

PEASANT FORMATION AND CAPITALIST DEVELOPMENT : THE CASE OF
ACRE, SOUTH-WEST AMAZONIA.

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To Margaret and Katy.

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PEASANT FORMATION AND CAPITALIST DEVELOPMENT : THE CASE OF ACRE,
SOUTHWEST AMAZONIA.

ABSTRACT.

The primary aim of this thesis has been to provide a detailed empirical account of the process of rural transformation in the State of Acre from its colonisation during the Rubber Boom up to the present day. Both secondary and primary sources have been used, the bulk of the contemporary material having been gathered during a field trip to Brazil between October, 1983, and March, 1985. Personal accounts form a significant part of the text, not as a substitute for analysis, but rather to complement it by providing a qualitative aspect in the form of 'life histories'.

Within this framework, the thesis also tests three hypotheses. Firstly, the presentation of the Amazon as an economic, political and socio-cultural unity is difficult to sustain given the extent of empirical variations at the sub-regional level. Secondly, the State cannot be treated as a simple aggregate whose actions are the implementation of the aspirations of a particular class. Such a position ignores both the complexity and the social nature of state apparatuses. Thirdly, the solution to the problems facing small rural producers may be found at the political, rather than the economic, level.

The text is divided into two parts, The first covers the 1870-1945 period and charts the constitution of a class of 'captive' rubber tappers tied to the rubber estate by debt peonage. In particular, Part 1 notes the economic, socio-political and ecological factors which made Acre something other than a general Amazonian 'norm' and which delimited the courses of action available to the various agents and agencies as they became engaged in the struggle for land in Acre in the 1970s.

Part 2 deals with the post-war period. It begins by analysing federal development strategies and the actions of two state organs, SUDAM and INCRA, in the implementation of state programmes in the Amazon. This is followed by a discussion of the struggle for land in Acre, the role of the federal and local state government in its precipitation and the socio-political repercussions of the struggle - notably a massive rural-urban migration into the shanty towns of the state capital and the development of a considerable rural protest movement. Federal and local state programmes to resolve the rural crisis are then analysed as are the activities of the Church and the Rural Worker's Union. The principal conclusion drawn is that small rural production units can and do survive in the 'modern' capitalist world and that there is considerable scope for the extension of small producer programmes. The determining factor, however, is a conducive political climate.

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Glossary of Portuguese Terms Used in the Text.

Alqueire	Unit of land measurement equal to either 24,400 square metres (São Paulo) or 48,800 square metres (Minas Gerais).
Aviamento	The credit system that linked the direct producer via a chain of intermediaries to the industrial and commercial houses of the U.S.A. and Europe.
Barraca	Tapper's hut.
Barracão	The hut/store/office of the seringalista.
Barranqueiro	Subsistence farmer living on the 'beira'.
Beira	Literally the 'edge', but here specifying the outskirts of town or at a distance from the 'centro'.
Borracha	Rubber, especially that produced from Hevea.
Casa Aviadora	Principal credit agency in the Aviamento chain.
Caucho	Rubber produced from Castilloa.
Cauchoeiro	Rubber tapper, extractor of caucho.
Centro	The interior of the seringal, i.e., in the middle of the forest, counterposed to 'beira'.
Colheita	Harvest, here the process of collecting the latex.
Colocação	Sub-unit of the seringal consisting of the seringueiro's barraca, tapiri, and a number of estradas.
Correria	Indian hunt.

Corte	Literally 'cut', here indicating the tapping process.
Defumador	Smokehouse.
Drogas do Sertão	Herbs and drugs collected from the botanical specimens of the forest such as Sarsaparilha.
Empate	Literally 'stalemate', but in Acre it has come to mean a united show of force by seringueiros to prevent deforestation being carried out.
Entrefina	The second of the three classification of rubber quality.
Estrada	Rubber trail consisting of up to 200 rubber trees. Also 'volta de estrada', the furthest point from the barraca, and 'boca de estrada', the nearest point to the barraca.
Faca de Seringa	Tapper's knife that superceded the machadinho.
Fazendeiro	Rancher, landowner.
Fina	First grade rubber, usually prefixed by Pará, the first state in which it was produced.
Fiscais	Seringalista's armed guards.
Folha defumada	Smoked sheet rubber.
Gleba.	Cluster of smallholdings on a PAD grouped together in an administrative sub-unit.
Grileiro	Land grabber.
Lata	Literally a tin can but which in Acre has come to signify a measure of 2 litres. The term derives from the the use of empty dried milk tins as containers.

Latifúndio	Large estate defined by INCRA in terms of its dimension (over 600 times the rural module) or by exploration (less than 70% utilized).
Machadinho	Small hand-axe used by seringueiros in the corte prior to its supercession by the Facade Seringa.
Mata	Forest, jungle.
Mateiro	Woodsman employed by Seringalista to search for seringueiras.
Meieiro	Sharecropper who gives up 50% of his rubber product to the owner of the colocação as a payment for the use of his estradas, and for board and lodging.
Minifúndio	Small property that is generally regarded as insufficient to maintain the family unit that lives on it, some family members needing to find off-farm employment.
Mini Usina	Small plant for processing latex.
Moto Serra	Brand name of a chain-saw that has come to indicate all such implements.
Nordestino	A Native of the North-East.
Patrão	Master (Spanish=Patron).
Paulista	A native of São Paulo state. In Acre the term is used to describe any non-Acreano especially a Southerner.
Peão	An agricultural wage-labourer
Pela	Large ball of rubber produced during the traditional smoking process.
Piqueiro	Employee of seringalista who marks out new estradas.

Posse	The occupation of land without a juridical title - homesteading.
Posseiro	Homesteader who may have a right to the land because of his physical occupation and economic utilisation of it.
Prancha	Rubber that has been pressed into blocks.
Quinzena	Literally a 'fortnight', but in Acre indicates a period of time of up to one month when the seringueiro brings his rubber to be weighed at the barracão.
Roçada	Small forest clearing utilised for subsistence crop production.
Seringalista	Master of the rubber estate.
Seringueira	Rubber tree of the Hevea Brasiliensis variety, also called 'seringa'.
Seringueiro	Rubber tapper on the seringal. Also '-brabo' greenhorn, '-manso' experienced, '-de tôco' paid on the spot, 'por conta' paid annually, '-cativo' captive, and '-autônomo' independent.
Sernambi	The third, lowest, classification of rubber quality usually consisting of scraps.
Sesmaria	Land grant from the Portuguese Crown.
Soldado da Borracha	Volunteer migrant rubber tapper during WW 2.
Tapiri	Small palm thatched hut with roof sloping down to ground level that is used by seringueiro as a smokehouse.

Tara	Tare weight. Weight loss due to pelas drying out prior to transportation to Casa Aviadora at end of tapping season.
Terras Devolutas.	Public lands.
Tigelinha	Small cup used to collect latex. Also Tigela.
Toqueiro	One of the three man team employed by the seringalista to open up new estradas.
Usocapião	Law giving right to a land title, or compensation in lieu, through its economic occupation over a determinate period of time.
Varadouro	Forest trail emanating from the barracão and elading to the barracas of the seringueiros. Any forest trail, excluding the estradas.

List of Acronyms.

AEAA	Associação de Empresários Agropecuários da Amazônia.
AO	Autorização de Ocupação.
ARENA	Aliança Renovadora Nacional.
ASSER	Associação de Seringueiros.
BANACRE	Banco do Acre.
BASA	Banco da Amazônia S.A.
BNDE	Banco Nacional do Desenvolvimento Econômico.
CAGEACRE	Companhia de Armazéns Gerais e Entrepósitos do Acre.
CEBs	Comunidades Eclesiais de Base.
COBAL	Companhia Brasileira de Alimentos.
COLONACRE	Companhia de Colonização do Acre.
CONTAG	Confederação dos Trabalhadores na Agricultura.
CPT	Comissão Pastoral da Terra.
EMATER	Empresa de Assistência Técnica e Extensão Rural.
FUNAI	Fundação Nacional do Índio.
FUNBESA	Fundação do Bem Estar Social.
IBDF	Instituto Brasileiro do Desenvolvimento Florestal.
IBGE	Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística.
INCRA	Instituto Nacional de Colonização e Reforma Agrária.
INPA	Instituto Nacional de Pesquisa na Amazônia.
LO	Licença da Ocupação.
PAD	Projeto de Assentamento Dirigido.
PDS	Partido Democrático Social.
PIC	Projeto Integrado de Colonização.
PMDB	Partido de Movimento Democrático Brasileiro.

POLAMAZONIA	Programa de Polos Agropecuários e Agrominerais da Amazônia.
PROBOR	Programa de Incentive á Produção de Borracha Natural.
PROTERRA	Programa de Redistribuição de Terras e Estímulo á Agroindústria do Norte e Nordeste.
PT	Partido dos Trabalhadores.
SEMTA	Serviço Especial de Mobilização de Trabalhadores para a Amazônia.
SENAI	Serviço Nacional de Assistência para a Indústria.
SENAR	Serviço Nacional de Assistência Rural.
SPI	Serviço de Proteção dos Índios.
SPVEA	Superintendência do Plano de Valorização da Amazônia.
STR	Sindicato dos Trabalhadores Rurais.
SUCAM	Superintendência de Campanhas Sanitárias.
SUDAM	Superintendência de Desenvolvimento da Amazônia.
SUDHEVEA	Superintendência da Borracha.
TD	Título Definitivo.
TFP	Tradição, Família e Propriedade.

PEASANT FORMATION AND CAPITALIST DEVELOPMENT : THE CASE OF ACRE,
SOUTH - WEST AMAZONIA.

Introduction.

The integration of Brazil's vast Amazonian Region into the national economy and society has been a consistently stated target of Federal policies and programmes throughout the post-war period. These have sought to combine the Government's principal geo-political and economic imperatives, i.e., the need both to physically occupy its territorial space and utilise that space to generate export revenue. Of particular significance was the creation of the POLAMAZONIA programme in 1974 whose purpose was the implantation of large-scale capital intensive ranching and mineral enterprises in the region. This marked a complete change from earlier policies that had given priority to the colonisation of the Amazon Basin by landless peasants from Brazil's North-East. The implementation of the POLAMAZONIA programme resulted in an increasingly violent confrontation between the ranching companies, which began to clear large areas of forest for pasture, and the small rural producers who already lived and worked on the land, although without documented title deeds.

The Federal Government, faced with mounting national and international protest over the social and ecological violence that its programmes had engendered, began to couch its public statements on the situation in terms of the twin problems of 'National Security' (the internal and external threat of communism) and the lack of

entrepreneurship/non-competitiveness of the 'peasant economy' in the 'modern' capitalist world. Subsequently, rural union leaders and lawyers, certain sections of the clergy, and others who openly worked to improve the lot of the small rural producer, began to be arrested under the Law of National Security and, in some cases, were imprisoned and/or expelled from the country. As recently as 1981, when such institutionalised violence against the Amazonian peasantry and those forces allied to it was the rule rather than the exception, a leading spokesman for the Federal Government commented:

" In the open society we wish to build, we cannot guarantee success to anyone. In the competitive struggle for survival, those peasant farmers who do not prove equal to the challenge will go under. " (1)

The implication, here, is firstly that the struggle between the small family production unit and the larger enterprise is taking place in the economic arena and, given the economies of scale, rational production techniques and so on of the capitalist unit, the small producer must go under. Secondly, that throughout this process, the state itself is merely an observer.

In the first place, many small producers are engaged in subsistence agriculture to the exclusion of production for the market place. This group is not in direct competition, then, with capitalist agriculture. The conflict that has arisen has been primarily over the control of one factor of production, the land, with the use of physical coercion rather than economies of scale as the principal

1. Quoted in Latin American Research Reports, 13/3/81, p.4.

means by which such large enterprises achieve that control.

Between April, 1980, and June, 1981, fifteen rural union leaders and activists were murdered. Three union presidents and three union lawyers were among the victims. They were murdered in places as far apart as Pará in the North and Mato Grosso do Sul in the South, Acre in the West and Pernambuco in the North-East. In this seemingly concerted attack on the rural union leadership, none of the perpetrators have been brought to justice.(1).

Secondly, it is clear that the accumulation of capital does not take place in a political vacuum. The Federal Government not only created an institutional framework within which this process occurs, e.g., as with the inauguration of such programmes as POLAMAZONIA, the actual agencies such as INCRA (2) which were given the task of counteracting the excesses of these programmes functioned in a manner prejudicial to the small rural producer.

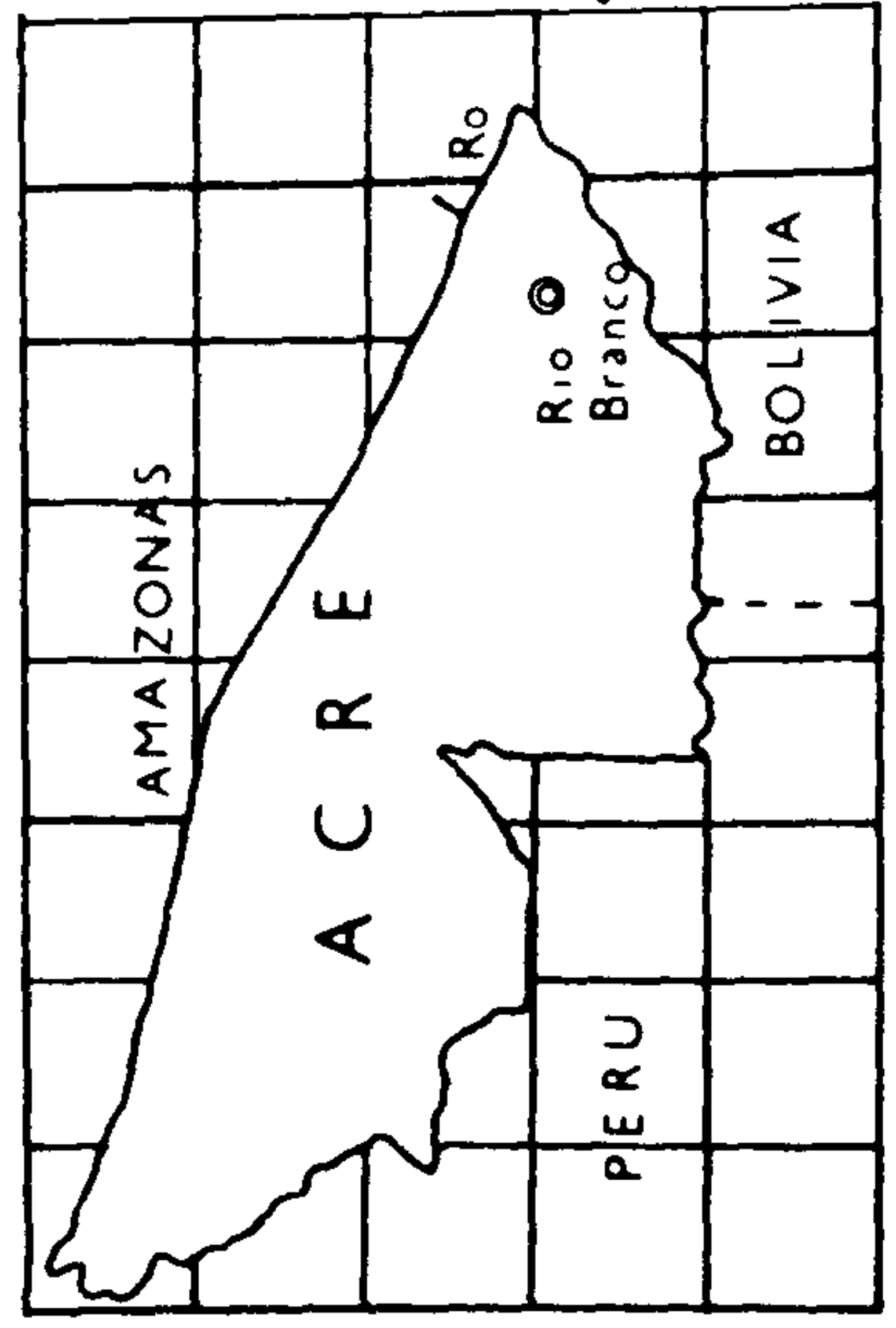
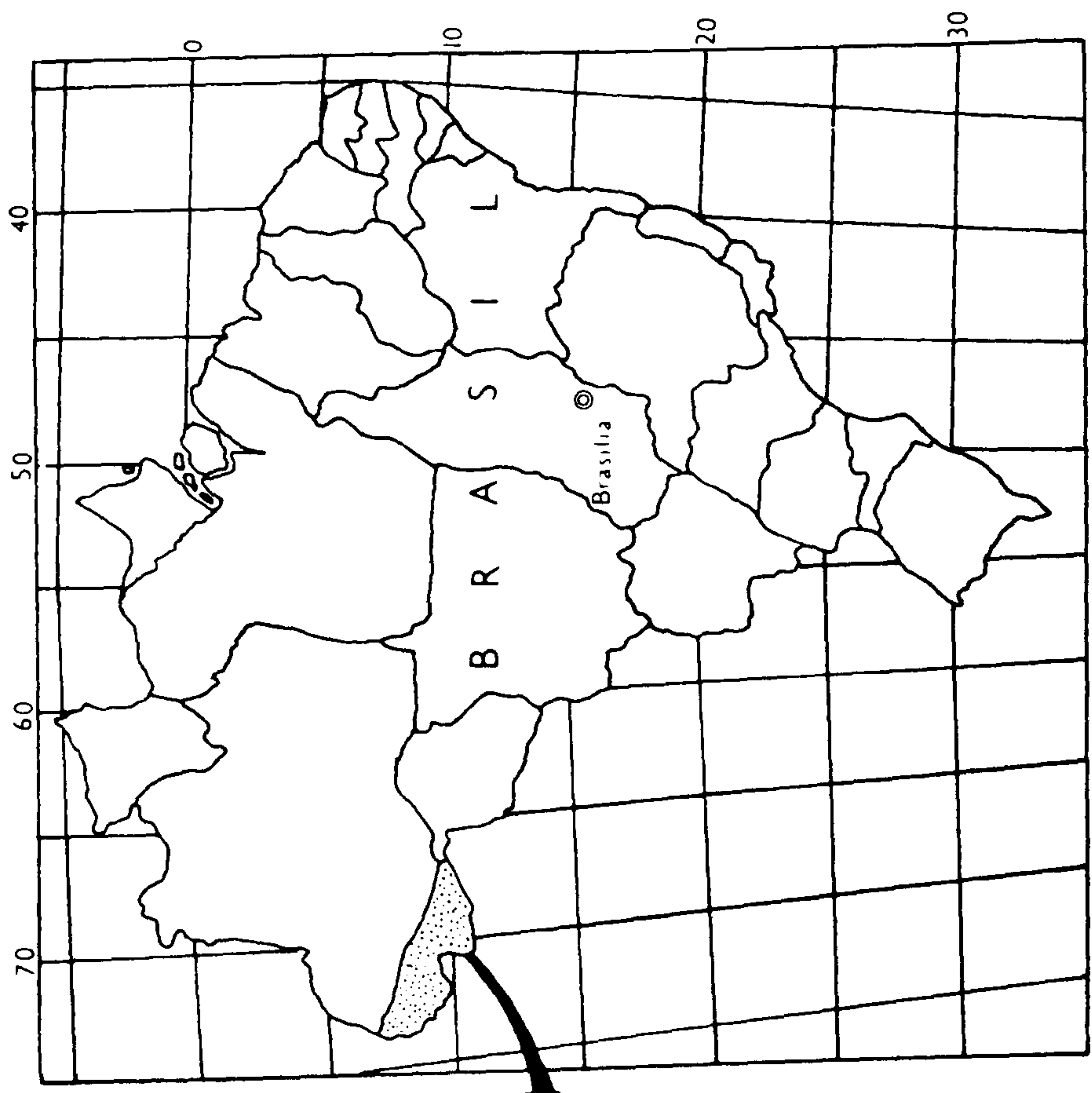
This thesis will analyse the struggle for land in the State of Acre, in the south-western corner of the Brazilian Amazon (3) between the resident rubber tapper population and the ranchers who migrated into the state. Here, the conflict resulted in the eviction of thousands of rubber tapper families from their properties during the 1970's and the assassination of the president of a local branch of the Rural

1. 'O Latifundio Armado' insert of Movimento, edition no.314,6 - 12 July, 1981, pp, 11 -14.

2. INCRA - The National Institute for Colonisation & Agrarian Reform.

3. See Map 1.

MAP I.
Location of area of study



THE STATE OF ACRE
 Area 152,589 Km²
 1.79% of National Territory
 4.26% of Northern Region

Worker's Union in July of 1980.

The thesis will be divided into two parts. The first and shorter part will provide an analysis of the historical constitution of Acre's rubber tapper peasantry between 1870 and 1945, i.e., during the so-called 'Rubber Boom' period and in the inter-war years. Part Two will cover the modern period, dealing specifically with those national and local elements that underpin the contemporary conflict in the Acrean countryside and the social consequences that have resulted from it. In particular, it will examine the development of the movement that sprang up locally to counter the violence that was being perpetrated by the ranchers and chart the various moves by state organisations and others to subvert the activities of and/or co-opt this movement.

It is not intended here to provide a general introduction, as this would anticipate results that will be substantiated later in the text. Nor is it the intention to give a detailed analysis/critique of the numerous theoretical works that have been written during the previous 50 years on 'The Peasantry' and 'Capitalist Development in the Periphery' to demonstrate how they fail to account for various features of the social complex under examination in this thesis. This would be a singularly futile exercise as the following section which outlines the methodological bases of this research will explain. Otherwise, where such points arise, they will be dealt with in the text.

Methodological Considerations.

The starting point of this research is at the level of the empirical particular, i.e., a given struggle between specific agents in a determinate space and time. Having identified the subject matter in its phenomenal form, the task that lies ahead, and which is undertaken here, is to analyse the essential relations that underpin this phenomenon and which determine both its form and trajectory.

The research is not founded upon some theoretical construction from which certain hypotheses were identified for testing in the field. In the first place, the available academic readings could not provide the basis of such a theoretical construction. They were either theoretical discourses themselves and as such speculative, or else they were grounded upon empirical observation of phenomena different to that under investigation here, although some authors assume their findings to be somehow universal. To use such foundations would be to predetermine the outcome of the research. If, for example, the contemporary struggle for land in Amazonia is conceived in simple economic terms, then the fate of the small producer is sealed : expulsion from the land and eventual proletarianisation. Such a position sees the small producer merely as a recipient of the determinations of others, the object of, rather than one subject in, a developing process.

1. The discussion in this section was developed from a reading of: Corrigan et al :1978 ; Sayer:1979 ; McLellan:1979 ; Marx:1858 ; and Hanson:1958 and 1971, in that order.

Following on from this, the field work was not directed toward the testing of predetermined hypotheses. As Hanson states so succinctly: " A theory is a cluster of conclusions in search of a premiss " (1) Here, hypotheses are constructed 'a posteriori' , that is, after the research has been undertaken and conclusions drawn from it. Thus, the hypotheses noted below and which will be discussed in the text were not elements of the methods of enquiry, but, rather, form part of the presentation of the results.

Hypotheses.

1. The presentation of the Brazilian Amazon as a region which is economically, politically, and socio-culturally homogeneous is difficult to sustain given the extent of empirical variation at the sub-regional level.
2. The state cannot be treated as a simple totality which represents a particular class. This position ignores both the complexity and the social nature of state apparatuses.
3. If the struggle between small rural producers and large-scale enterprises is also taking place at the political level, rather than just the economic, level, then the outcome of the struggle cannot be predicted by simple reference to economic laws. The struggle has resulted from a particular array of economic, political, and social, forces and, thus, a recomposition of those forces may produce a different result.

1. Hanson:1958:90 - also quoted in Sayer:1979:115. See also Hanson:1971, especially pp.60 - 67 on Hypothetico-deduction and Retroduction.

The Field Trip and the Presentation of its Findings.

As stated above, the primary objective was to conduct an investigation into the essential relations upon which the contemporary rural conflict in Acre is founded. It is obvious that such conflict cannot be treated in isolation, either in time or space, from wider contextual phenomena. In the event, the research came to be divided into two discrete, although intimately connected, parts: that which concerned the analysis of events/agencies that were prior/external to the struggle ; that which concerned the struggle itself.

The research into the former was undertaken during the first year of the Ph.D. programme in England, along with language training, as well as during the first few months in Brazil and on the return home. In essence the process involved the assimilation of general historical data relating to economic, political, and socio-cultural developments in Brazil as a whole and in the various regions, although emphasis was understandably placed on material concerning Amazonia.

Research into the second element took place in situ, during the field trip to Brazil which lasted from October, 1982, until March, 1984. Because Acre is so isolated and the conflict so recent, there was little literature available on post-1960 developments in the state. Only two works were read by me that were specifically concerned with events in Acre (1). These were both concerned with

1. Aquino:1977 & Cedeplar:1979. Three other works became available later:Silva:1981;Oliveira:1982;Cavalcanti:1982.The same comments apply.

intra-state migration and while they were useful in providing some background material, their subject matter was only tangential to this research. Where material has been utilised from these or other works, it will be noted in the text.

The bulk of the material collected on the contemporary situation, then, was collected at first hand during the field trip. During the latter, I participated as fully as possible in the social and political life of the rural population, attending a variety of social events, dances, religious ceremonies, public meetings and political demonstrations, branch meetings of rural unions and of political parties. The Acreano population, in both the countryside and in the towns, treated me extremely hospitably and it is hoped that I was able to give of my own life experiences as I received.

More than half of the period of the field trip to Acre was spent in the forest moving between the isolated huts of rubber tappers and subsistence farmers. Given the size of the state, 152,589 Km², and a rural population density of less than one person per square kilometre, it was not feasible to conduct surveys on any random sample of the rural population. Most of the contacts made, and therefore of the interviews taped, resulted from chance meetings. Interviews were recorded on small river craft, on buses, in bus stations, health posts, and bars, at union meetings, and in people's homes wherever possible. All the Acrean townships and cities were visited and interviews recorded in all the state's municipalities.

Travel in the forests of the interior was both the most physically demanding and the most pleasurable part of the research. In Acre, as elsewhere in Amazonia, locals say that there are only two seasons: summer when it rains every day and winter when it rains all day. This is perhaps an overstatement, however it does point to the difficulties of travelling overland on foot.

It was not advisable to wander alone in the forest, but rather than utilise a guide who may have facilitated access to these remote areas, but perhaps hampered the development of personal relations and interfered with discussions on sensitive issues, I travelled as and when others travelled the forest paths on their day to day business. I 'tagged on' to mule and ox trains, priests, rural union officials, functionaries of state agencies, traders, and the rural population themselves as they moved around the forest visiting neighbours, relations, or made their twice yearly shopping visits to town.

My arrival at a particular forest dwelling usually caused quite a stir. Outsiders and especially foreigners are seldom seen in the forest. On more than one occasion my arrival was sufficient reason for the residents to break open a few bottles of cachaça, the local sugar cane spirit, and celebrate. During such gatherings, those who were present were asked to give short taped interviews. It must be stated here that it was seldom possible to interview female members of the household as they were invariably occupied with domestic duties. In addition, there was a distinct tendency for men to respond even when a question was addressed to a woman.

Such interviews provided both the core data and wider contextual socio-cultural data. It was frequently the case that a family invited me to spend the night which gave me both the opportunity to participate socially as well as to solicit further information. I tried not to stay with any one family more than two days. This was not for anti-social reasons, and it was certainly difficult to leave after such a fleeting acquaintanceship, rather it was so that I did not place too great a strain on their meagre stocks of food supplies. It was not possible for me to transport my own foodstuffs as I was travelling long distances on foot. As a way of saying thank you, I frequently took family portraits which were delivered on the next visit to the area or else entrusted to the local priest or union official. Few families had photographs of their children.

The length of time spent with any given family was also determined on the volume of local traffic. I was totally dependent on mule trains and other passing travellers who allowed me to follow up in the rear. On a number of occasions I was 'stranded' for several days before the next traveller passed by and I could move on to the next site. Each trip into the forest lasted a maximum of three weeks. Apart from the need to recuperate physically and the impossibility of transporting more than my tape recorder, camera, hammock and two changes of clothing, a major factor in the length of these trips was the length of time the batteries lasted. They always ran out before I was ready to return to town. This was not due to any lack of planning on my part, rather it was a combination

of the humid conditions, the unreliability of Brazilian batteries, and the wish of those who had been interviewed to hear the recordings of their voice at least three times before climbing into their hammock for the night.

During these trips, two types of information were gathered. On the one hand, so-called 'hard data' of a quantifiable nature was obtained. This generally related to the economic life of the community and was collected using both pre-structured questionnaires and unstructured, informal interviews, usually taped. To complement this, to provide a 'sociological' perspective whilst at the same time trying to avoid a reduction into psychological case histories, 'soft data' was also collated pertaining to the life experiences of those concerned. It is the latter that form a significant part of the text.

It is hoped that a 'reasonable' balance has been achieved in the text between analysis and the 'life histories' that illustrate it. The latter have been included not so as to substitute analysis, and not simply because of the particular tale that is being told by the individual, but also because of the way in which it is told. Both the content and the form of these interviews reflect the social logic that underpins everyday existence.

It must be pointed out that 'life histories' do not provide a simple reconstruction of past events. In the first place, the results that are obtained are intimately linked to the relationship

between the interviewee and the interviewer. The latter's presence must be a significant factor as it is s/he who initiates the narration and is the principal recipient of it, as well as being its ultimate interpreter. In addition, the narrative is not just a recollection of previous events, the narrator also interprets these in the light of other occurrences that s/he has experienced subsequently. As Bertaux-Wiame notes:

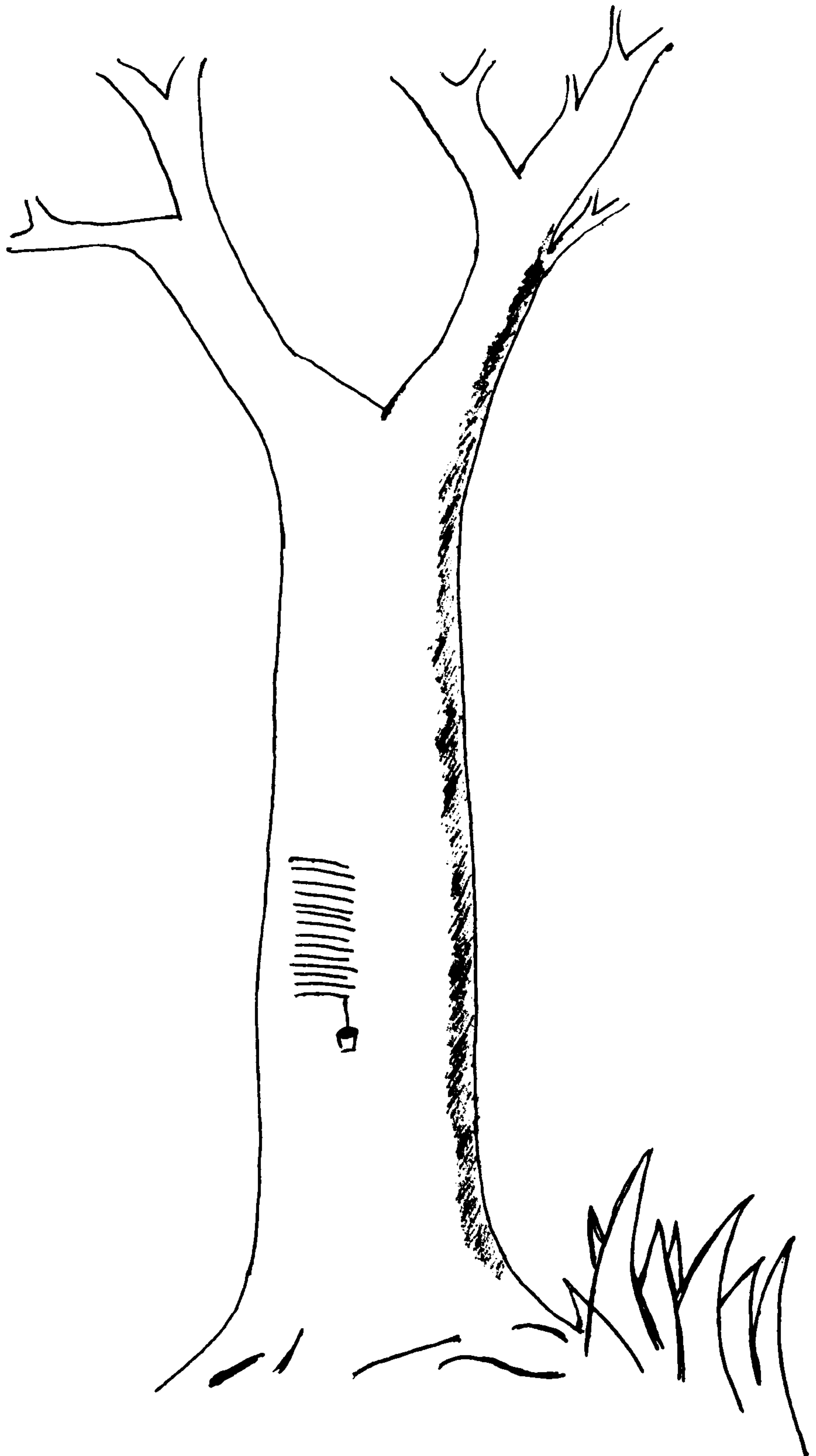
" To tell one's life story is not only to talk or to remember; it is an act, an encounter with reality. If this encounter seems to limit itself to an account of the past, it is oriented in fact by the present, in two ways: first it reconstructs the meaning of the past from the present point of view; second, and more deeply, it gives meaning to the past in order to give meaning to the present life of the person. " (1)

Life histories, then, provide an interpretation of the past and not a knowledge of it. However, in a given social context such as the conflict under examination in this research, it is as important to understand how events are perceived as to know that they happened. It is for this reason that they are extensively reproduced in the text. In this sense, this research is a series of interpretations of a series of events. As such it is not 'complete', it is merely part of a greater whole: the collective writing of social history.

1. Bertaux-Wiame:1979:29. For further discussions on the 'life story' method, see Bertaux:1979 ; Carr-Hill & MacDonald:1973 ; Farraday & Plummer:1979 ; Thompson:1978 ; and Tagg:1985.

Part 1

The Constitution of the Acrean Peasantry.



Chapter 1 - The Occupation of Western Amazônia.

1.1. The extraction of 'Backland Drugs'.

The Portuguese moved north into the Amazon delta from the coastal colonies of the north-eastern litoral during the 17th century to counter the the southward penetration from the Guianas of the Dutch, French and English. Settlements were few in number being little more than small forts whose population engaged in subsistence agriculture (1). Expansion was hampered by a chronic shortage of labour. An attempt was made in 1682 to resolve this problem when the Portuguese Crown created the 'Commercial Company of Maranhão' which was given the task of importing 10,000 African slaves into the region over a 20 year period. The project failed, few slaves being imported, as slaves brought a better price on the sugar colonies.(2).

Indigenous labour during this period was controlled by the Jesuits through the Mission System based on the law of 1680 which sub-divided Indian labour into three groups: the first was channelled into agricultural activity to support the mission village; the second, again under mission control, acted as guides, porters, etc.; the third was earmarked for distribution amongst the settler population. However, the latter could only be employed for a maximum period of two months at a time and only then after the state's labour needs had been met. In addition, Indian labourers were entitled to be paid a stipulated salary

1. Le Cointe:1922:16-22; Cardoso and Muller:1977:21.
2. Simonsen:1957:127.

and allocated a daily minimum ration of provisions (1).

By 1750, there were 46 settlements in the Lower and Middle Amazon. Primitive agricultural activity was now being supplemented by the extraction of forest products, the 'Drogas do Sertão' or 'Backland Drugs' such as cocoa, cloves, cinnamon, sasparilha, vanilla, guaraná, and, to a certain extent, rubber (2). The latter was receiving increasing interest in European scientific circles following the expedition of the Frenchman Charles de la Condamine to Ecuador. In a letter to the Parisian Academy of Sciences written in 1736, Condamine noted the peculiar properties of a tree that the natives called Hhevé (3). With a simple incision in the bark, the tree produced a white fluid, latex, that the Indians collected and formed into balls that returned to their original shape after being subjected to pressure. In addition, the latex could be painted onto objects to render them waterproof and, through the use of moulds, articles such as bottles could be made that were lighter than glass and which did not fragment when dropped (4).

This was not the first time that the properties of rubber had been noted. Several early voyagers in the Americas and Indies mention the qualities of the product (5). However, the new interest was not focussed on rubber's novelty value, but on its scientific properties. An early commercial application of what by the 1760's had come to be known as 'India-rubber' was its substitution for dried breadcrumbs as the means of erasing pencil marks on paper. In the preface of his 'Theory and

-
1. Maclachlan:1973:202. For a detailed account of Portugal's policy towards the indigenous population prior to 1680, see Thomas:1982.
 2. Furtado:1982:91; Ribeiro:1982:42.
 3. Hevea Brasiliensis. Also called Caucho or Cahucho which literally means 'weeping wood'.
 4. Tocantins:1979:99; Storrs:1946:1.
 5. For example, Columbus 1493, D'Anghier 1525, and Torquemada 1536.

and Practice of Perspective', written in 1770, Priestley notes:

"Since this work was printed off I have seen a substance excellently adapted to the purpose of wiping from paper marks of a black lead pencil. It must, therefore, be of singular value to those who practice drawing. It is sold by Mr. Nairne, mathematical instrument maker, opposite the Royal Exchange. He sells a cubical piece, of about half an inch, for three shillings, and he says it will last several years." (1).

As the demand for forest products such as rubber grew, collectors were forced to penetrate deeper into the interior and expeditions took months rather than weeks and thus were restricted by the Indian Labour Law which prohibited the employment of indigenous labour for periods in excess of two months.

At this time of increasing interest in rubber, the regional economy underwent an agricultural transformation following a series of events that occurred overseas. The Industrial Revolution in England created a demand for raw materials. The supply of one of these, cotton, was cut off by the American war of Independence. In addition, the Napoleonic Wars in Europe were disrupting agricultural production and creating chronic shortages of foodstuffs. Both the labour shortage and the laws regulating indigenous labour impeded the realisation of this export potential in forest and agricultural products (2).

To overcome this problem while, at the same time, promoting the further colonisation of the Brazilian Amazon, the Marquês de Pombal (3) announced three initiatives. Firstly, he created the 'Companhia Geral

1. Quoted in Tocantins:1960:153

2. Furtado:1982:91 ; MacLachlan:1972:202.

3. Prime Minister of Portugal, 1750 - 1777.

do Grão Pará e Maranhão' to supervise the commercialisation of the region's export products and through which the state offered tax exemptions, land concessions, and free agricultural implements to prospective colonists. Secondly, again with an eye to the labour situation, but intimately related to the anti-Jesuit campaign that was then being waged in Europe and the Americas, the Jesuits were expelled from Brazil and, in 1757, the Indian labour system entered a new phase. Under the new provisions, 50% of the indigenous labour force was reserved for the exclusive use of settlers. Thirdly, Pombal ordered the abandonment of the African colony of Magazão on the coast of Mauritania. Over 1,000 evacuees arrived in Pará in 1769 (1).

