

6 Reconstruction and development in the twilight of civil war

6.1 The critical turning point in the counterinsurgency struggle

By 1993 rebel forces had suffered crippling political and military setbacks to such a degree that the Shining Path seemed in the final stages of collapse. The tide had turned at last. Though Sendero Luminoso would endure into the new millennium—in part a testament to the stubborn resilience of its few remaining members—it seems unlikely that it could ever recover the strategic initiative it once enjoyed at the height of its power in 1990. With the capitulation of the Senderista stronghold of Sello de Oro in October 1993, there descended in the province of La Mar and in the Apurímac River Valley a period of relative calm that had not been felt in the region for almost a decade. Once guerrilla attacks were no longer imminent in Tambo and adjacent districts, local populations were finally free to concentrate on the daunting tasks of rebuilding their broken lives, their dispersed households, and their shattered communities.

The critical reversal in Sendero's fortunes was not isolated to just this region, however. Although guerrilla forces continued to mount military strikes, the power and influence that Shining Path had previously enjoyed over large parts of the country now seemed to be crumbling as their remaining forces were increasingly being contained, eradicated, or driven back to their few remaining strongholds in such remote areas as the Upper Huallaga Valley. By the end of the third year of Alberto Fujimori's first term in presidential office, it was sufficiently clear that the threat of a revolutionary takeover of the Peruvian state—seemingly imminent in the final months of the García government—had been conclusively averted.

On 5 April 1992, President Fujimori executed a bloodless self-coup, with the complicity of the armed forces. He suspended the Constitution, and dissolved a Congress dominated by his political opponents because, allegedly, its incessant bickering was hindering his efforts to deal effectively with rampant terrorism and the worsening economic crisis.¹ Rather than provoking popular resentment and opposition, however, the self-coup “proved to be widely popular with most Peruvians, who seemed to agree that the country needed a stronger government to deal with the ongoing crisis. Public opinion polls indicated that an astonishing 70 percent of the population supported the self-coup” (Klarén 2000:413-414). To the millions of ordinary Peruvians who were tired of living in fear of violence, and had had enough of seemingly incompetent and ineffectual politicians and political parties, it mattered little that Fujimori's dictatorial tendencies were widely criticised abroad.

It was only when important donor countries threatened to suspend economic aid to Peru that Fujimori was finally pressured into promising to rewrite the Constitution, and to hold congressional and municipal elections in the near future. Notwithstanding the promises of change he gave to the international community, at home he proceeded to rule by decree, backed up by the armed forces (Klarén 2000:414).

Underpinning Fujimori's iron grip on state power was his control over the armed forces, which he achieved by co-opting the upper ranks of the Army, Navy and Air Force (Kruijt and del Pilar Tello 2002), and the dismissal or forced retirement of suspected political opponents in the upper ranks of the officer corps. In particular, he and his shadowy intelligence chief Vladimiro Montesinos, head of the *Servicio de Inteligencia Nacional* (SIN), took to meddling in the process for promoting regional commanders and for choosing the chiefs of staff, replacing a time-honoured practice based strictly on academic rankings with one based on personal appointment. This was how General Nicolás Hermoza Ríos came to be promoted to the post of President of the Joint Command, which he held from 1991 to 1998. "New appointments in the upper ranks of the armed forces were made directly by Montesinos, who as a result inspired both fear and loyalty within the armed forces" (Cameron 2000:4). This apparent "de-professionalization and politicization" (*ibid.*) of the Peruvian armed forces, combined with the perceived "un-constitutionality" of the *autogolpe*, rankled some senior military officers. It even provoked General Jaime Salinas Sedó (recently forcibly retired) to plot a military coup against Fujimori, which was planned for 13 November 1992. This plan failed, however, because the armed forces as a whole remained loyal to the President and to Hermoza Ríos, and because the SIN was able to discover and arrest the conspirators before they could cause any trouble. Apart from the formidable mechanisms of internal surveillance and tight control designed by Montesinos to keep the armed forces in line, it is also important to keep in mind that Fujimori came to command the support (if sometimes begrudgingly) and loyalty of most middle and senior ranking officers as a consequence of a number of other key arrangements. For one, he expanded the political and judicial power of the armed forces in return for its unwavering support throughout the entire decade he was in power. In addition, he enacted a series of tough antiterrorist laws, many of which were promulgated as presidential decrees, which provided the security forces the necessary legal basis upon which to begin tackling the insurgency on their own terms—something that they have been demanding from government for years. Furthermore, in response to what had been a notoriously low conviction rate of suspected terrorists by civil courts (Klarén suggests a figure of just 10 percent), Fujimori created special military tribunals for trying cases of terrorism. These courts were presided over by "faceless" judges who, in order to guarantee their personal security, were permitted to conceal their identity by wearing hoods over their heads. Needless to say, the number of convictions shot up immediately, and this pleased the security forces to no end, for it gave them the feeling that their counterinsurgency efforts were no longer made in vain. In the months immediately following the *autogolpe*, the government's new pacification campaign gained steady momentum, not only in military terms, but also in the morale it generated.

Fujimori's anti-terrorism legislation was specifically designed to undermine the insurgency by demolishing its organisational and institutional bases of support in civilian society. For example, Decreto Legislativo No.726 gave the armed forces and the police legal authority to enter university campuses. This made it easier for the security forces to stamp out Shining Path in the universities. Prior to this, many universities function, in Fujimori's own words, as "true trenches of terrorism," where the radicals, despite being the minority, were nevertheless able to impose their will on the

majority by threatening fellow professors and students with physical violence (Fujimori 1995:444). In stark contrast to the terrifying and brutal incursions made by security forces into Ayacucho's university campus and student residences in 1983-84, this time military intervention was peaceful. Consequently, the general sympathy of faculty and students lay with the security forces. As Tapia observed,

Immediately the military effectives dedicated themselves to the cleaning of the installations and the painting of walls. The support of public opinion facilitated the measure. More than a repressive action that sought to arrest activists, it was about a typical psychosocial action, which had as its objective to demonstrate a new governmental will to combat terrorism. The effects were noticed immediately. After the bewilderment and the surprise, there consolidated a majority of students that, although with serious objections, supported the presence of the Army on the university campus (1997:78).

Another effective anti-terrorism measure was Decreto Legislativo No.734, which made it possible for the Ministry of Justice to call for the intervention of the armed forces in restoring order and discipline in national prisons. This move at first seemed destined to repeat that earlier, notorious incident of army intervention that ended in slaughter, scandal, and the martyrdom of dozens of Senderistas at Lima's El Frontón prison in June 1986. Whereas then, Alan García had been widely blamed and his pledge to uphold human rights discredited, Fujimori's actions now, though similar, surprisingly met with popular approval (Tapia 1997:77). Perhaps the difference was that whereas on the one hand, García came to be widely perceived as simply reacting frenetically to events as they came, without any clear policy, particularly towards the end of his presidency, Fujimori, on the other hand, always gave the convincing impression of a decisive man with a real plan. On 6 May 1992, security forces entered prisons in Lima to quell riots sparked by Senderista prisoners who were demanding improved conditions, and a continuation of the previous government's informal policy of allowing them to administer their own cell blocks. Seventy-two hours of bloody clashes later, forty rioters lay dead, and the surviving Senderista prisoners were separated and transferred to various prisons throughout the country (*ibid.*:77-78). Thus was Shining Path's hitherto formidable political control within the prisons demolished. Until then, the prisons had served as places of indoctrination and, allegedly, even as strategic command centres.²

In 1995, Fujimori's pact with the military was further strengthened when the outgoing Congress passed a general amnesty law for all soldiers charged with human rights crimes. But his crowning glory was, beyond doubt, the capture of Guzmán, for which he took full credit despite the fact that it was the culmination of an ongoing intelligence operation brilliantly directed since 1990 by DINCOTE chief, General Antonio Vidal. On that auspicious day, DINCOTE netted not only the mythical "Presidente Gonzalo," but also the organisation's master computer files. This information led to the swift capture of 90 percent of the movement's highest-ranking leaders (Klarén 2000:415). Perhaps most importantly, Guzmán's arrest and subsequent caged exhibition irreversibly shattered his aura of invincibility, and that of his organ-

isation. “Now we have definitely lost our fear,” Tambo’s district mayor once remarked to me in 1997. “Before it was the time of fear, when no-one was permitted to say anything bad against Sendero. But now we can freely say that terrorism is not the way to progress, but to destruction.”³

Like his predecessors, Fujimori promised the nation that he would smite terrorism. Unlike his predecessors, Fujimori delivered the goods—and such a prize beyond everyone’s highest expectations. In the years to come, he would promote a public image of himself as a strong, undaunted leader, uncompromising in the face of terrorism; a “hard-working” man of few words but of decisive action, whose essential quality is summed up by the catch-phrase that was to become his campaign slogan during the 2000 presidential elections: “*Fujimori. Sí Cumple!*”

6.2 Reconstruction in the midst of violent upheaval

After personal security, the most important concern in the minds of virtually all the peasants I spoke to in Ayacucho was socioeconomic reconstruction. But before we begin to consider the process of reconstruction that followed Peru’s period of protracted civil conflict, it is first important to recognise that, generally speaking, even at the height of war, the dynamics at work are not only those of sociocultural, economic, and political disintegration; conflict also engenders new, enduring patterns of social living. People adapt to their circumstances *even during* war, and life goes on. In this regard, we might even say that in the context of war, *reconstruction* is an ongoing process that happens alongside social disintegration and political conflict. It is not something that kicks in only after violence has effectively ended. With this in mind, I have tried to understand not only how political violence has destroyed ways of life in Tambo and elsewhere in Ayacucho, but also how conflict and violence have led to the construction of new social structures and new forms of social interaction. Perhaps the supreme irony in the case of Peru is that a civil war that has brought a significant loss of life and property has also given rise to fresh, lasting strategies of adaptation. An examination of these new processes, strategies, and patterns provides the essential context for understanding the role that *comités de autodefensa* have played in the reconstruction and development of local societies and local economies devastated by protracted political violence.

6.2.1 FORCED DISPLACEMENT

As the preceding chapters of this book have shown, the process of violence-provoked internal displacement reached its peak in the south-central highlands of Peru between 1983 and 1984 (INEI 1998b:9; cf. Coral 1994:15). Owing to its magnitude and prolonged duration, however, no comprehensive or systematic quantification of the phenomenon was ever attempted. For this reason, estimates of the total number of “internally displaced” persons vary widely. For instance, the Centro de Promoción y Desarrollo Poblacional (CEPRODEP) estimated in 1994 a figure of 120,000 as the total number of displaced families in the whole of Peru, representing at least 500,000 persons (Coral 1994:11). The Programa de Apoyo al Repoblamiento (PAR) put the number of Peru’s displaced population at around 600,000.⁴ The Comisión Episcopal

de Acción Social (CEAS) provided a much lower figure, estimating that as of July 1992, the displaced had reached approximately 311,000 individuals, or 62,200 families (Comisiones de trabajo 1993:34).

It is possible to divide the history of forced displacement in Peru into roughly three periods (Coral 1994:15, MRSDA 1997:8). The first period spans between 1981 and 1985, when those displaced were predominantly Ayacuchanos fleeing the military's harsh counterinsurgency repression. During this time, many *desplazados* sought refuge outside the department, particularly in places like Lima, Ica, and Huancayo. The years 1986 to 1989 marked the second significant wave of displacements. Those heavily affected at this time were people in a number of south-central Andean departments. This was also the period in which forced displacement became most widespread in the country,⁵ impelled by the violent actions of various armed actors—the military, Shining Path, civil defence patrols, and paramilitary groups like the Rodrigo Franco Brigade (Coral 1994:15; cf. INEI 1998b:9). The third and last significant episode of displacement took place between 1990 and 1992, of which the primary cause was guerrilla aggression. The vast majority of people displaced during these years sought sanctuary within their own region, and often just within their own district.

The official figures suggest that between 1981 and 1985, as much as 60.4 percent of all internally displaced Peruvians came from Ayacucho department, with around 39.1 percent originating from the neighbouring department of Huancavelica (INEI 1998b:9). From 1986 to 1990, Apurímac department registered the greatest number of displaced people. Within Ayacucho department itself, the Mesa Regional Sobre Desplazamiento Ayacucho estimated the total number of *desplazados* between 1981 and 1993 to have reached approximately 156,575 persons (around 36,000 families). Of this, approximately 73,996 (18,048 families) were displaced to zones of refuge within Ayacucho department, and around 82,579 persons (17,952 families) to areas outside the department (MRSDA 1997:2). The fact that the department's population was 503,392 at the time of the 1981 census, but 492,507 twelve years later, suggests that almost a third of the department's total population may have been involuntarily uprooted between 1981 and 1993 (INEI 1998a:176).

In spite of their superficial similarities, it has been commonly pointed out that there exists a qualitative difference between the massive economic migrations that occurred in Peru during the '50s, '60s and '70s, and the "forced migrations" of the '80s (Coral 1994:9, Degregori 1993:12). The earlier economic migrations occurred within the context of a desperate search for employment and a better life, impelled by the social pressures brought by a demographic explosion. Life in the cities for economic migrants coming from rural areas was anything but easy, and was marked by constant competition with established urban sectors, and with other migrants. There was stiff competition for scarce jobs, and for access to basic services and sources of income. There was also intense competition for adequate living space within the densely populated shantytowns and urban slums, and during the many free-for-all invasions of vacant land. Yet, in spite of the challenges and hardships, and many disappointments that they encountered along the way, hundreds of thousands of economic migrants flocked to cities like Lima-Callao, Chimbote, and Huancayo. They were led by the belief that they were moving towards progress and more opportuni-

ties, and a better quality of life. Far from embarking as though on a haphazard adventure, however, most economic migrants planned their journey carefully. They saved money and resources well in advance of their trip, and utilised whatever personal network was available to them to facilitate their search for a job and their adaptation to urban life. Isbell observed almost three decades ago that as a survival strategy, most “migrant must call on a wide network of kin and co-villagers for survival in the competitive urban environment. Furthermore, the threat of failure motivates migrants to maintain strong ethnic and economic ties with their places of origin” (Isbell 1978:179). Thus many migrants maintained a dual life: working and living in the city, but also periodically returning to their rural village to tend one’s fields and livestock, to participate in village festivals, or to get married.

By contrast, *political violence* was the principal driving force that caused thousands of highland Peruvians to flee from their homes during the turbulent 1980s and early 1990s. Unlike the economic migrants of previous decades, many *desplazados* have had to leave their homes in a hurry, without any prior planning, “untimely obliged to abandon their villages of origin, without the minimum conditions to begin a prolonged and uncertain journey, having to locate and to relocate themselves numerous times” (Coral 1994:9). Forced to flee at short notice and to leave most their worldly possessions behind, *desplazados* sometimes arrived at their destination with nothing more than the clothes on their backs (see chapter 3).

The general pattern of forced displacement in Peru was characterised by (1) relocation from small to larger neighbouring rural communities, and (2) the movement of individuals from the *campo* to urban population centres, such as district, provincial, and departmental capitals. The level of security they expected to find, in addition to the material and social resources available to them, were what often influenced *desplazados* in their initial choice of refuge (Coral 1994:15). Living an existence fraught with anxiety and uncertainty, many displaced peasants have had to move from place to place several times before finding a place where they felt safe enough to stay. Such was the experience of Daniel, a *desplazado* from the now-abandoned village of Huancapampa, Tambo district.

In '85 my family members died. The soldiers killed my godfather and my brothers, and they carried away our animals. Oh, we were clearly destitute. We had nothing. We escaped and I went to the selva with my wife, with my children. We stayed there with my [other] brothers. In the selva we lived calmly for three months. Then there appeared a group of Senderistas. They began to kill people. They murdered my patron. So I fled with my family and two brothers to Pichari. After two weeks, Sendero appeared again, in Pichari, and so we had to escape to San Francisco.”⁶

Of course, not all *desplazados* were peasants. Also among those displaced by political violence were urban professionals, including teachers, engineers, and bureaucrats. Nevertheless, according to the experts, peasants made up around 70 percent of all *desplazados* (Coral 1994:15).⁷ Whatever their social and class background, however, the condition of life for thousands of Peru’s displaced persons in their chosen

areas of refuge provides the necessary context for understanding why it is that many eventually opted to stay (*inserción*) in their new setting, whereas others chose to return (*retorno*) to their rural villages of origin. Such decisions were influenced not only by the political situation at home, but also by the quality of life one had managed to eke out at their place of refuge. Beginning with the large urban centres, let us briefly examine what life was like for *desplazados* living in diverse conditions.

