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INSTITUTE OF CURRENT WORLD AFFAIRS

WHM - 17  
Mollamarca

Hotel Ferrocarril  
Cuzco, Perú  
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Mr. Walter S. Rogers  
Institute of Current World Affairs  
522 Fifth Avenue  
New York 36, New York

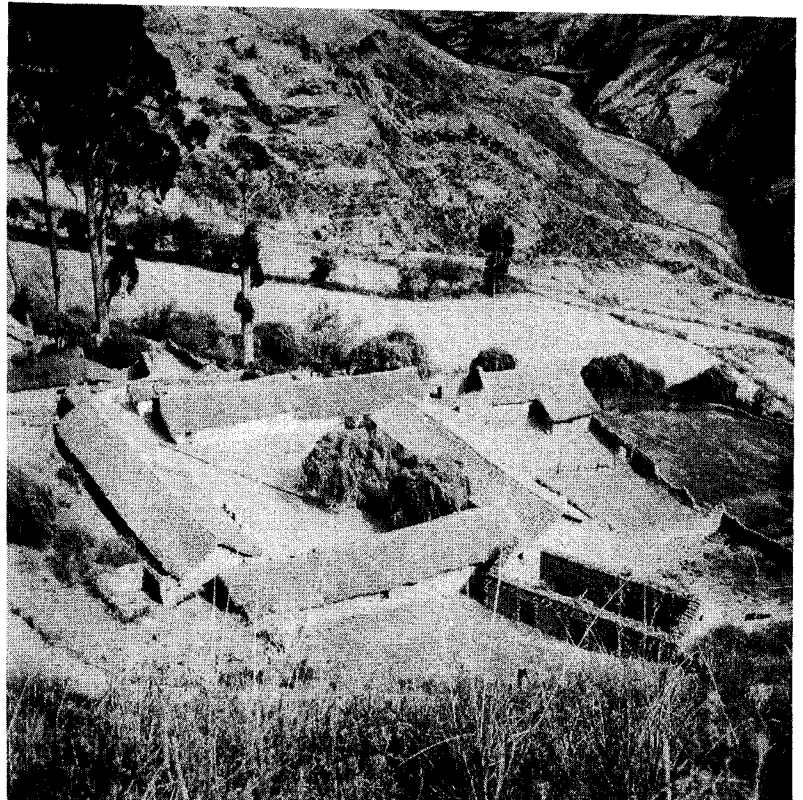
Dear Mr. Rogers:

The hacienda of Mollamarca has belonged to the Yábar family or one of its branches for over one hundred years. In the middle of the nineteenth century, when the great-grandfather of the present owner bought the property from a Spanish nobleman, he found himself the landlord of an estate which stretched for hundreds of kilometers on both sides of the Mapachu River, from high puna to the rich valley pampas. A century of land division among the members of the family, however, caused a drastic reduction and splintering of the original land tract. Moreover, the old way of life, built around the theory that the hacienda was the be-all and end-all of family relationships, faded somewhat as the lure of the growing cities and towns enticed several owners of the inherited sub-haciendas to sell their land and move to the more exciting centers of society. As a result, present day Mollamarca can boast of only 24,000 acres of land, about 4,800 of which are cultivable.

Last week, Bob Temple and I made the six-hour trip to Mollamarca - three hours by car from Cuzco to Paucartambo and three hours on horse-back over twenty-five kilometers of twisting, climbing trails. With us went the patrón of Mollamarca, Raúl Figueroa Yábar (WHM - 15), a lean, soft-spoken man of thirty. About twelve kilometers out of town, we turned off the Kusi-pata trail and began a one thousand foot climb up the cliff which forms the southern rampart of the Kusipata valley. A cold wind hit us at the top and stayed with us the rest of the thirteen kilometers to Mollamarca.

The caserío of Mollamarca

The hacienda lies in a shallow bowl high above the Mapachu River. True to the architectural style of the area, the buildings are arranged in a square around a cobbled patio. On the slope above the caserío or "big house" are scattered the adobe huts and small plots of land of Mollamarca's forty-odd Indian families. From the caserío to the valley bottom, the land falls away in broad



terraces and fields of maíz. Fields of barley and wheat, of potatoes and broadbeans, hang on the steep slopes above. Cattle and sheep graze on the high ridges and the rolling puna that comprise more than four-fifths of the hacienda.

