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The Instituto Nacional Indigenista  
and the Huichol Indians of Western Mexico

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requirements for the degree Master of Arts  
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by

Karen Barbara Reed

Committee in charge:

Professor Johannes Wilbert, Chairman

Professor Jerome Cohen

Professor Arnold I. Kisch, M.D.

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The thesis of Karen Barbara Reed is approved:

Ernest Cohen

Paul W. Kilduff

Johannes Filler  
Committee Chairman

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To the future of Maximiliano Muñoz.

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It is hoped that this case study of an organization created to help a sector of the Mexican population and thereby the nation as a whole will stimulate studies of similar organizations in other areas sponsored by the Latin American Center in conjunction with the Venezuelan 2000 Project.



ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

The Instituto Nacional Indigenista  
and the Huichol Indians of Western Mexico

by

Karen Barbara Reed

Master of Arts in Latin American Studies  
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Professor Johannes Wilbert, Chairman

In the greater part of the Americas, the Indian has long been a second-class citizen. The unique cultural achievements of the pre-Hispanic past are largely ignored and even denied and the Indian influence on and contribution to the present underrated. In recent years, however, an increased awareness of the plight of the Indian has developed and sporadic efforts have been made to remedy his tragic situation. No country has done more in this respect than Mexico. Here the Revolution of 1910-20 gave birth to indigenismo--drawing on the legacy of the Indian past to give moral inspiration for the future.

The Instituto Nacional Indigenista, founded in 1949 on the recommendation of the 1st Inter-American Indianist Congress (1940), is Mexico's main organization working toward the improvement of the Indian's way of life and his incorporation into Mexican society. The Instituto operates

through twelve Coordinating Centers located among the various indigenous populations. The Cora-Huichol Coordinating Center, located in Tepic, Nayarit, is the subject of this study, based on ten weeks of field observations (March-June, 1968). A brief discussion of the Indian in Mexico and his problems is presented, together with an examination of the development of previous and contemporary Indian policies in general, followed by a description of the Sierra Madre Occidental in the states of Jalisco and Nayarit, and of the Huichol Indians, one of the three Indian populations within the Center's jurisdiction. The structure and history of the Coordinating Center are examined; methods and problems in preparing personnel are considered; and the activities of the Coordinating Center in communications, economics (agriculture, zootechnology, and craftsmanship), education, social work, and health, employing both trained technicians and native personnel, are described in detail. The progress and problems of the operation of the Cora-Huichol Coordinating Center are evaluated, as one example of a program of directed acculturation.

## INTRODUCTION

Thirty million Indians, the deep roots and essence of that which is most traditional and autochthonous, ancestrally accustomed to suffer and hope in vain, make up today, from Alaska to Patagonia, from pole to pole and from the Pacific to the Atlantic, the mundo propio of our America of which they were owners and sovereigns and in which they now are servants; they constitute the firmest source of work, its soul and nerve, cannon fodder in the armies of not a few of the countries which form the geographic unity of the continent; they have offered to the culture of the New World the formidable systems of the past centuries--the Incas, the Aztecs and the Mayas--who to the present are the wonder of history; for four hundred years they have lived in the most deplorable, inhuman conditions, a hateful affront to civilization:...(Mac-Lean y Estenós, 1962:19-20).

Even though the most recent estimates for the total Indian population are slightly lower than that of the Peruvian sociologist Mac-Lean y Estenós, his indictment remains valid: whether thirty million or twenty-five (the number now generally accepted among Indianists), the "hateful affront to civilization" continues to exist, and its solution seems as elusive as ever.

Certainly efforts have been made to remedy the tragic situation which confronts the Indian almost everywhere. But the problem persists unchanged (as in the United States\*)

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\*For a statement of our treatment of the indigenous populations in the United States, see Sol Tax, "The Importance of Preserving Indian Culture" (1966:81-86, especially pp. 84-85).

or reaches ever more serious proportions (as in Brazil). There is even reason to believe that general attitudes have changed little since the 19th century when it was widely held that the Indian was an inferior being who, if he could or would not adopt the ways of the majority cultures, should be culturally and even physically exterminated. Why else would a leading authority on Indianist problems, the Mexican anthropologist Alfonso Caso, still find it necessary to remind his colleagues and the world at the Sixth Inter-American Indianist Congress\* that

to believe that the Indian problem is one of race and that we, the Mestizos, or the whites, have the right to impose our will and our forms of life on the Indians because they belong to an inferior race, not only violates all moral precepts but also scientific truth. Every man of conscience who lives on this continent must condemn such discrimination, and we shall condemn it as false, stupid, and immoral (1968b:2-3).

At the final session of the Congress, the thirteen member nations adopted a resolution which officially commended Mexico for her Indian policies and expressed the hope that the Mexican experience might serve as a source of inspiration for the Indianist work of those member nations which have not yet initiated similar programs.

Such recognition of Mexico's pioneering efforts in the field of Indianist action programs from within and from

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\*Held at Pátzcuaro, Michoacán, Mexico, April 15-21, 1968.

without Latin America is by no means new.\* The noted English historian Arnold J. Toynbee, for example, observed the work of Mexico's Instituto Nacional Indigenista (INI) at first hand some years ago and later stated in London that the Mexican experience in this area of social action was placing her far ahead of other countries, not only in Latin America, but in Africa and Asia as well (Nahmad Sittón, 1967). At the same time, however, INI officials freely acknowledge that even though much has been accomplished, much more remains to be done. How much may be gauged from the following statement by a Mexican social anthropologist long associated with the Instituto:

Scarcely 25% of the indigenous population of our country receive attention from the State, and the other 75%, that is, three million Mexicans, are still awaiting the benefits of the social justice emanating from the Mexican Revolution. To be conscious of what has been achieved is also to be conscious of what is left to be done (Nahmad Sittón, 1967).

This study, based on ten weeks of field work in 1968, will focus on one of the twelve Coordinating Centers of the Instituto Nacional Indigenista, which is the principal organization for official Mexican government policy toward the Indians. The work of this Center, the Cora-Huichol Coordinating Center, in Tepic, Nayarit, will be examined

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\*For example, see Ballesteros-Gaibrois and Ulloa Suárez (1961:148), and Rubio Orbe (1957:17-18).

in the context of former and present Indianist policy and the Mexican Indian problem as a whole. Although all three major Indian populations of the Sierra Madre Occidental, the Tepehuán, Cora, and Huichol, fall under the jurisdiction of the Tepic Center, this study will concentrate on the Center's activities with only one of these groups, the Huichol Indians of Jalisco and Nayarit, the largest Indian population in Mexico whose aboriginal world view and religion have remained fundamentally intact.

## CHAPTER I. THE INDIANIST MOVEMENT

### The Indian in Mexico

The Indian population of Mexico has been variously estimated at anywhere from two to nearly ten million. However, any statistics on the Amerind population must be used with caution since the methods for population estimates vary considerably and in many instances it is impossible to differentiate between Indians and Mestizos. The 1960 census figures show an Indian population in Mexico of 3,030,000, using language as a criterion (1,925,300 bilingual and 1,104,955 monolingual). With a total population of 34,625,903 in 1960, Mexico's Indians would appear to represent approximately 8.8% of the total, not a significant figure when compared with other Latin American countries such as Peru (46.7%--1961), Bolivia (63%--1960), Guatemala (53.6%--1959), or Ecuador (30.4%--1961) (Roberts and Kohda, 1967:80). Nevertheless, even if the statistics for Mexico were to be taken at face value, a population group of over 3,000,000 outside the mainstream of national socio-economic development would present a problem of considerable magnitude.

As already suggested, statistics can be misleading. The main problem lies in defining just who is an "Indian." For example, the 1940 Mexican census equated "Colonial Indian Culture" with bare feet, sleeping on mats, and the

wearing of calzones (Spicer, 1966:82). By this definition half the Mexican population would have been classified as "colonial Indian," or, to put it another way, most of Mexico's poor were "Indians."

Similarly, using preliminary figures from the Department of Statistics of the Pan American Union, 1960, the Inter-American Indianist Institute's GUIDE TO THE INDIAN POPULATION OF AMERICA (1961b:231) lists the following classifications under the title "Indian population-- Cultural factors (pre-Columbian survivals)":

Use of huaraches or sandals:	6,640,071	
Go barefoot:	4,769,262	4,768,262
Diet based on corn:	11,482,612	

Beals (1967a:87-90) provides another example of the ambiguity of the "Indian" category in statistics. In a paper presented at a symposium on Indian Mexico, he explains the complicated nature of the task of defining the Indian and points out that census figures must be used with caution. Unfortunately, Beals' own figures for the contemporary Cora and Huichol populations ("some 9500 persons") are approximately 50% below the actual figures, precisely because he himself relied on an inaccurate Mexican census.

Many surveys simply consider as Indian those sectors of the population which speak an Indian language as a native tongue. This is the basis for the figures of the 1960 Mexican census. As early as 1942, Gamio, the "father"



of contemporary indigenismo in Mexico, rejected racial and linguistic criteria and proposed instead an elaborate system of classification based on cultural characteristics (1966:1-25). In 1946, he accepted linguistic identification as the most practical, though he still felt that cultural distinctions were a more valid basis for distinguishing Indian from non-Indian (1966:177-179). More recently, Caso, who has long been Director of the Instituto Nacional Indigenista, has defined the linguistic affiliation as the principal objective guide for determining whether or not a man is an Indian (1958:13). However, Caso also states that this cannot be used as an absolute criterion, for it excludes any individuals who may speak only Spanish, but are in fact Indian in their way of life, their biological heritage, or their sense of belonging to the group, the three other criteria which he mentions. He singles out this last aspect, the sense of belonging to an Indian group, as the most important, from the subjective point of view--but by its very subjectivity it is the most difficult to measure.

The difficulties in determining the number of Indians in the country stem largely from the constant process of mestizaje (crossbreeding and interchange). This continual transformation (which in a way constitutes the basis of the Instituto's work and consequently of this study) makes it impossible to arrive at a concrete definition of the state of being "Indian." Nevertheless, some criteria are needed on which to base Indianist policy and so Caso "ventures

with reservations" to formulate a tentative definition, in which he emphasizes the importance of community, rather than individual:

An Indian is one who feels that he belongs to an indigenous community, and an indigenous community is that in which non-European somatic elements predominate, which by preference speaks an indigenous language, which possesses in its material and spiritual culture indigenous elements in strong proportion and which, lastly, has a social sense of community isolated within the other communities which surround it, which causes it to distinguish itself likewise from the towns of whites and Mestizos (1958:16).

This then is the officially accepted definition which forms the basis of the Instituto's operations.

For statistical purposes, the approximate number of three million Indians is acceptable, keeping in mind, however, that in terms of Caso's definition the true figure is probably much higher.

Exactly what is the nature of the problem which this segment of the population poses for Mexico as a nation? Characteristically this population exists on the margins of the national society, socially, culturally and, frequently, geographically isolated. Its economy is most often of the subsistence type. It lacks both material and spiritual communications with the "outside." It has none of the scientific knowledge and techniques needed for better use of the land. There is no clear sense of belonging to a nation rather than just a community. And it

lacks the proper scientific hygienic and therapeutic knowledge to substitute for magical practices in the diagnosis and curing of disease. In these and other respects, the indigenous population simply does not share in the benefits of the progress of the country and its members are incapable of keeping up with the rhythm of development which Mexico is establishing (Caso, 1958:99). In terms of the potential afforded by the nation as a whole to the individual, the Indian is missing out, and in terms of the progress of the nation created by the individuals who comprise it, the Indian is not contributing to his full capacity. He is, in fact, a liability or handicap to the nation's development. As Caso (1958:17) suggests, the Indian problem goes to the very root of the economic, social, and political ills of all Inter-Tropical America.

The indigenous problem described above does not differ greatly from problems of underdeveloped or "emerging" nations elsewhere in the world, or at least those whose political boundaries are based on a colonial past rather than ethnic reality. In these countries too one finds numerous populations which, like many of America's Indians, are unaware of belonging to a larger political entity called a nation. Like them, the indigenous populations of Mexico have their own traditions, customs, dress, and language. They are not unified, but comprise a cultural mosaic within the Mexican nation, responsible for much of Mexico's charm,

but unfortunately also for the difficulties encountered in creating a sense of national unity and improving living standards and conditions. Something of the tenacity with which Mexico's Indian populations have held onto their own identities may be measured by the fact that more than four centuries after the Conquest and despite the extinction of many pre-Hispanic languages, there are still more than eighty Indian languages and dialects spoken within Mexico's borders. Such diversity of language and culture cannot help but complicate the task of promoting intercommunication and education.

#### Policies of the Past

Students of Latin American history are familiar with the disastrous effects of the Conquest on the indigenous populations of the New World. In many areas, and especially in Mexico, the native population was sharply reduced in the early decades of colonization by disease, enslavement and other causes. At the same time, however, the promulgation by the Crown of the "New Laws" for the protection of the Indian in 1550 and the work of such men as Las Casas, Zumárraga, and Quiroga, among others, demonstrate an early concern for Indian survival and welfare. Whether or not the New Laws were effectively enforced is debatable, but official interest in the Indian did exist. Indians could appeal injustices in Spanish courts, and

restrictions were placed on the repartimiento of Indians (minimum wage to be paid, maximum of hours to be worked, etc.). Nevertheless, as the Colonial Period progressed and the encomienda system and strong missionary movements died out, social concern with regard to the position of the Indian decreased. The general trend was toward extended isolation in terms of social interchange. During this period the hacienda system became entrenched in the Latin American social and economic structure and the position of the Indian became reduced to that of mere peonage.\*

With Independence in the early 1800's, one would hope to find a corresponding improvement in the Indian's position. As is well-known, however, the Indian actually lost the somewhat limited "protection" he had enjoyed under the Spanish Crown. The reaction of the Yaqui Indians in the wars of the salt works in 1824-25 is but one of many examples of the disillusionment on the part of the Indian when he realized that little or no gain had been made in the process of independence. The Indian was actually confused. Considered a full citizen, required to contribute to the maintenance of the "nation," he was unaware of the rights he had gained and thus unable to apply them for his

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\*Eric Wolf (1959:202-211 and 231) gives a detailed discussion of this phenomenon and remarks on the deepening cleavage between Indian and non-Indian during the post-Conquest period.

own benefit and protection. Though aimed at large private landholders and the Church, the Reform Laws of 1860 added to the Indian's plight, for this attack on corporate holdings also dealt a serious blow to the native communal landholdings (the corporate entity of the Indian community being a long-established tradition). After Independence, the hacienda system became even more entrenched, forcing the Indians into deeper isolation.

Though there were a few vestiges of social concern in Mexico during the 19th century,<sup>\*</sup> they obviously had little influence at the time, since the situation of complete disregard for the Indian and his cruel exploitation at the hands of the latifundistas<sup>\*\*</sup> contributed to the unrest and dissatisfaction which ultimately led to the Revolution of 1910.

It was not until the beginning of the 20th century that a genuine preoccupation with the well-being of the Indian developed and that definite steps were taken to achieve that goal (Comas, 1953:245). Thus, for a period

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<sup>\*</sup> Luis Villoro (1950:167-179) draws heavily on the writings of Francisco Pimentel, whose book MEMORIA SOBRE LAS CAUSAS QUE HAN ORIGINADO LA SITUACION ACTUAL DE LA RAZA INDIGENA DE MEXICO Y MEDIOS PARA REMEDIARLA, written in 1864, is a definite example of interest in the problem, though it may stand alone in that period.

<sup>\*\*</sup> As noted by Cometta Manzoni (1949:53), as well as by many others. Latifundistas are owners of large landed estates, or latifundias.

of nearly four hundred years the Indian has remained in a disadvantageous if not disastrous position, exploited, subjugated, and disdained. His withdrawal in reaction to this treatment is one of the elements contributing to the persistence of the various separate and autonomous cultural groups which existed in pre-Hispanic times. The very nature of the Mexican countryside, which no doubt had a part in the creation of these culturally distinct groups, has been an important factor in their survival, and constitutes a major obstacle to the Instituto's work in some areas.

It is customary to point to the Mexican Revolution of 1910 as the initial manifestation of concern for the Indian and the improvement of his lot. Interesting to note, however, is the establishment of an Indian-oriented organization in the first decade of the 20th century, i.e., before the Revolution. The Mexican Indianist Society (Sociedad Indianista Mexicana--SIM) was founded by the Magistrate of the Supreme Court of Justice, Lic. Francisco Belmar, during the reign of Porfirio Díaz (himself part Mixtec Indian), with the intention of studying and promoting the evolution of the Indians (Ballesteros-Gaibrois and Ulloa Suárez, 1961:215-216).<sup>\*</sup> Various worthy projects were planned (including Indian education and castellani-

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<sup>\*</sup>See also Comas (1953:70-83) for more complete coverage.

zación, studies and annual congresses, publications, etc.) and there was general acceptance of the plans among prominent members of Mexican society. The publication of a monthly bulletin was started and continued from 1911 to 1914. One Indianist Congress was held in 1911. However, the dictatorship of Díaz apparently preferred to manipulate ignorant masses and rejected a number of the conclusions of the Congress and many of the projects of the Society, smothering the voices of those who were truly concerned (Comas, 1953:74-78).

With the outbreak of the Mexican Revolution came a recognition of the Indian past and an exaltation of Indian culture and heritage. Accompanying this recognition was an awareness of the prevailing poor living conditions and a strong desire for their improvement. Article 27 of the Constitution of 1917 was intended as a definite step towards urgent social reform. The comprehensive study of Ballesteros-Gaibrois and Ulloa Suárez (1961:143) points out the fact that this legislation marked the return to a paternalistic position regarding the status of the Indian, but, at the same time, with specific avoidance of any declaration of the real existence of discrimination. That is, the Indian was not considered as a "racial" or cultural entity, but rather given special attention because of his socio-economic and educational level. From that point on, no Indian legislation as such was passed, although work



laws, at least, took into consideration the special problems of Indians and their cultural level.

The extreme importance of land to the Indian can be traced throughout the history of the *New World*, for the Indian has generally been strongly tied to the land, if not by force, then by tradition. Legislation in Mexico recognized this (the Revolution itself being a cry of protest and a demand for agrarian reform) in the vast redistribution of land, accomplished especially under Obregón, Calles, and Cárdenas. Communal lands, a very basic part of the Indian way of life, were recognized and special safeguards established for ejido proprietors, the majority of whom were Indians, though, of course, the laws were not considered specifically "Indian."

With the Revolution, education became a major concern of the nation. Before 1910, public instruction had been sorely neglected. Benito Juárez had made an attempt to establish schools and improve the availability of education, but the Porfiriato put an end to such "innovations." At the time of the Revolution, 72% of the Mexican population was illiterate. In 1911, the Federal Congress approved a project in which the Government assumed economic responsibility for national education for the first time. During the periods of Obregón and especially of Calles, "Rural Schools " (born out of the Revolution) were established. These, in effect, became the hogar colectivo of the Indian,

combating illiteracy and teaching basic knowledge of Spanish, mathematics, history, etc., as well as civic orientation (rights and duties of citizenship) and certain general skills--to children and adults alike.\* The creation of these schools was a great step forward. However, in 1944 half of the Mexican population was still illiterate (Ballesteros-Gaibrois and Ulloa Suárez, 1961:146), due largely to the cultural and linguistic isolation of many Indian groups and the consequent resistance to change. This was especially true where the approach was highly idealistic and impractical, with stress on classical education which had no relevance for the Indian. Also, more often than not, promoters of education for the Indian had little knowledge of the language and culture of the group they were trying to educate.

Another development was the creation in 1923 of "Cultural Missions." These were intended to complement the Rural Schools in bringing basic education to small towns and villages. The emphasis was on improving the professional preparation of rural teachers and stimulating isolated population centers to maximize their own resources (Ballesteros-Gaibrois and Ulloa Suárez, 1961:146-147).

In 1936, the Autonomous Department of Indian Affairs (Departamento Autónomo de Asuntos Indígenas) was established

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\*Cometta Manzoni (1949:61-69) gives a thorough discussion of this aspect of education.

by President Cárdenas, in recognition of the special needs and problems created by a predominantly autochthonous cultural element. However, Ballesteros-Gaibrois and Ulloa Suárez (p. 147) also note that this pre-supposed the acceptance of a state of being "Indian" and of being "non-Indian" within the Mexican nation. In 1946, this department became a part of the Secretariat of Public Education. Evidently there had been much criticism of the specialized department, which was accused of the tendency to separate the European and native cultures rather than to unite them.

Also notable in 1936 is the creation of Banks of Crédito Ejidal, which gave the ejido property holders much-needed technical as well as financial assistance to use and improve the lands which had been distributed to them earlier (Cometta Manzoni, 1949:59-61).

The year 1940 is a good point at which to pause to consider the growing tide of social consciousness in general, for in that year at Pátzcuaro, Michoacán, a conference took place which was to have great influence over future Indian-oriented actions in Mexico as well as in other Latin American countries. Previously, there had been various international indications of concern regarding the Indian situation in America,<sup>\*</sup> but relatively

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\*For example, the VII International Conference of American States in Montevideo in 1933, which proposed a meeting of experts in Indian affairs; or the Assembly of

little had been accomplished. The Congress of Pátzcuaro marked the beginning of "Indianism" organized on a continental basis. This, together with previous proposals for meetings of "experts," demonstrated international recognition of the existence of the Indian problem. Up to this point, there had been no single generally accepted method of approaching the Indian problem. One will remember how the Mexican Government after the Revolution was unwilling to recognize an "Indian problem" as such for fear of demonstrating discrimination. This is the basic dilemma of whether or not a specific Indianist policy should be adopted. In 1933, Saénz gave voice to this basic legislative problem. He criticized the general tendency in Peru to continue considering the Indian as an "extra-social" class, proclaimed by special laws, special schools, and special cooperative plans, to be mentally incapable and socially less than the average citizen (Saénz, 1933:298-299). However, he recognized the necessity of singling out the Indian in order to be able to help him, and noted that the nebulous attitude of the Republic in not doing so did not achieve anything. His main concern was that the traditional division of "superior-inferior" be avoided at all costs, giving emphasis to national integration and

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the Pan American Institute of Geography and History in 1935, which urged the establishment of scientific institutions for the study of the Indian situation (Ballesteros-Gaibrois and Ulloa Suárez, 1961:215).

unity.

In 1950, Comas, then Director of the Inter-American Indianist Institute, noted that the prevalent view in Latin American countries with large Indian populations seemed to be that all legislation of a tutelar nature was harmful and discriminatory and that general laws should be applicable to the Indians. Comas mentioned that a special service called "Procuradores de Indígenas" (Indian Attorneys) had been created in order to guard against the non-execution of such laws. The procuradores are given the responsibility of defending and helping the Indians in obtaining their rights before the Public Administration. He remarked that Mexico was the most genuine representative of this Indianist policy, though this type of service had been created in most of the countries involved in the problem. With the help of experienced anthropologists and technicians familiar with the life and culture of different indigenous groups, this system would make possible the application of general laws with sufficient flexibility to make them efficient and yet recognize and respect the Indian personality (Comas, 1953:250).

Perhaps the strongest supporter of this type of Indianist policy was Gamio, who defended the position that the laws should be the same for Indians as for whites or Mestizos (1966:207). He even went so far as to suggest that "the needs and aspirations of today's indigenous

groups are basically equal with those of other social groups which make up the national population, and thus all should be governed by the same laws."

More recently, however, other views have come to be accepted. Caso, for example, lays stress on a specifically Indianist policy which aims at preparing the Indian to take his place as a full-fledged citizen, (just as special considerations are given to child labor). He concedes that no one wants to return to the Indian cultures of four hundred years ago, and that no one wants to divide the country into various indigenous nations or resort to the discriminatory system of reservations. Naturally one should speak in terms of a Mexican--not Indianist--policy, a national policy. To do otherwise would be discriminatory. But this, he points out, is the ideal for which one should strive. The situation in the reality of present-day conditions demands a special policy, aimed at remedying this need as soon as possible. Of course, this policy is not merely legal, but includes definite action to achieve the ultimate goal of incorporation (Caso, 1958:39-41).

In his *INDIOS DE AMERICA*, Mac-Lean y Estenós treats this policy dilemma thoroughly, presenting contrary opinions and then coming out strongly in favor of a definite Indianist policy with special protective legislation, which at the same time would not fail to recognize Indian attributes and their rights as human beings (1962:

44-50). He does not advocate a policy of "charity," as the Indian is not a beggar or an indigent. For this reason he condemns the paternalistic policy established by the Mexican Constitution of 1917, which, while not recognizing the Indian formally, made many concessions without requiring anything of the Indians in return, and denounces it as having born no fruit in more than thirty years. Thus, Mac-Lean y Estenós joins Caso in urging legislation geared to the reality of the situation, with the purpose of making the Indian a free, respected, authentic citizen.

This more comprehensive approach is clearly evident in the results of the 1940 Conference in Pátzcuaro: an Inter-American Indian Institute (I.I.I.) was created and the establishment of separate national Indian Institutes recommended. The following, which appears on the cover of every issue of the BOLETIN INDIGENISTA, a publication of the I.I.I., succinctly explains its purpose:

→ The Inter-American Indian Institute, established by the First Inter-American Indian Congress (1940), has its legal basis in a Convention and is supported by quotas from ratifying governments. It serves as a clearing house for information on Indians and on methods of improving their social and economic conditions, and initiates, directs, and coordinates studies applicable to the solution of Indian problems or contributing to better knowledge of Indian life.

Generally speaking, ratification of the Conference was immediate in almost all the countries involved and gradually National Indian Institutes were established. The

Jan 1943  
(Culture)

Mexican Government founded its Instituto in 1949 (Ballesteros-Gaibrois and Ulloa Suárez, 1961: 236-238). Recognizing the difficulty of formulating a single concrete method directed at the improved development of all the American Indian groups, (since they differ so among themselves and in their geographic surroundings), the respective National Institutes were created to investigate and formulate methods for encouraging development. At the same time, the Inter-American Institute was planned to stimulate and coordinate the activities and methods of the various National Institutes, giving unity to the movement, and informing the separate entities of the work and progress of each (Gamio, 1966:15).

#### Present Theories

Since the end of the 19th century and the early part of the 20th, there would appear to have been great changes in attitudes and institutions concerning the plight of the Indian. In the days of Pimentel the only solution to the dilemma of the Indian seemed to be extermination or transformation. The Mestizo was "superior," and the Indian should strive to become like him (Villoro, 1950:176-179). Later, with the Revolution, the value of the Indian heritage was recognized. However, this was largely sentimentalized, and efforts to help the Indian, through the various above-mentioned institutions, continued to be aimed at changing him by imposing the values of the "superior" sectors of society. There was obviously a contradiction



between the esoteric, alien aspects of Indian culture, past and present, and the romantic national identification with this culture embodied in the ideals of the Revolution. Villoro (p. 195) suggests that this contradiction has been resolved by the new philosophy of indigenismo, which seeks to incorporate the Indian into the national society in order to assist him to achieve progress in the modern world, at the same time respecting and preserving his distinctive cultural personality. This in fact constitutes the theoretical basis of the Mexican Instituto Nacional Indigenista.

The purposes for which the Instituto was founded and for which it continues to strive are best expressed in this statement by its Director:

The clear and definitive end which we propose is to accelerate the evolution of the indigenous community in order to integrate it as soon as possible--without causing a disorganization in the community itself--, into the economic, cultural and political life of Mexico; that is, our purpose is to accelerate the change, otherwise inevitable, which will bring the indigenous community to transform itself into a Mexican peasant community and, the indigenous region, into a Mexican region with all the characteristics which the other regions of the country have (Caso, 1958:77).

He goes on to say (pp. 77-78) that it is not a matter of completely changing these communities, for the instigators of change (in this case those of the Instituto) certainly do not have the right to destroy the positive and useful

aspects of the indigenous cultures. Among these he lists their sense of community and mutual help, popular arts, and folklore. Cultural variety, he writes, is necessary to enrich the highest forms of culture, whether it be within a nation or the world. The Instituto proposes to alter only the negative aspects, ideas which have become useless, such as those relating to the causes of natural phenomena, of disease and methods of curing; old, unscientific techniques of exploiting the land and the forests and of raising and caring for cattle, chickens, etc.

However, Caso states (p. 103), it is one of the fundamental principles of the Instituto that the transformation of communities be brought about in such a way that the social changes will be lasting and will come about without the tensions and conflicts resulting from the use of force. This means that change must come by education and example, invitation rather than obligation, demonstration instead of compulsion, transformation rather than destruction.