6.2.2. THE DESPLAZADO'S LIFE: LIVELIHOOD CRISIS AND ADAPTATION IN A CLIMATE OF VIOLENCE AND FEAR

Notwithstanding the apparent numerous advantages of living in or near a large urban centre like Lima, the quality of life for *desplazados* in semi-urban areas has not always been better than what it had been at home. Faced with problems like overcrowding, undernourishment, and terrifying disease epidemics, life in the urban slums and shantytowns for many internally displaced persons turned out to be much worse.

Most of the first wave of *desplazados* who fled to the cities went directly to the areas already settled by prior economic migrants from their community, knowing that these kinsfolk and friends could help them. Naturally, like the economic migrants before them, the *desplazados* tried to utilise the same support networks to find jobs and lodgings; and in this, they were largely successful. The problem, however, was that over the years, as more and more *desplazados* descended on the cities in the wake of growing political violence in the highlands, the established support networks, the adaptation strategies, the existing infrastructure, and the available living space were all eventually saturated and overwhelmed by new demands. The established strategies simply were unable to assist, accommodate, and absorb the vast numbers of displaced persons. Daily subsistence was, of course, everyone's most important concern. With no immediate area to cultivate, the majority of urban *desplazados* had no other choice but to buy much of their food. Moreover, with hyperinflation soaring between the late 1980s and the end of 1992, food purchases came to take up an increasingly large proportion of whatever income they could manage to scrape up.

Coping with life in the city was worse for *desplazados* who arrived destitute and with no links to any of the support networks of earlier economic migrants. Their subsistence options were therefore that much more limited. Over time, intensifying competition for scarce material resources and inadequate sources of income eventually led to conflict and animosity between the established migrants and the increasingly unwelcome newcomers. As Lima and other cities became saturated with *desplazados*, compassion began to dry up even among other popular urban sectors. Moreover, although urban life seemed to offer the promise of greater possibilities, such as the chance for one's children to get a better education than in the countryside, the pressures of everyday survival often rendered such opportunities impractical and irrelevant. The Catholic Church and various human rights groups observed, for instance, that "many children are obliged to go to work as itinerant street hawkers and in the end to give up their possibilities to study. School absenteeism is high and the children suffer yet more discrimination for being considered underdeveloped" (Comisiones de trabajo 1993:35).

In the urban setting, *desplazados* from Ayacucho had to contend not just with economic hardship and hunger. Discrimination and marginality, the distrust and suspi-

cion of authorities and of neighbours, and even the very stigma of being Ayacuchano (and so blamed for starting all the current troubles)—all these were additional factors that made *desplazados* feel excluded and marginalized. For many, social alienation simply deepened their longing to return home. The experiences recalled by one *desplazado* from Huambalpa is typical enough of displaced persons from other parts of Ayacucho:

Our arrival in Lima was filled with sadness. Our first attempts to forcibly settle unused land were repressed, and when we thought we had found a place, Army soldiers began to follow us and threaten us. Many of our fellow Ayacuchans had to beg to survive. Others worked as street vendors and a few in construction. We were accused of being terrorists in a very dismissive way by Lima people (quoted in Kirk 1995:357).

In the squalid, overcrowded *desplazado* settlements and shantytowns, where running water and a proper sewage system are virtually nonexistent, diseases spread rapidly. The cholera epidemic that ravaged Peru in 1991 was emblematic of the health crisis of the nation's poor, destitute, and displaced. Those hit hardest were the inhabitants of shantytowns and of the poorest urban neighbourhoods. Health risks came in other guises. Whereas respiratory and gastro-intestinal illnesses are extremely common in the *pueblos jóvenes*,⁸ the largely neglected (yet no-less-crippling) psychological effects of war, such as mental trauma, shock, grief and anguish were also pervasive problems among *desplazados*. In addition, many lived in constant fear of persecution—fear that their name would one day turn up on the blacklist of the police or of a Party cadre. Still, “[the] highest barrier to dealing with the psychological trauma,” said Ana María Rebaza of the Catholic Church’s Episcopal Conference for Social Action (CEAS), “is the overwhelming material need for food and shelter” (quoted in Kirk 1995:362).

For *desplazados* living in Ayacucho’s rural districts, on the other hand, their conditions of existence exhibited its own characteristics and dynamics. There were, of course, some similarities with displaced people living in big cities like Lima, but there were also marked differences.

In the province of La Mar as in Lima, political conflict has clearly been a driving factor in hastening the pace of urbanisation over the past two decades. The province’s urban population of 10.8 percent in 1972 had grown slightly higher to 11.8 percent by 1981. By 1993, however, the figure had jumped to 28.8 percent, and rising steadily.⁹ Even so, the increasing pace of urbanisation in La Mar was a misleading indication of overall demographic trends in the province. For whereas its population had been growing at an annual rate of 1.7 percent between 1972 and 1981, the subsequent years of violence saw the total number of inhabitants in the province fall from 77,477 in 1981, to 72,924 by 1993.¹⁰ Hence, whereas on the one hand, some of Peru’s major cities were undergoing a population explosion that was being fanned or intensified by political violence, on the other hand, most of its provincial hinterlands were experiencing an overall population decline, in spite of the growing population

congestion in many provincial and district capitals.

Another distinctive consequence of protracted violence in predominantly rural Andean hinterlands, like Ayacucho, was the ruination of an agricultural economy that was already in a state of crisis even before the outbreak of civil war (Degregori 1986, Huamaní Oré 1996). Indeed, ever since the 1970s, there has been a marked and steady decline in the department's gross internal product, in its overall output of agricultural crops, even in the production of potato,¹¹ the staple food crop of the region's inhabitants. Poor soil quality, extensive land erosion and progressive soil exhaustion were just some of the factors contributing to the agricultural troubles that had already plagued Ayacucho for decades. In addition, an uncompetitive, under-capitalised, and largely un-commercialised agricultural sector, coupled with a lack of credit and technological assistance from the government, were also to blame. In addition to these long-term factors, the agricultural crisis in the countryside of Ayacucho also owes itself to the phenomena of population displacement and instability caused by political violence.

Taking the example of Tambo district, we see that a prolonged climate of fear had two immediate effects with regard to agricultural production. Firstly, it caused a dramatic drop in the number of individuals actively working on the land, from 3,599 persons (2,746 males, 853 females) in 1981 to only 1,960 (1,751 males, 209 females) by 1993 (INEI 1983b:436; INEI 1994b:631). Secondly, the severe disruption it caused to daily work patterns led to a significant constriction in the total area of productive land being cultivated for food by the district's inhabitants. This led to severe and prolonged food shortage in the district. We have already seen that as guerrilla violence against peasants intensified in the course of the 1980s, most peasants became simply too frightened to venture out into the countryside to work. In what became a common pattern throughout the department, many peasants in Tambo stopped visiting and cultivating their remotest *chacras* (fields) altogether. According to the Ayacucho-based development organisation TADEPA, "in 1981 135 thousand hectares were sown [in the department]; on the other hand in 1985 only 53 thousand hectares were sown" (1992:20). As can be expected, the disruption caused to agricultural activity in Tambo effected a sharp drop in food production. The impact this had was made all the more serious by population pressure arising from the heavy concentrations of displaced people in small areas, such as in nucleated *resistente* communities or within the district capital. By the end of the 1980s, most people in Tambo—along with those in other parts of the department where similar circumstances existed—found themselves faced with famine and a livelihood crisis that would continue to well into the next decade. Physical evidence of this was unmistakable. At the departmental level, official sources estimated that in 1993, at least 67 percent of all rural primary school students suffered from chronic malnutrition (INEI 1997:81). We may reasonably infer that the highest levels of malnutrition were to be found in the worst hit rural areas of the department, like Tambo district. In 1997, the local civilian authorities of Tambo's suburban *desplazado* settlements with whom I spoke all referred to the critical food shortage and acute levels of chronic malnutrition in their communities. In addition, although a measurement of malnutrition has, as far as I know, never been attempted in Tambo, the visibly emaciated and undersized bodies of the adults and children there was at the time proof enough that chronic malnutri-

tion had indeed become a severe problem in the district.

How, then, did Tambo's inhabitants try to adapt their livelihood strategies to their rapidly changing, adverse circumstances? Let us first begin by looking at the *desplazados* that lived in large suburban settlements encircling the town. All of these densely populated settlements occupy land borrowed from or donated by local small landowners, or peasant collectives. Ccarhuapampa, for example, has been built on land owned by a peasant cooperative called Nueve de Octubre, which has its origins in the Agrarian Reform of the 1970s. In Ccarhuapampa as in most other *desplazado* settlements in and around the town, unused land remained scarce, though every *desplazado* family was ordinarily allocated a tiny plot by the *junta communal* of their settlement. Once a family erected their shelter, there was often very little land left even for a small garden. There was certainly not enough land within the settlements to grow enough food to sufficiently feed every household. The gravity of the subsistence problem was exacerbated by population growth: by the mid-1990s, the population of each of Tambo's semi-urban *desplazado* settlements was between 650 and upwards of 1,700 persons.¹² In addition, the fact that most of the fields surrounding these settlements remained private property and were still being cultivated by their original owners meant there was limited opportunity for the *desplazados* to utilise the existing arable land around them. With the threat of famine looming towards the end of the 1980s, many displaced peasants—mainly the men—felt they had no other option but to risk travelling to their own distant *chacras* to work during the day. But, as already noted in chapter 5, they always made sure to return to the safety of their settlements before dark.¹³

Despite improving security conditions in the region over the past decade, I discovered in 1997 that most *desplazados* were still too frightened to spend the night in their abandoned villages, even if to do so would have made it easier for them to get an early start on work the next morning. They feared being found and killed in the night by the “*terrucos*.” Or worse, by “*pishtacos*”—terrifying creatures usually in the form of tall, pale gringos dressed all in black, who are said to be paying off the nation's overseas debt by selling the fat extracted from their murdered victims to rich foreign countries, where it is used to grease factory machinery.¹⁴

Those for whom this labour pattern proved as exhausting as it was largely unprofitable were peasants with agricultural plots located far away from their *desplazado* settlements. Particularly affected in this regard were the inhabitants of Ccarhuapampa, whose distant, outlying villages are situated in the western half of the district. By 1997, a road had still not been built through that sloping and rugged area. Consequently, the villagers of Unión Minas, one of the displaced communities living in Ccarhuapampa, faced a gruelling four-hour hike uphill, on steep footpaths and obscure mule tracks, just to get to their fields—and half that time again just to get back. Although the village lies only 17 kilometres away from Tambo town, the amount of time it takes to get there on foot is more than the time it takes to make the 80 kilometre journey from Tambo to Huamanga by car. Ccarhuapampa's other *desplazados*, like those from the remote, deserted villages of Paría or Huantaccasa have had to abandon their fields altogether, being simply too far away to make a return trip possible in one day. As for those peasants of Ccarhuapampa who were able to work in this manner, they nevertheless had to spend between four or five hours a

day walking to and from their remote fields. This often left little time to actually get much work done upon arriving at one's *chacra*, apart from which the peasant would have invariably arrived already exhausted by the long uphill trek. Moreover, the further away the field and the fewer number hands available to help with bringing back the harvest, the less food a household would eventually have to feed itself.

However, not all *desplazados* had it as hard as those of Ccarhuapampa. The *pueblos juvenes* situated at the other end of town, like Vista Alegre on the east side, and El Porvenir, Viscachayocc, Túpac Amaru to the south of the central plaza, are populated by *desplazados* from nearby villages, located in the district's central and eastern rural areas. Many of those *desplazados* had fields within comfortable walking distance. It was even possible for those with *chacras* in the central part of the district to hitch a ride for at least part of the way on passing vehicles, for the main dirt highway to San Francisco runs through that area. Furthermore, many of these *desplazados* had relatives still living in rural *resistente* communities with whom they could lodge during planting or harvesting time, thus making efficient use of their time and energy. Consequently, *desplazados* from Tambo's central and eastern were generally at an advantage as compared with those of Ccarhuapampa. All the same, years of terror and fear generally deterred most of Tambo town's *desplazados* from venturing too often into the *campo*.

Those peasants who could afford it preferred to rent nearby fields from the municipality of Tambo, for which, in 1997, they were paying between 60 to 100 soles per month for one hectare of land, and an additional 60 soles if it was irrigated.¹⁵ Other displaced peasants worked as field hands or sharecroppers in return for food, or in lieu of paying rent. Given this context of livelihood crisis and labour disruption, and based on the available data and my own personal observations, it would not be an exaggeration to say that even as recent as 1997, over 90 percent of all agricultural production in the district was destined for household subsistence consumption, with very little absolute surplus being produced for commercial sale.¹⁶

Before the conflict, it was common for most peasant households in Tambo district to sell at least a small amount of surplus periodically in the market as a supplementary way to make ends meet. The women predominantly did the selling. With the ever-worsening disruption caused to agriculture over recent years, however, petty commerce and menial wage labour came to replace agriculture as the primary means of subsistence for many *desplazado* households. (With this, the role of women as the principal earners in their household rose in importance.) Worst off among the *desplazados* were those who could not produce enough of their own food to feed their households, let alone a surplus either to provide sufficient seed for next year's crop or to sell in the market.

Such were the economic problems and the living conditions of the urban *desplazados* as I observed them in 1997. On the other hand, the inhabitants of *resistente* communities situated in the countryside itself seemed not to have been afflicted by a subsistence crisis to quite the same degree as those living in or adjacent to the town. For one thing, many of the rural *resistentes* were still able to travel regularly to work in at least some of their fields, though they too always made sure to return at the end of the day and spend the night in the safety of their fortified multi-community hamlets.

According to a survey done by CEPRODEP, some of the inhabitants in a few of the *resistente* villages were even able to set apart as much as 20 percent of their harvest for commercial use, which led to regular *ferias* being held in some of the larger *resistente* villages.¹⁷ *Resistente* villagers also had the additional advantage of being able to sell their produce on the highway to passing travellers and traders on their way to the *ceja de selva*, although not always at prices which the villagers considered fair. At the main Sunday market held in Tambo, however, the *resistentes* participated only rarely.

Even though Tambo's economy remained fundamentally agrarian throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the agrarian subsistence crisis during this period contributed to the burgeoning of the "informal" commercial sector as an important alternative source of

Photo 6. Market day in Tambo



livelihood in the district. In previous decades, Tambo's so-called tertiary sector was comprised mainly of commercial, entrepreneurial, and mercantile activities dominated by the town elites—which is to say those who had the requisite literacy and numeracy, financial capital, and entrepreneurial sense to engage in business.

As already explained earlier, Tambo had long been an important commercial centre in the past by virtue of being as an important gateway and resting point between the *ceja de selva* of the Apurímac River Valley and the central sierra region of Ayacucho. Ever since colonial times, itinerant merchants from all over Peru have come to Tambo's Sunday market to buy and trade the products of the region (Vilchez 1961:24; Palomino 1971:165). And although the majority of the district's rural inhabitants were only marginally involved in the commercial economy, since the early 1970s many of them have nevertheless been selling to the traders at least some quantity of the various kinds of tubers and cereals they grew, these being in great demand by Andean migrants living in coastal cities. The peasants then used the small amount of cash they earned from the sale of their produce were to purchase from the essential manufactured commodities they need: metal pots, soap, cloth, noodles, cooking oil, matches, salt, and cane alcohol called *aguardiente*. Among themselves, however, instead of using cash, the rural inhabitants used *trueque* (barter), as the common form of exchange. High-altitude crops, like tubers, were traded by the peasants of the *alturas* for vegetables and fruits grown by the lowland valley peasants and by the farmers of the *ceja de selva*, thus ensuring a reasonable balance in the diet of people living in disparate ecosystems.