The social organization of Mollamarca differs from that of Kusipata hacienda (WHM - 15) in that the Mollamarca Indians live in a compact group within sight of the hacienda buildings and thus have observed the life of generations of the Yábar family. The present alcalde of Mollamarca remembers and often speaks of Raúl Figueroa's father and grandfather. In Kusipata, however, the Indians live in four widely separated villages and are comparatively ignorant of life at the caserío except as it is related to them by their mestizo mayordomos. Kusipata was out of the hands of the Yábar family too long (it was originally a part of Mollamarca) for the Indians to remember the patronages of the old days. Despite the reduction of its lands, Mollamarca still retains the aura of the ancestral estate, somewhat akin to that found in the old family plantations of the pre-Civil War South in the U.S.

In terms of work obligations, the Mollamarca Indians are on equal terms with their Kusipata counterparts. Each Indian family must supply one member to work for the hacienda for twelve consecutive four-hour days. In addition, one family each week is chosen to serve in the role of household help. Time spent in domestic service, however, is deducted from that required for the regular work obligations to the hacienda. It is to be remembered that in Kusipata the Indians are required to devote four days to hacienda affairs and three to their own. Household service duties are rotated monthly instead of weekly, owing to the larger number of Indian families living on Kusipata land. Only during the harvest months do both haciendas require entire families to work in the fields.