In the quoted work, Caso employs the term "integrate." Elsewhere he uses "incorporate," as do Villoro and others in speaking of Indianist work. Other common terms are "acculturate" and "assimilate." The observer may be pardoned if he is perplexed by the multiplicity of terms in the special language of culture change. To some, the words "integrate" and "incorporate" may imply a superior-inferior relationship between the two or more entities interacting,

though by strict dictionary definition this is not necessarily the case. The two terms do, however, convey the meaning of unifying or merging into a whole. This is the impression one receives from Caso's statement of the "clear and definitive end" which the Instituto proposes. The absolute tone of his statement suggests that the Instituto is really interested in the "assimilation" of the Indian, "assimilate" meaning, according to Webster, "to take up and make part of itself or oneself; absorb and incorporate." However, one must be aware of the socio-anthropological usage of the word. According to Aguirre Beltrán, a leading Mexican anthropologist and Indianist, the process of assimilation implies total incorporation, and consequently, the complete participation of the individual in the culture which admits him (1957:36). At least in theory, the intent of the Instituto is merely to change negative aspects of the Indian cultures. It is an attempt at guided "acculturation," "acculturation" being a reciprocal process of change which occurs from the contact of groups participating in different cultures (p. 49). Each group is expected to learn from the other and incorporate something new from the other culture into its own, without, however, being overwhelmed by that culture and thus becoming a part of it. As Kroeber states, there is no need for the approximation which occurs between the two cultures to

continue and end in "assimilation" (1948:428-429).\*

Kroeber seems to provide the key to the confusion of terms used by the Instituto when he writes that

normally, we may expect assimilation only when the outlook of one society is inclusive and when this society is definitely the stronger and its culture the more advanced. In the majority of cases the populations somewhat balance each other in size, have separate territories, are mutually influenced, but expect to retain separate ways and customs, and do retain them. In other words, the acculturation is more or less reciprocal, but incomplete. Each people is also likely to be developing new peculiarities even while it is taking over culture from the other.

Ideally and theoretically the Mexican Instituto Nacional Indigenista is attempting to guide the process of acculturation. In theory this is much more acceptable than frankly stating that the Instituto is directing the process of assimilation. However, the Mexican situation is very much like that which Kroeber describes when he explains the instances when one should expect assimilation to take place. The Mexican society as a whole is much more advanced than the indigenous societies with which it interacts, and though in the past its world view has excluded the Indian, to the extent that the Instituto succeeds in its work that world view will become much more inclusive. Thus it appears almost inevitable that the Instituto is in fact working

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\*Beals (1967b:450) also deals with this in his discussion on "Acculturation."

toward eventual assimilation.

Indeed, the problem of how to direct acculturation without having it result in assimilation is an extremely difficult one and one of no small significance, for we grapple with it today in our society with regard to our minority groups. Is it possible for a minority group, which in essence is what the Indians are in Mexico, to undergo certain changes in its culture as a result of contact with a stronger encircling group without eventually becoming a part of that group and completely, or nearly so, losing its own identity as a group? What can be done so that a group retains its pride and self-respect, while undergoing basic changes in its traditional way of life? Too often the "acculturated Indian" is a disappointment to the observer, for he has taken on many of the negative aspects of the society which has influenced his change. Often Mestizos do not seem to have the pride in their persons that the Indian has, nor do they have the traditions and familiar customs and social expectations on which to rely.\* This so-called transitional stage is a very uncomfortable one, both for the participant and for the observer. Is there a way to control or guide the changes which take place, so that this loss of pride and of foundation does not occur?

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\*See Gillin, "Ethos and Cultural Aspects of Personality" (1952:209).

This dilemma is one of the basic reasons for the existence of the Instituto Nacional Indigenista. Most assuredly, it has not solved this problem, though the Instituto was established twenty years ago. Nevertheless, it is constantly making an effort to come to some solution or at least to modify or facilitate the transition.

In an important work on culture change, EL PROCESO DE ACULTURACION (1957), Aguirre Beltrán says of Indianist action:

There is no question that, even without the intervention of Indianist action, "acculturation," as an irreversible phenomenon in a world which modern means of communication have made small, will continue its march. The power of expansion and penetration of the industrial culture will not yield before physical obstacles or ethnic boundaries, even when these are represented by the most primitive cultures. But it is also evident that, without Indianist action, the socio-cultural change which the Indian groups will have to experience, can turn into the disorganization of the subordinated peoples and not into their productive integration within the Mestizo culture. Examples of disorganization and extinction of Indian groups, especially jungle-dwellers, in their uncontrolled contact with the national culture, can be pointed out in all the Mestizo-American countries (p. 141).

There are those who will say that the Indian problem is a problem of maturity, that its solution is a matter of time. This is a valid point, for it will undoubtedly take a great deal of time and patience to "solve" the problem. However, modern man now has some of the tools necessary to speed the process and, as Ballesteros-Gaibrois and Ulloa

Suárez (1961:200) put it, modern times do not permit the slow sedimentation characteristic of the past. The "affront to civilization" demands that modern man intervene in the historic process.

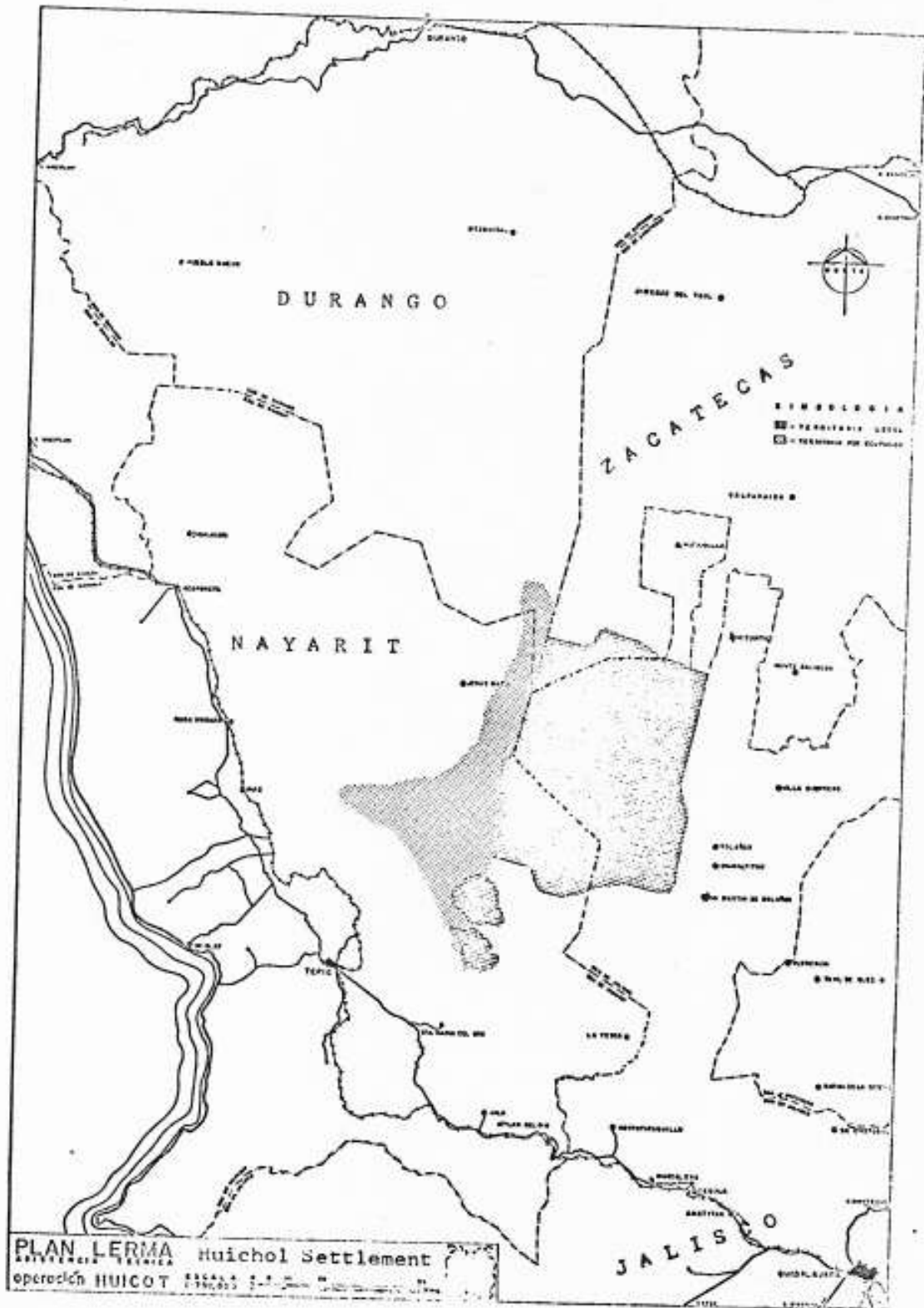
## CHAPTER II. INTRODUCTION TO THE HUICHOLS

### The Geographical Setting

Traveling by plane into the Sierra Madre Occidental one is immediately struck by its immensity and untouched ruggedness. Even from the air the isolation of the difficult terrain--mile after mile of high ridges and steep ravines--is pervasive. The plane with its penetrating engine noise seems anachronistic in this setting. This mountain range, stretching through the northern arm of the state of Jalisco and the eastern section of Nayarit, constitutes one of the most difficult and hostile regions of Mexico. The high peaks (with an average altitude of about 2,000 meters, 1,000 meters minimum to 3,000 meters maximum) and the deep barrancas (gorges) and tortuous canyons present very real barriers to human penetration.

The land itself does not invite the settler. Fertile farming land is scarce. There are forested areas where oak, cedar, madrona, walnut and a variety of evergreens thrive, making the potential for lumbering great, if only a feasible route for access by land could be found. However, since there are no roads of any kind, travel in the area is by foot, mule, horse or, more recently, by plane. There are mineral deposits, quite possibly very rich, but again the lack of communications has so far made mining





uneconomical. Nevertheless, the vast expanses of the Sierra offer possibilities for grazing, as many Mestizos from neighboring areas have found.

The formidable terrain affords great contrasts in geographic and climatic conditions, permitting one to hike in a few hours from the crisp air of scrub-pine-covered heights to the warm, tropical depths of a guava-producing barranca. Generally the climate of the region is moderate, with dry winters, the rainy season starting in early or mid-June and continuing until mid-October with a yearly average of some 800mm. This is considered to be between the averages registered in Zacatecas and Nayarit and thus rather favorable (Villa Rojas, 1961:5). However, the fact that the yearly rainfall is concentrated in a few consecutive months is highly significant. For the observer new to this area, the changes in the panorama from the end of May to the middle of August are incredible. In April and May (when I flew into the region) the countryside is brown, parched and crackling--in many instances truly harsh and desolate in appearance. Rivers dwindle to streams or trickles, or even disappear, until the downpours of summer bring them literally roaring back to life, swelling to such size and velocity as to present very real hazards to travelers and serving to isolate some areas to an even greater degree than that experienced throughout the remainder of the year. The hillsides and ravines take

on a lush green pleasing to the eye. The whole area is totally transformed.

Avocado, peach, apple, guava, crillo plum, gualama, cereus (pitshaya--a cactus), guanacamote, guamuchil, and sotol are found in the region. Among the wild life of the Sierra are rabbits, squirrels, deer, wild boars, grouse, mourning doves, turkey buzzards, sparrow hawks, red-tailed hawks, wild turkeys, eagle owls, ravens, blue magpies, screech owls, eagles, macaws, parrots, scorpions and snakes of various types (Villa Rojas, 1961:7), including the rattlesnake and the very dangerous "Durango" scorpion.

#### The Huichols Today

From the air one sees scattered signs of human life in this isolated territory. Here the Huichol Indians, numbering some 8-10,000, make their home.

Just as the season of the year dictates the observer's first impression and reaction to Huichol country, so climatic conditions and geography influence the nature of Indian life in this region, as would be expected in a primitive or transitional society which has not yet achieved even relative control of its environment. Perhaps the most striking example of the dictates of geography can be seen in the settlement pattern.

There are native politico-religious centers throughout the Sierra, where people congregate for special festivals

or for meetings of the traditional authorities. Here one finds a big calihuey,\* a house of the authorities with a jail (cepo) and meeting room, and small dwellings, some housing the few permanent inhabitants and the remainder serving to lodge those who come during the year for the ceremonies and fiestas. These ceremonial centers are the only Huichol groupings which in any way resemble "villages," and they are deserted most of the year. The Huichols live in small ranchos, generally in the extended family pattern, an older man serving as head of a rancho community which consists of his wife or wives,\*\* his children and their families, perhaps his brothers and sisters and their families and his cousins and theirs. However, even within the ranchos the nuclear families (the ideal consisting of about six children) exercise considerable independence and mobility.

Scattered over several thousand square miles of the Sierra, usually at considerable distances from one another, these small groupings of huts are invariably located near some permanent source of water, no matter how meager. Some Huichols settle on the ridge of a barranca through which a river flows, some even down in the tropical lowlands of the barranca itself, though for the most part the intermediate

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\* The Huichols use this term for the indigenous temple (tuki) when speaking Spanish. Calihuey is presumably an adaptation of the Aztec weyi kali meaning "big house."

\*\* Polygamy is not uncommon, though monogamy is more prevalent.

zones are preferred. Where there are no rivers, settlements will be found in the vicinity of a spring which trickles forth with some degree of reliability. There are even cases in which the water is naturally slightly saline and the people have become accustomed to its unique flavor.

An agricultural people, the Huichols are close to nature and to their land. Just as the region is transformed during the rainy season, so is the pace of Huichol life, for these are the months of highest activity. Fields must be prepared, crops planted and cared for, and ultimately harvested and stored for the long months which pass before the next rains. Obviously, the amount of water available throughout the year and the nature of the land determine to a large extent the Huichols' agricultural technology which expectedly is slash and burn, digging stick maize planting of the ladera type, that is, along the forested slopes rather than on the level mesas. The slopes are preferred because the Huichols, ignorant of water control, are afraid that on level ground "the maize would drown."

While maize, (primarily as tortillas) forms the basis of the Huichol diet, it can be supplemented by beans and squash and occasionally by deer meat or beef, the former always and the latter often, the result of a ceremonial sacrifice. Some Huichols own a few cattle, perhaps a horse or mule. Chickens, turkeys, and/or hogs can also be

found among certain households. Wild fruits are an addition to the traditional fare and some Huichols cultivate the peach, guava, and crillo plum.

During the winter months the lands lie idle. People take up their embroidery, weaving, or bead work. The Huichol male's ceremonial costume consists of full pants and a full-sleeved, open-sided shirt of muslin which his wife, mother or sister elaborately embroiders for him, plus a triangular muslin cape with a red flannel border, thrown over his shoulders, a long woven belt wound several times around his waist, a shorter belt with very small, individual embroidered or woven bags hanging from it (apparently strictly ornamental), often a scarf at the neck, leather thong sandals, and one or more woven or embroidered shoulder bags. He also wears beaded bracelets, rings, necklaces, and occasionally earrings. A straw hat decorated with squirrel tails, flowers, and colorful feathers completes his garb. Everyday dress consists of the muslin pants and shirt, either plain or sparingly embroidered, and the belt. The woman's dress is rarely as elaborate as the man's. The general custom is to dress one's man well and wear an unembroidered multi-colored percale skirt and blouse and a large scarf draped over the head. Beaded jewelry and embroidered bags are also part of the woman's attire. On rare occasions one might see a woman wearing a voluminous embroidered skirt. The Huichols

use the most brilliantly colored yarns, threads, and beads available, explaining that such are the colors of the peyote<sup>\*</sup> visions. The Indians do not make the materials necessary for their clothing and crafts, but must send to Tepic or to Mezquitic for them or purchase them from traveling merchants passing through the area. The latter is generally highly unsatisfactory, because of the high prices charged.

The men fashion surprisingly musical violins and small guitars by hand, in addition to preparing bows and arrows for hunting, arrows and votive bowls for offerings, straw stools and chairs, etc. Huichol houses are built of adobe mud and stones, or canes, with thatched roofs and dirt floors. There are no windows and the fire, which is often on the floor (though some have raised hearths and work areas), sends smoke throughout the room and out the hole in the center of the roof or under the edges of the thatch.

Most homes have a hard clay or metal comal (griddle) and most Huichols have succumbed to the metal corn-grinder. Other essential utensils include the stone metate, for

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\* Peyote (Lophophora williamsii) is a small hallucinogenic cactus, which when taken in sufficient quantities produces visions surrounded by brilliant colors. This cactus plays an extremely important role in Huichol life, forming an integral part of the symbolic complex of deer-maize-peyote which constitutes the basis of the Huichol world view. For further information regarding the significance of peyote to the Huichols see Benítez (1968), and Furst and Myerhoff (1966).

grinding the coarse corn meal to the desired consistency for making tortillas. Gourds are used for water, tobacco, nawá\* and the occasional beans, but galvanized pails are becoming quite common as household items. In other words, the Huichols are subsistence farmers, but they are not self-sufficient. Coffee, sugar, and salt must also be purchased from the outside.

Toward the end of the dry season supplies often run short and whole families find themselves obligated to travel to the coast to work on the plantations in order to survive until it is time to plant again. This aspect of Huichol life provides for some direct contact outside.

The Huichol is generally an agreeable, self-assured individual, having great pride in his heritage. That he has his own language helps to emphasize this fact. He is not necessarily gregarious, spending months at a time in a remote rancho, seeing no one but immediate relatives. He is not inclined to associate with Mestizos, and may be reticent in their presence. However, when discussing Huichol-Mestizo relations, he will often express a strong belief in his own cultural superiority, even though he may not feel great solidarity within the group beyond his own immediate relatives, or, at most, his own district.

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\* A maize beer, called tejuino by Spanish-speaking people of the region; also known as tesguino in other parts of Mexico.



Huichols are very loving people with regard to children. Any child is loved and fed by all.

The Huichols are an extremely religious group. Their beliefs, which have remained largely unchanged down through the centuries, pervade all aspects of Huichol life, and will be discussed in greater detail in later chapters. Though the Huichol may not be gregarious, he is capable of considerable joviality during ceremonial gatherings and fiestas, and expresses himself eloquently in music.

#### Demography

How many of these individuals exist in the Sierra Madre Occidental? Where did they originate, if not here? And what is the significance of this group in relation to modern Mexico?

The approximate figure of 8-10,000 has been cited. Due to the very limited communications and the type of settlement prevalent in this area, an even moderately accurate census is impossible.\* The most detailed study to be carried out on the region was that of the "Operación Huicot" of the Plan Lerma (PLAT), a plan for the development of the region surrounding the Lerma, Chapala and Santiago Rivers. The Santiago and its tributaries run

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\* Indeed, I "happened upon" a community of Huichols of which the local Center of the Instituto was not aware, at a mere two hours' distance by jeep!

through the state of Nayarit, the northern part of Jalisco, and the southern part of Zacatecas and Durango. In the preliminary studies for "Operación Huicot" (which derives its name from the Indian groups, Huichol, Cora, and Tepehuán), the Huichol population was listed as 4,441, inhabiting 4,107.5 km.<sup>2</sup> divided into five main groups or communities: Tuxpan, San Sebastián, Santa Catarina, San Andrés Cohamiata, and Guadalupe Ocotán (shown on the accompanying map). The population density is thus extremely low, resulting in 1.1 inhabitant per square kilometer (PLAT, 1966:69). However, in addition to these 4500, one must consider the various groups of Huichols who do not live within the five main "communities"--mainly in the state of Jalisco--, but are scattered over a wide area in isolated settlements, many of which are in Nayarit. According to "Operación Huicot" (p. 11), these Huichols number some 3800, bringing the total population to approximately 8300.

Furst (1967:39), who has conducted extensive studies on the Huichol aboriginal religion and world view, accepts the figure of 8-10,000 surviving Huichols. The well-known Mexican anthropologist Villa Rojas (1961:11) allows them a total population of no more than 9000, while Nahmad Sittón, anthropologist and Director of the Instituto's Cora-Huichol Coordinating Center in Tepic, Nayarit, estimates that there are approximately 10,000 Huichols, basing this



on the figures of the field workers in the National Campaign for the Eradication of Malaria (Campaña Nacional de Eradicación de Paludismo--CNEP). Their statistics are probably the most accurate available, since these men have visited and disinfected every known dwelling in the Sierra.

### History

The history of the Huichols is rather difficult to trace. One finds brief references in isolated texts, but generally these Indians have been neglected by historians. Lumholtz (1960:22-23), a Norwegian ethnographer who worked among the Huichols in the late 1890's and who left detailed accounts of his observations, merely mentions that though the Huichols have a certain racial relationship with the Aztecs, they belong to the tribes which have continued in "barbarism," maintaining themselves up to the present in their inaccessible mountains. He also states that according to their traditions, they arrived from the south.

The native inhabitants of the states of Jalisco and Nayarit experienced their first contact with the Spanish conquerors in 1524, when Francisco Cortés de San Buena-ventura, a relative of Hernán Cortés, led an expedition into the area in search of the legendary Amazons. However, Western Mexico (excluding the Sierra Madre range) was not truly conquered until 1530-1531, when the notorious Nuño de Guzmán cut his way through Michoacán, Jalisco and Nayarit

to Sinaloa. The mountainous regions remained impenetrable, affording protection and refuge to the "indomitable" Coras and Huichols until the early part of the 18th century when an agreement was finally reached between the Indians and the Spaniards in which the Indians were awarded free passage from the Sierra to the coast to obtain salt, a basic commodity the lack of which had brought them to the conference table.\*

Thus the Spaniards entered the heart of the Sierra Madre Occidental for the first time in 1722. However, the Indian submission was not complete, and bloody encounters still took place. Lumholtz (1960:22) notes the subsequent entrance of Franciscan missionaries and the nominal Catholicizing of the native population, but points out that at the time of his visit (the 1890's) the five churches which had been built were in ruins and no Catholic priest was living among the Huichols. In 1930, Mendizábal (p. 131) also emphasized the fact that in spite of glowing descriptions of the results obtained from the efforts of missionaries among the Cora and Huichol, their cultural transformation must have been superficial. Except in insignificant details, he said Spanish and Catholic influences were barely perceivable in religion or ideology, despite long historic contacts with the general population of the states

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\* See Mendizábal (1930) for a detailed study of the nominal conquest of Northwestern Mexico, especially pp. 53-64 and pp. 127-131.

of Nayarit and Jalisco.

Conjecture based on Huichol tradition provides the best explanation of Huichol history. Furst and Myerhoff (1966) propose a reconstruction of Huichol history based on an origin tradition and data collected from native informants. It does coincide somewhat with the study by Lumholtz, but is more detailed and differs in that the authors suggest an original migration into the plateau of north-central Mexico from the north--perhaps even from the southwest of what is now the United States--instead of from the south as Lumholtz suggests, followed by a later migration westward into the Sierra. The possibility that the ancestral Huichols were Chichimeca or Teochichimeca hunters and gatherers who adopted maize farming at a very late time, possibly not until the conquest, is also raised.\*

#### Cultural Persistence and the Concept of the "Region of Refuge"

The remarkable cultural persistence among the Cora and Huichol has been discussed by several anthropologists:

Both are remnants of groups which once were widely distributed; they are of particular interest because of their high retention of aboriginal culture traits and the great resistance they have shown to acculturation in modern times as well as in the past. No doubt their relative isolation and their rather special adaptation to life in a difficult mountain region have contributed to their conservative habits (Beals, 1967a:90).

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\*See also Sauer (1934:5-14).

The Huichols constitute at the present time the aboriginal group of greatest ethnographic interest in the whole vast extension which the northern and southern regions of the Sierra Madre Occidental encompass, inasmuch as, aside from having been able to maintain a greater cultural integration, they possess a high artistic refinement, as well as a markedly indigenous image of the Universe, as is revealed in their ceremonies, myths, and symbolism in general (Villa Rojas, 1961:4).

Strangely enough, although this would be a region and a population of extraordinary interest to anthropologists studying the causes of cultural persistence and the processes of change, the Cora-Huichol area has, with a few exceptions, virtually remained an anthropological terra incognita.

The effects of the geography of the Sierra cannot be overemphasized. Beals briefly mentioned the Huichols' unique adaptation to their environment. The protection and refuge the region afforded during the gradual conquest has also been noted. Aguirre Beltrán (1957:68-69) uses the term "regions of refuge"\* in EL PROCESO DE ACULTURACION,

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\* Aguirre Beltrán has developed this concept to the extent that he has recently published a book entitled REGIONES DE REFUGIO (1967), an extensive study with accent on social structure and community development, complementing his previously cited work which gave greater emphasis to cultural aspects. REGIONES DE REFUGIO discusses in depth the problem of contact and change in terms of the influence of the social structure on the process of integration. As the basis for the theories presented in this work, Aguirre Beltrán introduces the concept of the proceso dominical. He explains that the domination which technically and economically highly developed groups exercise over groups with less complex forms of life is one of the causal factors in the

when speaking of the culture shock of the Conquest which brought many Indian groups close to extinction. He explains how the hunting and gathering bands of the north could withdraw before the onslaught of the Spaniards and how a certain number of ethnic groups, established in central Meso-America, fled to the shelter of the mountains and in those "regions of refuge" escaped the most violent effects of culture shock. He goes on to say that before the inexorable push of industrialization the indigenous habitat is rapidly losing its old character of a "region of refuge" and is being exposed to culture shock. This is the basis for one of his main points: the responsibility of the anthropologist as an administrator of a regional development project to induce those cultural changes which will permit the indigenous community to survive the impact of industrialization. In the Huichol situation, this exposure is taking place less rapidly at present. Nevertheless, the Instituto Nacional Indigenista's Cora-Huichol Coordinating Center, created in 1960, has a fundamental role to play in guiding the process of change.

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evolution of cultures and of the societies which possess them. Proceso dominical indicates the forces at work which make this domination possible and the mechanisms which are initiated to maintain it.



### CHAPTER III.

#### INTRODUCTION TO THE CORA-HUICHOL COORDINATING CENTER

##### Integral and Intercultural Approaches

Since culture is an integrated whole comprised of all the multiple aspects of human behavior, it is evident that change in one aspect will unavoidably affect the others to some degree, no matter how slight. Culture is a living thing, the conscious or unconscious outgrowth of human activity and interaction. One cannot deal with it as if in a vacuum, isolating one aspect on which to concentrate and ignoring the remainder of the whole. Such an approach would be akin to that of a surgeon concerned only with the part on which he was operating, oblivious to blood pressure, respiration, or heart beat. The comparison may seem extreme, but such a simplistic approach to culture change is all too often applied by agencies of culture change, frequently with disastrous results. Therefore, the importance of viewing culture as an integrated whole comprised of interrelated parts cannot be overstated.

If an attempt to change any aspect of a culture will invariably have repercussions in other areas, it follows, logically, that in programs of directed change,<sup>\*</sup> intense

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\* One may question whether the assumption that we are capable of controlling and guiding specific desired changes is not itself an ethnocentric view. The literature on guided culture change is replete with examples of even the most

and exhaustive studies must be conducted on the whole culture and the possible as well as probable results of the proposed change. Not only will the particular culture in the process of change be affected, but also, the surrounding cultures with which it comes in contact will feel the reverberations. In discussing the great scope and difficulty of the "Indian problem," especially in a country with a high percentage of Indian population, Comas (1953:249-250) notes that any planned improvement of the aboriginal sector presupposes measures of great social magnitude which cannot help but have political and economic repercussions affecting the whole country. Certainly on the regional level this is the case. Efforts to improve the Indian's standard of living and to educate him (and in so doing teach him his rights and how to defend them) will undoubtedly have some effect on the surrounding Mestizo areas. (It actually is nothing less than tampering with the status quo, an action which is bound to meet with some opposition, no matter how worthy the cause. This aspect of the Center's work will be seen in the chapter on Economics).