This 'mini-boom' of agricultural exports, principally rice and cotton, was short lived, lasting only as long as the demand that gave rise to it. The 'Companhia' ceased to operate in 1778 and economic activity again concentrated on agriculture for local consumption and on forest extraction, mainly cocoa (2) and to a lesser extent rubber. Although the agricultural sector was significant, by the end of the Colonial period, the extractivist sector had become predominant (3).

By 1800, the non-indigenous population of the Brazilian Amazon totalled approximately 100,000 persons concentrated in the delta area and in riverine communities along the main tributaries of the Lower and Middle Amazon (4). Even at this early date, Amazonia was exporting finished rubber products to the U.S.A. in the form of bottles manufactured in Pará and, in 1820, merchants of Boston began to send shoes to Pará to be

1. Cardoso and Muller:1977:23 ; MacLachlan:1973:209ff ; Weinstein:1983:12.

2. Even though cocoa accounted for over 50% of Pará's exports between 1760 and 1822, it was mainly derived from wild as opposed to cultivated sources (see Weinstein:1983:13).

3. See note 1. 4. Cardoso and Muller:1977:24.

covered with a waterproof skin of rubber which were resold in Boston for the price of 5 Dollars per pair (1). By the 1930's, Amazonian shoes were also being exported to Europe. The table below shows the destinations of shoes exported from Pará between 1836 and 1839:

Table 1.1.1. - Amazonian exports of rubber shoes, 1836 - 1839.

Destination.	Quantity in pairs.
Antwerp.	1,280
Boston.	49,161
Hamburg.	38,641
London.	28,711
Marseilles.	3,259
New York.	87,896
Salem.	245,982

Source : Tocantins:1979:102.

This early primitive manufacture took place in situ, in the forest itself. Whole villages migrated in the dry season to the islands in the delta. A description of this activity is given in Bates' classic study of the 1850's :

"The people we met told us that they came every year to collect rubber on the islands, as soon as the waters had subsided, namely, in August, and remained till January or February. The process is very simple. Every morning each person, man or woman, to whom is allotted a certain number of trees, goes the round of the whole and collects in a

1. R.Santos:1980:45.

large vessel the milky sap which trickles from the gashes made in the bark on the previous evening, and which is received in little clay cups, or in Ampullaria shells stuck beneath the wounds. The sap, which is at first the consistency of cream, soon thickens; the collectors are provided with a great number of wooden moulds of the shape in which the rubber is wanted, and when they return to camp they dip them in the liquid, laying on, in the course of several days, one coat after another. When this is done the substance is white and hard; the proper colour and consistency are given by passing it repeatedly through a thick black smoke obtained by burning the nuts of certain palm trees, after which process the article is ready for sale." (1).

The first rubber articles to be manufactured on a truly commercial basis were produced in 1803 following the construction of a factory in Paris. A second was built in Vienna in 1811 and a third, that of Thomas Hancock, in England in 1820 (2). Demand for rubber began to rise rapidly, particularly after the discovery of a suitable solvent, Naptha, by Macintosh in 1823 and of vulcanisation by Goodyear in 1839 (3). As demand grew, prices rose in proportion, and Amazonian rubber exports increased dramatically as Table 1.1.2. illustrates.

The rapid rise in production, Amazonia produced 213% more rubber in the 1850's than it did in the 1840's, coupled with primitive tapping methods destroyed large numbers of trees in the delta region (4). However, the increase in demand/price made expeditions into the interior a more viable proposition. This signified that a greater and greater proportion of the available labour force was diverted from agriculture and other

1. Bates:1864:77-8.

2. A history of rubber manufacture in England in the 19th Century is given in Woodruff:1958.

3. Tocantins:1978:99 ; Santos:1980:43 ; Knorr:1945:9-11 ; M cFadyean:1944:1-23.

4. Tocantins:1960:171ff. This also occurred later in the East Indies (see Wooduff:1958:40) and in Peru (see Ganzert:1934:435).

Table 1.1.2. - Amazonia : Exports of Natural Rubber , 1821 - 1900.

Decade.	Production (in Tonnes).	Average Price per Tonne (in £'s).
1821 - 1830	329	67
1831 - 1840	2,314	72
1841 - 1850	4,693	45
1851 - 1860	19,383	116
1861 - 1870	37,166	116
1871 - 1880	60,225	183
1881 - 1890	110,048	152
1891 - 1900	213,755	209

Source : Benchimol:1977:252.

activities into rubber extraction. As Tavares Bastos notes in 'O Valle do Amazonas' written in 1866, the result was a total disruption of 'traditional' village life:

"Unfortunately, extractive products and rubber in particular, make up almost all of the Amazon's economic output...As a result, small towns become deserted during the gathering season (and are replaced by) provisional settlements which are picturesque in appearance, but deplorable in their economic conditions." (1).

This phenomenon also occurred later in Peru and Bolivia as Woodroffe

1. Quoted in Weinstein:1980:182.

witnessed on his visit in 1912:

"Contamana has a population during the dry months of perhaps two to three hundred souls, mostly women, while during the rainy season this figure is trebled, owing to the return of rubber workers from their labours, some in order to recuperate, others to spend without stint in all kinds of foolishness the profits acquired during their stay in the bush." (1).

The concentration of labour on extractivism to the detriment of agricultural production caused the governments of the states of Pará and Amazonas great concern. This was in part obviously related to the need to import increasing quantities of basic food supplies previously produced locally, but also to the fact that extractivist production was principally undertaken by a class of relatively autonomous producers not subject to the direct control of the traditional landed property class.(2)

The Cabanagem Revolt of 1835 - 1839, in which as many as 30,000 of the 130,000 total non-indigenous population of Amazonia died, began as a political conflict between the traditional planter elite of Pará and the immigrant Portuguese merchant class in the capital of Pará, Belém. The violence quickly spread to the rural areas where rural labour turned on the planters and destroyed the plantations, seen as the principal cause of their servitude. Labour migrated en masse into the interior to engage in subsistence production and/or hunting and gathering. Thus a free labour force was formed which became available just as demand for rubber was rising. The Pará state government attempted to re-impose control of labour through the use of regimented

1. Woodroffe:1914:57.

2. Weinstein:1980:Chapter 2 gives a detailed description of the organic links between this class and the state's political elite.

labour, the 'Corpo de Trabalhadores', but this failed as the state had insufficient military strength to defeat the resistance that it generated (1).

Free labour engaged in rubber gathering to such an extent that it supplanted all other production in Pará and Amazonas, both celebrated for their fertile land. Even the most basic of food items were imported from other parts of the Empire and from abroad. In 1852, the first president of the Province of Amazonas, J.B. de Figueiredo Tenreiro Aranha, stated:

"Agriculture used to prosper in this region thanks to the labour of the Portuguese colonists and Indian volunteers. They produced cotton, rice, coffee, tobacco, and manioc sufficient for local needs and to service several local industries that had been created. Nowadays, all agricultural and other products in the Province have disappeared. All that remains... is the primitive, dangerous and low paid work of forest extractivism." (2).

Two years later, in 1854, the President of the Province of Pará echoed these sentiments and decried:

"...the almost exclusive use of labour in the extraction and production of rubber, to the point of making it necessary to import, from other provinces, basic foodstuffs that we previously produced in such abundance that we exported them to those who now supply us." (3).

Between 1796 and 1802, Pará exported on average 56,796 kilos of coffee per annum. Between 1810 and 1818, average annual exports of coffee had fallen to 44,285 kilos. In 1862, Pará did not produce enough coffee for

1. See Weinstein:1983:40ff and Bates:1864:16, 20, & 221.

2. Quoted in Le Cointe:1922:290.

3. Quoted in Weinstein:1983:35.

its own consumption and imported 293,800 kilos from Ceará and Bahia. Amazonas faced a similar predicament. The latter exported 91,078 kilos of coffee in 1830, 3,966 kilos in 1870, and none in 1895 (1).

The transformation of rubber from its position as just one of a number of 'Drogas do Sertão' into an essential raw material for North American and European industry may have caused the wholesale desertion of labour from agriculture and impeded the growth of stable urban centres in the interior, but it also served to generate considerable expansion in the entrepôts of Belém and Manaus (2).

Table 1.1.3. - Demographic Growth of Belém and Manaus , 1872 - 1940.

Year.	Belém.	% Growth.	Manaus.	% Growth.
1872	61,997	-	29,334	-
1890	50,064	- 19	38,720	+ 32
1900	96,560	+ 93	50,300	+ 30
1920	236,402	+145	75,704	+ 51
1940	206,331	- 13	106,399	+ 41

Source : IBGE, Anuário Estatístico do Brasil, 1974.

During the initial period of westward expansion, i.e., between 1872 and 1890, Belém's population fell by 19%. In the decade that followed, during which rubber prices rose by 37.5%, Belém's population increased

1. Le Coite: 1922:295.

2. Iquitos, the provincial capital and main port of Peru's rubber exporting region, also experienced a similar urban expansion in this period.

by 93%. The state capital of Amazonas, Manaus, also experienced a surge in population, although less dramatic than that of Belém. Between 1872 and 1890, it rose by 32% and by a further 30% between 1890 and 1900 (1).

1.2. Westward expansion.

The annexation of the area that is today known as the State of Acre has its origins in the early explorations of the Rivers Purús and Juruá. According to the document of the 'Prelature of São Peregrino', the "discovery" of the upper reaches of these two rivers began with the voyage of:

"...Seraphim da Silva Salgado, Brazilian, who, between the months of May and October of 1852, with twelve natives and twelve soldiers, journeyed by canoe up the stream called Arraia, a tributary off the left bank of the River Purus." (2).

This was followed shortly afterwards by the explorations of João da Cunha Correa in 1854 and João Gabriel de Carvalho Melo in 1857. Carvalho Melo came to the lower Purús with 40 families of settlers from the states of Maranhão and Ceará to engage in the extraction of forest products. In 1861, Manoel Urbano da Encarnação made a 55 day voyage up the main tributary of the Purús, the River Aquiry, whose name, later changed to Acre, came to indicate the whole region (3). Two further expeditions undertaken in 1864 and 1866 by the English engineer William Chandless along the upper reaches of the Purús and

1. For details of the social and commercial causes/effects of this rapid urban expansion, see Weinstein:1983 and Burns:1965.

2. Prelatura de São peregrino:1928:7.

3. Ibid ; Tocantins:1979:150 ; Cavalcanti:1983:24 ; Tambs:1966:258.

Juruá respectively completed the navigation of the main channels of communication (1).

These early penetrations into the western Amazon were either of a scientific nature or part of the previously noted extractivist phase of the 'Drogas do Sertão'. They were not characterised by the migration of large numbers of settlers. The sparsity of non-indigenous settlements in the area is demonstrated in the evidence of a Silva Coutinho who visited the Purús in 1865:

"There are 240 straw covered huts on the Purus spread along the 277.77 miles between Beruri and the farm at Boa Vista. The homes of people employed generally in the extraction of drugs." (2).

According to Craveira Costa, the exportation of drugs was significant, notwithstanding the small population. During the 1860's, the Purús region alone was producing 3,092 arrobas (3) of sasparilha, 14,100 arrobas of cocoa, and 36,625 arrobas of rubber per season (4). The drug product of the region was shipped down the Amazon to Belém for export even though the area formed part of Bolivia and Peru at the time.

The increasing demand/rising price of rubber, the exhaustion of the rubber trees in Eastern Amazonia, together with the knowledge gained from explorations that areas rich in rubber trees lay to the West, sparked off a massive migration westwards. At first, the wave of migrants consisted of rubber tappers who had previously worked the

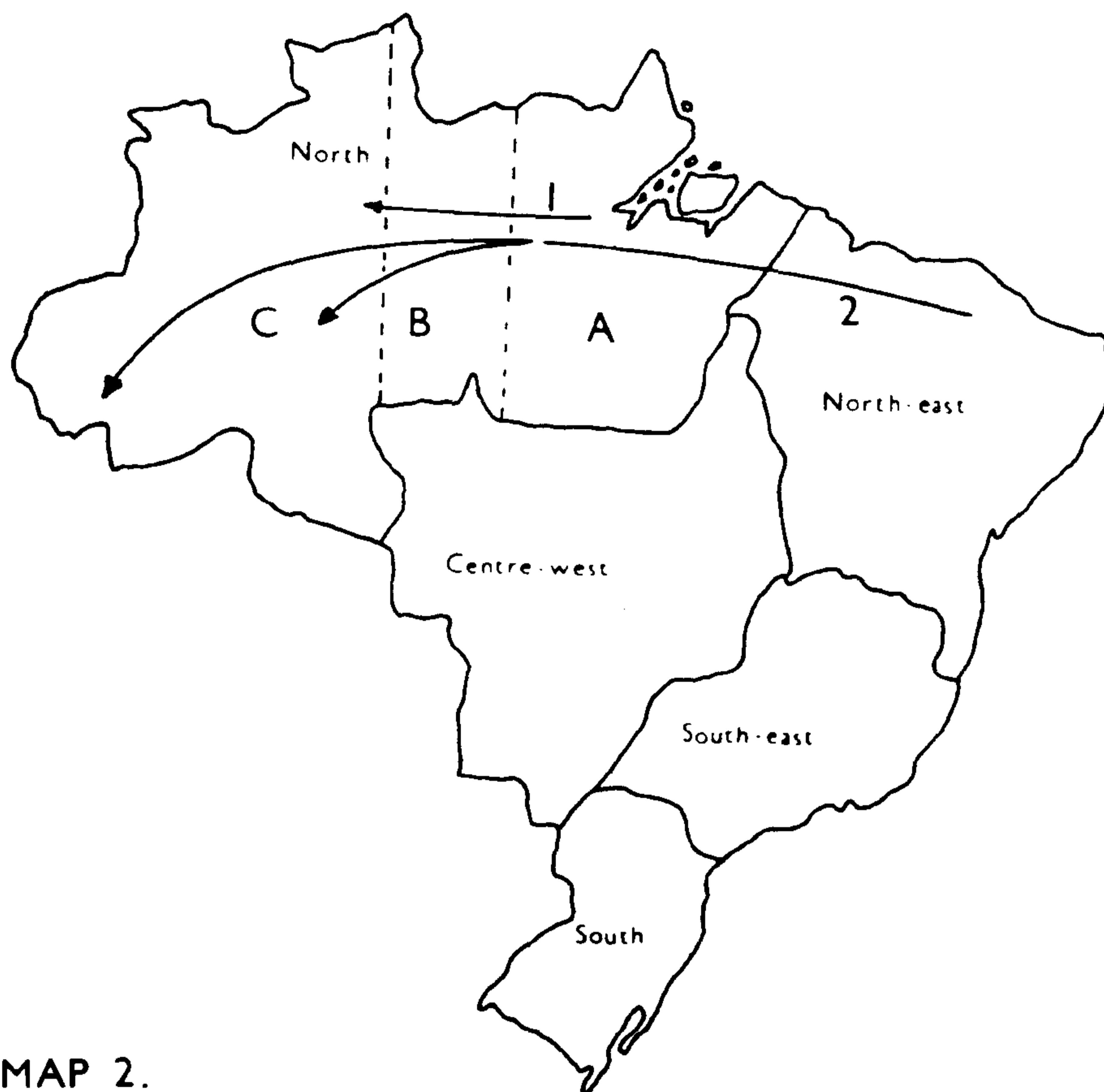
-
1. See Chandless:1862 , 1866 , 1867a , 1867b and 1868 for his accounts of the expeditions.
 2. Quoted in Tocantins:1979:145.
 3. One arroba = 15 kilos.
 4. Craveiro Costa:1973:22.

rubber fields of the delta and middle Amazon, or else had been employed in the urban area of Belém. Between 1870 and 1880, Pará's population increased by a mere 0.4%, much less than the vegetative growth rate, which indicates that a significant out-migration took place. Amazonas, on the other hand, saw its population grow from 54,895 to 120,899 during the same period, an increase of 120% in just 10 years (see Table 1.1.4. and Map 2).

The big 'push' into Acre began in the late 1870's when a second wave of migrants, this time from the North-East of Brazil, moved further westwards onto the upper rivers. This migration co-incident with a severe drought in the North-east that lasted from 1877 to 1880 (1). According to Reis (2), almost 1,000 persons migrated from the drought-stricken areas into the Amazon during the first few months. Evidence given in the 'Relatorios dos Presidentes da Província do Amazonas' (3) suggests that approximately 5,000 migrants per annum made the journey from the North-East to Amazonia during the first years of the drought. Most of the migrants came from the State of Ceará. Craveira Costa puts the figure somewhat higher:

"...in 1877, 14,000 persons left Ceara for Amazonia. In the following year, there was a true exodus: the migratory flow reached the enormous figure of 54,000 individuals. The wave of migrants did not stop. Ceara depopulated itself for the benefit of Amazonia. Amazonas (4) became the preferred refuge of those from Ceara afflicted by the drought. Even in 1900...the number of persons who abandoned their native home reached 47,835, of which two-thirds took the road north." (5).

-
1. For a discussion of the effects of the drought on the population of the North-east, see: Cava:1970; Girao:1948; L.A.C.da Silva:1982; Smith:1972.
 2. Reis:1977:26/7.
 3. Quoted in Aquino:1982:62.
 4. Here, Amazonas includes Acre as the latter did not exist as a distinct geo-political entity at this time.
 5. Craveiro Costa:1973:25.



MAP 2.

Brazil: Rubber zones and internal migration.

- A** Delta Region & Lower Amazon
- B** Middle Amazon
- C** Upper Amazon
- 1** Intra-regional migration C.1850 +
- 2** Inter-regional migration C.1870 +

Table 1.1.4. - Amazonia : Demographic Growth.1840 - 1920.

Year.	Pará.	Amazonas.	Acre.	Amazonia.
1840	109,960	19,570	-	129,530
1850	N/K	N/K	-	200,391
1860	232,063	46,187	-	278,250
1870	268,014	54,895	-	322,909
1880	269,098	120,899	-	389,997
1890	328,455	147,915	-	476,370
1900	445,356	249,756	-	695,112
1910	783,845	358,695	74,484	1,217,024
1920	983,507	363,166	92,379	1,439,052

Source : R.Santos:1980:111; IBGE,Sinopse Preliminar do Censo Demográfico,Brasil,1970.

N.B. Prior to 1910,the non-indigenous population of Acre is included in that of Amazonas. The indigenous population is not included here, no details being available for either Amazonia or individual states.

In contrast to Amazonas' 120% population increase,that of Ceará rose only 11.6% in the same period,from 721,686 in 1872 to 805,687 in 1890. Over the next ten years, Ceará's population again only expanded by 5.4% to 849,127 (1). This low level of population growth (2) was not simply the result of out-migration,starvation and disease also took their toll during the drought. Herbert Smith who travelled in Ceará at the time gives the following description of what was happening in the state in the first year of the drought:

1. IBGE: Recenseamento geral do Brasil,1980.

2. The figures for Ceará of 11.6% and 5.4% may be compared to those of Brazil as a whole which were 44.3% and 21.7% for the same period,i.e., 1872 to 1890 and 1890 to 1900.

"Long, long was the summer of 1877. Drought blazed in the sertão; the birds fell dead from leafless trees; foxes and armadillos died in their holes; insects disappeared. Drought withered the sea-coast woods, dried up the streams, brought thousands of refugees to Fortaleza and the interior towns." (1).

There is considerable controversy as to the numbers that actually migrated northwards into Amazonia during the so-called Rubber Boom period, i.e., 1870 - 1920. Le Cointe puts the figure for those who migrated from the North-East between 1890 and 1913 at 100,000, 60% of whom went to the Purús and 40% to the Juruá (2). Furtado estimates that, between 1872 and 1910, approximately 500,000 'Nordestinos' (3) moved into the Amazon Basin (4). Amilcar Tupiassu, on the other hand, suggests that the number for the same period was 300,000 (5). Samuel Benchimol gives the figure for 1877 - 1900 as 160,125 (6). Finally, Graham and Barque de Holanda estimate that, between 1872 and 1900, 117,125 made the journey (7).

Whatever the actual magnitude of the migration, it involved the dislocation of large numbers of people. It has been customary to refer to the abovementioned drought as the principal contributory factor in the 'economic occupation' of western Amazonia (8). However, while the occurrence of the drought may explain the existence of a large population with a propensity to migrate, the migration of that population to Amazonas and Acre was not guaranteed 'a priori' by it. Reference must be made to the wider contextual situation.

1. Smith:1879:412. Also quoted in Smith:1972:167.

2. Le Cointe:1922:360.

3. 'Northeasterner'.

4. Furtado:1982:129 - 135.

5. Tupiassu " O Processo Demográfico da Amazônia" in Tupiassu:1971.

6. Benchimol:1965.

7. Graham & Barque de Holanda:1971:98.

8. For example, Smith:1972:166ff.

Firstly, the developments in the techniques of manufacturing rubber products in Europe and North America have already been noted. These served to stimulate demand and push up the price of natural rubber. However, a crucial factor in the continuance of this demand was the invention of the pneumatic tyre and the later development of the automobile industry, particularly that of the U.S.A. By 1905, the U.S.A. was consuming 46% of world rubber production, a share which had risen to 74% in 1924 (1). The following tables chart the growth of the American rubber manufacturing industry and the rise in motor vehicle sales. With reference to the former, it is interesting to note the 189% increase in the number of manufacturing establishments between 1879 and 1899, the very years which saw the greatest numbers of migrants flowing into the western Amazon.

Secondly, improvements in international transport, especially the development of steam engines for shipping in 1853, not only made the transportation of freight less expensive and quicker, it also facilitated the migration of European labour to the 'New World'. This was another crucial factor which helped determine where the drought-stricken population would migrate in that it was effectively excluded from the coffee plantations of the South by the preference of the planters for imported, mainly Italian, labour (2).

A third factor was the extension of credit facilities by the merchant banks of Europe and the U.S.A., not only to those actively engaged in

1. Hotchkiss:1924:130ff.

2. Weinstein:1983:55 ; Santos:1980:107.

Table 1.1.5. - The growth of the American Rubber Manufacturing Industry, selected years 1849 - 1921.

Year.	Number of Establishments.	Index (1879 = 100).
1849	34	33
1859	29	28
1869	56	54
1879	104	100
1889	167	161
1899	301	289
1904	265	254
1909	267	257
1914	342	329
1919	477	459
1921	496	477

Source : Adapted from Hotchkiss:1924:131.

Table 1.1.6. - American Motor Vehicle Sales, 1900 - 1922.

Year.	Total.
1900	4,192
1901	7,000
1902	9,000
1903	11,235
1904	22,830
1905	25,000
1906	34,000
1907	44,000
1908	65,000
1909	127,287
1910	187,000
1911	210,000
1912	378,000
1913	485,000
1914	573,039
1915	969,930
1916	1,617,708
1917	1,873,949
1918	1,170,686
1919	1,876,356
1920	2,227,349
1921	1,616,119
1922	2,544,176

Source : Drabble:1973:224.

the production and commercialisation of rubber, but also to the governments of both the migrant recipient states, i.e., Pará and Amazonas, and to the migrant donor states such as Ceará. The latter were coming under increasing pressure as those affected by the drought moved into the urban areas on the coast. The provision of credit enabled the State governments both to finance social provisions for the refugees and to cover the cost of their translocation to the rubber fields of the Upper Amazon (1).

Fourthly, at the ideological, i.e., the level of perception, the Nordesteño labourer equated work on the coffee plantations of the South with the traditional forms of slave labour that had previously existed on the sugar plantations of the North-east. This did not match his aspirations of self-employment which could be achieved as a rubber tapper in the Amazon where he would benefit directly from the fruits of his labour (2). The illusion of rapid enrichment in the rubber fields was sufficient to subvert the stimulus of better working conditions in the South. The illusion itself was part of a propaganda campaign deliberately waged by the Rubber Barons of Pará and Amazonas in the northeastern cities of Fortaleza, Recife and Natal, in order to attract Nordesteño labour (3).

Finally, the expansion westward was also facilitated by the ease and low cost of transport from the coastal cities of the North-East to the port of Belém at the mouth of the Amazon from where the journey up-river usually began. Travel to the South was still difficult and expensive at this time (4). In addition, the resistance to the migration by the

1. De Paula:1982:66 ; Santos:1980:108.

2. As will be shown in Chapter 2, this was also an illusion.

3. Santos:Ibid ; Aquino:1982:63 ; Cunha:1941:23-4.

4. Ibid.

northeastern landed oligarchy collapsed during this period in which the drought was decimating the rural population. Souza (1) points to cases where the landowners themselves migrated to the Purús and Juruá valleys where they installed themselves as rubber estate owners.

Thus, the migration from the North-east to western Amazonia resulted from the interplay of a complex array of factors. The migration was precipitate and violent. By 1887, the non-indigenous population of the upper Purús (2), which now forms the eastern half of the State of Acre, numbered 10,000 who were exporting some 500,000 kilos of rubber per annum down river to Belém and Manaus (3). When two Englishmen, Barrington Brown and William Lindstone, travelled along the upper reaches of the Purús in 1873, they wrote:

"Every afternoon we observed, as we steamed along, wisps of smoke rising from the banks at frequent intervals. These indicated the places where men were engaged in the process of manufacturing India-rubber - the Purús being the headquarters of this business." (4).

The migratory current soon extended itself to the tributaries of the other main river of the region, the Juruá. The first steam ship to navigate the Juruá was the 'Curuzu' in 1870 followed by the 'Juruá' in 1871, the 'Guarajá' in 1880 and the 'Dido' in 1882 (5). Sobrinho notes the constant flow of migrants to the Juruá valley:

"...the current of migrants did not stop, following at short intervals by means of canoes, launches and steam vessels of

1. Souza:1960:70.

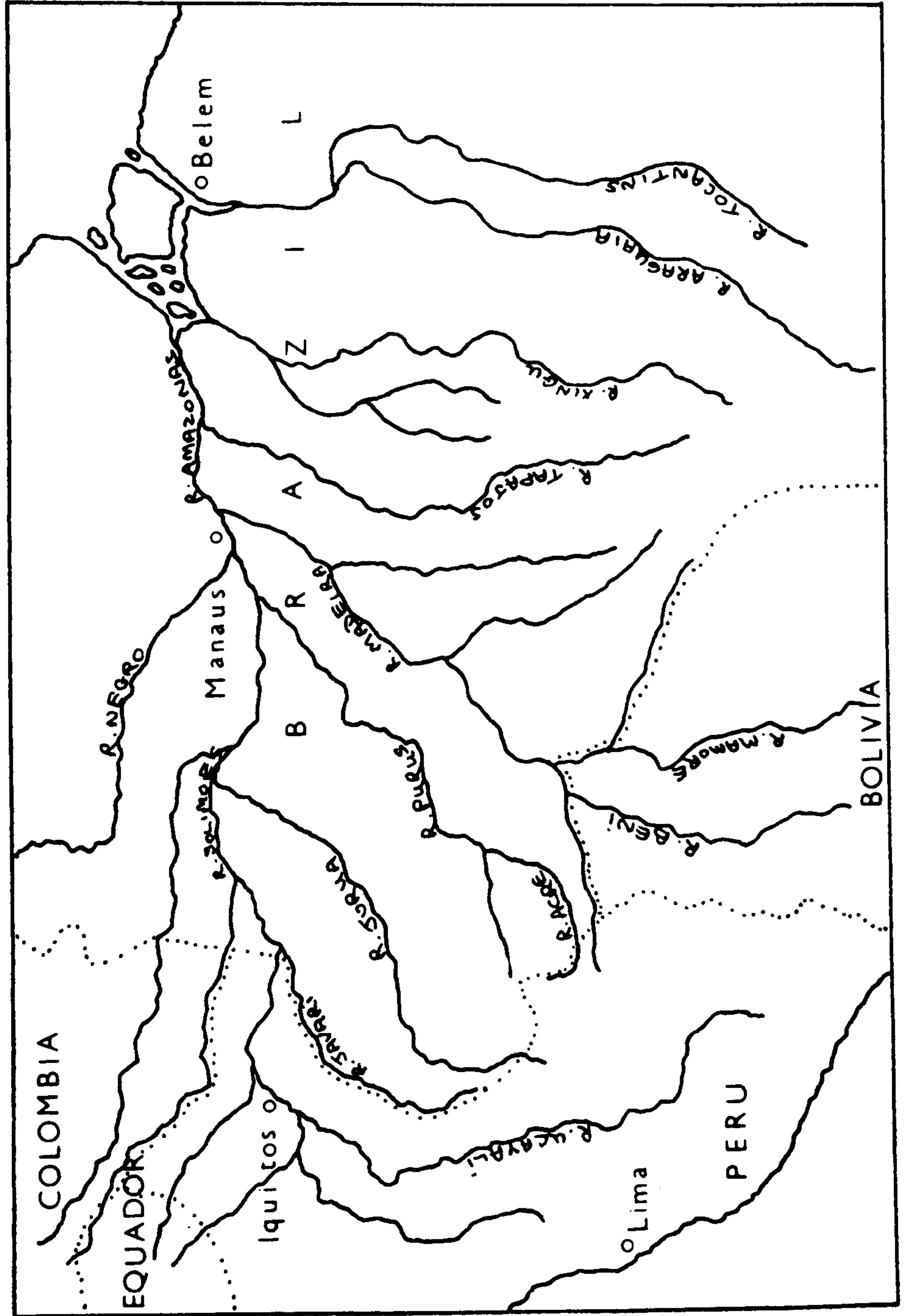
2. See Map 3 for location of rivers.

3. Tocantins:1979:147 ; Bowman:1913 ; Church:1904.

4. Brown & Lindstone:1878.

5. Tocantins:Ibid.

MAP 3
The Amazon and its
tributaries.



greater size destined for the Upper Juruá until by 1894...the banks of the Juruá were punctuated by small huts...that were the first nuclei of population." (1)

By 1884, Brazilians had crossed the Bolivian and Peruvian borders into the valleys of the tributaries of the Purús and Juruá in such great numbers that they greatly exceeded the resident national population. By 1900, there were more than 60,000 Brazilians in the Acre region (2).

The possibility of self-enrichment through the extraction of rubber in Acre, which contained trees that gave a greater yield than those of the lower Amazon, was not lost on either the Bolivians or the Peruvians. Following Heath's (3) navigation of the River Beni, which had previously been assumed impossible, Bolivian rubber tappers began to move into the Beni Province, of which eastern Acre was a part, from 1879 onwards. Heath estimated that at the end of 1880 there were less than 200 Bolivians working rubber along the Beni, these had expanded to over 2,000 within a few months of his successful navigation at the beginning of the next year. In 1896, the Peruvians, who had all but destroyed the rubber forests in the Ucayali Valley (4), began to move into the Juruá valley. Thus, Brazilians moving westwards began to clash with Bolivians and Peruvians moving eastwards. The struggle for control of the rubber fields of Acre had begun (5).

1. Sobrinho:1922.

2. Church:1904:598 ; Bowman:1913:278 ; Fifer:1970:124 ; Ganzert:1934:434.

3. For a discussion of the international implications of Heath's mission to Bolivia, see Bowman:1913; Martin:1918 ; Fifer: 1966 and 1970.

4. See Map 3.

5. Fifer:1970:124 ; De Riviére:1892 and 1900 ; Ganzert:1934:435 ; Ribeiro:1982:42ff.

1.3. The annexation of Acre.

The incorporation by Brazil in 1903 of the Acre Territory marked the conclusion of the process of consolidation of Brazilian national territory that began with the establishment of a bridge-head in the Americas following the Treaty of Tordesillas in 1494 and which continued with the systematic violation of that and subsequent treaties (1).

The historic origins of the frontiers between Brazil, Peru and Bolivia began in 1750 when, on the 13th of January, the territorial rivalry between Portugal and Spain on the subcontinent was temporarily resolved with the signing of the Treaty of Madrid. Between Pedro Teixeira's navigation of the River Madeira in 1722 and Leonardo de Oliveira's journey through Mato grosso in 1747, several expeditions were successfully mounted that opened up the hinterland of Brazil's Atlantic coastline (2). Thus, the Treaty of Madrid, based on the concept of 'uti possidetis de facto' (3), gave juridical rights to what already existed in reality (4). The 'unknown areas' (5), i.e., those which had not been penetrated from the east by Portugal or from the west by Spain, were divided equally between them by a line running east to west. What is now Acre fell to Spain.

1. See Map 4.

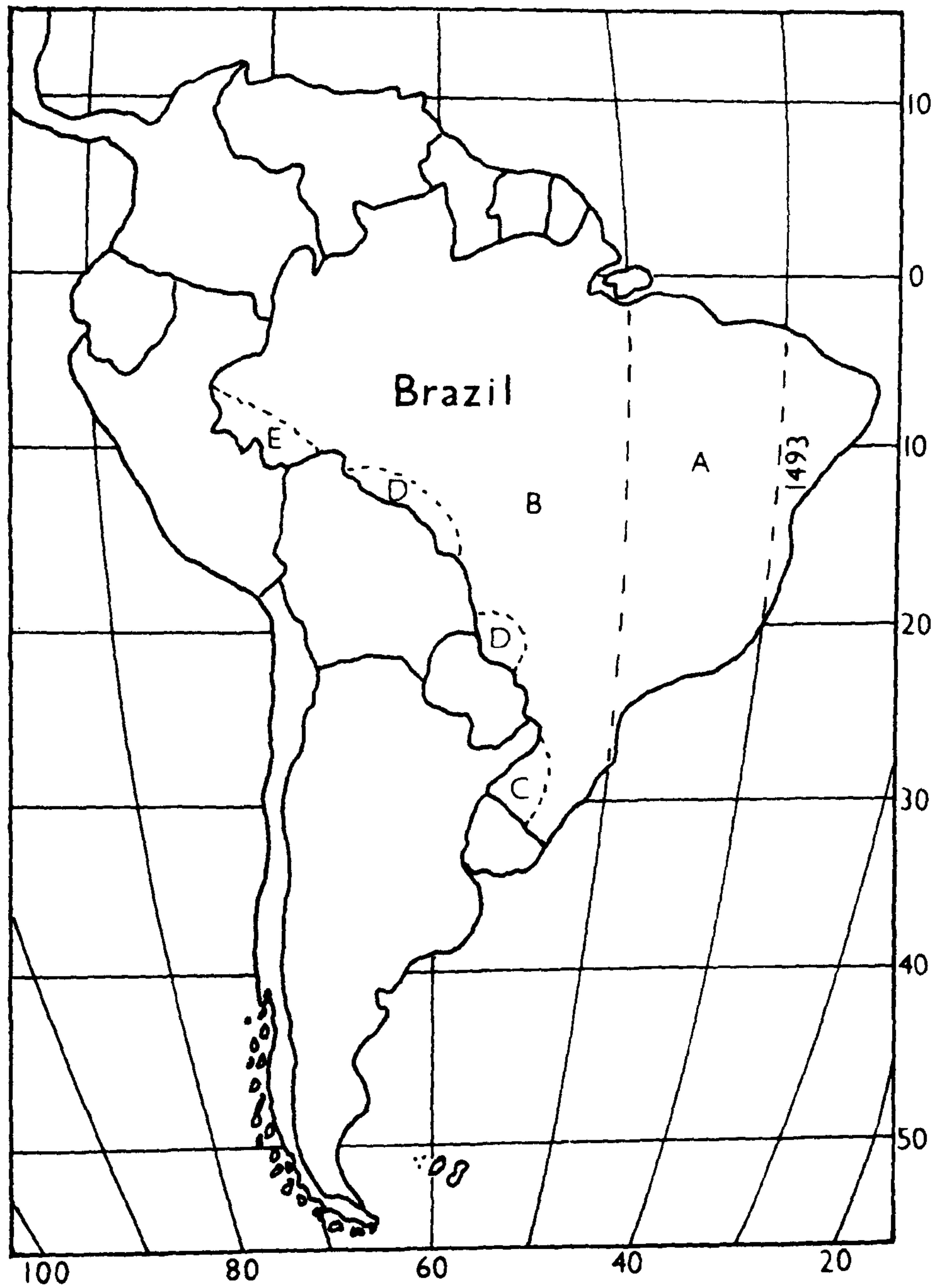
2. For a history of Brazil's boundary disputes with Peru and Bolivia, see : Church:1904 ; Fifer:1966 ; Ganzert:1934 ; Akers:1904 ; Ireland:1938 ; Platt:1924 ; Reis: 1941 and 1982 ; Tambs:1966 ; Tocantins:1979 ; Araújo Lima:1952 ; Ferreira:1962.

3. "Physical possession" as opposed to 'uti possidetis juris', i.e., "juridical possession". For a discussion of these concepts, see Ireland:1938:321ff.

4. Tocantins:1979:71 - 75.

5. Marked on Spanish maps of the period as 'Tierras no descubiertas'.

MAP 4 : Brazilian Expansion, 1493 - 1903



- | | |
|---|------------------------------|
| A | Treaty of Tordesillas, 1494 |
| B | Treaty of Madrid, 1750 |
| C | Treaty of Ildelfonso, 1777 |
| D | Treaty of 1872 with Paraguay |
| E | Treaty of Petropolis, 1903 |

The problem of territorial control re-emerged in the 1770's when Spanish forces overran the Island of Santa Catarina in 1777 and prepared to invade Rio Grande do Sul. A new treaty was signed at Santo Ildelfonso which ceded part of what is now the State of Rio Grande do Sul to Brazil. In terms of the 'unknown regions' of the Amazon, the Treaty of Santo Ildelfonso traced the same dividing line as did the earlier Treaty of Madrid (1).

In 1825, when Bolivia announced its independence from Spain, the question of the border between Bolivia and Brazil was re-opened. In 1853, Bolivia, seeking an exit to the Atlantic, enacted a decree that liberated the navigation to foreign vessels of the rivers within its territory, all of which flowed into either the River Amazon or the River Plate, i.e., through Brazilian territory. Brazil protested and the diplomatic manoeuvrings that ensued resulted in the Treaty of Ayacucho in 1867 and the Treaty with Paraguay in 1872 in which Brazil gained some 540,000 square miles of territory on the Paraguay and Madeira Rivers (2). Again Brazil renounced the right to the area that later became Acre, notwithstanding the fact that the majority of its non-indigenous population were Brazilian (3).

Bolivia had lost a considerable portion of its territory as a direct result of the encroachment by Brazilian nationals across its borders. In an attempt to avoid a repetition of this and to counteract the Brazilian presence in the area, the Melgarejo Government in La Paz initiated two colonisation projects, the first

1. Reis:1941:10 ; Ireland:1938:323.

2. Tocantins:1979:126 and 171 ; Ireland:1938:42 ; Tambs:1966:255.

3. Magalhães:1977:47.

in 1868 and the second in 1870 (1). Both of these projects collapsed following the fall of the Malgarejo regime in 1871. A third project, the 'Brabo Contract' of 1880, which sought to introduce 100,000 colonists in the space of 10 years did not start as the company failed to raise sufficient capital on the London money markets (2).

