged to the Trujillo family. His wealth was estimated at \$800 million before his death (Wiarda 1968). However, while Trujillo was alive it was not difficult to separate a state industry from one of Trujillo's: if the industry lost money it belonged to the state and if it made money it belonged to Trujillo (Wiarda 1968: 83). By 1961, Trujillo owned the

"state tobacco concession and was the country's largest cattle ranger. He had a monopoly on the natural riches of the country and received deferential, preferred treatment in exporting the products of his lands -- sugar, coffee, rice, sisal, cacao, coconuts, and wood" (Wiarda 1968: 84).

Besides the preferential trade concessions, Trujillo received, he was also able to obtain land at a fraction of its value. Trujillo frequently intimidated land owners into selling their holdings. For example, José Antonio Jiménez was the owner of prime agricultural land known as Laguna Blanca in the fertile Cibao valley. Trujillo ordered Jiménez-

nez' assassination for political reasons. However, Jiménez was able to save his own life by turning over his lands at Laguna Blanca to Trujillo (Crassweller 1966). In another case, Trujillo purchased Monte Llano, a sugar estate, at 40 percent of its value. Trujillo forcibly bought the land from an American, Edwin Kilbourne (Crassweller 1966). Most of Trujillo's sugar cane lands

"were generally acquired by means that would never stand firm under legal scrutiny. Sales were generally forced, directly or indirectly. Hints of advantages to be conferred, threats of trouble for friends or relatives, false promises, bullying of greater or lesser subtlety as circumstances ordained, and physical persecution up to the point of assassination were all familiar tactics (Crassweller 1966: 257)."

Through his expansive holdings, Trujillo expanded the country's trend toward large-scale agriculture; this intensification had an enormous impact on the country's land-use patterns. "Prior to Trujillo's ascent to the Presidency, about 90% of the Dominican farmers owned their own land, and grew tobacco, cacao, coffee, corn, and other vegetables. The sugar cane plantations were pretty well controlled by foreign interests, mostly American" (Hicks 1946:41). Most of the arable land was put into production during this period. There was an increasing lack of available land for campesinos and no land redistribution. The good lands in the country were eventually, almost exclusively, owned by Tru-

jillo; small farmers were pushed off their land and forced onto the peripheral lands or into the cities.

Trujillo linked the country's economy more closely with the world economy: industry, agriculture, and manufacturing all grew tremendously during his administration. The government bureaucracy eventually employed 75 - 80% of the wage earning Dominicans; many of these jobs were managers or technicians for his investments (Wiarda 1986: 87).

Trujillo's stranglehold on the Dominican society began to weaken in the late 1950s. His political techniques were coming under both local and international scrutiny with increasing frequency. A growing group of exiles, world-wide condemnation of dictatorships, and internal pressures which included problems with the Catholic Church intensified the critique of his regime. These conflicts caused economic problems for the small country. On August 20, 1960, the Organization of American States (OAS) imposed economic sanctions for Trujillo's involvement with the attempted assassination on Venezuela's President Rómulo Betancourt. The U.S. response was swift, they first added a special 2 cent tax on Dominican sugar and then cut the special (extra) sugar quota they had given the Dominicans after Castro took over Cuba (Wiarda 1968). The new archbishop, Octavio Beras, fought for reforms, supported by younger priests committed to social reform. On Sunday January 25, 1960, a message was delivered from all the pulpits in the country condemning

Trujillo, calling for democracy, and announcing that the Catholic Church had cut all ties with Trujillo's government (Espaillat 1963). Trujillo was stunned and did not reply immediately. "On the night of May 30, 1961, he issued an order for all the bishops to be rounded up and gaoled" (Bell 1981: 74). The order was never carried out because Rafael Trujillo was assassinated that evening. The CIA played a role in the assassination, providing guns and promises to recognize the new administration (Wiarda 1968). With a tide of internal and external pressures welling up against him, Trujillo was gunned down on May 30, 1961. Arturo Espaillat, one of Trujillo's closest aids, states that the action Trujillo took that night was suicidal. He didn't have his normal group of security guard with him and when confronted he got out of his bullet-proof car and attempted to fight the group off (Espaillat 1963).

1961-1965

After Trujillo was killed, the previously inexpressible political and economic sentiment spilled over into an eruption of political activism: conflicting forces fought for control of the government. Ramfis Trujillo, Rafael's first-born son, returned from France to assume his role as heir, sharing power with Joaquín Balaguer, Trujillo's puppet president at the time of the assassination. The combination

of political pressure and economic strain proved more than Ramfis Trujillo could stand. He fled the country in November 1961 with a large amount of money estimated at \$90 million (Wiarda & Kryzaneck 1982).

Elections were held in December 1962. Juan Bosch, leader of the Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD) won with a 2 to 1 margin over his nearest opponent, Viriato Fiallo of the National Civic Union (Wiarda & Kryzaneck 1982). Juan Bosch had been one of the most outspoken exiled leaders; he fought for democratic and economic reforms. Like many other idealists, Bosch had difficulty translating his ideas into action in the beleaguered country. There was no money in the treasury, the military did not support him, the oligarchy ridiculed him, and his support was limited to people who for the most part had good intentions but few skills needed to run a government. John Martin, the U.S. ambassador, stated that Bosch's workers

"must never have worked in an office - they would answer the phone then, going in search of the person wanted, hang it up. Or they simply would let it ring. Or take it the hook and leave it off for hours. Ceremonies were disastrous. Other ambassadors became disgusted. So did distinguished visitors. Not Communist infiltration, not thievery, but sheer incompetence seemed at times the bane of living under Bosch's government" (Martin 1966: 362).

Bosch complained about the inefficiency within the

agrarian reform agency to Martin; Bosch stated that while no significant land reform was occurring the Agrarian Reform Agency was "spending two hundred thousand dollars a month on salaries alone" (Martin 1966: 355).

Bosch's administration was known for its early inability to produce results. When Bosch finally did "do something" it was considered to be the wrong thing at the wrong time. He secured a \$200 million dollar line of credit from a European investment group. Many people in the U.S. government, including Martin, viewed this as a mistake because: a) the money was borrowed at a high rate of interest and b) the money was for a dam project and the contractors and supplies would be European instead of American (Martin 1966). It also made many Dominicans nervous, since the international debt was the reason for the original U.S. invasion five decades earlier.

Soon the forces that toppled Trujillo reunited to force Bosch from office. "The Church was opposed, the Army was rumbling, the economic elites were protesting, and the U.S. embassy became disenchanted" (Wiarda & Kryzanek 1982: 42). In September, 1963, a bloodless coup forced Bosch from office. A junta of three men was formed to lead the country until the next election. The junta controlled the country briefly. Then Donald Reid Cabral assumed control. Reid's tenure in office was riddled with complaints of corruption.

Reid was unpopular and when his plans to extend his term leaked out many formerly polarized groups united. Economic problems exacerbated political ones. Low export prices, a prolonged drought, and austerity measures decreased the Dominicans tolerance level. Soon many groups, including Juan Bosch's PRD and Joaquín Balaguer's PRSC, united to fight for the return of the "constitutional government" (Lowenthal 1972).

On April 24, 1965 the counter-coup began. Bosch had strengthened his ties with some military leaders. Neutral military leaders did not support Reid; therefore, Reid's regime soon began to crumble. For the next few days, momentum and advantage shifted from one side to the next.

On April 28, 1965, pro-Bosch forces seized the Presidential Palace. In the United States, the situation was viewed in the cold war's simple duality; the U.S. government feared, even though they believed Bosch was not a communist, that many of the leaders of the coup were communists. Shell shock from the failed Bay of Pigs fiasco in Cuba was more than enough incentive for "action;" President Johnson sent in the Marines to halt Bosch's progress. The political rhetoric behind this decision was wholly within the anti-communist mindset; "On May 2, 1965 President Johnson announced that 'what began as a popular democratic revolution, ... very shortly moved and was taken over and

really seized and placed into the hands of a band of communist conspirators'" (Black 1986: 38).

The events leading up to the invasion are multi-faceted and complex. The United States was officially neutral, but U.S. Embassy officials backed the military junta which was trying to gain control of the country (Lowenthal 1972).

The American intervention began on April 28, 1965 with a small force of 500 Marines ordered to protect Americans. By the end of the week, there were upwards of 23,000 U.S. soldiers, and the situation had snowballed into a full-fledged invasion. Luckily this intervention did not drag out into years; the forces left by September.

The intervention reinforced the belief in the Dominican Republic that the United States was really the power to reckon with. Hence the statement the U.S. would never let that happen -- no matter what "that" is. It also reinforced the caudillo mindset that might makes right.

In 1966, another "free" election was held. This time Balaguer was victorious. Balaguer had campaigned intensively: "to all his audiences Balaguer pledged to return the country to order, normalcy, and reconstruction. He presented himself as a benevolent father figure, stern but paternal" (Wiarda & Kryznaek 1982: 47). Bosch, however, left his house only three times during the campaign. During the campaign his party's representatives had been harassed, beaten, threatened, and Bosch feared for his life. Bosch

did receive 39 percent of the vote despite his lack of campaigning. Balaguer had full support of the military and the U.S. government. Bosch and his followers were made fully aware of this. Hence began the caudillo competition between Balaguer, the civilian caudillo, and Bosch, the idealistic caudillo. This competition has endured for 30 years and shows no signs of ending (Wiarda & Kryzanek 1982: 47).

ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL SITUATION: 1966 TO PRESENT

After Balaguer's win, economic aid to the country flowed freely. It was to be used to continue modernization, bolster the floundering economy, and to provide "stability" in the United States' backyard. It was an "era of unprecedented economic prosperity largely fueled by U.S. assistance With sugar prices sky rocketing, foreign investment flowing in, tourism on the increase, and business, the military, and the middle class content" (Wiarda & Kryzanek 1982:48).

The benefits of these economic advances were largely skewed to the upper-class. During this period of growth, unemployment remained high, 30 -40%, and "the population remained locked in poverty and squalor . . . the distribution of income remained remarkably inequitable" (Wiarda & Kryzanek 1982: 48). The economic "stability" was a veneer coat-

ing, artificially covering the serious issues facing the country: land distribution, unemployment and underemployment, and the availability of education and health care. The country was still precariously dependent on sugar.

Then in the late 1970s, the oil crisis and the declining sugar market halted the advances in the economy. The country slipped into economic decline due to the continuing influence of the reduced sugar market. As a result, Balaguer was defeated in the 1978 election. However, he did not readily accept defeat. When the early return of the vote showed that Antonio Guzmán leading, the Dominican army seized the ballot boxes. U.S. President Jimmy Carter urged Balaguer to accept defeat and to allow the country to follow the democratic process. The ballot boxes were returned and Guzmán assumed the presidency in 1978.