With these factors in mind, planners and directors of the Instituto have stressed the absolute necessity of an integral as well as intercultural approach in the work of the Coordinating Centers (Caso, 1958:55; Aguirre Beltrán,

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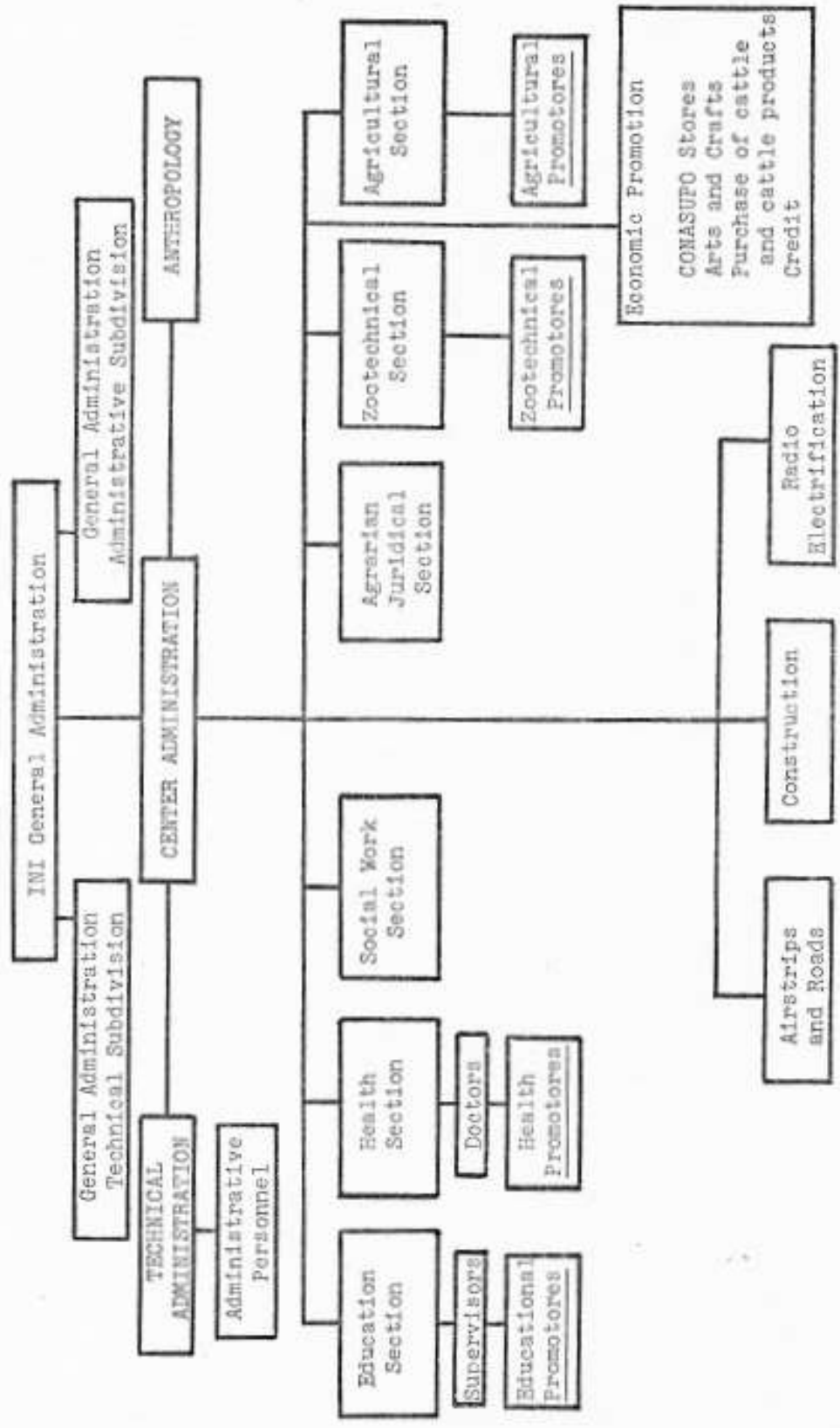
carefully planned changes going awry because one or another variable was overlooked. See, for example, Foster (1967).

1957:188-189). The "integral" approach means, for instance, that not only economic problems will be attacked, but also educational, sanitary, legal, etc., aspects and needs will receive attention. The "intercultural" approach signifies that the needs and responses of the whole region will be considered. Consequences of a certain change in both the indigenous and the Mestizo areas will be studied and taken into account, for the integrated development of the whole area is important. However, as Aguirre Beltrán (1957:203-204) points out, the greater part of the efforts should be focused upon the improvement of the more needy group, that is, the Indian population. This needs to be stressed since some change agents might be tempted to take the path of least resistance and expend their energies and resources on that group which is more vociferous in expressing its needs and also often less hostile to change, that is, the Mestizo population.

#### Structure of a Coordinating Center

The integral approach is manifest in the structure of the Coordinating Center, as seen in the accompanying "organogram." The INI General Administration and the Technical and Administrative Subdivisions are located in Mexico City. On the local level, each Coordinating Center is under the direction of a social anthropologist, whose function is more than merely administrative. The use of an

ORGANOGRAM OF THE STRUCTURE OF THE CORA-HUICHOL COORDINATING CENTER



anthropologist in this position is one of the unique aspects of the Instituto Nacional Indigenista and is indicative of the attitude and intent of the organization. In contrast to a colonial power, for example, which subordinates the anthropologist to the administrative functionary and uses him to facilitate the exploitation of the human and natural resources of the dependent territory, the Instituto subordinates the administrator to the anthropologist

because the goal pursued is the integration and development of a region, of its resources and inhabitants, and it is assumed that the social sciences specialist is better prepared to deal with the problems of living together which arise from the "contact" of human groups which participate in different cultures (Aguirre Beltrán, 1957:199).

Since the approach toward achieving this integration and development is to be an integral one, economists, agronomists, engineers, lawyers, teachers, doctors, social workers, veterinarians, etc., have an important role to play. However, as Caso (1958:79) points out, the main problem is not economic, sanitational or educational, but rather one of cultural change; that is, a cultural anthropological one. The function of the Center's anthropologist is to determine the changes needed, convince the people of the necessity of changes, guide and coordinate the methods and efforts of the technicians of the diverse sectors, and evaluate their results, but above all, it is his responsibility to study the culture in all its aspects, to try to

understand it, and try to determine the impact which the proposed innovations will have on it and on other groups which come in contact with it. In addition, the Director (the anthropologist) must present quarterly reports on the progress and problems of the Center to his superiors in the general offices in Mexico City for continuous evaluation.

Since the purpose of the Instituto is a complex one of instituting changes while promoting the preservation of certain values, practices and traditions, and since the problems of the Indians are not of the type for which solutions can be found simply in social reforms or intensive literacy campaigns, the Director needs to be able to rely on a skilled and specially prepared staff. In addition to the divisions of Anthropology (some Centers employ auxiliary anthropologists) and Technical Administration, the Center is comprised of sectors for Education, Health, Social Work, Agrarian Legal Problems, "Zootechnology,"\* Agriculture, Construction, and Economic Promotion.

#### Establishment of the Cora-Huichol Coordinating Center

The "Centro Coordinador Indigenista Cora-Huichol" was established on July 8, 1960. In announcing the formation of the new Center, the Mexican Government reiterated the basic philosophy of its Indianist policy: the Instituto

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\* The Spanish term for "animal husbandry" which I introduce here in English as a more sophisticated and suitable term.

Nacional Indigenista is the agency by which intensive integral action is to be carried out among the indigenous populations for the purpose of establishing an average social, cultural and economic level for the nation's population as a whole.\*

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\*The words of the Presidential decree, President Adolfo López Mateos presiding, were as follows:

CONSIDERING.--That the uniform development of the country fundamentally requires taking steps which permit the establishment of an average social, cultural and economic level for the Mexican population;

CONSIDERING.--That it would not be possible to achieve said goal if in the different zones of the country an intensive action were not carried out which permits the indigenous groups which inhabit them to approach that middle level;

CONSIDERING.--That in the States of Jalisco and Nayarit strong nuclei of Cora and Huichol Indians exist which constitute geographic and cultural groups, with their own characteristics, presenting noticeably low levels of life, with a precarious economy, great isolation and unhealthful living conditions;

CONSIDERING.--That the most effective form for solving the problems of this indigenous population is to coordinate, in an integral action, the efforts that the diverse dependencies of the Federal Government should carry out, and the collaboration which the Governments of the States of Jalisco and Nayarit can render;

CONSIDERING.--That in accordance with the law which created it, the Instituto Nacional Indigenista, has as its purpose the investigation of the problems relative to the indigenous nuclei of the country; the study and promotion before the Federal Executive of the means of improvement which are considered necessary;

The Cora-Huichol Coordinating Center employs the following personnel:

Center Administration: Director (anthropologist)  
Auxiliary anthropologist\*  
Secretary

Technical Administration: Administrator  
Administrative auxiliary  
Chauffeur  
Guardian (janitor)  
Electrician

Education: Head of the Section (professor)  
Normal-school teacher  
Supervisor of Education  
6 Promotores\*\*

Health: Medical doctor  
Medical "Assistant"\*\*\*

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the intervention in the relation of said means; the functioning as a consultative body of the official institutions in the matter and the undertaking of those works of improvement which the Executive entrusts to it... (Secretaría de Educación Pública, 1960:1-2).

\*The Auxiliary anthropologist, though still recorded as an employee has since been transferred to another region.

\*\*Only six promotores are employed by the Coordinating Center. There are, however, twenty-eight promotores actually working in the Sierra under the supervision of the Center. The state pays two of them, while the Secretariat of Public Education employs twenty.

\*\*\*The second doctor employed by the Center at the time of my visit was listed as "Medical Assistant" since he had not formally received his degree. He had been working as a rural doctor for the past four years, had completed his thesis which had been approved, and was then preparing to take the professional exams which represent the final step in the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Medicine. He has since passed his exams and has received the degree.



Agriculture: Head of the Section (agronomist)  
Topographer

Zootechnology: Head of the Section (veterinarian)

CONASUPO-INI Stores: Administrative auxiliary  
Supervisor of the stores

Also employed, though not listed on the official record, are a second secretary (actually funded by the Secretariat of Public Education), a social worker (the wife of the Director), a lawyer, two masons, and temporary employees for maintenance work and loading and unloading of supplies, and for the operation of the crafts store.

#### History of the Cora-Huichol Coordinating Center

Before the creation of a Coordinating Center, studies are completed on the area under consideration and the most appropriate site for the location of the Center is suggested. In the case of the Cora-Huichol region, Mezquitic, a Mestizo town of approximately 2,000 inhabitants in the extreme northern part of Jalisco, a few days' walk from most of the Huichol settlements, was selected and the Center was established there in 1961.

The first year or two was spent primarily in organizing and constructing the Center, and a good portion of the budget was allocated for that purpose. From 1962 to 1965 there was a special budget for the construction of roads. In 1962, however, the entire road budget, 200,000 pesos (\$16,000) was used for the construction of a landing

strip in Mezquitic. Today the Technical Administrator of the Center, Sr. Guillermo Flores Ventura, admits that the strip in Mezquitic might have been a poorly planned investment, especially now that the Center is no longer located there. It was beautifully finished, but there is a lack of personnel to maintain it. The main justification for the investment of funds at that time was the tremendously high cost of undertaking the construction of individual roads from the Sierra to Mezquitic. Sr. Flores estimates that each road would have cost from 3-5,000,000 pesos (\$240,000 to \$400,000). Thus it was considered wiser to invest in one necessary project, and one which could be completed within a reasonable period of time.

Sr. Flores entered the service of INI in 1964. It was in that year that the landing strip in Mezquitic was finished and that the construction workers were sent to begin work on another landing field in San Andrés Cohamiata, a Huichol settlement in the heart of the Sierra. This was singled out for the concentrated attention of the Coordinating Center because of its importance as a ceremonial center and its advantageous geographical setting. San Andrés is located in the midst of a very large plateau ideal for cultivation and development from the point of view of the INI technicians, if not from that of the natives themselves. (This diversity of opinion will be discussed in the chapter on Economics). In dealing with a population which does not

live in concentrated groups; the Instituto has decided to make full use of the ceremonial centers in an attempt to reach the greatest number of people and also encourage the possible development of centers of greater concentration. Therefore, as a matter of practicality, but also with a definite purpose in mind, the various activities of the Instituto are localized in the ceremonial centers of the Sierra (Nahmad Sittón, 1968).

In October of 1964, it was decided to move the Center from Mezquitic to Tepic, the capital of the neighboring state of Nayarit. It was evidently felt that the two locations were equally distant from the majority of Indian settlements and thus equally inconvenient in that respect. Tepic had decided advantages over Mezquitic in the practical realm of the administration of the Center. Referring back to the Presidential decree which created the Cora-Huichol Center, one will find that one of the considerations leading to its creation was

that the most effective form for solving the problems of this indigenous population is to coordinate, in an integral action, the efforts that the diverse dependencies of the Federal Government should carry out, and the collaboration which the Governments of the States of Jalisco and Nayarit can render (Secretaría de Educación Pública, 1960:1-2).

Thus, the Center, in accordance with its name, receives the cooperation and coordinates the efforts of various institutions, in addition to its own activities, in the realm of

Indianist action. Being located in Tepic offered immediate and direct contacts with the Governor of the state of Nayarit and good contacts with the Governor of Jalisco, whereas in Mezquitic one had to depend on communications which were not always reliable for contacts with either state administration. In addition, Tepic afforded direct relations with other governmental agencies, such as the Secretariats of Public Education (Secretaría de Educación Pública), Agriculture and Animal Husbandry (Agricultura y Ganadería), Health and Welfare (Salubridad y Asistencia), Public Works (Obras Públicas), Hydraulic Resources (Recursos Hidráulicos), the Department of Agrarian Affairs (Departamento de Asuntos Agrarios), the CONASUPO (Compañía Nacional de Subsistencias Populares--National Company of Popular Sustenance), and the National Association of Cattlemen (Compañía Nacional de Ganaderos), as well as with the state and federal facilities already in existence, such as the Central State Hospital.

Since the response of the Indians had not been overwhelming in Mezquitic, a change of location was not considered detrimental. The Director moved and in April of 1965 the remainder of the Center and administrative employees were transferred.

At first there were few visits by Indians to the Center and those who did visit came mainly to the city for supplies rather than to take up matters with the Instituto. Very gradually the work of the Center has become known and

its sphere of influence is growing. More Indians come to the Center each year and their visits and new-found knowledge of the assistance the Center can provide in turn generate other visits.

#### The Role of Geography in the Center's Work

Just as climate and geography play a leading role in the lives of the Huichols, so do they exert a major influence over the activities of the Instituto in this region. In fact, these are the most important aspects to be considered in examining the Cora-Huichol Coordinating Center, for these factors have actually played a decisive part in the form and direction of the Center in the years since its founding.

Physically, the geography of the region has presented great limitations to the Center and its work, the greatest of all being the very fact that it is located in a city of some 70,000 inhabitants, Tepic--a provincial capital--, instead of in the heart of the Indian territory. This location was necessitated by the lack of communications in the mountainous regions and by the tremendous dispersion of the native population. The Tepic location has the disadvantage that it is several days to a week's walking distance from most Huichol settlements. Due to the Instituto's influence air travel is now available from several communities, but fare is expensive (approximately 80 pesos--\$6.40--depending on the length of the trip) and not within

the meager budgets of the majority. Thus, contact with the Indians is limited. However, a surprising number do make the trip at one time or another.

This limited contact may be disadvantageous not only from the point of view of the attitude of the Indians toward the Center, but also from that of the attitude of the Center's personnel toward their work. That is, the personnel may not feel quite so closely related to or intensely involved in their work as in other Centers in which they would be living in Indian communities, in a situation in which they could not possibly escape constant awareness of the necessity and urgency of their jobs. The work here can become simply that, a "job," rather than a labor of great significance. Being situated in Tepic allows the personnel, when in the office and not "visiting" the Sierra, to have lunch downtown or retire to their homes in the city. This retreat from one's work may be quite healthful, indeed it is often advocated in this modern day, but in this case it could result in the lessening of awareness, a danger of which to be constantly mindful. (This is not to suggest that some of the personnel do not spend a considerable amount of time in the mountains.)

Also, since contact is not as close or continual as in a community-based center, personnel do not have easy access to the pulse beat of the group. Problems, individual and group feelings and opinions, occurrences in different

areas, must be ferreted out and undoubtedly much will pass unbeknownst to the Center.

On the other hand, the Center personnel may respond with increased determination and heightened interest to the challenge presented by the geographic obstacle. The difficulties of communication make each trip into the Sierra a more memorable experience for both the personnel and the Indians, who often travel long distances on foot to the locale to which INI personnel have come by plane in order to present their problems and grievances. Nevertheless, it is my feeling that the geography of the region is a more negative than positive factor in the formulation of the Center's work.

Aside from the attitudes of personnel and Huichols, another negative consequence of geography (and almost equally important) is that transportation expenses virtually consume the operating budget of the Center. As will be seen, the characteristically low funds are constantly juggled to survive the year, the transportation allocation always being depleted well before the year is up.

All these observations serve to point out the unique position of the Cora-Huichol Coordinating Center. This concept of uniqueness, rather than the negative aspects, receives the main emphasis of Center Director Salomón Nahmad Sittón. Nahmad, a social anthropologist who was previously INI Center Director in Yucatán, stresses the differences

between this region and others and inevitably concludes that different methods and approaches will have to be employed. The concepts, motivation, and ideals which form the basis of all Indianist work will, of course, be the same for the work of this Center as of any other, but the procedures will necessarily have to vary in keeping with the circumstances of a different situation (Nahmad Sittón, 1968).

This Center, then, is not a typical example of an INI Coordinating Center. Rather, it should be seen as one of many such Centers, each with its own unique problems, but all striving for the ultimate goal of national integration.



## CHAPTER IV. PREPARATION OF PERSONNEL

### Anthropologists as Administrators

One may question the effectiveness of social anthropologists as administrators. In a paper presented to the Sixth Inter-American Indianist Congress in April, 1968, Caso addressed himself specifically to this problem. He said the use of anthropologists to deal with an anthropological problem in many instances brought good results. In others, however, the results left something to be desired because the expert in community development must not be simply a scientific investigator (although investigation and study are a very important aspect of the work of a Center) but also an administrator capable of applying his scientific knowledge to concrete cases in order to achieve practical improvement and bring a community to the highest levels of development.

Thus the Center Director would be called upon to act in a capacity for which he had not received training in his preparation as a social anthropologist. He would have inadequate understanding of juridical problems and the proper channels for their solution within the community or in relation to surrounding areas. He would not be skilled in health problems, in the rational and productive use of the environment, in the selection of the best agricultural

resources, in the implementation of the most practical educational methods, etc. This does not mean that anthropological background and training should not be stressed. Obviously, the Director would have to understand the community--its viewpoints; actions and reactions; ideas and prejudices; sympathies and phobias; familial, social and political organization; and attitudes toward other communities and toward political, ecclesiastical and judicial authorities. He would need the training of a social anthropologist. However, in addition he would require specialized preparation in order to understand the legal, sanitational, economic or educational problems with which he would undoubtedly be faced. He would, of course, be able to count on his staff to deal with these particular problems, but as Director he would need sufficient knowledge to understand them, to coordinate the actions of his staff and make decisions in any given moment as to the type of action to be taken and the intensity with which it should be executed.

Though the ultimate authority on policies and practices in the field rests with the central offices of the Instituto in Mexico City, the position of Director of a Center is one of great responsibility, covering an almost overwhelming scope of activities and interests. It is quite obvious that a special type of preparation is necessary.

National Training Programs. In 1951, Indianists and

anthropologists were concerned with the problem of providing the anthropology student destined to Indianist work with the kind of training that would fill the gap between academic knowledge and the actual practice and experience which comes from working directly with people. In order to produce Caso's preferred social anthropologist, the Instituto Nacional Indigenista decided to create, in 1951, a department of applied anthropology, connected with the National School of Anthropology, in which specialized courses would be given to anthropologists who had finished the normal course of study. The courses would be coordinated with those of the School to facilitate teaching and give continuity to the program. In addition, the Instituto established a system of scholarships for students and interested anthropologists, thus allowing them to dedicate themselves exclusively to their studies and become familiar with the aims of the new Indianist policies.

Initially the courses offered were the following:

- Introduction to Social Anthropology
- Introduction to Applied Anthropology
- Methods of Investigation in Rural Communities
- Economic Problems of Indigenous Communities
- Educative Problems of Indigenous Communities
- Rural Hygiene

Later, in view of the experience obtained, certain modifications were made and courses on Social Structure and Culture and Personality added. Each course was to run one semester of six months. In addition to this theoretical and practical

preparation, three to six months of field work were added, to be undertaken in the indigenous zones where Coordinating Centers were functioning.

In 1955, Villa Rojas (1964:214-219) noted that the anthropologists who had followed this specialized program of studies actually formed the directive personnel of the Coordinating Centers or were in charge of evaluating the merits and defects of the work being realized. He also pointed out that to improve the program and give the students greater opportunity for close contact with the living reality in which they were to work, it was decided to move the classes from the National School of Anthropology in Mexico City to the Coordinating Center of Chiapas. This Center is located in the very heart of an important indigenous region, thus presenting students with a living anthropological laboratory and allowing them active and intense participation in the problems and concerns of the aboriginal world surrounding them. Because of the intensity of the program it was eventually reduced to a total duration of six months.

In the late 1950's and early 1960's national efforts to promote and direct popular participation in the process of development received special emphasis, which in turn brought to light the need for a better understanding of the techniques and methods of community development as instruments in the improvement of standard of living and the integration of marginal populations into the political,

social and economic life of the various countries. As previously noted, in several Latin American countries Indian groups constitute a very significant part of such marginal populations. In accordance with this increased emphasis, the need for specialized personnel became sharply apparent.

Inter-American Training Programs. In 1961, the Department of Social Affairs of the General Secretariat of the Organization of American States (OAS), in conjunction with the Inter-American Indianist Institute (I.I.I.), began a study of the specific requirements of personnel in community development work, with the intention of offering to the various member nations facilities for the training of such personnel through inter-American courses. As a first step it was considered appropriate to direct specialization to the development of indigenous communities, planning later to enlarge the scope of preparation through courses for specialists in programs of rural and urban community development.

Also in 1961 the I.I.I. presented a plan to the Inter-American Economic and Social Council (IA-ECOSOC), which was approved subject to its final acceptance and/or modification by the Department of Social Affairs and the availability of funds from the Department of Technical Cooperation. This was the beginning of Project 208 of the Program of Technical

Cooperation of the OAS.

The Project was to be located in two regions, representative of countries with similar characteristics and socio-economic conditions. In October, 1962, activities began in La Paz, Bolivia, and in Ciudad de Guatemala, Guatemala, but due to technical and pedagogical problems it was necessary to move the center in Guatemala to San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas, Mexico, a few months later. The overall direction of the project was to be in the hands of the I.I.I., while direction in the field, technical orientation and supervision were the responsibility of the Department of Social Affairs through its Program of Community Development and Social Welfare. It was also stipulated that each center would have three international professors, and that the courses offered would be of two types: one of nine months for the fifteen Latin American fellows chosen for the program, and national courses of short duration for functionaries of the country in which the center was located. The Project received the cooperation and support of national agencies and organizations in each of the host countries. In Mexico, for example, INI participated actively and the Secretariat of Public Education, the National Institute of Anthropology and History, etc., gave their support indirectly.

The Inter-American courses covered four main stages: orientation and theoretical teaching, field work, preparation

of studies and reports, and final evaluation. Both the international professors and technical experts from the host country or from international organizations participated in the training, which was very comprehensive in the practical as well as the theoretical areas. Scholarships were awarded following selective criteria, including the stipulation that the institutions to which the prospective students belonged agreed to grant them leave and to reintegrate them upon their return in positions of responsibility in accordance with their acquired specialization. Thus the newly trained personnel were guaranteed positions in national programs or organizations in which their preparation would be utilized.

During the four years in which the Project was in operation, 108 Latin American fellows received training and 240 national functionaries participated in the special courses. It was found that almost every student returned to his native land, approximately 92% to work in programs of community development in the public sector, with the remainder employed in private institutions. A large proportion are teachers. Others are social workers, anthropologists, sociologists, public health technicians and agronomists. Approximately 48% work in the preparation of other personnel, 52% in carrying out investigations or in the direction or supervision of local or regional programs. Thus the results of the Program appear to have been positive.

Unfortunately, in 1967 the Inter-American courses were discontinued, as a result of the limited budget of the General Secretariat. In their place another project has been organized, within the OAS' Special Fund for Assistance for Development, which utilizes the professional services of the international experts of Project 208 through direct technical assistance, in support of the efforts of the various countries to establish their own training programs. This project has continued in the present year (Unión Panamericana, 1968.) It is unfortunate, however, that the training program itself could not be continued, for the demand for qualified personnel continues to grow. At the Sixth Inter-American Indianist Congress, Rubio Orbe, a renowned Ecuadorian Indianist and current Director of the Instituto Indigenista del Ecuador, stressed the great void left by the discontinuance of Project 208 and called for its renewal or the creation of a new regional center specializing in the Applied Social Sciences (1968). A formal recommendation was adopted by the Congress requesting a study of the possibility of establishing an inter-American institute for the training of personnel in the tasks of social development (I.I.I., 1968:28). At present, on the inter-American level only CREFAL\* (Centro de Educación Fundamental para el

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\*CREFAL, founded in 1951, and presently under the auspices of UNESCO, the Mexican Government, the OAS, the UN and three of its specialized agencies: FAO, WHO, and the ILO, is an organization which merits a separate study. For further information, see García Ruíz (1966).



Desarrollo de la Comunidad en América Latina, originally Centro Regional de Educación Fundamental para la América Latina) is consistently and systematically offering opportunities for training in the field of community development.

A Current Mexican Plan. To prepare individuals to fill the position of Coordinating Center Director, the Instituto Nacional Indigenista of Mexico has devised a special course of studies, described by Caso in his previously mentioned paper (1968:1-9). The program is presented principally by INI experts, since they have the most direct knowledge of the reality in which the future community development organizers will work. Qualified guest lecturers also participate. The duration of the course is four semesters, a semester consisting of four and one-half months of preparation for exams and field work. The courses are intended to give the students a general, but sufficient, preparation in each of the following subjects: Anthropology, Economics, Law, Administration, and general ideas of Education and Health in relation to indigenous communities.

Within the realm of Anthropology the following are considered to be indispensable: a preparation in General Ethnography and Mexican Ethnography, a theoretical course in Social Anthropology, a course in the History of Social and Economic Doctrines, a course in Applied Social Anthro-

pology, two courses in Anthropological Investigation, one course in the History of Indianism and another about Indianism in the action programs of INI, a course about the Social Organization of the Community, and a course in the Planning of Indigenous Housing.

In Economics the requirements are a general theoretical course, complemented by the course in the History of Social and Economic Doctrines, a general course on the Investigation of Agricultural, Forest and Animal Resources, and of Crafts, and a course on the Economic Organization of the Community.

The courses in Law begin with a course on general principles and continue with concepts of Constitutional and Administrative Law, Penal Law and its proceedings, special emphasis being given to the knowledge of Agrarian Law and its proceedings.

In Administration two courses are offered, the first a general course, the second directed toward the organization of the administration of indigenous communities.

Finally there are two short courses which present the functions and responsibilities of the Director and Sub-Director of a Center and the organization of INI in its Central Offices and in its Coordinating Centers.

Because this comprehensive plan of studies was initiated this year, Caso could not include any evaluation in his presentation. However, when questioned about this ambitious and progressive program other sources stated that although

the program was initiated with the intent of preparing ten technicians from whom to select Center Directors, in practice it has not developed as intended and consists of only three students. Originally the students were to be doctors, veterinarians, agronomists, economists, anthropologists, etc., but of the three in attendance two are anthropologists and one is a normal-school teacher. Instead of the planned four semesters, the course will be reduced to a duration of three months. Apparently the project has not had the support of the most distinguished Mexican intellectuals who understand the Indian problem and has been handled in a political way. Most probably the project will cease to exist after the present group, for the students have not received instruction other than that which they had received in the study of Anthropology.

Thus, what appeared to be an excellent program for the preparation of personnel to fill the difficult position of Director of a Coordinating Center in reality has not been implemented.

As it was pointed out in a presentation on the preparation of personnel at the Sixth Inter-American Indianist Congress (Manrique Castañeda, 1968), one must remember, of course, that a multitude of factors has influence over Indianist action: the internal and external politics of the country, economic and human resources available, national programs of industrialization or of agricultural development,

etc. Nonetheless, the present status of personnel training programs is discouraging.

#### Training of Other Technical Personnel

One may well inquire about the type of preparation or orientation which the other personnel of the Centers receive. In handling such complex problems, indeed in participating in an organization the purpose of which is the delicate operation of introducing cultural change, one needs a certain type of background and/or a special orientation introducing him to the philosophy of the organization and the methods and problems involved in the work, not to mention some basic information on the people in whose midst he will be working. An agronomist, for example, must not only have mastered the techniques and concepts of modern farming, but must also be familiar with the region and have a good understanding of the people, their way of thinking and of seeing the world, and their beliefs about the methods and traditions of farming. Basic to this understanding, of course, is some knowledge of Social Anthropology, community work, and intercultural differences. A knowledge of the native language is also very important, though not as easily obtained, for communication is essential to good relations and to the learning process (which is by no means one-sided). It is true that many Indians now speak some Spanish, but it is also true that people all over the world appreciate the

attempts of an outsider to reach them in their native tongue, rather than assuming that they will accommodate him in his.