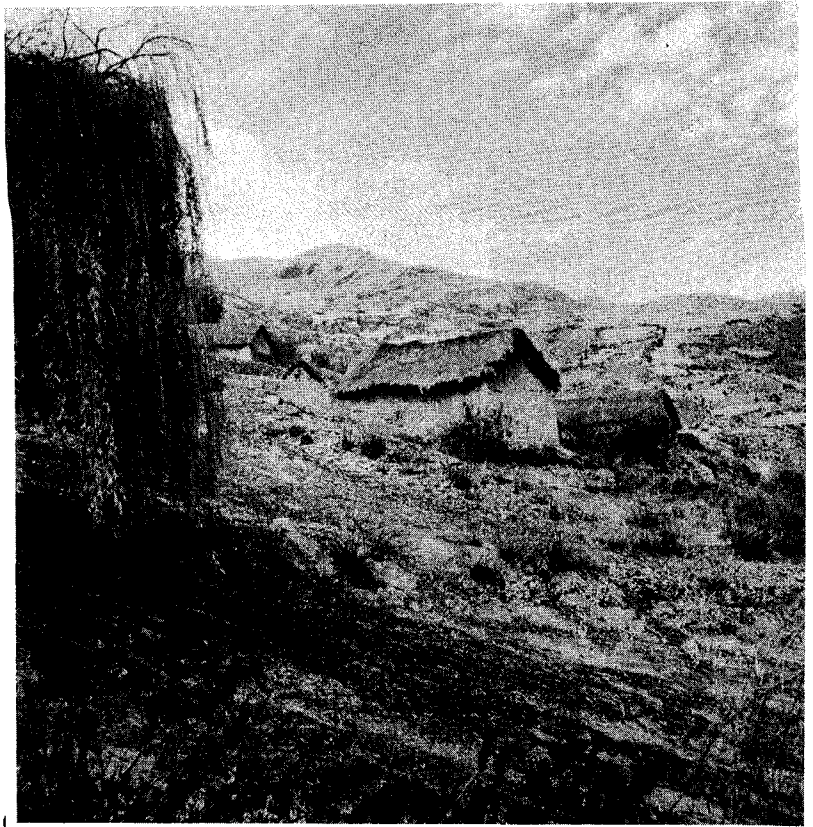


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LEFT: Indians clearing an hacienda field  
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BELOW: Working his own plot, Indian uses  
spear to prod oxen.  
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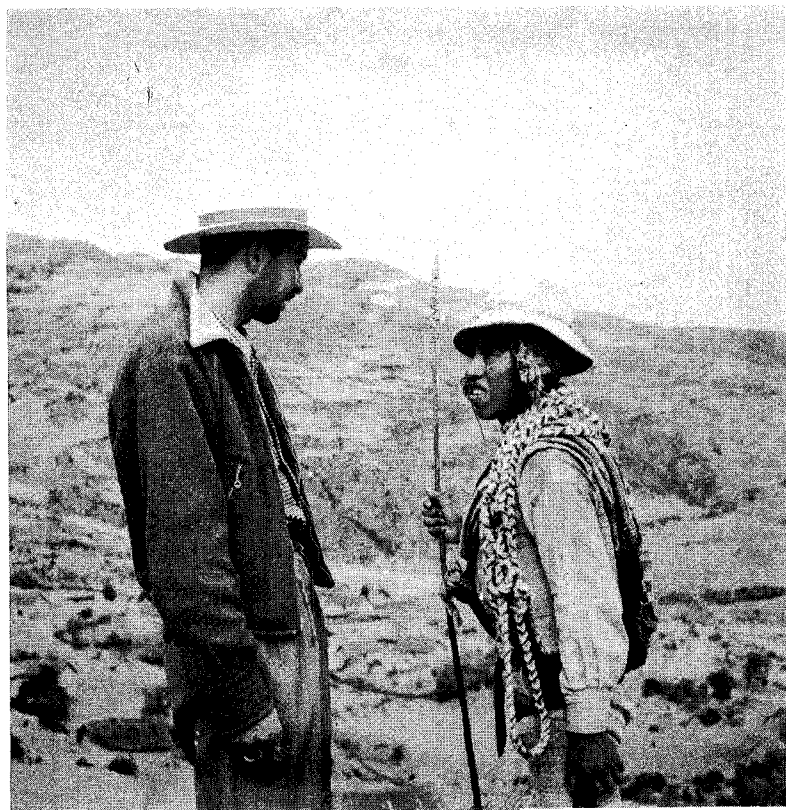


The political or governmental structure of the two haciendas is the same in organization if somewhat different in practice. Mollamarca has one mayordomo, a mestizo named Antonio Larcón, whose father filled the position before him. At the present time, there is no mandón (WHM - 15) because Figueroa Yábar has not yet named an Indian to occupy the post left vacant by the recent death of the previous mandón. The alcalde, Juan Ch'ampi, was elected by the popular vote of the Indian community as were his assistants, the two regidores and the alhuasiles. Despite the local authority vested in these officials, however, they insist upon bringing all of their problems to the patrón relying on him to act as judge and priest in the solution of the difficulties. At Kusipata, each of the four districts has its mayordomo as well as its mandón, alcalde, etc. Owing to the distances between villages and caserío, however, the patrón must of necessity take more of a hand in the selection of the lesser officials. A disloyal regidor could in a short time create a state of strained relations between his village and the remote patrón. Local problems are brought before the mayordomo of the district, and it is only during fiestas that the patrón is confronted with the tearful, drunken complaints of the village officials.



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Huts and land of typical family  
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If the Indians of Kusipata are rich in sheep and alpacas, those of Mollamarca are rich in land. Two-thirds of the hacienda's property is worked by Indians for their own benefit. What is more, some of the Indian land includes the richest soil to be found at Mollamarca. Knowing that a patrón could legally evict any and all of his tenants if he chose, I asked Figueroa why he or the Yábar patrones before him had not done so. I was told that the Mollamarca Indians had worked this land for centuries, that the fields of potatoes and corn had passed from father to son for countless generations prior to the Conquest and the establishment of the hacienda. The eviction of the Indians from their ancestral lands would have created an impossible economic situation for the patrón. Eviction would mean discontent, and discontent would lead to the slacking off of Indians working for the hacienda or - in modern times - a mass exodus of the aggrieved Indians. In either case, a severe financial loss would ensue. Figueroa told me that he would be a



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 Patrón Figueroa Yábar and friend  
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sents a problem which even the patrón cannot solve. Knowing that it was impractical to wait until such time as a priest might visit the hacienda, the Indians long ago adopted the practice of the trial marriage, whereby couples could live together on a year's trial basis. If the union proved unsatisfactory, the two could separate without incurring the wrath of the community. If their "marriage" lasted beyond a year, they were considered to be man and wife. Thus, if and when the priest came to the hacienda, it was an easy matter for him to round up all the unblessed couples in the area and sanctify their marriages in one mass ceremony.