Antonio Guzmán represented the Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD) and was a long time friend of Juan Bosch. He promised social reform, justice, and freedom. He fought for social programs for the poor. Shortly after assuming office, he doubled the minimum wage which had been frozen for 12 years. The economy worked against his laudable goals, and by 1982 economic pressures were more severe and pressing than ever. The U.S. sugar quota was plummeting, sugar prices continued to fall, and imports were becoming more expensive and increasingly more important because the country was producing less food for local consumption. The

country was feeling common problems, related to weakening terms of trade: expensive imports, falling standard of living, and the resulting political turmoil.

Antonio Guzmán committed suicide at the end of his term. The reports concerning this event are conflicting. Some authors state that he was depressed about the economic situation in the country and his inability to change the prospects for the future. Others state that he was distressed by the continuing graft and corruption which continued during his administration despite his efforts to the contrary. And it is also thought that he was refusing to relinquish the presidency and was planning a coup against the incoming president from his own party (Black 1986).

Jorge Blanco of the PRD won the election of 1982. Like his predecessor, he promised social reforms, justice and more equality; he also failed to accomplish these admirable goals. President Blanco made many of the same promises Guzmán had: he promised to cut the bureaucracy, military spending and to increase social programs. By the end of his term, he had increased the bureaucracy by 40% and increased the military budget more than health and education budgets (Black 1986). He attempted to build some housing projects, but these were eventually abandoned due to the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) austerity measures.

President Blanco was forced into negotiations with the

IMF to finance the Dominican Republic's debt. The IMF imposed measures that banned car imports, raised taxes on other imports, and imposed capital gains and real estate taxes. The measures also froze wages, and raised both prices and interest rates. The country was pushed into a recession. President Blanco wrote President Reagan urging him to intervene, arguing the measures would cause chaos in the small republic. Reagan did not reply. As Blanco had predicted, there were food riots in April of 1984 where 100 protesters were killed. After the violent protest, President Reagan offered \$50 million in new aid (Black 1986).

Even with the new aid, inflation in 1985 was 30% and prices increased (34% for gasoline and between 20 - 60% for food). Small farmers therefore bought less with the money they received from their cash crops. In the late 1980s, no credit was available from the Agricultural Bank, effectively forcing small farmers into a combination of wage labor and farming. The trend toward landlessness thus increased as did rural-to-urban migration (Black 1986; Vargas-Lundius 1988).

Blanco and Guzmán both made the business investment climate less attractive for foreign investment. They fought for more of foreign companies' profits to remain in the country and decreed that all foreign exchange be deposited with the Central Bank. As a result, Gulf & Western closed their operations in 1983. (In the late 1960s, Gulf & West-

ern purchased the sugar-producing holdings of the South Porto Rico Sugar Company. Gulf & Western expanded its Dominican interests to include tourism and a tax-free manufacturing zone. The tourism holdings included a ClubMed Resort and a well-known gulf course. All of their holdings were located at La Romana.) Gulf & Western was accused of union-busting and attempting to bribe Dominican officials. Gulf & Western sold their Dominican operations to the Fanjul Brothers and to Carlos Morales Troncoso, two Dominican business magnates. Carlos Morales was the president of the Gulf & Western Americas and is the Vice President of the country (Black 1986).

In 1986, Balaguer was reelected; he was viewed as someone who could ease the tensions and possibly bring some measure of prosperity back. Early in his presidency the sugar quota was low, Balaguer began to negotiate with the Soviet Union for the purchase of a large amount of sugar. He signed a three-year contract to sell 50,000 short tons of sugar per year to the Soviet Union at 8 cents per pound (The Washington Post March 6, 1987). Soon after, the U.S. sugar quota increased to keep the Dominican government friendly.

In 1990, the country's economy remains in decline: per capita income in 1985 was \$873; and in 1989 it fell to \$757; infant mortality is 74.5 per 1000 live births; imports continue to exceed exports; inflation has ranged from 10% to

40%; and malnutrition is hovering around 50% (U.S Department of State August 1987; U.S. Department of Commerce June 1989). Additionally, the exchange rate for the Dominican peso has steadily dropped throughout the 1980s (see table 1).

Table 1

Official Dominican Exchange Rate
(Dominican peso to U.S. dollar)

1980	1.26
1981	1.28
1982	1.46
1983	1.60
1984	2.74
1985	3.11
1986	2.90
1987	3.85
1988	6.11
1989	6.34

Source: United Nations: Economic Survey of Latin America & the Caribbean, 1990

Note: this is the official exchange rate and the blackmarket rate is usually significantly higher.

Present Situation

President Balaguer has ignored many social problems and concentrated on monument building and construction. The country is struggling with a \$4 billion dollar foreign debt, and Balaguer, unable to obtain more loans, opted to print the money necessary to finance his construction projects. One reporter stated that "as the buildings go up, the standard of living for many of the country's 7 million inhabitants is going down" (The Washington Post August 4, 1989).

In 1990, the economic and political situation in the country was difficult. Howard French, a frequent contributor to The New York Times, wrote on September 12, 1990 that

"in the few weeks since [Balaguer's] inauguration, the country has already experienced one violent general strike, in which 14 people died, narrowly averted another and witnessed the proliferation of grave shortages, from 20-hour cuts of electrical power and tap water to long lines for gasoline and the disappearance from stores of basic foods, even sugar, the Dominican Republic's No. 1 crop" (The New York Times September 12, 1990).

The economic, social, and political problems in the Dominican Republic have subsided since early 1991. For

example, inflation has temporarily been halted and even reduced some. But the sources of these problems remain. The economy is not diversified; the bulk of the population merely exists at the subsistence level; health care is virtually non-existent. Balaguer has been under increasing pressure internally because of the dubious results from the last election. Bosch and Peña Gomez, his two opponents, have both labeled the election as fraud. In response, Balaguer has considered moving up the elections from 1994 to 1992 (The Americas December 12, 1990).

Politics and Land Reform: The Case of Esperanza, D.R.

Chapter Three: The Promise of Reform

The increasing growth of larger farms at the expense of small family farms, a trend that began in the 1870s with the immigration of Cuban sugar producers, dominated the countryside in the Dominican Republic in the 1950s. During the 1950s the country witnessed a pronounced growth in large, export-producing farms. Trujillo's economic machine was accumulating land and producing a variety of export crops; "one percent of existing farms covered 20% of the total cultivatable area" (Bell 1981: 284).

The peasants bore the brunt of the changing land tenure system. In the increased competition for land, the campesinos were the underdogs and subsequent losers. For example in the 1950s, "50% of farms were of less than 2.5 acres and incapable of producing the minimum required for the subsistence of a small family" (Bell 1981: 284). These alterations in the traditional land tenure are graphically shown in census figures; between 1950 and 1960 the number of farms smaller than one-half an acre more than doubled: in 1950 there were 27,000 and by 1960 there were no less than 67,000 (Bell 1981).

The lack of frontiers and population expansion squeezed the bulk of the Dominican population onto increasingly

smaller individual holdings. As parents distributed land to their children, the plot sizes continued to decrease. Each generation found it more difficult to support themselves on their meager holdings. Further, the once abundant forest land had been encroached upon, and so-called vacant lands were non-existent. Forests still covered the steep mountain slopes, and desperate peasants with few options began expanding onto these areas.

During the Trujillo era, 1930-61, much land that was formerly controlled by campesinos was taken over by both Trujillo and foreigners looking to increase their holdings. In the 1950s, Trujillo expanded his holdings extensively and he also helped certain wealthy people to expand their holdings.

Due to loss of land and lack of options many campesinos were motivated to action. In most reviews of Dominican peasant organizations, either the Catholic Church or political leaders are given credit for the politicization of the peasantry. However while the Catholic Church and political leaders were influential, many campesino groups organized themselves. Rosemary Vargas-Lundius stated that many recent land invasions were "carried out by isolated groups of peasants, without coordination and support from popular organizations" (Vargas-Lundius 1988: 169). This was certainly the case during the first United States intervention from 1916 to 1924; from 1916 to 1922, guerrilla leaders

fought for land they had lost to the sugar planters in the eastern part of the country. And although they ultimately did lose their land, they did not lose many battles and the conflict was ended by the signing of a truce. The grass-roots campesino organizations have been the center of the land reform movement ever since.

Nevertheless, campesinos did find a considerable amount of support from certain Catholic bishops and priests. Priests and bishops within the Catholic Church had found political courage from contributing to Trujillo's assassination (Espaillat 1963), and in the early 1960s their courage was shown in the fight for land reform. One author stated that "the degree of [peasant] organization in the countryside has increased steadily since 1960 ... it is believed that many of these organizations were initially backed, or at least sponsored in part, by the Catholic Church" (Gutierrez-San Martin 1988: 52). While not all of the ecclesiastical leaders participated, some rural Catholic churches were transformed into centers of social action. Priests helped to organized peasants and encouraged them to fight for land.

Kenneth Sharpe addresses the Catholic Church's dedication to reform. He states that the church taught rural leaders to be concerned with the community through special catechism classes designed especially for them. He states that "each participant was required to reflect upon his life

up until then and to make certain vows about changes for the future" (Sharpe 1977: 82). Bishops regarded the classes as a first step in developing a community spirit and to finally develop cooperatives which worked toward community goals. In 1966, the bishop outlined the rural situation:

"the large mass of peasants, which include 72% of the population, without land, without fertilizers, without technical preparation, lacking in health, moving about in an atmosphere that is unfavorable to the development of moral virtues, and overwhelmed, in a pathetic manner by the dramatic demographic explosion which fills their houses with children whom they can neither feed nor educate'" (Sharpe 1977: 83).

Others, for either ideological or simply pragmatic reasons, also supported land reform, among them many politicians. Of course the issue of land reform received ample support in a country where, in the 1960s, over 70 percent of the population was rural. The two dominant political figures in the early 60s, Juan Bosch and Joaquín Balaguer -- adversaries since the 1950s -- both advocated land reform, although they articulated different strategies.

Left-leaning Juan Bosch fought for expropriation of large private land holdings. He vowed to try to rectify the disparity in land distribution and installed himself as the new Concho Primo. Ultimately, his "take from the rich" strategy made him popular with many campesinos but unpopular with the plantocracy. It was to be his round-trip ticket,

as the former group first propelled him into office and, soon after, the latter group forced him out.

Balaguer, on the other hand, preferred to straddle the political fence and tried not to upset the status quo, although he, too, promised change. He wanted, mainly, to redistribute Trujillo's extensive holdings. He was the Republic's President at the time of Trujillo's assassination; Balaguer attempted to appease the peasantry by doling out 356,000 tareas (55,000 acres) of Trujillo's land. Trujillo and his family had controlled 3.25 million acres at the time of his assassination. In addition to the gift of land, Balaguer also promised to distribute 'vacant' plots of the uncultivated hillsides. These 'vacant' lands were marginal plots, often located on steep slopes in the mountainous country. Balaguer's promises, to the angry populous who associated him with Trujillo's regime, were not enough to maintain his position as the Dominican President.