The training and orientation described for an agronomist is of course equally essential to a medical doctor, a teacher, a social worker, a veterinarian, an architect--in short, to any of the professional personnel involved in Indianist work.

As an initial step in the right direction the participants in the Sixth Inter-American Indianist Congress adopted the recommendation:

In order to achieve greater efficacy in the work of professionals who work in Indianist matters, that the universities and private institutions of higher learning in America modify, if they have not already done so, their curricula of professional studies in the different disciplines (Medicine, Engineering, Architecture, Law, Normal School Teaching, etc.) so as to include in each of them, as an obligatory requirement, a subject of two semesters in length entitled "Introduction to General Anthropology," and that the syllabus of said subject include in each case the topics most appropriate in relation to the interests of the profession with which it deals, with emphasis on socio-cultural problems and problems of application. At the same time, it is recommended that these courses always be taught by specialists in Anthropology (I.I.I., 1968:29).

In his discussion on personnel, which he entitles "Agents of Acculturation," Aguirre Beltrán (1957:198) outlines the orientation which the technical personnel in the Coordinating Centers receive. He first explains that their jobs encompass the processes of investigation, application; teaching, and technical advising, and then points out that

since such personnel are taken from the dominant culture, they have certain attitudes and stereotypes concerning the Indian. An attempt is made to correct these attitudes through informal lectures on General Anthropology and studies about the particular cultures of the region, so that the knowledge of the environment in which they work, combined with a better knowledge of themselves, permits them to understand their own economic structure and social system as well as that of the Indians, the development and integration of which is their goal.

Unfortunately, in the Cora-Huichol Coordinating Center the main orientation for the personnel takes place on the job, in the actual working experience. Several of the personnel expressed the opinion that they and their colleagues should have been required to read about the philosophy of indigenismo and the history of the Instituto. The importance of an anthropological understanding was also stressed. The only written study on the Huichols available to them, other than that by Lumholtz at the turn of the century, is an ethnography by Alfonso Fabila, who visited the area in 1958. Even though the study is not exhaustive, it could serve as the basis--the only existing one in Spanish at present--for the orientation of new personnel. Very few of the personnel have actually read the study. During my stay, a veterinarian new to the region joined the Center. He was presented with Fabila's study, but other orientation

consisted of on-the-job experience and trips into the Sierra with seasoned personnel.

Personnel are occasionally transferred from one Center to another, usually without much advance notice and with no formal orientation to the new area. Of course, in such cases previous experience in Indianist work facilitates the orientation of the personnel to the new Center, but since each region and each Indian group present different problems, some type of preparation about the region would seem imperative.\*

Perhaps the most formal training for Indianist work within the Instituto (with the exception of the preparation of the Director) is that which is presented by the personnel to the native promotores. The concept of the promotor and his training will be discussed in detail in the chapter on Education.

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\* It is possible that the demands of established projects or the lack of prepared personnel dictates present actions.

## CHAPTER V. COMMUNICATIONS

In dealing with "regions of refuge," regions of relative if not total geographic isolation, it is only natural that one of the first concerns in a project of directed change would be that of establishing an adequate means of communication to facilitate contact. In most cases this signifies the construction of roads--"roads of penetration," to use the words of the Instituto experts (INI, 1964:105). The creation of a road into the area may seem a very elementary task, preliminary to the undertaking of Indianist work in the area. However, a road itself can be a definite agent of acculturation. Beals (1952:232) states, for example, that from his experience one road was worth about three schools and about fifty administrators. Ewald (1967:504-505), in an article on "Directed Change," also mentions the importance of communications to raise the level of acculturation.

### "Planes of Penetration"

As indicated previously, from 1962 to 1965 the Cora-Huichol Coordinating Center was allocated a special budget to be used for the construction of roads. As the Technical Administrator pointed out, however, the construction of roads in the Cora-Huichol zone was virtually an impossibility, owing to the tremendous investment of funds which would be necessary because of the extremely rugged terrain and the



great distances involved. Thus, in the case of this particular Center, emphasis has been placed on "planes of penetration" rather than on roads. Airstrips have been prepared in Mezquitic and in San Andrés Cohamiata (the latter presently being covered with crushed rock) and landing areas have been cleared and are currently in use in other Huichol settlements, such as Guadalupe Ocotán, Ocotá de la Sierra, Huaixtita, and Tuxpan de Bolaños (though the latter is merely a level field and the one in Huaixtita somewhat resembles a plowed slope). Airstrips are cleared with the consent and cooperation of the people of the settlement. Unfortunately these landing areas are not always adequately maintained, nor are they fenced to prevent livestock and children from occupying them at strategic moments. (The strip in San Andrés--a very long, beautiful airstrip--is fenced off, but even so, INI sheep have been known to cause a pilot to circle several times before landing).

A commercial line maintains a service of four- and six-passenger cargo planes which have scheduled stops at each of the above-mentioned settlements once or twice a week. In addition the Instituto charters planes through this line when the need arises for transporting personnel and/or supplies to the Sierra. As mentioned in the discussion of the influence of geography on the Center's work, the actual expenditures for transportation are disproportionate to the amount allocated for this purpose. The

Technical Administrator points out that the annual budget for transportation fares is 60,000 pesos (\$4,800). An additional 30,000 pesos (\$2,400) are set aside for freight costs, making a total of 90,000 pesos (\$7,200) per year available for transportation costs. However, the Center averages an expenditure of 20,000 pesos (\$1,600) per month on transportation fares. Thus, the budgeted amount for transportation is highly unrealistic. Since the budget does not even cover the normal costs of a six month period (not to mention a year!), and since transportation is a very basic aspect of the Center's work which can in no way be eliminated, the usual procedure is to juggle the budget as best as possible, taking funds from the Section for which the transportation costs have been incurred. (For example, if a load of supplies were flown to Tuxpan because the school was running low on food for the children, the cost of transportation might be charged against the education budget). As is evident, the transportation budgetary problems are felt throughout the entire Center budget, each section of which is not without problems of its own.

#### Radio-Communications

As a means of facilitating and increasing communications between personnel and communities in the Sierra and the Center in Tepic, in 1967 the Center installed shortwave radios in the Huichol settlements of Ocota de la Sierra

San Andrés Cohamiata and Tuxpan de Bolaños. This system of radio-communication, gradually to be expanded throughout the Sierra as INI influence grows, has already been a positive force in reducing the isolation of the area. (The network is at present larger than it would appear by the above description, for installations have also been made in the Cora region).

### Roads

Though emphasis is on airstrips, the construction of two dirt roads, brechas de penetración, has been undertaken, one in the Cora region planned to run from El Venado through San Pedro Ixcatán and La Mesa del Nayar to Jesús María (one of the principal Cora communities), and one in the Huichol region from Calera de Cofrados, a predominantly Mestizo community, to the Huichol community of Colorado de la Mora. The construction of these roads is carried out by the combined efforts of the Instituto, the communities involved, the Secretariat of Health and Welfare, and the Government of the State. In 1967 eight kilometers had been completed on the El Venado-San Pedro Ixcatán road and in 1968 the workers expected to reach San Pedro, thus completing a means of terrestrial communication to the first Cora community.

I had the opportunity to visit the construction site of the road to Colorado de la Mora, located approximately two hours' distance by jeep from Tepic over a rough and recently

opened dirt road. Twenty men from the community of Colorado work five days a week with pick and shovel in the blistering heat, much of the time hammering away through solid rock. The community has practically transplanted itself to the construction site, for the wives and families of the workers have taken up residence temporarily at the site to care for the men. The State pays the men five pesos (\$0.40) per day as some compensation for volunteering their help, which is supervised by an engineer provided by the Secretariat of Public Works. The Secretariat of Health and Welfare furnishes the "settlement" with food--maize, beans, wheat flour, and only occasionally milk and rice--and the Instituto provides the use of its vehicles and lends its moral support, as at present it cannot afford more. Since there is no means of public transportation available, the INI vehicle goes back and forth between the construction site and Tepic on Saturdays and Mondays. Thus, through the cooperation of the various Governmental agencies, the Instituto, and the people themselves (a most important aspect), this community is slowly coming out of its isolation. In the past the people have had contact with the city, but only at considerable expenditure of energy. Now their cooperation in the construction will eventually facilitate that contact. In 1967, five kilometers were completed, bringing the total to eight. Before the June rains in 1968 they had finished another three kilometers.

On this particular visit a junta or meeting was held during which the workers discussed with the Director of the Center and the Personal Secretary of the Governor of the State various problems related to the work. Most of the men were beginning to think about leaving to prepare their fields and plant their crops--but subsequently agreed to work one or two additional weeks. The reasons that cause Governmental agencies to be occasionally slow with the supplies or the wages had to be discussed--a phenomenon which, of course, is very difficult to explain to people who depend on them for their daily food and may never really understand why or how inefficiency in one office--someone's extra long lunch hour, for example--may keep them from having their dinner. The INI had thirteen sheep to be distributed among three or four men who volunteered from the group to take on the responsibility. The sheep would become their property. Also Director Nahmad and Lic. Hernández stressed once again that they were there strictly to help them whenever they had any problem.

Perhaps of greater interest was the discussion among the Huichols themselves about the cooperation of the various members of the community in the construction of the road. Evidently there was some discontent among the workers due to the fact that a group of what they called "evangelist" Huichols--approximately sixteen men in the community--had not offered their services to contribute to the road. The

consensus of the workers present was that these men should be made to work also, since they would undoubtedly enjoy the resulting benefits. The discussion was carried on in an orderly manner, both in Spanish and Huichol, led by a very articulate Huichol who appears to be a natural leader in his community and who also has done considerable work with the Instituto, as a general handy-man at the Center and assistant in the crafts store, in addition to representing the Huichols in the INI booth at the State Fair and in other activities. This man is an example of the "innovator," the "agent of change" from within. He is respected in his community, has not completely divorced himself from his culture--being the son of a mara'akáme (shaman-singer) and familiar with the customs, traditions, and songs, etc.--and yet is quite at home in the city and very capable of expressing himself and explaining the needs of his people. At this meeting, in which he led the discussion, he acted in the capacity of intermediary between the Instituto officials and the men, especially when the need for translation arose. A representative of the evangelistas was present and after everyone had presented his viewpoint on their lack of participation, he spoke and explained to the group that they had decided to cooperate. Thus, for the time being the problem was solved and the meeting broke up. The experience was an interesting example of local leadership and of a group discussing and working out its problems.

### A Community Request

Earlier I mentioned a Huichol settlement located only two hours by jeep from Tepic, but nevertheless unknown to the Center. Following my visit to this community, contacts were established with the Instituto and the people became quickly acquainted with the assistance they might expect from the Center. One of the most frequent suggestions, from both young and old, concerned the problem of communications.

This settlement, El Vicenteño, is located northeast of Tepic, on the far bank of the Santiago River. Unlike most Huichol settlements, El Vicenteño is connected to Tepic by a road which runs from the river to Puga (a sugar cane factory town about fifteen minutes' drive from Tepic) and then to Tepic. For most of the way the road is simply hard-packed dirt, at times crossing small streams of black waste water discharged from the factory. The road is good enough, however, to permit an open bus (a tropical) to make one trip back and forth each day. Thus, compared with other Huichol settlements, the people of El Vicenteño seem to enjoy good communications with the city, at least during the dry season; during the four-month rainy season the road becomes difficult, if not impassable. This, however, was not what concerned El Vicenteño. What really bothered them was the river. During the dry months (October to May) it can at least be crossed by dugout canoe, but with the rainy season it swells

to a rushing torrent, cutting the settlement off from the road, the city and much-needed supplies. Once these people had become aware of the Center and what it might do for them, they were no longer content to spend yet another wet summer in isolation: might not the Center help them get a hanging basket on a cable across the river, so that they would no longer have to rely on the canoe even in the dry winter but might cross the river at any time, high water or low?

Center Director Nahmad was immediately sympathetic but suggested that something more permanent and less dangerous --perhaps a suspension bridge or even a permanent structure-- would be a much more useful investment in the long run. The Center, of course, had neither the personnel nor the resources to initiate such an engineering project, Nahmad explained. The first step therefore would be to bring the urgent needs of the people of El Vicenteño to the attention of the appropriate agency, in this case the Secretariat of Hydraulic Resources. Unfortunately there would not be sufficient time in 1968 to complete the installation of either a hanging basket or a suspension bridge, however temporary, before the rains set in, and the project would therefore have to wait until the following year. The people would have to spend at least one more summer in isolation. This was discouraging news and there was general disappointment, but relations had been established and there was reason to



believe (correctly, as it developed) that the settlement would maintain contact with the Center not only for this but other, less ambitious projects.

Of course there is no guarantee that such a bridge will be constructed in the near future, if only for financial reasons. A hanging basket would cost about 100,000 pesos (\$8,000) and a suspension bridge approximately 200,000 pesos (\$16,000). But at least the Indians are now aware that the Instituto is there to bring the problem to the appropriate governmental agencies and lend its moral support and with luck, even some financial aid.

## CHAPTER VI. ECONOMICS

The immediate problem facing the change agent in the Huichol country, as in other marginal areas of the world, is to find the proper starting point for improving the overall quality of life. Education? Health? Or Economics? This is a largely philosophical question, for a case can be made for any one of them, or for all three as an integral and inter-dependent system. Those opting for education as the key to development argue that learning about the ways of the Mexican nation, the rights of each citizen and the means at his disposal for the defense of these rights, is basic to any improvement in the quality of life of the indigenous populations. The argument for health as the most immediate need is based largely on the indisputable fact that no individual can function to his full capacity without good health, and good health is certainly not a general condition in the Sierra. On the other hand, it can be and is argued--and the case is a strong one--that basic improvements in the economic situation are not only a more realistic goal but would also have the widest ramifications throughout the society, with a direct effect both on education--or at least the will to be educated--and health. The theory here is that only when the Huichol no longer has to worry constantly about bare subsistence will he have time to think about other things, such as education for himself

and his children, and only then will he have the funds and the time to seek proper medical care in town rather than try to heal himself or rely on magical or herbal cures in the Sierra. It is also argued that once economic changes take effect, the community will progress even where there is no specific guidance for change. Ewald (1967:509), for example, makes precisely this point in his discussion of economic improvement in relation to directed and spontaneous change:

Where there has been substantial economic advance, as in Mexico, change in community life seems to be proceeding even in the absence of specific programs of directed change.

And further:

...a program of change which aims at solving fundamental economic problems over the broadest area possible, as a basis for raising the general standard of living, would have the maximum prospects for achieving significant results (p. 511).

The purpose of the Coordinating Center is of course not specifically to bring about the economic development of the Cora-Huichol region. On the other hand, the Instituto does regard economics as fundamental to its goal of improving the social, economic and cultural conditions of the population. Accordingly, while health and education are important and cannot be divorced from economics, one of the basic objectives of the Instituto and its Coordinating Centers is to increase income in the Indian communities,

in order to raise their buying power and incorporate them into the national economy (INI, 1964:69).

### Agrarian Reform

Huichol economics cannot be understood apart from the general problem of agrarian reform in Mexico. Land and maize are basic to the Huichol's conception of economic stability. With either or both, things are all right. So important is maize to the Huichols that people well supplied with other foods, such as dried fish, crackers, and beans, still feel deprived if they have no maize and in fact tell the Center that they have "nothing to eat." In Huichol mythology, too, "nothing to eat" is synonymous with having no maize. Land is even more basic to the Indian than maize. It is fundamental to his way of life, for he recognizes no other existence than subsistence agriculture. As mentioned earlier, the Indian has been tied to the land by tradition or force for many centuries. It is thus hardly surprising that he will not be separated from it today. The tradition of communal landholdings was also noted, and though it has come under repeated attack, (especially by those with vested interests), it has been given a stamp of approval by the creation and success of the ejido system.\*

Simply stated, the Agrarian Reform, which came about

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\* Caso (1958:23-29) defends en voz alta the Indian's right to his communal lands system.

after the Revolution of 1910 as a reaction to the tremendous hold of the haciendas over the land, did away with the "sanctity" of private land ownership in Mexico and replaced it with a system of landholding based on social utility.

The new institution which grew out of the conflict was the ejido, based on the premise that land belonged to the nation as a whole. It could be expropriated to be assigned to the people, without reimbursement to the original owners, by three principal procedures: restitution (by solicitation of rights based on legal documents and titles to the land and statements of despoliation suffered), dotation, or amplification. Not the land itself, but its use was given to the members of the ejidos, to prevent the recurrence of the hacienda system through land sale and reaccumulation of private holdings. The ejidatario (member of the ejido) had to be a Mexican, an adult (sixteen years of age), a resident of a town, and have as his regular occupation the exploitation of the land. The last requirement has since been altered to permit the development of forest and industrial ejidos (INI, 1954:203-207).

The ejido was established with the Indian in mind. It was believed to be a basic step toward the problem of assimilating the indigenous population. It was basically successful with the "Mestindian"--the not-quite-Indian, not-quite-Mestizo--, in that it achieved his integration into the economic and social life of the nation as a Mestizo.

The Indian population, however, did not really reap the benefits of the Agrarian Reform or feel its influence to any significant extent. It is true that the Revolution confirmed the Indians' rights to communal landholdings. Also the ejidal system incorporated a considerable number of communities which had not even been affected by the haciendas due to the undesirable condition of the terrain or an inhospitable environment. Nevertheless, this incorporation was largely on paper. The structure of most of the communities has not been altered (INI, 1954:207-208), and in many cases Indian communities do not have the technical means, nor the understanding of the official channels to solicit a dotation or restitution. At this point the Instituto becomes instrumental (Aguirre Beltrán, 1967:250-251).\*

#### Legal Services

In September of 1966, Salvatierra Castillo, then Director of the Cora-Huichol Coordinating Center, wrote of the plans for the following year:

→ As a consequence of the contacts which the Instituto Nacional Indigenista has achieved with the indigenous centers, there has been a considerable increase in the requests for assistance in defense against the abuses which the Indians suffer from the Mestizo population and which in the majority of

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\*See "La reforma agraria" (INI, 1954:199-208) for a concise discussion of the Agrarian Reform and its antecedents.

the cases originate with the invaders. This situation requires the appointment of an attorney... (pp. 12-13).

The two main concerns of the attorney would be (1) to intervene in disputes between Mestizos and Indians on the edges of the Huichol territory and (2) to take the necessary legal steps to dislodge unlawful Mestizo cattle from Indian communal lands. The most frequent problem faced by the Indians on the periphery of the traditional Huichol territory is exploitation and alienation of land and crops. Without legal intervention on the part of the Center, the Indians have no recourse against such abuse since they are by nature peaceable and rarely offer resistance against arbitrary acts from the outside. On the contrary, as Vogt (1955) has pointed out, the usual Huichol response to such treatment is flight rather than resistance.

Salvatierra's request was granted. The Cora-Huichol Coordinating Center now employs a lawyer. Unfortunately his position has been rather unstable. At one point, for example, his employment was terminated from Mexico City for lack of funds. He was subsequently reinstated at the urgent request of the Director, but his pay was cut.

The first and most important task of the attorney is to advise the Indians on their rights to the land and to establish the necessary titles through legal names. According to the Center's lawyer, Lic. Vito Silva Ortega, many Indian communities have land titles dating from the Colonial

Period. Since then Mestizos have purchased small sections of property from Indians, who did not realize that they were not authorized to sell their lands. Thus a conflict arises, for the Mestizos have their receipts for monies paid for the land, and the Indians have their titles, which the Revolution made valid. To resolve the situation, the Government recognizes small Mestizo holdings if they were acquired in good faith (that is, without violence) at least ten years ago. These holdings cannot be larger than sixteen hectares\* of irrigable land and fourteen hectares of non-irrigable land (or forty-five hectares of non-irrigable land if irrigable land is not included). Anything above these limits is subject to expropriation even though the "owner" purchased it. To complete the process of restitution, the Agrarian Department must take a census of the indigenous population of the region in question in order to confirm its titles. Then engineers are sent to investigate and establish the limits of the viceregal titles. If the latter are approved, the population is awarded a "Presidential Resolution" confirming its titles to the land.

To carry out the process of dotation--expropriating lands to create an ejido--the community must present a request to the governor of the state. The governor passes the request on to the state's Joint Agrarian Commission

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\*A hectare is equal to 2.471 acres.



(Comisión Agraria Mixta). If the Commission approves the request, the governor signs it and it is published in the press. Once published, it is passed on to the Agrarian Department for final approval and the titles are granted. As Lic. Silva noted, the request is processed more quickly if a little land is taken from each of the surrounding owners, rather than requesting a larger portion from fewer owners. The final approval in this case is also in the form of a "Presidential Resolution."

The legal proceedings for establishing land claims should take no more than one and one-half years. However, there are instances in which five to six years pass before the process is completed.

Once the titles are granted the next step is to execute them. The Agrarian Department has a delegation in each state which is specifically assigned to the problem of giving Indians possession of their lands. As may be expected, this problem is often complex. Indeed, on occasion there may be violent resistance to such changes in land ownership, particularly where they threaten existing power structures.

In the Huichol region, legal proceedings for scarcely half of the communities have been completed, although they have been initiated for the entire area. (In the Cora region all the titles have been granted, and it remains only to put them into effect).

In addition to the problem of land, the Center's lawyer has his hands full with numerous criminal proceedings for real or spurious violations of the law by Indians. These are frequently the result of the Indian's unfamiliarity with Spanish, as well as his ignorance of both his rights and duties with respect to Mexican national or state laws. There are even such flagrant cases as suits filed by Mestizos against Indians charging them with trespassing on their own lands or doing injury to Mestizo cattle which are illegally grazing on Indian land in the first place.

The lawyer also serves as legal counsel for the Center. As indicated above, the intervention of the Instituto in the expropriation of lands for the Indians and in their protection against invading Mestizos--thus disturbing the status quo--cannot help but create enemies. Groups and individuals who traditionally enjoyed power and influence without substantial resistance naturally resent anyone who informs the Indians of their rights, and, moreover, helps to enforce them. Reaction may take various forms, from individual harassment against Center personnel or Indians to attempts to undermine the Director through intervention with the state or federal authorities. For the latter the following serves as an illustration. A suit was brought by a politically and economically powerful Mestizo accusing the Center Director of being an outside agitator and committing all manner of crimes against the Indians, including

even homicide! The suit was signed by about thirty communities, of which many were neither Indian nor located anywhere near the region from which the complaint allegedly originated. To make matters worse, this same Mestizo had been passing himself off as an Indian in order to gain official sympathy and local support, although he did not even speak the local Indian language (in this case, Cora). From the point of view of the Director and the Instituto the whole thing was patently ridiculous. Nevertheless, it had to be taken seriously and would have to be handled legally, for the accusation had been made and would have to be proved false in a court of law (which it was without any difficulty). In this instance the services of the lawyer were obviously indispensable.

Regarding the protection of the rights of Indians in their relations with Mestizos, the Center recently took a big step forward. As mentioned, Mestizo cattlemen have allowed their herds to roam the communal lands of the Indians with complete disregard for Indian rights, causing serious damage to crops and grazing lands. Through the efforts of the Center, a meeting was held, attended by both Indians and Mestizos. Though the atmosphere was tense and the participants had to be disarmed, they arrived at an agreement by which Mestizo cattlemen would pay the Indian communities 12.50 pesos (\$1.00) per head per year for grazing privileges. So far this agreement has worked, for

some Mestizos have already begun payment.

### Credit

In 1966, Salvatierra also reported:

It is entirely necessary that credit be administered to the communities by means of stores which will distribute staple goods, with the purpose of liberating the Indians from the exploitation of which they are victims at the hands of traveling merchants (p. 11).

At that time the Center had begun to experiment with a store in San Andrés Cohamiata from which goods were distributed at cost except for the addition of 25% of the air freight expenses (an average of one peso--\$0.08-- per kilo). Soon after, small stores were also established in Ocota de la Sierra and in Santa Teresa (a Cora community).

In 1967, with the support of the state government, the Instituto requested a credit of 250,000 pesos (\$20,000) from the federally operated National Company of Popular Sustenance (Compañía Nacional de Subsistencias Populares--CONASUPO) for the purpose of opening sixteen stores in strategic locations in the Huichol and Cora regions of the Sierra. These stores would sell their merchandise at official prices fixed in Mexico City, with the goal of raising living standards in the most isolated Indian nuclei in the states of Nayarit, Jalisco and Durango. According to the agreement, INI and CONASUPO would totally subsidize air and land transportation costs as well as costs of

administration of the stores (approximately one million pesos--\$80,000--per year).

By September of 1967, the Director reported to Mexico City that the CONASUPO stores were functioning regularly, even though during the rainy season it was not always possible to deliver goods on schedule. At that time four stores had been set up, two in Huichol territory (San Andrés Cohamiata and Tuxpan de Bolaños) and two in Cora terrain (Santa Teresa and Mesa del Nayar). By December, arrangements had been made with the communities for the other twelve stores and the furniture for them had been received from CONASUPO. By March of 1968, seven new stores had been established.

These stores are supervised and administered by two Center personnel and are maintained on the local level by the promotores. Having charge of a store involves a great deal of responsibility. The importance of keeping records of the merchandise and of taking care against spoilage has to be constantly emphasized. The individual in charge or the community (depending on the circumstances) is held responsible for any discrepancies or missing merchandise. For example, when a robbery occurred in Ocoita de la Sierra, the community made up the loss of more than four hundred pesos (\$32).

The merchandise which these stores make available to the Indians is largely determined by demand (though of course supply is an unavoidable factor). After visiting

a three-week-old CONASUPO store in the Tarascan community of Turicuaró, Michoacán, as part of the activities of the Sixth Inter-American Indianist Congress, and seeing Gerber's Baby Food, Corn Flakes, and Kotex (among the other packaged goods), one could not escape some initial doubts about the planning and effectiveness of these stores. I later asked Sr. Figueroa Romero, the Administrative Auxiliary of the stores of the Cora-Huichol Center, on what basis merchandise was chosen. He explained that it is strictly by trial and error--finding out by experience which items are high in demand and which not. Undoubtedly the store in Turicuaró was still in the experimental state, having been stocked as a show-case example for the Congress members.

The four stores which I visited in the Huichol region generally contained the following immediately after a shipment: coffee (mixed with sugar); beans; sugar; brown sugar; crackers (galletas--an unsalted variety, almost like cookies though not sweet); wheat flour; oats; rice; salt; corn flour; powdered and canned milk; spaghetti and other noodles; dried fish; canned items such as sauces, chiles, sardines, fruit juices; sweets (chocolate bars, suckers, chewing gum, caramels); in addition to goods such as soap, detergent, straw hats, shirts, toothbrushes and tooth paste, "band-aids," and aspirin (these last three only in one or two stores). The items which seem to be most popular are beans, coffee, sugar, salt, and galletas.

At the end of the dry season and during the planting period, when the year's supply of maize runs low or becomes totally exhausted, the demand for corn flour is at its highest. In one store the toothbrushes and tooth paste did not sell; in another it was said that they did (though I never saw an Indian using either--for any purpose). "Band-aids" and aspirin did sell in the one settlement where they were found. In another store I was surprised to find "Raid" insect spray. When asked if it sold, the promotor answered affirmatively, but on further questioning I found that it was the first time it had been sent to the store and he did not yet know the price.

The stores appear to be quite successful. Since they sell at very reasonable prices, they are generally well-accepted by the people, and have reduced the business of those who come to the area to huicholear (the term used among Mestizos to designate the activities of the traveling trader in Huichol territory). One index of public feeling is the general willingness to volunteer to move merchandise from the airstrip to the store. The importance of the arrival of goods for the store is illustrated by a woman who was trying to teach me a few Huichol words. 'A'walk loosely translated means "nothing," which she explained by saying, "What did the plane bring? 'A'walk."

A different form of credit is that supplied by the state government for Indian crafts. Within the past year

the state has established a revolving fund of 30,000 pesos (\$2,400) to be used to stimulate and develop the high quality craftsmanship of the Indians of the Cora-Huichol region. The Center handles the funds to purchase crafts from the Indians to insure that they receive a fair price for their much admired work. The Center has a small store, located in its offices in Tepic, in which Indian crafts (beadwork, embroidered and woven bags and belts, yarn paintings, embroidered clothing, violins and guitars, bows and arrows, cane chairs, drums, symbolic feathers, etc.) are purchased from the Indians and sold to tourists and citizens of Tepic. To establish fair prices the Center followed the standards set up by the National Museum of Anthropology in Mexico City. As the Center's social worker, María Sara Molinari de Nahmad, explained, in order to maintain a standard of beautiful and carefully executed work the Center has made a practice of buying only good quality work. However, when money is desperately needed due to illness or some other unusual circumstance it becomes a matter of "dignity," as Sara Nahmad phrased it. The item is purchased and mention is made of the inferior quality, requesting a little better work next time. The Center is also careful (in its own dealings, at least) to protect the Indian from exploitation by traders, Mestizo or Indian, by refusing to purchase Indian goods from Mestizos or from Indians who bring large quantities of items obviously from



different sources. The one in charge of the store always asks casually, "Who made the article?"--the acceptable response being, "My mother," "My wife," "My sister," or some other close relative. In this way the store tries to insure that the creator of the article will reap some of the benefits of his or her work. The prices charged by the store in selling the goods to the general public are slightly higher than those paid to the Indians, but this is done to insure the availability of funds for continuous purchasing from the Indians (thus the concept of a revolving fund).