During this period, Bolivia had also lost her former maritime provinces in the war with Chile in 1879 and thus no longer had direct access to the Pacific (3). She was therefore dependent on the Brazilian river network for the commercialisation of her exports. In 1883, Brazil renounced the Treaty of Ayacucho, with the exception of the boundary limits, thus denying Bolivia access to the River Amazon. Bolivia retaliated in 1890 when it created a regional administration in the area on its border with Brazil, the 'Delegacion Nacional del Rio Purus y Madre de Dios', in an attempt to enforce its sovereignty over that portion of its territory which had received large influxes of Brazilian rubber tappers who had migrated from Brazil's North-East into Amazonia. In 1899, a new agreement was reached after an expedition led by a Brazilian naval officer found that an error had been made in the drawing up of the earlier boundary. Brazil received another 1,200 square kilometres of Bolivian territory (4).

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1. Both of these projects were contracted out to Americans, Colonel Church and Azaniel Piper respectively, which illustrates the increased U.S. interest in the rubber producing regions of the Amazon. For a more detailed discussion of this point, see: Bell:1939 ; Martin:1918 ; and Tambs:1966.
 2. Tambs:1966:263 ; Akers:1904:602.
 3. Pendle:1963:146ff.
 4. Tocantins:1979:171ff.

Notwithstanding the succession of treaties that categorically located the Acre Territory within the limits of the Bolivian and Peruvian boundaries, the wave of Brazilian rubber tappers still continued to cross the border. The Bolivian Government ordered troops into the area and set up a customs house on the River Acre to tax local rubber exports. At this point in time, the area on the Brazilian side of the border was controlled by the State of Amazonas which became concerned at the loss of revenue that the Bolivian action would signify, particularly if rubber was to be shipped from Bolivian territory directly along the Amazon to the U.S.A. and so by-pass Manaus. Amazonas' state revenues had increased from 3,710 contos de reis in 1890 to 33,081 contos de reis in 1900, a tenfold increase in ten years the direct result of its control over the rubber exports of western Amazonia (1).

On May the 1st, 1899, the Government of the State of Amazonas financed the first 'Acrean revolution' led by the rubber baron José de Carvalho who armed over 15,000 Brazilian rubber tappers and seized control of the territory. On the 24th of May of the same year, just 23 days later, Carvalho sailed back down the River Purús to Manaus after his forces had been routed by the Bolivian army. On the 14th of July, 1899, another expedition financed by Amazonas and headed by Luis Galvez defeated the Bolivians and proclaimed the 'Independent Republic of Acre' (2).

1. Tocantins: Ibid. ; R. Santos: 1980: 193.

2. Tocantins: Ibid. ; Ireland: 1938: 45ff. For an interesting account of the rise and fall of the 'Galvez Empire' in the 'Romance-Reportagem' form, see Márcio Souza: 1981.

Throughout the course of these events, the Brazilian Government insisted on Bolivian sovereignty over the disputed area and refused to recognise the new Republic. On the 15th of March, 1900, the Brazilian navy was sent to Acre and Galvez was deposed. A new independence expedition was sent out by the State of Amazonas, the 'Expedição Romantica', which sailed from Manaus on November 16th, 1900. It was defeated by the Bolivian army on the 24th of December in the same year (1).

Although these three expeditionary forces were ultimately defeated, lasting only 23 days, 8 months, and 38 days respectively, they were obviously very perturbing for the Bolivians who had already lost so much territory. Bolivia began to negotiate with British and North American merchant bankers for the formation of yet another colonisation company. This resulted in the establishment of the 'Bolivian Syndicate' in 1901, which was constituted along the lines of the East India Company and which had great administrative and juridical powers over the resident population of the areas under its control. The announcement of the charter of the Bolivian Syndicate provoked an outcry in neighbouring Brazil and Peru. For the former, the situation presented the possibility of a hostile fleet in Amazonian waters. It also, once again, threatened the revenue of Amazonas which duly financed yet another expedition under the leadership of Plácido do Castro who proclaimed the 'Independent State of Acre' in January, 1903 (2).

1. Tocantins:1979:171ff.

2. Ibid.

However, at this point, a new factor entered the political arena, a change of government in Brazil and with it a change to a more nationalistic stance on the situation in Acre. The new chancellor, the Barão do Rio Branco, negotiated the closure of the Bolivian Syndicate for an indemnity of £110,000. On the 17th of November, 1903, the Treaty of Petrópolis was ratified in which Bolivia ceded the Territory of Acre to Brazil for the sum of £2,000,000, the construction of a railway from the River Mamoré in Bolivia to the River Madeira which would give Bolivia access to the Atlantic, and the transfer of 860,00 square kilometres of Mato Grosso to Bolivia. Brazil had acquired 181,000 square kilometres of Acre and the indemnity was rapidly recuperated by the rubber revenues that Acre generated (1).

This was not the first time that territories had changed hands for money. Among the most notable precedents were : the Treaty of Paris in 1803 in which France ceded Louisiana to the U.S.A. for 16,000,000 U.S. dollars ; the Treaty of 1853 in which Mexico sold its land in Arizona to the U.S.A. for £2,000,000 ; and the Convention of Washington of 1867 in which Russia sold Alaska to the U.S.A. for £1,140,000.

On the 25th of February, 1904, through the enactment of Law 1,181, Acre became a federal territory of Brazil under the direct control of the State of Amazonas (2). The question of the border with Peru

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1. Tocantins: Ibid. A detailed discussion of this period of Acrean history is given in Ferreira: 1962 as well as providing an interesting account of the construction of the Madeira-Mamoré line.
 2. Weinstein: 1983: Chapter 7 contains a discussion of the rivalry between Pará and Amazonas for control of Acre.

was settled on the 8th of September, 1909, when Brazil recognised the rights of Peru to those territories in which the majority of the resident population was Peruvian.

Thus, in a relatively short space of time, from 1898 when Bolivia first sent troops into Acre up until its annexation by Brazil in 1904, control over Acre had changed hands seven times. The confusion that this was to present for the ratification of land titles was a crucial factor in the later struggle for land in the 1970's as will be demonstrated in Part 2.

Chapter 2 - Extractivist Production.

During the early phase of rubber collection, i.e., prior to 1840, the greater part of Amazonia's rubber product was gathered by the seasonal tapping expeditions as described by Bates in the previous chapter. At this point in time, rubber production was restricted to the delta region and on the islands at the mouth of the Amazon both of which were subject to flooding annually. Thus, whole families and even entire villages were transported to the rubber fields for the duration of the dry season along with the provisions and other essentials that were needed to maintain them. There was little division of labour. Men, women, and the older children engaged in both the tapping and primitive manufacturing process, while the younger children performed tasks such as the collection of wild fruits and wood for smoking the rubber (1).

As the price of rubber rose, so expeditions into the interior became more viable. These penetrated areas of 'terra firma', areas of higher ground not subject to flooding and therefore capable of permanent settlement. From 1840 onwards, small rubber estates, or 'seringais', sprang up along the lower Amazon, i.e., between the mouths of the Rivers Xingu and Tapajos (2), which by 1860 had spread as far as the lower Purús in the middle Amazon (3).

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1. Bates:1864:77ff & 163 ; Santos:1980:69ff ; Weinstein:1983a ; Tocantins:1960:157.
 2. See Maps 2 and 3.
 3. Reis:1953:106 ; Mendes;1943:55 ; Santos:1980:69ff ; Tocantins:1960:171.

The labour force of these small seringais was not forced labour, nor was any agent of merchant capital directly involved in the production process. The rubber tappers, or 'seringueiros', either owned the seringal on which they worked, having either a land title or else occupying it through 'posse' (1), or they rented it from the actual owner. In those instances where the seringal was rented, it was frequently the case that the rent was calculated as a percentage of the seringal's annual rubber production. In some cases, the renter was also obliged to sell the rubber product to the owner and/or exchange it for merchandise at the store owned by him. In addition to rubber production, the seringal was also the site of subsistence crop production usually undertaken by family labour (2).

The creation of these small seringais based on family labour in the previously unoccupied Amazonian interior was, on the one hand, stimulated by the rising demand and thus higher price for the product on the world market, but was facilitated by : a) the Cabanagem Revolt previously mentioned which created/resulted in an independent labour force that spread itself thinly along the the tributaries of the lower and middle Amazons; and b) by the ending of the 'Sesmaria System' (3) in 1822 after which the right of 'posse' was granted to those who moved onto public lands (4) and economically utilised that land. It is interesting to note that the use of terras devolutas solely for the tapping of wild stands of rubber trees was not

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1. 'Posse' - squatter's rights.
 2. Mendes:1943:55 ; Weinstein:1983a:131.
 3. The system of land grants that characterised land tenure during the Colonial period. For a discussion of land policy in 19th century Brazil, see Dean:1971.
 4. 'Terras Devolutas'.

considered sufficient grounds for the granting of a title through posse, whereas the gathering of the fruit of the wild cocoa tree was. This obviously was related to the fact that cocoa production was predominantly carried out on the traditional estates whereas rubber production was, at this time, the domain of the small settler or itinerant collector, i.e., the two principal rural factions who had opposed each other in the Cabanagem Revolt (1).

As noted, rubber production, whether on the early expeditions or the seringais, utilized family labour either directly in the production of rubber itself or indirectly through the production of subsistence items to maintain the seringueiro. In addition, the seringueiros under both regimes were linked to the rubber export houses on the coast via the credit system that came to be known as the 'Aviamento System' (2).

Firstly, the expeditions were furnished with provisions, implements, and other essentials to last them during the tapping season, the cost of which was offset against the season's production. Similarly, the sedentary rubber tapper on the seringal was also supplied with goods, including subsistence items, which could not be produced by family labour either because that labour was dedicated to other production, e.g., rubber, or else it was incapable of producing such items, e.g., kerosene for lamps. Again these supplies were invariably obtained on credit against the coming season's production. As both Santos and Reis note, the Amazonian economy had traditionally relied on such

1. Dean:1971:608ff ; Bandecchi:1967:45 ; Weinstein:1983:48.

2. To be discussed in detail in section 2.2. of this chapter.

forms of 'barter' as a means of commercialising the product of the isolated rural producer in an essentially non-monetised economy (1).

In addition to the small seringais, some large estates also were devoted to rubber production once the price became attractive enough. Here, the direct producer, the seringueiro, was neither the owner or the renter of the seringal. The estate was divided between a number of seringueiros each of which became the temporary 'partner' of the estate owner. On the one hand, the rubber that the seringueiro produced belonged to the seringueiro although he was obliged to hand over 50% of it to the estate owner as a form of rent. On the other hand, he was also obliged to sell the remaining 50% to the estate owner at a price that was a little below the prevailing market price. It was frequently the case that the balance that accrued to the seringueiro was spent in the estate owner's store. Thus, the seringueiro here was a type of sharecropper, a 'meieiro' (2). However, the seringueiro was still in effect an independent producer. There was no quota of rubber to be produced, nor was there interference in the way that he produced it (3).

The crude tapping methods used at the time and the successive tapping of trees without permitting them an adequate rest period, quickly exhausted the rubber fields of the lower Amazon and the Delta region (4) and so the 'rubber front' moved westwards in search of fresh stands of wild rubber. At approximately the same time as this was occurring, the Brazilian government enacted the Land Law of 1850

1. Santos:1980:156ff ; Reis:1953:85 ; Goulart:1968:43ff.

2. 'Meieiro' - literally one who receives half of his product, the remainder being paid over to the landowner. This form of production relation will be discussed further in Part 2.

3. Russan:1902 ; Akers:1914:56 ; Dean:1971:608ff.

which prohibited the occupation of terras devolutas except through the purchase of such lands from the state itself (1). The price of these lands was deliberately set above the prevailing market price so as to deny access to them to both the Brazilian peasant and to the European migrant, thus ensuring they remained part of a captive labour force (2).

The 1850 Land Law, which effectively created an enclosure system, perpetuated the colonial agrarian regime based on large landed properties - 'latifundia'. This signified that, when the rubber front moved west, it did not do so on the basis of the expansion of small seringais worked by the seringueiro-patrão (3) and his family. Rather, as will be demonstrated in the sections that follow, the seringais of western Amazonas and of Acre were in the main large estates sustained by the exploitation of the direct producer under a regime that reproduced itself through the virtual enslavement of the seringueiro via a system of debt-peonage.

2.1. The Labour Process.

The two principal sources of natural rubber during the initial phase of Amazonian production were the Branca (white) and Vermelha (red) varieties of the *Hevea Brasiliensis* (4) which are predominant in the lower Amazon and delta region. The expeditions described in Chapter One 'discovered' stands of two new varieties which grew in greater

1. Bandecchi:1967:45ff ; Guimarães:1979:31ff.

2. Dean:1971:613ff.

3. Seringueiro-patrão is used here to distinguish between the 'self-employed' seringueiro (patrão = master) and the seringueiro-cativo (cativo = captive) who worked for a master.

4. Also called Seringueira after the syringes made by natives.

abundance in the valleys of the middle and upper Amazon - *Castilloa Elastica* and *Hevea Brasiliensis Preta* (black) - both of which produced more latex than the earlier known varieties (1).

Castilloa produces a type of rubber known as 'Caucho' which can only be extracted by felling the tree and bleeding it dry, i.e., by killing the source itself. The direct producer, the 'cauchoeiro', must lead a nomadic existence in constant search of fresh stands of *castilloa*. The *seringueira preta*, on the other hand, can be tapped for periods of up to 60 years. Here the rubber tapper, the *seringueiro*, leads a sedentary life on the *seringal*. The two methods used to extract the product are detailed below.

2.1.1. The Production of Caucho.

After 1880, *Castilloa* began to be tapped on a truly commercial basis in the Western Amazon with the mounting of large expeditions of up to 40 *cauchoeiros*. In 1882, *caucho* was being produced along the Rivers Tigre, Morona and Pastaza to the west of Iquitos in Peru. As these areas became exhausted, so the *cauchoeiros* moved into the Ucayali valley in 1855, into the Beni in 1890, and into the Javary in 1892. By 1896, Peruvian *cauchoeiros* were felling trees in the valleys of the tributaries of the upper Purús and Juruá, in the area that was later to become the state of Acre (2).

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1. Woodruff:1958:38ff ; Higbee:1951. The main botanical sources of latex are: *Hevea* and *Castilloa* in the Americas ; *Landolphia* and *Clitandra* in Africa ; and *Ficus Elastica* & *Urceola Elastica* in the East Indies. *Hevea Branca* was later transported to the East Indies plantations as Chapter 3 will note.
 2. See Map 3 for the location of these areas.

The extraction of caucho began somewhat later in Eastern Amazonia beginning in the valleys of the Xingu and Tocantins in 1892 and later in that decade along the Tapajos and the Madeira. Such was the predation that caucho production came to a halt in 1910 with the virtual disappearance of the *Castilloa* from much of the Amazon valley (1).

Given the distances of the producing areas from the nearest urban centres and the relative scarcity of labour in the interior (2), it was necessary to equip expeditions that would last the whole tapping season, i.e., from May through to September. The 'Patron', or master cauchoeiro, gathered a labour force with the promise of a guaranteed price for their caucho product from which the cost of transport and maintenance would be deducted. Bedoya gives the following list of supplies that each cauchoeiro would require for a six month expedition:

- 6 Baskets of Cassava Flour.
- 20 Kilos of Salted Meat.
- 60 Kilos of Beans.
- 30 Kilos of Sugar.
- 15 Kilos of Coffee.
- 3 5lb Tins of Butter.
- 7 1/2 Kilos of Salt.
- Implements for cooking and eating. (3).

Joseph Woodroffe, who was himself a master cauchoeiro in the early 1900's on the River Tigre in Peru, describes the working methods used by the cauchoeiros:

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1. Le Cointe:1922:420 (Vol.1) ; Marin:1977:26ff ; Guerra:1955:66 ; Enoch:1907:285ff ; Fifer:1966:366 ; Akers:1914:72.
 2. Indigenous labour will be discussed in Section 2.3.
 3. Bedoya:1905:22.

" Each man is supplied with arms and ammunition and food calculated to last him about six days, consisting for the most part of a few tins of sardines and eight of farinha (1). Having made a small bundle of other necessities, he penetrates into the bush in search of the caucho trees which, as he encounters them, are marked with a big letter or other sign cut into the bark of the tree. That particular tree then is his own property, and no other cutter will work upon it, unless he is prepared to place his life in jeopardy. The cauchero continues his wanderings in the bush, marking well his trail as he goes, until he has blazed the number of trees which he calculates will yield him the amount of rubber that he has set as his limit, after which he returns to the main camp for his axe, a good supply of all that he will require for a month or more, and, returning to the bush, he makes for the first tree and builds himself a small hut. The caucho (*Castilloa Elastica*) is worked in this manner: clearing a space all around the base of the tree perhaps twenty feet in radius, he proceeds to bleed the long roots and suckers by cutting the bark with his machete, allowing the latex to flow all over the ground which has been previously freed of all dead leaves, stick, etc. When this work is concluded the main trunk of the tree is attacked with axe and machete, sometimes requiring in the case of a big specimen several hours' hard work before it eventually falls with a crash to the ground. The bark of the trunk and branches are then subjected to large incisions with the machete, and the latex as it flows is allowed to fall onto the surrounding ground. This performance is repeated until all the trees have been bled, when the making up of the rubber into balls or rolls is commenced, after allowing a sufficient time for the milk to coagulate and harden. Taking a portion of the hard rubber, weighing about fifteen pounds, this is roughly washed, and sticks, earth, etc., adhering to it are picked out. Strips of rubber are then cut and are tightly wound around the first named mass, which subjects the strips to great tension, and this wrapping is continued until there is no more rubber available, the weight of the roll when complete averaging about seventy pounds for a full grown tree.

The product of a good cauchero will amount to about one thousand kilos of 'sernamby de caucho' in rolls, allowing the gatherer about nine months in a district where the tree is abundant, but owing to the lazy and dissolute habits of the average rubber gatherer, he rarely produces much above five hundred kilos." (2).

It was rare for the cauchoeiro to finish the season off with a credit balance, i.e., having earned more from his rubber production than he owed for the purchase of food and other items. In the first instance, the price offered for the caucho by the patron was far

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1. Cassava flour.
 2. Woodroffe:1914:105/6.

below the prevailing market price, often less than 50%. In addition, Caucho commanded on average only 60% of the price of rubber obtained from the seringueira (1). This was because of the high level of impurities found in caucho. Thus, even in a good season, the cauchoeiro earned considerably less than his seringueiro counterpart. On top of this, the price charged for subsistence goods by the Patron was far in excess of their original cost. Maurtua gives the following comparison of the costs of subsistence goods in 1905 between the entrepôt city of Iquitos in Peru, the relatively accessible valley of the Madre de Dios in Bolivia, and the almost inaccessible valleys of the upper Purús and Juruá in the Acre territory:

Table 1.2.1. - Price per kilo (in Soles) of Subsistence Products in Three of the Main Caucho Producing Regions, in 1905.

<u>Subsistence Item.</u>	<u>Price in:</u>				
	<u>Iquitos (a).</u>	<u>Madre de Dios (b).</u>	<u>$\frac{b}{a}$</u>	<u>Upper Purús & Juruá (c).</u>	<u>$\frac{c}{a}$</u>
Rice	0.21	1.30	619	2.00	952
Sugar	0.54	1.19	220	2.00	370
Beans	0.65	1.30	200	1.00	154
Butter	0.86	1.95	227	4.00	465
Cassava Flour	0.65	1.19	183	1.08	166
Salt	0.21	1.08	514	1.00	476

Source: Maurtua:1911:41.

1. Woodruff:1958:51ff.

The above shows that a kilo of rice cost the cauchoeiro who was working in Acre almost 10 times as much as what the Patron paid for it in Iquitos; a kilo of sugar cost 3.7 times as much; and a kilo of beans 1.54 times the Iquitos price. The cauchoeiro who finished the year in debt was often sold to another Patron in exchange for payment of the debt and there are instances where the widows and children of cauchoeiros were enslaved because of an unpaid debt (1).

2.1.2. Rubber Production on the Seringal.

When the first waves of Brazilians reached Acre territory in the 1860's and 1870's, there was a virtual land rush. As has been noted, Acre lay outside of Brazilian territorial space and the two sovereign powers, Peru and Bolivia, had not as yet begun to occupy their Amazonian provinces. Thus, the colonisation of Acre by Brazilians was carried out under the principal of 'uti possidetis', i.e., the 'ownership' of land rested on the ability to effectively control it, not on any juridical title. The new 'owners' of the estates, the seringalistas, were in effect kings of whole river valleys and used armed guards to patrol them (2).

Given the size of Acre's seringais, the larger estates employed between 50 and 300 seringueiros (3) and the lack of sufficient local labour, it became necessary to import labour from outside.

1. Indigenous labour will be discussed in Section 2.3.

2. Ribeiro:1977:27 ; Wagley:1953:94.

3. Tastevin:1920:135.

It was customary for the larger seringalistas to send their own agents to the North-East of Brazil, particularly the state of Ceará, to contract labour. Smaller seringalistas generally paid a commission to an agent resident in the migrant donor state who contracted the labour for them (1).

Fortaleza, the capital city of Ceará, lies some 5,000 kilometres by river from the estates of the upper Amazon. In addition, the migrant labour force did not intend to settle in the Amazon, rather the intention was to 'get rich quick' and return home to the North-East (2). Thus, the cost of travel and the predatory ideology combined to ensure that the vast majority of the migrants were single or unaccompanied married males. When Tastevin visited the seringais of the River Tarauacá in Acre some 15 years after their initial colonisation, he found that men outnumbered women by almost three to one. The census undertaken by Tastevin reveals that in 1926 there were : 1,333 men, 475 women, 466 boys under 16, 434 girls under 16, and 173 babies whose sex he could not ascertain (3). A similar situation existed on the upper reaches of the River Juruá which Tastevin visited during the same period. Here there were 4,190 men, 1,646 women, and 2,785 children (4).

As the only routes of communication were the rivers themselves, the seat of the seringal, the seringalista's store or 'barracão', was

1. Cunha:1941:23ff ; Wagley:1953:93 ; Akers:1914:53 ; Aquino:1982:63.
 2. Santos:1980:108.
 3. Tastevin:1926:47.
 4. Tastevin:1920:140.

situated on the river bank. It was here that the seringalista kept the supplies, stored the rubber product, and conducted the day to day business of the seringal. From the barracão, a number of forest trails or 'varadouros' lead off into the interior of the estate. Located along these varadouros at intervals of approximately two hours walk are the huts of the seringueiros, the 'barracas'. While the barracão of the seringalista was often a large building with several rooms and sometimes having a roof made from imported Portuguese tiles, the barraca of the seringueiro was a very simple dwelling. It consists of a single roomed wooden hut, sometimes without walls, and raised off the ground on short stilts to prevent flooding in the rainy season. The roof is generally thatched with palm leaves and the floor made from the wood of the Paxiuba tree which is easily split into canes, but which is extremely soft and becomes infested with insects. Around each barraca are the rubber trails or 'estradas'. Each estrada, which may contain up to 200 rubber trees, 'seringueiras', is shaped in the form of a loop so that it begins and ends close to the barraca of the seringueiro (1).

As with caucho production, rubber production on the seringal is based on the collection of latex from stands of wild seringueiras naturally dispersed throughout the forest. At best, 10 or 15 trees are contained within the area of a single hectare, there being one seringueira to every 70 or 80 other species of tree. The distance between each seringueira varies on average between 60 and 70 metres (2).

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1. A schematic representation of a 'typical' seringal is given in Figure 1.
 2. Fifer:1966:366 ; Akers:1914:40 ; Cunha:1906.

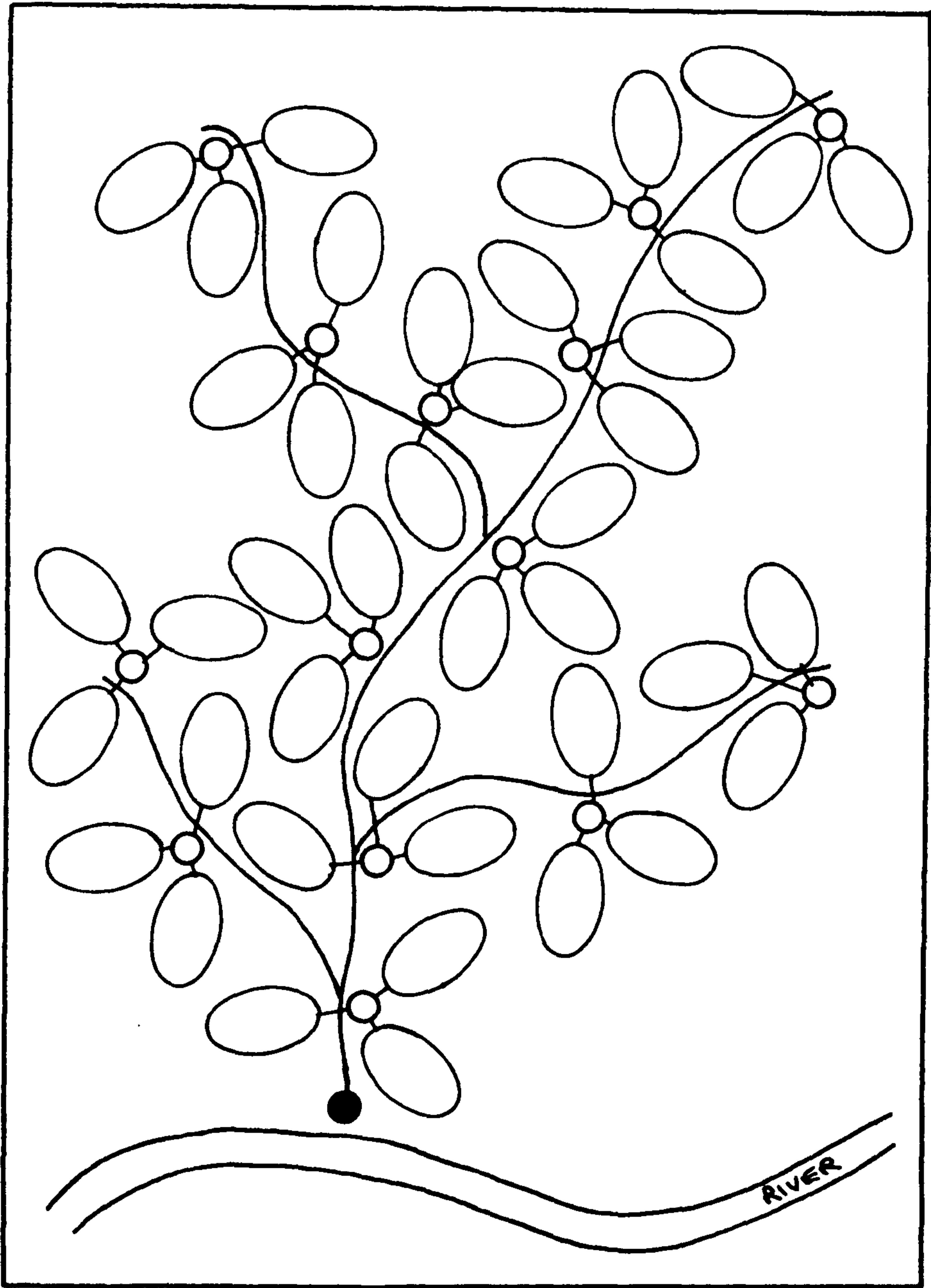


FIG. I Plan of a Seringal.

- Barracão of Seringalista
- Barraca of Seringueiro
- Estrada - Rubber Trail
- Varadouro - Forest Trail

The opening up of an estrada takes approximately 9 man-days to complete. The task is not undertaken by the newly arrived migrant seringueiro as he is still considered a seringueiro 'brabo' or greenhorn (1), but by a specialist team consisting of a 'mateiro', 'toqueiro' and 'piqueiro' (2).

At the point where the barraca of the seringueiro is to be built, the mateiro, or woodsman, enters the forest to locate the nearest seringueira which he marks. This will be the start of the new estrada, called the 'boca de estrada', literally the 'mouth' of the rubber trail. It is here that the toqueiro and piqueiro wait while the mateiro searches for the second seringueira. As noted, this may be some 60 metres away in dense undergrowth. On finding it, the mateiro shouts or whistles as a signal to the toqueiro who follows the sound until he joins the mateiro at the base of the second seringueira. The mateiro then goes on to find a third tree while toqueiro (3) bangs two pieces of wood or sticks together as a signal for the piqueiro (4) to follow as he cuts down the brush in a line between the first and second trees.

Depending on the density of the seringueiras, once the mateiro has successfully located and marked 50 to 80 seringueiras in a line, he will turn around and carry on the search for more rubber trees on the return journey so that the finished estrada will form a loop. The point of the estrada most distant from the barraca is called the 'volta de estrada', the turning point. Once the required number

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1. As opposed to being a 'seringueiro manso', or an experienced seringueiro, a state that is achieved after the first tapping season has been completed.
 2. Tocantins:1979:157 ; Cunha:1906.
 3. Toqueiro is a substantive of the verb 'Tocar' : to make a sound.
 4. Piqueiro is a substantive of 'Picar' : to trace a line.

of seringueiras have been located, marked and put 'em pique', i.e., have a rough trail hacked out between them, the task of this trio is finished and they move on to cut another estrada. Each estrada takes approximately three days to complete. The seringueiro can now commence tapping the estrada, improving the trail through constant use until the top soil disappears completely and a thin sandy path runs from seringueira to seringueira. The length of each estrada varies from 8 to 12 kilometres (1).

Once tapped and collected, the latex must be processed on the same day because it becomes granular and unworkable (2). Thus, the size of the estrada is determined by the amount of trees that a seringueiro can tap in a single day, taking into account that the latex must be collected and processed on the same day. In addition, each estrada must be allowed at least one day's rest in between successive tapings otherwise the latex will contain a higher water content and so produce less rubber. Continuous tapping may also kill the tree. It was therefore common practice for each seringueiro to be allocated 2 or 3 estradas, i.e., sufficient to keep him continuously occupied throughout the working week.

The area that comprises of the seringueiro's barraca and his quota of estradas is called his 'colocaçāo', i.e., literally the area in which he is placed, but which has come to mean 'tapping post'. The seringueiro whose colocaçāo consists of two estradas taps these on alternate days, tapping each one three times a week. Those with

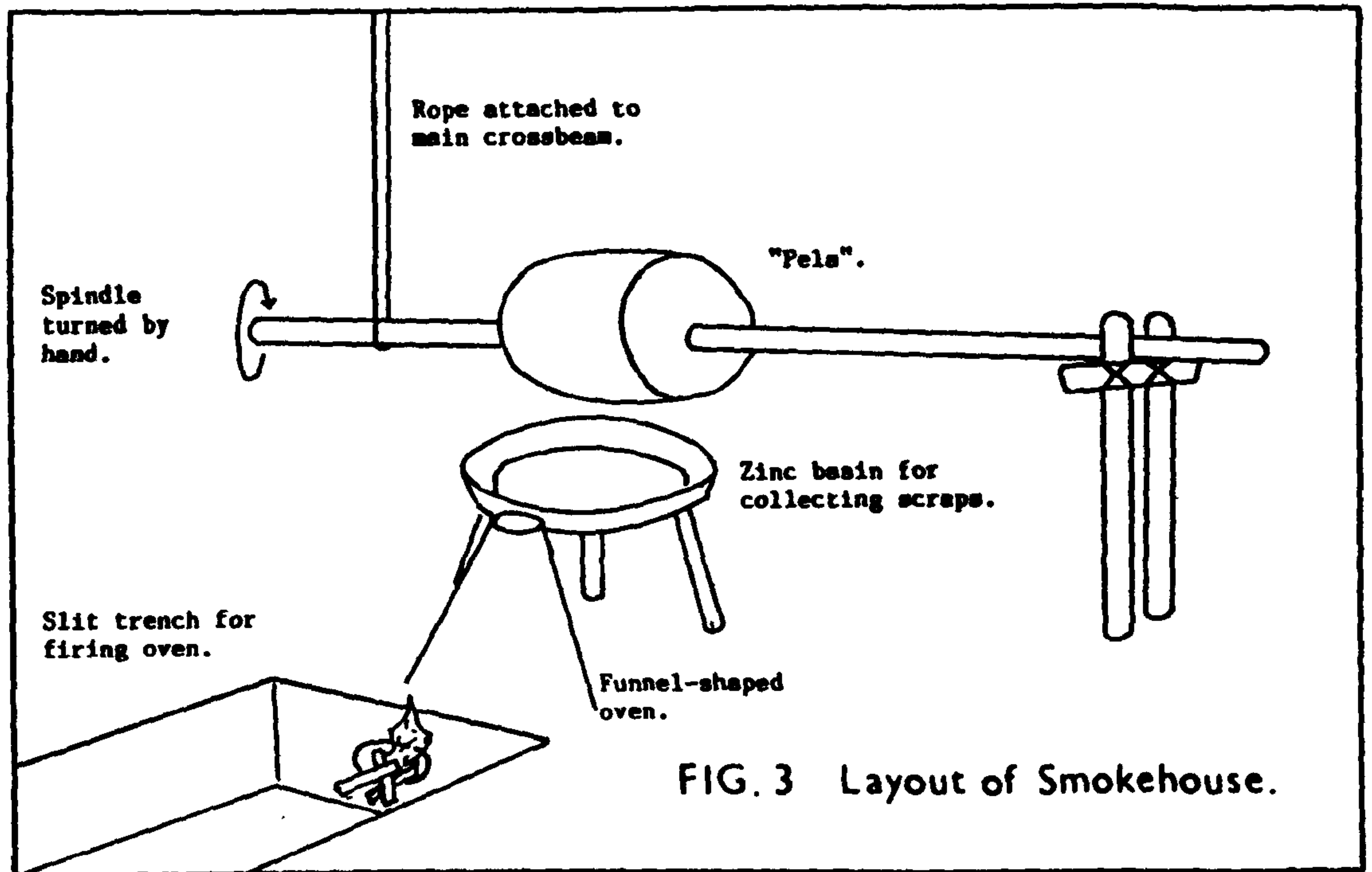
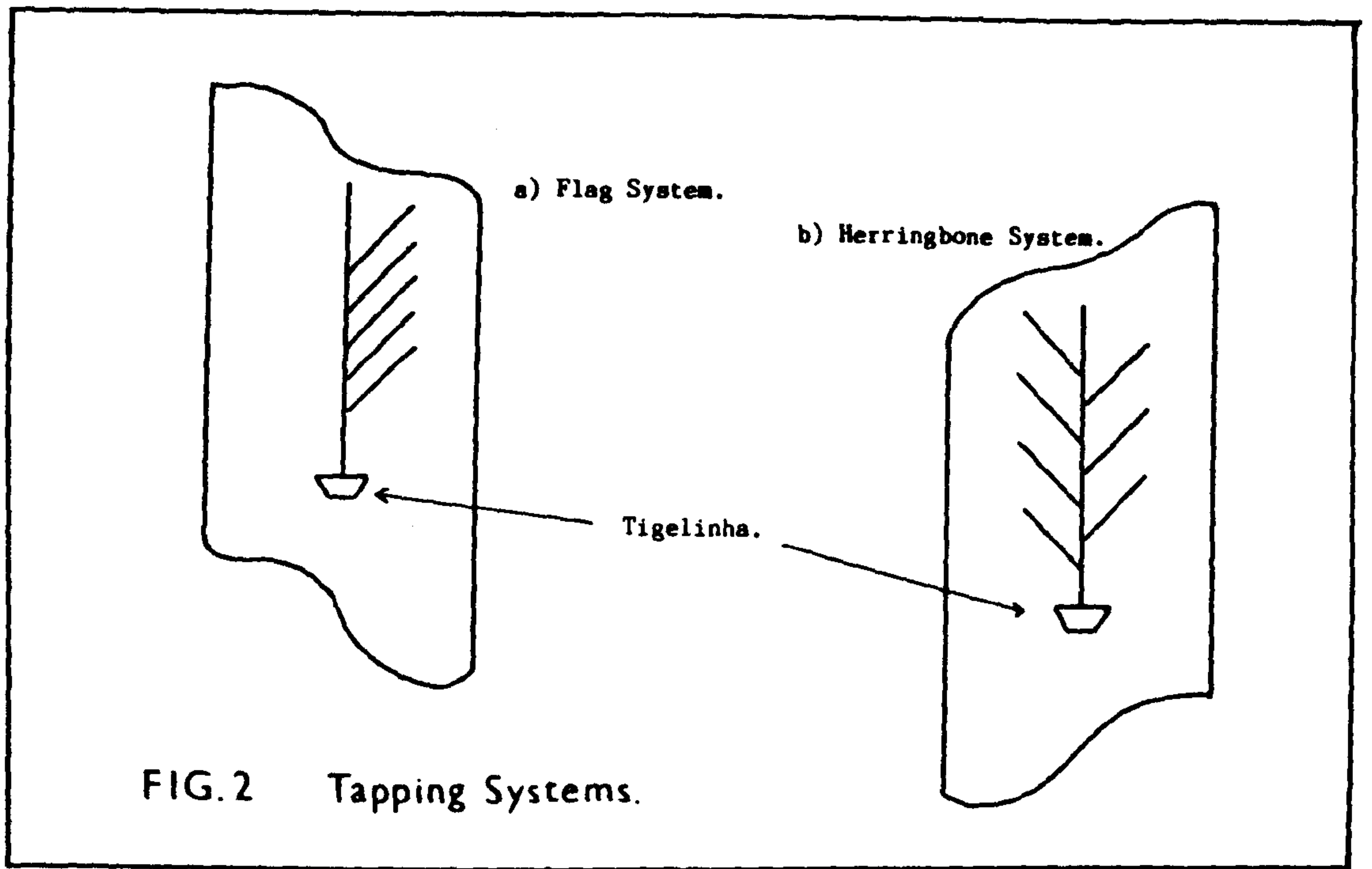
1. Akers:1914:31.

2. Akers:1914:94 ; Woodroffe:1914:51.

three estradas tap each estrada twice a week leaving the trees to rest for two days in between tappings. The three estrada sytem has come to predominate in Acre, partly because of the better quality of rubber obtained and because the seringueira will crop for more years, but also possibly because of the traditional shortage of labour in Acre.

The production of rubber on the seringal during this period involved three distinct operations. Firstly, there is the tapping process itself, or 'corte' which literally means 'cut'. This was carried out using a small hand-axe, 'machadinho'. The seringueiro cuts an incision into the bark of the tree at approximately 45° to the horizontal. The incision extends for 18 inches from a central incision that is vertical. A new incision is made each day above the previous day's cut until the series of incisions resemble a flag. A small basin, 'tigelinha', is placed at the base of the vertical incision so as to collect the latex as it trickles out of the wound. In some areas a 'Herringbone system' is used instead of the 'flag system'. Here the successive incisions are made on opposite sides of the central cut. The two methods are illustrated in Figure 2.

The seringueiro makes the first cut approximately one metre from the ground. At each successive tapping he makes a further incision around one centimetre above the previous one. At the end of the season, the trunk of the tree is marked by a series of some 60 to 100 cuts one above the other. At the beginning of the new season,



the seringueiro starts again at the base of the tree and works upwards re-cutting the old incisions.

The corte occupied the seringueiro for approximately 5 hours depending on the size of the estrada. He climbed out of his hammock at around 3 a.m., drank a cup of coffee and took his lunch pack to the 'boca de estrada'. Here he left his lunch hanging from a branch and began the corte, lighting his way in the dark with a 'poronga', an acetylene lamp strapped to his head in a similar manner to those used by European coal miners in the 19th century. The corte was finished by 10 or 11 o'clock when the seringueiro had completed the circuit of the estrada and reached the 'boca de estrada' where he ate his lunch. The latter usually consisted of the cold remains of the previous night's supper of rice, beans, cassava flour, and tinned meat or game.