After Balaguer was forced from office, a Council of State was established with help from the U.S. Embassy in November of 1961. Before the December 1962 elections were held, a comprehensive agrarian reform law, number 5879, was passed (on April 27, 1962). The law, created the Instituto Agrario Dominicano (IAD), the agrarian reform agency. The IAD was empowered to administer land reform, but it was not given the legislative ability to expropriate land. Without the power to expropriate, the agency was severely limited to

the lands remaining from Trujillo's regime now in the control of the state. The right of expropriation was therefore reserved solely for the Dominican President (Gutierrez-San Martin 1988: 65).

The first task of the agency was to determine how much land could be used for agrarian reform, how it should be divided, and who should receive it. Two million acres were eventually designated for agrarian reform. Some of these two million acres had been Trujillo's; others were 'vacant' lands consisting mainly of parts of the forested mountainous countryside. Of the two million acres, 41.7% was meted out to landless campesinos. One-third of the land continued to be used for sugar production and was managed by the state sugar agency (CEA). Another one-fourth was poor quality land which could not be used at all (Bell 1981: 284). Those receiving plots were called Parceleros. The requirements guiding the redistribution were as follows: the parcelero needed to be between the ages of 18 and 50, have some education, and have experience in agriculture (Bell 1981). Each parceleros received 50 tareas (7.72 acres).

In the election of 1962, Bosch was swept into office under the banner of land reform. Soon after the election, he told U.S. Vice President Lyndon Johnson that he "intended to use twelve million of the twenty-two-million-dollar sugar money [money from the U.S. sugar quota] for agrarian

reform" (Martin 1966: 340). He tried to change the trend of export agricultural development by pushing for rice settlements for internal consumption. However Bosch had difficulties executing his agrarian reform goals. Although his promises may have helped him into office, they did not help him achieve his goals. His campaign had alienated much of the educated populous and seasoned government bureaucrats. This segment of the population is small in number, but very powerful. He was soon forced from office, but during his short tenure he did manage to have 1,577,912 tareas (243,881.29 acres), land expropriated from lands that were formerly held by Trujillo and his family, passed to the IAD, more than four times what Balaguer was able to accomplish in 1961.

After his election in 1966, Balaguer increased land expropriations. Most of these expropriations were from large and small land holders who had fallen on hard economic or political times. By 1971, 9058 additional hectares (22,373 acres) had been turned over to the IAD. Under Balaguer's administration, the IAD set conservative goals for itself: to distribute 25,000 tareas (3863.98 acres) by 1967 and 70,000 (10819.16 acres) by 1970. The latter goal was subsequently reduced to 45,000 tareas (6955.17 acres).

Doling out tareas to campesinos did not, however, change the trend toward latifundia because more and more land was being purchased by corporations and individuals

focused on export agriculture and pasture lands. For example, in 1971, 3.3 million tareas (510,046.36 acres), out of 17 million (2,627,511.50 acres), were dedicated to cash crops, by 1980 this number had doubled to 6.7 million (1,035,548.6 acres) (Gutierrez 1989: 47). Even though campesinos produce cash crops, the increase in land dedicated to cash crop production indicated an increase in large export-producing land holdings.

Export crops are also raised by small- and medium-sized land holders (holdings under 3 hectares). These small producers produce the bulk of the food for local consumption-- "between 80 and 90 percent of the production of onions, pigeon peas, sweet potatoes, corn, yams and manioc, and between 40 and 70 percent of the production of garlic, rice, potatoes, plantains and tomatoes" (Vargas-Lundius 1988). Medium sized producers also produce most of the secondary export crops like tobacco (84%), coffee (95.6 %), and cocoa (84%); these large percentages of these export crops are produced by farmers holding less than six hectares with the exception of cocoa, those land holders produce 84% of the total crop on less than five hectares each.

As table two illustrates land use has changed between 1960 and 1976. Land holdings used for pasture and export crops have grown while fallow land, forest land, and lands producing crops for local production have all diminished.

Many small and medium sized land holders lost their land during this period and since 1976, larger land holdings have continued to grow and campesinos have continued to exist on smaller and smaller land holdings. Table three reinforces the land tenure changes outlined above.

TABLE 2
Dominican Land Use, 1960 and 1976
(in thousands of hectares)

	1960		1976	
	hectares	%	hectares	%
Food Crops	350	16.9	328	12.0
Export Crops	396	19.1	577	21.1
Pastures	757	36.5	1,445	52.8
Forest	280	13.5	222	8.1
Fallow Land	290	14.0	164	6.0

Source: Vargas-Lundius 1988: 286.

TABLE 3

Dominican Land Tenure, 1971 and 1981

(in hectares)

1971

size of holdings	No. of holdings	%	size (hectares)	%	ave. size
< .5 - 5	234,943	77.07	351,847	12.86	1.5
5.1 - 50	62,790	20.60	819,215	29.94	13.0
50.1 - 200	5,765	1.89	517,364	18.90	89.7
> 200.1	1,322	.44	1,048,039	38.30	792.7
Totals	304,820	100%	2,736,465	100%	9.0

1981

size of holdings	No. of holdings	%	size (hectares)	%	ave. size
< .5 - 5	314,665	81.72	326,163	12.19	1.0
5.1 - 50	63,358	16.45	872,319	32.59	13.8
50.1 - 200	5,906	1.54	523,052	19.54	88.6
> 200.1	1,131	.29	955,172	35.68	844.5
Totals	385,060	100%	2,676,706	100%	6.95

Source: Vargas-Lundius 1988: 173

Table three shows the continuing trend toward smaller holdings. From 1971 to 1981 the group of smallest farms, .5 to 5 hectares, grew by almost five percent. The average size of these farms dropped from one and one-half hectares to one hectare. Meanwhile, the average size for the largest holdings increased from 792.7 hectares in 1971 to 844.5

hectares in 1981. The number of land holders, in the largest class decreased from 1422 to 1131. This shows a consolidation of large-scale producers at the expense of small-scale producers. The increased number of smaller land holders juxtaposed with the increased size of the large land holdings indicate a lack of land reform.

One of the traditional uses of land, cattle raising, was responsible, in large part, for the increasingly skewed nature of the Dominican land holdings. Ganaderías (cattle ranches) are the latifundios of the Dominican Republic. The Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) did a study in 1970 and found that ganaderías occupied no less than 56% of the total cultivable land. All of the farms producing beef are held by wealthy individuals or corporations. Only wealthy individuals and corporations can afford the amount of land needed to raise cattle.

Presently only Argentina dedicates a larger percentage of its land to beef production than does the Dominican Republic (see table 4). Argentina only has 11.9 people per square kilometer, while the Dominican Republic has 152.6 people per square kilometer, and Nicaragua, the other country dedicating 43 percent of its land to meadows and pasture, has 29 people per square kilometer (The World Factbook 1991).

Table 4

Percent of Land Dedicated to Meadows & Pastures
(top ten countries in the Western Hemisphere)

1) Argentina	52%	(11.9 people per square kilometer)
2) Dom. Rep.	43%	(152.6 people per square kilometer)
3) Nicaragua	43%	(29 people per square kilometer)
4) Puerto Rico	41%	
5) Honduras	30%	
6) Colombia	29%	
7) El Salvador	29%	
8) Virgin Is.	26%	
9) Cuba	23%	
10) Venezuela	20%	

Source: The World Factbook 1991

As is the case with most of the other large land holdings, most of the beef produced is exported. Locally, beef is a scarce and expensive commodity; I only had it once during my visit.

Ganaderías are not only used for income; they are a

social expression of success. While I was on a bus bound for Santo Domingo, a man explained the prevalent political and economic issues facing the country. He also suggested solutions. He let me know that the United States was, to a large extent, responsible for the economic and political problems in the Dominican Republic. After this intense conversation, he informed me that he had a "grande finca, cerca Esperanza, con vacas!" (A large farm near Esperanza with cows). A look of delightful pride crossed his face after he told me this.

The gross national product increased in the 1970s largely due to high sugar prices. Large land holdings increased as individuals who had benefited from governmental positions or business holdings bought land. However, income was skewed, with a few people making enormous amounts while the bulk of the population barely sustains itself, due to the large number of small holdings and the smaller number of large holdings. So although the traditional measure of development, GNP, increased, much of the population was actually getting poorer. Into the 1970s, the agricultural crisis (a crisis only for the campesinos) continued and worsened. As more and more campesinos turned to cash crops and with large export-producing land holders increasing their holdings, the amount of land dedicated to food production for internal consumption decreased. Limited food

production led to social unrest and more land invasions. In the early 1970s, the number of land invasions increased.

Due to the increasing unrest, Balaguer moved to speed up agrarian reform. There were soon five new agrarian reform laws. The first law, number 282 passed in 1972, designated all idle land to IAD. Number 290 stated that rice holdings over 500 tareas (77.27 acres) were eligible to be expropriated if the owner used the state irrigation system. Law number 314, passed in April of 1972 expanded expropriations to include large latifundios. Laws number 282, 290, and 314 also increased the legislative ability of the IAD to include some expropriations. Other laws adjusted the guidelines for beneficiaries. For example, on September 22, 1972, law number 391 was passed. It declared that all agrarian reform land must be concentrated into collective farms. The final law in this series is number 657; it states that rice lands must also be managed collectively (Meyer 1989: 48; Gutierrez 1988: 67-69).

But these new laws had a negligible effect. The land distribution of the early 1970s was not vigorously sustained and the plantocracy actually had become stronger in the 1970s due to favorable trading conditions. The price of sugar and other cash crops had risen and so too had the political power of the oligarchy. In 1974 a law concerned with expropriation of vast pasture lands was defeated by the senate (Vargas-Lundius 1988). Other laws were not repealed;

they were just ignored. In the long run, most of the new laws proved to be powerless.

In the early 70s, the number of peasant organizations increased. Individual peasants and peasant organizations, coops and individuals, petitioned the IAD for land. For example, "the number of petitions for allotments by the IAD rose from 6,467 in 1971 to 16,305 in 1973" (Vargas-Lundius 1988: 170). The increase in these organizations easily could have been a function of the new laws and the hope for land. The hope for land, in most cases, remained just that -- a hope.

President Balaguer used land reform as a political "big stick" to beat both the land owners and the campesinos into line. The laws that he imposed in the early 1970s were an attempt to weaken the plantocracy. Ultimately, land was expropriated only from unfortunate owners who did not have either sufficient wealth or influence to maintain their position. And with the promise for reform always present, most campesinos were resigned themselves to wait for the government to take care of them. Balaguer thus became known, or wanted to be known as, the "Land Reform President."