Other forms of credit are more difficult to obtain. As pointed out in an Instituto publication,

the most serious problem confronting the Instituto in the implementation of its economic activities is the lack of sufficient credit, by virtue of the fact that the institutions responsible for distributing it have refrained to date from dealing with the Indian communities, because they do not consider them to be good prospects for credit (INI, 1964:73).

They are considered bad risks for obvious reasons: the characteristics of land tenure, type of crops produced, low productivity, and absence of communications, stores (almacenes) and entrepreneurial orientation (Aguirre Beltrán, 1967:256). Thus the Instituto must assume the role of intermediary and attempt to obtain the much needed credit.

By September, 1967, through the efforts of the Center,

loans totaling more than 60,000 pesos (\$4,800) had been granted by the National Bank of Ejidal Credit to two Cora communities, the first time in the history of the Sierra that such credit had been obtained. By December, the Center had completed the necessary agricultural, economic and social study of the community of Colorado de la Mora (Huichol) which was presented to the National Bank of Ejidal Credit with the request that credit be granted this community. Needless to say, the Center has continued in its efforts to increase the distribution of credit among the indigenous communities.

Maize is also available on credit from the state in cases of extreme need, such as natural disasters damaging crops or during the months immediately prior to planting and harvest, when supplies may dwindle to a dangerous low.

The Center itself makes loans in extreme cases--credits of maize or craft materials (beads, yarn or manta, a coarse muslin)--with definite repayment schedules. According to Sr. Flores, the Technical Administrator, it is rare indeed that a loan is not repaid. The Center also helps when a special plane is needed and the people involved cannot afford to pay.

#### Agriculture and Zootechnology

Agrarian reform and credit are not enough, of course. Indeed, agrarian reform as land redistribution is only the

beginning of a continuous process which perpetuates itself in an integral agricultural reform with two essential and complementary actions: (1) a change in the community's knowledge and technology vis-à-vis the environment, and (2) a change in the motivations and attitudes of the community so that new knowledge and techniques will be accepted and assimilated (Aguirre Beltrán, 1967:251-252).

The latter is much more difficult. Habits and traditions are very slow to change, for within their own context they are a living and functional element of the culture, even though they seem anachronistic when considered from the viewpoint of an industrial culture. Therefore, any efforts to change primitive technology must bear in mind that it has a reason for being (Aguirre Beltrán, 1967:253). The issue is complicated even further by the fact that economic change involves modification not merely of habits and practices, but of cultural values. This applies particularly to the Huichols whose religious values permeate the entire economy:

The Huichol standard of living is connected with religious ideas of not arousing envy of the gods by doing too well. One informant explained that if a person is filthy and wears ragged clothes, the gods will see that he is poor and will help him. Eating a lot of things beside the "ideal" diet of maize and chile is an attempt to display wealth and is not approved (Grimes, 1961: 285).

And further:

In the economic realm the values of the Huichol have been subjected to some pressure to change. The Huichol have been told that they should own more, grow more, eat more, save more, build bigger houses, and build them closer together. Such unorganized attempts to change what amount to basic cultural values have not met with overt success (p. 305).

A program of directed change cannot begin with an attack on cultural values or a direct confrontation with habits and traditions. As Beals (1952:230-231) has pointed out, the ethos of a culture seems to be most sharply defined in "las costumbres"--the customs and traditions--of a people. Here resistance to change and rejection patterns are most developed. Beals notes, then, a "differential acculturation" taking place, in which things of "practical" value (such as the mechanical corn grinder or the transistor radio) are not rejected. It is in the realm of the practical, therefore, that the first inroads must be made.

For the present, at least, the greatest potential for economic improvement in the Sierra lies in cattle raising. For this reason the Instituto has developed a program of importing animals of high quality to be traded for the Indians' animals, thereby gradually improving the stock in the Sierra. From 1966 to the present, the Center has been bringing in zebu bulls from the best stock in the country and trading each one for two of the native animals. The Secretariat of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry donates much of this stock to the Instituto. According to Director

Nahmad, this program has awakened great interest among the Indians, who recognize for the first time the possibility of improving the low quality of their cattle.

There is also a program of vaccination, although this is handicapped by the isolated residence pattern and rugged terrain. The Center veterinarian is available for consultation on any problem that might arise. He also travels through the Sierra supervising, insofar as is possible, the care of the animals. But this is hardly adequate. Obviously, there is a great need for indigenous agricultural promotores. It is here that the agricultural school in Mezquitic, Jalisco, will play an important role. This school, recently established by INI, will be discussed in greater detail below.

In the future, the Instituto hopes to initiate a program of cattle buying in order to guarantee fair prices in the sale of livestock.

The Sierra is potentially suitable also for sheep raising. The Instituto has introduced a flock in San Andrés Cohamiata as part of its demonstrational experiment there.

Raising pigs has long been a part of Huichol life. No special effort is expended: the pigs multiply and care for themselves in and around the ranchos, eating anything and everything. (Needless to say, the food supply is not abundant.) Here, too, the Instituto has been importing

quality animals in an effort to improve the low caliber of popular strains.

Chicken raising is also included in the efforts of the Center. By October of 1967, 525 chickens of high quality (Rhode Island Reds, for example) had been distributed among the Indian population and six school chicken coops had been constructed in the heart of the Sierra and supplied with 490 chickens. Chicken raising is part of school activities in order to teach first the children and through them the population as a whole. Also, of course, the chickens supplement the daily diet of the children. Unfortunately, in the only school chicken coop which I saw (in Tuxpan), the thirty Rhode Island Reds were not laying eggs because there had been no maize to feed them in over a month. As Professor Onofre Montes Rios, Head of the Education Section of the Center, remarked, "If we don't have enough to feed the children, what are we going to feed the chickens?"

There are plans for training in the care and exploitation of beehives, but little has been done thus far due to lack of experienced personnel. Many Huichols keep bees for both honey and wax. These bees are of the stingless varieties domesticated in Meso-America since pre-Hispanic times. No special hives are constructed. Rather, the bees nest in hollow logs placed on upright posts. However, both the honey and the wax of the small stingless bee are inferior

in quality and quantity to those of the common European bee which many Mestizos cultivate.

The Center distributes improved seeds of maize, wheat, beans, sorghum and potatoes. Ideally each school should have a garden,\* but so far no gardens have been cultivated at any INI schools. An attempt in San Andrés Cohamiata apparently did not receive proper care and animals invaded the area. For 1968, however, plans have been made to implement vegetable gardens in Ocota de la Sierra and Tuxpan de Bolaños, and to renew the efforts in San Andrés, with the objective of improving the diet of the school children and serving as an example for the community.

The concept of example is extremely important in the work of the Instituto. The reader will recall Caso's discussion of the only method to bring about change so that social modifications will be lasting and occur without tension and conflict: the use of education, example, demonstration. Obviously, simply importing better stock and distributing better seeds will not insure an increase in production and an improvement in the standard of living. It is a start in the practical realm, but only a start. The success of new techniques and new crops must be proved before they will begin to be accepted.

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\*This concept was included in the establishment of the ejido. A plot of land is set aside in each ejido for the school specifically for demonstration and the sustenance of the rural teacher and the school (INI, 1954:205).

In addition to the examples which the Instituto hopes to set with school agricultural activities, it has decided to establish one experimental center in each of the two regions, Cora and Huichol.

The settlement of San Andrés Cohamiata is located in the heart of the Sierra on a large plateau at an altitude of 1,860 m. (about 6,045 feet) above sea level. It is the principal politico-religious ceremonial center of the region and has a large calihuey (temple), a Catholic church (which is only used for occasional Huichol rites and ceremonies, the Franciscan missionaries having been driven out of the community), and various private dwellings (with about thirty inhabitants). An INI school, kitchen, dining hall, dormitory, and a building housing a radio and the CONASUPO store and serving for medical consultations also form part of the settlement of San Andrés.

This location was chosen for INI's Huichol experimental center for a number of reasons. Such a large expanse of level land is very unusual in the Sierra. Also, the settlement is an important ceremonial center. Location in a ceremonial center will make the experiments visible to the large number of people who come and go (Nahmad Sittón, 1968), and it is hoped that once the people of San Andrés have been won over, they will influence others. The latter may prove to be true in the future, but at present it appears that the Instituto has



chosen the most difficult region in which to begin. The people of this area are the most resistant to change. They have preserved their customs and traditions with greater purity than any other region (PLAT, 1966:75), and apparently with great determination, as shown by the expulsion of the Franciscans.

The Instituto requested and received permission from the community to use part of the plateau as its "proving grounds." In 1967 a small tree nursery was organized with peach, apple, calabur, and hawthorn trees. In addition, two demonstration fields for maize were prepared with fertilizer, one in San Andrés and the other in Las Guayabas, a nearby settlement. Studies were made for an integral agricultural program and by December of 1967, ten hectares had been fenced off. Also, preparations were made for an orchard of cold weather fruit trees.

Plans for 1968 included the preparation of an additional ten hectares, making a total of twenty hectares for the cultivation of maize (maíz de temporal) with improved seeds, insecticides and fertilizers. Experimental plots were also to be prepared for wheat, broad beans, chickpeas, lentils, etc., with the intention of observing and selecting those that adapt best and give the greatest yield. To introduce fruitgrowing into the Indian communities, trees will be acquired already grafted with varieties of apple, pear, peach and quince for the above-mentioned fruit orchard.

The equipment necessary for the care of the plants and the control of fruit diseases will be acquired.

By May of 1968 (when I visited the region), the Instituto had transported a new tractor piece by piece to San Andrés and a full-time Mestizo employee and his family were living there. Several fields had been fenced off by Huichol employees, and plowed with the tractor in preparation for planting. Apple trees were growing, cared for by the wives of the Indians employed by the Center.

The Instituto plans to make San Andrés a demonstration in zootechnology also. Construction of ideal pig pens with beautiful stonework and sheep runs is being carried out. As previously mentioned, there is now a small flock of sheep at the INI installations there.

#### The Farming Center for Indian Promotores

It is evident that the most effective and long-lasting changes will have to come from within. The importance of community cooperation was seen, for example, in the construction of roads. That the community approve and participate is a basic part of the theory behind the Instituto's work, (as indeed is in any community development project). One obvious way to inspire ultimate change from within is through education. In training young people from the indigenous community in the use of new techniques and the value of new crops, it is hoped they will return to their families

and communities and gradually impart to them their new-found knowledge. On this principle the Farming Center for Indian Promotores in Mezquitic, Jalisco, was founded.

The Center was established in July, 1967 by an agreement among the Secretariat of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry, the Government of the State of Jalisco, and the Instituto Nacional Indigenista (represented by the national Director, Alfonso Caso). According to the agreement, the Farming Center would be located in Mezquitic, and would house thirty Indian students from the Cora-Huichol region, on fellowships, selected by the Instituto for scholastic ability and aptitude for scientific farming. The two-year courses would be decided by the Instituto, with one third devoted to academic and two thirds to practical studies. The State of Jalisco would commission a veterinarian (and "zootechnologist") and an agronomist who would live in Mezquitic full-time as professors. The Instituto would recommend the personnel to fill these positions and would technically be responsible for their activities. The Secretariat of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry would provide the materials and the corresponding equipment as requested by the Instituto for the installation of a laboratory for certain types of analyses, including that of soil samples. In addition, the Secretariat would put the following animals at the disposal of the Instituto for the operation of this project: 10 Swiss cows and 1 bull; 10 Duroc-

Jersey sows and 2 boars; 1000 Rhode Island Red hens, seven to twelve weeks old, and 20 roosters; 20 Granadine nanny goats and 2 billy goats; 30 complete beehives with swarms and handling equipment. For its contribution the Instituto would provide for the construction of the classrooms and laboratories as well as for adequate buildings for the different animals, and dormitories and other services for the students. Also the Instituto would maintain and house the students, (each student to receive 425 pesos--\$34--per month), and pay the salary of a teacher for the basic education of the participants, in addition to maintaining the animals and the Center site. The State of Jalisco would provide complete bedding for the dormitories every six months and two changes of underwear and work clothes for the daily use of the students.

It was also agreed that both the Secretariat of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry and the Government of the State of Jalisco would be allowed to supervise the agricultural and zootechnological work being carried out in the Farming Center. Each could make suggestions at any time for the improved functioning of the Center. The agreement was to be in effect for four years from the date of September 1, 1967, with the possibility of being continued if deemed advisable at the end of that time (Secretaría de Agricultura y Ganadería, Gobierno del Estado de Jalisco, y el INI, 1967:1-2).

By the end of December, 1967, fifteen Cora and fifteen Huichol students had been chosen. Participants were limited to boys ages fifteen through twenty. However, because of the difficulty of finding boys with adequate schooling (a minimum of third grade) who did not have familial responsibilities which would prohibit them from leaving for two years, the age limit had to be raised to twenty-five. Classes began in January of 1968, with twelve students in the third grade and eighteen in the fourth. The students were to study intensively in the first year in order to finish the fourth and fifth grade levels respectively by the end of the year. Tentative programs for agricultural studies, both theoretical and practical, are as follows: First year: Basic Cultivation (maize, wheat, and beans), General Cultivation (potatoes, oats, alfalfa, etc.), Horticulture, Surveying, Soil Classification; Second year: Fruitgrowing, Rural Constructions, Agricultural Administration, Conservation of Fruits and Vegetables. The teaching of farming was to include: First year: Aviculture, The Breeding and Raising of the Pig, and The Handling of the Bee and the Hive; Second year: The Breeding and Raising of the Cow, The Raising and Exploitation of the Rabbit, and The Raising and Exploitation of the Fish. Similar programs of studies were established in zootechnology.

## CHAPTER VII. EDUCATION

### The Promotor

Change from within--this is the underlying concept both in the actual education of the Indian and in the methods used to accomplish it. As stated previously, the fundamental education of Indian children has a dual purpose. It not only enables children to learn to deal on an equal basis with their fellow Mexicans in a world which is gradually closing in upon them, but also reaches parents and families and thereby the community as a whole through the students. The methods and personnel used to achieve this purpose must be carefully selected, for in this as in other areas in which changes are introduced, the approach will often determine acceptance or rejection of the proposed innovation.

The importance of an anthropological understanding by Center personnel has been discussed. Even with such an understanding as the basis for actions and attitudes, the technical personnel cannot escape the fact that they are "outsiders" and will always be considered as such among the Indians with whom they work. They may be quite successful in suggesting change. However, they continually run the risk of failure simply because they are members of the dominant culture. In other words, the process of

inducing cultural change is so sensitive that in order not to create insurmountable barriers of resistance, personnel working most closely with the people should be selected from their midst. As Aguirre Beltrán (1957:193) explains, in cases where change is imposed from outside a group, it is accepted with difficulty. Where coercion is evident the inevitable result is culture shock and possible disintegration of the group and disorganization of the culture. On the other hand, when change is introduced from within by a member or members of the group, it is psychologically much more easily accepted.

In education, the significance of the innovator's membership in the group has been proved by experience. In the early years of its work in Mexico the Instituto found that many indigenous communities did not recognize the need for a school. In fact, in the few areas where a rural school was already functioning it was totally uninvolved with the community and in many cases had become a negative element. This was generally because the teacher was a local Mestizo with the prejudices and attitudes common to his group regarding the Indians. He rarely could speak the native language, a fact which kept him from participating in the activities of the community to any extent and made his identification as an outsider, and thus a potential oppressor, even more evident. In order to change the image of the school and prevent similar developments with new

schools, INI found it necessary to employ teachers from within the community itself, individuals who had some academic preparation, however minimal, and who enjoyed a high status within the community (INI, 1964:31-32). The results of this policy were encouraging and it has been incorporated into the Instituto's general procedures since that time. High status within the community, though helpful, is no longer a prerequisite, especially in areas which have grown accustomed to the idea of a school and are now aware of the importance of the preparation of the teacher. Thus younger people have been accepted, and in fact predominate, since they are most likely to have the necessary minimal education. Of course, they must be acceptable in the eyes of the community. However, in order to be effective innovators, they must also be persons who deviate somewhat from the norm of the group, who distinguish themselves as individuals, and are therefore more open to different concepts and practices.

The term promotor<sup>\*</sup> is derived from the role these individuals play in the community under the guidance of the Instituto. That is, they function as catalysts, as "promoters" of cultural change.

The use of these promotores has proved more valuable than ever imagined, and the name and the function have

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\*The Spanish term promotor is used throughout because of the negative connotation of the literal English translation, "promoter."



spread to similar programs in Central and South America (Aguirre Beltrán, 1966:226). With the preparation he receives from the Instituto in addition to his minimal schooling, the promotor becomes an individual trained in the manipulation of two cultures, his own and that of the nation as a whole. Being fluent in Spanish (as well as in his native tongue) and familiar with the way of the national society, he can help to introduce his people to new and practical aspects of that society. Since he has been conditioned to his own culture from birth, he will be able to see any innovations from within the context of the native society, thereby understanding and perhaps foreseeing the reactions of the people. In this way he can be invaluable to the INI technical expert, both before and after the introduction of a specific change. Also, as a native, he knows how to handle himself properly within the indigenous society. (For example, with regard to education, he will know how to correct without offending.)

Obviously the promotor can and should be used in all the Instituto's activities. His main responsibility is the basic education, (the promotion of literacy in the native language and in Spanish), of the children of the community to which he is assigned. If he has charge of a boarding school (an alberque) it will of course occupy much of his time. However, he is also called upon to fill various other roles in the community. Since he is the teacher, he

is in a position of leadership (though not in the traditional sense). As the representative of the Instituto he must have some knowledge of all projects introduced and must stimulate and encourage the people, as well as advise them if problems arise. He also serves as interpreter, if necessary, for the technical personnel when they are visiting the area.

In the more established Coordinating Centers throughout Mexico, there are different types of promotores -- educational, agricultural, zootechnical, and medical. Each receives adequate training in his particular field. Though the "organogram" of the Cora-Huichol Coordinating Center shows each type of promotor, as yet the individual promotores are functioning in all capacities. A group of thirty (fifteen Cora and fifteen Huichol) are presently being trained specifically as agricultural and zootechnical promotores (as described in the preceding chapter). Gradually, the educational efforts of the Center should increase the number of potential promotores. Standards for selecting promotores may then become more demanding. Also the number employed may be increased if funds are available and they may become more specialized. For the present, however, the promotores are required to take on responsibilities in an incredibly wide range of activities.

To become a promotor, in addition to being Huichol one must be fluent in Spanish and have completed primary school.

Since there are as yet relatively few with such preparation, further prerequisites cannot be made and anyone who is willing and meets these two requirements is accepted. (In fact, individuals who have completed the fifth year of primary school are accepted also, though at a lower starting salary.) Promotores are employed by the Secretariat of Public Education, the state, or the Instituto and receive monthly salaries which vary depending on their employer. The Secretariat of Public Education pays 870 pesos (\$69.60) per month; the state 500 pesos (\$40) per month; the Instituto 720 pesos (\$57.60) per month.

In 1967, since there was a large group of new promotores they were given a general orientation to community development work by the Center personnel during the summer months (July and August) before assuming their duties for the school year in September. This preparation consisted of classes in the Center Monday through Friday from 9:00 A.M. to 7:00 P.M. (with a two-hour dinner break in the afternoon) and Saturday from 9:00 A.M. to 12:00 noon. The following subjects were presented: the teaching of reading and writing; the teaching of arithmetic and geometry; rudiments of hygiene and first aid; community development and organization; geography; the Instituto Nacional Indigenista and its projects; agricultural orientations; zootechnological orientations; elementary civics, writing and documentation; the teaching of Spanish; and administration and

management of the stores. The enormous scope of the responsibilities of the promotores is evidenced by the range of materials presented to them as "orientation."

During the school year, in addition to their activities within the community, the promotores are expected to be studying to become full-fledged teachers. On vacations and occasionally on weekends they visit Tepic for classes at the Federal Institute for Teaching Qualification (Instituto Federal de Capacitación del Magisterio). Coming to Tepic for classes and returning to the Sierra to work and study, the promotores will generally spend six years in obtaining a teaching certificate. In other Centers, promotores attend classes once a week, but the distances involved here do not permit such a practice.

#### Use of the Indigenous Language

The use of bilingual promotores has made possible the teaching of reading and writing in the native language. The main goal in the basic education of Indian children in INI schools is, of course, to provide them with the skills necessary for their participation in federal and state schools--the major prerequisite being a fluency in Spanish. However, experience has shown that students learn the national language more easily once they have mastered the skills of reading and writing in their native tongue.

As noted, in the past the rural teacher rarely had a fluent knowledge of the native language of the area in which he taught. In fact, his use of that language in his teaching was expressly prohibited, due to the belief that such a practice would be contrary to the purpose of incorporation into the national society (Aguirre Beltrán, 1957: 111). It might be pointed out that the same concept has long guided educational policy on Indian reservations and in Indian schools in the United States with generally disastrous results. It also was and in some cases continues to be common practice to punish Indian children for speaking their mother tongue on school grounds (Henninger and Esposito, 1969).\*

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\*A recent comment of a well-known American authority on education and language, Dr. Nancy Modiano, a professor of Education at New York University, is of interest in this context:

Some school systems in the United States, in the face of growing recognition that ours is a pluristic, not a meltingpot, society, are beginning [emphasis mine] to reevaluate their language policies for children of linguistic minorities...

whereas previously the educational policy throughout the country stipulated that all children be taught exclusively in English (Modiano, 1968:405). In discussing the teaching of English to North American Indian students, Evelyn Bauer (1968:6-9) of the Division of Education, U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs, presents a recommendation made to the BIA by the Center for Applied Linguistics in Washington, D.C., which specifically suggests teaching Indian children to read in their mother tongue before they are made literate in English. She goes on to note that UNESCO's statement, "We take it as axiomatic...that the best medium for teaching is the mother tongue of the pupil," is supported by

As Evangelina Arana de Swadesh (1968:1-3), linguist at the National School of Anthropology in Mexico, indicated in a paper presented at the Sixth Inter-American Indianist Congress, the Tarascan Project in 1939 marked the beginning in Mexico of the application of scientific linguistic methods to the promotion of literacy in the indigenous language. That project prepared teachers, natives of the region, with special techniques and educational materials relevant to the culture. The results were so favorable (though the project only functioned systematically for a year and a half) that INI since its inception in 1949 has made use of Indian languages and the Secretariat of Public Education in recent years has employed linguistic techniques with effective results in its work among indigenous groups.

In a recent study in Chiapas comparing the Spanish reading comprehension of Tzotzil and Tzeltal children in bilingual INI schools with that of children in all-Spanish federal and state schools, Modiano's findings "that a significantly greater proportion of students in the bilingual Institute schools read with significantly greater

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experiences in various education systems throughout the world and by controlled experiments. These concepts regarding the significance of bilingualism are being incorporated into the planning of future projects of the BIA.

comprehension in the national language" (1968:407) corroborated the theory of the Mexican linguists.

Why is teaching in the indigenous language more effective? Through the teacher's use of the native tongue the child is not alienated from the process of learning, for at least he can understand what the teacher says to the group--a direct communication exists. Thus psychological barriers which may arise when the teacher speaks a strange language can be avoided. Teaching in the indigenous language also eliminates the problem of the child who may have a preconceived attitude toward the national language which may influence his initial willingness to learn. The use of his own language, with which he is familiar and completely at ease, makes beginning to learn much less complicated. In reading, the ability to attach symbols to meaningful concepts will make progress much more rapid than if the child is forced to relate the symbols to concepts or sounds with which he can make no identification. Once he has learned to read and write in his own language, learning to do so in a second language will be relatively easy, as he will have already mastered the basic mechanisms. However, he must have had oral training in the second language from the start of his education so that by the time he approaches the reading and writing of that language he will be somewhat familiar with the sounds involved and will thus be able to make

meaningful associations as he learns (Swadesh, 1968; Modiano, 1968:410-413).

Aguirre Beltrán (1957:126) stresses the need for a reevaluation of the indigenous languages on the national as well as local level. Their reduction to written form and the production of an abundant literature will help in their appreciation by other elements of Mexican society, and will aid in maintaining the pride of the Indian in his heritage as he undergoes the changes brought about by acculturation. But also within the native culture, the use of the indigenous language in teaching implies the need for linguistic studies to reduce the language to writing and prepare texts in the language in keeping with the experiences and values of the culture in which they will be used. This has been accomplished successfully in several regions.\*

At present in the Cora-Huichol Center the promotores are working without a text in the native language--in fact, in some cases without any text. The Summer Institute of Linguistics has published a Huichol primer, but the Instituto does not use it. An INI linguist completed a study in 1967 for the preparation of a Huichol primer which was expected to be ready for use in 1968. However, by mid-

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\*The Summer Institute of Linguistics in cooperation with the Secretariat of Education has produced and continues to publish numerous dictionaries, texts, and instructional materials in many of the Indian languages of Mexico.



year there had been no word of its publication. In the meantime the promotores are using a text entitled ROSARITA Y JOSECITO which is used throughout the country as a general primary text. Since it is not specifically for Indian children, the promotores must make certain adaptations in the classroom discussions to give it meaning.

#### Center Schools

In the past year the Education Section of the Corahuichol Coordinating Center has expanded considerably. In the academic year 1966-67, the Center had seven promotores in seven communities, with a total of 301 children enrolled. By the end of the year approximately 80% had learned some Spanish. By September of 1967, there were twenty-one promotores and a total of twenty-one schools had been established, with 600 children enrolled. By the middle of the 1967-68 school year the number of promotores had grown to twenty-eight, working in twenty-two schools with a total actual enrollment of 887 children. Fourteen of the twenty-eight are Huichol, working in the eleven Huichol schools, with approximately 379 children.

Of these schools, three function officially as albergues (boarding schools during week-days): San Andrés Cohamiata, Ocota de la Sierra, and Tuxpan de Bolaños (all in the Huichol zone). In San Andrés and Ocota classrooms, dormitories, kitchens, and dining halls have been constructed.

In Tuxpan the classrooms and dormitory are complete, but as yet no kitchen or dining hall has been built. A temporary one has been set up in a dwelling of the settlement, separate from the INI installations. In addition, meals are being provided for the children of three other schools (one of them Cora).

As in the other Sections of the Center, the Education Section suffers budgetary problems. Though the demands have grown at an incredible rate (as evidenced by the number of schools: from seven to twenty-one in one year), the budget has remained exactly the same. One problem is that much is spent on transportation. However, even if that were not the case, the funds are clearly inadequate. For example, 50,000 pesos (\$4,000) per year are allotted for the maintenance of the three albergues. Of that approximately 20,000 (\$1,600) are spent in paying the cooks (and even then it is difficult to find suitable native women who are willing to work for the poor wage of 300 pesos--\$24--per month). Three pesos (\$0.24) per day per child are needed for food. Simple arithmetic indicates the inadequacy of the budget. For the 193 children (the total enrollment in the three schools) the expenditure for even a fifteen-day month would be more than 8,600 pesos (\$688), just under a third of the remainder of the annual allotment. In order to feed the children in the other three schools in which meals are being supplied, the Head

of the Section, Professor Onofre Montes Ríos, has had to dip into the budget of the regular albergues. Fortunately, in two of the communities with schools supplying meals, the parents have cooperated in donating small quantities of maize and beans.

A total of 6,000 pesos (\$480) per year is set aside for instructional materials, but as Professor Montes remarks, it is exhausted on notebooks, rather than books. In this area alone, the Professor feels the need for an additional 10-15,000 pesos (\$800-1,200).

This Center cannot afford the scholarships which other Centers offer, nor school furniture for the great majority of its newly founded schools. According to Professor Montes, though it may have been bad policy to set up more schools than they could adequately supply, at least they are attending to the children.