The past two decades, however, saw the town lose importance and vitality as a rest station and regional commercial centre. This fact is vividly apparent in the sharp drop in the number of persons employed in the town's hotel and restaurant sector: from 43 individuals in 1981, to only 21 by 1993 (INEI 1983b:437; INEI 1994b:631). The number of transporters and storekeepers, or their employees, also shrunk by almost half over this same period (ibid.). Military repression and frequent guerrilla actions in the district were, as we have already noted, responsible for frightening away most of Tambo town's oldest, most prominent families, many of which were also the local merchants and entrepreneurs of the district. A symbiotic (if not always fair and equal) relationship had long existed between the town elites and the local peasantry whereby the peasants provided a source of cheap produce and labour for the urban entrepreneurs in return for the cash they needed to make basic purchases of manufactured goods. Civil conflict rapidly ended this relationship, for with the departure of most of Tambo's urban entrepreneurs, an important source of cash and wage labour for the peasants disappeared. In time, the resulting socioeconomic vacuum was filled by a new wave of urban dwellers, recently arrived from the countryside. Unlike the earlier urban economic elites, however, the vast majority of *desplazados* who eventually entered the tertiary sector had very little capital. It is not surprising, therefore, that the service sector of impoverished rural districts like Tambo came to be dominated in the late 1980s and the 1990s by underemployed and unskilled wage labourers, and by informal street sellers—the latter being an economic activity that requires relatively little start-up capital. As Huamaní Oré observed,

The major part of the commercial activities and the presentation of

services is realised at a micro-enterprise level, without credit assistance or help from the government, with the result that they have limitations in their development and they generate low interest for the urban population. However, it is the only alternative for the majority who are unemployed and lack resources, like the migrants from rural areas, who out of necessity have generated the phenomenon of “informality” based on self-employment. In this way, the informal sector is the most important component of the urban economy and with the greatest potential for future development if favourable conditions are created (1996:51).

However, in spite of its apparent dynamism, a number of general factors—or unfavourable conditions—serve to limit the extent to which Ayacucho’s informal sector can further develop in the future. For one thing, most of the activities which make up this sphere of the economy—like ambulant peddling, taxi driving and transportation, unskilled labour and cleaning, etc.—have become saturated over the years. There are simply too many people trying to make a living out of doing the exact same thing. Stiff competition caused by under-pricing one’s competitors has resulted in a buyer’s market, bringing the prices of goods and services down to almost unprofitably low levels. Every informed consumer knows what the going prices are, and even then, prices often can still be haggled lower. With so many informal vendors fighting for the same customer, and only too willing to offer a better price for their goods or service than their competitors, anyone wishing to make a living in the informal sector is forced to price low or risk going completely hungry.

Yet in urban centres as in rural areas, prices (and therefore profits) are kept low not only by intense competition. Weak consumer purchasing power also ensures that vendors charge only the low prices that their potential customers can afford, or are otherwise willing to pay. The problem is that the explosive growth of the “informal” sector over the past two decades, particularly in Peru’s urban centres, has not been accompanied by a similar rise in per capita income. This is especially so in impoverished rural towns like Tambo, where my own estimate is that the average monthly household income of *desplazados* in 1997 was only around S/.80 nuevo soles, or about \$30 American dollars. In Tambo as elsewhere in Peru, an “economy of *sencillo* (small change)” is the norm, where only small amounts of money change hands daily, and little profit is made which can be reinvested to improve the quality or increase the quantity of the goods sold and services rendered. The vast majority of people in the district live hand to mouth, and work at subsistence level. The poverty of most people in Tambo was made evident to me by the fact that vehicles coming from the *ceja de selva* of the Apurímac Valley almost always passed through the town, rarely ever stopping to sell their cargo of fruits. This is understandable, given that few local people could afford to pay the price that the fruits would otherwise fetch in Huamanga. For most of the past two decades, lack of money or credit, or low financial returns for their meagre surplus of poor-quality produce, has left many peasants in Tambo unable to buy fertiliser, pesticides, or even seeds for the following year’s planting. This in turn has led to a further deterioration in the quality of their produce, thus placing them at a disadvantage in the open market, which in turn meant an ever-

declining cash income and an ever-lessening chance of obtaining the chemicals they required to improve their crops—and so on in a vicious circle. I heard many peasants in Tambo complaining that they did not receive fair prices for their produce, and so would rather just eat what little they produced instead of selling a part of it, even though they were always in need of money. To state their dilemma simply, Tambo district's peasants (*desplazados* and *resistentes* alike) are placed under rising pressure by the monetary consumption that has become part of the new conditions of their everyday existence, but they are finding it increasingly difficult to obtain the cash they need.

In 1997, Tambo's municipal authorities made an effort to try and revitalise the moribund agricultural economy by promoting the district as the "*papa nativa*" (native potato) capital of Ayacucho department—an allusion to a bygone era when Tambo was, indeed, renowned for the large variety and high quality of its tubers. However, a comparison of the quality of produce sold at Tambo's Sunday market with the agricultural produce on offer at Huamanga's central market was clear proof of how far the reality had to come in order to catch up with the marketing image the district authorities were trying to advertise. In fact, the generally poor quality of agricultural produce from many of Ayacucho's rural districts has, over the years, resulted in local production becoming increasingly restricted to local rural markets, while the largest and most lucrative urban market in the region—that of Huamanga's—has come increasingly to rely on importing better-quality produce from outside the department.¹⁸

The analysis of commercial traffic demonstrates that approximately 98% of the industrialised products that Ayacucho consumes comes from other cities; only 2% is produced internally, which means a high dependence on extra-regional [food production] industry. On the other hand, the only products for exportation to other departments are small volumes of agricultural products from the sierra and a considerable quantity of agro-industrial products that come from the *ceja de selva*. It indicates that commercial activity in Ayacucho is based on the movement of merchandise that come from other departments, less on the employment of internal production which is small (Huamani Oré 1996:51. My emphasis).

Given that on the one hand, most manufactured commercial goods and foodstuffs in the department were increasingly imported throughout the 1990s, and on the other hand, that locally produced goods were generally perceived to be of comparatively inferior quality (and thus of lesser value), barter as a common method of exchange between peasants, or between peasants and traders, has consequently come to lose much of its viability in the sierra. In most instances, it has been completely replaced by cash transactions, and this has left *desplazados* in particular at a serious disadvantage in the following ways.

In the semi-urban *desplazado* settlements of provincial districts like Tambo, the "monetization' of needs and obligations," to borrow a phrase from Stern (1982:186), has radically altered social relationships and strategies of household production.

Everyday existence in an urban (or semi-urban) context brought many of Tambo's displaced peasants numerous essential cash expenses hitherto almost unknown when they lived in the *campo*. Most of these cash-based needs were drawn from what Wolf refers to as the peasant's (in this case, the *desplazado's*) *replacement fund*, which is the "amount needed to replace his minimum equipment for both production and consumption," thought of "not merely in technical terms, but in cultural terms as well" (1966:6). One notable example is the purchase of school uniforms and supplies for one's children. While living in Tambo in 1997, it never ceased to impress me that come Monday morning, the weekend's multitude of grimy children in threadbare clothes were always miraculously transformed into students in crisp, immaculately clean uniforms. It seemed that every parents' desire was to be able to outfit all of their children in school uniforms. At an average cost of about S/.80 soles for an entire set of shoes, trousers, socks, shirt and jumper for boys, or blouse and pinafore dress for girls, it is no small accomplishment for those parents who indeed are able to do so. Besides the fact that school uniforms are mandatory at most urban schools, not having a school uniform also causes children to feel socially excluded and ashamed. Indeed, once while watching a group performance of uniformed school children at a school anniversary ceremony, I asked some of the students and teachers sitting beside me why a handful of dejected-looking children were sitting in the corner of the plaza, not participating in the activities. "Those are children recently arrived from the *campo*," I was told. "They are kept separated for the time being because they still have to learn to speak Castellano, and they have no uniforms because their parents cannot yet afford to buy them." The social pressure placed on parents to provide their children with uniforms is greater in Tambo town, where almost all the schoolchildren have uniforms, than in the countryside, where it is rare to see children in school uniforms.

Still other important and unavoidable cash expenses include the cost of medicines, particularly antibiotics. Given the unsanitary conditions and overcrowding of the suburban refugee settlements, antibiotics have become increasingly in demand. Intestinal and respiratory ailments are prevalent among the refugee population. In Tambo town, I often saw young children playing in the water of the very same street gutters in which I also commonly saw peasants urinating. Women and children regularly bathed and washed clothing in a small, polluted stream that flows between the barrio of Rosas Pata and Ccarhuapampa, and also drew their drinking and cooking water from it. A small water reservoir provided piped water to the town and to some of the *pueblos jóvenes*, but the water was neither filtered nor safe to drink without first boiling it. After even light rainfalls, mud from surrounding hillsides would flow down and into the open reservoir, transforming the water into a muddy soup contaminated with vegetal debris, human and animal faeces, and tiny, white worms. People have not learnt to use cloth to filter their tap water. When struck with a bacterial intestinal infection, then, a treatment of antibiotics was often one's only salvation from days of excruciating abdominal pain, dangerously high fever, and life-threatening dysentery. According to the chief physician in charge of Tambo's hospital in 1997, dysentery and subsequent dehydration were the principal causes of death in the district, especially among children and young people. "It's because the parents either have no money for a full treatment of antibiotics, or are reluctant to use what

little money they have on medicine, choosing instead to wait and see what happens, or to seek the services of a *curandero* [curer],” he once explained to me. He went on to say,

Medical care in Peru is free, but medicines are not. Just the other evening, a peasant man brought his young wife to the hospital. She had meningococcal meningitis and was already close to dying when they came in. We gave her antibiotics in the morning and by the evening she was walking around again; but she was still very weak. I told her husband that it was important for her to carry on taking the full treatment of antibiotics for a few more days, so she can recover completely, but that the medicine would cost him 18 soles. He said he would try to get the money, but they never returned. The problem is that these are ignorant people who don’t understand that antibiotics must be taken over an entire treatment period, even if the patient already begins to feel better. If they stop, they will suffer a relapse, and the bacteria will probably become resistant to the antibiotic, which can be dangerous for everyone else. We would like to provide medicine without charge but we are simply not permitted. There’s no money for it. Even in developed countries like the United States or in Holland, people have to buy their medicines, no? The only medication we can use at no cost to the patient are those donated by the Medicos Sin Fronteras. But they haven’t been back here for months.¹⁹

The economic crisis affected the district’s inhabitants not just physiologically, but also mentally. Most *desplazados* I spoke to, especially the young, complained that there were no jobs for them in either the district or anywhere else in the department. For this reason, they—and especially those lacking education—saw a bleak and difficult future for themselves and their families. Even the young people with education were pessimistic about their prospects. Many expected to be underemployed at best, but more realistically to be forced to return to a life of subsistence farming just to support themselves and their families. The life story of Pascual Quispe Vargas is typical in this regard.

My parents and I are *desplazados* from the countryside, and we came to live in Vista Alegre in 1987. Through the grace of God, I was able to continue my studies and even to enter the university in Ayacucho. I studied agronomy at the UNSCH and graduated in 1992. But afterwards there was no work, so I worked for a year as a *rentado* in the *Patrulla Especial* here in Tambo. That way at least I could make some money. That was in about 1994. Then I had the luck to find a job with CEPRODER. That was good, the pay was good. Better than what I was making as a *rentado*. But then that job ended—maybe the money ran out, I don’t know. So I returned to Tambo, to Vista Alegre. I got married last year, and now we have a four-month old baby. Now I work primarily as a peasant; I have some fields not far away. There I grow

my family's food. Sometimes I drive my sister's pickup truck, taking passengers back and forth between Tambo and Ayacucho. Sometimes the people at CEPRODEP come and hire me to drive them to the communities in the *campo*. That can bring me as much as 50 soles per day. But that doesn't happen very often. I hope to work for another NGO like CEPRODEP again in the future so I can put my education to use. Right now things look bad in Peru. There's no work. So I'm back to being a peasant.²⁰

Although not always obvious, the economic and political situation of the past two decades has caused many people to suffer periodically from bouts of severe depression. The culture of machismo places added pressure on a man to fulfil the role socially expected of him as the breadwinner of his family. Given the dire economic situation, however, most men are unable to fulfil this expectation, while women, as I have already noted, have grown in recent years to become the main income earner in many households through their resourceful "informal" commercial activities. Yet although most men recognised the vital importance of women's contributions to the maintenance of the family, some nevertheless resented this reversal of roles, for they felt that it diminished their status (especially in the eyes of their neighbours) as the head and main provider of their household. For many men, their mental anguish led them to look for comfort in a bottle of *aguardiente*.²¹ Many *desplazados* found in drinking a means of escaping their problems as well as their obligations. Unfortunately, though, as various policemen and hospital staff told me, the majority of reported cases of domestic violence were related to the alcoholism or the heavy drinking of one's husband or father.

Economic hardship, especially among the *desplazado* population, has also caused the break-up of families, and the abandonment of children (see IER "JMA"/UNSC 1987:13-98). It was not only widows and widowers of political violence, but also single mothers, abandoned wives, or destitute couples, left with too many mouths to feed, who are frequently forced to abandon some of their children. In Tambo, the more fortunate of these children are taken to the local orphanage—the *aldea infantil*—by their parent(s) or relatives, and left in the care of the nuns and workers there. And even though the orphanage is small and has limited resources, its staff members also periodically try to take as many orphaned or abandoned children off the streets as they can find in Tambo town and in nearby rural communities. Sadly, however, the majority of abandoned or orphaned children end up on the streets to fend for themselves. Many find their way to the cities where they attempt to survive by begging, or through petty crime. For the duration of what for most of them is often a short life, almost all street children in Peru can expect to suffer such adversities as sexual abuse, forced prostitution, substance addiction, physical violence and constant gnawing hunger.

6.2.3. CULTURAL CONTINUITY AND RECONFIGURATION AMID VIOLENT UPHEAVAL

Political violence has also had a profound impact on cultural activities. Surprisingly, however, in spite of the population displacements, communal disintegration, the escalating political violence and the deepening poverty over the years,

traditional festivities and religious rituals have not completely lost their relevance and importance in people's lives. As can be expected, in many rural areas violence seriously disrupted the Andean calendar of festivities. Nevertheless, time and again people in Tambo, as in other parts of Ayacucho, have shown a stubborn desire to continue observing, whenever they can, the ceremonial activities which they hold important for maintaining or strengthening the solidarity of their community. Death has sometimes come with cruel irony at the very moment of ecstatic celebration or profound worship, such as when eight members of the Presbyterian Church were dragged out in the middle of a church service and summarily executed by Marines in the peasant community of Callqui Nisperoc Niyocc, Huanta province, on 1 August 1984 (DESCO 1989:109). Or when peasants were massacred by guerrillas at Huayao while celebrating a wedding. Such pressures have made performing ceremonials not only difficult and irregular, but have also brought the risk of a general crisis of faith and confidence in religion and traditional values. Nevertheless, it seems that many of those who have suffered most have nevertheless held tenaciously on to the festivities and ceremonial they deem most pertinent to their lives.

Public festivities and ceremonial activities in the department of Ayacucho can be grouped into three types: (1) religious fiestas, (2) renewal and fertility-related rites, and (3) secular village-specific celebrations.²² A number of new village-specific celebrations of a secular variety have appeared over the past decade. Of these, what is particularly important to *retornantes* is the anniversary of their return to their once-abandoned villages, for it represents the physical and symbolic recuperation of their lands and the reconstitution of their communities. In Marccaraccay, a village situated in the cold *punas* of Huanta, Orin Starn noted, for instance, that "the anniversary of the return has replaced the feast of Saint John as the principal date. It is an indication of how even the ritual calendar can be altered by variable circumstances" (1994:78-79). Other important dates which were commemorated by communities throughout the department included the anniversary of the founding of their local *Club de Madres* and *Comité de Autodefensa*, which in Tambo were celebrated on 22 November and 24 May respectively.²³ These two new institutions were celebrated because they came to be associated in the collective consciousness with the people's triumph over Shining Path, and were further envisaged to play a significant future role in the reconstruction and development of the district.