Kenneth Sharpe argues that the state may be co-opting or capturing the reform movement in that the state has the ability to provide "financing, technical aid, and legal

recognition" (Sharpe 1977: 224), and therefore it may take over the reform sector and stop independent organizations that may ultimately threaten the state. Further it can then exercise control over the movement, finally insuring that it can "control discontent of popular classes" (Sharpe 1977: 225) without changing the agrarian structure. Further, the control of the agrarian reform movement has enhanced Balaguer's political career. He has been able to designate to whom land shall be granted, and campesinos from Balaguer's Reformist Party (PSRD) have benefited disproportionately. These grants of lands are often political gifts and, thereby secure rural support. In the Dominican Republic, the promise of land reform has been used by an autonomous state seeking to extend its control. Promises of land reform have been used by individuals, like Joaquín Balaguer, to gain votes enabling his regime to be extended.

THE IAD

While the IAD has not been successful in changing the agrarian structure, it has improved the standard of living for some Dominicans. The agency controls approximately 14% of the agricultural land. On this land, the IAD has established 483 settlements between 1962 and 1984 (Gutierrez-San Martin 1989). These settlements are responsible for producing much of the food consumed in the country. Rice is the main staple in the country, and the IAD lands produce an

average of 40% of the rice consumed (Meyer 1989). Some of the other important food produced are yuca, yams, and beans; the settlements produce over 50% of these products (Gutierrez-San Martin 1989). Through its reform projects, the IAD has benefited some 20% of the rural population at one time or another (Gutierrez-San Martin 1989).

However, the problems facing the IAD are serious and wide ranging. Over 45% of IAD land is underutilized or idle (Gutierrez-San Martin 1989). Originally, each recipient received 50 tareas (7.7 acres). These tareas were not actually given to the recipient; they were only given a provisional title. Provisional titles state that the holder of the land has control of the land until further notice. Provisional titles sap peasant's incentive for reinvestment and capital improvements.

One of the agency's most serious problems is their personnel policies. Gutierrez - San Martin reported that "only five percent of those currently employed had filed an application and been tested formally for their position" (Gutierrez 1989: 72). No less than 85% have been appointed by the director or directly by the President. Furthermore, there is no correlation between wages received and position. Gutierrez stated that

"one's salary depends, not on the post to which one is appointed, but on the salary slot vacant at the moment. It is possible, and indeed common, for a person to be ap-

pointed to the job of custodian and be receiving the salary of an econometrician working in the Statistics Division simply because the econometrician had just left that particular salary slot open for the next appointee ... It is not unusual to see a janitor with two months experience make more than an administrator with ten years on the job" (Gutierrez 1989: 72-73).

And once a person secures a position there are not regularly scheduled performance reviews. The lack of reviews obviously stifles the incentive for increasing the quality and quantity of work performed.

These employees are nonetheless responsible for producing many important reports about settlements and food production. But there is no evaluation of these reports and no follow-up to ensure the data are correct. There is no formal data sharing agreement between the administrators; information flows only through friends (Gutierrez-San Martin 1989).

Whereas structural problems within the agency affect the employee's motivation, lack of credit to parceleros affects the IAD's ability to accomplish its principal goal -- successful agrarian reform. The lack of credit to parceleros is, by far, the most serious impediment facing agrarian reform. A memo written, in 1983, to the director of IAD stated that the IAD would need to provide RD \$50 (in 1983 the official exchange rate was approximately 2 pesos per U.S. dollar, however, the black-market rate was higher)

per tarea to put idle and underutilized lands into production (Gutierrez-San Martin 1989). The Banco Agricola, the agricultural bank, is the only official organization permitted to loan money to reform projects. This agency is weighed down by an extremely heavy bureaucracy and is known for its mismanagement (Gutierrez-San Martin 1989). More often than not there is no money available for loans. This is due to a slow pay-back rate and a high default rate. One reason for the default rate is migration; some campesinos use their agricultural loans to migrate to the urban centers in the United States or the Dominican Republic (Gutierrez-San Martin 1989).

Further, only certain types of IAD settlements received funding. Meyer reported that the Banco Agricola funds crops that are currently receiving high market prices (Meyer 1989). Many settlements, twenty-three percent, receive no credit (Gutierrez 1989: 64). Rice lands receive top priority for loans and governmental assistance because the price is normally high and rice is the main staple of the Dominican diet.

While other sources criticize Banco Agricola for its inefficiency and its lack of resources, Carrie Meyer, citing local state sources, gives a glowing report of the Banco Agricola. She states that "in 1975 it was estimated that only 54% of credit needs in the agricultural sector were satisfied through formal channels ... and by 1981 a survey

carried out by SEA [Secretary of Agriculture] estimates it at 89 percent" (Meyer 1989: 47).

If Meyer's assertions were correct there would be no need for local village-based credit. Campesinos, however, need to rely on other sources. Oftentimes, the sources are local people such as store owners who offer "fast, flexible, reliable credit" and who charge an enormously high interest rate -- sometimes as high as 10% monthly (Meyer 1989: 48).

Rosemary Vargas-Lundius reveals a different dimension of the Dominican peasantry's overall credit system. She asserts truck drivers often provide low-interest credit to peasants; drivers do this to secure their supplies. The camioneros, or truck drivers, often have family ties to the local producers and therefore usually offer reasonable rates of credit. Many cash loans are interest free. However, if the producer sells to someone else, he must then pay three to four percent monthly interest on the loan (Vargas-Lundius 1988).

Vargas-Lundius states that these favorable credit terms only apply to the national market; export-producing campesinos have fewer options because one or two corporations control the export markets. For export-producing campesinos, credit is more expensive. Cash crop producers often are forced to pay higher rates of credit and have fewer sources of credit. For instance, the coffee middle-men have

an monopoly and work together to keep interest rates high and prices low (Vargas-Lundius 1989).

Other structural difficulties of the IAD include payments extracted from parceleros for services that, at times, are not provided. IAD parceleros are required to pay the IAD for road maintenance. They are also required to pay the governmental water agency (INDRHI) for irrigation maintenance. However, often irrigation service is not available. Even if adequate irrigation is provided, the maintenance service is frequently not done (Meyer 1989).

In Peasant Politics, Kenneth Sharpe describes the micro level, day to day, impact of the problems with the IAD structure. Sharpe contends that the lack of low-interest credit, the insecurity of markets, and the lack of land seriously hamper the ability of the peasant to succeed. Due to these problems, family members have to work as wage laborers in order to purchase food. These obstructions are still central, and have only worsened due to the increased population and weakened economy. Further, he states that the state run agrarian reform movement may be a way for the government to stay in control by quieting "the discontent of popular classes who react against being forced to bear the costs of accumulating the capital needed for development" (Sharpe 1977).

Although laws have been passed and a bureaucratic agency has been established, the situation for campesinos is

worse now than it was even ten years ago. The Dominican Republic ranks

"among the countries with the most unequal land ownership structures in the world. Hundreds of thousands of small producers are cramped together on marginal lands. Others are forced to lease land and pay a high price for it. At the same time, some of the best lands are being poorly used by a few large landowners. . . . the limited access of the Dominican peasants to productive land is one of the major factors behind their increasing level of poverty and undoubtedly constitutes an important push factor for rural-urban migration (Vargas-Lundius 1988: 176-7).

Even as more and more people migrate to the urban areas, the overall population is escalating dramatically. More people in the countryside means less land per person. The inefficiency in the agency compounds the difficulties inherent in land reform making true reform impossible. Further, governmental leaders are much more interested in maintaining their positions by riding the political fence than in taking a stand. The combination of a weak and corrupt agricultural reform agency, politicians dedicated to themselves and political expediency, and campesinos who have learned to wait for a savior results in a disastrous economic situation for the campesinos.

National Economic Transition and Resulting Impact on Land

The Dominican economy began slipping into recession in 1979. The usually generous U.S. sugar quota was slowly and painfully dwindling. The global energy crisis also caused oil and gasoline prices to increase. Into the early 80s, the sugar quota and world sugar price continued to fall, and the national government was unable to stem the tide of economic factors working against the nation. Because of this, leaders of the nation sought ways to diversify the national economy. The sugar industry was the most obvious place to start. The State Sugar Agency (CEA) managed 12 sugar mills. In "July of 1982 CEA announced losses of between 50 and 60 million pesos for the current year and that it had presented plans for a closure of a full third of its ingenios (namely - Amistad, Catarey, Esperanza, and Monte Llanos)" (Plant 1987: 42). CEA's plan designated the optimal products that should be produced on the land.

The main objective of the land distribution was to earn foreign exchange in order to cope with the Dominican Republic's chronic but now worsening debt. The conclusion of the CEA report states that due to the "serious problem with the balance of payments, new monetary inversions are needed" (Acosta 1986: 59). This debt dilemma seriously limits the choices available to the government because it must continue to earn foreign exchange to pay on the debt. For this rea-

son, CEA allocated the land to export-producing agro-business, energy, and services. According to the report, all these products will help "to produce a more stable source of foreign exchange" (Acosta 1986: 4). The Dominican debt and the need for foreign exchange compromises to some extent the autonomy of the Dominican government, and limits the government's options to those earning foreign exchange. However, many land reform projects could produce export crops as many campesinos already do.

CEA planned to reinvest in the most efficient ingenios, increasing their production capacity, and to diversify the non-productive sugar lands by renting the lands to other producers. The proposals argued against state-run industry; "state industries are not always the most optimal use of the land" (Acosta 1986: 6). Further, it recommended joint ventures with parties from the developed countries because of their access to capital resources, technology, secured markets, and human resources.

The first lands to have been transferred are listed on table five. The early transfers of land exclusively went to large agro-businesses. The rental agreements usually are for 50 years; Frutas Dominicanas is the exception receiving only a 12 year agreement.

USAID helped the diversification process with a 21 million peso loan (Frederickson 1990). The money was used

to establish an agency (DACEA) whose role would be to administer the diversification of the State Sugar Industry's land. DACEA is a quasi- "sister agency" to CEA. While it only employs a small fraction of the number that CEA employs, it is independent from yet housed with CEA. Its role is to manage all the leasing of the former CEA holdings once the mills have been closed (Rifenburg 1990). DACEA also has a personnel loan from USAID. This person's function is to oversee the land distribution (Guardilla 1990).

Pedro Juan del Rosario (1990), a Dominican scholar, states that the actual amounts of land distributed differ from the DACEA listing (see table 6). Discrepancies such as those illustrated in tables 5 and 6 are common. What DACEA presents on paper is not necessarily an accurate portrayal of the situation in the field. Del Rosario argues that this distribution "concentrates and excludes" (del Rosario 1990: 9) in that it concentrates the land in the hands of private industry and excludes it from the small farmers or campesinos.

While many Dominicans disapproved of the transfers, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) applauded the government's decision, and played a peripheral yet powerful role in the nation's economic plans. USAID recommended that while the Dominican Republic should not abandon sugar, it should diversify some of its holdings (Rifenburg 1990). This would reduce the country's

Table 5
Distribution of Dominican Sugar Lands
as per DACEA
(as of July 1990)

Company	Product	Tareas of Land
Frutas Dominican	Pineapple	17,835
Consortio Citri.	Oranges	28,188
Induspalma Dom.	Trees	33,876
Consortio Citri.	Oranges	30,000
Dole Dominican	Pineapple	83,600

Source: DACEA listing of distribution.