Communication and commerce is strictly limited in the Paucartambo area. Some of the Kusipata and Mollamarca Indians have been to the town of Paucartambo, and a scant handful of them have travelled as far as the hacienda of Chinchubamba, located in the montaña at the lower end of the Paucartambo, to buy coca. By and large, however, the Indians rarely stray beyond the boundaries of the haciendas, relying on trading with the nomadic bands of gollas or Indians from the high altiplano of the Puno area who travel with their llama pack trains into the Department of Cuzco to buy corn. According to Figueroa, the gollas and the occasional mestizo muleteers who visit the hacienda

wealthy man if he could take over some of the rich, Indian-held land along the lower slopes of the valley. The fact that he is unable to do so illustrates the basic flaw in the hacienda system of this region - a flaw created by the complete dependence of the patrón on the Indians' placid acceptance of the hacienda in general and his position as their lord and master in particular.

In isolated haciendas like Mollamarca and Kusipata, education and religious instruction are almost totally lacking. A priest will visit the Indian communities only when the patrón provides transportation from Paucartambo to the hacienda and pays him as well. It has been two years since a priest has come to Mollamarca. To keep up at least the appearances of adherence to the Catholic doctrine, Figueroa has often been forced to play a priestly role in the ceremonies of birth and death in the Indian community. He is the godfather of a large percentage of Mollamarca children. Marriage, however, pre-



cheat the Mollamarca Indians blind. They will sell a horse to a mollarqueño for three hundred soles worth of barley, for instance, after telling the Indian that the current price of barley is forty soles a fanega (100 kilos). The Indian, not knowing that the actual price is eighty soles, hands over twice as much grain as he should. Figueroa claims that he tries to prevent these shady deals from being consummated and to convince the Indians that they should sell their produce to him. He has been unsuccessful to date, however, because of a belief prevalent in the community that if a man sells to the patrón, the latter will know exactly how much he has and will try to take it from him.

Early one afternoon, the patrón of Mollamarca took us on a tour of nearby hacienda and Indian lands. On a steep footpath above the village, we met a group of men coming down from the puna, carrying wooden plows and ox prods as well as modern picks and shovels - tools belonging to the hacienda. In the tiny plots of land lying between the houses, teams of oxen were leaning against their yokes, straining to pull the plows through the heavy soil. This was the beginning of the planting season, and the land was being prepared for new crops. Seed potatoes lay stacked outside the huts ready for the trip to the puna. Barley seed was being sifted in the reed hoppers preparatory to being sown on the high fields. Young boys sat in the doorways whittling out the long, three-man chakitakilla or digging sticks for use in the heavily-sodded pampas of the puna.

On our way back to the hacienda, we stopped at the dwelling of Valentín Ch'ampi, brother of the alcalde. Ch'ampi met us at the thorn gate of his tiny earthen patio, a stubby-legged man with a tremendous chest - typical of the well-developed Indian of the region. Although close to sixty years old, he looked and acted like a young man. This was

Sunday, and Ch'ambi and his eldest son were repairing their plow while his wife, young son and daughter were spinning wool or sorting seed potatoes in the sun. Ranged around the patio were three low adobe huts: the storeroom, the kitchen and the sleeping quarters. Beyond the red trumpets of the kantu bush - the sacred flower of the Incas - lay the family's "truck garden". The plot had been freshly plowed, and now Ch'ambi was making preparations to sow his corn field down by the river.

Figueroa and the alcalde's brother talked for several minutes while Bob Temple and I took pictures of the members of the family.



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Plowmen coming down from  
fields in the puna  
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Valentín Ch'ambi and family  
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There was no trace of subservience in Ch'ambi's manner as he talked with the patrón. Respect, yes, but no boot-licking. There was more of the independent landlord than the tenant in the man.