In recent years, school anniversaries have also become important village-specific celebrations. In Tambo, the anniversary of one the large primary or secondary schools situated in Ccarhuapampa or Vista Alegre—Tambo's two main *desplazado* settlements—is more than just a sentimental exercise to honour the school. A school's anniversary also serves to remind the people of how fortunate they actually are to have the opportunity to give their children an education. For parents (most of whom are illiterate) as much as for students, schools symbolise modernity and progress, a hope of a better future for the next generation. The education that schools provide offers an avenue of escape from the harsh existence of the *campesino*. Parents in Tambo realise that had their lives remained in the countryside, their children could not have received the same level of schooling that they do today, living in a semi-urban *desplazado* settlement. It is indeed ironic that in this instance, the situation of displacement caused by political violence has provided youths of rural origin an

opportunity that they otherwise would not have received had they continued living in the *campo*. Furthermore, the establishment in these *desplazado* settlements of their very own school—which, by the way, are not one-room shacks, as in the *campo*, but large multi-storey buildings—provides inhabitants with a possible point of reference around which to begin constructing a broader collective identity for what, in fact, is a heterogeneous *desplazado* population made up of households from diverse local communities.

When I was living in Tambo in 1997, I was once invited by some teacher friends to join the anniversary celebrations of the Colegio San Isidro, in Vista Alegre. The celebrations began the evening before the anniversary day with a solemn procession of students and faculty members, lighted candles in hand, through the streets of Tambo town and Vista Alegre. Leading the crowd was a brass band and the local Catholic priest. At the back of the pack, however, a small group of rowdy students lit off fire-crackers, and called for people to come out of their homes and join in. After walking a few times round the town, the procession wound its way to the central plaza, where a live band on a stage began to play *huayno* music for the large crowd that had gathered. The students and a few older townspeople danced and flirted in the plaza to the sound of happy music well into the early hours of the morning. The celebrations resumed early the following morning, which was the anniversary day itself, with yet another lively parade, this time of the students dressed in their school uniform. Once again, they marched a number of times around the town plaza before making their way back to the large football pitch at Colegio San Isidro. A large throng of parents and other invited guests also filed into the school. On the pitch, the students formed ranks while the spectators sat themselves down in the stands. The programme got under way first with the singing of the national anthem, followed by speeches from the district mayor, the school's headmaster, and the school's two best students, a boy and a girl. The common theme in all the speeches was the end to violence and the importance of reconstruction. The main entertainment that day, however, was a traditional-dance competition, for which students from communities all over La Mar had come dressed in colourful traditional costumes to perform the folk dances of their region. Some groups performed dances from the selva, and others the dances of *puna* communities.

The event was not only entertaining for the audience and the performers. At a time when the young people in Tambo and elsewhere were more interested in the latest salsa hits from Lima and abroad than in the cultural traditions of their parents or grandparents, the dance competition also engaged the students in a piece of their own cultural heritage. Specially for the occasion, the students had to learn the folk dances and to don the traditional costumes previously worn only by their parents and grandparents. What will probably happen, however, is that in years to come, these traditional dances, costumes, and music will survive as quaint cultural artefacts paraded for the enjoyment of cash-wielding tourists. Nevertheless, it would not be surprising if the ritualised and cultural framework from which they originally derived their social meaning will disappear as young people increasingly come to embrace the more valued and attractive “modern” popular culture of Lima and the outside world.

There are also the religious festivities, often held in honour of patron saints, of which Tambo district's is San Juan Bautista (Saint John the Baptist). The festival in

this saint's honour is celebrated from 24 to 27 June, and his icon is housed the rest of the year in the town church. Not all icons have been so lucky, however. In the hasty flight of villagers under attack, religious images were often left behind, and at times subsequently destroyed by either the guerrillas or the soldiers. The loss of these icons sometimes meant that the fiestas associated with them were abandoned, or at least suspended for a time until they could be recovered. Fortunately, such a fate did not befall the icons of village of Balcón. Despite the devastating guerrilla incursion on 20 June 1984 that finally emptied the village of its remaining inhabitants, its three most important religious icons—la Virgen Amparadora, el Niño Jesús, and el Pírsu Cur—were taken by the fleeing *desplazados* with them to Ccarhuapampa, and thus saved. In September 1997 I had the opportunity to attend the annual fiesta dedicated to these three images which, ever since Balcón was abandoned, has been celebrated annually in Ccarhuapampa amid solemn processions, comical bull-fighting, riotous music and dancing, and unrestrained drinking.

The district's other important traditional religious holidays that have come through the period of violence—disrupted and inconsistently celebrated though they have been over the years—include *Todos los Santos* (1 November) and *Día de los Muertos* (2 November), *Inmaculada Concepción* (8 December), *Carnaval* (in February or March), and *Semana Santa* (Easter Holy Week).²⁴ These occasions invariably start with the parading of religious images in sober procession, and culminate in drunken revelry.

Given the direct relationship that exists between ecological renewal and fertility rites on the one hand, and the crucial periods of the agricultural cycle on the other, the disruption of one necessarily affects the other. When political violence depopulated the countryside and transformed many places into no-go areas, irrigation canals had to be abandoned for a time, and so too the observance of *Yarcca Aspiy*, the important rite of cleaning the irrigation system in September that signalled the beginning of the rainy season and the time for planting. Similarly, in some years, the personal risks placed on peasants during harvesting time left no opportunity for the *Trilla*, the normally carefree harvest festival often celebrated in July, in which horses are made to trample the harvested wheat or maize to separate the grain from the stalk. Other ecological renewal or fertility rites that were discontinued during the years of violence, but have since been revived in Tambo include the *Herranza*—the ritual branding of livestock in August that culminates in offerings being made to the local *Wamani* or mountain deity—the *Corte Monte* (mentioned in the previous chapter), and the *Toro Watay* (September).

In the Peruvian Andes, religious festivals have historically been interrelated with local indigenous prestige hierarchies. Namely, it was the members of prestige hierarchies who sponsored the fiestas by footing all costs associated with providing music, food, coca, and abundant amounts of *chicha* (corn beer) and *trago* (cane alcohol) for the participants. Nevertheless, civil-religious hierarchies were already declining throughout the Ayacucho region ever since the 1960s, due to the great deal of effort, goods, and money expended in sponsoring a saint's fiesta. As noted by Isbell at Chuschi in the early 1970s, "Migrants and governmental agencies are frustrated by the amount of time, energy, and resources that are expended in supporting traditional rituals" (1978:220). For these reasons, some of the rural nouveaux riches—Andean

economic migrants in particular—found conversion to Protestantism to be spiritually and instrumentally conducive to their interests in as much as it allowed them to bypass the traditional cultural levelling mechanisms that stood as hurdles in the way of their social advancement and personal enrichment. “With the Protestant ideology of personal advancement, *comuneros* can escape the obligations of participation in the complex of reciprocity and displays of generosity that consume so much of their economic surplus,” (ibid.:240). As we have already seen in an earlier chapter, such self-interested social and cultural distancing by an upwardly mobile and economically successful minority often provoked social fragmentation, and resentment from their communal neighbours. This usually resulted in the weakening of community solidarity, which later only played into the hands of Shining Path. Although religious fiestas are very occasionally still celebrated in Tambo, lean times over the past two decades have made for fiestas that are much less extravagant than those that were given in the distant past. It can generally be said that these days, when a saint’s feast is celebrated, the sponsor does so for personal reasons—such as giving thanks for a saint’s blessing or so that one’s prayers are answered, or so as to gain votes in a political election, etc.—rather than as an obligation associated with membership in a community’s cargo prestige hierarchy, which have now all but disappeared in Peru.

These examples help to illustrate that individuals are not slaves to their customs and cultural systems. They often are, in fact, consciously selective and self-interested when interacting with or adopting cultural identities, cultural symbols and practices. For instance, Isbell (1978) witnessed how the *comuneros* of Chuschi voted in 1970 to abolish the public observance of rituals and of cultural institutions—namely the *hatun varayoc*—that did not directly relate to their fundamental beliefs regarding the social and natural world. Yet a few years later, they voted to resuscitate some of these very same “obsolete” cultural structures in response to changing political circumstances, and because it served their new political interests to do so (ibid.:238). Changes to individual circumstances and socioeconomic context often lead people to reaffirm, re-evaluate, or to redefine their cultural systems and behaviour. The recent rapid growth and popularity of evangelical churches in the Peruvian Andes underscores this point.

Although Protestant missionaries have been in Peru ever since the early decades of the nineteenth century, it was not until the 1980s that the population of Ayacucho department began converting in large numbers. Comprising only 4.33 percent of the department’s total population in 1981, by 1993 11.42 percent of Ayacuchanos had become Protestants, or “evangelicals,” representing a wide spectrum of non-Catholic sects (Gamarra 2000:279). Protestantism in Ayacucho first established itself at the beginning of the twentieth century in the department’s principal urban centres of Huanta and Huamanga, slowly expanding from there into the *campo*. Starting in about the 1950s, those most responsible for spreading Protestantism were migrants from the countryside, who were exposed to these new churches while living in urban shantytowns. They eventually brought the evangelical message back with them when they returned to their rural villages of origin. The advance of the evangelicals in Ayacucho department received further impetus towards the end of the 1960s when the old order, dominated by the landed regional elite, broke down and finally collapsed. For this demise in the power of the landowning elite also undermined the power and the privileges previously enjoyed by the Catholic Church, which was itself

one of the largest and most powerful landowners in the country.

Growing political awareness also took its toll on the public image of the Catholic Church, causing it to lose much of the popular respect and reverence it had enjoyed and taken for granted ever since the Conquest. In the politically charged context of the late '60s and early '70s, politicised rural activists began to denounce the Catholic Church as an institutionalised exploiter of peasants. Furthermore, recognised peasant communities received sympathetic support from the revolutionary Agrarian Reform Office in their efforts to recuperate communal lands seized in generations past either by the Church or by encroaching *haciendas*. In this popular assault on the status quo, the Catholic Church—one of the pillars of the old order—was not only losing power, but also fast becoming discredited. As the 1970s ended, the presence of the Catholic Church in Ayacucho's countryside became "limited to sporadic visits by priests who paid privileged attention to the administration of sacraments" (Gamarra 2000:279). By contrast, many evangelical pastors, most of whom were themselves Andean migrants, lived and worked with the poor and marginalized sectors of society. In 1997, I was often told by rural people that in the initial years of Sendero Luminoso's armed struggle, priests and nuns abandoned the countryside and fled to the cities, whereas the evangelical *hermanos* stayed (and sometimes died) with the people (see del Pino 1996).

Jefrey Gamarra, an academic lecturer at the UNSCH, explains the widespread religious conversions and the rapid expansion of Protestantism during the years of political violence as the result of the evangelical churches' ability to help provide "a minimum of community cohesion in the exile areas so as to guarantee access to resources in the expulsion areas" (Gamarra 2000:272). In contrast to the ritual-orientated practices of Catholicism, the moral code of behaviour preached by the evangelicals was better suited to the realities of a modern low intensity conflict. In the words of one of his informants,

...before we celebrated the Feast of the Cross, the feast of Santiago,...we had bullfights, dances and drank a lot. Sendero took advantage of that because when we were drunk and fought each other, the terrorists came and attacked us. They took the old people and the children away. Now we don't have those parties anymore. We don't drink, we are sober and ready to defend ourselves from the terrorists ("Jacinto" quoted in Gamarra 2000:282).

Furthermore, the emphasis placed by evangelical pastors on Biblical scriptures that spoke of the trials and tribulations of Israel in exile, its images of violent cataclysms heralding the apocalypse and Last Judgement, provided their followers with a point of identification and a relevant meaningful framework with which to render comprehensible the chaos and suffering in their own lives (ibid.:282; also see del Pino 1995a:381).

Apart from the functional advantages and material benefits that made joining an evangelical church appealing, however, we should not underestimate the emotional sincerity and religious conviction of its adherents. As Ponciano del Pino has argued, instead of running away, evangelicals in the Apurímac River Valley willingly placed

their lives on the line by declaring war on Shining Path, which they came to view as the Antichrist incarnate (1996:167). “The Senderos have persecuted us the most,” the evangelical *desplazado* Daniel once said to me. “Do you know why? It’s because the Senderos do not believe in God. For this reason they hate us, and want to exterminate all evangelicals. But at this moment God is also protecting us.”²⁵ The evangelicals’ resistance to Shining Path in the valley took on the appearance of a holy war, and guerrillas eventually found themselves faced with an undaunted enemy for whom death held no fear; an enemy for whom, like the most zealous Maoist militants themselves, dying for the sake of one’s beliefs was not only accepted, but at times even welcomed.

With time, however, the level of political violence in Ayacucho would subside and everyday life would begin a slow return to normality. According to Gamarra, in the context of post-violence social reconstruction, the strict social and moral order imposed by evangelical pastors on their followers—so well suited to survival in times of war—would prove incongruent with changing outlooks, attitudes and interests.

The totalitarian narrative [of evangelicalism] serves to diminish the risks of fragmentation in a situation of conflict but not during stable periods. The evangelical version of the struggle against Shining Path was effective only to the extent that people were on their guard, and engaged continually in defensive actions. But with the passage of time, *Sendero* platoons became less frequent and so did the intensity of their attacks.... The returning and resistant communities no longer had to choose between the Bible of evangelism or the *Sendero* sword to ensure their survival and memory.... Everyday life changed gradually. The feeling of precariousness disappeared...[and the] habit of praying at night gave way to lively conversations by shop fronts. On weekends, music and dancing were the new forms of entertainment for community youngsters. Life returned to the communities and with it an enjoyment of drinking—practiced surreptitiously to prevent criticisms from the staunchest converts and evangelical leaders.... As violence diminished, the communities tended to engage in less religious behaviour and have now started to draw the line between evangelism and community interests (Gamarra 2000:284,287).

Among a number of high-Andean communities in Huanta, Gamarra has also observed professed evangelicals performing or participating nevertheless in non-evangelical Andean rituals, like the *Herranza*. Yet such instances, he argues, do not necessarily mean that evangelicalism was now being rejected by its adherents. Rather, as with Roman Catholicism that preceded it, within the cultural universe of its adherents, evangelicalism was simply undergoing that Andean tendency towards syncretism with pre-existing local indigenous religious beliefs and rituals.

6.2.4. DESPLAZADOS RETURN

When Fujimori became President of the Republic in July 1990, he inherited not only a critical political situation but also an economy wracked by his predecessor’s failed heterodox experiment. As an indication of the extent of the economic crisis, by

1990 the GDP had fallen to the 1950 level, and as much as 80 percent of the national population was either unemployed or underemployed (Klarén 2000:408). Real wages had dropped to what it was two decades earlier and poverty levels soared. Upon assuming presidential power, Fujimori sought to tackle the nation's disastrous economic situation. He did this by implementing a severe economic austerity programme—"far harsher than anything that Vargas Llosa had contemplated" (ibid.:407)—that immediately caused unprecedented rises in the price of food and other essentials, wage cuts, and job losses. Between 1990 and 1992, "a conservative estimate was that 54 percent of the total Peruvian population were living in poverty" (ibid.:408). In time, the inflation rate was brought under control as the restructuring measures of the "Fujishock" took effect. Public sector spending rose as international financial loans flowed into the country once more. Foreign investment began to increase cautiously. Although these austerity measures brought new hardships, the general mood towards Fujimori's policy solutions remained one of optimistic tolerance, undoubtedly sustained by his early victories against the insurgency, and by the general impression that, for the first time in a long while, here was a government that was doing what had to be done to resolve the crisis, no matter how painful (Cameron and Mauceri 1997). Besides, people had grown to expect cumulative problems from government, and already stoically hardened to it. For solutions to life's everyday problems, they turned not to the state but to themselves.