Table 6
Distribution of Dominican Sugar Lands
Independent Listing by Rosario
(as of July 1990)

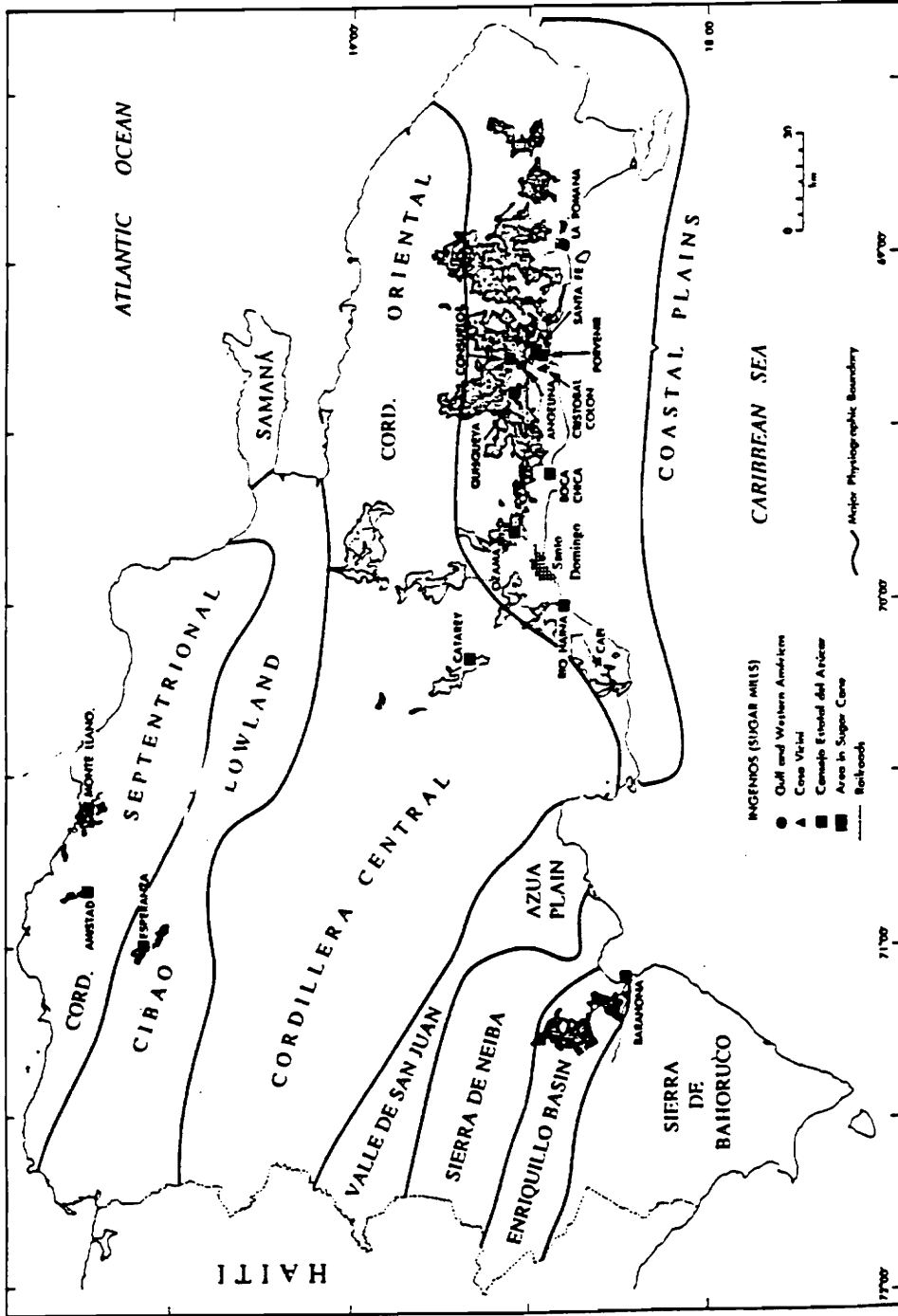
Company	Product	Tareas of Land
Agrodelta	Citrus Fruit	80,000
Dole	Pineapple	83,600
Frudoca	Citrus Fruit	60,000 *
Citricos Rica	Citrus Fruit	50,000
IAD	Land Reform	12,344

Source: Del Rosario 1990: 9.

* Frudoca is a joint venture with United Fruit

vulnerability on one market. USAID further recommended objectives for the redistribution: a) to maintain foreign exchange earnings, b) to reassure productive employees that the diversification will not displace them, and c) to increase the efficiency of the remaining sugar mills (Caamano 1989).

Although CEA's plans met with harsh opposition both from campesinos, land reform advocates, and CEA employees who would lose their jobs, the diversification process began. The redistribution of land quickly turned into a political nightmare. The first mill to close was Catarey, a state-owned and state-run mill, northwest of Santo Domingo (see Map 2). All the land from the mill, 46,023.79 tareas (7113.41 acres), was leased to Consorcio Citricos for the production of oranges and to Frutas Dominicanas for pineapple production. A tax-free manufacturing zone was set up. In the plan the agro-business would export produce, thereby helping the trade deficit and earning foreign exchange, and the free zone would provide jobs for the ex-mill workers, thus providing an economic base for the community. The results however have been disappointing. The jobs in the free zone are low paying and are filled by females. Many of the ingenio workers are unemployed. Despite the plan, many Dominicans wanted the land to be given to them, and land reform is constantly demanded. Catarey is considered one of



Map 2. Sugar Mills in the Dominican Republic.
 Source: Chardon, Rolando. 1984. "Sugar Plantations in the D.R."
 The Geographic Review. October, Vol. 74(4).

the "hot spots" in the country; it is politically volatile. This sentiment was shown in civil strikes protesting the government's decision.

Not all objections have come in the form of civil strikes. There have also been written protests in the form of newspaper articles (Listin Diario July 17, 1990; Listin Diario January 1987) and scholarly presentations (Del Rosario 1990). Pedro Juan del Rosario (1990), for example, presented a paper stating that of the 42.5 million arable areas in the country, 44.7% is used to produce cattle. Over the last decade local food production for the local market has decreased. He states that the concentration of land has led to the proletarianization of the campesinos. Landed campesinos are forced to work as wage laborers and farm their lands in order to keep their holdings.

Ray Rifenburg, Director of Missions at USAID, told me that land reform would not work because of the handicaps within the IAD itself; he said that one farmer can feed only one family in the city along with feeding his own family (Rifenburg 1990). Del Rosario presents an alternative view by stating that the small and medium producers grow no less than 82.3% of the food consumed nationally. Moreover, they produce 90% of the coffee, cacao, and tobacco (del Rosario 1990:15). Del Rosario states unequivocally that "there are no urban solutions for rural problems" (del Rosario 1990:

8), and that nationwide development must focus on the rural areas along with the urban ones. There must be true reforms for the rural populous, and any reforms must include land.

Despite national resistance, expressed in civil strikes and in the media, Esperanza was the next ingenio to be transformed. Like Catarey, it was to produce a diversity of agricultural goods, and house a free zone, but the transfer was scheduled near the presidential election and politics would play a part in its transformation.

Politics and Land Reform: The Case of Esperanza, D.R.

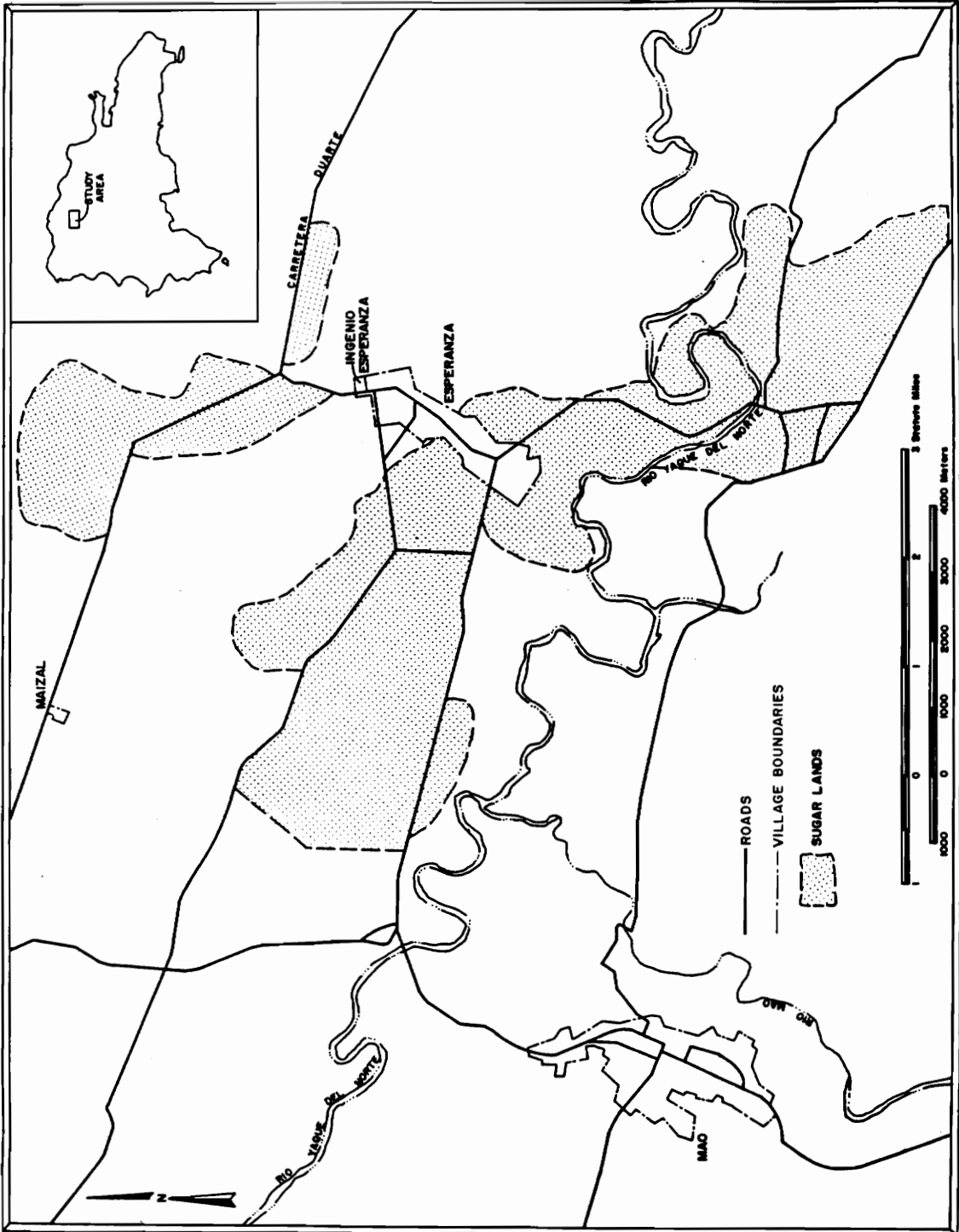
Chapter Four: Esperanza

Esperanza: Background

The town of Esperanza is located in the northwestern part of the country, approximately 45 minutes by car from Santiago, the country's second largest city. Esperanza lies in a fertile valley between two mountain ranges. Seeing the area is believing what Columbus said on his first visit; the island is the most beautiful place on earth. There are sloping mountains which are for the most part covered with tropical and deciduous trees. And from first glance there appears to be an abundance of water as two of the country's main rivers pass through the area (Map 3).