The problem of attendance on the part of the children is one of the major difficulties confronting the Education Section. It is not primarily a question of the community's failure to see the need for a school, but rather stems mainly from the nature of Huichol economics. Huichol children, both boys and girls, are an important source of labor for the family. In the months of October, November, and even part of December, the children are expected to be with the family in the fields, harvesting the crops. Due to the topography and the dispersed

settlement pattern, the fields are usually quite a distance from the ceremonial center in which the school is located. Thus, school activities generally cannot begin until mid-October or even November and enrollment does not really reach its peak until December or January. Children begin leaving again in mid-April and May to help in the preparation of the fields. They may leave even earlier if it has been a bad year and the family is compelled to travel to the coast to work on Mestizo lands. For example, in early May when I visited San Andrés, which has an official enrollment of fifty-six, forty-eight boys and eight girls, there were thirteen boys and one girl actually attending classes.

Therefore, for many children the school year is reduced to perhaps five months, instead of the usual nine. Until economic conditions are improved, the Instituto can do relatively little to change this attendance problem. Possibly with an increased investment of funds allowing for more food parents would see greater value in the regular attendance of their children. Even in the case of the albergues, attendance is influenced by the settlement pattern. Children spend the week and go home on weekends. However, depending on the distance, they may wish to leave early Friday and may not return promptly for Monday morning classes, thus reducing not only the school year but also the school week.

The distance between home and school is an important factor in the enrollment and attendance of girls. Attendance figures for the Huichol schools show a marked difference between the number of girls enrolled as compared with boys (much more so than in the Cora region). Of the 379 total enrollment in the Huichol region, 271 are boys and 108 are girls. In all probability, the actual daily figures, especially concerning girls, are much lower. One reason for this is simply that the necessity to educate girls is not recognized. Another is that in Huichol society one's daughters must be closely guarded. Traveling any distance to school unprotected is hazardous, in addition to the fact that the school is attended predominantly by boys and the teacher is usually a young man. Understandably, a parent's hesitance to send his daughter is especially strong in the case of an albergue, where she is expected to stay away from home all week long.\*

In discussing the agricultural and zootechnological activities of the Center, I mention related school activities. Ideally the school is also the place to begin training in sanitary living conditions. Especially in the albergues, children are taught to wash before meals, clean

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\*On the whole, however, the attendance of girls has increased in schools sponsored by other Centers since the inception of the use of the native promotor as teacher, a fact which shows a greater degree of confidence in him than in the Mestizo teacher (INI, 1964:32).

their dormitories, classrooms and dining halls, and generally maintain an appearance of cleanliness. Promotores have been given orientation in hygiene and first aid and are responsible for the appearance and healthy habits of their students. This responsibility includes giving haircuts. However, there is one major shortcoming. At the schools which I visited (the main INI installations), there were no latrines. The only latrines found were in San Andrés at the quarters of the technical personnel, a ten-minute walk from the school. A latrine should certainly be an inherent part of the construction of a school, especially if that school is planned to house ninety-one students five days out of the week (as in Tuxpan de Bolaños). What better place than the school to instill this fundamental habit of sanitary living?\* When questioned regarding this lack, Professor Montes replied that it was considered the responsibility of the Health Section. However, the Health budget is fraught with as many problems as that of any other Section. Apparently the building of latrines was not considered to be within its means, even though the investment in labor and materials would not seem to have to be very large. It is unfortunate that either Section would have to rationalize so obvious a failure by passing respon-

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\* Stressing this aspect might seem ethnocentric were it not for the fact that many of the intestinal disorders found not only in the Huichol area but also throughout rural Mexico are transmitted through human feces.

sibility to the other because of budgetary problems.

#### The Franciscan Missions

An element of conflict within the Huichol world has been created by the Franciscan missions. As mentioned, the Franciscans were expelled from San Andrés. However, they established a mission in Santa Clara, about an hour's walk away. There are also missions in Guadalupe Ocotán, Huaixtita, and Santa Teresa (Cora). The presence of a mission school alongside that of the Instituto is a potential source of confusion in these communities. The problem is particularly acute in Guadalupe Ocotán, where a long-standing conflict between "progressives" and "traditionalists," the former leaning toward Mestizo ways and the latter desperately clinging to the Huichol customs, has been aggravated by the existence of the mission. For obvious reasons the mission tends to favor the "progressives," who are condemned by other Huichols for economic, political and social alliances with Mestizos, and especially with cattle interests. The resulting conflict has even led to considerable bloodshed and to the burning of the Huichol temple by the "progressives," who are small in number but who feel strong because of their association with the dominant culture. At the same time, however, their alienation from Huichol culture does not seem complete since not long ago they elected a strong "traditionalist"

as their governor. Until recently the only formal school at Guadalupe Ocotán was that of the Franciscans. In 1968, however, the INI Coordinating Center established its own school within sight of the mission. Since it is the Instituto's policy not to interfere with the native religion and values, it is inevitable that the more traditional sector of the community will feel itself strengthened by the Center school. It is perhaps a measure of community reaction to the new Center school that parents immediately began supplying the school kitchen with maize and beans for the children. Whether the competition between the Franciscan school and the Center school will lead to new conflicts or result in a new balance between the factions remains to be seen.\*

A mission cannot help but be strong competition for an INI albergue even though there is now more tolerance and cooperation than in the past between the personnel of the two organizations. For example, the mission of Santa Clara is staffed by a young, energetic priest, a Mother Superior and seven young nuns, all of whom live there full-time. Several of them have become reasonably proficient in Huichol, through a conscious effort to learn the difficult language. At the time of my visit, there were

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\*One of the most startling experiences I had during my visit to Guadalupe Ocotán was to be awakened at 5:30 A.M. by the blare of a loud speaker reverberating through the community broadcasting the mass from the mission church.



fifty-six boys and twenty-eight girls staying at this mission. Only four had left to work the fields or travel to the coast as compared with the fourteen remaining out of fifty-six in San Andrés at that time. The children appeared happy, healthy, clean, well-cared-for and well-fed.\* The physical contrast between this atmosphere and that of the INI school staffed by one or two promotores and a native cook is painfully sharp. Clearly, better and more abundant food and more pleasant living conditions have attracted and kept a greater number of children. The mission obviously has a more adequate budget, more personnel (volunteers fully dedicated to their work) and a very specific cause.

The Franciscans work to educate a child, but also and of greater significance, to impose a change of beliefs. This is precisely the aspect of their work which creates conflicts within the individual Huichol and within the community, for the Huichol world is a very closely integrated aboriginal ideological universe which leaves no room for Christian concepts. Huichol beliefs about the nature of the universe permeate every aspect of their daily lives, as one might expect of a subsistence-farming people with a not-too-distant pre-agricultural past. That

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\*Even the dogs there were big, healthy animals which I automatically patted before realizing the extreme contrast between these and the lean, mangy dogs one usually sees sneaking around the fireside to snatch a bit of tortilla.

the Huichol universe is a very personal one is manifest in the conceptualization of the divine beings (which are the deified phenomena of nature, the spirits of ancestors, "owners" or spirits of animals and plants, and the forces which govern fertility and growth) as divine ancestors, addressed by ritual kinship terms (Furst, 1967:39).

Although when talking with a Spanish-speaking outsider the Huichol will use the word dios ("god") to describe his deities, Furst (personal communication) points out that it is erroneous to speak of "gods" with regard to the Huichol world. The word "god" does not exist in the Huichol language and the Huichol merely uses dios for want of a more adequate word in Spanish. The deities are addressed and spoken of as Our Grandfather, Our Father, Our Mother, etc., and while a great deal of veneration is shown them, they are treated with much greater familiarity than is normally acceptable in Judeo-Christian tradition. As I indicated earlier, the persistence of this native Weltanschauung in relatively unaltered form has been remarkable. Catholic missionaries have made little or no impression upon it. Even today, though the missions care for a large number of children they do not seem to be making real converts. The ideological conflict and social pressure felt upon returning to one's community are too overwhelming. For example, young people are told that it is sinful to participate in the "pagan" rituals and cere-

monies. Nevertheless, in the social context of their families and communities, they know they would be ostracized and disowned if they did not participate. Thus a double standard of behavior is developed to suit the social environment, whether it be the mission or the indigenous community. Once the young people have left the mission school, they continue with the beliefs and practices of their ancestors, which they never really abandoned.

Physically, then, the missions present a much better image than does the Instituto. However, ideologically INI has greater respect for the indigenous Huichol culture and tries insofar as possible not to disturb aboriginal religion, world view and ritual, while at the same time seeking to improve Huichol health, education and economy and thereby enable the Indians to participate more fully in Mexican national life.

## CHAPTER VII. SOCIAL WORK

The physical contrast between the mission school children and those in the INI schools points out the lack of a woman's influence in INI activities in the Sierra. There is a definite need for closer supervision of the albergues. I do not wish to imply by this that the promotores are not carrying out their responsibilities. There are of course promotores who are more enthusiastic and conscientious than others and who take greater pride in the appearance both of the school buildings and of the children. However, it does seem that a woman's guidance in the washing and mending of clothing, the care of the dormitories and dining halls, and the preparation of food could improve present conditions, and perhaps reduce resistance with regard to girls' attendance.

In this respect the missions have a decided advantage over the Instituto. The nun fills an established and accepted position--at least within her limited social environment, an environment which affords her as an individual the security and protection necessary. Within the community, on the other hand, the role of the single woman outside the family context is not accepted. Few female "outsiders," free from familial responsibilities, would be willing to live and work in the Sierra, nor

would they be favorably received at present.\* The concept of the position of social worker must first become familiar and accepted. In this respect the fact that the presence of the nuns has begun to familiarize people with a special role for certain single women may help in the introduction of the social worker, provided that the differences between her work and that of a nun are emphatically stressed to avoid her identification by the community with religious changes.\*\*

Not only with regard to the operation of the albergues, but also due to the sexual dichotomy of society in indigenous communities, a definite need exists for women among the ranks of Instituto personnel. If individual social workers are introduced in the future to full-time work in the Sierra, they can begin to work gradually with the women of the community and perhaps instill in some of them

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\* Also, the nun is a volunteer. INI would have to employ its social workers and could not do so with the current budget.

\*\* Also, it should be pointed out that women occupy a much higher position in Huichol society than they do in Mestizo communities. This may be due to the comparative recency of a hunting and gathering way of life which is generally characterized by a greater social equality between men and women. The double standard so typical of rural Mexico is rare among the Huichols and women participate on all levels of ritual, including the very sacred peyote hunt. Some even function as mara'akáte (pl. of mara'akáme, shaman-singer) (Furst, personal communication). Thus the relative independence and prestige of women within the native culture may facilitate the acceptance of female personnel, Indian or not.

the basic concepts of social work, for ideally native women should take over in this realm. This, however, will require some changes in social roles and values within the Indian community. A start can be made with the training of promotoras, young native girls who have been allowed to attend school and who show enthusiasm and promise as leaders within their social environment. At present such girls are difficult to find. There are a few, however, and if the opportunity is taken to continue their training, it is likely that the number of girls in school will gradually increase. In discussing the need for the social worker and the promotora, Director Nahmad said the Instituto hopes to be able to send fifteen Indian girls to the school in Mezquitic next year. Also, at the time of my stay, Professor Montes, of the Education Section, was hoping to get a scholarship at a girls' school for a particularly bright Huichol girl whose father would otherwise not permit her to go away to study to become a nurse.

The Cora-Huichol Coordinating Center does employ one social worker, María Sara Molinari de Nahmad, who has professional training and a degree as a social worker. She states that ideally the social worker plays an intermediary role between the family and the doctor, the teacher, the economist, etc. At the Center she does as much as possible to fulfill this position. However, since her familial responsibilities prevent her from spending much

time in the Sierra, she directs her energies primarily to the needs of the Indians who come to the Center in Tepic or have dealings through it.

Her principal duties are medical. She orients people who come to Tepic to the services available to them at the Central Hospital, the State Health Center (for out-patient care), a tuberculosis hospital, the offices of an oculist who has volunteered to help, a pharmacist, or a dentist; convinces people of the need for care; helps them to obtain care and medicine; demonstrates and/or administers medicines; and follows up on the patient's care and progress while he is still in the city. In her dealings with the various health organizations and facilities of the city she has made many contacts and knows precisely who will be of greatest assistance in each case, or where one is most likely to get the best price on certain medicines, etc.

She also helps orient people to other urban facilities, such as finding a place to stay (many spend the night in the Center's courtyard), the market or employment. There are times when she is called upon to counsel people regarding family or economic problems. For example, a young Huichol came in with a complicated tale of desertion. Evidently his young wife had run off with a friend of his. Now her father wanted the husband to give her back to her family. Since he was unable to comply because she was

with another man, he wanted the Instituto to write a letter to the authorities of the community requesting that they get his wife to return to him so that he might give her back to her father! Though this case is unusual, it is an example of the variety of problems which fall within the scope of the social worker's responsibilities.

In addition, she has charge of the crafts store, maintaining a friendly, informal atmosphere while encouraging continued high quality workmanship. She occasionally purchases materials requested by letter and sends them to the Sierra.

She also aids in the training and advising of promotores and has begun to implement a program of trying to improve the traditional Huichol diet of maize, beans and chile in simple ways, utilizing items usually available to the Indians, for example the prickly pear cactus as a vegetable (nopales). These efforts are based on the concept of introducing changes gradually, proceeding slowly from the known to the unknown.\* Very helpful also is the experience of the Secretariat of Health and Welfare, which has published several small booklets to be used by teachers and social workers. These include "How to Enrich Maize with Other Foods," "How to Use the Foods of the Desert Zones," and "How to Enrich Beans with Other Foods." Of course the best place to start in such a campaign is in

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\* See Aguirre Beltrán (1955:72-75).



the albergues, teaching the cooks to give the children a more varied and substantial menu and teaching the girls in the school to prepare new dishes. Since changing diet is a matter of changing cultural values and practices, the adoption of different combinations and even new ingredients will be more easily accomplished in more acculturated areas where the diet is already somewhat more varied than the traditional trio of maize, beans and chile. The process will necessarily be a slow one, due to the Huichol concept of the "proper" diet, the obvious respect for tradition and the distinctly "Huichol ways," and the belief that one should not manifest wealth.

In all these duties, Sara Nahmad makes an effort to come to know each individual and to maintain personal, friendly contact. While people are hospitalized or in the city receiving medical attention, she is often their only link with the Sierra and a familiar face in a strange world. When possible, she informs their relatives of their progress. Occasionally people write a note to her on their return to their communities. Of course follow-up and communication are extremely difficult, and the gratifications of a social worker here are relatively few. The value of her work is not easy to assess and only rarely does she get the satisfaction afforded her, for example, when a man came to her with his sick little girl and said, "I have come looking for you; I will do what you say." A

year earlier she had helped him obtain hospital care for a hernia and she had not seen nor heard from him in over six months. However, he knew where to come when he needed help.

Thus, the role of the social worker is a very important one, lending a warm and personal touch to the relations between the Center and the Indians, simplifying as much as possible the complicated city ways, and softening the ordeal one must endure to receive the necessary services.

## CHAPTER IX. HEALTH

### The Anthropological Approach

The importance of good health in any society is self-evident, for without it its members cannot function to their capacity. In rural Mexico scientific medical care and sanitary living conditions are not widespread. Health facilities are even less available among the indigenous populations of the nation, who, in their isolation, have maintained traditional concepts of illness and of "proper" curing practices based on magico-religious beliefs. Infant mortality rates are high; gastro-intestinal ailments are an accepted part of daily living; infectious diseases run rampant.

The unhealthy situation of Indians and the need for change have been stated by the Peruvian sociologist MacLean y Estenós (1962:43-44):

In order for the Indian to become reincorporated into the nation, for him to be an individual unit of production, for him to be no longer a serf and convert himself into the owner of the land which he works, for him to be instructed and educated, and thus develop into an authentic citizen, he must have one essential quality: he must live, not vegetate. Let life leave its mark in productive years instead of passing by in days that leave no trace. Let us not forget, therefore, that caring for the health of the Indian is caring for his very life and for the life of his race.

The above statement suggests a direct relationship between good health and other aspects of the development of

a community and its integration into national society. Thus, any directed program of development should include a health program. Similarly, a health program is dependent on the other aspects of development. The economy--the levels of purchasing power--determines the ability to obtain food, housing, clothing, and medicines; social organization, education, traditions and values--all the aspects of the culture intervene in some way in the results of a health program. Aside from the effects of other aspects upon it, a health program cannot be implemented by itself because of the wide range of influence it has over other areas, (since a change in health practices is a cultural change and culture is an integrated whole). As Foster (1958:23) puts it:

When and under what circumstances does reduced infant mortality produce a higher level of welfare for the entire population, and when does it simply produce more adults who cannot realize their potential because of lack of land, undeveloped natural resources, insufficient industrialization to absorb a growing population, and so forth?

A health program should form a part of a larger program of integral regional development which attacks all aspects of the intercultural situation from all possible angles in order to obtain physical, mental and social well-being for the community (Aguirre Beltrán, 1955:25).

In accepting the necessity of implementing a health program to improve the deplorable physical conditions of the indigenous communities, one must take care to emphasize the importance of understanding the native culture. Here,

as in other areas, an anthropological understanding on the part of the personnel is essential. However, perhaps in the realm of medicine more than any other, the ethnocentrism typical of the scientist is difficult to overcome. Modern medicine based on science seems to have unequivocal proof of the validity of its practices. As Foster (1958:20) points out,

there has been a rather general assumption, particularly among Americans, that because scientific clinical techniques work equally well on the human body, regardless of race, language, or culture, the whole complex of belief, practice, and interpersonal relationships which together constitute the "institution" of medicine in a Western country can be transplanted without modification to any part of the world.

This attitude constitutes a failure to recognize that every human community has developed an elaborate set of ideas, attitudes and behavior patterns in response to persisting problems of social living, of which illness is one. Although disease and its treatment are essential problems in the functioning of every society, not every society will react in the same way. Each is different and has its own matrix of culturally conditioned responses-- responses not only to physiological ailments, but also and more importantly to emotionally based and culturally defined conditions (Foster, 1958:20). Strict adherence to science is blind, for it denies the existence of cultural differences and the possibility of the validity and usefulness of non-scientific methods and practices within other cultural

contexts.

The necessity for the medical doctor to divest himself of his own cultural conditioning is essential in approaching an indigenous community. There especially it is impossible to separate ideas and patterns of action with regard to medicine and health from beliefs, values, and moral, religious and social norms which govern the community and give it its solidarity. In working in an intercultural situation, Paul (1955:1) counsels;

If you wish to help a community improve its health, you must learn to think like the people of that community. Before asking a group of people to assume new health habits, it is wise to ascertain the existing habits, how these habits are linked to one another, what functions they perform, and what they mean to those who practice them.

Thus, in approaching the implementation of a health program in an indigenous region, the medical doctor must observe with an open mind. Difficult though it is, he must attempt to place himself in that other world so that he may see the problems from his prospective patients' point of view and come to understand the culture with which he will work.

#### Huichol Medicine

Indeed, from a study of Huichol beliefs and practices regarding illness, one can learn much about Huichol society and world view, for sickness, unfortunately a common occurrence, is closely tied to religious beliefs.\* Studies are

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\*In fact, due to the large number of native curers

available concerning traditional medicine in general, presenting beliefs and practices commonly found throughout Mexico (Aguirre Beltrán, 1955:108-119). However, few studies have been dedicated specifically to Huichol health beliefs and practices. Very brief descriptions are found in Lumholtz (1960), Villa Rojas (1961), and Fabila (1959). Grimes has written an article "The Huichol and Medicine" (1955), unfortunately for all practical purposes unobtainable. A group of University of California, Los Angeles, medical and anthropology students spent several months of the summer of 1967 in San Andrés, but the results are as yet unpublished. One of the rare sources available at present is a paper by Furst (1967) on the Huichol conceptions of the soul, which are related to the concept of illness and to curing practices. This paper provides considerable insight for certain aspects of the Huichol world view. Though it does not include a comprehensive description of beliefs and practices regarding illness, (nor was it intended to do so), the study is helpful in pointing up some of the main concepts. What follows will be based largely on the findings in this study and on my own limited observations.

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which he found among the Huichols, about 25% of the male population, Lumholtz (1960:21) was led to believe that the name "Huichol" was a corruption of the term vishálica or virárica which he believed meant "doctors" or curanderos. In actuality, the Huichols only refer to themselves as "Huichols" when talking with outsiders. Within the group they use a traditional tribal name, wixarika, for which there is no translation.

From the Huichol point of view, the causes of most illnesses can be traced to the supernatural. Entering the Huichol ideological world, Furst (1967:47) explains this concept of illness by asking, "...how else can one explain that some people are still healthy and active at an extremely advanced age while others are struck down for no apparent reason by one illness after another?" According to this reasoning there are five generally accepted causes of illness: divine displeasure; effects of natural phenomena; sorcery; soul-loss; and the return of an ancestor.\*

The majority of sicknesses (and other calamities, for that matter) can be attributed to divine displeasure. I was directly introduced to this concept on my first visit to a Huichol settlement. A week after my arrival in Tepic I was invited to accompany a Huichol woman, Lupe, to the fiesta of the Parching of the Maize at a nearby community, El Vicenteño,\*\* where she had relatives. Unfortunately, Lupe's rheumatism began to bother her early in the day before we had even set out, and by the time we arrived by bus at El Vicenteño, she could hardly walk and had to be carried up the hill from the river to the settlement in a chair. As I was to find out, at least three of her relatives present possessed curing powers, and in the course of our stay

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\*Except for the fifth one, these causes are generally prevalent in the traditional medicine of other groups (Aguirre Beltrán, 1955:115).

\*\*See also chapter on Communications.



several curing rituals were performed upon her. During one such curing, the curendero, by sucking, supposedly removed from her body a thorn found on a bush which grows in the desert lands of San Luis Potosí, where the Huichols make the traditional pilgrimage of the peyote hunt.\* This was extremely significant, for her uncle--who was doing the curing--explained to her that she was suffering from this ailment because she had incurred the displeasure of the divine ancestors when she and her husband had failed to keep their promise to go on a peyote pilgrimage the preceding December. This was an especially serious ceremonial lapse because her husband, Ramón, was preparing to become a mará'akáme (shaman-singer) and he lacked only one pilgrimage, the fifth and most significant, to fulfill his goal and "complete himself" as a mará'akáme. In order to rid herself of this illness Lupe was advised to conduct a special ceremony for the purpose of appeasing the offended deities.

Many cases of illness are similar to that described, though the offenses may be less serious. Also the mará'akáme may need to have a dream about the problem before advising the proper steps to insure a cure, steps which usually

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\*The trip is generally made annually in December or January to collect peyote for the year's ceremonies. Participation in the pilgrimage is a highly sacred act. For further details see Benítez (1968), and Furst and Myerhoff (1966) who interpret and the significance of this ritual, return to the land of the peyote in terms of Huichol history.

involve special offerings to certain of the divine ancestors.\*

Natural phenomena are sometimes thought to cause certain types of illnesses or abnormalities. For example, a young Huichol couple and their new baby were at the Center conducting some business. The mother kept the child well-covered, partly because it was so young, but also because the baby had a harelip. When questioned about the Huichol belief concerning the cause of such a deformity, the husband explained there had been an eclipse of the moon during his wife's pregnancy and they believed that the moon had eaten a piece of the child's lip. This belief, however, is not strictly Huichol, being a rather common folk belief throughout Mexico. (A well-known surgeon happened to be visiting the Center that day and volunteered his services at a future date to correct the condition.)

Within the Huichol world view sorcery is occasionally the cause of illness. There are certain individuals who are regarded as sorcerers, using their supernatural powers for negative or harmful acts. Actually, every mara'akame has the potential for malevolent magic. However, such anti-

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\*This is also true in regard to calamities of another sort. For example, in Tuxpan the Instituto doctor for the Huichol region, Dr. Enrique Campos Chavez, and I talked with a man named Juan whose house had just burned down. He told us that he had gone that very afternoon to talk to the mara'akame about it and that night the mara'akame had had a dream. The following day he had advised Juan that it was a punishment from the deities because he had failed to make a certain offering. To make up for this ceremonial lapse he had to take a candle to the calihuey.

social conduct is rare, for a mara'akáme is considered and sees himself as the "guardian of the community against all dangers, whatever their origin, and a shield against all threats to the spiritual integrity and equilibrium of its membership" (Furst, 1967:51). Interestingly, sorcery entered into the case in which Lupe's conduct was diagnosed as a ceremonial lapse incurring divine displeasure. Her husband Ramón was not feeling well either, partly due to osteomyelitis which has afflicted him in one leg for years, but also due to a nervous condition which he described as being enfermo de bilis (having a bile illness\*). The symptoms of this were a constant bitter taste in his mouth, lack of hunger, much rage inside only calmed by smoking a cigarette. It must be explained here that in addition to having failed to fulfill the promise of going on the peyote pilgrimage the previous December, Ramón had taken a second wife--which is not supposed to be done during the five-year period (Furst and Myerhoff, 1966:20) of preparation to become a mara'akáme. Lupe, his wife of many years, had scolded and warned him, as had his mother. Probably, his condition was due to the emotional conflict between his fear of displeasing the divine ancestors and endangering his chances of becoming a mara'akáme and his determination to keep his new young wife, aggravated by the familial pressures he had

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\*This is a traditional illness found throughout Mexico. See Aguirre Beltrán (1955:113).

brought upon himself. In discussing Ramón's physical condition with him, Dr. Campos asked if he thought it was because the deities were displeased. Ramón replied that his sister (who is a mará'akáme herself--and apparently one of the few women of the region in that position) had "sung" in a fiesta a few days earlier to find out. The divine ancestors, specifically Tatewarí (Fire--Our Grandfather, the First Mara'akáme--principal deity of the Huichols) and Káuyúmarie (the culture hero, Sacred Deer Person, helper and companion of Tatewarí) (Furst, 1967:39), replied that they were not displeased with him and even asked why he hadn't gone on the peyote pilgrimage, saying that they would expect him this year. Also in her dreams his sister had seen that Ramón had been bewitched (enhechizado), but she couldn't find out by whom or for what reason. Ramón remarked that he was going to another cantador to find out who did it.

The diagnosis of sorcery would probably reduce some of the emotional strain Ramón was feeling, for it would relieve his preoccupation with divine displeasure. It is said that sorcery can be neutralized by the powers of the mará'akáme, for they are greater than those of the sorcerer because the former has the help of Káuyúmarie and even of Tatewarí himself. Sometimes the cure will depend on the proper identification of the sorcerer and his punishment and/or withdrawal of the hostile magic (Furst, 1967:50-51).

One of the most serious causes of illness is that of

"soul-loss," an ever-present danger. The soul, which is identified with the crown of the head or kupúri, may be lost in various ways. It may wander off during sleep and roam about. Even though it does not wander far it may be captured by a sorcerer or by an animal sent by a sorcerer. Or the kupúri, the life essence, may spill out of the top of the head accidentally--if one falls, for example--and be lost or abducted by a sorcerer or eaten by animals sent by sorcerers (Furst, 1967:51-52). Soul-loss during sleep causes one to wake up ill in the morning, not knowing what happened. If the mara'akáme does not find the soul, the sufferer will die. Accidental soul-loss due to a fall is equally serious, as explained by Ramón:

One lies there and cannot think. One is not dead and one is not asleep. But one lies there, not moving. Then after a while one gets up from there, feeling bad. One feels very ill. Because one does not know what happened. One does not know about one's head. One cannot think properly. One has no thoughts. One is out of one's mind, as one says. One walks off-balance. It is because everything fell.

One gets up after a time but one does not feel well. One walks and walks, one climbs up there, not feeling well. One's head aches. One returns home but one cannot do anything. One lies there, feeling ill, ill (Furst, 1967:52-53).

Another cause of illness and a most interesting one is also related to the soul, not with regard to its loss, but rather its recovery. The Huichol believes that five years after death the essential life force of an old, wise (wise in the ways of the Huichols) relative can return to the living in the form of a rock crystal, called 'urukáme, or

tewarí (in the sense of "ancestor"). During the course of the five years after death the soul shapes itself with five little crystalline arrows, like the stings of a wasp, into the form of the pure crystalline bones of the life (the rock crystal). When he has formed himself, he throws an arrow at one of his relatives, causing a pain or an ache in his ear, head, throat, stomach, heart, or wherever the arrow falls. This ache is usually persistent and does not respond to a simple herbal cure. It is then up to the mara'akáme to diagnose it as a manifestation of the desire of the 'urukáme to return (pp.80-83).

Logically, if the causes of illness are supernatural, the cures will be based on similar premises.