After lunch, the seringueiro began the 'colheita', the collection of the latex from the tigelinhas. This involved retracing his journey around the estrada pouring the latex from the tigelinhas into a latex impregnated hessian sack that he carried on his back. This operation took another 4 to 5 hours and the seringueiro finished this at around 4 o'clock in the afternoon. On completing the colheita, the seringueiro carried the latex to his barraca where he began the final stage of the process.

As noted, the latex needs to be processed on the same day as it is tapped. Near to each seringueiro's barraca was the 'tapiri', a much smaller hut than the barraca with a thatched roof that slopes right

down to the ground just like a bivouac tent. This is the 'defumador' or smokehouse. It is not raised on stilts like the barraca as it is not used in the rainy season as rubber is not tapped at this time because water becomes mixed with the latex in the tigelinhas and they overflow.

In the tapiri is a short slit trench in which a fire is built. The nuts of the Urucury palm is generally used for this purpose as they give off a dense black smoke when burnt. The smoke passes through a funnel shaped clay oven that the seringueiro constructs at one end of the slit trench and pours out of the hole at the top in a constant stream. A wooden paddle or stick is revolved by hand over the mouth of the funnel and latex slowly poured on to it where it hardens. Gradually layer upon layer build up into a large ball or 'pela'.

A zinc basin is placed underneath the pela so as to catch spillage. This is later sold as 'sernambi', scrap rubber. Each day the latex is added to the pela until it reaches an optimum weight of between 45 and 65 kilos. The lower figure is the maximum weight that the seringueiro can carry on his back when he transports it to the seringalistas barracão or to the point where the seringalista's mule train will pick it up. The higher figure is the weight attained by seringueiros who lived on the river bank and could transport the pela by canoe. The finishing of a pela could take up to between two or three weeks. Seringueiros commonly speak in terms of the

'quinzena' or fortnight as the period of time in between successive visits to the barracão to deliver rubber and collect supplies. However, this is a very loose term and refers to the visit itself rather than the length of time in between them.

The 'defumação' or smoking process lasted 2 to 3 hours depending on the quantity of latex collected that day. During this time, the seringueiro sits on an upturned log in the tapiri. The latter is filled with a thick smoke and is heated to a high temperature by the clay oven. It must be remembered that the outside temperature is normally at least 30°C. Many seringueiros suffer problems with vision after a life of smoking rubber and some also suffer with stiff leg joints which have been baked by sitting too close to the oven for long periods. The lay-out of a tapiri is illustrated in Figure 3.

The working day of the seringueiro, then, lasted from 3 or 4 o'clock in the morning to 7 or 8 o'clock at night, approximately 15 hours per day. This was undertaken for 6 days a week, the seventh was set aside for hunting, the transportation of rubber to the barracão, or visiting neighbouring seringueiros. This was carried right through the tapping season which lasts from March/April to September/October, approximately 8 months in all.

2.2. The Aviamento Chain.

Aviamento is the name given to the system that linked the seringueiro via a series of intermediary agents to the large export and import houses in Belém and Manaus and from there to the financial and industrial enterprises in Europe and the U.S.A. It was a system in which the latter speculated in the future demand for rubber by advancing credit to the export agencies in Brazil. These in turn made similar advances to the principal agents in the system, the 'Casas Aviadores' (1) who furnished the lesser intermediaries with essential supplies such as food items, tools and equipment, and medicines. The lesser intermediaries, usually the seringalistas (2) themselves, advanced these goods to the final link in the chain, the direct procer, the seringueiro. Thus, as credit in the form of money and goods moved one way down the chain, i.e., westwards, rubber moved in the opposite direction (3). Figure 4 gives a spatial representation of the Aviamento chain.

A superficial analysis could view the workings of the Aviamento system simply in terms of the laws of supply and demand of the free market economy. Demand for the product in the industrial west raises the market price to a level where collection becomes profitable. The lack of available capital and labour in the producing zones is overcome by the extension of credit facilities and the offer of

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1. 'Casas Aviadores' - literally credit houses. In some instances the export/import agency and the casa aviadora were a single enterprise.
 2. On some of the larger seringais, under-managers functioned as the penultimate link in the chain.
 3. Weinstein:1983 , Paula:1982, and Santos:1980 discuss Aviamento in some detail.

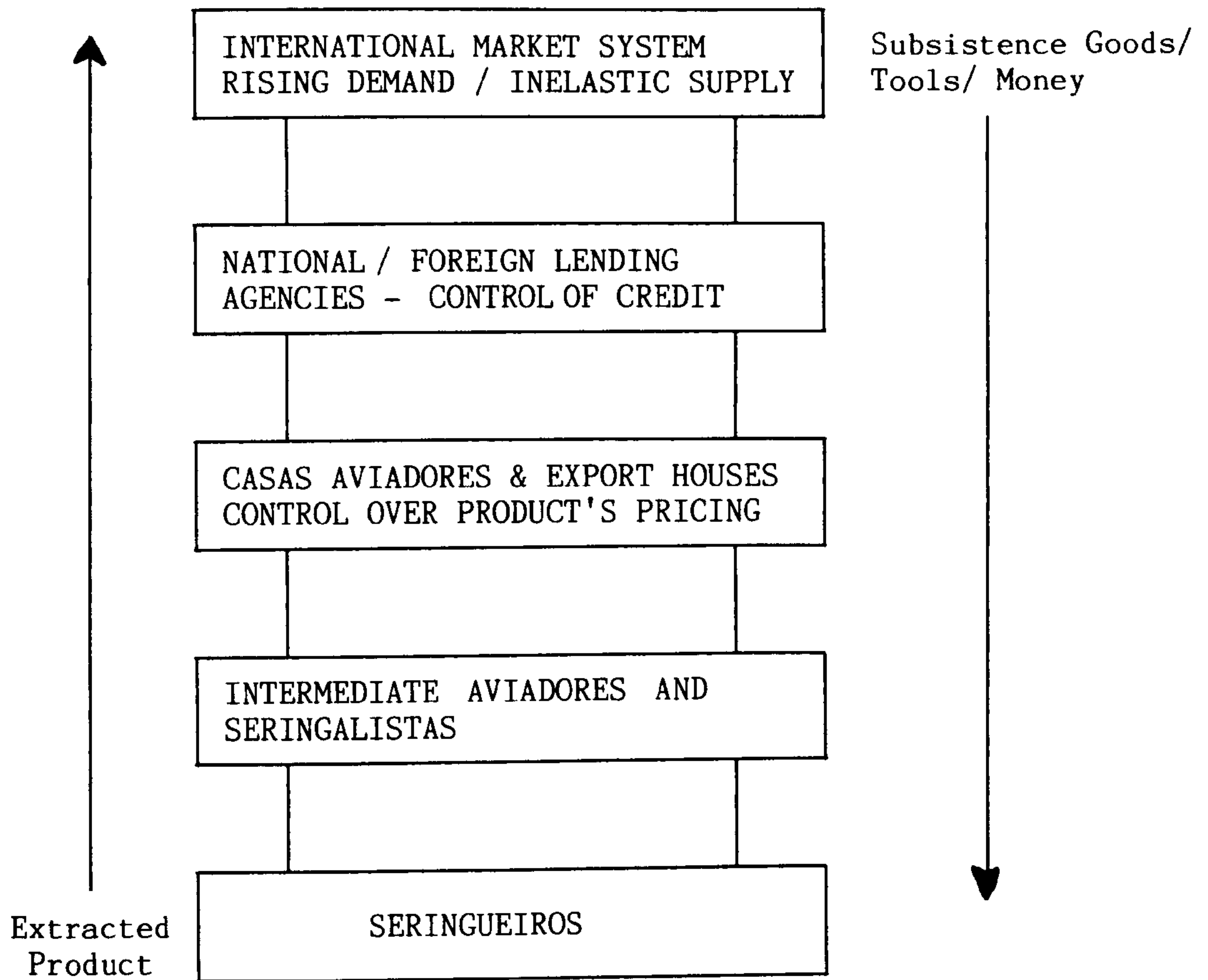


FIG 4 The Aviamento Chain.

Adapted from Santos:1980 ; Weinstein:1983 ; Miranda Neto:1979.

financial assistance to migrant donor and migrant receiving states by foreign lending agencies. The result is expanded production which creates employment in both Amazonia and the West.

Rubber production generated a great deal of wealth; it accounted for the bulk of the revenue of the rubber producing states. In 1906, rubber export earnings were sufficient to pay off 40% of Brazil's annual debt (1). At the height of the 'Rubber Boom' in 1910, the value of rubber exports was 376,971 milreis, the equivalent of 90% of the revenue generated in the same year by coffee (2). However, while coffee production led to a sustained development drive in the South, rubber did not achieve the same for Amazonia (3).

A paradox existed in that, while rubber production promoted the rapid settlement of vast areas of the Amazonian hinterland, it hindered the possibility of further development. A major factor in this was the functioning of the Aviamento system which, as will be demonstrated, impeded the formation of an independent labour force and a developed agriculture through the immobilisation of the factors of production.

The migrant rubber tapper, the seringueiro 'brabo', arrived in Acre already in debt. The cost of his transportation from the North-East, the cost of provisions and hostels during the journey, were the first items to be debited to his account to be offset against his future earnings from rubber production. To these were added any advances

1. Bourne:1978:30.

2. Ferreira:1962:317.

3. A number of works discuss this point. In particular, see Lima:1981 ; Cano:1977 ; Silva:1976 ; and Scantimburgo:1980.

made to the seringueiro to pay off any debts that he had prior to migration and the cost of a rifle and ammunition, essential tools and equipment, and foodstuffs to last him the first month of his stay on the *colocação*. It has been estimated that the seringueiro brabo was likely to have accumulated a debt in excess of £140 (1) sterling before he had produced a single kilo of rubber (2).

The debt was quickly compounded as the seringueiro brabo may have taken several months to reach a reasonable standard of expertise at his trade. During this 'probationary' period, it was customary to allocate him a single *estrada* which had probably been tapped before. In this way, the damage done by the novice was kept to a minimum, but it signified that the seringueiro was lucky to produce half a kilo of rubber per day. This would earn him less than 25% of what was required to maintain in him materials and supplies. Thus, by the end of a three month 'apprenticeship' the debt to the seringalista may have risen to £200 (3).

In Acre and western Amazonas, where the most productive seringueiras are found, an experienced seringueiro can collect $4\frac{1}{2}$ litres per day from the average size *estrada*. This will produce approximately 4 kilos of processed rubber. Thus, in a full season's tapping, the seringueiro can produce as much as 600 kilos. However, it is rare for the seringueiro to achieve this target. Disease, hunting, the collection of fuel and supplies, and the transportation of the product, all reduce the time spent on tapping. Akers' survey of

1. Different authors use different currencies. For the purposes of comparison an exchange rate of £1 = 6.5\$ = 15 milreis is used. This was the rate in early 1914.
 2. Woodroffe:1914:221; Cunha:1941:23/4. 3. Lange:1911:35;Woodroffe:ibid.

rubber production in 1913 on Seringal Sevastopol on the River Purús found that the annual production of each seringueiro averaged out to approximately 262 kilos (1).

All the items that the seringueiro consumed during the season were entered onto his current account that was kept at the barracão by the seringalista as were also his production totals. Two methods of paying the seringueiro were in operation in the early phase. In the first, the seringalista set a price on the spot as and when the seringueiro brought his production to the barracão. The seringueiro here was called a 'seringueiro de tóco'. The seringalista used his knowledge of how the market was behaving together with the last quote he had received from passing river traffic to determine the price that he set. Prices oscillated a great deal and the seringalista could lose as often as the seringueiro.

This system fell into disuse and the 'annual account' system came to predominate. Here, the 'seringueiro por conta' brought his product to the barracão every 'quinzena' and exchanged it for supplies, each transaction being entered onto the current account. However, this account was not balanced until the end of the production year when the seringalista returned from Manaus after having transported the seringal's production to the Casa Aviadora (2).

Before balancing the seringueiro's account, the seringalista first deducted 10% from the original weight of the seringueiro's annual

1. Akers:1914:88.

2. Goulart:1968:119 ; Woodroffe:1914:220 ; Akers:1914:89.

production to allow for any drying out and subsequent weight loss during the course of the season (1). The remainder was then credited to the seringueiro's current account at a rate that varied between 40% and 60% of the price that the seringalista received at the Casa Aviadora. Thus, even if the seringueiro had produced the optimum 600 kilos during the course of the season, his earnings after 'tara' and the seringalista's 'discount' had been deducted would amount to no more than £50. (2).

From this the seringalista deducted the price of the supplies and other goods that he had advanced to the seringueiro during the course of the season. Just as he had discounted a percentage from the price of the rubber, so the seringalista added a percentage to the price of these goods. Santos gives the following comparison of prices charged for similar goods in 1907 in Rio de Janeiro, then the capital of Brazil, and on a seringal on the River Solimões in the middle Amazon (3):

<u>Article.</u>	<u>Cost per unit (in Reis).</u>		$\frac{b}{a} \times 100$
	<u>In Rio.(a)</u>	<u>On Seringal.(b).</u>	
Flour	72	1,000	1,389
Sugar	375	1,500	400
Rice	245	1,500	612
Coffee	340	2,000	588
Dried Meat	600	3,000	500
Beans	155	1,200	774
Tobacco	1,200	10,000	883

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1. This gave the 'net weight' or 'tare weight'. The word 'tara' is used by Acre's seringueiros to describe the weight loss.
 2. Goulart:1968:119 ; Woodroffe:1914:220 ; Akers:1914:89.
 3. Santos:1980:167.

Thus, sugar cost four times as much on the seringal than it did in Rio and flour cost almost 14 times as much. It must be remembered that the price quoted for Rio also included an element for the cost of transportation from the sometimes distant centres of production. The disparity, then, between the price in Rio and the price on the seringal cannot be solely attributed to the distance between the producing areas and the seringal.

The price differentials were even greater for those seringueiros who worked the seringais along the upper rivers, in Acre and the surrounding areas. This is demonstrated from the following list, again from Santos, which compares the price differentials (1=100%) between the various links of the aviamento chain as they operated on the River Solimões in the middle Amazon and the River Madeira near to Acre's border with Bolivia (1).

Price differential between the:-	Solimões. Madeira.	
1. Seringueiro and Rio:	4.9	10.2
2. Seringueiro and Seringalista:	1.6	3.4
3. Seringueiro and Aviador:	2.4	5.0
4. Seringalista and Aviador:	1.5	1.5
5. Aviador and Rio:	2.1	2.1

The above shows that the average cost of supplies to the seringueiro on the upper Madeira was over twice that available to the seringueiro on the Solimões. In addition, the seringalista is shown to be the

1. Santos:1980:170.

principal beneficiary of the price differentials between the two rivers. The Casa Aviadora sold goods to seringalistas on both rivers at an average mark-up of 50%. However, while the seringalista on the Solimões levied a 60% price rise when he sold the goods to the seringueiros on his estate, his counterpart on the upper Madeira added a 240% surcharge to the cost of the goods. Granted that it was the seringalista who bore the initial charge of transportation from Manaus to the seringal and that costs were greater the more distant the seringal, yet the most distant seringal on the upper Madeira is approximately twice as far from Manaus as Coari, for example, on the middle Solimões, while the price differential is four times as great.

Akers, who spent a number of years in the Amazon during the second decade of this century, gives the following list of essentials drawn each month by the seringueiro from the barracão. The average prices that he quotes relate to the seringais of the middle Amazon.

<u>Article.</u>	<u>Quantity.</u>	<u>Total Price (in £l).</u>	
Rice	3 Kilos	0.38	
Beans	4 "	0.53	
Coffee	1 "	0.14	
Sugar	2 "	0.21	
Dried Meat	4 "	0.64	
Salt	2 "	0.08	(Adapted from Akers:1914:89).
Soap	$\frac{1}{2}$ "	0.04	
Cassava	20 Litres	0.64	
Kerosene	1 "	0.05	
Lard	2 Kilos	0.23	
Tobacco	1 "	0.64	
Matches	2 Packets	0.22	
Cig.Papers	2 "	0.08	
<u>Total.</u>		<u>£3.91p.</u>	

Given a monthly expenditure of £3.91p, a seringueiro of the middle Amazon drew approximately £31 worth of goods during the tapping season. Therefore, even at best, i.e., where the seringueiro produced 600 kilos in a season earning him £50, his credit balance would amount to only £20 annually. At this rate of accumulation, it would take him at least seven years to pay off his original debt to the seringalista.

There still remains the question of the rainy season when it is not possible to tap rubber as the estradas and varadouros become impassable and the tigelinhas fill with water. In general, the migrant seringueiros of the lower and middle Amazons returned home to the North-East during the winter months. Again, the cost of this was met by the seringalista and it was debited to the seringueiro's account. Each seringueiro's debt was carried forward to the next tapping season and it was this debt that tied the seringueiro to a given seringal and guaranteed that the seringalista would have a supply of labour for the following season (1).

For the seringueiros of the upper Amazon, along the valleys of the Rivers Purús and Juruá, the situation was quite different. Here the seringueiro was less likely to finish the production year in credit. Firstly, the initial debt that he incurred would have been higher than for his counterpart on the lower reaches because the cost of his transportation would have been greater. Secondly, as has been

1. The mechanisms that guaranteed this will be discussed later in this section.

demonstrated, the cost of essential goods was higher on the western-most seringais. Thirdly, at the end of the tapping season, the migrant seringueiro of Acre and western Amazonas was not able to return home to the North-East : the journey was too long to undertake a return trip in the 'off' season; it was also too expensive given the likelihood that the seringueiro was probably already in considerable debt. So the seringueiro was obliged to spend the winter months idle on the seringal, consuming but not producing, and thus adding to his debts. Under these circumstances, it was probable that the seringueiro would never pay off his debt to the seringalista and would remain a 'seringueiro cativo' (1) for the rest of his working life.

It is suggested by some authors that the relation between the seringueiro and the seringalista was fundamentally an exchange relation, rather than a production relation, i.e., that the seringueiro was an independent producer and that the seringalista was in some way a storekeeper rather than a taskmaster (2). While this may have been the case on some of the smaller seringais of Eastern Amazonia where the seringueiro may have rented estradas or been a meieiro, it was not the case in the West where, as in Acre, large estates of up to 300 seringueiros predominated. Here, as will be shown, the seringalista controlled both production and exchange within his domain.

1. 'Captive seringueiro', a phrase used to describe the situation of those 'tied' to the seringal.
 2. See for example, Russan:1902 ; Higbee:1951:411 ; Weinstein:1983:131.

In the first instance, the seringueiro must tap his estradas each day. He, therefore, must live close to them. As each colocação covers an extensive area, perhaps as much as 200 to 300 hectares, and the working day is long and arduous, there is no social articulation on a daily basis. As Galvão states, it was the seringalista's barracão itself which provided the social focal point of the whole community when seringueiros came in every quinzena to exchange rubber for goods. This is not to suggest that cooperative activity did not take place. However, given the nature of the enterprise, this tended to occur under the direction of the seringalista, e.g., in the formation of teams to open up new estradas or guide ox trains and so on (1).

Secondly, the seringalista employed armed guards, 'fiscais', to police the estate. The fiscais checked that the seringueiro tapped in the prescribed manner, that he did not cut too deep, or tap the same estrada on consecutive days, both of which gave more latex in the short term, but which could eventually kill the tree. In addition, they kept out the river traders, the 'marreteiros' or 'regatões', and so denied the seringueiro an alternative means of commercialising his product and ensuring that it would be brought to the barracão. The seringueiro was also obliged to stamp the pelias of rubber with the mark of the seringalista (sometimes the mark of the Casa Aviadora) so that it could be identified. This had the effect of re-enforcing the notion that the pelias belonged to the seringalista and not the seringueiro (2).

1. Galvão:1952:19 ; Wagley:1960:94ff ; Ross:1978:207.

2. Wagley:ibid ; Goulart:1968:111ff ; Ribeiro:1977:26 ;
Weinstein:1983:50ff.

The fiscais also ensured that the seringueiro devoted his labour almost exclusively to rubber production and did not engage in subsistence agriculture. The fiscais were ordered to destroy any such subsistence plots that were discovered on the seringal. It must be remembered that the migrant seringueiro was not accompanied by a family whose labour could complement his own by producing subsistence items and so partially relieve the burden of purchasing goods from the barracão (1).

The seringueiro, then, was forced to barter his product for items sold by the seringalista. As has been shown, the seringalista had exclusive franchise within his own domain. This monopoly position was founded upon the the actual use or the threat of force which enabled the seringalista to pay the seringueiro half the market price of rubber while, at the same time, charging him twice the market price of essential goods. Not only were the latter highly priced, in many instances they were of inferior quality. As Wolf and Wolf state:

"Typical of the fabulously priced but well nigh worthless goods foisted upon these jungle rubes (the tappers) was the 'trade gun' which came to be specially made in Europe for the Amazon rubber trade. Muzzle-loaders with wound-wire barrels, they would unwind and fall apart after half a hundred shots had been fired...Of course, the general theory of the whole commerce was to buy the cheapest possible goods and dispose of them at the most extravagant prices possible." (2).

1. Guerra:1955:197 ; Weinstein:1983a:129.

2. Wolf & Wolf:1936:45 - quoted in Weinstein:1980:37.

This array of factors guaranteed the permanent indebtedness of the seringueiro. Escape from this predicament was virtually impossible. The seringais of Western Amazonia were isolated and more distant from any urban centre. Fiscais were stationed at the mouth of tributaries to prevent seringueiros escaping down river. In addition, there was an unwritten agreement between seringalistas not to employ a seringueiro who was in debt to another seringalista. While these 'Rules of the Rubber Fields' had fallen into disuse in the East, they were still very much in force in the isolated areas of the West where labour was scarce and debt the principal method of immobilising the workforce (1). As Cunha noted on his visit to Acre at the turn of the century :

"There is an agreement amongst the patrões not to accept the employees of others who were still in debt. Recently there was a large gathering (of seringalistas) in Acre to systematise this accord...with the creation of heavy fines for patrões who contravened the agreement." (2).

While it was technically possible for a seringalista to buy the debt of a seringueiro so that he could transfer his labour to the seringalista's estate, this seldom occurred in practice (3) because the labour force was jealously guarded as the only source of wealth.

Unlike the seringueiro-patrão and meieiro previously mentioned, the seringueiro in Western Amazonia was not an independent or relatively independent producer, he was a captive on the seringal, a seringueiro-cativo. His relation to the seringalista did not centre upon exchange

1. Wagley:1960:94 ; Weinstein:1983:30.

2. Da Cunha:1976:111.

3. Aquino:1982:74ff.

The seringalista, as has been demonstrated, effectively possessed the seringal (1). He may or may not have held juridical title to the property, but he controlled the practices that occurred within its boundaries.

In the first place, he controlled access to the estradas in that it was the seringalista, or his agent, who allocated them to individual seringueiros. Once allocated, the seringalista used fiscais to control the labour process both in terms of the methods used to tap rubber and that labour would be concentrated on rubber production to the exclusion of other economic activity. The fiscais also guaranteed that the rubber product was exchanged at the barracão. It was the seringalista's control over both the means of production, i.e., the land and the trees that grew on it, and the labour process that enabled him to force such unfair exchange rates on the seringueiro and keep him captive on the seringal. As with the 'unfortunate Mr. Peel', had land been freely available such relations would not have arisen. (2)

2.3. Indigenous Labour on Acre's Seringais.

Prior to the migration of 1877 and after, the forest valleys of the upper reaches of the River Purús and Juruá were inhabited almost exclusively by Amerindian tribes of the Pano and Aruak linguistic families. None-indigenous settlements were few and consisted mainly of isolated dwellings along the principal tributaries of the Purús.

1. For a discussion of 'effective possession' see Cutler et al:1977 Chapter 10, Vol.1, pp. 243 - 262.

2. Marx:1867:716 gives an account of a certain Mr. Peel who took with him from England to Australia capital to the value of £50,000 and 3,000 persons, working men and their families, only to be deserted by the latter on arrival because of the ready availability of land.

Within 30 years, Acre had become the principal rubber producer of Amazonia and had been the recipient of at least 60,000 migrant seringueiros (1).

Brazil has had a long history of indigenous enslavement. Indeed, in the Amazon where few African slaves were imported, the Indian was the traditional object of servile relations (2). As Veríssimo wrote of Eastern Amazonia in 1892 :

"While negro slavery had almost disappeared Amazonia during the time of the general emancipation of slaves, the co-existent enslavement of Indians continues. I emphasise, continues to exist...Here, the Indian and the Tapuio (3) are still very often slaves. As such they are beaten...sold...given away or transferred without their consent from owner to owner." (4).

However, during the first two decades of Acre's occupation by Brazilian seringueiros, up until the late 1890's, no attempt was made to incorporate the native population into the labour force. The Indian was viewed as hostile, hampering the economic emancipation of the territory, and incapable of being "civilised". As such, the indigenous population was treated as was a dangerous wild animal - hunted down and killed. The cauchoeiros, as they moved eastwards into Acre from Peru and Bolivia, treated the Indian in a similar manner (5).

1. Kietzman:1967:13 - 16 ; Bowman:1913:278.

2. Santos:1980:61ff ; Ribeiro:1977:44ff.

3. Tapuio - a so-called 'civilised' Indian or mestizo.

4. Veríssimo:1970:178

5. Aquino:1982:59ff ; Ribeiro:1977:42ff ; Tastevin:1928:211

This period, 1880 - 1900, was the era of the infamous 'carrerias' or Indian hunts. On his visit to Acre in the 20's, the French priest Constant Tastevin encountered several tribes which had been the subject of genocidal attacks. In the quote below, he describes one such carreria against an isolated village of Kaxinauá on the River Muru :

"That night a group of between 30 and 50 men, armed with repeating rifles and over 100 rounds of ammunition each, encircled the lone (communal) hut, which was shaped like a bee-hive, where the whole clan slept in peace. When the time came for the Indians to get up, make breakfast, and prepare for the day's hunting, a pre-arranged signal was given and the attackers all began firing. Few managed to escape. The women and children who got out alive were spared, but not a single man survived." (1).

The concerted efforts of seringueiros and cauchoeiros with their modern arms against the disunited tribal groups with primitive weapons resulted in the decimation of Acre's native population, especially that of the Purús valley. Many tribes listed by William Chandless and Manoel Urbano on their various voyages in the area some 30 to 40 years earlier had completely disappeared. Others only survived total extinction by fleeing to the remote areas along the upper rivers (2).

As the two fronts, seringueiro and cauchoeiro, moved from the Purús into the Juruá, so too did the Indians of this area suffer a similar fate. However, within 10 years of the penetration of the Juruá, the policy of extermination had changed to one of enslavement (3). It must be pointed out that precisely at this time

1. Tastevin:1925:419 2. For an account of a group of Kaxinauá who migrated into an area of Peru that was devoid of seringueiras, see Johnston:1969 and Dwyer:1975.
3. Aquino:1982:68ff ; Ribeiro:1977:42ff.

of greatest threat to indigenous groups, i.e., from the birth of the Republic in 1889 until the creation of the Indian Protection Service in 1910 (1), there were no laws in force in Brazil regulating the treatment of Indians (2). When the first S.P.I. inspectors arrived in Acre in 1911 and 1912, they noted that the indigenous tribes were still being subjugated by violence:

"On the River Inauhiny, the inspector came across a camp of Peruvian cauchoeiros who had 70 Yamamadi Indians in their service. These were imprisoned in a circle formed by a number of guards armed with rifles so as to prevent their escape. They had been captured in their village many leagues away and brought to this area under the threat of and the use of violence, as well as starving them during the whole journey. Some died on the way, others once they had reached the camp." (3).

The creation of the S.P.I. did not bring about the cessation of these practices. While the cauchoeiros began to disappear gradually after 1910 with the practical extinction of Castilloa in the region, the seringalistas continued to utilise Indian labour as a buffer against the oscillating price of rubber on the international market. On the one hand, the native population were obliged to produce subsistence crops for the seringalista. The latter used them for the maintenance of his own household as well as for sale at extortionate prices to the migrant seringueiros. On the other hand, the Indian was also forced to produce rubber for little, if any, payment. An example of

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1. Serviço de Proteção dos Índios.
 2. Souza Nasser:1982:55.
 3. Quoted in Ribeiro:1977:44.

this mode of treatment is given below in two interviews with members of the Poianauá tribe. The seringal on which this group still live, the Seringal Barão do Rio Branco, is located on the banks of the River Moa in the remote northern corner of the state in the municipality that bears the name of the original 'owner' of the seringal, Mâncio Lima. A Poianauá, aged around 70, describes the situation of the tribe under the regime of 'Coronel' Mâncio (1):

"We suffered a lot at the hands of Coronel Mancio Lima... actual slavery...I began to collect the tigelinhas when I was 8 years old, by the time I was 10 I was already a seringueiro, I tapped rubber for over 30 years...For what? I never was in credit at the time of Coronel Mancio. I worked for food and a change of clothing. In this way, we were slaves on this Seringal Barão. The women and children hoed the vegetable garden and the sugar cane patch. It was they who planted corn, rice, beans, manioc, and sugar ...all of them were slaves of Coronel Mancio...with his overseer shouting and yelling: " Work you lazy Indian vagabonds." The women worked by the barracão, the men tapped rubber in the centro (2). We couldn't take our women to the centro with us, no chance...We even worked on Sundays and Saint's days. The women also had to carry the rubber on their backs because Coronel Mancio wouldn't use a mule train. He was a good man, wasn't he? Coronel Mancio was the only one with a full belly in the midst of our slavery." (3).

Another Poianauá, son of Napoleão, the chief of the tribe when Mâncio Lima took control of the tribal lands, relates what happened to his father:

"When I was small, I saw Coronel Mancio sitting on the top of his horse whipping my uncles and my grandfather. I became tired of asking my mother why he was beating

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1. Coronel - honorary title used by large landed estate owners in the North-East of Brazil and elsewhere. The same title was used by some seringalistas. For a history of coronelismo, see Barbalho:1983.
 2. Centro - the centre of the seringal, where the colocações are found.
 3. Folha do Acre:13/11/1983.

them. Mamãe used to say that he killed my father. Whenever I asked her where Papai was, she said that Coronel Mancio had ordered them to kill him. They murdered him because he was strong and courageous. Papai was not used to being a slave, so he would run off into the forest and take some of the others with him. So Sêu Mancio told his men to kill him as an example to the rest." (1).

The brutal treatment that was meted out on the seringais and contact with diseases such as influenza and measles further decimated the Indian population already close to annihilation following the correrias. While no population statistics are available for the various tribal groupings prior to the 1870's there is sufficient evidence to suggest that many tribes disappeared completely and those that remained suffered heavy losses. In the first instance, an examination of a map (2) showing the distribution of Acre's tribal groups will show that the Purus valley is almost completely devoid of natives. The remnants of three tribes inhabit areas far from Acre's townships on the upper rivers which are accessible only on foot or by canoe during the rainy season. Secondly, there is the evidence of travellers such as Tastevin who noted in 1926 that there were only 700 Indians left in the valley of the River Taruacá where twenty years earlier there had been 4,000 (3).

The fate of Acre's tribes after the collapse of the rubber economy and the arrival of the ranchers will be discussed in Part 2.

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1. Ibid. The title 'Sêu' also indicates servility/respect.
 2. See Map , Part 2, Chapter 2.
 3. Tastevin:1926:49.

Chapter 3 - The Decline of the Amazonian Rubber Economy.

3.1. The Expansion of Oriental Rubber Production.

Brazil's position as the World's principal producer of natural rubber was seriously undermined when, in 1876, Henry Wickham exported 70,000 seeds of *Hevea Brasiliensis* Branca to Kew Gardens out of which 2,700 seedlings were germinated (1). Specimens of these were later transferred to the Botanic Gardens in Singapore and Ceylon to form the basis of a rational plantation system in the British and Dutch East Indies. The rapid expansion of the oriental plantations can be seen in Table 1.3.1. which shows that, between 1900 and 1910, over 450,000 hectares were converted to the planting of rubber (2).

At first, it was envisaged that the rubber obtained from the eastern plantations would be destined for the new manufacturing industries that were planned for the Indian sub-continent (3). However, the success of plantation production soon began to interest British manufacturers who began to diversify horizontally and open up their own estates in Malaya (4).

Plantation production was based on the employment of cheap indentured labour from China and India. According to Maurette (5), the distribution of labour by nationality of workers on the British

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1. Previous attempts to raise seedlings had by and large been unsuccessful. See Drabble:1973:Chapter 1 and Wycherley:1968.
 2. Drabble:ibid ; Maurette:1924:415 ; Knorr:1945:58ff.
 3. Drabble:ibid.
 4. Storrs:1946:9ff.
 5. Maurette:ibid.

Table 1.3.1. South and South-East Asia: Total Rubber Plantation Hectarage, 1898 - 1922 (in 1,000 has.).

<u>Year.</u>	<u>Total Hectarage.</u>
1898	0.81
1899	1.62
1900	2.83
1901	6.07
1902	8.90
1903	14.56
1904	25.90
1905	51.40
1906	106.44
1907	175.23
1908	247.27
1909	311.62
1910	455.29
1911	610.29
1912	773.79
1913	838.13
1914	913.81
1915	997.99
1916	1,105.24
1917	1,262.66
1918	1,425.35
1919	1,558.10
1920	1,642.27
1921	1,693.26
1922	1,719.98

Source: Drabble: 1973: 219.

estates was : Hindu 78.9% ; Chinese 14% ; Malay 5.9% ; Others 1.2%. The wages received by such labour was lower than that obtained by Brazilian seringueiros. Akers (1) states that, in 1914, the average daily rate for a plantation labourer was less than one shilling, whereas the Brazilian seringueiro produced approximately six shillings and eight pence worth of rubber per day. As has been noted, the Aviamento System ensured that the seringueiro was no better off.

Brazilian production, based as it was on the tapping of stands of naturally dispersed seringueiras, could not compete with the oriental plantations which concentrated up to 100 trees in a single hectare. In 1912, the cost of producing and shipping one pound of Malayan rubber to Europe was 1s 10d, while the equivalent for Amazonian rubber was 2s 4 $\frac{1}{4}$ d, i.e., almost 20% more (2). In the same year, the ratio of Amazonian production to plantation production was 1.5:1. Ten years later the ratio was 1:14 with plantation rubber accounting for 92.3% of the World's total rubber production (3).

The expansion of the plantations and the subsequent increase in production was so precipitate that, by 1916, total World production had outstripped consumption (4). The price of rubber began to fall dramatically. In 1910, at the height of the 'Boom', the average price of 'Pará Fine' (5) stood at U.S.\$ 1.908 per pound. Twelve years later, in 1922, it had plummeted to U.S.\$ 0.199 per pound, a fall of 90% (6).

1. Akers:1914:122.

2. Akers:1914:126/7.

3. See Table 1.3.2.

4. Santos:1980:236.

5. The highest quality of Amazonian rubber.

6. Hotchkiss:1924:130.

Table 1.3.2. World Production of Natural Rubber, 1900 - 1922.
(in Tonnes).

<u>Year.</u>	<u>Amazonia.</u>	<u>Plantation.</u>	<u>Total.*</u>	Index of Mean Annual Price. 1910 = 100
1900	26,271	4	53,890	51
1901	26,750	5	54,850	45
1902	28,040	8	53,340	38
1903	30,540	21	55,950	47
1904	30,097	43	62,120	57
1905	32,869	145	62,145	65
1906	34,147	510	66,210	64
1907	36,844	1,000	69,000	56
1908	37,384	1,800	65,400	46
1909	38,748	3,600	69,600	78
1910	43,547	8,200	77,500	100
1911	41,673	17,487	84,880	58
1912	48,767	31,935	105,283	55
1913	43,450	59,989	114,651	42
1914	39,643	69,996	118,087	32
1915	42,924	103,300	158,170	29
1916	41,218	144,663	199,146	35
1917	42,453	198,979	253,925	34
1918	28,232	159,734	194,762	29
1919	41,147	317,132	369,808	25
1920	27,976	372,702	406,833	17
1921	20,171	297,630	322,801	10
1922	26,696	377,786	409,482	10

* Including African, Central American & Other.

Source: Hotchkiss:1924:130; Santos:1980:236; Paula:1982:70; Maurette:1924:425; McFadyean:1944:226; Pearson:1911:215; Le Cointe:1922:333
Weinstein:1983:218.

Faced with the imminent collapse of the entire rubber economy, the Brazilian government announced a two-pronged initiative. Firstly, it enacted the Rubber Defence Laws in 1912 which sought to transform the seringais of the Amazon into plantations through the offer of advantageous concessions in the form of low interest loans, improvements in transport and medical facilities, and the stimulation of migration into the region (1). Secondly, it introduced a valorisation programme through which the Bank of Brazil bought up rubber stocks and held them for the price rise that never came. Both of these initiatives arrived too late. The sharp fall in rubber prices and subsequent loss in revenue caused the government to halt its plantation programme and, whereas valorisation had been quite successful with coffee, it failed with rubber because the Amazon no longer held a monopoly of production and with it the ability to manipulate the quantities that came onto the market. The Bank of Brazil nearly brought itself to the verge of bankruptcy (2).

3.2. The Differential Effect of the Collapse.

A number of authors have suggested that, following the entry of plantation rubber onto the World market, the collapse of the Amazonian rubber economy was virtually total and characterised by the wholesale desertion of the seringueiro population into subsistence agriculture and/or the extraction of other forest products such as Brazil nuts. For example, Cardoso and Muller state:

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1. The 'tripé' of low interest loans, infrastructural improvements and the stimulation of migration was also used in several later programmes for Amazonia, as Part 2 will illustrate.
 2. Melby:1942:463ff ; Burns:1965:419ff ; Weinstein:1983:223ff.

"In synthesis, the decline of Brazil's participation in the World production of rubber and the decline in national production...caused, as we have seen, demographic stagnation - but not only this, we can assume that the mercantile rubber economy and the activities dependent upon it regressed into a subsistence economy." (1).

Celso Furtado also notes that the Nordestinos in Amazonia, having been abandoned and with no means to return home to the North-East:

"...were obliged to supplement their diet with local hunting and fishing resources and also reverted to the most primitive form of subsistence economy, typical of Man living in the tropical rainforest. This can be gauged by their extremely low rate of reproduction." (2).

Octavio Ianni similarly points to the transformation of the seringueiro into a subsistence cultivator, although he does allow for variation in the pace and extent of the process:

"Thus, the complex of the Amazonian economy began to stagnate and regress...while, at the same time, the forces and relations of production were rearranged. To a greater or lesser extent, in the different areas, the conditions of life in the region met other forms of organisation. Small-holdings were created on the sites where ex-seringueiros ...and other workers formerly linked to the extraction of rubber...were located - Nucleii of homesteaders were formed." (3).