The valley of Esperanza is home to approximately 48,032 Dominicans (see table 7). The economy of the area is based on agriculture. There are also many landless campesinos in the area, and these people want land. Employed Esperanzians work at a wide range of agriculturally related jobs, many were with the ingenio.

The mill at Esperanza had, for many years, just managed to get by economically. In 1981, the mill made RD\$101,696, and produced 5.88 tons of sugar cane per tarea -- resulting in 15,830 short tons for the season (CAESA 1990). However once the decision was announced that the plant would be closed, production dropped by 20%. For the 1985/86 season



Map 3. Area of Esperanza.

ESPERANZA POPULATION

TABLE 7

YEAR	RURAL	URBAN	TOTAL	CHANGE	% INCREASE
1920	n/a*	n/a	4,797	n/a	n/a
1935	7,849	346	8,195	+3,398	+70.83%
1950	n/a	n/a	9,230	+1,035	+12.63%
1960	14,770	4,430	19,200	+9,970	+108.02%
1970	12,737	10,404	23,141	+3,941	+20.53%
1981	16,420	15,589	32,009	+8,868	+38.32%

Estimated Population for 1990: 48,032**

*n/a = not available

** No Census was done for 1990. The figure was estimated by averaging the rate of increase, thereby projecting, based on an average of past growth, the rate of increase and consequent population for 1990. (Average rate of growth 50.06% per decade).

Source: The Dominican Census. Data collected at the CEUR center in Santiago, The Dominican Republic.

the mill lost RD\$ 2,717,010, producing only 4.79 tons per tarea, and harvesting only 12,141 short tons for the season (CAESA 1990). There were other factors, besides falling productivity, adding to the economic woes of the mill; inflation had increased dramatically in the island nation, and the world price for sugar had dropped. The mill was scheduled to be closed after the 1988/89 season.

The ingenio at Esperanza had been in operation for 32 years. Built in 1955, it was one of Trujillo's and used some of the most fertile land in the valley. It began operation in 1957, with a daily capacity of 1,500 short tons (CAESA 1990). The mill's equipment was purchased from Cuba and had been manufactured originally in the United States before 1950. The equipment was never replaced, and by the mid-80s it was obsolete and dilapidated. The mill still stands on the Esperanzian plain symbolizing the national economic situation. Sugar had been the primary economic pillar, and now a caricature of its infrastructure remains with nothing to replace it.

Besides the ingenio's technical deficiencies, there were other factors influencing the decision to close the plant, specifically the quality of its land and the infrastructure surrounding Esperanza. The land is composed of fertile alluvium. In a CEA report, Hector Acosta stated

that Ingenio Esperanza has excellent soils and good climatic conditions. He believed that the government could make more money simply by renting the land than by producing sugar cane on it (Acosta 1986). Additionally, the Agricultural Corporation of Esperanza's report stated that the high quality of the soils and not the relative unprofitability of the plant is the main reason for the closure of the mill (CAESA 1988).

Esperanza is also located strategically. It is situated close to Santiago and Puerto Plata. A main highway, Autopista Duarte, offers easy access to both cities. There is a new international airport near Puerto Plata, and a new port in Monte Cristi which is two hours away by car. These geographical advantages no doubt had an influence on CEA's decision to close the mill as certain agricultural producers would need access to international markets.

Irrigation is also widely available. Two of the country's largest rivers flow through the area: the Yaque del Norte and the Rio Mao. From the roadside, water seems abundant; wide canals frame the road. The irrigation system was built in the 1960s (INDRHI), and it has been adequate until recently. During the past few years, the supply of water has lessened for many reasons, mainly climatic changes, deforestation, and overuse by the rice growers.

The total irrigated zone in Esperanza is 135,000 tareas (20,865.53 acres). There are three canals; Canal Principal

Jicome services the farms in region number one, Canal Esperanza is used for farms located in regions two, three, and five, and Canal Caneo services farms located in the fourth region (INDRHI). The National Water Resources Institute did a study of the irrigation and found that there is difficulty in water service to zones one and four because they are on secondary canals. Problems in water supply are especially difficult for small producers living near the mountains. When I was there many of their canals had been turned off, due to the shortage (map 4).

The changes in Esperanza began a mere year before the 1990 presidential elections. The President Joaquín Balaguer was not favored to win, and the transfer of land in Catarey had left many Dominicans distrusting Balaguer.

Furthermore, campesino groups had wholly different ideas for the land. They felt the land should be used by them to produce food for the country and to provide a livelihood for them. The redistribution of the sugar lands at Catarey had been a bitter experience for them; their increasingly marginalized position had made them radical and, at times, violent. There were a number of civil strikes in Catarey and protests, and the issue was oftentimes lands.

Balaguer responded to the strikes by making promises, and lots of them; his slogan was "Cambio sin Peligro" or "change without danger." He dubbed himself the "Agrarian

Reform President." He vowed that the mistakes that had been made in Catarey would not be repeated in Esperanza and promised 40% of the Esperanzian land to the Agrarian Reform Agency (IAD) to be distributed to small-scale farmers. He assured the campesinos that he was, indeed, on their side and told them that they, too, would get land.

However pleasing these promises were to the ears, they were not new. For example, in one month of a recent year, January of 1987, the front page of the Listin Diario, a popular Dominican paper, had many articles concerning land reform. On January 5, 1987, Balaguer had stated that "land reform is important" (Listin Diario 1987). Two weeks later he vowed that "the IAD would receive CEA lands" (Listin Diario 1987). In the latter part of the month, he urged campesinos "not to sell land [but] to use it to grow coffee and other crops for the country" (Listin Diario 1987). Despite Balaguer's promise that land reform is important, land was rarely turned over to campesinos.

The Catholic Church also spoke against the current land tenure in the country. The sentiment of the Catholic Church or a priest can easily spill over into the peasantry, or can justify land invasions. In January of 1987, a Catholic priest "denounced the situation of the land, and stated that it is a gift to sustain life. It should not be concentrated" (Listin Diario 1987).

In addition to promising land, Balaguer also promised

new housing for campesinos who had been moved into Esperanza from many rural villages across the country. The houses were built and campesinos did receive them. In Esperanza, campesinos were given homes with the promise that land would be forthcoming.

The promise of reform, however potent, was not easy to accomplish. Forty percent of Esperanza's land, 26,000 tareas (4081.54 acres) was given to the IAD but very little was redistributed to the peasantry, not even the new residents in the government subsidized homes. The remaining 60%, 39,000 tareas (6027.82 acres) was passed to DACEA to be distributed to a variety of mostly medium- to large-scale agricultural holders.

Distribution of Esperanza's Lands

DACEA

DACEA's distribution process has been met with many complaints. Individuals in Esperanza state that the land was not distributed fairly, and the present holders had money or connections (Frederickson 1990; Modesto Vargas 1990; del Rosario 1990). In response to these claims, DACEA officials responded that they measured the projects by their feasibility and the number of jobs created, and they felt that the distribution was fair and just (Interview with

DACEA employee in Santo Domingo 1990).

I heard a proliferation of complaints in Esperanza about DACEA and their distribution process: complaints ranging from corruption, lease sales for personal profit, to the more mundane and common complaints of governmental incompetence.

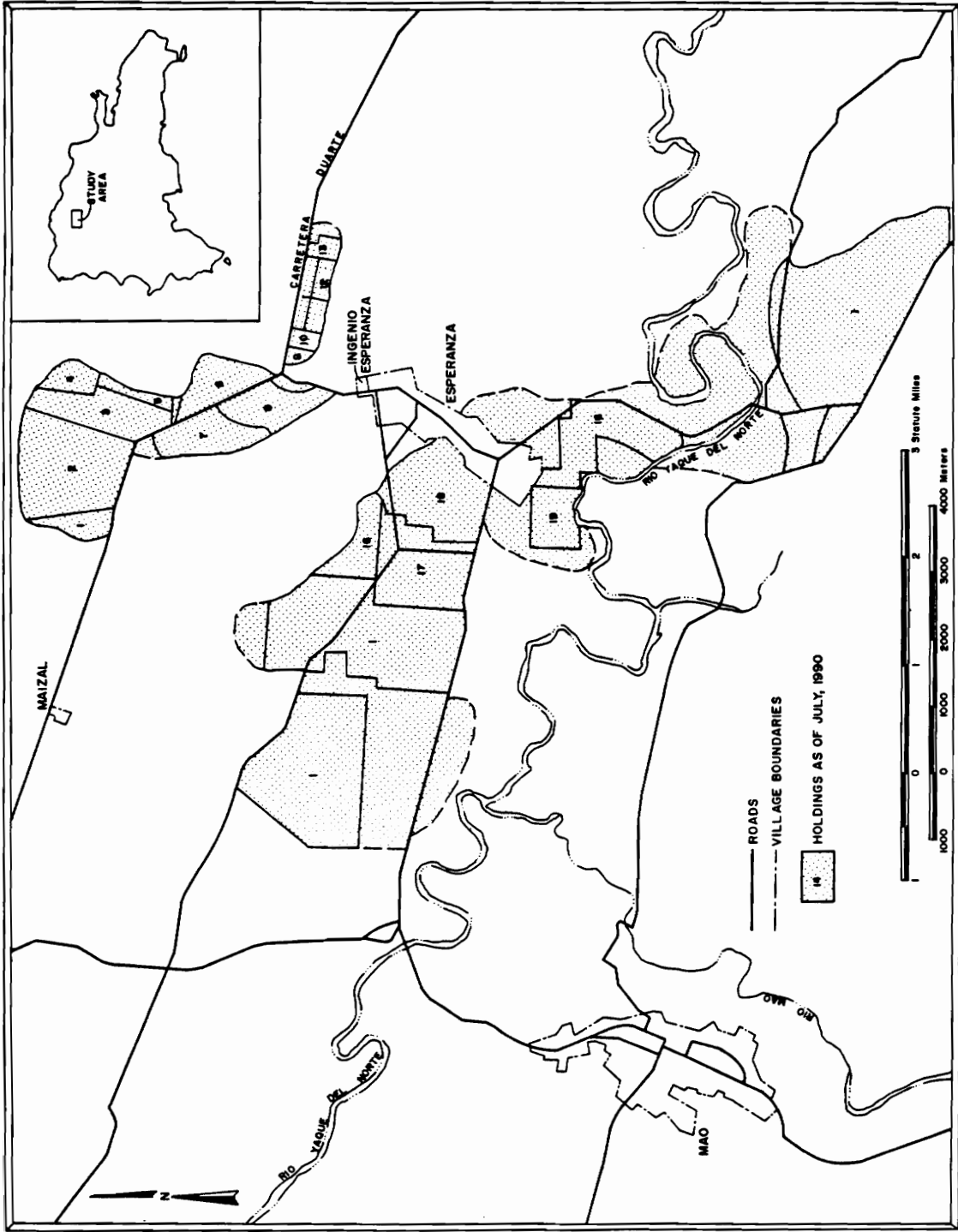
The total amount of land that DACEA disclosed as rented is only 20,285.11 tareas --little more than half of the total they supposedly received. Where is the rest of DACEA's land? Maybe it had not been all rented out. But a big plot of land, approximately 10,000 tareas (1545.59 acres), shown on the DACEA map as vacant, the pocket north of the Yaque del Norte but south of the Esperanza/ Mao highway, was occupied by cattle in July of 1990. This example illustrates that while DACEA is disclosing some information, other aspects of the Esperanza distribution are vague and undisclosed. DACEA's information does not give an adequate accounting of what was really going on in the field.