Throughout the south-central Andean departments, one of the most significant effects of worsening economic crisis in the cities coupled with waning political violence in the countryside was to encourage large numbers of peasant *desplazados* to return to their villages of origin, many of which had lain abandoned for over a decade. With food prices rising to as much as 500 percent in the wake of "Fujishock", returning to the home village to resume cultivating one's own land was, for many *desplazados*, the only possible way of supporting one's family. Unlike in previous years, expanding pacification made this option viable. The *retornos* or returns (also called "*replamamientos*") were organised for the most part by the people themselves, rather than by government, and as such may be regarded as the most important spontaneous, popular initiatives for socioeconomic reconstruction to occur in the past decade.

The official government statistics regarding the percentage of displaced persons who have opted to return home is unclear. Based on its study of 437 districts in the departments of Ayacucho, Apurímac, Huancavelica, Junín, Huánuco and Ancash, the Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática concluded that by 1997 "57.6% [of the total population interviewed in the districts] declared having changed residence for reasons of violence and had returned to the place of census as a consequence of the process of pacification. The remaining 42.4% constituted the [*resistente*] population that did not change their place of residence" (1998b:9).²⁶ What is not provided in the INEI study, though, is the percentage of the entire *desplazado* population that did not choose to return home, deciding instead to remain displaced for the time being, or to settle down for good in their place of refuge. An indication of this can be found in other studies. The Mesa Regional Sobre Desplazamiento Ayacucho, for example, suggested that in 1997, "of the 36,000 families [156,575 persons] displaced at the departmental level, to date, 8,246 families [approximately 35,864 persons]

have opted for Return. The absolute majority has opted for insertion (27,754 families), especially in the city of Lima” (1997:2). INEI’s findings do, however, provide us with a more global picture of refugee returns, which is that 59 percent of all *retornos* took place in Ayacucho, followed by Junín and Apurímac departments, representing 14.9 and 12.9 percent of refugee returns respectively (INEI 1998b:9). As a national phenomenon, the number of refugee returns began to pick up in 1991, reaching their peak between 1993 and 1994, and gradually diminishing thereafter (ibid.:10).

A third of all *retornantes* interviewed in a government study into displacement and return cited improved security in the countryside as their main reason for returning home (INEI 1998b:10). Around 33.6 percent indicated their desire to recuperate their property as their primary reason for returning, and a slightly smaller percentage said they were motivated to return home by the need to search for work. A lesser number of people said they returned because of family reasons (ibid.). It is more likely, however, that individual decisions to return were influenced not by one, but rather by a combination of many of these factors. (It logically follows, for example, that one cannot recuperate property or attend to family business until the area has been pacified). The level of security in an area, the amount of time away, the distance to one’s village, the quality of life attained and opportunities found at one’s place of refuge as compared with what one can expect by returning home—these are some of the key factors that, over the years, have influenced *desplazados*’ decision whether to return or not.

From as early as 1984, internal refugee returns have occurred in response to those random occasions when political violence appeared to wane. For example, the apparent diminution of guerrilla attacks in the countryside of Huanta province between 1996 and 1997 prompted some alto-Andino villagers—notably those of Huallhua, Culluchaca, Iquicha, Huaychao—to return home for a time. Their optimism was dashed, however, when the resumption of rebel activities throughout the entire region, from 1988 onwards, eventually forced almost every single one of these early *retornantes* to flee their homes once more (Coronel 1996:58-61). Besides security, Flagg et al. (1998:12) have identified other important interrelated factors that have influenced people’s decisions whether or not to return. These include:

- Extent of improvement/worsening of living conditions in the displacement area
- Extent of social, cultural and economic integration in the area of displacement
- Access to education and other services in the displacement area
- Family linkages in the district/village [of origin]
- Possibilities of social and economic development opportunities in the original villages as opposed to the area of displacement
- Access to financial aid and other types of support from government by deciding either to remain displaced or return to their villages
- Geographic distance of displacement area from village of origin & Economic means at the moment in which the return is considered as an option
- Length of time spent away from the village and age of the potential returnees

With regard to persons who had sought refuge in distant urban centres, the pattern that emerged was that those most recently displaced were also the ones most like-

ly to return to their rural villages of origin. Or in other words, the longer the time away, the lesser the likelihood that the *desplazado* would want to return to his original home (see Table 6.1).

Table 6.1: Duration of Displacement of Return Population

Duration of Displacement %	
Total	100.0
Less than 6 years	39.6
6-10 years	36.6
11-15 years	22.7
More than 15 years	1.1

Source: after INEI 1998b:24

One explanation why the majority of long-time *desplazados* seldom chose to return is that in most instances, having come earlier, they were able to secure the best of the scarce resources, space, and opportunities available at their place of displacement. The livelihood conditions of most of the earliest, most settled *desplazados* were therefore generally superior to those of more recent refugees. Furthermore, long-established *desplazados* have also had more time to feel settled in their place of refuge. It is therefore hardly surprising that *inserción* was often the option of choice for such individuals. Isabel Coral argues that a large percentage of these people would, under normal conditions, probably have become traditional economic migrants anyway, had their lives and plans not been disrupted by war. "The violence expelled them before their time. In general, definitive insertion is considered by those who have achieved a certain stability," writes Coral (1994:29). These were mainly people who possessed the necessary linguistic skills and education, economic resources, and personal support networks with which to integrate relatively easily into their host (urban) society. Consequently, their goals and actions were directed at permanently settling down where they were, and their global strategy was to promote the general development of the *asentamiento humano* in which they lived. By contrast, those *desplazados* who failed to adapt to urban life have generally chosen to make at least a partial return. Predominant among this group were peasants from Ayacucho's high-Andes region (*puna*), and displaced natives from the Amazon.

Another likely reason for not returning was that many *desplazados* who had been displaced for 11 years or more simply believed there was probably very little for them to go back to. They supposed that after so many years away, their homes and all their livestock and seed stocks would almost certainly have already been plundered or destroyed. For them, a return was viewed as a waste of effort and resources; besides which the idea of returning to backbreaking agricultural work held little appeal. For many *desplazados*, that it was highly probable they had nothing left to go back to served to discourage a decision to return.

Many other *desplazados*, on the other hand, were determined to return and make a fresh start, whatever the hardships involved. This was apparent to me in 1997 when

I visited Unión Minas, a return community in Tambo district. Situated in the frigid *puna* at an altitude of around 3,500 metres, the village was considered by the municipality to be “*muy pobre*.” However, even that assessment did not fully prepare me for the appalling living conditions I would find there. Most of the village’s 170 or so inhabitants lived in a tight cluster of low, damp, turf-walled huts, with roofs constructed from the wild *puna* grass called ichu. Only a very few huts had roofs of corrugated iron sheets. The inhabitants had returned to Unión Minas from Ccarhuapampa almost two years earlier, and there was still neither a local school nor a health clinic built in the village. Every single inhabitant was suffering from one form of health problem or another, from skin infections to a wide range of respiratory and gastro-intestinal illnesses. As honoured guests, the health worker I was accompanying and I were served the best food the villagers could offer, which were blackened, withered potatoes. They apologised for the condition of the potatoes, blaming *rancha* (a fungus) for blighting their crops. They had no money for fertilisers and pesticides, let alone for healthy seeds. Yet, in spite of all this, the *retornos* of Unión Minas at the time of my visit remained undaunted and optimistic. “At least here we have our own land,” many told me. Indeed, many of the surrounding hillsides were once again under cultivation after having been unattended for so many years.²⁷ The men expressed to me their optimism that the municipality would eventually build a road to the village; that one day soon it would provide them with electricity and potable water, construct a school and perhaps even a health clinic. Although secretly I could not share their optimism that the future would bring the degree of development that they patiently awaited, I nevertheless wished them the best of luck and left with my small plastic bag of mouldy potatoes and a great degree of respect and admiration for their tenacity and hopefulness.

In the department of Ayacucho, the very nature of the cause of displacement also proved a significant factor in the regional patterns of *retorno* or *inserción*. The evidence suggests that the greater part of *retornantes* came from provinces where internal population displacement could be attributed primarily to Shining Path aggression; of these, La Mar and Huanta registered the largest number of returns (see Table 6.2. MRSDA 1997:3).

In comparison, the vast majority of *desplazados* from the department’s southern provinces—Lucanas, Parinacochas, Huancasancos, Víctor Fajardo, Vilcashuamán, Paucar de Sara Sara—have chosen for insertion, “owing, among other factors to [the fact] the Armed Forces, who was the principal cause of displacement in these zones, remains in control of them” (MRSDA 1997:3).

The vast majority of *retornantes* were those who had fled only to neighbouring rural villages, or to district capitals—that is to say, fled to rural places of refuge not too distant from their home villages. Proximity makes returning to one’s original home easier, both physically and psychologically. By contrast, the vast majority of displaced persons who fled to Lima and other major cities have not returned.

Generally, more *retornantes* were male than female, with 25 to 39-year-olds of both sexes constituting the largest age group (INEI 1998b:43-45). The INEI study discovered that they also tended to be individuals with only a very basic level of education, if any at all: “...85,3% [of the population interviewed] mentioned working in

Table 6.2: Internal Refugee Returns, Ayacucho Department, by Province and District, as of 1997

Province	Number of Families	Districts Principally Affected
Huanta	3,575 (13,727 persons)	Ayahuanco, Santillana, Huanta, Sivia, Luricocha, Huamanguilla, Iguain.
La Mar	2,003 (8,012 persons)	Anco, Santa Rosa, Ayna.
Huamanga	738	San José de Ticllas, Santiago de Pischa, Acocro, Chiara, Vínchos, Acosvínchos, Pacaycasa, Quinoa, Ocros.
Vilcashuamán	625	Umaru, Vischongo, Pomatambo.
Cangallo	275	Icaraccay, Huahuapuquio.
Víctor Fajardo	263	Huamanquiquia, Asquipata.
Lucanas	389	Santa Ana de Aucará, Andamarca, Chipao.
Parinacochas	250	Pacapausa, Upahuacho, Incuyo.
Sucre	188	Chalcos, Pampamarca, Belén.

Source: after MRSDA 1997:3-4

occupations connected with agriculture and farming qualifications. As well, 8,3% declared themselves to be unskilled labourers, ambulant peddlers and such, the other group of 1,8% claimed to be professionals and intellectuals” (ibid.:51).

Table 6.3: Level of Education of Returnees Interviewed by INEI

Level of Education	%
Very little or no education	18.5
Primary education	57.6
Secondary education	21.4
Higher education	2.5

Source: after INEI 1998b:47

A reasonable explanation for this pattern is that there were generally more opportunities for higher-educated individuals in urban centres than for the lesser educated, and also greater and better opportunities for the higher educated in the cities than in the *campo*. Moreover, individuals who already possessed or have recently gained a comparatively high level of education often regarded themselves as socially superior, and certainly as belonging to a separate social class from those with much lesser schooling. Consequently, such higher-educated *desplazados* probably came to have the attitude that nothing less than an urban lifestyle befits their social status, and that a life in the *campo* is only for the “*cholos*” and “*chutos*.”²⁸

Comparatively few refugee returns have been planned and organised with the

assistance of the government, the army, or non-governmental groups (see Table 6.4). The government's Programa de Apoyo al Repoblamiento (PAR) claims that by 1997, it had assisted in organising 7,723 instances of return.²⁹

Table 6.4: Modes of Return in Ayacucho, Junín, Apurímac, Huancavelica, Huanuco, and Ancash departments.

Mode of Return	%
Total	100.00
Own Decision	88.8
Organised by Government (PAR)	5.4
Organised by Armed Forces	3.7
Organised by NGO	1.2
Other	0.8
Organised by the Catholic Church	0.1

Source: after INEI 1998b:38

The Mesa Regional Sobre Desplazamiento Ayacucho noted, however, that “the return marches organised from Lima by PAR generally result in failure a few months after the referred to return” (MRSDA 1997:9). Why? Uncertainty about security and living conditions owing to a lack of contact with their home villages, and even distrust of the government’s motives, were just some of the reasons why many government-organised returns failed.

In contrast, the vast majority of returns—PAR estimated their number to be around 50,000—have been spontaneous actions organised by the returnees themselves, though always with the authorisation of the local or regional political-military commander either before or very soon after the return. *Retornantes* made the return journey home either as individuals, as separate households, or with other co-villagers as a group. Moreover, rather than making a total return to the countryside, many families opted instead for a “partial return,” whereby the family members would divide their time living and/or working both in their urban *asentamientos humano* (human [refugee] settlements) and in their rural villages of origin. *Retornantes* to villages close to their *asentamientos humanos* have been understandably reluctant to give up the modern conveniences of urban life they have become accustomed to, like running water, electricity, schools, etc. Such individuals therefore often return to their rural villages only when they need to work in their fields, and otherwise preferring to maintain their place of residence in an urban setting.

The decision to return was sometimes literally made “on the spot” by many communities, such as in the case of Huico, a community in Acocro district, whose displaced members “met in Ayacucho on 28 September 1995 and decided to return together on the very same day” (Flagg et al. 1998:8). Other *retornos* were achieved only through the vision, initiative, and vigorous effort of a few individuals.

Few return stories are as dramatic as that of Uchuraccay’s, the alto-Andino community that achieved widespread notoriety after eight reporters were brutally mur-

dered there by villagers in January 1983. Throughout the rest of that dreadful year and into the following one, Uchuraccay and its neighbouring communities frequently experienced intensely devastating guerrilla attacks for being the first of Ayacucho's peasant communities to counter-rebel. The violence took its heavy toll, and by the end of 1984, Uchuraccay lay completely abandoned. Its villagers had fled to different destinations. Many went to live in Huanta, Huamanga, and Tambo, while others moved to as far away as Lima. Wherever they went, the Uchuraccayños took care to conceal their true identity in an attempt to escape the stigma of having come to be known throughout Peru as "*los mataperiodistas*"—"the journalist killers." During their long years in exile, the scattered villagers never attempted to reunite as a community, and very few tried to contact old neighbours beyond immediate relatives and close friends. Nevertheless, many often thought back nostalgically to how much better life had been before the war, before they became *desplazados*. Many reminisced about their "*vida de tranquilidad*," when they were able to grow enough food to feed themselves, and had vast livestock herds to meet the rest of their subsistence needs.³⁰ Although the so-called "Iquichan" alto-Andinos were commonly regarded by their fellow Peruvians as among the "poorest" of peasants (e.g. Degregori 1999a:67), the Uchuraccayños, for their part, measured their wealth in terms of the size of their herds, and so had actually thought themselves quite well-off. However, when their animal herds were annihilated or were forcibly taken from them by Shining Path guerrillas, and their homes burnt, the Uchuraccayños fled and eventually arrived at their various places of refuge completely destitute. Given that at the time of their displacement the vast majority of alto-Andinos were virtually uneducated and spoke only Quechua, those lucky enough to find sporadic work were limited to performing menial jobs as domestic servants and manual labour as peons. Even then, such work did not necessarily bring monetary income, as Elías Ccente, Uchuraccay's president, explained to me years later. "They didn't pay us. We worked for our patrons for nothing. We worked only in return for food, nothing more. Therefore we didn't have money to make purchases."³¹ Less fortunate Uchuraccayños had no other choice but to beg for food or money in the street. Over the years, however, the *desplazados* of Uchuraccay learned to speak Castellano. With occasional help from friends like José Coronel (a Huantino anthropologist and lecturer at the UNSCH), and from some evangelical and humanitarian institutions, they managed to make a new life for themselves. In time, the various *desplazados* living in the city of Huanta were able to form, with the assistance of one or two NGOs and a few sympathetic individuals like Coronel, a self-help organisation that pooled together the scarce cash and food resources of its members. Few Uchuraccayños imagined it would ever be possible for them to return and, according to Elías Ccente, many no longer even wanted to. Consequently, organising a return proved a tremendously difficult undertaking. Not only did he first have to track down his widely dispersed co-villagers throughout the country; he also had to convince them that it made sense to return. "It was difficult to reunite my *paisanos*," he told me.