Caio Prado Junior (4) notes similar occurrences in the States of São Paulo, Minas Gerais and Pernambuco, resulting from the decline in coffee and sugar cycles in the 1930's, as also does Valverde (5) for the Zona da Mata of Minas Gerais in the 1940's. All of these

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1. Cardoso & Muller:1978:34. Emphasis mine.
 2. Furtado:1971:134.
 3. Ianni:1978:60ff.
 4. Caio Prado Jr.:1969:9 - 22.
 5. Valverde:1958:43.

works, however, discuss the impact of the collapse of a particular economic cycle in terms of a regional economy as a whole. At this level of abstraction, i.e., in terms of the majority of the region's inhabitants, their comments may be valid. It must be pointed out, though, that in the case of Cardoso & Muller and Furtado no empirical backing is given to their statements. It is stated that the regional rural economy collapsed and it is assumed that the only alternative open to those who remained was a 'regression' into subsistence production. Ianni, on the other hand, does provide empirical details of the process at work in the Araguaia valley in Eastern Amazonia, but assumes that it is a generalised phenomenon. It will nevertheless be argued here that, within the Amazon region, there were sufficient variations at the sub-regional level to warrant the treatment of Eastern and Western Amazonia as distinct cases (1).

In the first place, as Table 1.3.3. illustrates, the sharp fall in rubber prices after 1910 was catastrophic for all three rubber producing states. Notwithstanding relatively constant levels of production, the revenues of Pará and Amazonas fell by 47% and 49% respectively between 1910 and 1915. That of Acre, on the other hand, fell by a massive 72% during the same period. While this may in part be due to the greater percentage drop in rubber production in Acre, it also points to the generation of revenue from a greater variety of sources by the other two states. The capitals of the latter, Belém and Manaus, had significant urban populations (2) and thus had substantial markets for manufactured goods. This was not the case in Acre whose population was scattered throughout the interior

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1. This is not to preclude any further differentiation into other sub-regional units.
 2. As Weinstein:1983:239 notes, in 1912 Belém had a population of 275,167 which made it one of the top five largest urban areas in Brazil.

Table 1.3.3. - Rubber Production and the Revenue it Generated for Principal States, 1910 & 1915.

<u>States.</u>	<u>Revenues (in Contos de Reis).</u>		<u>Production (in Tonnes).</u>	
	1910 (a).	1915 (b) $\frac{b}{a} \times 100$	1910 (a).	1915 (b). $\frac{b}{a} \times 100.$
Pará.	20,255	8,887 43.8	10,257	9,581 93.41
Amazonas.	18,069	7,428 41.11	10,453	8,446 80.80
Acre.	19,868	5,610 28.24	11,512	8,961 77.84
Total.	58,192	21,925 37.68	32,222	26,988 83.76

Source : Santos:1980:240 and Le Cointe:1922:434 (Vo1.2).

of the state. As late as 1940, the state capital, Rio Branco, had a population of less than 5,000 persons, just 6.2% of the total state population of 79,768 (1). The lack of diversification of the Acrean economy is demonstrated in Table 1.3.4. which shows that, in 1920, Acre's industrial labour force amounted to 22 persons.

Table 1.3.4. Amazonia : Manufacturing Establishments and Industrial Labour Force, 1907 & 1920.

<u>State.</u>	<u>Number of Establishments.</u>		<u>Number of employees.</u>	
	<u>1907</u>	<u>1920</u>	<u>1907</u>	<u>1920</u>
Pará.	54	168	2,539	3,033
Amazonas.	92	69	1,168	636
Acre.	-	10	-	22
Total.	146	247	3,707	3,691

Source: Santos:1980:273.

The loss of revenue saw the debts of the producing states rise steadily. By 1913, the combined external debts of the states of Pará and Amazonas amounted to £1,015,989 (2). While the states continued to meet the payments on their external debt, they partially suspended payment of internal debts. As Le Cointe notes:

"It is difficult to imagine the agonising predicament in which the Amazonian state employees found themselves. ...Judges, teachers, employees of various government departments, pensioners etc., had not been paid for twelve months, eighteen months and, in some cases, for

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1. Acre:1981: Anuário Estatístico and IBGE:1980:Sinopse Preliminar do Censo Demográfico, Acre.
 2. Le Cointe:1922:436 (Vol.2). Acre was still a Territory at this time and so its debt accrued to the federal government.

two years....The president of the court in one of Pará's administrative districts announced to the government that he could no longer hold trials because he had exhausted his supply of decent clothing and since the state refused to pay him even a portion of what he was owed, one of the capital's leading newspapers took up a collection for him...A judge in the Federal Territory (of Acre) closed the sessions of his court stating that he had not received his salary for such a long time that he had to abandon his position to prevent his family from starving to death." (1).

The effect of the crisis in demographic terms is given in Table 1.3.5.

This again shows marked differences between the producing states.

Between the years of 1910 and 1920, the population of Pará fell by 19%, that of Amazonas stagnated, while Acre's rose by 24%. This was intimately associated with the geographical location of these three states in relation to the migrant donor areas of North-eastern Brazil. On the one hand, the Nordestinos in Pará and the easternmost portion of Amazonas found it relatively inexpensive and practicable to migrate back to the North-East once the crisis set in. This was not the case for the seringueiros of the upper rivers.

In addition, Western Amazonas was still receiving contingents of Nordestinos even though the price of rubber was falling rapidly. These came up river to Manaus, where some may have settled, before travelling on the the seringais of western Amazonas and Acre. Schurtz, who visited Acre in the early 1920's, comments that even during the decline new workers were constantly needed "for the industry has proved exceedingly wasteful of human life". He also notes that, in 1916, between 8,000 and 10,000 migrants arrived in

1. Le Cointe:1922:436 - 437 (Vol.2).

Western Amazonia in full flight from a new drought that had hit the state of Ceará (1).

Table 1.3.5. - Amazonia: Demographic Growth, 1910 - 1940.

State.	1910 (a).	1920 (b)	1940 (c)	$\frac{b}{a} \times 100.$	$\frac{c}{b} \times 100.$
Pará.	783,845	635,000	944,644	81	149
Amazonas	358,695	363,166	438,008	101	121
Acre.	74,484	92,379	79,768	124	86

Source : Santos:1980:261 & IBGE:1980:Sinopse Preliminar do Censo Demográfico, Acre.

Between 1920 and 1940, Acre's population fell by 14%, although in absolute terms it still remained above the 1910 level. Those of Pará and Amazonas, however, rose by 49% and 21% in the same period. Again this was due to the latter possessing substantial urban centres with manufacturing industries and other enterprises not connected with rubber production and which attracted migrants from the hard hit countryside. Belém and Manaus were major recipients of those who migrated out of Western Amazonia as is noted by Guerra:

"Once the exodus began, it affected all the extractivist areas (of Acre). On the River Juruá, as well as on the River Acre, one saw instances where more than five families went downstream on a single raft containing all of their possessions, their animals and everything else that they needed for their survival. These were real 'Noah's Arks' which followed the current towards the lower rivers until they reached Manaus, the capital of the state of Amazonas. Many properties were left completely abandoned." (2).

1. Schurtz:1925:223/4.

2. Guerra:1955:65n.

The exact number of migrants who left Acre during the 1920's and 1930's is not known. The absolute population fell by 12,611 (13.65%) between 1920 and 1940, but this was lower than the number of persons who migrated out of the state as it does not take into account the birth rate and death rate of the residual population. It is possible that Acre lost at least one quarter of its total population in this period. It is again left to travellers such as Tastevin to illustrate the catastrophic effect this had on the population levels of isolated communities:

"Because of the fall in the price of rubber, the number of Brazilians is diminishing. Having lost the hope of making thier fortunes, many are returning to their native states...The census of 1920 noted that the Muru (valley) had a population of 4,000 inhabitants and now in 1923 there are only half that number. In three years the Muru has lost half of its population and the exodus continues."(1).

Tastevin notes similar occurrences throughout the valleys of the Juruá region. Along the 250 kilometre length of the River Riozinho da Liberdade in the Acrean municipality of Tarauacá, he found a resident population of just 771 spread among 15 seringais. One of these, Seringal Ceará, had a resident population of over 300 at the height of the boom. Ten years later it had a mere 35 residents (2).

Those who remained in Acre continued to produce rubber, although on a lesser scale. Whereas in Eastern Amazonia, the rural population which reverted to agriculture had a market for subsistence items such as farinha (3) in Belém, as occurred in the Bragantine region

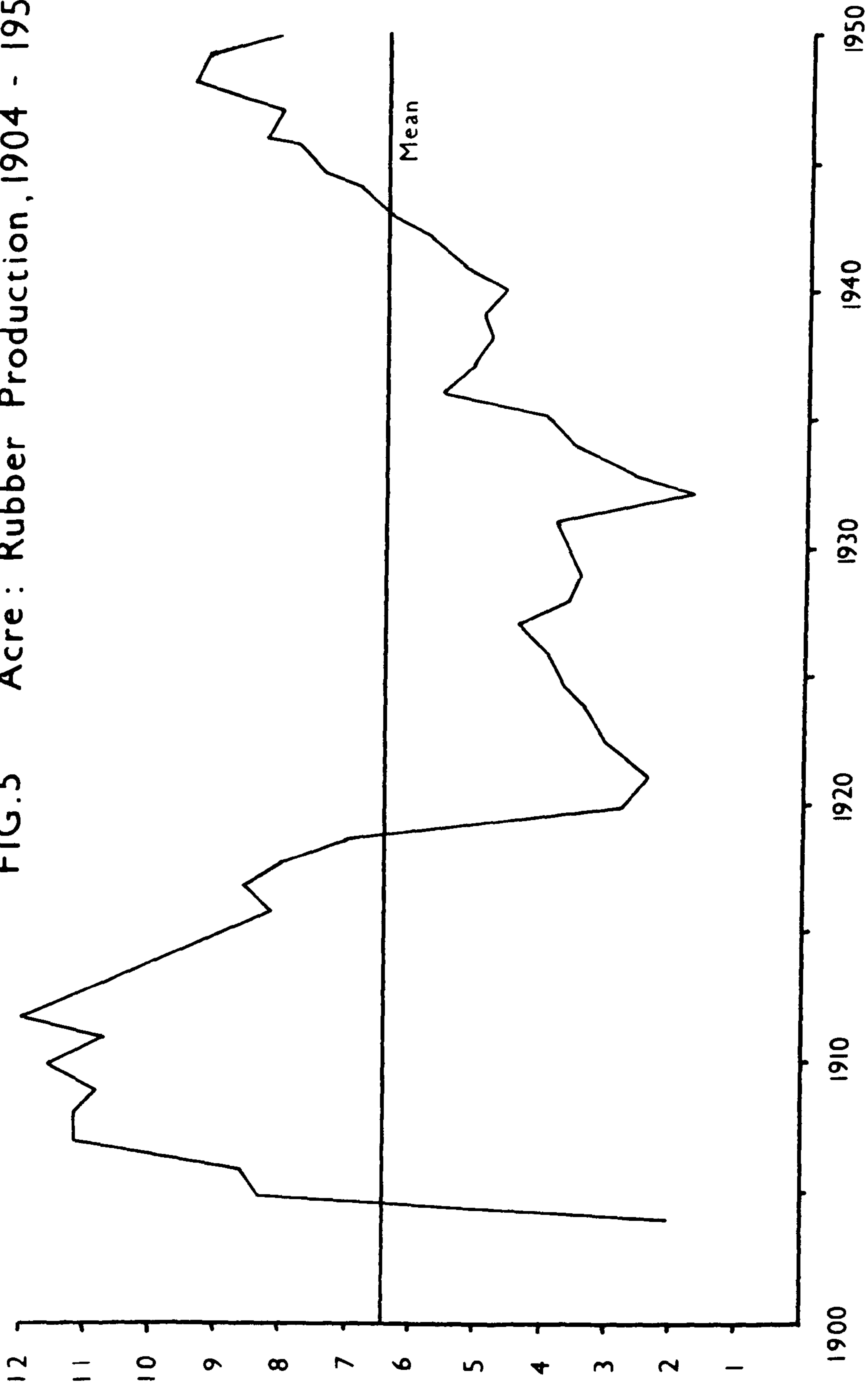
1. Tastevin:1925:419

2. Tastevin:1928:214.

3. Cassava flour.

'000
Tonnes

FIG.5 Acre: Rubber Production, 1904 - 1950.



Source: Guerra:1955:206/7.

which suffered much deforestation as Nordestinos moved in to produce charcoal for the urban centres (1). The Acrean population had no such alternative and rubber continued to be the only cash crop (2).

Figure 5, which gives Acre's annual rubber production figures between 1904 and 1950, shows that rubber production fell considerably during the 1920's. Production during this decade averaged approximately 3.2 K tonnes per annum, i.e., a third of the level produced in the previous decade (3). Yet, as has been noted, Acre probably lost at least 25% of its population through out-migration at this time. This suggests that the residual population continued to produce rubber at something like 40% to 50% of previous levels.

It must be remembered that the Acrean seringueiro who remained on the seringal was still subject to the direction of the seringalista and it is in this relation that a temporary transformation did occur. In order to reduce costly imports of food onto the seringal and to maintain a captive labour force until prices improved, the seringalista began to encourage rather than discourage subsistence production.

When Schurtz visited Acre in 1925, he noted:

"The Acre now produces nearly everything that it eats and as a result of this condition the inhabitants tend to remain on the land when the price of rubber makes its working less remunerative, rather than abandon the seringal for Manaus or Para. The same tendency is noticeable in other localities, as in Bolivia and on the lower Purus.

1. Penteado:1967.

2. Brazil Nut collection did increase, but this is native to only the eastern portion of the state.

3. Guerra:1955:206ff.

Under this new regime, during the season when the tapping of rubber trees is suspended or relaxed, the seringueiros dedicate themselves to the cultivation of beans, corn, manioc, bananas and sugar cane. Fish are also caught and salted, and pigs and chickens are raised. This is contrary to the old system, whereby the proprietor discouraged the production of foodstuffs by his workers, because of the profit which he made on their sale and because he preferred that the seringueiro devote all his time to the production of rubber. A few proprietors have clung to the old system, but the majority have accepted the new conditions as more advantageous to all concerned." (1).

Thus, whereas in Eastern Amazonia, agricultural production may have come to dominate rural activity, in Acre and the surrounding areas, the primary unit of rural production was still the seringal with the seringalista still maintaining his control over the seringueiro population, although under slightly relaxed conditions. Rubber production did fall due to both out-migration and the need to divert labour into subsistence cultivation, but its production still continued to be the element around which the Acrean social formation continued to be reproduced.

The existence of small farmers in Eastern Amazonia and 'captive' seringueiros in the West was to be an important factor in both the periods that followed : World War 2 which saw a resurgence of U.S. interest in Amazonian rubber production ; and the post-War era during which investment in the Amazon began to interest the entrepreneurs of the Brazilian Centre-South. The first period will be discussed in the next section, the second will be dealt with in Part 2.

1. Schurtz:1925:225.

3.3. World War Two and the Demand for Rubber.

Of the industries that contributed to the war effort, the hardest hit by enemy action was rubber production. During the 1939 - 1941 period, natural rubber supplies were abundant. The World produced 1,390,000 tons in 1940 of which 1,100,000 tons were consumed by the Allies and Neutrals. Almost 90% of total World production at this time originated in the British and Dutch East Indies. Consequently, the Allies were dealt a severe blow when these areas were overrun by the Japanese in 1942. Between 1942 and late 1943, strict conservation of stocks was needed and only essential articles were manufactured, some from recycled rubber (1). The pressing problem of finding new sources of rubber was tackled on two fronts : the search for natural rubber sources outside the sphere of influence of the Axis powers ; a search for alternatives to natural rubber itself.

3.3.1. The "Soldados da Borracha".

The Allies obviously needed to obtain supplies of rubber in the short terms from areas not subject to enemy naval action, but if new plantations were created in, say, Central America, these would require 6 to 9 years from planting to their first yields of latex. It was almost a foregone conclusion that the U.S. would turn its attention to the rubber fields of Amazonia.

1. Storrs:1946:21-24 ; Knorr:1945:101ff.

This was not the first time that the U.S. interest had become focussed on the region. After the Stevenson Plan of 1922 which attempted to create an artificial shortage of British and Dutch plantation rubber and so inflate prices (1), the U.S.A., which was then consuming 70% of World production, became increasingly apprehensive and sought to guarantee supplies outside of foreign control. In the mid-1920's, North American technicians began to explore the Amazon for possible sites for plantations and attempts were made to interest the three largest American consumers (Ford, Firestone, and Goodyear) in the project. In the event, Firestone went into production in Liberia, Goodyear created plantations in Sumatra, and only Ford experimented in Amazonia (2).

In a reversal of Wickham's earlier exportation of Brazilian seeds to the Orient, Ford took out a concession in 1929 for over one million hectares in the Brazilian Amazon with the object of setting up plantations using rubber tree clones brought from Singapore. The project was to be based on the rational techniques that Ford had evolved in Detroit and included in the package was a plan to construct whole townships to house employees, hospitals and other facilities. Ford's attempt to reproduce a factory system in the middle of the Amazonian rainforest was a signal failure, the result of labour shortages, disease, pests, and variable rainfall. The experiment lost over 9 million dollars (3).

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1. McFadyean:1944: ; KNorr:1945:93 -101.
 2. Galey:1979.
 3. Galey:ibid ; Russell:1942 ; Melby:1942.

During the war years, the U.S.A. subsidised rubber production in a number of countries, but the project that received the greatest publicity and which concerns us here was the U.S. effort to obtain natural rubber supplies from the Amazon. Through the agency of the U.S. Rubber reserve Company and the U.S. Rubber Development Corporation, plans were laid to re-activate Amazonia's decadent seringais (1).

The overriding problem was Amazonia's historic shortage of labour. It has been estimated that, in 1941, there were approximately 34,000 seringueiros in the Amazon, the majority being resident in Acre and western Amazonas. It was also estimated that this labour force would need to be doubled to meet the production levels required by the Allies (2).

Three principal factors contributed to resolving this problem which resulted in the second mass migration from the North-East into the Amazonian interior. Firstly, a new drought struck the North-East in 1942. The second was an offer from the Rubber Development Corporation to underwrite the recruitment, transport, intitial lodging, food supplies, tools, medical supplies of the new migrant seringueiros. Thirdly, when Brazil declared war on the Axis powers in 1942, the Rubber Reserve Company made an agreement with the the newly created ' Special Service for the Mobilisation of Workers for Amazonia ' (3) for the latter to transport 50,000 men into Western Amazonia before May 31, 1943. The Company was to pay SEMTA U.S.\$100 for each migrant placed (4).

1. Bauer:1948:303ff ; Storrs:1946:94ff.

2. Cedeplar:1979:52 ; Bauer:ibid.

3. SEMTA : Serviço Especial de Mobilização de Trabalhadores para a Amazonia.

4. See note 2.

The Nordestinos who migrated came to be known collectively as the 'Soldados da Borracha', the 'Rubber Army', and, according to Benchimol, approximately 30,000 made the journey between 1942 and 1945. Over 70% of these migrants were adult males (1). The 'Soldados' were exempted from military service in the war zones and guaranteed a return passage once the war was over and a state pension on reaching retirement age. Field interviews were recorded with eight ex-soldados and informal discussions were held with over a dozen more during the field trip to Acre. The following interview is representative of the group, it describes the journey from the North-East and the conditions found on arrival at the seringal in Acre:

"I was born on the Fazenda Carapateira in the municipality of Mossoró in the state of Rio Grande do Norte in 1922... on the nineteenth of July.... I came to Acre in 1943 during the month of March...Well, I came to Acre to produce rubber during the second World War in what was considered as part of the war effort...some government people came around to recruit us and promised us that when the war was over they would pay for our return passages and that, when we were old, we would be given a state pension...but we still haven't received a penny...As I said, I travelled here in 1943, but the recruitment began in 1942. We were enlisted in our own municipalities and taken to Fortaleza (the capital of Ceará) by lorry. In Fortaleza we were put up in a hostel called Pos de Prado. Then we went by land to São Luis in Maranhão and from there we went on board a boat bound for Belém. The boat on which we travelled was called the Itaimbê. We left São Luis on the Wednesday of Easter Week at 6 o'clock in the evening and only two days later, on the Friday of the Passion, we arrived in Belém. We had travelled on one of those steamers of the Lloyd-Brasileiro Line. We didn't have any problems with submarines because there were two minesweepers with us all the way...and an aeroplane as well with two big torpedos circling around us the whole time...right up until we reached the mouth of the Amazon and the danger was over. ...They say that the most dangerous part was near the bar at

1. Benchimol:1966:148 ; Cedeplar:1979:52.

Salinas right by the mouth of the river. Once we passed by Salinas, we entered the river and the danger was past...We travelled in the dark, the only light that was lit was in the hold...We couldn't even light a cigarette...The boat that came after us, the Itaipui, was hit by a torpedo from a German submarine and ended up on a sandbank, but we didn't here a thing, just a noise in the distance out to sea...At that time I didn't even know how to swim...where I come from it is very dry with just a few wells here and there... We spent twelve days in Belém in a hostel between Icoaraci and Pinheiro, called Tapanã...all paid for by the government. They paid for everything, food, medicine, clothes, hammocks...everything all paid for by the Government...I was married eight months before I came to Acre, but my wife left me...we were married in church, so here in Acre I married a girl in the registry office...I was widowed ten months after the wedding...From Belém to Manaus we had a good journey...I can't remember the name of the boat, it had an English name that was difficult to pronounce...at that time, I couldn't even read Portuguese let alone a foreign language...It was a large boat...From Manaus to Boca do Acre we travelled in a small launch called the Tupi...in Boca do Acre we split up...some of us went to Rio Branco...We went on board the Diamantina bound for Sena Madureira...I think that there were about forty of us in the group...Sena Madureira was very small then without even a pavement...just like a village...There was what people used to call the 'road' between Sena Madureira and Rio Branco, but it was just a narrow track for animals...I don't remember the date, but I arrived in Sena Madureira at the beginning of May and we were taken out to Seringal Mercês on the 20th of that month...It was located on the River Iaco and owned by Senhor Raimundo Escosse de Farias...We travelled to the seringal by motorised canoe...There were over 150 Soldados on this seringal...The seringal was very big...I don't know how many colocacoes there were, but from the banks of the Iaco to the other side of the seringal on the River Riozinho was a three day walk on foot...the mule train that brought in supplies used to take three days as well...Just a few days after I arrived on the seringal I came down with what we used to call *impaludismo* in those days...malaria...I was in a fever for two weeks...When we were taken to our colocacoes we already knew how to tap rubber...There was a man on the boat from Belém who had a load of tree trunks and who was paid to teach us how to tap...When we got to our colocacoes, the mateiro had already marked out our estradas...We had to build our own barracas and then clear up the trails and start tapping...The colocação on whic I was put was called 'Palhal'...that was where I got my nickname from...people around here call me Raimundo de Palhal...On the colocação were myself, my father and my two brothers...and on the next colocação were my other brother and my brother-in-law...and about an hour's walk away there were my brother's father-in-law and his wife and children...We left my mother,

three sisters and one brother back there in the North-East. Then in 1947, we heard that this brother had been killed during the Italian Campaign...When we came to this seringal, the seringalista sold us supplies on credit...then, once we had begun to produce rubber, we had to pay him back...We bought a tapper's knife, tigelinhas, a hunting knife, an axe, a rifle, ammunition, cassava flour, preserves...and cans of sardines and corned beef because we didn't know how good the hunting would be...we also had to buy beans, rice and pills called 'Febrinha' for malaria...It took me three years to pay off that debt...the prices in the barracão were high, but we had to accept them...I only had a credit balance in the third year because I economised a lot and I managed to plant some corn and rice so that I would not have to buy so much from the barracão." (1).

It was estimated that this army of seringueiros would produce approximately 80,000 tonnes of rubber per annum for export, but, as the following table demonstrates, these expectations were not realised (2) :

Table 1.3.6. - Brazil : Natural Rubber Exports, 1937 - 1947.

<u>Year.</u>	<u>Exports (in Tonnes).</u>	<u>Index.1941=100.</u>
1937	14,792	138
1938	12,064	112
1939	11,861	110
1940	11,832	110
1941	10,734	100
1942	12,204	114
1943	14,575	136
1944	15,965	149
1945	16,696	156
1946	9,821	91
1947	9,434	88

Source : Superintendência da Borracha, Anuário Estatístico, 1981, Mercado Nacional.

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1. Field interview, ex-Soldado da Borracha, Rio Branco.
 2. Bauer:1948:306.

In only two years, 1944 and 1945, did exports surpass the 1937 level and then only by 8% and 13% respectively. In practical terms, the massive input by the U.S.A. yielded only a fraction of what had been projected even though exports did increase by 56% between 1941 and 1945. The physical and social factors that impeded the achievement of significantly higher production levels were listed in the field reports made by technicians of the Rubber Development Corporation. In September, 1943, one technician wrote :

"The supplying of equipment and foodstuffs for the Amazon Basin in Brazil has completely broken down this year and many regions will not receive supplies this season and unless a better organisation and transportation is worked out supplies will not even reach the tappers in time next season. This seems to be due to shipping difficulties, the vast distances involved, lack of experienced personnel, poor organisation and the red tape of the various countries involved." (1).

In the Eastern half of Amazonia (2), where the seringais were in the main disactivated during the crisis of the 20's and early 30's, the seringueiro population had either migrated away from the rubber fields or else remained their as subsistence farmers/extractivists on the parcellised remains of the seringais. Here, the U.S. aid was aimed directly at the small farmer who benefitted accordingly. A description of the situation of this group is given in the field report of another visiting technician :

1. Quoted in Higbee:1951:403.

2. That area of Amazonia that lies east of the 60th Meridian, i.e., more or less East of Manaus. See Map 2.

"The operators along the main streams of Baixo Amazonas are nearly all small farmers. In addition to a few rubber trees, varying from 50 to 2,000 in number, they usually have some cacao, and engage in some form of agriculture. Production of rubber is only part of a badly balanced economy and is engaged in only in the off season when prices make such production attractive. Until a year ago, most trees had not been tapped for the past six to ten years and only now are some of the seringais being reopened. We believe that thru our efforts and the present attractive, guaranteed price for rubber that before the end of the present season nearly all the seringais in Baixo Amazonas will be in production." (1).

Thus, during the crisis, rubber production in the middle and lower Amazons had practically ceased with labour being diverted into agricultural activity in relatively small economic units. Given the quoted maximum of 2,000 seringueiras, the largest would have had a maximum of 10 to 15 estradas, i.e. sufficient to keep around 5 seringueiros fully occupied.

In Acre, western Amazonas, and Bolivia, where many of the large seringais remained intact, the U.S. aid, rather than help the direct producer, helped re-enforce the traditional seringueiro-seringalista relation. Firstly, as Higbee points out, the aid in the form of supplies was utilised by the seringalista to re-impose the dependence of the seringueiro on the barracão :

"Huge quantities of food, cloth, medicines, utensils, kerosene, tools and hunting arms were supplied to the Patrons at less than wholesale prices. They obtained for less than one dollar machetes that sold in the open market for as much as two to four times that amount. It was expected that these commodities would be sold to the seringueiros (sic) at comparably low rates in order to stimulate a greater interest in rubber gathering. But the Patrons seldom passed on more than a small part preferring to profit themselves rather than offer greater incentive to their peons." (2).

1. Higbee:1951:403.

2. Higbee:1951:413.

Secondly, now that credit for supplies was readily available, the seringalistas of Acre once again began to discourage subsistence production, preferring the seringueiro to concentrate on tapping and trade their product for supplies at the barracão. As in former times, the terms of trade were weighted against the seringueiro who again found it difficult to finish the year with a credit balance. As one Soldado da Borracha who worked on Seringal Humaitá on the River Riozinho in the interior of the Acrean municipality of Xapuri explains:

"After we arrived on the seringal, I spent five years in the forest without being able to go into town. All the rubber that we produced had to be taken to the barracão where the seringalista kept a current account for each seringueiro...on one side he used to write all the rubber that you produced and on the other side of the page he wrote down everything that you bought...He didn't allow us to plant or to keep chickens or pigs...so the only food that we didn't pay for were the fish and wild animals that we caught ourselves...everything else we bought in the barracão....and if he was short of salt or sugar or kerosene or something, we couldn't buy it from anyone else, because we had no money...it was unusual for anyone of us to actually have cash...everything was done on credit...and if we tried to sell rubber to anyone else, he would bring the police...He sold us supplies at very high prices...I never had a credit balance the whole time that I worked that seringal....not until I moved to another seringal in 1948, called Seringal São Pedro, where the seringalista was less strict and allowed us to plant a small garden...this was the first time that I was in credit at the end of the year...It wasn't much, just two contos (de reis)." (1).

U.S. incentives, then, did not result in a significant increase in the production of natural rubber for export and was differential in its affect on the livelihood chances of Amazonia's seringueiro population.

1. Field interview, ex-Soldado da Borracha, Seringal São Pedro, Xapuri.

3.3.2. Synthetic Rubber Production.

In his article of January, 1924, Hotchkiss prophetically wrote:

"Until synthetic rubber comes along to upset all our calculations, the essential to secure adequate supplies for the future is a market price high enough to make planting profitable for reasonably efficient planters. If this condition prevails, money will flow into every tropical country that is economically able to compete in production and the world will have all the rubber that it needs." (1).

Notwithstanding the millions of dollars that flowed into the Amazon during the war, the region failed to provide rubber in the quantity desired. The second spearhead of U.S. policy was the promotion of a colossal programme of synthetic rubber production that produced the first small samples in 1939, but which by 1943 was well under way. Table 1.3.7. gave the production figures of the North American rubber industry during the war years.

Table 1.3.7. - U.S.A. : Synthetic Rubber production, 1939-1945.
(in '000 Tonnes).

<u>Year.</u>	<u>Buna-S.</u>	<u>Buna-N.</u>	<u>Butyl.</u>	<u>Neoprene.</u>	<u>Total.</u>
1939	-	-	-	1.8	1.8
1940	-	-	-	2.5	2.5
1941	-	2.5	-	5.4	7.9
1942	3.7	9.7	-	9.0	22.4
1943	182.3	14.5	1.4	33.6	231.8
1944	670.3	16.8	18.9	56.7	746.7
1945	719.4	7.9	47.4	45.7	920.4
Total.	1,575.7	51.4	67.7	154.7	1,931.0

Source: Bauer:1948:296; Wendt:1947:214; Phillips:1961:45.

1. Hotchkiss:1924:138.

So, whereas the Brazilian Amazon exported 93,867 tonnes of natural rubber between 1939 and 1945 inclusively (1), U.S. factories produced over 20 times that amount during the same period. The rise of the synthetic rubber industry and the re-opening of the oriental plantations after the war was over spelt disaster for Amazonian production. In 1947, the Amazon exported less than 40% of what it had exported in 1902 (2). However, as will be demonstrated in Part 2, while Eastern Amazonian seringueiros once again transformed themselves into agriculturalists, both for subsistence and for the burgeoning metropolises of Belém and Manaus, the seringueiros of Acre and the surrounding areas continued to produce rubber even at the low market prices that prevailed.

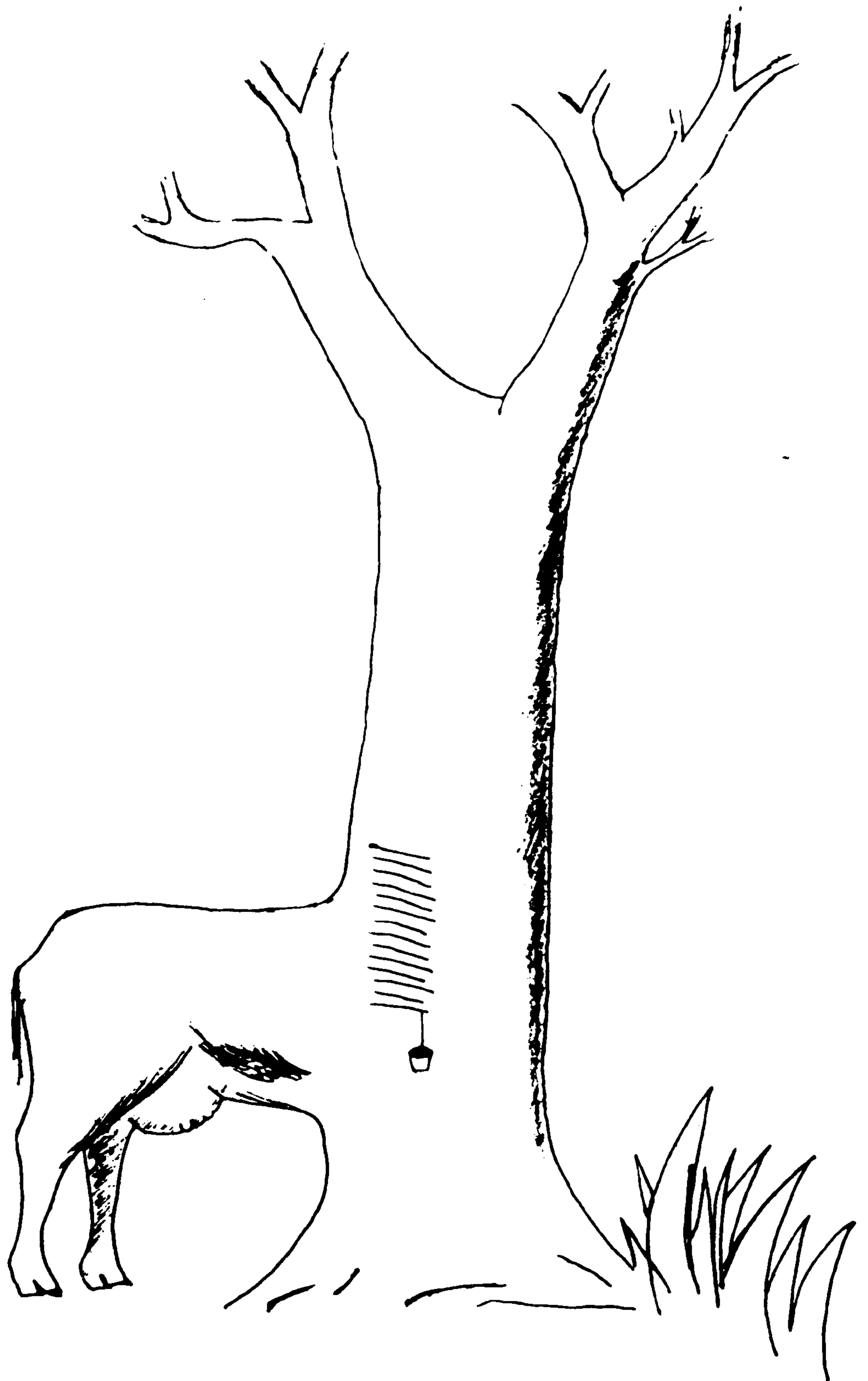
Summary.

Part 1 has analysed the elements that led to the formation of a class of 'seringueiros cativos' in the rural areas of Acre, a process in which both migrant and indigenous autonomous labour became subordinated to the regime of the seringal. It identified the social and ecological determinants which moulded the Acrean social formation into something more distinctive than a general Amazonian 'norm'. Whether these are merely empirical variations of a single 'development' model, or are sufficient to identify a dual or multiple path model is a matter for theoretical conjecture. It is clear that the latter would have to include analyses of the process as it has evolved in those other sub-units of the region not dealt with in this work. What is important is that the 'variations' noted - the formation and reproduction of a captive labour force, the continued predominance of large estates, the complex issue of land titling, and the low index of urbanisation - are crucial to the understanding of the contemporary situation in that they delimited the range of possible actions available to the various agents and agencies as they engage and disengage themselves in the present conflict.

Part 2 will begin with a discussion of the role of the state in determining the form and trajectory of Amazonian development. This will be followed by an analysis of the struggle for land in Acre in which state agencies have played a crucial part, firstly, in cutting the ties that bound the seringueiro to the seringal and, secondly, in subverting the attempts of the now autonomous seringueiros to remain independent.

Part 2

The Differentiation of the Acrean Peasantry.



Introduction.

For centuries the great northern region of Brasil remained virtually undeveloped, having no known mineral deposits or natural products to attract labour or capital. However, as Part 1 has shown, the Amazonian political economy was transformed after 1870 when many thousands of peasants, mainly from the North-East, migrated to the valleys of the upper rivers to tap rubber. This period witnessed the decline of Amazonian agriculture as well as the decay of local industries based on rubber as first Europe and then the U.S.A. began to expand their manufacturing capacity of rubber products. Apart from the brief interlude of World War 2, when the Japanese overran the rubber plantations of the Far East and Amazonian natural rubber production was stimulated, the region almost disappeared from public view. As Velho remarks, "...Brazil and the World lived as if Amazonia did not exist." (1).

It was during the war, in 1940, when the first signs were given that the Brazilian authorities were considering developing the region. In this year, President Vargas visited Amazonia, the first Brazilian president to do so. In a press interview given on his return, he prescribed the creation of agrarian colonies, systematic planning, scientific methods and improvements in health care as the cure for Amazonia's economic 'backwardness' (2), sentiments that were to be restated by successive governments. In this momentous task, Vargas

1. Velho:1979:193.

2. Quoted in Wagley:1964:289.

explicitly sought the aid of foreign capital:

" Already to arrive are North American industrialists who are interested in collaborating with us in the development of Amazonia, where their capital and technical resources will find a secure and remunerative application." (1).

During these war years, relations between Brazil and the U.S.A. were also strengthened on the political front. Of crucial importance, here, were the ideological links forged between the military establishments of the two countries during the Italian Campaign. According to Dreifuss, it was at this time that the seeds were sown of the Brazilian development 'model' which combined a programme of capitalist industrialisation with a fervent anti-communist ideology (2).

The post war period saw the centre of gravity of capital accumulation change from the rural agrarian to the urban industrial enterprise. This is not to suggest that agricultural activity somehow declined, rather, industry became the focal point around which the rest of the economy revolved. In particular, three processes must be noted (3) :

1. The emphasis on industrialisation with the rest of the economy developing extensively, little capitalised.
2. The spatial concentration of industry and therefore of capital accumulation in the South-East.
3. The laying of the foundations of a centralised, planned economy.

1. Quoted in Davis:1977:23.

2. Dreifuss:1981:71ff. See also Gambini:1982.

3. Brandão Lopes:1981:24ff ; Lessa:1982:27.

Neither the Vargas regime, nor that of Kubitschek which followed, attempted to structurally alter the primary sector. That is to say, the prime objective was industrialisation and, as long as agriculture fulfilled its obligation to supply raw materials for industry and foodstuffs for the rapidly expanding working class, then it was sufficient that it developed extensively through the incorporation of new lands. The underlying philosophy, here, was that, firstly, industrial growth would cause 'backwash' effects and so stimulate the primary sector and, secondly, that the development of a marketable surplus in the latter would provide a general growth input (1). Between 1950 and 1960, primary sector production rose by an average of 4.6% per annum, while the area under cultivation increased by a total of 56%. Industrial output, however, grew at approximately 9% per annum during the same period (2).

The occupation of new lands by peasants was greatly stimulated by the construction of the new capital, Brasília, on the central plateau. The federal highways that came to radiate out from Brasília into the so-called 'frontier regions' became the focus of a massive migration of small farmers and peasants and, as will be shown later, also of large-scale enterprises (3).