Nevertheless, DACEA distribution process will be discussed here. One of the primary problems with the distribution process has been determining exactly how much land was controlled by the Esperanza ingenio. Further, while certain groups are sure that the ingenio held 80,000 tareas (campesinos, and some ex-sugar mill workers) others state that the mill only controlled 60,000 to 65,000 tareas (CEA, and

DACEA officials), while USAID officials stated that "they don't know how much land is controlled by the ingenio (Rifenburg 1990). Many people argue that theft of the land by politicos and not ignorance is behind the confusion. Further, many believe the Vice President, Carlos Morales Truncoso, received 15,000 tareas. An independent analysis has been difficult to obtain because the available maps show fluctuating sugar lands from one year to the next. For the purpose of this study, I will use the figure given by the Director of the Mill at Esperanza during an interview -- 65,000 tareas.

DACEA received 60% of the 65,000 tareas, 39,000 tareas (6027.82 acres). I received a map from DACEA; it shows the largest 16 holdings (see map 5 & table 8). There are numerous small holders whose lands are not included on the map, but these small holdings are incorporated into tables 9, 10, and 11. Both small and large holders, the crops they grow on their present holdings, their markets, and the size of their holdings are shown on tables 8, 9, 10, and 11.

The newly distributed land in Esperanza will be used for a wide variety of agricultural crops. Twenty-five percent of the land DACEA received will be used for export crops. The products grown for export are organically grown herbs and vegetables and passion fruit. The vast majority of land is being used for the internal market. Among the items



Map 5. Largest Land Holdings.
Source: DACEA Listing & Map

DACEA Public Land Disclosures for Esperanza
Table 8
Land Holdings

Name	Amt. Tareas/Acres	Crop
1. IAD	Total 26,000/4006	Unknown
2. Prod. Alim.	2166.21/333.77	Vegetables
3. C. Frederickson	1210.52/186.52	Organic Veg.
4. F. Maria Rojas	622.08/95.85	Rice
5. R. Grullon	411.06/63.33	Rice
6. C. Dominiguez	861.00/132.66	Rice
7. L. Reyes	1016.19/156.57	Rice
8. Eddy Santos	403.50/62.17	Cow Pasture
9. INDRHI	Unknown	
10. F.P. Trejo	154.08/23.74	Vegetables
11. not shown on DACEA map		
12. A.F. Reynoso	375.06/57.79	Rice
13. M. Reyes	604.80/93.18	Rice
14. IAD land shown as number 1		
15. not shown on DACEA map		
16. Expo. Japonesa	811.00/124.96	Passion Fruit
17. V.G. Sued	824.60/127.05	Plantains
18. Chicca Agro.	2133.00/328.65	Plantains
19. A. Madera	811.00/124.96	Plantains

Total	38404.10	

26,000.00 tareas IAD/ 12404.10 tareas DACEA

Source: DACEA Map and Project List. Received July 1990.

DaCEA Public Land Disclosures, Esperanza Lands
 Table 9
 Land Divisions
 (as of July, 1990)

Size of Holding	Amount of Land	Percentage of total
1000 + tareas	12427.03	61.26
500 - 999 tareas	3723.48	18.36
250 - 499 tareas	1189.62	5.86
150 - 249 tareas	769.75	3.79
50 - 149 tareas	1583.91	7.81
1 - 49 tareas	591.32	2.92
Totals	20285.11	100.00%

Table 10
 Crop Types
 (as of July, 1990)

Crop Type	Amount of Land	Percentage of Total
Vegetables	6580.37	32.44
Rice	5298.01	26.12
Plantains	5021.00	24.75
Passion Fruit	1708.11	8.42
Organic Vegetables	1210.52	5.97
Pasture Land	467.10	2.30
Total	20285.11	100.00%

Table 11
 Market for Crops

Market	Amount of Land	Percentage of Total
Export	4877.92	24.05
Local	15407.19	75.95
Total	20285.11	100.00

Source: DaCEA Project List 1990; Information gathered from total DaCEA agreements as of July 1990; 2930.54 more tareas were in negotiations.

grown for internal consumption, rice is the most common. Twenty-six percent of DACEA's land is held by rice growers. While rice production is dominant, plantain production has also increased dramatically. A full twenty-five percent of DACEA's land is now dedicated to plantain production. The remaining 24% of the land is held mainly by smaller producers growing "Frutos Menores" or secondary food stuffs like yuca, tomatoes, and beans. Surprisingly while many residents complained about cattle production, land reportedly rented to cattle producers is limited to one large producer, Eddy Santos (see number 8 on table 8).

However, smaller producers, holders controlling less than 50 tareas, are using the land for cattle production, and large holders may also be producing other items, like cattle, while they did not claim it on the inventory list used by DACEA. Many new land holders in Esperanza are producing other crops than the ones on the listing. While DACEA claims that the new holders are producing rice, plantains, or other items, the actual crops grown in Esperanza and the market for those crops are different than the listing claims. Also, in July of 1990, DACEA was negotiating with about 20 more people, half of whom planned to use the land for pastures (information from DACEA listing: July 1990).

DACEA made rental agreements for all the land they distributed. In other closed mills, the agreements are

usually for more than ten years. For example, Dole Pineapple has a 50 year rental agreement for their land in Rio Haina. But in Esperanza, all agreements were made for between 5 and 10 years, and only four individuals received 10 year agreements: Craig Frederickson, Felix Rojas, Luis Bonilla, and Rolando de los Santos. The remaining holdings have five to seven year agreements (DACEA 1990).

The IAD

Due to Balaguer's promise of reform, forty percent of Esperanza's land, 26,000 tareas (4081.54 acres), was subsequently transferred to the Agrarian Reform Agency (IAD). I will discuss the quality of their new holdings first, and the distribution of them secondly.

The quality of the land IAD received is similar, and in some cases better than the land received by DACEA. The land is lower in elevation than most other holdings. One of IAD's largest tracts of land is located near the Rio Yaque del Norte. This land is low and fertile. Holding number one, shown on map 5, is also located in a low and fertile plain; at its lowest, the elevation is approximately 70 meters, while most of the ingenio's land is between 80 and 100 meters (Information gathered from regional map).

Considering the elevation of the tracts, irrigation is

usually not a problem, and, for the most part, IAD's land has as much access to irrigation as DACEA's land. However, IAD distributes land into small fragmented holdings. For the lands that are located directly on a principal canal, irrigation should not be a problem; however, the settlements lying in the interior and away from canals may have virtually no access to irrigation. A possible solution would be a network of pipes linking the interior producers to the water supply by pumping water to them. This seems extremely unlikely due to the lack of finances within the IAD. Even if finances were available, this kind of agricultural infrastructural development seems impossible due to the inefficiency that has paralyzed the agency since its conception.

Not only is IAD and DACEA's land quality similar, the distribution of land by the Agrarian Reform Agency has also been widely condemned. Despite the transfer of 26,000 tareas to the agency, few campesinos have benefited. One hundred and forty-nine campesinos each received a small 25 tarea plot, a mere 10% of the number that could have benefited if all IAD's land was distributed to campesinos (del Rosario 1990; Frederickson 1990; CEA 1990; Rifenburg 1990). The balance was rumored to have been sold or given to employees of the agency. The small number of people who received plots were exclusively from Balaguer's political party, the Social Christian Reform Party (PSCR) (del Rosario 1990).

IAD holdings are planted with mixed crops. A visual inventory shows some of the following crops: yuca, red peppers, and tomatoes. In the IAD plots I visited, I saw no sign of irrigation even if the plot was close to an irrigation canal. The soil seemed dry and almost sandy.

Further, boundaries between plots are ill-defined if not non-existent. This confusion makes it difficult, even for local residents, to determine who is controlling the land. On one visit to the area, a local resident accompanied me. He said it was not clear who is actually using the land. This vagueness is compounded by the fact that people do not live close to their plots. The plots are located just north of the Rio Yaque del Norte, and most housing is, at the closest, in Esperanza, approximately five miles away. But their housing could be as far as seven miles away in Maizal, an agricultural village north of Esperanza.

Six months after the original IAD and DACEA distributions began complaints from campesino groups became more frequent. As popular support of the redistribution waned, so too, did support for Balaguer and his administration. As the 1990 election drew closer, Juan Bosch was gaining political support; he was leading in the polls. There had been much publicity over the redistribution of the sugar lands, and it had not been positive. Many individuals called for more agrarian reform; the Bishop of Mao, Tomas Abreu, was

one of them.

The Bishop is the president of the Agricultural Corporation of Esperanza (CAESA). The group submitted a proposal to DACEA for land in Esperanza. They proposed an agricultural project which would benefit many campesinos families and provide food for the local market (CAESA 1990). The proposal stated that land reform is essential, but that the Agrarian Reform Agency has many structural problems that prevent them from carrying out successful reform projects. In essence, they argued that a new distribution system needs to be formed.

The proposal was submitted in 1988, and by January of 1990 the group still had not received their land. In January of 1990, the Bishop wrote President Balaguer; he stated the redistribution had been unjust (Guardilla 1990). He was invited to visit President Balaguer and discuss the situation. After a brief meeting, Balaguer passed Decree 25-90. It nullified all previous agreements made by DACEA in Esperanza. It, more importantly, passed DACEA's holdings in Esperanza to the Agrarian Reform Agency. Balaguer stated that the distribution had been corrupt and that it would not be tolerated. This seemingly benevolent act was a brilliant political move made at an opportune moment in his campaign for reelection. He shored up the rural vote.

Despite decree 25-90 by July of 1990, two months after the election, the original distribution had not changed.