The term mara'akáme has been used several times, with its approximate equivalent, "shaman-singer." An understanding of this term is fundamental to any study of Huichol society and world view, particularly health concepts and practices. The term is difficult to define, for it cannot be equated precisely with curandero, cantador, shaman, or priest. The mara'akáme is clearly the most significant individual in Huichol culture, fulfilling a combination of roles. Perhaps the best description of his functions is that of Furst and Myerhoff (1966:5):

In many respects the Huichol shaman resembles the classical shaman of other primitive peoples, serving as intermediary between the individual (as well as the group) and the supernatural world

in times of crisis and performing magical cures by means of the common shamanic techniques of blowing, spitting, and sucking. He is also "called" to his profession by the gods\* ("divine election") and enters a trancelike state during which his soul journeys to the other world. In other important respects, however, he serves as priest, both in relation to the Huichol temple, or túki, and in organizing and officiating at the sacred ceremonies during which he sacrifices to the deities and chants the sacred mythology.

They go on to point out that the priest-like functions predominate over the shamanic curing, and due to this and their significance within the culture they prefer to use the Huichol term mara'akáme rather than shaman.

Thus, though the mara'akáme does cure, that is not his sole nor even main function. It must also be noted that there are lesser curers, who use many of the same methods but do not have the powers or respect enjoyed by the mara'akáte (pl.).\*\*

In three of the above causes of illness, foreign object intrusion plays an important role. In cases of divine displeasure as well as sorcery, the victim is said to have been "shot with an arrow of sickness" (Furst, 1967:47). In the case of illness caused by the return of an ancestor in the form of a rock crystal, the 'urukáme throws an arrow at his

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\*As noted previously, Furst has since decided against the use of the word "god" in discussing Huichol divine beings.

\*\*Furst (1967:101) comments that this fact could possibly account for Lumholtz' exaggeration of the number of shamans among the Huichols.

relative. This also is like an arrow of sickness, and must be removed by the mara'akáme.

The usual method of removing the arrow or foreign object is exemplified in Lupe's cure. After listening to the complaint (in Lupe's case, that her whole left side was sore and stiff and her head ached), the mara'akáme (one of her uncles) passed the sacred feathers\* over those parts of her body and sucked, or made a sucking motion, over her upper chest, head, and left side.\*\* After sucking he backed off and spit a kernel of maize into his hand. He looked at it carefully, turned it over thoughtfully, and then threw it away, after people had seen what it was. He returned to pass the feathers over her, blew on her and made a spitting sound. People watching showed great concern and interest and seemed satisfied when they had seen the maize kernel as the physical manifestation of her illness. With its removal, she was on the road to recovery. On another occasion, another uncle cured her without muviéri, using generally the same motions. Her legs and joints were stiff, so he very lightly touched her knees with his knarled hands,

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\*Muviéri--power object of the mara'akáme comprised of an arrow wound with yarn, on one end of which are bound several small feathers and from which hang two large feathers. See Benítez (1968:227-229) for further description.

\*\*Furst (1967:48) notes, "The usual motion with the feathers is one of brushing the illness from the four directions to the center, from where it is sucked out."



made as if to suck, and spit a thorn into his hand. He then passed his hands over her knees and legs without touching them, made some spitting sounds, sucked again, and again spit out a thorn, then passed his hands over her again. After completing this process, he explained to me that vecinos\* say that the Huichols cure with saliva, but that is not so. They cure with the power and talent which the divine ancestors have given them.

One sees this type of curing repeatedly in the Sierra, sometimes with variations such as a kind of massaging which looks surprisingly similar to a scientific doctor's exploratory examination. In the case of a woman who was supposedly "dying" from a reopened wound (from an appendix operation, to be discussed further), the mara'akáme used several small pieces of cotton. He blew on one and passed it over her hands. He did the same with a second one, passing it over her feet. Then he blew on her head and put pieces of cotton in a T-like design (a cross?) on her bare stomach, blew on the cotton and with both hands lightly touched her ribs. He then removed the cotton, covered her with her blanket, and went outside to the fire where preparations were being made for a visiting mara'akáme to "sing" all night for her.

Since Huichol culture has remained relatively untouched, one would expect curing beliefs and practices to have a long

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\*Literally Spanish for "neighbors," used here for the Huichol word tévaris--outsiders--which Grimes spells téwiyaris.

history. Lumholtz' (1960:237) description at the turn of the century is almost exactly the same as the practices which I have described. It is also interesting to note that the Jesuit priest Father Pérez de Ribas (1944:139), writing in 1645 of the work of the Order among the natives of the province of Sinaloa, described the practices of blowing, sucking, and removal of foreign objects such as thorns, pebbles, etc. Of course, spitting and sucking are standard in shamanic curing. Blowing is also common.\*

There are other means of physical curing. Herbal poultices and remedies are frequently used. This aspect alone merits further investigation, for the medicinal properties of some of the herbs could prove interesting. For example, there is an herb which is said to suspend menstruation.\*\*

In dealing with illnesses which have a supernatural cause, removal of the physical symptoms ("the arrow of sickness" or the foreign object) does not constitute the complete cure. In fact, it is generally only the beginning. In Lupe's diagnosis, for instance, she was advised to conduct

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\*See Aguirre Beltrán (1955:119).

\*\*A group of medical and anthropology students from the University of California, Los Angeles, who spent the summer of 1967 in the settlement of San Andrés Cohamiata, conducted a study of plants and their uses, and brought back as many samples as possible. Unfortunately, the sample of the herb which affects the menses was insufficient for complete testing.

a special ceremony to propitiate the divine beings who were displeased with her. Especially serious ailments require, in addition to divination of the cause, special offerings and what appear to be supplications (chants offered by the mará'akáme). In the case of sorcery, the mará'akáme must divine the identity of the sorcerer and the reason, and then must employ his supernatural powers to neutralize the sorcery or turn it back upon its source. In cases of soul-loss and of the return of an ancestor in the form of a rock crystal the procedures which the mará'akáme must carry out to complete the curing are most elaborate. In soul-loss caused by a fall, the mará'akáme must divine how, why, and where the patient fell, and then must search out the lost kupúri after completing certain ritual preliminaries and obtaining the promise of help from the relevant deities and from Káuyúmarie. Once he has found the lost soul, a complicated process in itself, he must pick it up and carry it in a certain way back to the sick man and replace it on the crown of the head (Furst, 1967:53-56). In the case of the 'urukáme or rock crystal, once the condition has been diagnosed and the little arrow removed, complex preparations are made to receive the ancestor and provide a place for him in which he will be happy among his relatives. An arrow with a special piece of weaving is made in which he will be kept. Then an elaborate ceremony is enacted during which the ancestor is captured by the mará'akáme and comes

down into a gourd of nawá (maize beer), to be removed later with great ritual (Furst, 1967:83-90). Obviously, the ritual procedures and ceremonies are far more significant than the physical curing in restoring the well-being of the individual.

Preventive measures regarding illness among the Huichols are generally in the form of offerings. Because of the nature of the cause of illness (divine displeasure, for example), the best way to avoid falling ill is to fulfill ceremonial obligations and not violate social and religious norms. Especially with regard to children, offerings are made for their good health and continued well-being. Small votive gourd bowls decorated with wax and bead figures manifest a mother's wish for numerous and healthy children. The tsikúri, a yarn or thread cross, is a symbol offered for the protection of children.\* One such diamond-shaped design is offered representing each year the child has completed up to the age of five.\*\* Tsikúri with more than

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\*The term tsikúri cannot be translated. Lumholtz was in error when he rendered it into English as "eye of god," a term now widely used in English and Spanish, but meaningless to Huichols (Furst, personal communication).

\*\*The number five is very significant in the Huichol culture, for it means "completion, wholeness, everything being 'in its place' in the Huichol world view" (Furst and Myerhoff, 1966:14). After the first five years the child passes from childhood (though without ceremony). It takes five years of preparation, or more (five peyote pilgrimages), to become a mara'akame. The 'urukame returns after five years, having formed itself with five little crystalline arrows. In curing, the mara'akame brushes from the four

five crosses are made, but for tourist consumption.

Children and adults wear bead bracelets with scorpion designs to protect from the dangerous sting, which is not at all uncommon.\* The scorpion is also woven into belts as an added protection.

As an illustration of lack of acculturation, it is interesting to note the absence of certain supernatural ailments which are well-known throughout Mexico. Huichols are unfamiliar with the infant malady called caída de la mollera (fallen fontanel), from which a baby is supposed to suffer if he has a sudden fall or an intense surprise (or even if his mother takes her nipple from his mouth while he is holding it) (Aguirre Beltrán, 1955:91;114). This was probably originally a Spanish concept but has become accepted among indigenous groups in Mexico. The Spanish susto (fright) and mal de ojo (which results from having received the evil eye) are also absent from Huichol pathology. It appears that the Huichol culture is one of the few indigenous cultures which does not include these ailments. (Furst, personal communication).

Huichols do recognize certain scientifically accepted

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directions to the center. This is related to the concept of the cardinal points, the fifth direction being the center, a concept which pervades Huichol thought and action. With regard to the tsikúri one may note that the diamond-shaped yarn design manifests the four points and the center.

\*See Furst (1967:49-51) for an explanation of Huichol beliefs regarding the scorpion and its sting.

diseases, such as measles, smallpox, chicken pox, and whooping cough. These diseases, which were originally introduced by the Spaniards and which decimated many indigenous groups, are clearly set apart. These are disorders which the mara'akáme knows he cannot treat, for they belong to the Spanish world and thus logically can only be treated by Spaniards (outsiders).<sup>\*</sup> It was perhaps for this reason that a very old Huichol grandfather in Tuxpan, when speaking of the ravages of whooping cough, said that a doctor was needed because the mara'akáme could do nothing.

This cursory view of the Huichol world of health and illness, while far from complete, illustrates the complex universe which the scientific medical doctor must penetrate and understand in his attempts to introduce the benefits of modern medicine.

#### The Introduction of Modern Medicine

Due to the important social and psychological functions which Huichol illness beliefs and practices fulfill within the society, it might seem that in introducing modern medicine one would encounter great resistance, rendering the task impossible until basic beliefs had changed. The concept of divine displeasure is, after all, a useful and necessary control against violation of the religious (and thus

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<sup>\*</sup>See Furst (1967:47).

social--the two being practically the same in Huichol ideology) norms which guarantee the smooth functioning of the community. The return of the soul of an ancestor in the form of a rock crystal to dwell among the living as a guardian spirit fills the need for a strengthening of the bond between the living and the dead (Furst, 1967:102). One might expect resistance especially because of the prominent role of the mara'akáme. However, it is precisely because the mara'akáme is so involved in the religious aspects of the beliefs (his physical curing acts being of lesser importance) that there is a possibility of introducing the concept of the scientific medical doctor.

Evidence has shown that practices change more quickly than beliefs (Foster, 1958:18, for example). People are pragmatic and will adopt practices which are proved useful so long as they do not completely violate respected norms. Madsen (1960:230) found this to be true of the Tecospans (Nahuatl-speaking Indians of San Francisco Tecospa in the Valley of Mexico) who

are broad-minded enough to use any remedy that works provided they have seen proof of its utility and it does not require them to revise their own theories of disease... Instead of giving up folk medicine Tecospans are likely to add doctors' medicines to their old curing practices in an effort to attack disease with all available techniques.\*

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\*See also Erasmus (1952:417); Foster (1958:40); and Caudill (1953:774-775).

This has been seen in economics, when Huichols have adopted the mechanical corn grinder and transistor radio. People have also accepted the idea of flying to Tepic (if they can afford it) rather than walking for several days. In medicine perhaps the best example of this pragmatism is the recognition of the value of an injection of scorpion serum when one has been stung by the extremely dangerous alacrán. (One must, of course, go on to discover why the scorpion struck and remove or neutralize the cause in order to be assured of not suffering similar and repeated misfortunes--Furst, 1967:50.)

Due to this pragmatism, the importance of the mara'akáme in the metaphysical realm, and the existence of lesser curers in Huichol society, it will be possible for the scientific medical doctor and the mara'akáme to function side by side. The fact that indeed one must go on to discover and neutralize the reason for the scorpion sting insures the mara'akáme's position. Assuming the role of another kind of curer, the doctor can step into the Huichol system of social relationships. It is interesting to note that mara'akáte themselves now consult the medical doctor or bring their wives and children to him evidently without feeling that they thereby lose face. I know of at least three mara'akáte who readily accept medication and other treatment from the INI doctor. Ramón, for example, is a religious person, very concerned with maintaining a "Huichol heart." About to become a



mará'akáme, he consults the doctor in addition to conducting the proper ceremonies and rituals, because he has seen through experience that the doctor's medicine also works. Hilario, a mará'akáme in San Andrés, not only brought his infant son and two small grandchildren, one near death from dehydration and all suffering from dysentery, to the doctor, but even permitted the intravenous administration of a glucose solution. Fortunately, the dehydrated child lived. Nicolás, the leading mará'akáme in San Andrés, also consults the INI doctor and cheerfully accepts medication.

Since there is a definite, recognized dichotomy between Spanish and Huichol diseases, the doctor can and should take advantage of this as another mechanism for acceptance.

Eventually there might develop a functional dichotomy between the two practitioners, doctor and mará'akáme, one operating on the physical and the other on the spiritual plane, similar to the accepted system among more "advanced" peoples, as well as more acculturated populations in Mexico. For the latter Kelly (1965:21-22;39), for example, cites the popularity of folk medicine side by side with modern health services in the ejidos of the Laguna region in the Torreón area of the state of Coahuila, in northern Mexico. In fact, there the dichotomy receives official sanction, for ejido funds are set aside for both types of service. Madsen (1964:73) found a similar situation among the Mexican-Americans of southern Texas. It must be noted, however,

that thus far the dichotomy in these two cases (and in others like them) can be differentiated in one very important aspect from that which seems to be developing among the Huichols. In the cases cited by Kelly and Madsen there is a basic division which excludes diseases which can be treated by the curandero from the jurisdiction of the modern doctor. This is due to the skepticism and in many cases outright disdain on the part of the scientific medical profession for many widely and sincerely held folk beliefs. In the gradually developing Huichol dichotomy of spiritual and physical doctor, the distinction is not yet made between various diseases, except with regard to the few "Spanish" diseases. It is, rather, a distinction between physical symptoms and metaphysical causes. Medical personnel must learn to accept and respect existing Huichol beliefs insofar as they do not conflict with modern health measures. Only in this way will they be able to prevent mutual estrangement between doctor and patient and further the advance of scientific practices. As Aguirre Beltrán (1955:20), a medical doctor as well as anthropologist, points out:

...preventive or curative action declines very little in value if the Indian accompanies it with prayers, offerings and other innocuous procedures--purification and mystic cleansing, magic transference of the disease--in his first contacts with scientific medicine; on the contrary, this unusual union of science and magic strengthens the feeling of psychological security of the patient and is a step forward in the introduction of rational\* concepts.

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\*The use of the term "rational" is unfortunate, for

Therefore, to be accepted himself, even before he begins to consider the problems of introducing a modern health program, the medical doctor must have an anthropological approach to the culture. He must attempt to fit into the culture instead of changing it to meet his standards. It is, after all, he who is the outsider.

It must be emphasized that the respect which the modern medical doctor must show for indigenous beliefs does not need to constitute a compromise on his part, nor a false or expedient respect. As pointed out, certain beliefs are socially useful. In the realm of curing the para'akame fills a socio-psychological need, and it must be realized that he often enjoys real success, since many ailments are purely psychosomatic and thus lend themselves to a non-physical cure. Also, some herbal remedies may be actually therapeutic.

It has, in fact, been suggested that the curandero be incorporated into the modern health program. A quarter century ago, Gamio proposed giving curanderos the basic knowledge of a medical assistant or student nurse (1966:14). In 1955, Aguirre Beltrán (p. 16) wrote that the training and utilization of curanderos had been attempted with a certain amount of success in urban societies. In 1968, a resolution of the Sixth Inter-American Indianist Congress

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within their cultural context Indians are at least as rational as we are within ours.

read in part:

...in view of the evidence that the curandero is one of the natural leaders in the aboriginal groups, instead of combating him, it is recommended that he be attracted and converted into an active collaborator in the health programs (Instituto Indigenista Interamericano, 1968:20).

While conceding the utility of the curandero in some situations, Aguirre Beltrán also warned that their training for scientific medical programs in indigenous communities might be difficult if not impossible (1955:16). This was because of the considerable number of them practicing traditional medicine, their dispersion in an extensive region with poor communications, and the conservatism of traditional medicine supported by social pressure and closely tied to a firmly integrated magico-religious system. These factors were not generally propitious for introducing new knowledge and skills which would substitute or be added to those already in existence.

With regard to the Huichols, the objections concerning physical limitations hold true. However, the magico-religious system in this case would not necessarily constitute a barrier. Of course, the actual instruction of mara'akáme in the basic tenets of modern scientific curing would be a slow process of winning them over by introducing a few concepts and practices at a time.

The theory of not competing with the mara'akáme is a valid one. It is absolutely essential to have him as an

ally. Perhaps the lesser curers could be more easily influenced and indoctrinated with new techniques. At least within Huichol society this is a possibility. A start can be made with young people as health promotores. Though they will not enjoy the respect which the older curers hold, with success in curing they may be able to make some converts. Indeed, it has been suggested that training the curandero in scientific medical practices may not be a good idea. Given his traditionally prominent position in indigenous society, he may become too convinced of his own medical abilities, converting into a dangerous tool what was envisioned as a social aid. When possible, it appears that the curandero serves best as a referral source rather than medical assistant (Kisch, personal communication).

#### Center Medical Facilities

The Instituto in Tepic employs two doctors, one for the Cora region and one for the Huichol. Neither has a nurse. Fortunately, the Center employs a social worker, who takes care of orienting people to services in the city and deals with the problems of obtaining the prescribed medications. The promotores receive some orientation in first-aid and basic hygiene, in addition to being taught to give injections (such as the scorpion serum) and vaccinations. Individual promotores in the communities visited by the doctors sometimes accompany and aid them, learning how

to dress a wound or how and when to administer simple medications. However, as noted, the Center does not now have promotores specifically designated as health workers. It is hoped that the future will permit the training of such individuals. For the present, the task before the two doctors is overwhelming. Obviously two men cannot give adequate medical care to 20,000 people. This would hardly be possible under clinical conditions. With the cultural and geographical limitations of the Cora-Huichol region it is out of the question.

The Health Section of the Center has a yearly budget of 7,000 pesos (\$560 ) for medicines and 10,000 pesos (\$800 ) for potable water installations. With such a low budget, the doctors and the social worker are constantly searching for free medicines--samples, donations, discounts, etc. The patients are usually charged a token sum, an amount within their very limited means, which is nowhere near the actual cost of the medicine but gives it value within their frame of reference. If the patient can afford to pay, he is charged a more appropriate price, or, if he is in Tepic, he is given the prescription and directed to a pharmacist. If the patient cannot pay immediately, the debt is noted. Usually he will pay when he can afford it. With the Section's budget, of course it is difficult, if not impossible, to continually supply medicines on credit. Often the patient will be given an examination, diagnosis

and prescription, but be unable to obtain the medicine because of the high cost which neither he nor the Instituto can afford.

To begin to give medical attention to the various settlements in the Sierra, the Center has established rudimentary medical posts in several of the ceremonial centers where the Instituto is carrying out other aspects of its work. In the Huichol region, Dr. Campos now officially visits four communities: San Andrés Cohamiata, Tuxpan de Bolaños, Ocota de la Sierra, and Guadalupe Ocotán. At each of these, posts have been set up with a small supply of basic medicines. The doctor travels from center to center spending from five to ten days per month in each, depending on the situation. Actually, Dr. Campos visits more than these four communities, for he has found it necessary to travel around on foot or by mule, letting his presence be known in surrounding settlements and inquiring for the sick. He also has found it more expedient to fly to one area and continue on to the others by mule, covering more territory and making himself more accessible than if he were to await the scheduled flights. (This also reduces transportation costs.) When he is not in the Sierra, he is available for consultation at the Center in Tepic.

When the doctor is not in a community, the promotor has charge of the medical supplies and is authorized to distribute and administer certain medications. His quali-

fications, of course, are extremely limited. One of the basic problems here is the need to impress upon the promotor the importance of recording every "treatment" and keeping an inventory of the medicines in the post. At present, when the promotor fails to do this, the doctor does not know what supplies he should bring with him to replenish the stock. Often an adequate prescription cannot be given because the store of drugs is depleted. It is hoped that in the future the promotores will keep more conscientious records and will make use of the radio installations to relay requests for medical supplies to the doctor in Tepic before his visits.

As part of the installations for demonstrational purposes, a clinic is to be established in San Andrés where, eventually, a doctor will reside full-time. (A similar project is under way in the Cora region.) The buildings have been constructed and a hospital bed has been installed. At present, however, Dr. Campos gives consultations in the building in which the CONASUPO store is housed. Even though this is a ten-minute walk from the other installations, it is a logical location, for here people usually congregate. They must first accept the idea of coming to the doctor at all before they will look for him at the clinic site.

#### Preventive Medicine

Given the environmental and cultural obstacles, preven-



tive measures are very difficult to introduce. As stated previously, beliefs change easily only if they present little or no conflict with existing norms and appear to be useful and practical. Reasons for preventive measures are difficult to understand and results are not immediately visible. Practical success in curing is quickly apparent. It arouses interest and can help break down resistance. But preventive measures are another story, for they are largely theoretical. More importantly, the community sees no need for them and does not recognize their logic, since the indigenous concept of disease is magical.\*

In addition to the problems one encounters in most preventive campaigns, certain aspects of the Huichol situation make preventive efforts here especially difficult. The availability of water is basic to the establishment of hygienic conditions. With the water supply as scarce as it is through much of the year, people are not used to bathing often, nor to washing clothes regularly.\*\*

In the major ceremonial centers which I visited while accompanying the doctor on his rounds, efforts have been

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\*For example, the boiling of water. See Wellin (1955: 71-106).

\*\*As Sara Nahmad, the social worker, once pointed out, it is not that the Indian is basically dirty--as many people in the city have stereotyped him. Rather, without running water, soap, and central heating, for example, bathing is not a common practice, nor a healthy one in the colder regions.

made by the Center to protect the main source of water from pollution. In San Andrés the Instituto constructed a deep well, around which the albergue buildings are located. A galvanized iron pipe takes water across the mesa to a concrete tank a few minutes' walk from the second INI installation which includes the projected clinic and agricultural and zootechnological demonstrational unit. Water from the tank pours into an open basin, the overflow of which runs into a nearby creek. This structure is meant for human use only and is protected from the animals by a wire fence. In Tuxpan one spring is channeled into a cement casing with a pipe outlet. However, another lesser source which is located next to the albergue is merely channeled by the use of an open pipe to trickle into a pool in the albergue courtyard, where children and animals alike can wash and drink. Of the three ceremonial centers, Ocota has the most abundant water supply, (as well as the coldest climate). Here the spring is also theoretically protected by a cement encasement. In none of these communities, however, are the encasements properly maintained. In addition, the water flows out and around them in pools or streams open to use as well as to pollution.

While discussing hygienic conditions, I want to re-emphasize the lack of latrines. It is above all with regard to the schools that this is a serious shortcoming. The construction of such facilities is fundamental if one is ever

to break the continuous cycle of intestinal parasites which plague the great majority of the population.

The vast expanses of difficult terrain and the isolated settlement pattern present very real barriers to any effective vaccination campaign, an important preventive measure. Lack of personnel is also a factor here. With increased personnel greater coverage could be achieved. (Dr. Campos envisions, for example, the incorporation of rural vaccination campaigns into the curriculum of medical students as one possible means of improving coverage.) However, the main problem would remain: the administration of second and third doses. This problem is graphically illustrated by statistics (which include both the Cora and the Huichol regions) from the files of the Center's Health Section:

January-December, 1966:	
"DPT" vaccinations (diphtheria-whooping cough-tetanus)	
First dose	338
Second dose	163
Third dose	26
Revaccination	91
Smallpox vaccinations	
First vaccination	99
Revaccination	7
September-November, 1967:	
Smallpox vaccinations	
First vaccination	229
Revaccination	94
December-February, 1968:	
Smallpox vaccinations	
First vaccination	108
Revaccination	156

Obviously coverage has improved. However, the differences between first dose and additional doses are striking. In this region, where people retreat to their isolated ranchos and make only sporadic trips to the ceremonial center for a fiesta or perhaps for supplies, one is never assured of seeing and treating the same people. Until the population can be convinced of the importance of second and third doses, vaccination campaigns will continue to be relatively ineffective, even if greater initial coverage is achieved.

During my stay (March-June, 1968), preparations were being made for another "DPT" campaign. Promotores in Tepic for classes at the Federal Institute for Teaching Qualification were given a lecture (which I attended) by the doctor for the Cora region, Dr. Nicolás T. Zavala S., on the symptoms of the diseases, the reasons for the "DPT" vaccination and the methods of administering it. The doctors hoped to be able to take advantage of the large numbers of people assembled in the ceremonial centers during the rituals which coincided with Holy Week, but the campaign could not get under way immediately, due to a delay in the arrival of the syringes.

#### Curative Medicine

With preventive medicine a distant goal at best, the introduction of modern concepts of healing will have to

concentrate, for the moment at least, on the curing of symptoms. In the long run, of course, curing without prevention is like the proverbial finger in the dike. Nevertheless, a curative campaign can set the stage for the gradual introduction of preventive measures. As both medical personnel and patients become more familiar with each other's cultures, the chances of acceptance will be heightened and the danger of unnecessary cultural conflicts lessened.

Needless to say, there are numerous interrelated problems even in convincing people to begin to use the curative facilities of the scientific medical doctor. Underlying all of these problems is the importance of success. When the doctor makes himself known as a curer and when people first come to him, out of desperation or curiosity, failure to alleviate their symptoms and cure the causes can be fatal to the advent of modern medicine in these communities. The fact that most Indians do come in desperation greatly compounds the problem of obtaining success in curing. Since they have waited until it is almost too late before consulting the doctor, a cure is much more difficult, especially with the limited facilities to which he has access. The Indians, of course, have no understanding of the physical limitations under which the doctor labors. Since he is an outsider, all failures are attributed to his medicine, whether or not he actually can control the results. In

addition to being held responsible for failure when the patient was actually already beyond help, the doctor is blamed if the patient suffers any additional disorder while under his care or shortly thereafter. For example, in Tuxpan, Juan (the man whose house burned down) had been under treatment by Dr. Campos for anemia. The doctor had given him a shot of vitamins and some pills to help combat the condition. About two weeks after the injection, Juan apparently had an arthritic attack accompanied by a seemingly unaccountable hemorrhaging of the palms. He immediately attributed it to the medicine he was taking (a natural reaction, since the medicine was a foreign element in his life) and stopped taking the pills. Dr. Campos explained to him that his strange attack was not related to the medication, being a separate problem, and that he still very much needed the pills and another injection. Juan was quietly and firmly resistant, absolutely refusing to be injected ever again. However, he did consent to resume taking the pills.

One wonders if Juan really did resume taking the pills. Effective follow-up is as difficult in the process of curing as it is in such preventive measures as vaccination. Once the doctor has succeeded in convincing a patient to consult him, and the diagnosis has been made and the medication obtained, the doctor has no guarantee that the patient will follow his instructions. One fundamental obstacle to be

overcome is the difficulty of explaining the schedule for taking the medicine, since Huichol time orientation is not the same as the doctor's. Instead of prescribing the hours when pills must be taken, for example, the doctor must try to find terms that will be meaningful for the patient.

Dr. Campos sometimes uses his hand, held up with the fingers toward the sky, to illustrate the positions of the sun which indicate the time to take a pill--the thumb, for example, representing six o'clock in the morning, when the sun rises; the index, ten o'clock; and so on, until the sun has fully set. Of course administration of the medication must also be compatible with the patient's cultural routine and orientation. Prescribing for a man a medicine which must only be taken with a hot liquid several times a day would not bring satisfactory results. It would be impractical and inconvenient, since the Huichol is not accustomed to having a hot drink while working in the fields all day. In fact, the doctor can help to increase his acceptance and success by making a conscious effort to adapt his medicine, insofar as possible, to his patients' cultural patterns.\* Also, one must realize that the actual value and function of the medicine may not be perceived by the patient. It is not unusual to find that the patient has dutifully purchased the medicine and carefully stored it away, proudly showing

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\*Foster (1958:40) points out how medicines may be prescribed in terms of the ritual numbers of the people.

the unopened bottle when questioned about it--obviously believing that mere possession constitutes the cure, the medicine being viewed as magical.\* Any number of other barriers may exist with regard to the actual administration of medication. For example, if a child struggles too vehemently while being given eye drops or pills, a parent may simply give up. This is true also if a particular medication causes pain or discomfort, since Huichols are very solicitous of their children. Even an unfamiliar taste, pleasant or unpleasant, may inhibit the acceptance of a medicine. If the use of a medication appears to conflict with a religious practice it will obviously be rejected. In the case of Lupe's attack of rheumatism, Dr. Campos had previously prescribed medication. However, Lupe was deliberately refraining from buying it, as she told me, until after the fiesta because she was planning to take peyote during the ceremonies and festivities and was afraid that the combination of the two, peyote and modern medicine, might not be good for her (in a ritual sense?). Thus despite her great discomfort and her previous satisfactory experiences with modern medical treatment, she was unwilling

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\*The mara'akáme Nicolás of San Andrés used a medicine in just this way in the ritual of the naming of a grandchild in the spring of 1967. Holding the baby toward the rising sun, Nicolás touched the infant's face, arms, and legs with a small brown medicine bottle which Dr. Campos had once prescribed for him (Furst, personal communication).



to do what she considered would constitute a compromise of her religious standards.