Industrial development was not founded upon the traditional industries of wood, furniture, leather, food production and so on, but on the new industries of mechanical and electrical goods,

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1. Goodman and Redclift:1981:71, point to the incorporation and maintenance of rural petty commodity production based on family labour, rather than its destruction as in the 'classical' model, as the means of mobilizing an agricultural surplus in peripheral social formations for the promotion of rapid capitalist development through industrialisation.
 2. Rocha Viana:1980:89;Lessa:1982:27. 3. Costa:1979:209ff. See also Lafer.B.:1975; Rattner:1978 ; Cardoso.M.L.:1978.

transport and communications, and, what was to be significant for Amazonian natural rubber production, the petro-chemical industries (1). Table 2.0.1. below shows how industrial growth became concentrated in São Paulo:

Table 2.0.1. - Brazil: % Distribution of Value of Industrial Production, 1907 - 1965.

Area / Year.	1907	1920	1938	1958	1965
Brazil	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
São Paulo	16.5	31.5	43.5	55.0	57.6
Guanabara (Rio)	33.1	20.8	14.2	11.4	9.3
Other States	50.4	47.7	42.3	33.6	33.1

Source : Rattner:1972:36.

Regional development institutions were set up in both the North-East (SUDENE (2)) and Amazonia (SPVEA (3)) to counter the tendency of capital and labour to concentrate in the industrial South-East. The SPVEA was allocated 3% of federal revenues and, later, 3% of state and municipal taxes in the Amazon region. However, the SPVEA was disbanded in 1966 following charges of bureaucratic ineptitude and corruption (4). SUDENE also failed to revive the North-Eastern economy during this period (5). While industry continued to expand

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1. Humphreys:1982:36.
 2. Superintendency for the Development of the North-East, created in 1959.
 3. Superintendency for the Economic Valorisation of Amazonia, created in 1953.
 4. Mahar:1979:6; Neto.M.:1978:145ff.
 5. There exists a large body of works on the northeastern economy and the workings of SUDENE during this period. See, especially, de Oliveira:1977 and also, amongst others, Cohn:1978 & Rattner:1978.

in the South-East, the North-East and the North remained structurally unaltered. With reference to the sugar cane workers of Pernambuco in the North-East, Celso Furtado wrote:

"...the status of the morador (1) is almost incompatible with that of citizen. All the acts of his life are the acts of an aggregate, of an element whose existence in all of its aspects are integrated into that socio-economic unity that is the sugar cane plantation." (2).

A similar situation existed for the seringueiro on the Amazonian rubber estates. When, in 1962, Charles Wagley returned to the Amazon town that had been the subject of his earlier study of the 1940's, he found that his earlier hopes of rapid economic development had not materialised:

"The Amazon region of Brazil is not stagnant economically or socially. It has changed since 1948, but not as much as the rest of Brazil. The economy is still based on extractive industries. The social and economic classes...are still basically the same. Communications remain inadequate; there have been no marked improvements in the fluvial transport system since 1950. Roads, except in the vicinity of Belém and Manaus, have hardly been extended. Men still occupy the riverine areas of Amazonia." (3).

The military coup of 1964 began a new era in Amazonian development in which the noted partnership between the military and foreign and national capitals was to play a prominent role. The Castelo Branco

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1. Morador - a rural worker who lives on the property of another and who maintains a subsistence plot on that property in exchange for labour services for the owner.
 2. Furtado:1964:141.
 3. Wagley:1964:308/9.

government came into power with two overriding imperatives. The first was geo-political - the effective occupation of its huge territorial space, particularly Amazonia which was sparsely populated and bordered by seven other countries. The second was economic - the resolution of the balance of payments problem. Here, the Amazon was seen, firstly, from the point of view of import substitution and, secondly, in terms of the production of exports. Mahar (1) comments that the new regime treated Amazonia not as a depressed area in need of developmental aid, as was the case with the North-East, but as a resource frontier to be exploited.(2)

The slogan that the government adopted, 'Social stability with economic dynamism', showed its commitment to economic growth and social control. To accomplish these aims, the state launched an apparently contradictory twin-pronged strategy : agrarian reform and the invitation of multinational companies to develop the region's natural resources.

Agrarian reform sought to relieve pressures on land in the North-East, an area that had been the scene of considerable social tension in the early 1960's (3). The commitment to land reform was given in the 'Plan of Government Action' (4) and the 'Estatuto da Terra' (5), both of 1964:

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1. Mahar:1979:17.
 2. Ianni:1981:132.
 3. For a history of the 'Peasant Leagues' in the North-East, see Azevêdo:1982.
 4. PAEG - Programa de Ação Econômico do Governo, 1964 - 1966.
 5. Land Statute.

"The type of reform that the country should realize should not just consider redistribution in terms of rural properties. It ought to incorporate socio-economic changes within this process, a wider agricultural policy content which brings in measures such as education, a new system of land taxation, cooperative organisations and improvements in the system of rural credit." (1),

that is, a total package for rural labour: in addition, the Estatuto da Terra states that the Government is obliged to:

"...promote and create conditions of access for the rural labourer to property in economically useful land, preferably in the region where he lives, or, when regional circumstances do not permit this, in zones previously delimited to conform with the regulations of this law." (2).

This opened up the possibility of the expropriation of land in Amazonia and the Centre-West and the translocation of landless peasants from the North-East to those regions. However, this provision permitted the government to realize its aim of social control by diffusing rural social tensions in the North-East without altering its rural social structure. In addition, the landless peasant and his family would be allocated land exactly where the government policy of the time required them to be, i.e., in Amazonia. Thus, the second policy aim of effective occupation of its 'empty spaces' would also be achieved.

At the same time as it was advocating the social use of land based on peasant family labour, the government also paved the way for foreign and national companies to purchase huge extensions of land for the

1. Brasil, PAEG: Sintese, Documento EPEA No.1, 2nd Ed., May, 1965, p.106.
2. Brasil, Estatuto da Terra, 1964, Law 4.504, Article 2a, Section 2.

purpose of exploring its natural resources. This process began with a series of encroachments on the relatively nationalistic Mineral Codes of 1935 and 1954 which had been promulgated to maintain state control over oil and other mineral resources. In 1964, Castelo Branco issued a decree that endorsed the right of private companies to explore Brazil's iron ore deposits. Then, in 1966, the Brazilian Court of Appeals upheld the right of the Hanna Mining Corporation, a U.S. multinational, to extract ore in the state of Minas Gerais. While this was happening in the South, the U.S. Steel Corporation gained a large land concession to mine ore in Pará, eastern Amazonia. These directives were further re-enforced when the federal government again reversed earlier protectionist legislation so as to enable each company, whether national or foreign, to hold 50,000 hectares of land in their own name and 30,000 hectares in the name of each of their subsidiaries. This was a considerable increase over the earlier 5,000 hectare limit per parent company and represented the promotion of foreign control of Brazil's natural resource base (1).

In 1966, the government announced a new initiative following a conference called by Castelo Branco to discuss the future of the whole Amazon region. A series of decrees were enacted that have come to be known collectively as Operation Amazonia. The aim was to further promote regional import substitution and to stimulate the occupation of the interior. This was in part a response to the plans of other Amazonian countries, notably Peru and Venezuela, to occupy their own Amazonian hinterland (2).

1. Davis:1977:36 ; Sampaio:1980:95ff ; Sautchuk:1981:77ff.
2. Mahar:1979:10ff ; Reis:1982:197ff.

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Among the new directives was the Plan for the Economic Valorisation of Amazonia - PVEA - Article 4 of which enumerates the following policy objectives:

1. The formation of stable population centres with the aim of self-sufficiency.
2. The improved organisation of natural resource exploitation, but with incentives only being given to the extractive economy when it could not be substituted by more profitable activity.
3. The selection of areas most propitious to the establishment of 'growth poles' whose effects would radiate into the surrounding area. (1)

Here the government is continuing its twin-pronged strategy of attracting both labour and capital into the region through the promotion of agricultural settlement by small farmers and peasants while at the same time offering incentives to large private companies. The PVEA is also disincentivising extractive production at a time when the natural rubber industry had already been hard hit by both a fall in the price in the early 60's (2) and the start of Brazilian synthetic rubber production in 1965 in the South and the North-East. This will shown later to be part of a strategy which, if not directly aimed at, was effective in the dismantling of the traditional power structure of Acre and paved the way for its subsumption to interests allied to southern capital.

1. For a list of the objectives of PVEA, see Cardoso & Muller:1977:112.
 2. The 1967 price of Amazonian natural rubber was 42% of the 1963 price in relation to the general index of prices;Pinto:1984:130.

These, then, were the contextual structural elements that combined to underpin the struggle for land in Amazonia in general and Acre in particular: the subsumption of agriculture to industry ; widening regional disparity ; the links between national and international capitals at both the economic and political levels ; the creation of a centralised, planning apparatus.

This discussion has necessarily been brief. The points made will be developed throughout the course of Part 2. Chapter 1 will analyse the roles of the two state agencies created to implement the government's dual strategy for Amazonia. Subsequent chapters will deal specifically with the crises such policies and programmes created for the rural population of Acre and will chart the growth and development of the political movement that sprang up as a result of and in spite of this state intervention.

Chapter 1 - Planning for Amazonian Development.

During the Estado Novo, the concept of the 'March to the West' was utilised as an ideological expression to promote the occupation of the so-called 'empty spaces' of Brazil's vast interior. The object was the settlement of the Centre-West and by the 1950's, with the exception of Paraná and parts of the interior of Bahia, the 'demographic frontier' was limited to Amazonia and the non-Amazonic areas of Mato Grosso and Goiás.

Early frontier occupations, i.e., those that took place prior to the development of industrial capitalism in Brazil, had taken two basic forms: firstly, through the penetration of merchant capital and based on the direct or indirect subordination of the direct producer, as was the case during the Amazon Rubber Boom; secondly, through the expansion of peasant subsistence agriculture which, for example, occurred with the extension of the North-East peasant movement into Maranhão during the 1920's (1). With the exception of this latter, 20th century movements into Amazonia are indissociable from the actions of the state as either facilitator or regulator of them.

1.1. Amazonia - 'Land for speculation' or 'Land of labour'?

The Superintendency for the Development of Amazonia - SUDAM (2) - was created to replace the discredited SPVEA to function as

1. Velho:1976:195.

2. Superintendência da Amazônia, Law 5.173 of the 27/3/1966.

coordinator of federal intervention in the region. Its financial arm was the Banco da Amazônia - BASA. SUDAM's prime directive was to free Amazonia from its historical dependence on extractive activity and, aided by a fiscal and financial incentive programme, it gave priority to those companies which wished to re-invest their taxable income in large-scale 'development' projects in the Amazon. As Mahar's discussion of SUDAM's First Five Year Plan (1967 - 1971) notes:

"While the regional economy was predicted to grow at a 9.4 percent average annual rate during the 1967 - 1971 period, the 'leading sectors', modern agriculture and industry, were programmed at annual rates of 11.5 and 11.9 respectively. Extractive industries and commerce, on the other hand, were expected to grow at the respective rates of 1.7 and 5.4 percent." (1)

Under the system of incentives, juridical persons who had already begun enterprises in Amazonia and which were functioning on 31st December, 1966, were exempted from 100% of taxation due for a period of ten years. In addition, juridical persons situated anywhere in Brazil would be exempt from 50% of taxes due provided that this was destined for projects approved by SUDAM. In this manner, private investment was attracted into the region with SUDAM providing the infrastructural base. SUDAM's incentives programme gave a massive boost to the spread of ranching projects throughout Amazonia.(2)

Table 2.1.1. below gives a breakdown of SUDAM's projected expenditure for the first five year period. It demonstrates SUDAM's prime

1. Mahar:1979:14.
2. Davis:1977:37.

concern with infrastructural provision (57.4%), the de-emphasis on extractivism (0.1%), the low commitment to social projects (12.1%) and the even lower commitment to colonisation (1.4%).

Table 2.1.1. - SUDAM: Expenditure, 1st Five Year Plan, 1967-71.

Sector.	% Expenditure.	Sub-Total.
Crops/Livestock	16.4	
Industry	12.6	
Extractivism	0.1	29.1
Transport	40.5	
Services	4.9	
Energy	4.5	
Other	7.5	57.4
Health/Sanitation	5.8	
Housing	3.6	
Education	2.7	12.1
Colonisation	1.4	1.4
Total.	100.0	100.0

Source: SUDAM, Primeiro Plano Quinquenal, 1967, p.63.

It must be pointed out that the 'ranching front' had begun to move into the Amazon even before the government started to offer incentives to do so. SUDAM's activities, however, accelerated the process. According to Pompermeyer, at least three large business concerns

had acquired extensive properties in the region as early as 1957. Two of these, one of 400,000 hectares and the other of 700,000 , were located in Pará and a third, of 600,000 hectares was in Mato Grosso (1). Then, in 1968, a group of business from São Paulo formed the Association of Agro-Ranching Enterprises in Amazonia - AEAA (2). The association was registered in Belém, Pará, but its seat was in industrial São Paulo. The group was formed to pressurise state agencies to direct the programme of Amazonian occupation along lines that served their interests. As Pompermeyer correctly argues, the formation of AEAA was crucial to understanding the government's emphasis on ranching at this time (3).

SUDAM incentives were not restricted to national companies. Large multinationals such as Nestlé, Goodyear, and Swift-Armour were also recipients of them and these too came to control vast tracts of land in the Amazon. The Jari Project of the U.S. multimillionaire Daniel Ludwig is officially estimated at 1,008,000 hectares, but other sources put the figure at 3,500,000 ha. ; the Italian company Liquigas owns 670,000 ha. ; the Dutch timber firm Bruynzeel, 500,000 ha. ; the U.S. Georgia Pacific, 500,000 ha. ; the Japanese firm of Toyomenka, 300,000 ha. ; Volkswagen, 220,000 ha. ; the Swift-Armour King Ranch, 140,000 ha. These seven companies control approximately 58,380 square kilometres of Amazonia, an area greater than several of the smaller European countries. (4)

1. Pompermeyer:1982.

2. Associação dos Empresários Agropecuários da Amazônia.

3. Pompermeyer:ibid.

4. Guimarães:1978:318ff;Sampaio:1978:133ff;Sautschuk:1981:84.

It is important to note here that SUDAM fixed a minimum limit of 25,000 hectares for these agro-ranching projects at a time when presidential rhetoric was emphasizing property redistribution in the countryside. In a very short space of time, 20 million hectares (220,000 square kilometres) came under foreign control (1). Whilst being legal, this certainly contradicted the spirit of the Estatuto da Terra. As a counter to this and to assuage public outrage at the 'foreign occupation' of the Amazon, as well as to relieve social deprivation caused by another devastating drought that struck the North-East in the spring of that year, the government announced its new 'Plan of National Integration' - PIN (3) - which was enacted in June, 1971 (3).

As coordinator of projects in Amazonia, SUDAM continued to supervise the infrastructural construction that was required by PIN as outlined in SUDAM's second development plan - PDAm 1 (4). As Moran (5) points out, while some attention was given to small farmer colonisation, SUDAM/BASA involvement focussed mainly on region-wide investment programmes, principally ranching and industry. To facilitate the realisation of PIN, Project RADAM (6) was created in 1970 with the object of itemising the basic elements required for the rational exploitation of Amazonia's natural resources. Of significance was the RADAM section which dealt with mapping out the region in terms of the potential use of the soil. It was after RADAM produced its maps that the 'land rush' by large-scale corporations accelerated.

1. Guimarães:1978:318 2. Programa de Integração Nacional.
 3. Mahar:1979:18 ; Guimarães:1978:317.
 4. Plano do Desenvolvimento da Amazônia 1, 1972 - 1974.
 5. Moran:1981:77. 6. Projeto Radar da Amazônia.

Amazonian occupation was an integral element of PIN and another programme was initiated in 1971 which aimed to complement the previous emphasis on the enterprise and deal specifically with inequality in land distribution and inefficiency in land utilization. This was the 'Programme for the Redistribution of Land' - PROTERRA (1) - whose aims were:

1. The transformation of subsistence agriculture into production for the market.
2. The allocation of incentives for the industrialisation of agricultural products.
3. The modernisation of the commercialisation and distribution structures for agricultural products.
4. The incentivisation of the small rural producer through the redistribution of expropriated lands. (2)

Here again we see a programme which seeks to mobilize an agricultural surplus through the expansion and subsequent incorporation of rural petty commodity production. As will be shown, the priority here was not small producer expansion per se, but the expansion of such production as the most practicable means of achieving the required growth input from agriculture in the shortest possible time.

The agency that was given the task of implementing this part of the programme was the National Institute for Colonisation and Agrarian

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1. Programa de Redistribuição da terras e Estímulo a Agro-Indústria do Norte e Nordeste, Decree Law 1.178 of 1/6/1971.
 2. Ministério da Agricultura, PROTERRA, undated pamphlet.

Reform - INCRA (1). It is important to note that: firstly, INCRA came under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Agriculture, whereas SUDAM was controlled by the Ministry of the Interior, thus the functioning of each organ was susceptible to inter-ministerial conflicts and some doubling up of bureaucratic functions was also inevitable; secondly, while SUDAM (and SUDENE) was a multisectoral regional agency, INCRA's brief was restricted to one sector covering the whole country. This latter will subsequently be shown to be a crucial element when, in the early 1980's, INCRA began to use Amazonia, and Acre in particular, as a 'dumping ground' for those who had been forced off their land in other regions.

INCRA's object, then, was to implement a colonisation programme with the aim of realizing an agrarian reform through the elimination of 'uneconomic' forms of land occupation and use as outlined in the Estatuto da Terra:

"The agrarian reform seeks to establish a system of relations between man, rural property and the use of the land, capable of promoting social justice, the progress and well-being of the rural labourer and the economic development of the country through the gradual extinction of the minifundio and latifundio." (2)

Prior to the modification of the Estatuto da Terra in 1973, minifundio signified a small peasant property of less than ten hectares, based on family labour, but too small to maintain the family, thus necessitating one or family members to seek paid employment to supplement family income. Minifundisation results

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1. Instituto Nacional de Colonização e Reforma Agrária, decree law 1.110 of 9/7/1970.
 2. Estatuto da Terra, 1964, Article 16.

from the constant subdivision of family property which, while there tends to be a maximal use of the land, leads to its eventual deterioration , there being little if any funds available for chemical inputs. Guimarães (1) quite rightly comments that minifundios have traditionally provided a guaranteed reserve of low-paid labour for large-scale properties.

Latifundios, on the other hand, were defined as those rural units over 1000 hectares which underutilized their land and relied on the superexploitation of labour for their profitable operation. As Foweraker (2) notes, the latifundio immobilized the two principal factors of production in the countryside - land and labour - through the monopoly control of the former and the coercion of the latter.

Between 1920 and 1970, i.e., the 50 years immediately prior to the creation of INCRA, the number of rural properties rose from 648 to 4,924, while the average size fell from 270 to 60 hectares. By 1970, properties of less than 10 hectares represented 51% of all rural properties, yet occupied only 3.1% of the total area. Conversely, properties over 1,000 hectares accounted for only 0.7% of the total number, but occupied nearly 40% of the total area. In addition, while properties of less than 100 hectares economically utilized an average of 31.43% of their surface area, those over 500 hectares economically utilized an average of only 3.28%. Thus, in terms of the Estatuto da Terra, over 50% of properties and 40% of land was either socially or economically inefficiently occupied (3).

1. Guimarães:1979:267.

2. Foweraker:1981:179.

3. IBGE, Censo Agrícola,1960, & Censo Agropecuário,1970.

This section has noted the two crucial elements relating to the 'agrarian question' as identified by the Brazilian government at this time (1). Firstly, given the need for export earnings, the expansion of capitalist agriculture is being promoted. In terms of Amazonia, this was translated into SUDAM's programme of infra-structural developments and incentives to attract large-scale capitalist intensive ranching (and mineral) projects into the region. On the other hand, given the national trend towards minifundisation and with an eye towards social control in areas of land pressure, the government committed itself, at least verbally, to agrarian reform. Here, Amazonia is treated as a safety valve to relieve rural social tension in areas such as the North-East whilst leaving their social structures intact. So, within the same programme, the government combines two apparently contradictory rural 'development models' : the construction of capitalist estates (ranches) and the expansion of peasant agriculture. It will be demonstrated in subsequent sections how these two paths crossed and led to a struggle to determine whether Amazonia was to become a reserve of value for southern capital or the object of the labour of the small rural producer.

1. For a discussion of what constitutes an 'agrarian question', see Hussain & Tribe:1981. They find that there is no pre-given and constant object called the 'agrarian question'. It is a political problem faced by a given organisation and as such cannot be understood in isolation from that context.

1.2. Colonisation induced by state infrastructural developments.

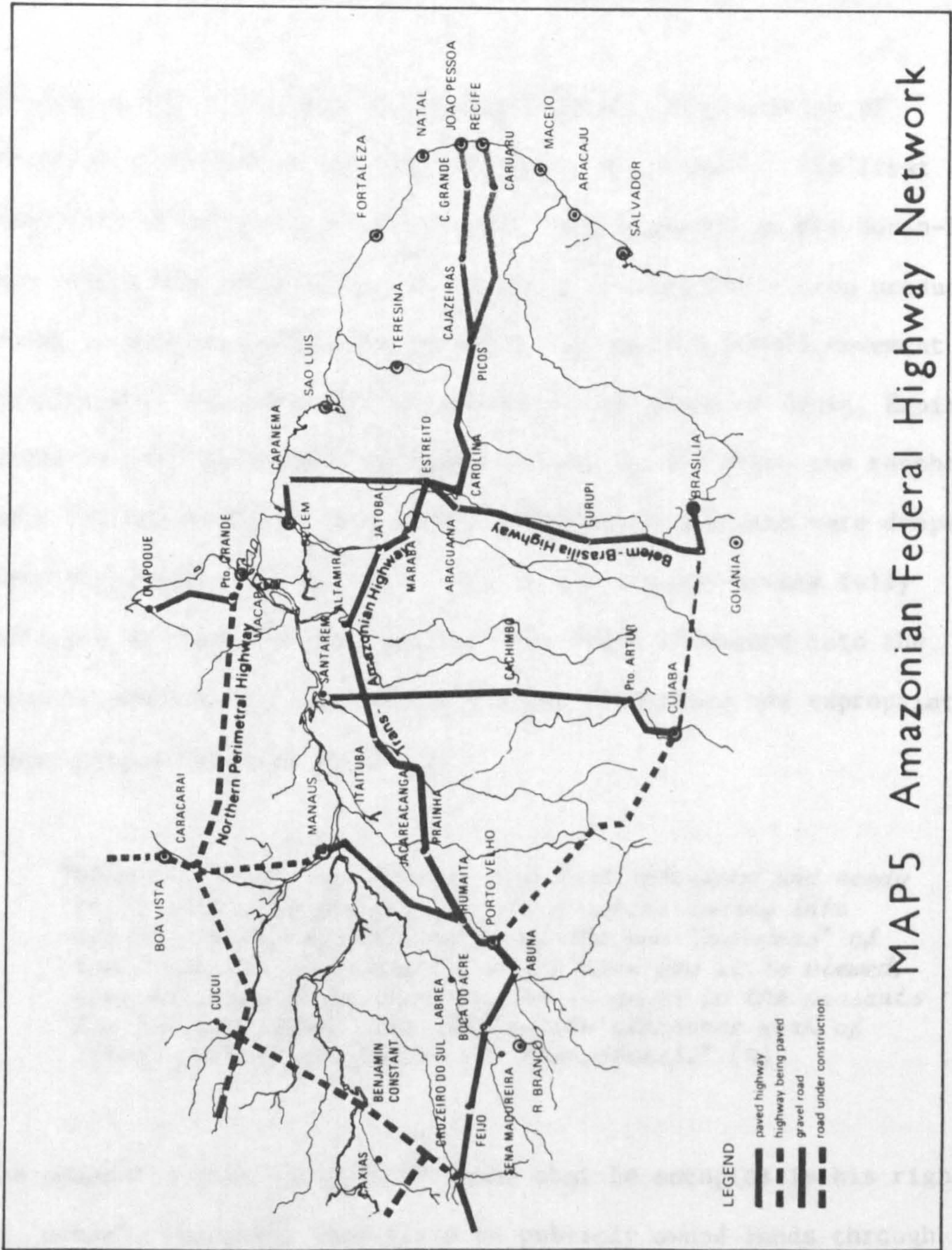
The colonisation of Maranhão in eastern Amazonia began in the 1920's following the collapse of the rubber economy in the rest of the Amazon Basin. The loss of seasonal employment in the rubber fields of the lower Amazon led to the expansion of peasant production from the North-East into the coastal area of Maranhão. By the early 1950's this movement had extended itself throughout the forest areas of western Maranhão and into the southern parts of Pará (1).

For the main part the peasant colonists survived on subsistence agriculture, although some extractivism was carried out. The principal stumbling block to agricultural development lay in the relative isolation of the area which hampered commercialisation of any surplus that might have been realized. Then, in the late 1950's, this problem was resolved by the construction of the Belém-Brasília highway. By 1965, 10% of the rice consumed in Rio de Janeiro came from the interior of Maranhão (2). However, it also opened up the area to further colonisation as did future highway construction. The following list of the six principal highways that came to criss-cross Amazonia (See Map 5 overleaf) shows the great distances that they covered:

1. Belém - Brasília : 1,325 miles.
2. Cuiabá - Santarem : 937 miles.
3. Porto Velho - Manaus - Boa Vista : 1,003 miles.

1. Velho:1979:197 ; Velho:1979a:30. This is not to suggest a causal relation between the collapse of the rubber economy and the occupation of Maranhão, rather, it simply reduced the options available to the landless peasant of the North-east.

2. Velho:1979:197.



MAP 5 Amazonian Federal Highway Network

Source : SUDAM.

4. TransAmazonian Highway : 3,500 miles.
5. Northern Perimeter Road : 2,437 miles (uncompleted).
6. Brasília - Cuiabá - Acre : 1,560 miles. (1)

Following the opening of the Belém-Brasília, the interior of Maranhão absorbed two successive migratory movements. The first again consisted of peasants from the neighbouring states in the North-East who penetrated the forest and cleared for subsistence crop production using rudimentary slash and burn techniques. The second movement consisted of ranchers mainly from the rural areas of Bahia, Espírito Santo and the north-east of Minas Gerais. In the main, the ranchers were located alongside the highway, while the peasants were deeper into the jungle. As the land close to the highway became fully occupied so then did the 'Baianos' (2) begin to expand into the peasant areas by forcing them off their properties and expropriating these already cleared lands (3) :

"When the forest is cleared, the land valorised and ready to be sown with grass, then the ranchers spring into action, demanding the removal of the now 'invaders' of the property, the peasants. Which ever way it is viewed, even in cases where compensation is given to the peasants for the work done, they utilize the clearance work of others without any burden (to themselves)." (4)

The peasant's only claim to the land that he occupies is his right of 'posse', the right to a title to publicly owned lands through the useful occupation of it. However, this right was and still is abused by ranchers who, in these isolated jungle regions, use

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1. SUDAM, Amazonia, Novo Universo (undated).
 2. Baiano - the generic name given to the ranchers as many of them came from the state of Bahia.
 3. Velho:1979:195 ; Vieira Keller:1975:683.
 4. Vieira Keller:Ibid.

INCRA was swamped by a wave of spontaneous migration and so forged titles and jagunços (gun-men) to intimidate the peasant, abandoned the scheme and allowed the expropriation/concentration forcing him off the land. Ianni describes a similar process of process to continue impeded. In the later scheme, in Rondônia spontaneous colonisation by peasants, their expropriation and the and Acre, INCRA's mishandling allowed the same process to occur resulting land concentration in the area of Conceição do Araguaia, through default.

further along the Belém-Brasília in southern Pará :

1.3: INCRA Directed Colonisation I : The TransAmazonian Highway.

"In 1950, in the municipality of Conceição, there were 292 occupants, that is to say, posseiros (peasants), and one proprietor, or rather, rancher with a title to his land.

Between In this year, posseiros accounted for over 96% of the rural establishments and occupied more than 91% of the land covered by the various types of establishment. In 1970, the 2,136 posseiros, who made up more than 95% of the rural establishments, occupied only 43.64% of the land. At the same time, in that year, the 100 fazendeiros accounted for 4.46% of the rural establishments and occupied 56.33% of the land." (1)

operations was national, the new colonisation programme centred on Amazonia with the principal object of resettling landless peasants. In both these cases, a situation that was to be repeated as each from the North-East. Another important factor in the concentration section of each highway was completed, the peasant functioned as of settlement schemes in Amazonia was the closure of the agricultural the vanguard of capitalist expansion, clearing the land and so frontier in Paraná, the reduction of coffee production in the Centre giving it value, only to suffer expulsion through the organised South and its partial substitution by ranching (1). Both of these violence of the rancher. For the peasant and his family, there are trends reduced the South's ability to absorb surplus rural labour, only three alternatives: to stay and fight to remain on the land; Paraná underwent an intense process of minifundisation followed by to migrate further into the forest in the hope of finding a a shift to capital intensive soya bean production which resulted in permanent home; or to migrate to the nearest urban centre where he another, but spontaneous, movement of small farmers into Mato Grosso, will have no home, few if any relatives to support him, and no Rondônia and, later, into Acre (2).

labour skills that he can sell. Subsequent sections will show that

this process occurred even on the state directed colonisation There were three migratory currents which flowed into the Amazon schemes. In the earlier scheme along the TransAmazonian highway

Basin from 1970 onwards: the movement into Maranhão discussed in

1. Ianni:1978:100.

2. Velho:1979:113.

3. An analysis of which will be given in Section 1.5.

INCRA was swamped by a wave of spontaneous migration and so abandoned the scheme and allowed the expropriation/concentration process to continue unimpeded. In the later scheme, in Rondônia and Acre, INCRA's mishandling allowed the same process to occur through default.

1.3. INCRA Directed Colonisation 1 : The TransAmazonian Highway.

Between 1970 and 1973, the federal government launched its colonisation programme. Whilst colonisation was still official policy after 1973, it will be shown that it played a minor part in the government's overall strategy. Although INCRA's sphere of operations was national, the new colonisation programme centred on Amazonia with the principal object of resettling landless peasants from the North-East. Another important factor in the concentration of settlement schemes in Amazonia was the closure of the agricultural frontier in Paraná, the reduction of coffee production in the Centre-South and its partial substitution by ranching (1). Both of these trends reduced the South's ability to absorb surplus rural labour. Paraná underwent an intense process of minifundisation followed by a shift to capital intensive soya bean production which resulted in another, but spontaneous, movement of small farmers into Mato Grosso, Rondônia and, later, into Acre (2).

There were three migratory currents which flowed into the Amazon Basin from 1970 onwards: the movement into Maranhão discussed in

1. Velho:1979:215.

2. An analysis of which will be given in Section 1.5.

the previous section; the movement from the South into southwestern Amazonia which is the subject of Section 1.5. and Chapter 4; and the officially sponsored settlement of the TransAmazonica which will be dealt with here (1).

The government continued to emphasize social stability as a prerequisite to development:

"The Government understands that the maintenance of a climate of internal order and institutional stability is an indispensable condition for the achievement of development." (2)

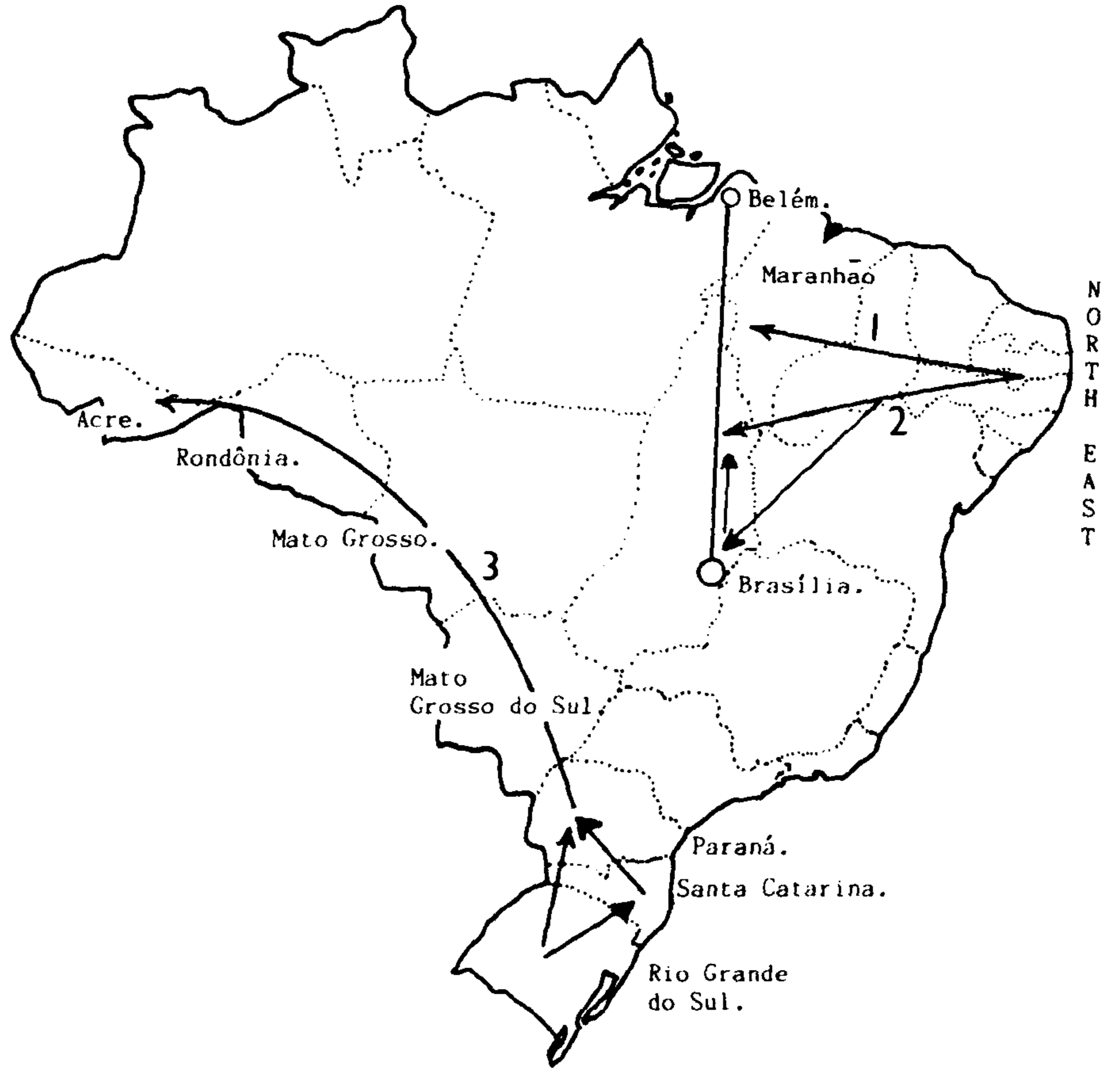
"...political stability, so as to realize development under a democratic regime. National security, internal and external." (3)

It also was conscious of the need to stem the tide of Nordestinos that was flowing into the already overcrowded and inadequately serviced shanty towns of the South. Thus, the TransAmazonica became the focal point of the new colonisation programme:

"(We must) transport the economic frontier, the agricultural frontier in particular, to the banks of the River Amazon, to realize on a large scale and in a region with important fertile lands what the Belem-Brasilia and other roads of penetration did on a small scale in less fertile areas." (4)

"(We need to) re-orientate the migration of the North-Eastern labourer in the direction of the humid valleys of the (Amazon) region, so avoiding his translocation to the super-populated metropolitan areas of the Centre-South." (5)

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1. See Map 6 overleaf.
 2. Programa Estratégico de Desenvolvimento, 1967-1970, p.14.
 3. PND 1, 1971-1974, p.12.
 4. Metas e Bases para a Ação do Governo, 1970, p.29.
 5. Quoted in Costa:1979:233.



- 1. North-East - Maranhão.
- 2. North-East - Belém-Brasília Highway.
- 3. South-East - Mato Grosso - Rondônia - Acre.

MAP 6 - 20th Century Migration into Amazonia.

The Medici regime, which had since come into power, used the TransAmazonica as a powerful nationalist symbol to counter the growing political unrest against the military government. As one reporter of the leading daily, the 'Folha do São Paulo', wrote in December, 1977:

"The TransAmazonica was a type of World Cup on wheels with the same anaesthetising and motivational properties ... The project was above all eminently political and sought to create an aura of resolute determination around the government and make the people forget their right to participate in the political process." (1)

However, given the social tension that occurred after the spontaneous colonisation of the Belém-Brasília, the new programme foresaw the orderly occupation of a tract of land 10 kilometres wide on either side of the highway that had been specifically reserved for INCRA's use (2). The settlement of this land centred on the formation of a hierarchy of small urban nuclei of progressive size, the Agrovila, the Agropolis, and the Ruropolis:

"The Agrovila is a small urban centre destined for the inhabitation of those who dedicate themselves to agricultural or pastoral activities and has as its final objective the social integration of the inhabitants of the rural environment, offering them civilized conditions of life... The Agropolis is a small agro-industrial, cultural and administrative urban centre destined to support the integration of the rural environment. It will exercise a socio-economic cultural and administrative influence over an ideal area of more or less 10 kilometres radius in which there would be 8 to 12 Agrovilas which are smaller communities"

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1. Folha do Sao Paulo, 1/11/1977, quoted in Ianni:1979:53.
 2. da Costa:1979:234. This band on either side of federal highways was later extended to 100 kilometres.

and dependent upon it...A Ruropolis is a small development pole, the principal centre of a large rural community constituted of Agropolises and Agrovilas distributed in a theoretical sphere of action of around 70 to 140 kilometres." (1)

As Ianni points out, all this structure of 'rural urbanism' has connotations of social control (2). The aim was to transfer some 100,000 families, approximately half a million persons, in a time span of five years and 1 million families by 1980 (3). The first controlled settlements were inaugurated on the stretch of the Amazonica between Estreita and Itaituba in 1972, but the project soon ran into problems. According to Martine (4) :

1. Notwithstanding the initial aim of PIN to resettle landless Nordestinos, INCRA began to recruit from other regions of the country farmers who were experienced in commercial farming and the use of machinery/pesticides and also credit. In the three principal pilot projects at Altamira, Itatuba, and Marabá, Nordestinos numbered 34%, 39% and 42% respectively.
2. The goals that the government had set INCRA were far too ambitious. By 1974, when state policy changed, only a total of 6,000 to 7,000 families had been settled instead of the targeted 100,000. Moreover, an estimated 18% of colonists on the Marabá projected had abandoned their plots and moved on. A similar situation existed on the other projects.

1. INCRA, Urbanismo Rural, 1973, pp.10 - 17.

2. Ianni:1979:61.

3. Martine:1980:84.

4. Martine:1980:85.

3. The government propaganda that land was available for the peasant and small farmer along the highway created a spontaneous land-rush that overwhelmed INCRA as it had done on the Belém-Brasília. The migrants occupied plots without prior permission and simply waited there for INCRA to legalise their situation.