Land was never given to the campesinos who were moved into Esperanza. They were removed from agrarian villages across the country and were given a house with the promise that land would be forthcoming; it has not. It seems as though these people should have been first priority. The yards of their new homes are full of subsistence crops and fruit trees. One campesino I talked to was furious because he had no land to work and no way to make a living. Further, he said his economic situation was worse in Esperanza because he had no family or friends to count on for support.

His situation was not unique. On July 17, 1990, Listin Diario ran an article about the IAD land in Esperanza. The heading was "campesinos hope that the IAD will give land from the ingenio" (Listin Diario 1990). Emma Balaguer, spokesman for the campesinos and no relation to the President, was interviewed and said that the land was passed to the IAD and the IAD authorities must hurry and pass it to the campesinos. The campesino leader complained that the campesinos are suffering through hunger and misery while the land is used unproductively. The campesinos expressed hope that the director of the IAD would look for a solution quickly.

While some campesinos complained generally about the IAD distribution, others wrote editorials asking why agrarian reform land was in the control of Victor Sued, a senator

from Santiago, when it should have been given to campesinos. Further, they demanded that the land be taken from him and be distributed to campesinos as it was supposed to have been in the first place. They gave the IAD 30 days to correct the situation (Listin Diario 1990).

The Dominican campesinos are beginning to realize that the government is not the interventionist body they had hoped it would be. Many are unhappy with the status quo and do not believe that government will change it regardless of the promises. They have realized that change will only come through considerable pressure.

The passing of Decree 25-90 has spurred a number of land invasions. The invasions have been organized by both campesino groups and by the Agrarian Reform Agency.

Land reform projects have incorporated the peasantry into the political process, at least during election time. They have learned that gains can be made simply by being attached to the correct political party or functionary. There are many campesinos in Esperanza; a large percentage of these people are landless. The promise of reform and the subsequent land grab has united the campesino organizations in an effort to get more land.

I interviewed a leader of one of the smaller campesino groups. He said campesinos believe food should be grown in the country, export crop production should be curtailed, and the government should focus on the landless rural popula-

tion. The campesinos feel, he said, that the distribution of land in Esperanza has been inequitable and unjust (Modesto Vargas 1990). He also believes that the land from the sugar mill should be given to the people, not to large foreign or domestic interests.

This sentiment is common among campesinos. Because of this, land invasions have been common. Modesto Vargas, a campesino leader, described an upcoming invasion to me. He said his group planned to invade Craig Frederickson's land. He had organized a large number of campesinos, and each one would keep a certain amount of land from Frederickson's holding. They planned to invade first the front gate, and while the guards were distracted, another group would invade from the rear. This method of distraction and invasion was to continue for a number of days until Frederickson could no longer fight the invasion off and would be forced to concede his rented property (Modesto Vargas 1990) .

Vargas' invasion was one which seemed free from IAD help, although the agency had given this group of campesinos symbolic titles to the land DACEA rented to Frederickson. The campesino leader stated that they have no problems with Frederickson, but they had titles to his land and therefore it was really their land.

The IAD more often than not was integrally involved in these invasions. The IAD administrators had organized pro-

tests and led invasions in a continuing effort to obtain more land. The campesinos are easily influenced by IAD officials. The officials promise, or give, symbolic titles, a certificate stating they have the right to use the land, to the land in the area. They tell campesinos that this piece of land will be theirs as soon as the present holder is forced from it.

The goal of the land invasions was to force the holders off the land so that the IAD could control it. Certain people were targeted while others were virtually ignored. The targeted group witnessed numerous land invasions and harassments; others escaped untouched. The reasons for this are unclear. At first, I reasoned that the land must be better, but it is not the best lands which were targeted. And finally it seems that there were political motives behind the invasions; while some people are economically or politically untouchable, others are vulnerable. In Esperanza, the vulnerable suffered repeated invasions and could eventually lose their land.

The IAD is fully aware that they could gain more land in Esperanza. IAD officials continue to press for more land for two reasons: 1) to obtain the extra land, and 2) to divert attention from their questionable transactions.

Conclusion

The Esperanza situation exposes graphically the problems in not only the Dominican land reform agency but also in the governmental redistribution process. The example of Esperanza shows that land received by IAD is rarely adequately redistributed and that the country cannot realistically call this land reform. Pacification would be a better label. Moreover, the thinly-masked corruption within both agencies, IAD and DACEA, blunted the minuscule redistribution that could have taken place in Esperanza. Additionally, the use of provisional titles saps incentive for reinvestment and capital improvement. Hence, over 45% of the agrarian reform land is underutilized. The infinitesimal 25 tarea plots that IAD gives out are enough of a handicap but when they are coupled with lack of credit, extension, and markets, it is easy to understand why so many campesinos throw their hands up in disgust and move to the cities. In some cases, this migration is funded by selling the rights to IAD lands and using the money to migrate. Increasing migration causes other political and economic problems: overcrowded cities lacking in jobs and social services for its new inhabitants.

If campesinos do not migrate they are often forced into dualistic lives. The dualistic lives campesinos lead, both

farming and working as wage laborers, offers a cheap labor force for the export-producing elite.

The case of Esperanza is a microcosm of Dominican politics. The promised land reform there has been in response to political pressure. Balaguer's promise of reform was born more out of political pragmatism than humanitarianism. His weak showing in the polls combined with the political violence in Catarey paved the way for the distribution of land in Esperanza. Further, the change from giving 40% of the Esperanzian land to giving all of it to agrarian reform shows two points: a) Balaguer did and will do what is necessary to try to shore up votes, and b) the Dominican government is responsive to its constituents only during election time.

Even though the area of Esperanza was in turmoil, Balaguer's "gift" of land was advertised throughout the country and was probably perceived at least by the peasantry as a sign of good faith. His promise worked. Balaguer can easily blame the agencies for corruption and pass decrees. These politically expedient moves are effective at focusing attention on his subordinates and allow him to avoid responsibility.

The case of Esperanza shows that Balaguer has become a master of manipulating the Dominican political machine. He and his administration enjoy considerable autonomy. Balaguer is skilled at playing both sides against the middle,

and effectively keeps campesino groups, wealthy Dominicans, and even USAID officials guessing and believing that he is, indeed, on their side.

Thus, the case of Esperanza provides a case in point supporting Merilee Grindle's assertion that land reform projects are a function of an autonomous state trying to maintain its credibility, while also extending its influence. In the Dominican Republic, the state-owned and state-run sugar industry has given the government relative autonomy over the landed elite. "In terms of the Latin American state, it is often argued that the state and its policies represent not the interests of a specific hegemonic class, but rather an ongoing form of compromise and coalition among dominant classes and class factions" (Grindle 1986: 13). In the case of the 1990 election, Balaguer's government acted pragmatically to obtain the necessary votes to win the election. In promising land reform in Esperanza, Balaguer acted directly against the wishes of both the landed elite and United States' representatives in the Dominican Republic. Thus, because of the nature of the voting process, the Dominican peasantry has become a political power. Granted this is true mainly during election-time, however, the case of Esperanza shows a departure from the traditional view of Latin American governments as extensions of the landed elite class. Grindle stated that

"once armed with legal, organizational, and legitimate presence, state agencies seem to have taken on their own rationales and orientations, which guided their subsequent activities and helped shape their relationships with elite and nonelite social groups" (Grindle 1986: 15).

Ultimately, the Dominican government has operated to perpetuate itself and its industries.

Rosemary Vargas-Lundius (1988) stated that agrarian reform was not intended to change the Dominican agrarian structure and thus has had little impact. In the Dominican Republic the primary role of land reform is political; it has been used to incorporate the peasantry into the political system. The peasants' vote is their voice. The demographics of the country easily explain why the promise of reform is ubiquitous, especially at election-time. With the democratization of the Dominican Republic after Trujillo's assassination, the government has increasingly needed the support of its constituents. While land reform remains mostly a promise, increasing pressure from the rural areas may actually force some substantial action.

The use of land reform as a political tool has long been the function of the agrarian reform agency. Unfortunately, the heretofore national policies causing the lack of reform work counter to the social needs of not only the rural inhabitants but all Dominicans. Poverty causing malnutrition, landlessness inducing migration, teacherless

schools spawning ignorance, and desperation spurring violence are all widespread problems in the Dominican Republic; land reform is, of course, not a panacea, but it may be a step in the right direction.

Promises and the occasional delivery of land reform endears the rural populous to the patriarchal presidents. The persistence of Concho Primo in the memory of the rural Dominicans and the hierarchical structure of the political, social, and economic aspects of Dominican society allows the promises to be made and often left unfilled. Occasionally, like in the case of Esperanza, the government is forced to toss a bone, if you will, to the rural inhabitants in order to keep its power. But, like in the Esperanzian case, the land rarely finds its way to campesinos unless, of course, they happen to be a member in good standing of the political party in power.

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VITA

EDUCATION

Master of Science, Geography, December 1991
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
Blacksburg, VA GPA: 3.45/4.0
- Received a Cunningham Masters Summer Thesis
Fellowship
- Field work in the Dominican Republic, Summer 1990
- Gave Invocation for Doctoral Graduation Ceremony 1991
- Extensive course work and experience in Spanish

Bachelor of Arts, Geography & Urban Planning, August 1989
University of Toledo, Toledo, OH, Cum Laude
GPA: 3.43/4.0 Major GPA: 3.85/4.0
- Undergraduate Scholastic Recognition Award 1989
- President's List: Fall 1986

PRESENTATIONS

- "The Political Role of Land Reform in the Dominican Republic," presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers, April 1991, Miami, FL
- "Land Reform in the Dominican Republic," presented at the Geography Colloquium, September 1990, Blacksburg, VA

EXPERIENCE

Research & Teaching Assistantship, Virginia Tech
August 1989 to May 1991
- Researched political and economic relations between the U.S. and Japan: the FSX fighter, trade agreements, and public opinion
- Assisted in teaching and grading courses: Introduction to Human Geography and Economic Geography

Resource Development Coordinator, United Health Services, August 1986 to August 1989
- Planned and implemented ten fund raising events per year:
* The Holiday Gift Wrap: recruited, scheduled, and supervised 300 volunteers; budget \$25,000; profits \$15,000
* The Rib-Off: three-day summer waterfront event; coordinated 800 volunteers, media relations, recruited 16 - 20 restaurants; budget \$100,000; profits \$40,000

- Supervised a 15-member Community Service Board: organized meetings, edited newsletters, and supervised projects

Store Manager, McDonald's Corporation, November 1983 to August 1986

- Supervised staff of 100 including 8 assist. managers
- Responsible for profits and losses; yearly sales \$1 million
- Received "Outstanding Contributor" award in course
- Employed by McDonald's from January 1980

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

President, Virginia Tech Geographic Society, 1989 - 90
- Received national award for the Geography Awareness Week

Member, Congress of Latin Americanist Geographers
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