For example, they were very suspicious and very ashamed because of the problem that had happened in Uchuraccay on 26 January, when the journalists were killed. Therefore, the peasants didn't want to return. And so we have searched for *paisanos* here and there, even as

far away as in the city of Lima. I have personally gone to invite [them to reunite], spending my own money, emptying my own pockets, no? Therefore, little by little we have reunited, with difficulty. We succeeded in reuniting only twenty-eight families in '92 and '93."³²

The return date to Uchuraccay had been set for 20 July 1993, but this original plan fell through. "Regrettably the people had not returned, and there on the moor I stood alone, all by myself," Ccente recalled with some amusement. It had been arranged beforehand that the commander of Huanta's Castropampa Army Base would lend security by providing the *retornantes* with a military escort. Rumours, however, transformed this security measure into the very source of their fear as many Uchuraccainos came to believe that the soldiers meant to sell them. (Sell them to *whom*, nobody really knew.) (It is interesting to note that this fear of bodily abduction is similar to that which has inspired the *pishtaco* legend.)

There had been comments, then, which my *paisanos* heard, that said, 'Don't return because there are perhaps bad people who are going to take you away to sell you.' Or 'Anything can happen. You are all fine here, what do you want to return for? Why do you want to go back?' That is why my *paisanos* did not come the first time, then, because they were thinking that perhaps the soldiers were going to take them away to sell them, and so it was better [not to return and] to stay [where they were].

The community that *did* make a return to the high *punas* on 20 July was San José de Santillana Marccaraccay. Pointing to Marccaraccay's successful return as an example, Ccente was finally able to convince many of his *paisanos* that their fears and apprehensions were unfounded, and a new date to return was set. And so it was that on 10 October 1993, around 70 families returned home at last to Uchuraccay, after an absence of almost a decade. They have since been joined by many others who have made their way back to the village. As if to break with the bitter events of the past, the new village is located on a slope some one hundred metres above the old village square, where the reporters were killed, the site of which is today commemoratively marked by a single white cross.

Though we may associate refugee returns with social renewal, it is true that in some instances they have also engendered new tensions, rivalries, and competition. As such, refugee returns can also be viewed as having had a disruptive effect on local social and political relations. Indeed, in many areas of the department where *retornantes* have come back to live alongside *resistentes*, ensuing social and political discord has frequently been reported. Whereas the most common tensions and conflicts between *desplazados* and *resistentes* often involves the issue of land entitlement and whether *desplazados* who might never return to the village should be permitted to retain land, the tensions that have arisen between *retornantes* and *resistentes*, by contrast, have often been about local political power. For instance, Flagg et al. observed, "in Pampamarca a certain amount of tension existed between the resistant members of the community and the returnees, not over land as much as *political power*."

Returnees are generally the younger more educated generation who...had been sent away to the city for their schooling. They therefore tend to have different ideas concerning possible developments for their community vis a vis the *resistentes*" (1998:10). The authors also go on to point out that social and political tensions between *retornantes* and *resistentes* were sometimes exacerbated when community funds were involved: "...in Pampamarca...great disputes arose when the community tractor was sold to raise funds to buy a parabolic aerial for television (there is no electricity in the area at the time, although there will be soon). This raised the issue of who is really responsible for this money and how many *comuneros* must be present at the meetings which decide how to spend it" (Flagg et al. 1998:40).

The dynamics of *retornante-resistente* relations differ from district to district, although at the root of most tensions and conflicts is contested political power. The objective of most returnees was not simply restricted to recuperating the material property they had lost, or to returning to the life they had before their displacement. Rather, the majority of *retornantes* brought back with them new ideas and expectations aroused by their urban experience, and they wanted to rebuild their communities according to the image they had in mind. It is hardly surprising that problems arose when the village they wished to transform was inhabited also by *resistentes*. This is not to imply that *resistentes* were against change. Of course, even *resistentes* who had never lived outside their community (or have only had limited migratory experience) also desired material and infrastructure development for their village. The problems between the two groups usually arose, however, when it came to deciding the manner and the direction of the community's future development. Many *resistentes* I spoke to in Tambo district maintained that they should have a greater say than recently arrived *retornantes* in deciding the affairs of their community on account of the many sacrifices they had made in defending the village over the years. On the other hand, *retornantes* told me that they felt more capable than their "more traditional" and "less experienced" *resistente* neighbours in planning, deciding, and managing their community's future development.

Resistente-retornante friction can arise within individual village populations, but also between villages. At the district level, *resistente* villages in Tambo district have often appealed to the *alcalde* that they should have priority over repopulated *retornante* villages in receiving developmental and reconstruction assistance (CEPRODEP 1997). They maintained that it was not only their due as *resistentes*, but also that it was more reasonable to put scarce resources to use in aiding and developing existing needy villages, rather than reviving those that had long ago been abandoned or completely destroyed.

I cannot predict how these sorts of conflicts and tensions between *retornantes* and *resistentes* will develop in the future, for these processes are still unfolding. We must not forget that what are often involved here are communities in the process of becoming, where individuals and households with diverse backgrounds and experiences are having to used to living alongside one another once again after years of separation and social disruption. But whatever the outcomes will be, the most encouraging sign that Tambino society as a whole had made an important break with the past was that people were keen to make it clear to me that they were determined to resolve their problems and differences by peaceful means, rather than with violence.

6.3 The significance of the CADs in the process of return and reconstruction

It was the *security* that village-defence militias were able to bring to many rural areas that made it possible for displaced people to begin returning and rebuilding their economic and social lives. We have already presented numerous illustrations of this. In the previous chapter, for instance, we saw that the round-the-clock vigilance provided by Ccarhuapampa's active *ronderos* enabled other community members to cultivate nearby fields in safety. We have also seen the example of the *Patrulla Especial* of Tambo escorting peasants who wanted to work the fields they had in more remote and possibly dangerous corners of the district. In more recent years, the *Patrulla Especial* was also used to provide security for workers on various infrastructure construction projects in the district, such as the new Tambo-USmay road. In addition, it was the pacification of vast areas of the emergency zone, achieved through the efforts of civil defence groups, that helped to convince thousands of displaced people to return and repopulate villages situated in areas that were once considered unsafe.

Apart from the general socioeconomic reconstruction they engendered, refugee returns were fulfilling another important function. Namely that in as much as they repopulated strategic areas of the countryside with communities hostile to Shining Path, refugee returns also served as an effective instrument of pacification. This being so, the Fujimori government, in coordination and conjunction with local military and civilian forces, put its full support behind the return process, undoubtedly as much for its counterinsurgency value as for humanitarian motives.

It is indeed amazing how much military attitudes had changed in less than a decade. In 1984 the army generally viewed Ayacucho's peasants with deep suspicion, and thus adopted a strategy that sought to empty the countryside by concentrating local populations into clustered settlements—the objective being to deprive the enemy of its presumed peasant support base. By 1993, however, the government's new pacification strategy involved repopulating abandoned areas of the countryside with communities organised into self-defence committees, and through them expanding the presence and influence of the State.

In Tambo district, the civil defence committees themselves apparently took the lead in initiating the return process. Comando Zorro writes in his war diary: "We decided to organise, from the month of December 1993 onwards, in the district of Tambo, the Repopulation [of abandoned villages], supporting them by offering security and organising community works so as to rebuild vanished communities."³³ (See Appendix A.) Every repopulated village in Tambo district was obliged to form a *Comité de Autodefensa y Desarrollo*, and to provide Comando Zorro with a register of the names of all its members. Over the following months and years, PAR and a small number of NGOs would lend assistance to Tambo's *retornante* communities by providing them with donations of food, tools, seeds and building materials, like corrugated iron sheets (*calaminas*). For its part, the army periodically provided humanitarian assistance by way of civic action projects, and military assistance by dispensing shotguns and ammunition. In fact, local army garrisons throughout the emergency zone were, by this time, making more serious efforts to foster better and closer relations with the local population. One way was to periodically organise cultural enter-

tainment and sporting activities, like dances and friendly football matches. In the province of La Mar, the Pichari garrison's 35-piece army brass and drum band was a regular feature at all its *acciones cívica*, providing music and entertainment as well as momentary protection to the rural beneficiaries of the army's goodwill. Schoolteachers would often also accompany civic action excursions, handing out school supplies ("*paquetes escolares*") to *retornante* schoolchildren. Usually also on hand was an army barber or two giving free haircuts, and civilian nurses and doctors to perform checkups, distribute donated medicines, and to try and educate peasant men and women about contraception. In fact, civic actions were not unlike fairs, and on the occasion I was able to participate in one, it was obvious to me that the *retornantes* present were clearly enjoying themselves.

From 1994 onwards, Tambo's *Patrulla Especial*, in addition to routinely inspecting all the rural communities in the district to ensure that they continued to maintain a functioning self-defence committee, also came to assume the responsibility of organising and supervising *faenas*. The task of ensuring that all able-bodied men and women participated in the *faenas comunal* fell on the patrol's members, who punished absentees and malingerers with a fine of two soles, or with extra work. Just as participation in community defence had been compulsory, so too was it made mandatory to take part in the realisation of community work projects of reconstruction. A typical CCADD report to the local military commander in Tambo, following a routine inspection of the communities, would read: "Verified the following: general registration of the population, armaments, communal *faenas*, and later proceeded to sanction the loafers who did not collaborate in the *faenas* of the programmed tasks, like cleaning their reservoir and irrigation canal, the construction of their communal house [*casa comunal*] and latrines" (after CCAD-SJB 1995:2).

There is little doubt that the degree of socioeconomic and political reconstruction that has taken place in the Ayacuchan countryside to date would not have been possible were it not for the increased ability of the CADs, together with the army, to guarantee a reasonable level of security from about the end of 1992 onwards. Not only did this process of pacification enable the government to initiate extensive reconstruction and development projects, it also stimulated the return to the countryside of NGOs and the crucial aid they bring. In addition, the decline in political violence in recent years also gradually encouraged local individuals to assume bureaucratic offices once again, even in rural areas with little or no police or army presence, so long as there were CADs. It also helped convince existing district authorities to return from the urban centres to which they had fled. Ever since the early 1980s, the threat of assassination by guerrillas impelled most district-level government officials—like *alcaldes*, *juezes de paz*, and *gobernadores*—to administrate from a distance; that is to say, from the relative safety of cities like Huamanga or Huanta. With the gradual achievement of pacification in the surrounding countryside, thanks largely to the efforts of the CADs, municipal officials began to return to their district capitals from 1991 onwards, thus effectively undoing the earlier success of Sendero's campaign to "*batir el campo*" (see Table 6.5).

Table 6.5: Deaths caused by Political Violence, according to social category, 1989-1998

	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Presumed										
Subversives	553	320	218	377	323	53	152	56	51	20
Army 95	56	69	181	69	29	71	40	18	17	
Governor	8	5	3	4	5	0	0	0	0	0
L. Governor	20	12	9	10	11	6	4	5	2	2
Judge	17	6	2	11	2	0	0	0	1	1
Prov. Mayor	7	0	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
Dist. Mayor	37	17	16	15	12	4	0	1	1	0
L. Mayor	8	2	3	5	4	0	1	0	0	0
TOTAL	1,971	1,477	1,177	1,718	1,129	324	428	211	130	83

Source: INEI 1999:47

6.4 Agents and visions of reconstruction and development

In 1991, the government took the first steps to trim a bloated bureaucracy by auctioning off state-owned enterprises. The domestic political and economic instability at the time, coupled with sceptical international opinion about the uncertain fate of the country, ensured that the privatisation venture got off to a slow start. But the government's competent and rapid ability to bring both the insurgency and the rampant hyperinflation problems under control helped to bolster foreign investor confidence. So much so, in fact, that "[by] the end of 1994, the government had sold or was set to sell most of the private companies that had been nationalised during the period of military rule from 1968 to 1980. The total inflow of these revenues to the treasury exceeded \$3 billion by the middle of 1995" (Klarén 2000:418-419). Furthermore, tax reforms initiated soon after the new government came to power also helped boost the Central Bank's reserves, which the García government had left with a deficit of \$143 million (ibid.:420). Additional revenues also came in the form of substantial foreign financing and credit. The consequence of all this was to enviably endow the Fujimori government with ample, fresh revenues at its discretionary disposal. The President prudently chose to allocate at least half of this windfall to new governmental social programmes, ostensibly aimed at improving the lives of the urban and rural poor and working classes. It was a wise decision given that these classes formed the backbone of his electoral support. Even before the political opposition even began to think about preparing for the next general elections, the Fujimori government was already fully engaged in waging a calculated political campaign to win hearts and votes.

The way in which the government's social programmes of reconstruction and development were applied merely reflected the structure of power laid down by the *autogolpe*. That is to say, "budgetary allocations became more concentrated in the

Ministry of the Presidency.... The upshot was that Fujimori could now effectively micromanage the government's social programmes, targeting specific areas and sectors of the population for maximum political impact. In effect, the Ministry of the Presidency had assumed a monopoly over public works and social projects" (Klarén 2000:420). The mainspring of the Fujimori government's social assistance and development programme was FONCODES, the Fondo Nacional de Compensación y Desarrollo, financed by the World Bank. FONCODES funded an array of infrastructure and poverty-focussed initiatives ranging from the construction of roads, water reservoirs, and public latrines, to projects dealing with health and nutrition matters. Schools across the country were built with financial aid from INFES, and FONAVI brought electrification to many *asentamientos humanos* in the emergency zone. As has already been mentioned, in the government's campaign against poverty and perennial neglect, the army managed to improve its relations with the local population—and so too its public image—by conducting an increased number of civic action initiatives. As I have already explained, these *acciones cívica* put soldiers to work on infrastructure construction or repair projects, or had them distributing emergency rations and other basic items provided by PAR, PRONAA (Programa Nacional de Asistencia Alimentaria), or some other government agency or ministry, to returnees and to impoverished rural communities. (It should be noted that the army-sponsored civic actions of the 1990s were by no means original initiatives. It was General Huamán who had first advocated them in the early 1980s as an important component of his own counterinsurgency vision.) The military's expanded civic action role in the 1990s, along with the fact that it came to assume both the tasks of organising most pro-government rallies in the emergency zones, and of routinely shuttling the President around the country from one public relations function to another, led many observers to conclude that under the Fujimori regime, "the armed forces had become the principle institutional vehicle to deliver these services and the related political message" (Klarén 2000:420-421).

One of the most important government aid agencies to operate in the conflict-torn Andean emergency zones was PAR, whose mission was, firstly, to organise and supply provisions for the return of displaced populations to "areas affected by terrorist violence," and secondly, to assist in establishing for such *retornantes* their "basic conditions sustainable human development" (PAR 1997:4). In the returns organised under its auspices, the returnees were always provided with a standard donation of food, tools, clothing, cooking utensils, and provisional identity/electoral cards. Once on a visit to the peasant community of Trigopampa to inaugurate public works financed by PAR and the Swiss government, President Fujimori himself handed out provisional identity documents to the villagers in the presence of visiting representatives of the Swiss embassy. "This action is being made not only in regard to the repopulation, but also to grant identification to each of the citizens who has lost them during the time of terrorism or did not have the opportunity to obtain his voter's card," Fujimori then announced to the press. "We calculate that from now until [the year] two thousand we will be able to give more or less half a million provisional identity documents, which are later going to result in a voter's card so that displaced persons may recuperate their civic rights totally. This is a continuation of the process of pacification...." (quoted in La Calle 1996:4).

There is no doubt that on this as on other similar occasions, the inauguration of public works and the issuing of provisional identity-cum-electoral cards were interconnected events—a “coincidence” calculated for political ends. Beneath the civic-rights rhetoric expounded for the benefit of the press and the Swiss diplomats, the President’s political message to the locals, conveyed more by his actions than by his words, was simple and clear: “*The next time you’re at the ballot box, remember what I have done for you and your community.*” Indeed, for most of its ten years in power, the Fujimori government never permitted local communities to forget what benefits it had brought them. Throughout Peru, one could not miss the large billboards, painted in bright orange, which were planted beside every public work subsidised by the government. These signs not only stated, among other things, the project’s objective, the sponsoring governmental agency or ministry, and the total cost. They were also mental markers that served to remind local beneficiaries daily of the government’s patronage and generosity, and, concurrently, of their moral and political debt to “El Chino.” On Election Day 1995, Fujimori was not to be disappointed. His landslide victory that year marked the high-water mark of the symbiotic political relationship between the populist president and the underprivileged masses, which were his most numerous political supporters and thus the main beneficiaries of his aid and pork-barrel projects.