Given its terms of reference, INCRA's attempt to rationalise the colonisation of the area was a singular failure. The geometrical construction of the Ruropolis and its satellites, the Agropolis and the Agrovila, never materialised. A principal element in the lack of success was the spontaneous movement which sought to realize its own de facto agrarian reform. The process repeated itself at each stage of the highway's construction and at each stage INCRA tried to block it and when this failed co-opt it and submit it to INCRA's own regulations. The INCRA debacle here and along the Belém-Brasília forced the government to rethink its position and it was from this period on that the emphasis changed to Amazonian occupation by large-scale enterprises incentivised by SUDAM (1).

1.4. The POLAMAZONIA Programme.

INCRA's failure was complemented by a building up of pressure on the government by businessmen following the rise in the price of land once the TransAmazonica was constructed (2). Official statements of the period changed from accentuating Amazonia as the ideal

1. For a further discussion of colonisation along the TransAmazonica, see Bunker:1983.
2. Cardoso & Muller:1978:158;Martine:1980:86;Pompermeyer:1982.

environment for peasant farming to emphasizing the need to protect the Amazonian ecosystem from its predation, the implication being that large-scale ranching and mineral projects do not do this:

"The object of occupying the Amazon region through the absorption of the northeastern population, in spite of the efforts which were made, is in disagreement with the purpose of accelerating regional growth and does not link, as it should, the elevation of living standards to the expansion of productive employment...On the other hand, the area cannot offer settlers the fertile soils, which they dream of possessing, in necessary quantities. Thus, the mass of spontaneous settlers in the region...will undertake the only and dangerous activity which it knows, the destruction of the forest and the depletion of the soil through the practice of planting extremely poor subsistence crops, using ill-famed methods of itinerant agriculture." (1)

To re-enforce its argument, the role of Amazonia as the 'natural' home of ranching was also pointed out. In the words of the then Superintendent of SUDAM:

"Amazonia is a region made for ranching with excellent natural pastures and ample space for the expansion of the sector and it is because of this that the main approach in its integration will be on ranching." (2)

The POLAMAZONIA programme was introduced as the means to implement the new policy which was based on the creation of 15 areas chosen in relation to their feasibility for ranching and/or mineral extraction. The 15 areas were:

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1. SUDAM, 2nd development Plan for Amazonia, p.19 -20. Quoted in Martine:1980:86.
 2. Quoted in Cardoso & Muller:1977:158.

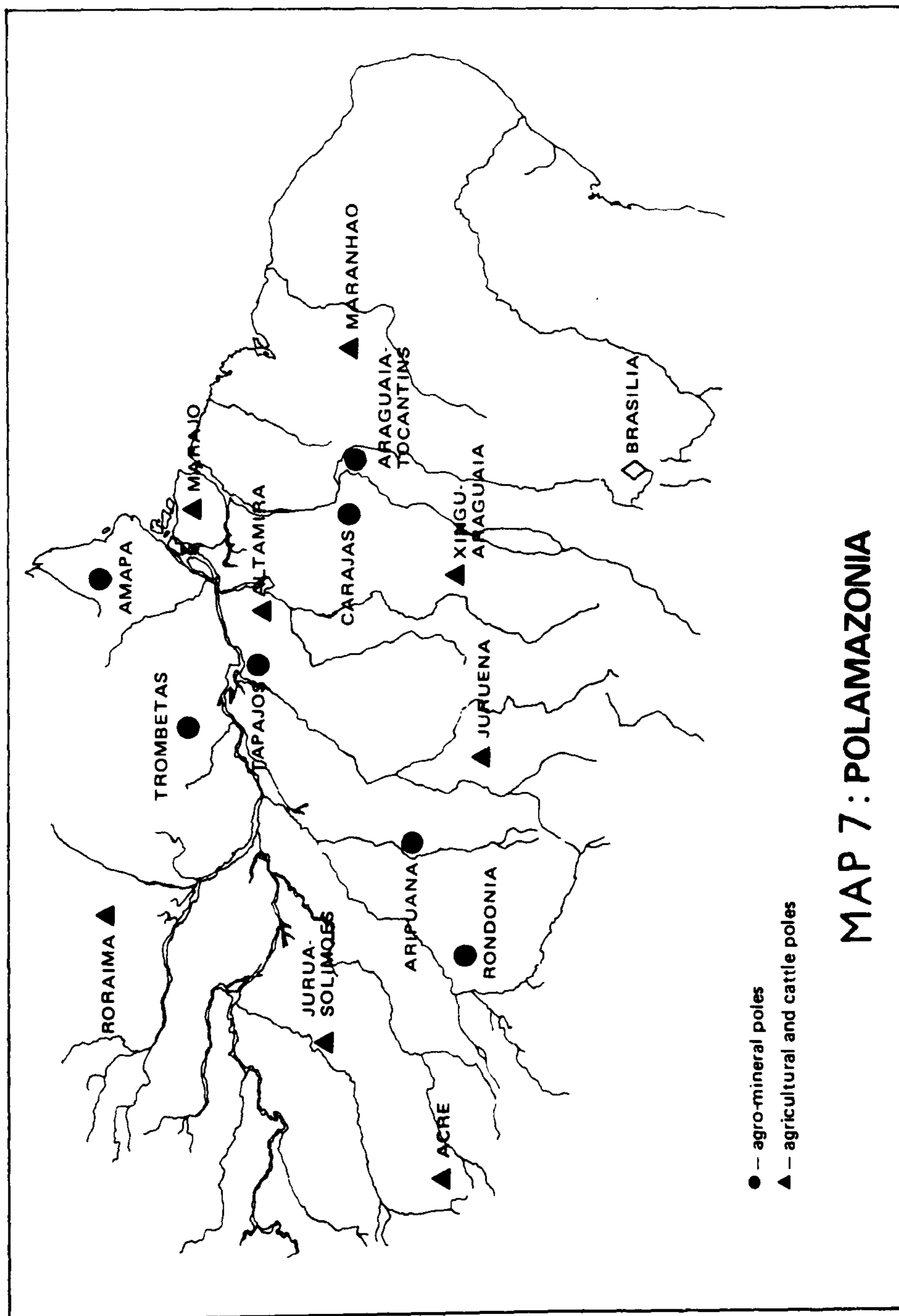
1. Xingu-Araguaia : cattle breeding and meat processing.
2. Carajas : iron ore.
3. Araguaia-Tocantins : cattle breeding.
4. Trombetas : bauxite.
5. Altamira : cattle breeding.
6. Maranhão : cattle breeding and timber.
7. Rondônia : tin, timber and rubber.
8. Acre : cattle breeding and rubber.
9. Juruá-Solimões : timber.
10. Roraima : cattle breeding and minerals.
11. Tapajós : cattle breeding and rock-salt.
12. Amapá : cattle breeding and timber.
13. Aripuaná : minerals and timber.
14. Juruena : cattle breeding and timber.
15. Marajó : cattle breeding.

For the spatial distribution of these projects, see Map 7 overleaf. Ten of these 'growth poles', then, are devoted to cattle which, as Table 2.1.2. shows, accounted for 49% of the projected budget:

Table 2.1.2. - BASA: Resource Distribution, 1975 - 1979.

Sector.	% of Budget Allocation.
Ranching	49.1
Commercial crops	4.1
Green belt	0.9
Rubber	2.8
Industry & other	43.1
Total.	100.0

Source: Adapted from Cardoso & Muller:1977:159.



Source : SUDAM.

By May, 1974, SUDAM had approved 498 projects in the region of which 312 were devoted to cattle ranching, 168 to industry and 18 to services. Table 2.1.3. gives the distribution of the projects according to state and the number of jobs created for the 7½ million cruzeiros that were invested:

Table 2.1.3. - SUDAM: Spatial Distribution of Projects, Investment and Employment Provision, May, 1974.

State.	No. of Projects.	% of total investment.	No. of Jobs Created.		
			Agric/ Ranching.	Industry.	Services.
Acre	2	0.4	0	97	216
Amapá	7	4.8	0	2774	79
Amazonas	55	24.3	548	12266	1189
Goiás	30	3.3	988	949	24
Maranhão	29	4.3	139	2636	203
Mato Grosso	192	27.9	9638	1558	686
Pará	176	34.5	3586	18917	710
Rondônia	7	0.5	60	754	47
Total	498	100.0	14959	39951	3057

Total Jobs Created = 57,967.

Source: Sudam.

The majority of these projects (89%) are located in just three states, Amazonas, Mato Grosso and Pará, where the greatest number of ranching projects are found. It is here also that the multinational corporations have their principal properties in land. The concentration

on ranching is doubly significant. Firstly, job creation is minimal(1) thus contradicting one of the fundamental principals of the Estatuto da Terra which emphasizes the social use of land. According to Foweraker (2), some 60,000 jobs were to have been created in the first four years of the POLAMAZONIA programme (1975 - 1979) at a cost of 1.8 million cruzeiros per job. This must be compared to INCRA's 'social colonisation' which was projected to create 125,000 jobs at the lower unit cost of 32,000 cruzeiros. Secondly, the wholesale destruction of large areas of forest with its conversion to pasture for cattle removes the foundations of the livelihood of the resident population, the subsistence farmers, rubber tappers and the native population. Thus ranching proved to be a two-edged sword in relation to employment: it not only does not create new jobs to any great extent, it also destroys the basis of existing jobs.

It is understandable, therefore, that the advance of the 'cattle front' was accompanied by a corresponding rise in the incidence of violence. Government statements of the period constantly refer to Amazonia as an empty space in need of occupation, thus denying the existence of the posseiro and the Indian. As Souza Martins comments:

"To the thinking of a large number of people in this country, especially in the heads of numerous technocrats, Amazonia is a desert to be occupied...The military themselves have developed a 'doctrine of the occupation of empty spaces' to justify governmental measures designed to promote the occupation of Amazonia...In truth, however, Amazonia is not a desert to be occupied...We are not seeing a process of Amazonian occupation...we are witnessing an invasion in which the so-called pioneers act as the actual invaders against the original inhabitants - devastating, expelling, violating

1. Most employment in the ranching sector is temporary and concentrated in the initial deforesting period prior to seeding from the air. Hebette & Marin:1979:177 found that one new job was created for every 330 cattle/788 hectares in the 28 SUDAM projects covered by their research. 2. Foweraker:1981:163.

rights and principals. The regional and social origin of these invaders is quite clear. They come from the South and South-East and an actual 'sulification' is taking place. They are mainly from São Paulo and it is because of this that the people call 'Paulista' those who come from the outside with wallets full of money. Here, Paulista is synonymous with 'shark'. Statistics show that in just a few short years these Paulistas have come to own 3.3% of the land covered by the INCRA census in Acre and Rondonia; 7.9% of Amazonas; 3.1% of Maranhão; 37.1% of Mato Grosso; 9.6% of Goiás. For the country as a whole, excluding São Paulo, they come to own an area 2.3 times the size of the area controlled by São Paulo residents in their own state. Apart from being predominately Paulista, above all they come from a specific social class, they are capitalists, they are members of the dominant class, they are businessmen. In Amazonia it is not a new form of territorial occupation that is happening, but a different form of occupation from the economically and politically hegemonic centres of Brazilian society." (1).

The methods used by the 'invaders' - murder, arson, forgery - will be discussed in Chapter 2 in relation to specific cases in Acre. It suffices to note here that, by the mid-1970's, violence against the resident population of rural Amazonia was the rule, rather than the exception. A list is given below of the principal areas of rural social tension in the Amazon region for 1977:

1. Acre, Seringal Nova Empresa with a litigated area of 7,000 hectares involving 400 families.
2. Acre, Seringal Catuaba : 87,000 hectares, 900 families.
3. Pará, Colônia Floresta : 69,000 hectares, 3,645 families.
4. Pará, Agua Branca : 1,500 hectares, 260 families.
5. Pará, Fazenda Capáz : 103,000 hectares, 260 families.
6. Pará, Fazenda Parapora : 18,000 hectares, 200 families.
7. Pará, Perdidos : 152,000 hectares, 815 families.

1. Souza Martins:1982:68/69.

8. Maranhão, Vale do Rio Buriticupu : 1,700,000 hectares, 500 families.
9. Mato grosso, Fazenda União : 3,000 hectares, 200 families.
10. Rondônia, Gleba Itaporanga : 1,200,000 hectares, 600 Families. (1)

Thus, in 1977 alone, such disputes over land between posseiros and ranchers/fazendeiros involved a total area of over 300,000 square kilometres and approximately 7,780 families (or C. 40,800 individuals) who suffered some form of violence or intimidation at the hands of the new 'owners' of the land.

The POLAMAZONIA programme, then, represented a step towards the private control of land in Amazonia and the separation of the direct producer from the basis of his production, i.e., the land. The violence that was engendered in the rural areas reached such proportions and received so much media attention, both at home and abroad, that the government again changed tack and used another provision of the Estatuto da Terra, the expropriation of land in the 'social interest' as a means to resolve this issue. However, as the following section will demonstrate, while the stated aim was land distribution, the effect was land concentration.

1. Quoted in Ianni:1979:256/7.

1.5. INCRA Directed Colonisation 2 : 1974 - 1980.

Following the modification of the Estatuto da Terra in 1973, INCRA began to use a more complex methodology to establish whether a property was suitable for agrarian reform. This did not solely rely on the fixed area of the rural unit, but also took into account its economic value in productive terms and its social value vis-à-vis the size of the family living on it. To accomplish this, INCRA conceived of the 'rural module', the yardstick to which all rural properties would be compared:

"A rural module is a measure of economic value that demonstrates the ability to exist in a determined area, where it is propitious enough for a family to subsist, with an average of four members, as if each one gained a minimum salary." (1)

Here, INCRA relates the size of the unit to the use that the land may be put to, the number of persons living on it, and the statutorily defined minimum salary of the region in which it is located. Another dimension is added by Article 43 of the Estatuto da Terra, that of zoning. The country was divided up into homogenous micro-regions and each of these classified according to one of the following zonal groups:

1. The critical regions that need agrarian reform, with progressive elimination of minifundios and latifundios.
2. The regions in a more advanced stage of social and economic development in which tensions in their

1. INCRA, Instrução Especial No.5, 6/6/1973.

demographic and agrarian structures do not occur.

3. The regions that are economically occupied in which subsistence economies dominate and whose agriculturalists and ranchers lack adequate assistance.
4. The regions that face economic occupation, that lack programmes of exploration and colonisation of pioneer areas. (1)

Under these provisions, a minifundio is defined as that property that does not attain the dimensions of a single rural module in its economic, social and zonal attributes. Thus a unit of 10 hectares in Zone 1 dedicated to the cultivation of a temporary annual crop, e.g. mandioca, would be classified as a minifundio, as would an 85 hectare unit dedicated to cattle ranching in Zone 3, and a 100 hectare extractivist unit based on extensive rubber tapping in Zone 4.

With reference to latifundios, INCRA defined two basic types: latifundio by dimension and latifundio by exploration. The former is that unit which exceeds 600 times the area of the zonal rural module. So, a unit in Zone 2 dedicated, for example, to intensive horticultural activity, may require as little as 2 hectares to attain the dimensions of the zonal module. At the other end of the scale, in the activity that requires the most land in relation to gaining a fixed income, forest extractivism, the module required by a rubber tapper and his family to sustain themselves may reach 120 hectares. Thus, if the criteria for defining a latifundio by

1. Estatuto da Terra, 1964, Article 43.

dimension/extension are applied to these two module examples, then the horticulturalist activity would be classified as latifundiarist on an area of only 1,200 hectares, whereas the rubber tapper would require an extensive 72,000 hectares to be so classified.

The latifundio by (non) exploration is that rural production unit which does not exceed 600 times the size of the zonal module, i.e., it is not a latifundio by extension, but for reasons such as speculation remains relatively little explored:

"Units which contain a number of modules equal to or more than 1 (one) and less than 600 and which do not fill the conditions of Article 9 of the Special Instruction, and so are not classified as a Rural Enterprise, will be classified as latifundios by exploration". (1)

So, if the unit is not categorised as a minifundio, latifundio by extension, or rural enterprise, then it must be a latifundio by exploration. The rural enterprise must fulfill the following conditions. It must have (2):

- "a) a number of modules equal to or more than one and less than 600.*
- b) must utilize, with any of the types of exploration indicated in Table 3 of this special instruction, more than 70% of the usable area of the unit.*
- c) social and productivity coefficients calculated in the manner of Articles 17 and 21...equal or inferior to 1."*

1. INCRA, Instrução Especial, No.5.
2. Ibid.

The rural enterprise, then, became the form of rural land occupation aimed at by INCRA policy objectives. Units that did not meet the requirements of this model were by definition classified as either minifundios or latifundios and so liable to agrarian reform. INCRA then assessed the need for agrarian reform in accordance with five criteria: the geographic position of the area in relation to the economic centres in the country; the prevalence of units of over 1000 and under 50 hectares; the average number of hectares per person ; the density and annual growth rate of the rural population; the occurrence of socio-political factors that may aggravate the other factors (1).

During the 1970's and particularly after 1975, INCRA began to expropriate lands under these provisions. Table 2.1.4. gives the spatial distribution of those areas expropriated by INCRA before 1978. Though some expropriations took place prior to 1974, over six times that area was subjected to agrarian reform in the 3 years that followed. Two points must be made here. Firstly, the area that had been uppermost in the government's mind in terms of the peasant 'problem', the North-East, accounted for only 8.6% of the total area expropriated. Secondly, two Amazonian states, Acre and Rondônia, accounted for 63.64% of expropriated land in the whole period, and 74.1% of the 1974 - 1977 total. This points to the political nature of agrarian reform, a matter that will be returned to later.

1. Estatuto da Terra, Article 43, Section 1, and Decree 55.891/1965, Article 39, Section 1.

Table 2.1.4. - INCRA : Land Expropriated Prior to 1978 (in Hectares).

State or Territory.	Prior to 1974.	1974-77.	Total.
Paraná	105,658	254,539	360,197
Santa Catarina	-	51,000	51,000
Rio Grande do Sul	41,927	-	41,927
Rio Grande do Norte	-	10,534	10,534
Bahia	-	257,500	257,500
Pernambuco	27,990	3,356	31,346
Paraíba	18,089	10,224	28,313
Ceará	3,695	729	4,424
Rio de Janeiro	5,706	139,309	145,015
São Paulo	3,325	-	3,325
Minas Gerais	98,396	132,609	231,005
Mato Grosso	135,958	-	135,958
Goiás	104,000	-	104,000
Acre	-	700,000	700,000
Rondônia	-	1,758,205	1,758,205
Total.	544,744	3,318,005	3,862,749
% Total.	14.1%	85.9%	100.0%

Source: Adapted from Laranjeira:1983:136.

In the post 1973 phase, INCRA abandoned its colonisation model based on the Agrovila, Agropolis and Ruropolis, substituting for it a less grandiose design which, although incorporating similar intergrated features, was based on much smaller relatively self-contained units. The new model was the 'Integrated Colonisation project', the PIC (1). The four stages of its installation and completion were planned along the following lines:

1. The selection of the site for colonisation, its subdivision into 100 hectare plots and the selection of settlers.
2. The creation of an urban nucleus for each site that was to contain the project headquarters, public agencies, and housing for public functionaries.
3. Infrastructural developments, roads in particular, and the completion of land titling.
4. Following the successful completion of phases 1 to 3, the site was then transferred from the jurisdiction of INCRA to that of the state in which it was located. (2)

The federal government's claim to a band of 10 kilometres and later 100 kilometres wide on each side of federal highways, provided that the land's ownership was not established beyond dispute, has already been noted. In addition, in those states bordering on foreign countries, the government also claimed a 150 kilometre wide band along the international boundary. Thus, in states such as Acre and Rondônia, which border on Bolivia and Peru and which both have

1. Projeto Integrado de Colonização.
2. Mahar:1981:50.

federal highways that run through their length, almost the entire surface areas of them were subject to federal intervention (1). It was in Rondônia that INCRA first began to implement its new colonisation programme.

Prior to the construction of the Brasília-Acre highway, which passes through Rondônia, the state was relatively isolated. Access was limited to the river routes that led east to Manaus and Belém and which took several weeks to accomplish. With the completion of the first stretches of the highway, Rondônia became articulated to the South of the country, thus the way was opened up for both small colonists and capitalist enterprises to occupy the state (2).

Notwithstanding its large size of 243,044 square kilometres, Rondônia had a population of only 113,659 in 1970, less than 0.5 inhabitants per square kilometre. With the opening of the highway and the announcement of INCRA's plans to create colonisation schemes, the state became the object of a considerable spontaneous migration. Table 2.1.5. shows that, between 1970 and 1980, the state's population increased by a massive 333.59%.

The INCRA PICs in Rondônia were projected to settle a total of 23,439 families, or approximately 94,000 individuals. By 1975, the projects were inundated with applications from families who had migrated to the state in the hope of obtaining land. The influx

1. With the proviso that there was no substantiated title to the land.

2. Mueller:1980:145.

Table 2.1.5. - Rondônia: Demographic Growth, 1950-1982.

Year.	Absolute population.	Absolute increase.	% increase.	Population density.
1950	37,173	-	-	0.15
1960	69,672	32,619	87.75	0.29
1970	113,659	43,867	62.85	0.47
1980	492,810	379,151	333.59	2.02
1981*	585,171	92,361	18.74	2.40
1982*	680,608	95,437	16.31	2.80

Source: IBGE, Censo Preliminar rio de Rond nia, 1980, and

(*) Journal do Brasil, Suplemento Especial, Rond nia, 10/4/83.

was so precipitate that the state authorities set up a migrant orientation centre at Vilhena on the border with Mato Grosso to monitor and give assistance to migrants. Excluding children under 5, the following numbers of individuals checked in at the centre between 1976 and 1982:

1976	-	17,129
1977	-	6,319
1978	-	14,755
1979	-	44,278
1980	-	57,572
1981	-	61,647
1982	-	52,200 (1).

1. Mahar:1981:16. It must be noted that these are 'official' figures and others may have crossed into the state at different points or when the centre was closed.

The major state of origin of these migrants was Paraná with 30%, closely followed by Mato Grosso, with smaller contingents from Minas Gerais, Espírito Santo, São Paulo and the states of the North-East (1). The migrants were in the main small farmers who had been forced off the land through minifundisation, or the high price of land in their own states, or both. This was particularly the case of those who came from the South, the states of Paraná, Rio Grande do Sul, and Santa Catarina. Calil Padis observes that, in Paraná:

"...between 1940 and 1960, the number of small properties of less than 10 hectares - many of them minifundios - multiplied 2.7 times while, in the same period, the medium size of these properties was reduced from 5.6 hectares to 5.2...this process was most intense in the decade of the 50's when the number of properties of this size rose from 47,724 to 100,132." (2)

Those forced off the land moved into the already overcrowded cities of the South and South-East, or else migrated to the nearest open frontier. As Foweraker makes quite clear (3), this was a continuous process in which the small farmer and peasant was forced out of Rio Grande do Sul, then Paraná, then Santa Catarina, and then Mato Grosso. During the 1970's, spurred by the possibility of land on an INCRA project, this flow moved into Rondônia and, as will be shown, by 1980 it had reached Acre (See Map 6, p.136).

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1. Although, many of the migrants may have been second generation Nordestinos. This point is discussed further in Chapter 4.
 2. Padis:1970:121.
 3. Foweraker:1981:68/9.

It is clear that INCRA PICs with their projected capacity of 23,439 families could not absorb more than a fraction of this in-migration. Highway patrols were ordered to turn migrants back at the border and, in 1977, a leaflet campaign was mounted in the migrant donor states of Paraná, Mato Grosso, Minas Gerais and Espirito Santo in an attempt to dissuade prospective migrants from even setting out on their long trek. The leaflets bore the following message:

"Rondonia has soils of excellent quality for agricultural exploitation. But, for all practical purposes, these lands are already occupied. Therefore, only a limited number of lots are available for sale. Moreover, a large part of these lands (over 2 million hectares) are located either official colonisation projects or in areas which have been ceded by INCRA in public auctions to farmers and cattle ranching companies." (1)

As was shown in the tables on page 154, the migration continued unabated. The factors that contributed to this were threefold. Firstly, intensive capitalisation of southern agriculture had proceeded apace, particularly with the increased incentivisation of soya production which lent itself to mechanisation, unlike coffee. Secondly, from 1978 onwards, a series of severe frosts hit Paraná, the southernmost state in Brazil, which seriously affected agricultural production and caused the bankruptcy of small farmers already in debt to the banks. Thirdly, and possibly most significantly, Brazil and Paraguay signed an agreement to build the largest hydro-electric power project in the world with a capacity 6 times greater than the Aswan Dam and a fifth of the capacity of the English Central Electricity Generating Board (2). Included in this project

1. Quoted in Martine:1977:91.

2. Nickson:1982:1-20.

were plans to create an artificial lake by diverting the River Paraná and flooding an area of 1,400 square kilometres (600 of which were in Paraguay) occupied in the main by small farmers.

The pressure of migration forced INCRA to modify its colonisation model from the PIC to the PAD (1) - Directed Settlement Project. For the latter, responsibility for the execution of each project was divided up between a number of federal and local state agencies and did not rest solely on INCRA. Secondly, the financial and technical attributes of prospective colonists were taken into account. According to INCRA, the division of labour and the selection of 'qualified' colonists would ensure that settlement would be both rapid and successful (2). Table 2.1.6. gives the size and projected capacities of INCRA projects in Rondônia:

Table 2.1.6. - Rondônia: INCRA Projects, 1970 - 1975.

Project.	Size in Ha. (a)	Family capacity (b).	$\frac{b}{a}$
Ouro Preto	512,585	5,133	100
Sidney Girão	76,300	500	153
Ji-Paraná	479,737	4,757	101
Paulo de Assis Ribeiro	293,560	2,974	99
Padre Adolfo Rohl	456,366	4,341	105
Burareiro	304,925	1,215	250
Marechal Dutra	494,661	4,520	109
Total.	2,618,134	23,439	112

Source: Mahar:1981.

1. Projeto de Assentamento Dirigido.
2. See pp. 158 - 160 for a discussion of the selection criteria.

It will be noted that the last two projects listed show a considerable difference in the average size of family plot ($\frac{b}{a}$), Burareiro with 250 hectares and Marechal Dutra with 109. These two projects together with a third area, Gleba Burareiro, which was destined for sale by public auction, all lie in the municipality of Ariquemes. The three were the subject of a research project undertaken by Jean Hebétte and Rosa Acevêdo in 1982 (1). A resumé of their findings are presented below to illustrate the form that INCRA activity took in Rondônia, a model that was later to be used in Acre.

In 1975, a decree (2) was issued for the expropriation of 10,000 square kilometres in the municipality of Ariquemes which amounted to 30% of its total surface area. Three projects were planned for it:

1. Gleba Burareiro of 222,609 hectares was designated for sale by auction and subsequently divided into 201 five hundred hectare lots and 118 one thousand hectare lots. The former, in the most fertile section, were destined for cocoa production. The 1000 hectare lots were for other cash cultures such as pepper and rubber. This represented a significant change in INCRA policy in that land was designated for the production of a particular crop, rather for a given social use. It must be remembered that this was immediately following the 1973/4 oil crisis which placed an even greater pressure on export crop production. Both the selection process, which was based on the viability of the enterprise and, thus, on the organisational ability and previous experience of the applicant, and the

1. Hebétte & Acevêdo:1982.

2. Decree 75, 281/1975.

sale by auction, rather than allocation, of the land obviously restricted the future occupants of these plots to a particular social class. By 1981, almost all the lots were sold. The new owners were mainly ranchers, either from the region or from São Paulo, followed by lawyers, doctors, economists, and public functionaries.

2. PAD Burareiro of 304,925 hectares was also destined for cocoa production, but in smaller plots of 250 hectares. The selection process was founded on criteria that the average migrant could not fulfill. Of the 50 possible points that could be obtained, 20 were attributed on the agricultural capacity of the individual, 10 points for financial capacity, and 10 points for level of schooling. As Hebéte and Acevêdo point out, these criteria are repetitive, rather than complementary, and again ensure that the recipients came from the same social class. Thus, the agricultural engineer and the agronomist would score a maximum, whereas a migrant peasant with no experience of cocoa, few, if any, financial resources, and minimal education would be effectively barred from participating.

3. PAD Marechal Dutra of 494,661 hectares was set aside for 4,520 families on 100 hectare plots destined for subsistence agriculture. The siting of this project on the poorer land meant that in some cases, for example, those close to the River Anari, their cultivable area was reduced by 50%. The selection criteria were different from the other two projects. Here, the composition of the family was important: the age and agricultural experience of the head of the family, the number and age of dependents etc. Of a total of 1000 points, 500 was the minimum required. It is interesting to note that

a single person found it impossible to reach this minimum; female children were evaluated at only 80% of the points awarded for their male equivalents; and a higher weighting was given to older dependents, the three age groups being: 0 - 6 years, 7 - 14 years, and 15 years and over. This led the authors to consider that the settlement criteria were weighted towards the concentration of the largest potential labour force possible in the Marechal Dutra project area.

A two tier titling procedure was used on these projects. Once registered with INCRA, the colonist received an 'Authorisation to Occupy' (AO) his land. This is a provisional title that recognises the right to settle on and work the land, but does not confer ownership. This latter state is not achieved until after a time period of at least two years and only after INCRA officials have visited the site and evaluated the progress made. If a positive evaluation is received, then INCRA issues a 'Definitive Title' (TD) which confers ownership with the proviso that the land may not be sold for five years without INCRA's express approval (1).

It is important to note that for colonists in possession of just the AO, credit, apart for some seasonal crops (and definitely not for cash crops such as cocoa), was almost impossible to obtain as banking and finance houses only give credit to those who can either prove ownership to the property, or else had properties elsewhere which could act as collateral. This limited the small farmers'

1. Mahar:1981:50.

access to credit for at least two years and this during the most critical period of setting up. Lack of credit also meant that the small farmer was less likely to meet INCRA's evaluation standards and so his TD might be delayed indefinitely.

The small farmer was also less likely to have the required personal documentation needed for his title to be processed. INCRA also suffered a variety of organisational problems, including a high turnover of staff, that further delayed titling. By 1979, that is 4 years after the creation of Marechal Dutra, 517 TDs had been issued out of a target of 4,649, i.e., only 11% (1). Thus, for a significant period of time, the majority of the subsistence colonists had their access to credit severely restricted.

Technical assistance was also in short supply partly due to the already noted bureaucratic problems, but also because road construction was delayed which made certain areas inaccessible during the long rainy season. Of the projected 1,123 kilometres of roads for Marechal Dutra, only 33% had been completed by 1979 (2). Such problems, especially those relating to credit provision, technical assistance and transport, could be relatively easily overcome by the larger landowners many of whom were self-financing in the initial stages and who possessed transport and were very often technicians themselves, or could afford to employ them. This was not available to the small farmer.

1. Mahar:1981:52.

2. Ibid:53.

Given the emphasis that INCRA placed on the settlement of large families on Marechal Dutra and the latter's location on the poorest land, its proximity to the other two projects with their larger plots and superior service provision, and given the related problems of lack of credit, technical assistance, and roads network for the small farmer, the inhabitants of plots on the Marechal Dutra project were forced to either abandon their land, or were transformed into the wage labour force of the two projects adjacent to it. Whether INCRA policy specifically aimed at locating large numbers of potential wage labourers on Marechal Dutra, it is not possible to say. What is undeniable is that INCRA settlement criteria functioned so as to ensure that the project fulfilled the role that the minifundio has traditionally played in relation to the latifundio: the provision of an abundant, cheap, captive labour force.

1.6. SUDAM and INCRA : Two horns on the same bull?

The aim of the Introduction to Part 2 was to locate the contemporary struggle for land in Acre within the context of the Brazilian development model which prioritized industrialisation while, at the same time, maintaining the agrarian structure intact, allowing agriculture to develop extensively. Following on from this, Chapter 1 has shown how Amazonia became one of the lynch pins in the government's strategy to sustain the development impetus, particularly after the oil crisis of 1973-4. As one means of bridging the export earnings gap, successive governments launched a series of programmes that led to (1) the implantation of large agro-ranching and mineral complexes in

Amazonia through the agency of SUDAM and (2) the accelerated capitalisation of agriculture in the South. The effect in both cases was the expulsion/migration of the resident peasant/small farmer population and a further concentration of land.

INCRA, the agency responsible for countering the trend towards land concentration, was at best ineffectual and may have accelerated the tendency through its own operations. After 1974, INCRA's prime objective changed from giving priority to a land reform based on the distribution of those Amazonian 'lands without peasants' to the Nordeste 'peasants without lands' to a reform which had as its model the 'rural enterprise' with its obvious connotations of capitalisation and wage, rather than on-farm, labour.

In this sense, the interventions of SUDAM and INCRA complemented, rather than contradicted, each other. Both sought to achieve the expansion of capitalist activity into a region in which petty rural commodity production had predominated - SUDAM via the implantation of large-scale agro-ranching and mineral enterprises and INCRA through the smaller rural enterprise. The effect of both is to concentrate landholdings.

However, as has been shown, the interventions by state agencies was paralleled by the spontaneous migrations which represented a move, although possibly temporary, towards the redemocratisation of the land. The chapters that follow will continue the discussion of rural transformation in Acre with particular reference to state intervention and its effects as well as to the responses to it.

Chapter 2. The Countryside in Transition.

Following the implementation of the measures outlined in 'Operation Amazonia' and the creation of SUDAM and INCRA, the State of Acre became incorporated into the so-called 'moving agricultural frontier'. During this process, Acrean land was transferred to individuals and groups from the South of Brazil at great social and economic cost to the existing occupants of that land. The 'land rush' did not begin until 1970, but, as has been demonstrated, the factors that led to it and which determined its trajectory had their origin much earlier.

Throughout the earlier period, social relations of production were specifically non-capitalist. The capitalist was neither the direct purchaser of labour, nor did s/he intervene either directly or indirectly in the production process. The rubber economy was articulated with industrial capital (foreign and, later, national) via the intervention of merchant capital which commissioned the product and made advances in the form of the instruments of labour, subsistence goods and money. The seringalista, the agent of merchant capital, held the direct producer, the seringueiro, in a situation of dependence by controlling his access to, and directing the use of, the means of production, i.e., the land. Through the use of extra-economic coercion, the use of armed gunmen to destroy subsistence plots, and the monopoly control of imported subsistence items, the seringueiro was forced to exchange, and therefore produce, rubber to survive.

According to Marx, this form of production subordinated to merchant capital is the soil from which modern industrial capital springs, a process in

which the direct producer is separated from the means of production and transformed into a wage-labourer (1). With reference to the functioning of this process in Amazonia, Souza Martins comments:

"...on the one hand, an increasing number of peasants, that is, autonomous rural workers, whose existence is strictly based on their own labour and that of their families, are being expelled from the land, expropriated; on the other hand, as a consequence, this mass of labourers is being transformed into a mass of rural proletarians, of labourers without land." (2)

In another work, Souza Martins does allow for variations in the process of proletarianisation, particularly in the 'frontier' regions:

"The classic model of capitalism shows us capital expanding at the cost of the expropriation and proletarianisation of the rural work-force, the one necessarily producing the other. In our country, the process is not so clear, nor so simple. Capital expands into the countryside, expels, but does not necessarily proletarianise the labourer. Some of the expropriated occupy new lands, regaining the autonomy of their labour, demonstrating a betrayal of the laws of capital." (3)

However, even the 'open' frontier will eventually close given the acceptance of the continued expansion of capital and, so, the final expulsion and proletarianisation of the peasant becomes a simple question of time.

It is clear, however, that the accumulation of capital does not occur in a political vacuum. It is the complex array of both economic and political (including socio-cultural) forces that delimit the direction, or

1. Marx:1867:1023. 2. Souza Martins:1980:200. 3. Souza Martins:1982:17.

multiplicity of direction, that a given social formation will take. Thus, if the path taken results from the composition of a variety of forces, then the re-composition of those forces may result in a change of 'direction'. Here, the proletarianisation of the peasant is by no means a foregone conclusion. This chapter will discuss the different forms taken by the recent occupation of Acre.

2.1. The disactivation of the seringais of Acre.

In an article written in 1952 outlining the principal economic problems facing Acre, the Governor, Dr. João Kubitschek de Figueiredo, emphasized the state's almost total dependence on the extraction of a single product, rubber, which left the economy at the mercy of market price fluctuations:

"In it (rubber), one finds the almost exclusive wealth of all Amazonia even to the present day. To it, Acre owes its historic and economic existence. With it, Acre has lived its life of uncertainty, abundance and poverty." (1)

Less than 30 years later, the situation had dramatically changed. On the one hand, the state had become the scene of violent clashes between ranchers from the South and the seringueiro population as the former attempted to implant ranching enterprises on the land still occupied by the latter. On the other hand, this eroded the economic base of the state which came to depend almost entirely on federal resources for its revenues (2). The table overleaf demonstrates that this transformation

1. Figueiredo, J.K. de:1952:15.

2. Between 1975 & 1979, state revenues generated within the state did not exceed 16.2% of total state revenues in any given year, while federal funding did not drop below 81.8% of total state revenues in this period: Governo do Estado do Acre:Balanças gerais, 1975 - 1979.

occurred after 1972:

Table 2.2.1. Acre: % landholding according to use, 1972 & 1980.

Land use/Year.	1972 (a).	1980 (b).	$\frac{b}{a}$
Crops	3.0	16.7	5.57 (*)
Livestock (**)	3.7	31.9	8.6
Extractivism	93.3	51.4	0.55
Total.	100.0	100.0	-

Source: INCRA, Estatísticos Cadastrais, 1974 and IGBE, Censo Agropecuário, 1980.

It will be shown that, in many instances, ranching was merely a cover for speculation in land and thus revenue generation was minimal. Thus, the transformation of the Acrean countryside into ranching dealt a direct blow to the state's economic base. Manoel Pacífico, the deputy leader of Acre's ruling PMDB (1) party notes the state's predicament:

"We have now reached a situation here in the State of Acre ...that is to say, we have seen the rupture of the traditional sector of the economy, the total dependence on rubber. Today, while we still depend on rubber production to a certain extent, this dependence has been overtaken by the introduction of ranching and discussions on diversifying the economic activity of the state. As a direct result, however, the state now depends on the Union for almost 90% of its resources." (2)

(*) The rise in land for crops is possibly due to the intervention of INCRA during this period. However, INCRA figures do not state whether this is land destined for, or in actuality, crop production.

(**) 97% of the figure for livestock refers to cattle raising.

1. Partido do Movimento Democrático Brasileiro.

2. Field interview, Rio Branco.

The factors that led to the decadence of the seringais of Acre and their differential substitution by ranching will be analysed in the following sections.

2.1.1. The isolation of the seringalista.

Part I has shown that, while Acre was not immune to the effects of the collapse in the price of rubber in the second decade of this century, it continued to maintain its dependence on rubber, whereas Eastern Amazonia reverted to agricultural activity and industrial production around Belém and Manaus. Yet, when the 'Paulistas' arrived in Acre in the early 1970's, they found land both available and cheap, the traditional power structure fragmented in a large proportion of the state, and the direct producer, the seringueiro, transformed into an autonomous producer, a posseiro, in effective control of the land on which he lived and worked.

How did this transformation occur? Merchant capital has traditionally impeded the formation of an independent labour force through its immobilisation of the factors of production - the monopoly control of land, the repression of the rural masses, and the non-introduction of new techniques. Yet, by the late 1960's, both land and labour had been freed from the control of the seringalista.