Another problem is widespread fear of the hospital. This is directly related to the geographical situation and to the practice of waiting out an illness until the very last moment before consulting the doctor. Going to the hospital in Tepic is generally equated with dying, since cases which are finally hospitalized are extremely serious, and may already be on the verge of death. Reluctance to go to Tepic for care is also due to the inconveniences involved. Transportation is expensive (though in dire cases it may be paid by the Instituto). One needs a companion and guardian, and he will incur expenses during his stay in the city, in addition to not being available to do the work at home. (The social worker attempts to fill this role when no relatives or friends can accompany the patient.) Also, it is uncomfortable to be in a strange new place, surrounded by people who do not know one and do not even speak Huichol. It is enough to be sick, without having to be far away from one's family and having to adapt to strange faces in a strange culture with different foods, customs, and language. No wonder, then, that it took Dr. Campos four days to convince the relatives of a woman with acute appendicitis that they had to take her to Tepic. Another example is a man who has not been able to leave his familial responsibilities to go to Tepic for treatment of tuberculosis.

He continues to work year after year, while his condition worsens and his life expectancy shortens.

An additional difficulty with which the doctor must cope in order to be understood and accepted and to be considered successful, is lack of patience with modern curing practices. This is partly due, of course, to practical considerations: being unable to devote much time to the process of being cured because of the need to devote all of one's time to subsistence. Indigenous curing practices are compatible with this need (except for the time involved in an offering or a pilgrimage, practices for which the necessity is fully understood). Huichols tend to want an immediate cure. If they do not get one, they lose confidence in the modern doctor and reject his methods. This generally results in the patient's failure to be cured--a failure automatically attributed to the techniques of modern medicine. A classic example of this is the case of the woman with appendicitis. Her relatives were finally convinced that she should be taken to the hospital in Tepic. There her appendix was removed and she was making normal progress toward complete recovery. However, the cure had taken longer than her relatives thought necessary. Consequently, one morning at six o'clock they trooped into the hospital and took her out. (The main guard had stepped away from his post for a moment.) The nurses were frantic, for only four days remained before she would have been released.

The wound had not quite healed. Nothing could be done. No one had seen the patient or her relatives since that morning, the 5th of April.

On the 29th of April, Dr. Campos and I arrived in Ocota de la Sierra, after traveling seven hours by mule from Tuxpan de Bolaños. Upon our arrival we were greeted enthusiastically, for the doctor was well-known in this community. There was a large crowd of people, since we had arrived at the end of the fiestas of the Parching of the Maize.\* We were told that the woman with appendicitis was dying. Evidently, when she had been put on a horse to make the trip of several days from Tepic to Ocota her wound had opened up (as was to be expected). Since then she had been lying ill in her hut. The mara'akáte unanimously believed that she would die before five o'clock the next afternoon. When we went to examine the wound, we found to our surprise that it was not greatly infected, though it had been open for several weeks in most unsanitary surroundings. The skin at the outer edges was dead and would have to be cut away to allow the wound to heal, but Dr. Campos was encouraged by the woman's incredible resistance to infection, especially unusual since she was over fifty years of age. He decided to perform the minor operation immedi-

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\*Fiestas and ceremonies such as this one are not held on a specific date, but rather within a certain season of the year at a time which is convenient for the members of the community.

ately. If he could save her, it would prove the power of his medicine and also help to disprove the charge of most of the people that her present condition was due to the treatment in Tepic. The operation was performed at the INI post by the light of three candles, since the diesel generator installed by the Instituto was not working. The necessary local anesthetic was fortunately found among the medicinal supplies. Since the post's supply of alcohol for cleansing and sterilizing had been depleted, alcohol not yet consumed at the fiesta was collected from the participants. Once the wound had been sutured\* and bandaged with a new undershirt (since there were no bandages available), the woman was carried back to her home, for her relatives did not wish her to spend the night in the Center building. She seemed to have great faith in the doctor and asked if he had something for vomiting.

At five o'clock the following day the patient was still alive. The mara'akáte had gathered. I was permitted to witness a curing which one performed on her (described previously). We then joined the relatives and others around the campfire where preparations were being made for a visiting mara'akáme to "sing" for her all night. The doctor and I were passively received. Gradually the doctor

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\*We were assisted in the operation by the girl for whom Professor Montes is requesting a scholarship. (See p. 140.) She calmed the woman, who remained conscious, by talking to her in Huichol.

began to talk, explaining about the difficulty of this cure because they had taken her from the hospital, and telling them that she would have to return to Tepic. He also declared that the mara'akáte had helped him very much, as they were about to do again that evening. He needed their help and they needed his--neither could accomplish the cure without the other. His approach was that of being entre mara'akáte, including himself among their ranks. This brought friendly amusement from those seated around the fire. He managed to draw the visiting mara'akáme into a discussion of the latter's profession--how many years it took to become a mara'akáme (generally five to ten years, but for him only five), what he could cure (everything but the bite of the rattlesnake), etc. The atmosphere was one of respect on the part of both "practitioners." The mara'akáte did not object to the doctor giving the woman another injection, and allowed us to sit by the fire and listen as they began their melancholy chant. The visiting mara'akáme did most of the "singing." The others joined in occasionally, not in unison--each with his own train of thought.

Before we left Ocota, Dr. Campos had convinced the woman's relatives to send her back to Tepic. To do so, however, he had had to promise that whoever accompanied her could eat at his house in the city, thus cutting down on their expenses. (This promise resulted in having three boarders for more than two weeks.) Days later, when the

special plane which had been sent to pick her up arrived in Tepic, the woman had improved greatly and was able to walk gingerly from the plane to the jeep. This time she did stay in the hospital until fully recovered and her return to her home and family was a huge success for the mara'akáme téwari (loosely meaning "the doctor from the outside"). It could have proved otherwise under the circumstances.

Tuberculosis presents special problems, not only because of the danger to the patient himself, but to the entire community. The factor of contamination is difficult to explain to people who see illness solely in terms of supernatural intervention. The doctor cannot tell a man that he might make his own family ill, for that would be to accuse him of being a sorcerer. Not only would this be ill-advised, but it would make no sense, since no one would commit sorcery against his relatives. The difficulty in convincing the patient to leave family and fields and come to Tepic for prolonged care has already been mentioned. It does little good to tell him that the time spent in Tepic will greatly lengthen his life-span. Such concepts are not easily understood where time and life have such different meanings. Many are the cases of the father who cannot leave his responsibilities, the grandmother who lives in El Vicenteño and has bus service to Tepic but cannot be convinced to come, or the fifteen-year-old girl whose fifty-year-old

husband does not think she is strong enough to make the trip to the nearest airstrip because he cannot imagine being without her help during the months it would take for her recuperation. Nevertheless, there are some cases in which individuals have come to Tepic to be hospitalized in the small TB hospital run by an understanding priest. The best example of faith and patience is that of Cristóbal, who has spent over a year in the hospital and is now almost completely recovered. His wife, Lupe, came with him to Tepic and learned to adapt to the city, visiting her husband whenever possible and making a living with her handiwork. Of course they had constant encouragement and reinforcement from the Center's social worker, Sara Nahmad. However, Lupe's mother provides an example of the resistance and fear which still prevails in most Huichol settlements. She came to Tepic to see a doctor about a growth which was deforming her jaw. Everything was arranged for her to undergo an operation to correct the condition. The date was set and she was admitted to the hospital, but decided against the operation at the last minute and returned to her home in the Sierra.

A striking example of the ravages of tuberculosis and of the courage to cooperate in its cure is that of a small eight-year-old boy with extrapulmonary TB. He left home and family to come with the promotor to Tepic to be treated. At first, since he was a child there was concern that he

would not be accepted at the local TB hospital. He was placed there at least temporarily until arrangements could be made to have him admitted to a children's hospital in Guadalajara. Meanwhile he was in a hospital of adults in a strange city where everyone spoke a language he did not understand. Fortunately, Cristóbal would be able to watch after him and speak with him in his native tongue.

The diseases and disorders most prevalent among the cases treated by Dr. Campos are vitamin deficiencies and anemia; diarrhea and digestive disorders; skin diseases; intestinal parasites; arthritis and rheumatism; grippe; bronchitis and other respiratory ailments; dysentery; tuberculosis; and occasional outbreaks of measles, whooping cough, etc. The most critical period with regard to health is from age one to four. Infant mortality is high. Mothers are accustomed to losing several children, generally due to the nutritional problems involved when a child must switch from mother's milk to the adult diet, consisting mainly of tortillas. The contrast in the nutritional value of the diets is extreme and many children die during this period. Also, measles and whooping cough, which are normal childhood illnesses in our society, often prove fatal to undernourished children, who cannot withstand the accompanying respiratory complications.



## CHAPTER X. CONCLUSIONS.

Just how successful has the Instituto Nacional Indigenista been in the area on which this study has focused? The Center is young. It would be unfair to make a definitive evaluation based on the results of its efforts to date. However, there are lessons to be learned, both from its successes and its failures, which have implications not only for the local area or the general Mexican Indian problem, but also in a wider sense for the whole question of integrating ethnic minorities into the socio-economic life of a nation. What have been the reactions of the Huichols to the different programs of the Center? Is the Center using the means at its disposal in the most efficient and beneficial manner? What improvements can be made?

It is to be expected that individual groups will react in various ways to the services and overtures of the Coordinating Center.

In the realm of communications we have seen how most Huichols have nonchalantly accepted the use of the airplane when economically feasible and how some have shown themselves willing to labor on a road which will eventually link their community more closely with the outside world.

Huichols have employed the services of the Center lawyer and indeed have actually searched him out. They

have readily frequented the CONASUPO stores in the Sierra and the crafts store in Tepic. They have begun to improve their stock through trades with the Instituto.

How have the people of San Andrés Cohamiata responded thus far to the agricultural and zootechnological demonstration which is being initiated there? Most evident is passive indifference, in some ways one of the most frustrating reactions with which to cope. In talking with INI employees most closely involved in the project--Mestizos, but well-accepted among the Indians--I was told that the people are unhappy with the fencing of so much land, even though the community authorities gave their permission. This particular group has suffered land invasion and threats for many years. They are naturally afraid and suspicious that their land will be taken from them again. Also, they are not accustomed to fencing and really do not like the bother of having to walk around it. With regard to the latter, openings have been made by the Center at those places which receive the most traffic. The fear of losing the land will eventually disappear when the people realize that the work of the Instituto is truly for their benefit and will ultimately be put into their hands. It is not a matter of direct invasion of the land or of a displacement of others, for this level land has never been used by the Indians for cultivation. As noted previously, they prefer the slopes of the

barrancas because it is believed that on the mesa the maize would drown. Here is one example of how the Instituto can prove by direct demonstration the success of new techniques (among them, a drainage system for the fields).

Clearly it will take years for INI to prove its point, especially in the case of the fruit trees. Is the Center justified to expend so much of its limited energies on this particular region--the most resistant of all? The annual budget is only 1,460,000 pesos (approximately \$116,800). Even though the demands on the budget have increased four- or five-fold as the influence of the Center has grown, the available funds have changed very little since the initiation of the Center in 1962. In view of the resistance in San Andrés and the interest and enthusiastic requests for help from other communities--which could not be answered adequately for the present because of lack of funds--one cannot help but question the advisability of so great an investment in San Andrés. For example, the people of El Vicenteño inquired specifically about a tractor, while those in San Andrés scarcely showed any interest in the beautiful new machine which had been flown in in pieces and assembled before their very eyes for the purpose of plowing the fields. A group from El Caracol, a settlement which does not yet even have its own land, came asking several times for any help they could get. They were extremely poor, especially at that time of year--the end of

the dry season--and were in an area completely surrounded by Mestizos. It took repeated requests from a group spokesman before anything could be done for them. Finally, foodstuffs for the children were obtained through the Institute for the Protection of Children of the State of Nayarit (Instituto de Protección a la Infancia--IPI), and later a loan of maize was granted by the state. The lawyer, Lic. Silva, planned to investigate the possibility of obtaining land for them.

Director Nahmad was as moved as I by the difference in the attitude of the people in San Andrés with their seemingly impenetrable indifference, compared with that of those from El Vicenteño and El Caracol who come asking for help, wanting to work and improve their lives.\* Nevertheless, he remains convinced that San Andrés is the best place for the demonstrational program for the reasons explained previously as well as for its geographical and climatic conditions. He also firmly believes that though it will take years to persuade the people of San Andrés, "they will be eating those apples muy a gusto (with great

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\*The degree of acculturation is obviously a factor here. The people from El Vicenteño and El Caracol live in areas which have the use of terrestrial communications with the city and have been influenced by the contact, for they no longer wear the Huichol dress, though they still preserve the language and customs. These communities would be excellent subjects for a study of the process of acculturation in communities in varying stages of transition, including the factors that have caused the transition and those that cause the persistence of certain aspects.

pleasure)."

The Farming Center in Mezquitic was experiencing a few difficulties during my stay. A financial problem was creating unrest among the students. Of the 425 pesos (\$34) allotted each student per month, 300 pesos (\$24) is spent on food. The Instituto has not had sufficient funds as yet to construct a dining hall and had planned to withhold 200 pesos (\$16) from each student for that purpose. Since it had proved more expensive than originally assumed, by May the students had run up a considerable bill (nearly 40,000 pesos--\$3,200) in the dining hall where they now eat. The Instituto at present does not have the funds to pay their bill nor to alleviate the problem by constructing a dining hall.

Another problem which arose during my visit was the insistence of the students on being with their families for the native fiestas which generally coincide with Holy Week. At first Director Nahmad wanted to discourage this because he knew if he let them go, especially if they walked (as most of them planned to do), it would take weeks to get them to return and a great amount of time would be lost. However, the students were so adamant about it, preferring to lose their scholarships rather than miss being with their families during that time, that the Director had to relent and provide them with bus transportation as far as possible.

Also, there was one case of a Cora boy whose father kept trying to convince him to come home. Unable to withstand the parental pressure, he finally went, despite efforts by the Center staff to make him realize the great opportunity he would be losing.

Aside from these and a few other minor problems to be expected in an undertaking of this nature, the Farming Center seems to be functioning well. Certainly the concepts behind it are practical and comprehensive. Its ultimate value will only be proved after several groups have graduated and returned to their communities.

The reactions of parents to the other school programs have been varied. The people of one particular community were so aggravated by Mestizo actions that the teacher then acting in the capacity of Supervisor of the Education Section felt certain that they would not allow the establishment of an INI school in their midst. Mestizos had invaded the best lands. Mestizo cattle roaming freely damaged Indian crops or forced the Indians to harvest early to salvage what they could. Occasionally Mestizos branded Huichol cattle as their own. This, in addition to individual harassments, resulted in a closing of ranks, a tightening of the Huichol community circle. Perhaps if the Center could give them some kind of support or instigate action by the proper authorities against the Mestizos in question, the community

would become more responsive regarding the possibility of a school.

The example of the two communities in which maize and beans have been volunteered for the new school is encouraging and it is hoped that other communities will cooperate in this way in the future. The cooperation of parents in helping to build the schools shows their initial interest and helps to maintain that interest, for the school is partly theirs. Enrollment has greatly increased and fifteen new schools have been opened in the last year, though in most instances the parents still do not recognize the importance of daily attendance.

The vital role of the promotor must necessarily come under scrutiny. In viewing the various activities of the promotor it is obvious that he is subject to many pressures and influences, for he plays a central role in the work of the Instituto. So many factors are at work within the community and within the individual promotor that there will doubtless be times when the interaction of the two does not result in the anticipated effectiveness. It is considered to be good policy to use as promotores individuals from within the community when a school is first being introduced. However, as the concept of the school becomes an accepted part of the community, promotores from other settlements--still native to the region--may be brought in. Professor Montes has found that in some cases promotores

need to be changed, perhaps simply because they have become so accepted in their communities that they can no longer command the necessary respect to be stimulating agents of change, or because they may not be sufficiently energetic for their particular communities. (Of course, the opposite might also be true.) For example, San Andrés has proved to be so resistant that Professor Montes definitely feels the need to bring in a new set of promotores.

What of the personal effects of being a promotor? The position could cause a great deal of emotional strain, for one no longer truly belongs to his own culture, nor does he belong to the culture which he is introducing. The acceptance on his part of certain new elements may have necessitated considerable adjustment. Though he may be constantly reassured by his associates in the new culture, he most probably will feel some insecurity due to the changes in his cultural values and the consequent reactions to him by his community. There is a delicate line between the individual who can adjust sufficiently to be a successful innovator and still be accepted and respected in his community and the one who finds his adjustment uncontrollable and either falls into total rejection or total acceptance of the new culture. The danger that a promotor may become completely uprooted and divorced from his culture must always be kept in mind.\*

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\*Of course it is hoped that even after he has received



Aguirre Beltrán (1957:197) points out that the danger of maladjustment or of personality conflict resulting from the stress which the promotor may suffer is greater in those societies which participate at very low levels of acculturation. The contrast between the two cultures in those cases would obviously be great. Most of the Huichol promotores are under constant strain, for their culture has long been relatively untouched. In addition, the physical isolation of the communities in which the promotores work increases the possibility of emotional conflict. The Huichol promotor at present is expected to function in so many different capacities with relatively little orientation that he often is unsure of what he is doing. Also, individual problems arise which were not considered in his preparation. His insecurity is heightened by the fact that he is physically isolated from his fellow promotores and can rarely discuss his problems, practices, successes and

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his teaching certificate he will remain to further help his people. Experiences such as that of the "Casa del Estudiante Indígena" (INI, 1954:253), which trained Indian students in Mexico City, expecting them to return to their rural communities and share their knowledge, only to find that they would not, are not uncommon among other groups--for example, medical students who do not return to their rural origins to practice, etc. Perhaps too much training makes one uncomfortable in his own community, in addition to the fact that financial opportunities may be greater elsewhere. However, INI (1964:36) as a whole has apparently had satisfactory responses from its ex-promotores, reporting in 1964 that 110 of them had positions as Federal teachers and had remained assigned to their respective centers and almost always to the same communities in which they had worked as promotores.

conflicts with his "colleagues" and only occasionally with his superior. Some communities now have two promotores. Nevertheless, I heard the complaint that one needs to be able to discuss with the other promotores and with INI personnel in order to better understand one's position. During my stay, one of the truly promising promotores (significantly, from the resistant San Andrés area) evidently felt the pressure to be too overwhelming and simply abandoned his duties.

We have seen a variety of reactions to the Center's health services. Given the sporadic nature of the available care, one can hardly draw conclusions regarding general acceptance of modern medicine. Nevertheless, some limited observations may be made.

The description of Dr. Campos fraternizing respectfully with the mare'akáte (while remaining firm in the value of his own medicine) and offering his home to the woman's relatives exemplifies the approach which he has come to take since his initiation to the Huichols about one and a half years ago. Gradually he is becoming familiar with Huichol ways and is taking a greater interest in them. He has learned the differences between the doctor-patient relationship of his training and that of the Huichol's orientation. Modesty, especially, is a problem. He was working in the Huichol region a year before he was allowed

to witness a birth, and prenatal examinations are practically impossible. Language also is a special barrier in the doctor-patient relationship. Although he cannot speak Huichol, he has found that by using the few phrases which he has been able to pick up he amuses and relaxes the patient.

The fact that he once remarked to me, "To be a doctor here one must almost convert himself into a brujo (sorcerer, magician)," shows that he is learning the importance of at least attempting to see things through Huichol eyes. This attitude is indicated by his use of the stethoscope. He has introduced it almost as a power object of his kind of medicine, explaining that with it he can listen to the canto del corazón (song of the heart), which tells him what is wrong with the person. In so doing he allows the patient and onlookers to listen also--to his heart, to their own, and to each other's. His otoscope allows people to see, as he puts it, that the ear of the téwari (outsider) is the same as that of the wixárika (the native Huichol term for themselves). The use of these instruments enhances his medicine, perhaps giving it a little more magic quality. Dr. Campos has learned to employ them to interest people in his medicine.

The number of consultations given has increased considerably. In the six-month period from January to June, 1968, Dr. Campos treated almost as many cases as he had the entire preceding year. Just in the period of my stay (March

to June, 1968), he treated 262 patients, almost 100 more than he had in the quarter covering December through February (178). Thus it would appear that he is gradually becoming accepted. That the response varies from settlement to settlement is shown by the Center statistics. For example, in eighteen days in San Andrés Cohamiata (until recently as resistant to medical as to other changes) fifty-three consultations were given. In comparison, in three days in Guadalupe Ocotán (a very open community where Mestizo influence has crept in) sixty persons requested medical attention.

Perhaps one index of gradual Huichol acceptance of Dr. Campos can be seen in the fact that many have begun to call him a mara'akáme nunútsi (child mara'akáme)--showing, in this way, their acceptance of the possibility of the validity of his medicine. Also, he has been "baptized" by a group of Huichols and given a Huichol name, 'Aítenáí (which means "little white cloud"). These indications, the friends he has made, together with the increase in consultations, lead one to believe that some progress is being made in introducing modern medicine to the Huichols.

Progress has been made in each of the Center's activities, even though Huichol acculturation has been very slow due to the cultural and geographical limitations discussed throughout this study. As we have seen time and time again, an equally significant limitation has been the tremendous

lack of funds and personnel\* characteristic of the Center. This situation clearly illustrates what Ewald (1967:508) suggests in discussing the concept of the importance of sound financing in programs of directed change:

...the success of any program of directed change depends at least in part on the resources at the command of the directing agency. A constant theme, in the literature on governmental agencies, is inadequacy of funds and therefore lack of personnel...In short, budgetary problems may be at least as important as those of theory in planning culture change.

Interestingly enough, he uses the Instituto as an example, stating that it "has been well financed and is vigorous," when compared with other countries where "nothing like the Coordinating Center program has been undertaken."

If the Cora-Huichol Coordinating Center is to make meaningful gains in achieving the acculturation of the Huichol and thereby merit the acclaim given INI as a whole, it is imperative that the annual budget be appreciably increased. Especially in the Education and Health Sections, the need for more personnel and larger budgets is glaring. Additional Education Supervisors who would travel the region giving more complete and direct guidance to the promotores are essential. At present only one is employed. How can he adequately provide the personal supervision so necessary in the twenty-two schools? Books and supplies are urgently

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\*The training of personnel and their employment being dependent, of course, on the availability of funds.

needed. That twenty-two schools operate on a budget for seven underscores the desperate position of the Education Section. Several nurses, as well as health promotores, could greatly increase the efficacy of the efforts of the Health Section. An increase in the Health budget could permit the implementation of the plans for the clinic in San Andrés. The presence of a resident doctor there would considerably improve the modern medical care available, at least in one area of the Sierra. With the training of interested individuals in basic first-aid, the doctor's influence could radiate out from that center. At present the limited funds allocated the Health Section are being spread thinly, almost as a token gesture to touch on all the aspects of a health program. Though the efforts are well-meaning, vaccination campaigns are ineffective; water sources are semi-protected; latrines are non-existent; medical supplies are minimal, if available; the doctor is in a community a few days of the month, leaving it virtually unattended for weeks at a time. Can Huichols be convinced of the value of modern medicine if the doctor is not available when they need him or the prescribed medicine is unobtainable? It is difficult to suggest how the meager budget could be used more effectively. One might concentrate on a comprehensive vaccination campaign. To do so, any requests for curing would have to be ignored. What doctor could do this? Obviously the budget is the source of the ills of the

#### Health Section.

In my observations while traveling through the Sierra, I felt a definite need for constant evaluation of the Instituto's work and the Huichols' reactions. This, most probably, falls within the scope of the responsibilities of the Center Director. However, in this particular Center upon which the geography of the region has such a great influence, the location of the Center in the city and the fact that the Director is an administrator as well as an anthropologist make his continual presence in the Sierra practically impossible. At the same time, it is precisely this location which makes close contact and constant evaluation even more imperative. A position should be created for an additional anthropologist who would be continuously in the Sierra, spending time at each of the settlements in order to be with and among the people. In this way he could have his finger on the pulse of the different communities, evaluating the attitudes of the people, possible and actual consequences of INI projects, needs of the communities, etc. Of course each of the technical personnel must fill this role with regard to his specialization as well as to the work as a whole. In other Centers, located in the midst of the indigenous communities, the evaluation by these personnel might suffice. In the Cora-Huichol Center, however, due to the limited communications, closer, more continual and comprehensive contact is vital.

After a review of the centuries-old plight of the Indian in Mexico, the history and philosophy of the Instituto Nacional Indigenista, and the problems and progress of a Coordinating Center, one may still wonder if the ideals espoused by the Instituto are realistic. Having introduced the dilemma of the inevitability of assimilation earlier, I must return to it. Is it really possible, as INI proposes, to retain certain cultural aspects of a group while changing others deemed to be unfavorable? Regarding medical beliefs, for example, (which are perhaps most closely related to Huichol religion and world view), I have suggested that beliefs may become isolated from practices due to the significant role of the mara'akáme over and above the practices of physical curing. They will certainly be affected. Will they not eventually die out? As INI experts themselves (1954:244) point out, the acceptance of modern medicine can result in an altering of the influence of the elders over the youth of the community, since it liberates them from the fear of falling sick as a consequence of not following the traditional norms, (on a small scale, akin to the result of the intellectualizing of a society). This would, of course, be a very gradual process, but it seems that in this sense the introduction of modern medicine could possibly be a disruptive force. In economics it also seems that the Instituto's efforts to upgrade the Huichol level of living



will create conflicts with regard to cultural values, if in fact Huichol religious ideas are such that they require people not to demonstrate wealth, as they would by "improving" their diet or clothing, etc. Especially in the case of the Huichols, whose religion is all-pervasive, it would appear that this religion could not remain intact while changes were made in economics. It does seem, then, that assimilation (and a loss of present distinctive cultural values) is a definite possibility in the distant future. For the present, the Instituto's general respect for Huichol cultural views and its sincere appreciation of crafts and "things Huichol" are helping to maintain the Indian's self-image and pride. Perhaps in this way the ultimate transition will be eased.

One may question the right to determine which aspects of the culture are detrimental and therefore should be changed and which should be retained. Who is to decide, and is this not an imposition of one group's beliefs and values upon another? As Gamio (1966:25-39) wrote in 1942, the decision as to which aspects are considered to be detrimental and which beneficial must be based on scientific criteria, while also taking conventional, i.e., popular, standards into account. In medicine, for example, certain traditional beliefs about health, disease, and curing practices are scientifically considered harmful, though popular standards are respected as much as possible. Obviously the

decision is an imposition, but it is one of a practical nature. One must refer back to Aguirre Beltrán's (1957:141) explanation that since changes are inevitable, it is necessary to intervene and help make them more easily accepted, relieving somewhat the unavoidable conflict. Foster (1958: 78) mentions the existence of differing viewpoints: either that no one has the right to tamper with the cultural destiny of any group to seek to introduce any change, or that widespread and detailed planning and direction of the lives of men are inevitable. He declares:

Much emotional nonsense has been written on this subject, and anthropologists are among the worst offenders with respect to the "thou shalt not tamper" view. Some public health workers, on the other hand, have been serious offenders in their refusal to question the ethnocentric premises on which they justify their work, and to recognize the full implications, both good and bad, of its clinical success.

He goes on to say that the middle view seems safest, recognizing that peoples are going to change whether they like it or not, but admitting that we understand culture insufficiently well to undertake full-scale planning.

While one may debate the right to tamper with cultural destiny, it cannot be denied that the theories (integral action, use of the anthropologist, understanding and respect for the culture, etc.) and methods (obtaining the help and cooperation of the community, giving credit but not charity, introducing change by example, using native personnel, teaching in the indigenous language, etc.) employed by the

Instituto Nacional Indigenista of Mexico are well-founded. Indeed, they have helped to create a functioning organization which has begun to effect the integration of marginal Indian populations into the national society--an organization for directed change which other such agencies would do well to emulate.

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