Although in recent years the government came to assume a more prominent role in the struggle against poverty and underdevelopment in the country’s urban shantytowns and in the Andean countryside, it had not always done so in the past. During the last years of President García’s administration, for instance, the mismanaged, bankrupt, and corruption-ridden government was more preoccupied with forestalling its own disintegration and collapse than with initiating poverty alleviation programmes.

Photo 7. Civic Action at Usmay, Tambo District, 1997



It was therefore of little surprise that in Peru, “[as] government programs failed to meet basic needs, NGOs multiplied with special speed..., promising more efficient, innovative, and democratic ways of improving poor people’s lives” (Starn 1999:193). In fact, many of the projects implemented by foreign-funded Peruvian NGOs and by the Catholic and Evangelical churches over the years prefigured many of Fujimori’s own social assistance initiatives. These NGO-supported initiatives included providing various sorts of assistance in order to facilitate refugee returns; (re)building local infrastructure like irrigation canals, potable water systems, health clinics and schools; donating machinery and tools, setting up orphanages and providing assistance to destitute widows and street children; and supporting grassroots movements, like the *clubes de madres* and the *rondas campesinas* of Cajamarca. Yet whereas the government’s programme focused almost exclusively on providing *material* assistance, Peru’s diverse community of NGOs and church-related groups tried instead to offer a wider variety of projects aimed not only at meeting basic material needs, but also at addressing deeper social issues and promoting social justice. Particular emphasis was placed on reaching out to the most marginalized and “muted” sectors of society (like orphaned and abandoned children).

The escalation of political violence during the 1980s created conditions that made it extremely difficult, and eventually impossible, for NGOs to continue working safely in the countryside. NGOs offices and personnel throughout the emergency zone found themselves caught in a vicious crossfire that put them at risk of being bombed, assassinated, kidnapped or disappeared by one or both sides (see Smith 1992). They were, on the one hand, denounced as “counter-revolutionary” by Sendero Luminoso, which regarded the work they did as both diverting the peasant masses from recognizing the imperativeness of the “armed struggle,” and serving but to prop up the “rotten” state and status quo. In addition, NGOs have found themselves assailed on the other flank by the State. Successive presidents from Belaúnde to Fujimori have accused NGOs of disparaging the Peruvian government and its security forces, mainly about human rights abuses, and of allegedly serving as fronts for diverting funds to the insurgency movement. In one of his particularly acerbic denunciations of NGOs and their foreign sponsors, President Belaúnde stated: “Our Police Forces, they are confronted at the present time...[by] the mistaken ideologies that [the insurgency is] trying to introduce to Peru, sometimes concealed by pompous names of scientific or humanitarian institutions which, as we have been able to prove, receive hundreds of millions of soles not so as to exalt or to raise the standard of life in the country, but to sow misery and chaos, and to try to drown this nation in a sea of blood and tears” (quoted in DESCO 1989:402-403).

And so, whereas between 1980 and 1983 there had existed in Ayacucho no less than twelve non-governmental institutions, by 1984 most had abandoned the countryside and retreated to Huamanga. The majority of them would eventually close down, leaving only four NGOs functioning in the entire department.³⁴ Very little work could be done by the remaining NGOs in the *campo* during the 1980s, and even then only in easily accessible areas, close to Huamanga. Moreover, given the hostility and deep suspicion shown towards advocates of human rights by successive governments, NGOs working in the emergency zone prudently restricted themselves to addressing exclusively technical-economic issues in order to avoid persecution from

the security forces. As TADEPA points out, “[a]ny ample meeting, in a community or a hamlet, always has to rely on the previous authorisation of the security forces (police or army)....” (1992:120). And if an NGO wanted to obtain military authorisation to continue working, it had to appear “politically neutral” (ibid.).

Even so, abandoning political work and restricting themselves to technical and economic tasks was not without its attendant benefit. By focusing their work on addressing urgent economic needs, some of these NGOs were consequently able to forge strong links with local communities, and to win the trust and crucial support of the population (ibid.). The progressive pacification of the emergency zones from 1993 onwards brought a concomitant easing of some of the implicit political restrictions on the sorts of work NGOs were permitted to do by the security forces. Consequently, many old and new NGOs returned to once again take up the task of informing local populations of their human rights, which is one aspect that is noticeably absent from the Fujimori government’s own civilian-led social development programmes—not surprising, of course, given the regime’s own appalling human rights record.

As the idea of “promoting local government” became a increasingly fashionable guiding principle of many North American and European humanitarian aid financiers during the 1990s, NGOs in Ayacucho came increasingly to work closely with municipal mayors (*alcaldes*). This situation has, in turn, helped to enhance the social and political importance of *alcaldes*, while at the same time serving to offset, to some extent, the central government’s absolute control over the transfer of state revenues.

Municipal funds are generated primarily by renting out municipal land or machinery, property taxes, through fines, tolls, and fees for professional services (e.g. registering births, marriages, and deaths), and by managing wisely whatever other local revenues and resources are at their disposal. As can be expected, then, the municipalities of impoverished populations are likewise poor, and must therefore depend on the central government for financial assistance. Yet this raises its own set of problems, for reliance on the central government has historically been plagued by rampant clientelism and political favouritism, which reached new extremes during the Fujimori era. As Nickson explains,

In 1994, without prior consultation, President Fujimori assumed direct control of the FPM [Fondo de Promoción Municipal, or development tax], the main source of central government transfers to local government. Henceforth 20 percent of FPM proceeds would be transferred to provincial municipalities and 80 percent of district municipalities, *but the allocation among municipalities was left to the discretion of the presidential office* (1995:245. My emphasis).³⁵

The *alcalde* of Tambo district once described to me the government assistance his district received as a “ridiculous [sum] with which to attend to the numerous needs of our population” (MDTLM 1996a:1)—a sentiment generally shared by municipal mayors throughout the country. Fujimori’s self-assumed discretionary prerogative, while tightening the executive branch’s control over state revenues, was also widely interpreted by his opponents as a means to keep potential political rivals financially weak and opposition-controlled municipalities dependent on the central government.

For this reason, NGO support, when it could be obtained, offered *alcaldes* a preferable alternative way of obtaining developmental assistance for their municipalities without having to rely exclusively on currying favour with the Fujimori regime. The financial assistance provided by NGOs allowed municipal authorities to exercise a greater degree of autonomy in initiating the development and reconstruction projects of their municipalities, though the optimal strategy was to obtain a combination of governmental and private developmental aid. For example, Rubén Rojas Domínguez, Tambo district's municipal *alcalde* from 1996 to 1998, was able to bring electrification to most of Tambo's semi-urban *desplazado* settlements with financial assistance from the governmental agency FONAVI. From the Swiss government he was able to secure funding for the construction of water reservoirs and for the reactivation of irrigation canals. And a financial donation from a German organisation—Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau—helped build a road running from the village of Huayao to the community of Usmay, thus providing many of Tambo's remotest eastern communities with easier access to the town and the world beyond (MDTLM 1996a).

In the so-called "*Lucha por la Reconstrucción y Desarrollo*" of Peru's war-torn society, the accomplishments of the central and local governments, in conjunction with NGOs, had been extensive and undeniably remarkable. By mid-1994, FONCODES was funding and managing some 4,760 social assistance projects and 23,000 jobs (Klarén 2000:420). In 1997 it allocated the equivalent of \$251,183,279 American dollars to 6,046 projects throughout the country (INEI 1998a:206). Similarly, PAR could boast of having organised more than 7,700 instances of refugee returns in Ayacucho by the end of 1997. And a host of NGOs could lay claim to having improved the quality of life of country folk through their implementation or sponsorship of diverse projects, like the construction of irrigation canals and latrines, the setting up of communal shops and micro-credit schemes, the provision of practical training and information on issues of health, agriculture, livestock engineering and family planning, women's literacy courses, the promotion of gender equality, local initiative, self-reliance, and so forth (see CIDRA 1996).

However, impressive figures on paper, prodigious activities résumés, and outstanding progress reports belie the numerous serious problems that have plagued the reconstruction and development mission as a whole. For a start, most of the government's projects were unmistakably motivated principally by political interests, and aimed at strengthening the electoral base of Fujimori's populist regime (see Kruijt and del Pilar Tello 2002). Furthermore, the central government's method of dispensing aid had been harshly criticised over the years, not least by municipal mayors, for simply handing out goods to politically loyal constituencies rather than providing training that would be more beneficial to the local populations in the long term. As Federico Salas, Huancavelica's *alcalde* and a future presidential candidate, once explained to the magazine *Debate*: "[The] State has the resources, at present it is giving away food. It is giving them fish but it is not teaching them how to fish. The peasant has the will to work, he does not want too much assistance nor too many gift, because we know that it is temporary; what we want is the power to develop ourselves, to produce" (Dávila 1997:9). Government handouts, combined with continuing unemployment, simply promoted political clientalism to the regime, and engendered among local populations both dependency and the loss of the will to find or

create even “informal” sorts of employment. Many common people I spoke to in 1997 and 2000 believed that the government should not restrict itself only to handing out goods, but must also help to create jobs and, most importantly, to open up or to seek out new domestic and overseas markets for local produce and labour.

There were other common problems: the mismanagement of projects and inefficiency in their execution, the incompleteness of work contracts, and, of course, graft and corruption of public funds, particularly at the municipal level. It was not uncommon to hear stories of mayors who had plundered their municipal coffers, leaving the next *alcalde* no available funds with which to start his three-year term in elected office. In 1997 alone, at least twenty-five serving and former municipal authorities from various districts and provinces of Ayacucho were either being investigated, pursued, detained, or jailed by the police for embezzling or absconding with municipal funds originally intended for local social development projects.³⁶ The result was a lack of public trust in the integrity of political officials—hardly a new sentiment, in fact. “Most men want to become *alcalde* only so they can plunder the municipal funds, and rob from the district,” a Tambino once commented to me. “That’s the way it’s always been, and that’s the way it will always be.”³⁷

But most frustrating for local populations had been what appeared to be a lack of general coordination between governmental institutions and aid agencies, different levels of government, and the various projects they envisaged or were actually implementing. There was no more convincing proof of this than FONCODES, which, as Nickson points out, “came under direct presidential control, with little involvement by local government” (1995:245). As regards the central government’s social programmes, Mayor Federico Salas opined to the magazine *Debate* that “they are not coordinated with the [local] authorities or with the local population, they are directed from its ministries in Lima, and therefore they do not get to satisfy the needs of the population of the interior of the country” (Dávila 1997:8). Surprisingly, this view was shared even by some of the programme directors themselves. For instance, Victor Torres Cornejo, PAR’s zonal director for Ayacucho wrote in an internal report:

Governmental agencies have been created for this purpose: FONCODES, SIERRA CENTRO SUR, PAR. These Agencies and others of the public sector still do not articulate their actions organically, acting in practice in isolated ways, at times duplicating activities, for want of a Plan that orientates their actions in an organic way. Some 60% of those [returnees] who with the assistance of PAR returned to their communities come to abandoned it once again because of the lack of economic opportunities that satisfy their urgent needs. This is partly due to the slowness in the maturation of the projects and to the absence of decentralization and de-concentration of the state apparatus (Torres Cornejo 1997:17).

There is little doubt that the absence of a common plan of action when it came to development strategies in general stemmed from the fact that different state institutions and agencies had conflicting ideas of the best way to “develop” Ayacuchan society. For instance, according to a number of army officers I spoke to in 1997, the mil-

itary intended to assume a leading and directing role in any future process of national reconstruction and socioeconomic development within the emergency zones. Rather than providing basic services to every village, however, the military envisaged a cost-effective plan that would require small, remote rural communities to congregate at a centralised place where they would get road access, electricity, and potable water. "They will only need to return to their fields to work, but they will live in nucleated settlements" an army officer explained to me.³⁸ "This is the only way to develop rural society. There is nothing for them in their abandoned villages, and when they realise this they will want to live in the nucleated settlements." This vision of post-war development seemed to me to be nothing more than a continuation of the "strategic hamleting" initiated by the military during the 1980s, which had already succeeded in creating nucleated, semi-urban refugee settlements like the ones around Tambo town. Moreover, such a plan was obviously at variance with PAR's mission to encourage and to assist as many displaced people as possible to return to their rural villages of origin, no matter how remote. More importantly, the army's vision was, at the time, wholly incompatible with the deep desire of many internal refugees to return home.

Evidently, the true picture of developmental achievements and institutional efficiency was not as bright as the government would have foreign donors and the international community believe. Yet a similar lack of coordination and common effort was equally apparent among Peruvian NGOs, in addition to which was the more general question of whether the projects executed by NGOs are always compatible with, and attuned to, real needs and local demands (Foweraker 2001:851-852). TADEPA, a local NGO, pointed out the subsequent problems that had arisen between non-governmental institutions: "The presence of [the ONGs and organs of the State] in the countryside with distinct methodologies and absence of coordination, in practice, generates confusion and even conflicts between the inhabitants of the microregion, even reaching unnecessary internal divisions through parallel projects that weaken communal development" (1992:122).

Persistent operational inefficiency and the general lack of coordination between projects and between the organisations themselves leads one to simply wonder whether these problems were permitted to persist in order to serve particular base interests. An idealistic though disillusioned NGO staffer once told me in 1997: "The ideal of *desarrollo social* of the 1960s and '70s has today been replaced by the pursuit of *desarrollo personal*. It seems to me that many aid workers intentionally try to be inefficient in their work because if they eradicate poverty quickly, they would only be putting themselves out of a job." A cynical view, perhaps, but there may be some truth in it nonetheless. One must face up to the bitter fact that during the course of the 1990s, the project of poverty alleviation had become somewhat of an industry in Peru, as in many other parts of the developing world (Foweraker 2001:852, 860). Thousands of educated, middle-class Peruvians earned their daily bread working for social development organisations, and, as Starn points out, "To start an NGO was a way to work on social issues, and even to make a living at it, a matter of no small urgency for all but the wealthiest Peruvians in the hard times of the 1980s" (1999:202). During the developmental aid boom of the mid- and late-1990s, it seemed that the funds flooding in to Peru were limitless. To many people—both aid

workers and peasants alike—the state seemed to possess bottomless financial coffers. This, of course, was not true, and became all-too-evident when the Peruvian economic bubble burst towards the end of the decade. Unemployment began to rise once again, and the government began to cut drastically its amount of social spending. Moreover, on the international priority list, Peru can expect to face stiff competition from the Balkan and African countries for the developmental aid it will continue to receive from the European Community from 2000 onwards. That Peru has not been able to do more with the generous amounts of funding it had already received from foreign donor governments may have caused some donors—like the Dutch government—to reassess the degree of financial assistance it provides to the country.

6.5 CADs in the process of economic development

What, then, has been the role of *comités de autodefensa* in the complex and problematic process of economic development described above? Before addressing this question, I believe it is first necessary to draw a distinction between the so-called “process of reconstruction,” and the “process of development.” As I have already argued, the process of *reconstruction* can take place even in the midst of war, for even in adverse situations of political violence, people still strive to restore some sort of normalcy in their lives. Reconstruction in this sense consists mainly of small-scale local activities which utilise local labour and resources, the objective being to recuperate as much as possible that which was destroyed by war. Of course, the rebuilding of such things as sabotaged bridges, bombed power lines, roads, and the like, can also be defined as *reconstruction*. But in the case of Ayacucho, which as a department has suffered decades of chronic underdevelopment and neglect on the part of the central government, much of what has been built in recent years never existed before, and therefore was never previously destroyed. It would thus be more accurate to describe the recent flurry of infrastructure construction and expansion in the department as projects that are a part of the *process of development*, rather than of *reconstruction*.