All three huts of Ch'ambi's dwelling (one which was typical of the community) were without windows. Low doors led into the one-room hovels, letting in just enough light to see by. The kitchen walls were covered with soot smelling of years of dung fires. The sleeping quarters were simply low platforms of adobe strewn with a few sheepskins. Upon entering the storeroom, we had to wait for a few minutes to adjust our eyes to the gloom before we could make out the tall reed baskets bulging with this

season's harvest of barley, wheat and corn. Jerked meat hung from the ridgepole along with family clothing and dancing costumes, among them the decorated vicuña skin of the Qolla dancers, the masks of the Q'achampas (WHM - 14) and the hardwood bow used by the Ch'unchu dance groups - a bow which Ch'ambi had picked up during one of his rare coca-buying expeditions to the montaña. In the repertoire of the mollarqueños' fiesta dances, these three essentially mestizo dance forms - Qolla, Q'achampa and Ch'unchu - hold an important place.

Two of the rafters supporting the ridgepole of the storeroom had been planed down and decorated with primitive pictures. Ch'ambi explained to Figueroa that they were gifts presented to him by his marriage padrinos or god-fathers at the time of his wedding. They had come bringing food, aguardiente, coca and these two decorated rafters. There had been a ceremony of tying them into the framework of the roof. On the upper part of the rafters were pictures of men and women embracing, of men stamping out the figures of the Ch'unchu dance, of llamas and alpacas. At the bottom of each pole was the design of the cross and, above it, the sun-symbols of the two religions which mix so freely in the minds of these singularly devout people.

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Community officials. Right to left:  
alcalde, two regidores, alhuacil.  
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We left Ch'ambi's house and walked down the steep slope to the grain storerooms of the hacienda. There, Indians were working in the dust, shovelling part of this year's 40,000 kilo harvest of barley into the bins. As each bin was filled, a straw cross was placed upright in the grain to guard it against mildew and rot. Another crew of men carried heavy barley sacks out to the patio to be weighed by the mayordomo. Small sierra horses were being driven into the corral behind the caserío; the next day, fifty of them would be chosen to make up a pack train to carry the barley to Paucartambo where a truck from the Cuzco brewery would be waiting.

In the evening, we heard the pututus (conches) sounding in the village, announcing the fact that the alcalde and his retinue were coming to the caserío to hold their nightly meeting with the patrón. The officials entered the patio and doffed their hats to Figueroa. There followed a long conversation about the money to be paid for the use of the Indians' pack horses. Figueroa took out a roll of bills, and the alcalde counted them out loud ..... huq, ishkey, qinza, tawa... Then, satisfied, he handed the bills to his assistants and asked the wirakocha (great father) for some liquor, cigarettes and mercurochrome, the first two items to be consumed by the officials, the last to be taken back to the village to treat cuts and bruises (Figueroa has trained them in at least this respect). At long last, the Indians trooped out of the patio, and the mournful sound of the pututus echoed in the hills back of the village.

Before we left the hacienda, Figueroa showed us the family chapel. Outside the building was the Indian cemetery, the graves marked by mounds of adobe. Inside, behind the altar, were the vaulted tombs of the Yábar family. Uncles and aunts, grandfather and great-grandfather, and the small tombs of the still-born babies and the children of four generations. The engraved inscriptions told a story of family devotion to Mollamarca. A grandfather who died in a small town beyond Puno, an uncle who perished in the montaña, another relative who collapsed of a fever in Urubamba - all were brought back here for burial. Many of them were born in one of the big rooms of the caserío, and they had no desire to rest in alien ground.

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Mayordomo and Ch'ampi weighing  
barley  
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Raúl Figueroa Yábar will probably follow the example set by those of his forefathers who chose to stick with hacienda life. He plans to live at Mollamarca the year 'round - a rare thing among the patronos of the Paucartambo valley. His young wife has started a flower garden under the eucalyptus trees, and he himself is rebuilding ruined portions of the old buildings and making plans to install a hydroelectric generator and hot water heater. Despite the drudgery of hacienda life, the constant necessity of being the Indian community's judge, priest, doctor, policeman and teacher, and the lure of a more comfortable life in the city, there is little doubt in my mind that there will be Yábars living at Mollamarca for some time to come.

Sincerely,

*William H. MacLeish*

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