Based on this rough, conceptual distinction between the process of *reconstruction* and the process of *development*, then, it can be concluded that CADs have clearly made valuable contributions to the process of socioeconomic reconstruction in the department. Examples of this were provided above, in section 6 of this chapter. In contrast, their role and accomplishments in regard to the economic and infrastructure development of the department over the last decade is more difficult to assess, and in fact appears to have been fairly marginal, and certainly much more limited in scale and scope than their contributions to departmental reconstruction. More specifically, the contribution of peasant militias in government or NGO-sponsored development projects has often been limited to providing the unskilled, manual labour force for construction work. There are, of course, some small-scale community development projects that have been organised almost exclusively by the committees of local defence groups, such as the construction of a “*parque de la pacificación*” (“park of pacification”) in almost every village. These simple, dirt plazas (which can be handily transformed into a football field) not only have the symbolic significance

of honouring *ronderos* and soldiers who have been killed in the line of duty. Where they have been built, they also form the new social and spatial centre of Andean villages. They are symbolic spaces where community assemblies are held, where the Peruvian flag is raised and saluted, where the national anthem is sang—where, in short, the rituals of *patriotism* are celebrated.

In regard to the larger process of developmental transformations in the department, however, the primary directing and managing agents have been (1) the central and municipal governments, (2) the Peruvian NGOs and their foreign donors. Surprisingly, apparently included in this group are the *clubes de madres*, which for years have dedicated their energies precisely to the tasks of economic and domestic survival, reconstruction and development, and which are now popularly regarded by the NGOs as one of the most important grassroots vehicles for channelling aid to local communities, particularly from a “gender perspective,” which is another of the fashionable principle among NGOs today. Contrary to what their official title might suggest, *Comités de Autodefensa y Desarrollo* have never played a directing role in any major development project executed in Tambo district,³⁹ nor in any other AyacuCHAN district for that matter. One of the main reasons for this is that CADs have been unable to define any meaningful contribution they can make to the process of development that is not already being done by one organisation or another. Apart from their proven capacity for organisation, and their proficiency in mobilising the local inhabitants as a work force, the CADs controlled no other means of production with which to generate more ambitious development projects on their own. Unlike district mayors, whose access to various sources of financial assistance gives them the ability to create new jobs for locals, CAD leaders controlled few locally derived resources, besides organised labour. Thus in order to execute developmental projects beyond basic infrastructure construction, CAD leaders “[needed] outside support to be successful” (Palmer 2000:19). However, CAD commanders had found it difficult to forge links with NGOs because their subordination to military authority had given them somewhat of a bad public image in Lima and abroad. The general impression among foreign donor agencies that finance local NGOs was that the CADs were nothing more than army-manipulated “paramilitary groups,” and as such were almost never seriously considered as grassroots institutions through which foreign aid could be channelled to local populations. Foreign-funded NGOs have instead preferred to work through other organisations and social entities deemed to be civil in nature, like *clubes de madres* and municipal governments.⁴⁰

Another reason for the marginalisation of CADs in AyacuCHO’s process of development was that in spite of the professed goal of governmental and non-governmental agencies to promote “grassroots empowerment and participation,” what in fact has more commonly happened is that agencies continued to practice a top-down approach. Development aid projects, in other words, were conceived, planned, and managed by these agencies themselves, with little participation from the local population in the decision-making process. This is perhaps not surprising, given that these agencies and organisations were almost all administered by educated middle- and upper-middle class professionals from Lima, many of whom still held paternalistic attitudes towards the peasantry that often manifest itself in what Starn describes as the “infantilization of villagers” (see Starn 1999:197-198). Thus, local peasant lead-

ers, including CAD commanders, were almost never given the responsibility of making important decisions in development projects, and rarely even consulted. This fact was brought home to me in 1997 while I was participating in a military-sponsored civic action in the remote upland community of Usmay. At the site of the old village, I congratulated the local CAD president on the health post that was being built there in the *puna*, with the financial assistance of FONCODES. He replied: "Yes, but nobody consulted us about the location. At night, we all sleep in the old army base, half a kilometre away, not here, because the *terrucos* still move through through these hills after dark. When this health post is built and stocked, the *terrucos* will just break in, steal everything, and burn it down." Sure enough, six months later, a band of guerrillas raided the health post. They painted subversive graffiti on the walls before making off with everything of value that was inside.⁴¹ Though it was not burnt down, the hospital remained empty and unused ever since.

Irrelevance and marginalisation was therefore the fate that befell the self-defence committees in the process of socioeconomic development in Ayacucho. It was possible, of course, that given time and with skills training for its members, the CADs might have been able to transform themselves into appropriate vehicles for the pursuit of developmental priorities, and so obtain financial and organisational support from external aid donors and the local non-governmental agencies they sponsor. But as the decade drew to and end, and the twilight of civil war gave way to a new dawn of peace on the edge of which dark clouds of uncertainty and crisis still loomed, a reorientation of sociopolitical and economic agendas, priorities, and strategies would ultimately bring the story of the CADs to an unexpected ending.

Notes

- 1 Fujimori's infamous national security advisor, Vladimiro Montesinos, explained to the journal *Comando en Acción* (1994:40) the justification for the *autogolpe* in the following terms: "When the Executive displayed the required initiatives to implement this new strategic design, it came up against a negative obstruction from the political opposition that, under the inconsistent argument that [the Executive] wanted to militarise the country, [the opposition] proceeded to trim or to repeal the Legislative Decrees issued (....) Faced with this situation of entrapment and mindful that above all was the interests of the nation, on 5 April 1992, one entered a new stage in which the Government of National Reconstruction, apart from various important measures, put into effect the Decrees for National Pacification that had previously been sabotaged (quoted in Tapia 1997:69. Tapia's emphasis). For further details and analysis of the *autogolpe*, see Rospigliosi 1996.
- 2 According to Tapia, during the clashes the Special Forces sent in to quell the riots killed every member of the Central Committee they encountered, except for Osmán Morote (Tapia 1997:78, fn.42). The prison intervention thus gave the armed forces a tremendous opportunity to weaken the revolutionary organisation yet further. During his Independence Day address to the Democratic Constituent Congress on 28 July 1993, Fujimori had this to say about the judicial and penal system that his government inherited:

Until April 5 we had a national government and a criminal force that was challenging it in an increasingly evident balance of armed power that we could not allow. Within that context, the previous judicial branch was unable to mete out justice to the terrorist criminals. Following legal proceedings that were a farce, the terrorists returned to the streets to rejoin annihilation cells. For over a decade prisons stopped performing their fundamental duty of confining criminals to protect society. Terrorists enjoyed unbelievable opportunities in jail that allowed them

- not only to train their cadres but also to coordinate from there attacks and other criminal operations because of the submissiveness and inaction of the authorities (quoted in Starn et al. 1995:439).
- 3 Author's interview with Rubén Rojas Domínguez, *Alcalde*, Tambo district, on 14 October 1997.
 - 4 Torres Cornejo 1997:3.
 - 5 The peak in the number of internally displaced individuals, however, occurred in 1983-1984.
 - 6 Author's interview with Daniel, a *desplazado* living in Vista Alegre, Tambo district, on 3 November 1997.
 - 7 According to Isabel Coral and CEPRODEP, approximately 20 percent of *desplazados* were from marginal urban sectors, whereas around 10 percent were from higher classes (Coral 1994:15).
 - 8 The Ministry of Health for the sub-region of Ayacucho lists the top three causes of death in the department between 1995 and 1997 as (1) respiratory illnesses, (2) intestinal infections, and (3) illnesses of the digestive system (see INEI 1998a:186).
 - 9 OPRLW 1996:20.
 - 10 OPRLW 1996:20.
 - 11 The output of potato production in the department was 70,475 kg in 1962, but this had fallen 17 percent to 58,592 kg by 1991. Between 1983 and 1984, production plummeted to the low points of 20,502 and 24,933 kg respectively. The only other year that potato production fell to a lower point in the '80s was in 1987, when output dropped to 20,032 kg (Ministerio de Agricultura 1992:281).
 - 12 During the first half of the 1990s, each mother in Tambo still had an average of 5 surviving children (see INEI 1994b: 623), a comparatively high figure—the national average for rural women in 1990 was about 4.2 (TADEPA 1992:15)—that was nevertheless confirmed to me by members of Tambo's local *clubes de madres*. Large extended families are common among Tambo's *desplazados*, which also places greater pressure on the producing members of the household.
 - 13 Peasants were not the only ones apprehensive about travelling through the countryside. The medical staff of Tambo's hospital was also always terrified of having to make trips into the *campo*. In past years it was common for the staff of Tambo's health centre to make regular or emergency visits to the rural communities. However, these visits ended when the political violence escalated in the early 1980s. The guerrilla incursion on 15 May 1982, the purpose of which was to loot the hospital, must have only served to heighten the fear felt by the health workers. Furthermore, even when periodic health visits to rural villages were resumed in Tambo in 1997, the continuing climate of fear in the district encouraged medical personnel to make the amount of time they spent in the *campo* as short as possible. As a result, it became common practice for the visiting health workers to place one of the village authorities, or even the ill persons themselves, in charge of administering the medication. The danger, as one retired *técnico en enfermería* (nursing technician) explained to me, is that this sort of uncontrolled dispensation and administration of medication—they are often antibiotics donated by *Medicos Sin Fronteras*—can lead to the emergence of drug-resistant diseases, which could have a devastating effect on the local population in the long run. This information is based on author's interview with Miguel Casorla Casorla (retired *Técnico en Enfermería II*), Tambo district, on 23 October 1997.
 - 14 For a more detailed discussion of the *pishtaco* legend, see Anson 1989 and Weismantel 2001. When my partner, Jenny, and I first came to live in Tambo in 1997, our identity immediately became the subject of a variety of aspersions and rumours: we were government agents, human rights agitators, *pishtacos*. We heard people occasionally mutter the word *pishtaco* at us in the street or at the market, especially during our first weeks. After a time, we were eventually able to persuade a girl called Marlena to describe for us what a *pishtaco* looked like and how it behaved, so that we could recognise it if we happened to come across one. According to Marlena: "*Pishtacos* are often white-skinned, though not always. They wear black clothes and can speak Quechua. [She did not know why this is so, but she immediately knew that we were not *pishtacos* because we were

unable to converse with her in Quechua!]) Male and female *pishtacos* both wear dark sunglasses and long black skirts [*faldas negras*]. They carry long knives which they use to kill their victims.” Some say that *pishtacos* are always strangers to the communities they visit, and haunt desolate places such as abandoned rural villages. Others claim that they are known individuals who have somehow been transformed into the frightening creature. Why should they appear as *gringos*? An Ayacucho friend later suggested that it was because in the late 1980s and early ‘90s, masked Senderistas (many of whom were Caucasian in appearance) visited the villages periodically and recruited or kidnapped young people to fill their ranks. According to her, most parents in the highlands of Ayacucho tell their children that all *gringos* are *pishtacos* to keep them from approaching strangers. And the sunglasses and black clothing? The most conspicuous wearers of sunglasses and dark camouflaged clothing are the police and army officers (most of whom are again Caucasian or *mestizo*). It is hardly surprising to find these latent memories of the horrendous atrocities committed against rural civilians by the Sinchis (the civil guard’s counterinsurgency unit) and the Peruvian Marines in the 1980s, also incorporated into the image of *pishtaco*. The legend is undoubtedly pre-Hispanic, but the hybrid characterisation is unmistakably contemporary. It would appear that parents use the *pishtaco* myth as a parable for why one must distrust and avoid all strangers. Each generation takes the fears and nightmares unique to its own experiences of man-made cataclysms and symbolically personifies them in the fiend they call *pishtaco*. It is an example of how the people of Tambo are using cultural symbols to teach and warn their young about contemporary social dangers.

- 15 CEPRODEP 1997, Grupo 5, Tema II ‘La situación de la Producción Agropecuaria, el Comercio y el Empleo.’
- 16 CEPRODEP 1997.
- 17 CEPRODEP 1997, Grupo 3, Tema II ‘La situación de la Producción Agropecuaria, el Comercio y el Empleo.’
- 18 Of Tambo’s urban *desplazados* who have surplus to take to market, almost all sell their produce at the town’s Sunday market and nowhere else (CEPRODEP 1997).
- 19 Author’s interview with Jorge, Centro de Salud, Tambo district, on 29 September 1997.
- 20 Author’s interview with *rondero* Pascual Quispe Vargas on 17 September 1997.
- 21 Author’s interview with the Junta Directiva of Comité Distrital del Club de Madres, Tambo district, on 16 October 1997.
- 22 A general description of most of the rituals and festivities I mention here can be found in Vilchez 1961, Isbell 1978, Mitchell 1991.
- 23 As we have already seen, the self-defence phenomenon emerged in different parts of the department at different times, and so it is as if to simplify this varied history that the armed forces has declared May 28 the official *Día del Rondero* in the departments of Ayacucho and Huancavelica. Local *CADs* must celebrate the day at the nearest military base, whereas *Sede Central* authorities are obliged to attend more lavish celebrations at Los Cabitos.
- 24 Most of these traditional festivities and celebrations are described in Vilchez 1961:55-68.
- 25 Author’s interview with Daniel, an evangelical *desplazado* living in Vista Alegre, Tambo district, on 3 November 1997.
- 26 The INEI (1998b) data is based on a survey of approximately 76, 389 *retornantes* from these 437 districts.
- 27 As is commonly known, it is not harmful for agricultural fields to lay unused for many years. Fallowing is, in fact, an important practice especially in the cultivation of the otherwise unpromising soil of the Andes. Elías Ccente told me that in Uchuraccay, the peasants there employ a pattern of what Wolf terms “sectorial fallowing” (1966:20-21), whereby plots are planted for two or three years, and then allowed to regenerate for another seven before being replanted again. That is why in these highland communities, agriculture and pastoralism are complementary livelihood activities, each of which is often insufficient by itself to maintain a family.
- 28 “*Chuto*” is a derogatory term sometimes used by lowland peasants and city people to refer to the

- peasant highlanders, particularly of Huanta and La Mar provinces, signifying *primitive*, *uneducated*, and *uncivilised*. The label “*cholo*” can be regarded as simply meaning anyone who is non-white, or an indigenous person of “recent upward social mobility” (Isbell 1978:250), usually of peasant heritage. Its everyday usage, particularly by “non-*cholos*,” however, usually contains racist and contemptuous overtones. “To be straight with you, the *cholo* is like an animal for me,” a Lima *criollo* and former Marine once voiced to anthropologists during an interview (quoted in Degregori and López Ricci 1990:345).
- 29 Torres Cornejo 1997:3.
 - 30 Sufficient animals and enough food to feed themselves is how Elías Ccente defined the satisfying condition of “*tranquilidad*.” Sendero altered their life of “*tranquilidad*,” he told me. Their source of cash income came primarily from the sale of animals, rather than of agricultural crops like potatoes, in towns like Huanta,
 - 31 Author’s interview with Elías Ccente, president of highland peasant community of Uchuraccay, Huanta province, on 26 May 2000.
 - 32 Author’s interview with Elías Ccente, president of highland peasant community of Uchuraccay, Huanta province, on 26 May 2000.
 - 33 Walter Ramirez Echacaya, n.d., (Private Papers), p.71.
 - 34 These four remaining NGOs were CEDAP – Centro de Desarrollo Agropecuario, IER – Instituto de Estudios Regionales ‘José María Arguedas,’ CCC – Centro de Capacitación Campesina, and TADEPA – Taller de Promoción Andina.
 - 35 For a detailed overview of local government in Peru, or in Latin America for that matter, see Nickson 1995.
 - 36 See La Calle 1997a, 1997b, 1997c, 1997e, 1997f, 1997g.
 - 37 Author’s conversation with Yuri Calle, Secretary of Acco, a peasant community in the district of Tambo, on 24 September 1997.
 - 38 Author’s interview with Captain (now Major) César G. Vásquez Guevara of the 2nd Infantry Division, *Jefe Militar CCAD SZSNC-8*, Frente Huamanga (Ayacucho and Huancavelica departments, and the districts of Pichari-Quimbiri in La Convención province, Cuzco department), on 27 June 1997.
 - 39 Author’s interviews with Walter Ramirez Echacaya (Comando Zorro), *Presidente* and *Comando General* of Tambo district’s *Comité Central de Autodefensa y Desarrollo*, on 6 November 1997 and on 31 May 2000.
 - 40 Author’s discussion with Jan Kees Verkooijen, *Primer Secretario Cooperación Técnica*, Royal Embassy of the Netherlands, Lima, on 9 May 2000.
 - 41 This guerrilla incursion is reported in CCAD-SJB 1998:1.