Part of the answer lies in the demographic expansion experienced by the state after 1950, in particular the expansion of the state capital, Rio Branco, following the elevation of Acre to statehood in 1962 and the arrival of the Brasília-Acre highway towards the end

of that decade. Both these latter marked the end of Acre's commercial and political links with Belém and Manaus and, apart from the more distant municipalities of the Juruá micro-region, its further integration into the political-economic complex dominated by the industrial South.

Table 2.2.2. Acre & Rio Branco : Demographic growth, 1940-70.

Year.	Absolute pop. (a).	Absolute increase.	% inc.	Absolute pop. (b).	Absolute increase.	% inc.	$\frac{b}{a} \times 100.$
1940	79,744	-	-	7,710	-	-	9.7
1950	114,788	35,044	43.9	9,371	1,661	21.5	8.2
1960	158,184	43,396	37.8	17,245	7,874	84.0	10.9
1970	216,200	58,016	36.7	34,988	17,743	102.9	16.2

Source: IBGE, Sinopse Preliminar do Censo Demográfico, 1980.

Rio Branco's population as a % of the Acre's total population almost doubled from 8.2% in 1950 to 16.2% in 1970. In absolute terms, the city's population rose by 84% during the 50's and by 102.9% in the 60's. This was in part due to the migration of ex-Soldados da Borracha following the end of this war-related programme, and also to the increase of commercial activities and the expansion of the bureaucratic apparatus. The rapid rise of Acre's urban population and concomitant decline in rural population as a proportion of the total caused a crisis in food provision. The state government attempted to resolve this problem by transforming the 80,000

hectares of the now exhausted Seringal Emprêsa (the seat of the Galvez Empire in 1900) into small agricultural nuclei to provide subsistence crops for the city (1).

The demographic growth of the urban centres, especially Rio Branco, created a demand for luxury goods and other non-subsistence items. Acrean seringalistas traditionally owned small motorised river craft on which they transported rubber to Manaus and returned with subsistence items with which to maintain the captive labour force on the seringal. During the 50's and 60's, the price of rubber did not rise in proportion to the price rise of subsistence and other commodities that the seringalista sold in the barracão. This restricted the credit rating that the seringalista had with the Casas Aviadores. The rise in demand for non-subsistence goods in urban areas caused many seringalistas who traded in and around the capital to substitute the high bulk/low value subsistence goods for low bulk/high value luxury items on the return trip from Manaus.

To relieve themselves of the responsibility of providing those necessary items for the seringueiro and his family, these seringalistas began to loosen the ties that bound the seringueiro to the barracão. For the first time, the seringueiro was permitted to grow subsistence crops on his colocação, thus he was no longer dependent on the exchange of rubber for food items. As was shown in Part 1, some seringalistas had permitted this during the 30's and again in the period of the Soldados da Borracha, but from 1950

1. Guerra:1955:118 - 176, gives a discussion of local state creation of agricultural nuclei.

onwards this became generalised, at least in the Purús micro-region(1). In the Juruá valley and along the upper reaches of Acre's other rivers , the traditional system continued as will be shown.

The loosening of seringalista-seringueiro ties in the Purús region, in the valleys of of the Rivers Acre, Xapuri, and Iaco (see Map 8), had three important effects. Firstly, the seringueiro was now able to take a greater control over his livelihood and in many instances was able to obtain a credit balance at the end of the production year, thus avoiding the crippling burden of debt:

"It all changed during the Second World War...The seringueiros began to plant small gardens, but it was only a small thing... it wasn't big enough to develop and sell on the outside, just enough to grow some bananas, rice and a little extra corn... Then, a little later, we began to see how we could grow more, the patrões were becoming weaker...they couldn't bring enough produce onto the seringal and the seringueiro began to clear some of his land...It was good because most seringueiros just tapped rubber and lived only on what they bought (at the barracão)...they produced a lot, but spent a lot too and were left with nothing...Now what rubber he produced went only towards buying what the land would not give, because whatever the land gave, he took." (2)

Secondly, when the seringueiro finished the production year in credit, the seringalista had no alternative than to pay the balance in cash. Some seringalistas avoided this by lowering the price given for rubber, raising the price of other goods that he sold (ammunition for example), or by simply cheating the seringueiro who was often illiterate and had little arithmetic expertise. However, payments in cash began to monetise the economy of the interior and permitted the

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1. Acre is divided into two 'micro-regions' for census purposes which correspond to the valleys of the two principal rivers, the Purús and the Juruá, and their tributaries.
 2. Field interview, seringueiro of the interior of Xapuri.

seringueiro to purchase goods in the town now that he was no longer restricted to barter on the seringal. It must be pointed out that, at this point in time, the seringueiro was still obliged to sell his rubber at the barracão.

Of the items that he was now able to buy, mention must be made of the battery operated radios that many families of the interior now obtained. Apart from the socio-cultural impact that this had, it brought the seringueiro family, previously isolated on the seringal and who made at most only two trips to town each year, into contact with the outside world. The seringalista, the one-time sole provider of wordly information on the seringal, could now be challenged on the basis of information broadcast into the seringueiros own home. Of particular importance were the market quotations through which it became apparent to the seringueiro that the seringalista was not paying the market rate for his rubber product. In the words of one seringueiro:

"Now when the seringueiro bought a radio and went to the barracão and said: "Rubber costs so much", he (the seringalista) would say: "Well go there and sell it to those who say that it costs so much. That is the price there, not here." So the seringueiro couldn't say anything, he didn't have the knowledge to discuss it, so he kept quiet...but he knew that the price that he heard on the radio was the price that was to be paid at the door of his own smoke-house, not in São Paulo." (1)

Thirdly, the seringueiro population became more mobile, seringueiros began to move from seringal to seringal in search of a better price

1. Field interview, seringueiro of Brasiléia.

for their production. As another seringueiro from the interior of
 Brasiléia notes:

"I would come into town looking for a patrão. I would find out that such and such a patrão was a good patrão, that his seringal was good and I would go and look for his house in the town...When I got there, I would introduce myself and say that I wanted to tap rubber. He would ask if I had already tapped rubber. I would say: "yes". "Which seringal?", he would ask. "Seringal such and such, with patrão such and such, on the River such and such."...I only left one seringal for another to improve our situation, where there was a better price, for someone who paid more...Then he would ask: "Do you have your (current) account from there?" I had my account with my day to day production totals and debits for the merchandise that we had bought...all written down on my account...So then he would see how much I could produce (in a season) and would say: "Yes Senhor, I have a colocação for you." (1)

As this situation was evolving, so too did federal policies begin to weaken the position of the seringalista. The creation of SUDAM and BASA with their orientation towards the implantation of 'modern' large scale production units in the Amazon also furthered the decay of the seringal enterprise in Acre. SUDAM's 1st Five Year Plan budget allocated only 0.5% to extractive production and the PVEA stated that incentives to the extractive economy would only be given where it could not be substituted by more profitable activity even though, by 1973, rubber imports were 4 times as great as the total of natural rubber produced in Amazonia (2).

The real death blow for the seringalista of Acre, however, came in the mid-1960's when BASA, which exercised monopoly control over the

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1. Field interview, seringueiro of Seringal Carmen, Brasiléia.
 2. SUDHEVEA, Anuário Estatístico, Mercado Nacional, 1981.

commercialisation of rubber, began to restrict the credit facilities that it extended to the seringalistas of the area and, in some instances, actually intervened directly in the running of the seringais. The effect was catastrophic for those seringalistas who relied on BASA to finance their activities during the production year. In an interview, a seringueiro notes the effect that this had in the Brasiléia area:

"I came from Ceara to Amazonia when I was 15..I'm 45 now...I worked first in Boca do Acre and then came to this municipality of Brasileia in 1964...I worked until 1970 on this seringal (Seringal Montivideu)...at that time, everything was sold from the barracão, everything...I left because the seringalista finished up...It was the finance that he had from the bank, he owed a lot to the bank, BASA...Well, he had a big debt and the bank saw that he was in no condition to pay, so it took all the goods that he had. Without finance he couldn't function and he went bankrupt...The seringueiros were still there, but he couldn't advance them anymore credit and, in any case, there was nothing left in the barracão...It happened to all the seringalistas around here...they (the seringalistas) all got together with the lawyers from the bank to see what could be done...everyone was in debt, but they wouldn't allow more finance...The seringueiro was left with nothing, abandoned. He could still produce rubber, but had no-one to sell it to." (1)

With reference to direct BASA intervention in the daily running of the seringais, using its own agents as managers, Geraldo Mesquita (Governor of Acre, 1974 - 1978) stated the following in a lecture to Acrean graduates of the Escola Superior da Guerra (2):

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1. Field interview, seringueiro of Seringal Montivideu, Brasiléia.
 2. The War College.

"...to give an idea of what this meant in terms of debt, it suffices to give the example of one of the largest Acrean seringalistas of the Juruá Valley who had a debt of 1,800,000 cruzeiros (the result of an initial debt and accrued interest and monetary corrections which compounded the debt) and who suffered intervention by the Banco da Amazonia in all of his properties. Two years later the seringais were returned to his control with a debt elevated to around 12,000,000 cruzeiros." (1)

The above complex of elements led to an almost total breakdown of the Aviamento System, the credit system upon which the entire rural economy depended. The effect was not uniform throughout the state, but, as the next section will illustrate, in a large area, particularly the municipalities of Rio Branco, Xapuri and Brasiléia, seringalistas abandoned their seringais en masse.

2.1.2. The constitution of the barranqueiro and seringueiro autônomo.

The crisis of the seringal enterprise culminated in the financial ruin of seringalistas and the transformation of the seringueiro cativo into two different, although not mutually exclusive, social categories. The first that developed were the barranqueiros (2), an emergent agricultural peasantry (3), that inhabited the areas on the perimeter of seringais and at the edge of the expanding urban centres.

The barranqueiro who lived in the interior was almost by definition an ex-seringueiro or ex-employee of the seringalista. Prior to the actual collapse of the seringais, the barranqueiro had no property

1. Mesquita:1978.

2. Barranqueiro, literally: one who lives on the river bank (barranca) where rubber trees are less dense than in the 'centro'.

3. As opposed to the rubber tapping cum horticulture of the seringueiro.

rights to the land that he worked, he cultivated crops with the express permission of the seringalista who could evict him at will. He produced bananas, rice, beans, manioc, tobacco, charcoal, pigs, chickens, and ducks for home consumption and for 'sale' at the barracão. The non-existence of freely available land meant that the barraqueiro, like the seringueiro, was still subordinated to the seringalista and was forced to sell his produce at the price that the seringalista was prepared to pay and buy merchandise at a price that was also set by the seringalista.

The link with the patrão was also maintained through other members of the family, generally young unmarried males. It was common practice for the work of subsistence agriculture to be carried out by the father and unmarried females, while the unmarried male who still lived at home tapped rubber for the seringalista. The rubber product of the unmarried sons was usually credited to the current account of the father, rather than their own. In the words of a barraqueiro of the River Tarauacá:

"I am a barraqueiro on this seringal. But I have two sons who tap rubber in the 'centro'. They work for me because they are still single." (1)

It was rare for the barraqueiro to use 'off-farm' labour. When this did happen it was done on the basis of exchange, not payment.

Neighbours (more often relations in these isolated valleys)

1. Quoted in Aquino:1982:86.

commonly 'exchanged days' in the form of the 'mutirão', i.e., the gathering together of neighbours to perform tasks that cannot be accomplished by the individual because of the size of the task (as with clearing a new section of the forest) or for time reasons (as at harvest when the crops must be gathered before the rains set in):

"We used to exchange days of work with the neighbours... When one of us was hard pressed, he would ask for help and invite the neighbours on that day and give them breakfast and lunch... Here, we worked together, but this was mainly for tree-felling and clearing a new plot." (1)

During the 1950's and 1960's, then, the barraqueiro remained the subject of the seringalista if he lived in the interior. The situation of the barraqueiro who lived near the towns was less servile, here there was the possibility of buying a 'colônia', a small subsistence plot, perhaps on one of the state's agricultural nuclei. (The state had founded such nuclei in Acre as early as 1908, but by 1951 there were only 278 inhabitants left on these early colônias). (2)

The already noted state purchase of 80,000 hectares of Seringal Empresa on the outskirts of Rio Branco, which was effected in 1950, was divided into three zones: the 'Zona Florestal' which consisted of 140 colocações destined for rubber production, an early attempt to create rubber plantations; the 'Zona Urbana' of 388 lots for those who worked in the city, but who required land for house

1. Aquino:ibid.

2. Guerra:1955:123.

construction with small subsistence gardens; and the 'Zona Agrícola' which was destined for 423 subsistence production units with the aim of providing staples for the urban markets. The respective populations of the three zones were: 669; 1,931; and 1,918; a total of 4,518 persons. It is interesting to note that two of the conditions made on the purchase of each lot were the conservation of at least 25% of each unit as virgin forest and the planting of a minimum of two hectares with rubber trees. All the three zones have since been transformed into housing estates within the Rio Branco area.(1)

Some of those who bought subsistence units in the Zona Agrícola were ex-Soldados da Borracha who migrated into Rio Branco once their obligation to tap rubber ceased. One such ex-Soldado describes how he was able to save enough to purchase a colônia after the change that allowed subsistence cultivation on the seringais of the Purús and the subsequent monetization of the economy:

"In February (of 1949) I went back down river to the North-East and then in 1952 I came back to work on another seringal, Seringal Horizonte on the River Antimari, here in the municipality of Rio Branco...It was owned by a Portuguese called Rodrigo Alfonso who lived in the village of Floriano Peixoto...Well, I worked there for three years and, when I had got together a little money, I came into Rio Branco and bought a colonia...I started to work on the colonia and I also decided to study...I wanted to sit at a school desk before I got old, I was 36 by then...There was a school 3 kilometres away and I went there every night there for lessons. I began lessons in 1958 and it was there that I received my Primary School Teacher's Diploma in 1972...My colonia was called Placido de Castro, 10 kilometres from the city. I walked into the town centre every weekend, leaving at dawn

1. Guerra:1955:118 - 176.

...sometimes with a box full of chicken's eggs, sometimes with a hen in my other hand, I came to the city to sell them so that I could buy some of the things that we needed here...You could only sell during the summer when the road was good...My colonia was 12 1/2 hectares, or 500 metres long and 250 metres wide. I produced rice, beans, manioc, pineapples, bananas, and coffee as well...When I eventually sold the colonia, the coffee bushes were producing so much that I never had to buy any in town." (1)

Small agricultural nuclei also began to flourish around the other Acrean townships, although these were far outweighed by the continued emphasis on rubber production in the interior of the municipalities. They were also hindered by the lack of any road network via which to commercialise the produce. According to Guerra's 1955 analysis of the Acrean economy, there was only one area in the whole of Acre in which agricultural activity was superior to extractivism. This was the Vila of Japiim which "constituted a real exception in the general panorama of the Acrean economy" (2).

The area of Japiim was divided between the municipalities of Mâncio Lima and Cruzeiro do Sul in 1980. It still provides much of the subsistence crops for the rising population of Cruzeiro, the largest town in the Juruá micro-region. The commercialisation of the product of this area was greatly improved in 1983 when a bridge was constructed over the River Moa cutting the three day river journey to 4 hours by road.

With the abandonment of many seringais in the late 60's came the transformation of the seringueiro cativo into that other social

1. Field interview, ex-Soldado da borracha, Rio Branco.
2. Guerra1955:114.

category that still predominates in the eastern portion of Acre: the seringueiro autônomo. Once the seringais were disactivated as integrated units of production and the seringalista no longer continued to direct production, i.e., the seringueiro stayed on his *colocação* at his own cost and risk, the latter constituted an authentic posseiro or, in local terminology, a seringueiro autônomo. The seringalista may have still claimed title to the land that he once controlled, but his withdrawal from participation in production and his lack of de facto control of his former seringal, the right of ownership through effective occupation devolved to the seringueiro autônomo (as it did to the barraqueiro at this time).

The question of ownership is defined by the Estatuto da Terra. A right of 'posse' is established when the 'posseiro' has lived on and cultivated his land for a year and a day provided that the land is 'terra devoluta', i.e., untitled, unoccupied land. As a Rural Worker's Union delegate from Brasília explains:

"Law 4.504 states that after a year and a day, posseiros who maintain themselves on a piece of land with the labour of the family have the right to have that land documented... only if he is a posseiro, if he is not an employee, and he doesn't pay a monthly rent... He used to work on the land of the patrão and the patrão maintained him... When the patrão no longer does this, he supports his family by subsistence and he is not obliged to sell the land and its product is his." (1)

In addition to the right of 'posse' on 'terras devolutas', i.e., untitled land, there is also the Law of Usocapião which gives the occupant certain rights even when the land already has a legal owner. This is outlined below in the words of another seringueiro autônomo:

1. Field interview, seringueiro autônomo of Brasília.

"I don't remember exactly, but there is a law that, if a seringueiro lives on a colocação, or an agriculturalist ... whoever lives on a colocação for over five years without paying rent to anyone, without interference from the owner, has the right to a definitive title through Usocapião from the courts... this law exists... Also, even if he didn't actually live on that land, if he lived in town, but he worked on it for ten years, then he has the right to receive a title to that land through Usocapião, wherever he lives... with twenty years, even if he owned another property, but has worked that land for twenty years, then he has the right to receive a definitive title by law." (1)

The interpretation of these two laws became a major source of conflict in the period that followed when some seringalistas began to 'sell' their seringais to the ranchers from the South while they were still occupied by posseiros. On the one hand, the titles that the seringalistas claimed were in many cases based simply on the de facto control of the land over a long period of time or 'purchased' from those who had originally opened up the area. It must be remembered that Acre was not ceded to Brazil until 1903, some 20 years after its initial occupation by Brazilians. Given that Law 601 of 1850 states that terras devolutas could only be titled if purchased from the state, unless posse was consolidated through effective possession and registration, which had not been the case in Acre, then the whole of the area that came to constitute the State of Acre was terra devoluta and as such came under the control of the Republic. The constitution of 1891 devolved legal ownership and political control of terras devolutas to local states, but as Acre was a territory until 1962, it remained under federal control. The titles claimed by seringalistas, unless granted by Bolivia or Peru, were based on posse and, once the seringais were abandoned by the seringalista, the right of posse devolved to the seringueiro

1. Field interview, seringueiro autônomo of Tarauacá.

autônomo and barraqueiro. Those seringalistas who did hold legitimate titles from the Peruvian or Bolivian governments, however, could still be expropriated under the Law of Usocapião (1).

As Foweraker points out, though, the situation of the posseiro was far from settled. It is one thing to have a right to a piece of land, it is quite another to have that right translated into a legal document. Documentation, which can involve a lengthy and costly bureaucratic process and the possession of birth certificates etc., is almost impossible for the posseiro to obtain. The bureaucratic and power structures may form an impenetrable barrier for the uneducated seringueiro and barraqueiro who has spent most of his life subject to the arbitrary decisions of those who dominated him. A seringueiro in the municipality of Feijó explains his feelings regarding this:

"First of all, the only one to enter (the state) government is the seringalista; the only one to sit in the mayor's chair is the seringalista; the majority of state deputies are seringalistas; the municipal councillors are seringalistas or ranchers... In Congress, you can count on the fingers of one hand, those who are not landowners or ranchers. In the Senate, too, you can count on your fingers those who aren't landowners or ranchers. Do you think that, if there are two pans on the stove, one mine and the other yours, and we are sitting here talking and I smell burning and start running... Do you think that I am going to pull your pan off the stove first?" (2)

While the above is a subjective impression, the reality of the divergence between what the law states and what the law does is 'known' by all the inhabitants of the Acrean countryside as well as by urban dwellers (a specific case study will be presented overleaf).

1. For a discussion of legal history of frontier land, see Foweraker 1981, Chapter 4. 2. Field interview, Seringueiro of Feijó.

Under the provisions of the Estatuto da Terra, the posseiro of terras devolutas is not obliged to sell his property if he wishes to remain on it. Under the law of Usocapião this is not the case. If the person who has legal title wishes to reclaim it, then he can do so providing that the posseiro has not previously registered a claim and providing that the owner gives 'fair' compensation for the improvements that the posseiro has made. This latter provision is also the case for those seringueiros cativos who open up a colocação on land still controlled by the seringalista.

The following interview illustrates the difficulties met by the seringueiro in trying to obtain compensation. While it is in itself a single case, it is representative of many such cases encountered during the field research. It is an account of a struggle that took place in 1954, prior to the 'sale' of the seringal at the time when the seringalista permitted the cultivation of subsistence plots, but still prohibited the sale of rubber to anybody but himself. In this case, the lack of essential supplies in the barracão forced the seringueiro to sell a small quantity of rubber to a marreteiro (independent trader), which precipitated the conflict.

"We were thrown off our colocação, Pao Bocal, by the police in '54 because we sold some rubber...because we sold a small amount of rubber to the marreteiro...The seringalista argued with Papai and ordered him off the land...We spent a year, a year and three months fighting him. The first time that the police came, it was to order us off...at that time it wasn't the Federal Police, it was the others...the ones in yellow...the Civil Police of the municipality of Labrea in the State of Amazonas...Well the seringalista didn't have enough goods in the barracão when the tapping season began...all of us seringueiros began in April and by May he was

already short of some supplies...He was short of kerosene, powdered milk and salt...So I tapped rubber for 32 days lighting my way in the forest with a burning torch...In the house, Papai filled a powdered milk tin with soil and stuck piece of sernambi (scrap rubber) in it to make a candle... Everything was covered in smoke...tapping rubber in the early hours with a torch, vomiting in the jungle because of the smoke...I was black all over...I had to tap rubber with a lit piece of sernambi sticking out of my mouth...One morning Seu Otavio (my father) couldn't stand it anymore... the stomachache, the stench, his face black with smoke... all his clothes and his hair were black too...Well, at this exact time when we were short of supplies, the road from Porto Velho (Rondonia) to Rio Branco had just been built... It cut right through our seringal, Seringal Rio Novo...Today there are four ranches on it...Now then, when the road reached Rio Branco, all the marreteiros of Rio Branco began to tarde along the road in their lorries, buying rubber and selling goods. The marreteiro would come to the houses of those seringueiros who lived near the road and say:

"Do you want to buy anything?"

"No Senhor, I haven't any money."

"Don't you have any rubber to sell?"

"I have some, but the patrão will find out."

"But the rubber doesn't belong to the patrão, it's yours.

Are you tattooed with the sign of the patrão?" (a mark of slavery).

"No Senhor. I have no mark."

"Well then, sell it to me and buy a few things. Then afterwards you can produce some more for the barracão. You are short of supplies aren't you?"

"Yes."

"Well then...."

So the seringueiros used to sell, but it was hidden, they were frightened of the patrão finding out...but he always got to know...other seringueiros would tell him just out of fealosity of the other...Now Papai wasn't one of those who sold right away. We lived about four hours from the side of the road, four hours walking on foot...But my Godfather sold a little and when he saw that he got a good price for the rubber and a good price for supplies, he came to my father's house and said:

"Compadre, the marreteiros of Acre are buying rubber...at an incredible price...and the merchandise, they're almost giving it away, not selling it."

"But I can't buy any. I haven't any money. I have a balance at the barracão, but he (the seringalista) won't pay me here... and it's too far, we haven't any animals."

"Look. Why don't you get your boys to carry it on their backs?" Then Papai said: "Compadre, for you it's easy...but I'll try. I will send a letter to the barracão asking for money so that I don't lose my rights. I'll ask for 50 contos de reis to buy goods with. If he doesn't give me the money, then I'll to sell. My married daughter here has a two month old baby and we haven't a drop of milk to give her."

The seringuealista of this seringal was Raimundo Pereira dos Santos, who got credit from Manaus. Papai wrote a letter to the barracão and ordered me to take it. It was two hours from our house to the barracão...so I took it there and gave it to the manager...He said to me: "Look we have no money here."

I said: "Go and call Seu Raimundo."

He said: "I know that you have a balance here, but you know that we pay it in Manaus."

"I know that you pay out in Manaus, but our account is here and we're short of supplies."

Well, when the seringuealista arrived, the manager gave him the letter. He began to read it and he shook his head from side to side and said: "You know that we only pay the balance at the end of the year in Manaus. So why are you asking for money now?"

I told him at least five times that we had a balance of 380 contos and Papai was only asking for 50. We were not asking him for his house. But he said that he wasn't going to give it and that we would have to wait until the end of the year in Manaus. I said that we would have to sell some rubber. He said: "You can't sell it, it's mine."

"Yours? You never made any of it. We were the ones that produced it. Your rubber is here in the barracão. While it's in the 'centro' before you receive it, it belongs to us. We don't owe you and you won't pay us. We've got 26 balls of rubber outside of our house, we aren't going to give it to you and then wait until the end of the year for payment."

He said: "If you try to sell it, then I'll take it."

When I got home, I told Papai and he asked us if we had courage and if we would carry the rubber on our backs to the road...

We said that we would and so we left at two in the morning, each of us with a pela on our backs. There were four of us each with a ball of 60 kilos. There were 22 left at home which we later took to the patrão. But it was because of these four pelas that all this confusion started. More than a year of struggle with a policeman sitting in our house six days a week, soldiers coming to our colocação every day to stop us from tapping rubber...We are not robbers, we are not bandits or criminals, nor the deflowerer of anyone...Yet we had the police in our house every day on the orders of the patrão. They gave us 90 days to get out, but we wouldn't leave until Seu Raimundo gave us the balance and due compensation for our house and crops that we had planted. Our balance was 380 contos (380,000 cruzeiros), but the house was ours, the crops were ours too...We had planted more than 10 kilos of corn, mandioca and beans...50 litres of rice...and our other belongings, 3 rifles, tools, all the things in the house, a radio, a guitar, an accordion...It all came to 1,770,000 cruzeiros and when we went to court, there in Labrea, the judge made a list and only gave us 3,400 cruzeiros in compensation...We lost everything, so we came here to Brasileia." (1)

1. Field interview, seringueiro autônomo of Brasília.

When BASA intervened in the operation of Acre's seringais and withdrew credit facilities, the effect was differentially felt by seringalistas. Some moved into Rio Branco and other Acrean townships, while others went to live in Belém and Manaus, and still others simply stayed on in the barracão continuing rubber production where possible, or tending their own subsistence plots where it was not.

Where the seringalista had stopped extending credit to the seringueiro, and the latter lived near a town or a river bank, then he was able to commercialise his rubber product. Most merchants in the small towns of Acre will exchange merchandise for rubber and a feature of all shops is a room at the back where rubber is stored. The shopkeeper keeps this as a hedge against inflation or else exchanges it for commodities when the next boat comes in.

Those seringueiros who lived in the 'centro', the interior of the seringal, were forced to trade with the increasing numbers of marreteiros who plied the rivers and the few roads that existed. Prior to the 1950's, while the seringalista effectively controlled his seringal, the marreteiro was kept at bay. With the abandonment of such control, the marreteiro came into his own. Some came from outside Acre, but many were ex-employees of local seringais who had lost their positions following the collapse of the enterprise, the book-keepers, muleteers, and some seringueiros and seringalistas themselves. Just as the monetisation of the economy allowed the seringueiro/barranqueiro to buy a colônia, so it allowed him to set up as a marreteiro, the largest capital requirement being a motor for a canoe.

One seringueiro turned marreteiro describes the sequence of events that led to this transformation:

"We used to buy everything from the barracão...no-one planted a garden...no-one planted crops when I first came here in '43 ...It was only after 1950 that we began to plant corn, rice and manioc...Well, the family started to grow and we had to be more careful, everything was becoming more expensive, so we planted a small garden and raised some pigs, some chickens, and the hog fat saved us buying cooking oil...and so we carried on like this...Before 1950, I only tapped rubber... After that, I started to stay in credit (at the barracão)... in 1970, when I went to weigh in my rubber in August, we all came to the barracão in August and December to weigh our rubber, I had a balance of 11,600 cruzeiros. At that time 11 contos was a fair sum...but the manager, who was my father-in-law and who liked to drink a lot, was poor and he only gave me the 600 cruzeiros...So I went to Senhor Adão (the seringalista) in Xapuri and gave me six contos and said he would owe me the other five...just after that the seringal stopped operating, so I bought some merchandise with that six contos and a hull as well, a canoe...I put that merchandise in the hull and employed a small boy to help me and I began working up river...I sold merchandise and brought back rubber, sernambi, hides...all that sort of thing." (1)

All the seringueiros autônomos who were interviewed stated that the regime of the marreteiro was far harsher than that of the seringalista. The severity of the regime depended on a variety of elements: the relation between the marreteiro and seringueiro; the distance of the colocação from the nearest urban centre or river bank; the number of marreteiros plying the same river; the number of middlemen in the chain. The following interviews relate to the plight of the seringueiro who was obliged to trade with the marreteiro. Of interest here is how seringalista/seringueiro relations continued during the transition period, i.e, when the seringueiro may have still been in debt to his

1. Field interview, merreteiro (ex-Soldado da Borracha) of Xapuri.

former patrão, and the vehemence with which the seringueiro speaks of the marreteiro. In general, even though the seringalista also exploited the seringueiro, the latter speaks of the former in quite deferential terms.

"It was after this (the collapse of the seringal) that the marreteiros arrived. I was still in debt to the patrão, but the patrão said: " I can't give you any more credit, so every time that you smoke three pelás of rubber, give one to me and sell the other two." All the marreteiros did well because we seringueiros kept our own families in poverty while keeping the family of the marreteiro. The children of the marreteiro, they went to school, while the children of the seringueiro went sick, half naked...I have seen in the forest when, if someone like you, Doctor, arrived at a seringueiro's house, the woman and the children stayed inside because they were too ashamed to come outside, because they were naked...They didn't even have enough to buy clothes...The marreteiro took everything..." (1)

"The system with the marreteiro...the type of business with them was like this...we traded with them, but we could only buy if we already had production...If you had no rubber, then you couldn't buy...Well now, that production, like for example here in Xapuri...a kilo of rubber sells for around 770 or 780 or 750 cruzeiros... the marreteiro will buy it for just over 400 ...with the merchandise, for example, they buy a kilo of sugar for 300 cruzeiros, they will sell it here for 600, or at least 500...they gain over half." (2)

Three important points need to be noted here. Firstly, the marreteiro rarely advanced goods against future rubber production as had the seringalista. Trade was strictly on the basis of on the spot exchange (3). Secondly, the marreteiro never bought rubber for cash, he would only exchange it for the merchandise that he carried. This demonetisation of the economy of parts of the interior restricted

1. Field interview, seringueiro of Brasiléia.

2. Field interview, seringueiro of Xapuri.

3. As with the 'seringueiro de tôco' described in Part 1, p.69.

the seringueiro's access to other, possibly cheaper, sources of goods as well as commercialisation of the product. Thirdly, interviewees always stated that the marreteiro never showed them a current account. The seringalista traditionally kept a ledger in the barracão which was referred to whenever a transaction occurred between the seringalista and the seringueiro. At the end of the production year, the account was balanced and paid out, any debts being carried over to the following year. This chapter has shown that, from the 1950's onwards, it became increasingly possible for the seringueiro to maintain a credit balance, a direct result of the rise in subsistence cultivation on the colocaçã̄o. This was now denied to those seringueiros who were forced to trade with the marreteiro, because of the adverse terms of trade offered by the latter.

The two interviews that follow, both recorded on a seringal 3 days walk from Xapuri, illustrate the difference between the regimes of the seringalista and the marreteiro as perceived by the subjects of their exploitation. The greater % profit gained by the marreteiro in the second interview may be compared with the second interview on the previous page in which the seringueiro lived only one day out from Xapuri.

"I spent 20 years on that first seringal (Boa Vista).. Well, it was a life that wasn't too bad...the worst was that time that I took sick...but, thank God, everything went alright for me, thank God...I could say it was a peaceful life, you know, I never owed the patrã̄o...sometimes I did when the patrã̄o kept on allowing us credit in the winter (when rubber could not be tapped), but, during that

time, we were careful and then we worked hard to pay off the account...At the end of the year, I always had a small balance...two or three contos...that could buy a few small things...and so life went on." (1)

"When the patrão left and abandoned us on the seringal...the seringalistas of Acre were all financed by the bank and, when the finance was cut off, it took over the seringais...no rubber was being sold and so the marreteiros began to trade... I mean, do what the patrão used to do...well they grew and grew and, with the marreteiro, things got worse...With the patrão we were exploited, yes, but it was an exploitation that didn't kill us off...the marreteiro didn't give us a chance and nearly finished us. The patrão gained a percentage, always 20 to 30%...the marreteiro took 200%...buying an object like when it happened to us, a blanket which cost 16 cruzeiros in town, over there in Kalume's shop, and this Maria Cancão, who was the marreteiro on this Seringal Boa Vista...well she bought the blanket there for 16 cruzeiros and sold it to us here for 50...At that time a kilo of rubber could be sold in town for 4 cruzeiros...She bought a kilo of rubber here for one cruzeiro and sold it there for four. The patrão never did that. I was always in credit at the end of the year with the patrão, but with the marreteiro it was impossible...I was always in debt...She never told you how much a thing cost, only how much she wanted...You were never shown a current account, she never added it up on paper..She just took it out of her head and said: "You owe me so much." (2).

A major factor in the subjugation of the seringueiro to the marreteiro was the former's inability to commercialise his own product, a situation that is described in an interview with a delegate from the Rural Worker's Union in Xapuri:

1. & 2. Field interviews with seringueiros of Xapuri.

"Look, there are many marreteiros around here trading with the seingueiro and they will be here for some time to come. This is happening...why? Because there are some seringueiros, you know, that from the colocação where they live to town is a two day journey...24 hours on foot...and some live even further out...This seringueiro doesn't have a mule, he hasn't got an ox on whose shoulders he could load up his product and bring it to the city, sell it and buy his merchandise. He doesn't have them...why doesn't he?...Its because he is a scoundrel?...Many people say that the seringueiro doesn't own anything because he is lazy...He isn't in any shape nor form...Its because of the exploitation that is so great here...He is exploited in his work and his mind, because he is constantly tricked by the marreteiro, by the patrão...He buys their goods at prices that will kill him and sells his product for next to nothing...and he never woke up to this, you know...To buy an animal, an ox, which is the cheapest around here...a mule already costs 400,000 cruzeiros, a horse costs 250,000...but an ox you can still buy for between 100 and 150,00...a young ox, you know...a small one...But how can the seringueiro buy one when he is always in debt?" (1).

At the time of the above interview, November, 1983, the official minimum salary in Acre was approximately 56,000 cruzeiros per month. A seringueiro autônomo working alone and working the traditional system of three estradas (i.e., tapping each trail every third day and leaving one day per week for subsistence production) could expect to earn approximately 80,000 cruzeiros per month during the tapping season of 7 months providing he was selling his product at town prices (700 to 750 cruzeiros per kilo). Thus, a mule would cost 71% of his annual earnings of 560,000 cruzeiros, a horse 45% and an ox between 18% and 27%. Given that the seringueiro still needs to maintain his family, the purchase of such an animal would require a great saving effort. It is unlikely that such saving would continue past the first winter, when the seringueiro has to rely on savings or stored-up rubber to purchase supplies. For the seringueiro who lived in the 'centro' and who traded with the marreteiro, the purchase of an animal would be impossible.

1. Field interview, STR Delegate, Xapuri.

To overcome this problem of accumulation, some seringueiros with larger colocações, i.e., with more estradas than the seringueiro and his family can tap, began to institute the system of the 'meieiro', the system of share-cropping noted in Part 1 in which the 'owner' of the property receives half the production of the meieiro in exchange for the use of the estradas and his maintenance. Field interviews reveal that this only occurred after the seringalistas had abandoned the seringais. Colocações seem to have expanded when those seringueiros autônomos that were left incorporated the areas of those seringueiros who migrated to the towns, both before and after the violence that began in the 1970's. The system of the meieiro also seems to be restricted to that part of the Purús where the seringueiro autônomo was found (see Map 8).

"We call those people that come to work at our house...they are always single, they have no family of their own...We call them meieiro...They come to our house to tap rubber... We help them clear the estradas, clearing the undergrowth, getting the trees ready for tapping...Now if he produces 100 kilos (in a month), then half of it is his. But, he lives in our house, he eats our food, drinks our coffee...many of them don't bring their own tobacco...most of them get their clothes washed, you know, with our soap...They have all of these things and one half of their production belongs to them." (1)

The meieiro was a single man, often from a small colocação that could not support his labour as once he became adult. Working as a meieiro gave him the opportunity to earn enough to buy his own colocação. The system began in the late 1950's and seemed to be dying out by the early 80's. In part, this was due to the rising

1. Field interview, seringueiro autônomo of Xapuri.

union activity in the area after 1976 (1), it being difficult not to compare the exploitation of the meieiro with that of the seringueiro cativo. As the same informant explains:

"Well, not long ago, we began to realize that this was not right. It wasn't right because...it is still a form of exploitation...because the meieiro is a person who works hard and who ends up losing...If the meieiro doesn't work hard, then the patrão will lose...that is to say, the owner of the colocação...if he does work hard, then he himself loses because a large part of his labour goes to that person." (2)

This problem of how to accumulate capital to be free from the cycle of debt while still ensnared by it was to a certain extent overcome by the setting up of seringueiro cooperatives for the selling of rubber and the purchase of merchandise in the early 1980's. This will be discussed in Chapter 4.

The above has centred principally on the Purús micro-region, the municipalities of Rio Branco, Xapuri and Brasiléia, the area which was mostly affected by BASA foreclosures of the seringais and their subsequent abandonment by the seringalistas. In the other micro-region, that of the Juruá (see Map 8), the situation of the seringueiro was somewhat different. Here the seringais tended to be much smaller and so the seringalista was burdened with a lesser debt to BASA. Some of these smaller seringalistas continued in the traditional manner and increased the exploitation of the seringueiro to pay of the debt to the bank. Amongst examples cited by seringueiros of the area were: the falsification of weights and balances; the imposition of a 10% tax on the weight of rubber produced; excessive profits on the goods

1. See Chapter 3 for a discussion of unionisation.
2. Field interview, seringueiro autônomo of Xapuri.

that were sold in the barracão; continued prohibition of subsistence plot production; the eviction of seringueiros who produced little or sold rubber to the marreteiro without compensation under Usocapião.

In a large number of cases, particularly in the municipalities of Tarauacá and Feijó, a system of rent was imposed. This acted on two levels. Firstly, those seringalistas who had begun commercial activities in the urban centres and who lived there rented out the seringais to managers. As the following interview shows, this increased the burden on the seringueiro as there was now another middleman in the chain who also sought to profit from his labour:

"The system here is like this. I get a wage of 2,000 cruzeiros (per month) from Seu R.M. who rents this Seringal Alagoas to me, but I also get a commission on the merchandise. ...Its like this...If Seu R.M. buys an article for 5 cruzeiros, he also wants to make 5 cruzeiros profit. So that already means 10 cruzeiros. He also adds on 25% for transport from town (to the barracão), then another 15% into the 'centro'. here the merchandise comes into my hands. So I put on my commission of 10% when I sell to the seringueiro. I need a profit as well, I am responsible for the seringal. Seu R.M. stays in town, only taking money out of the bank so that he can send goods here to the seringal." (1)

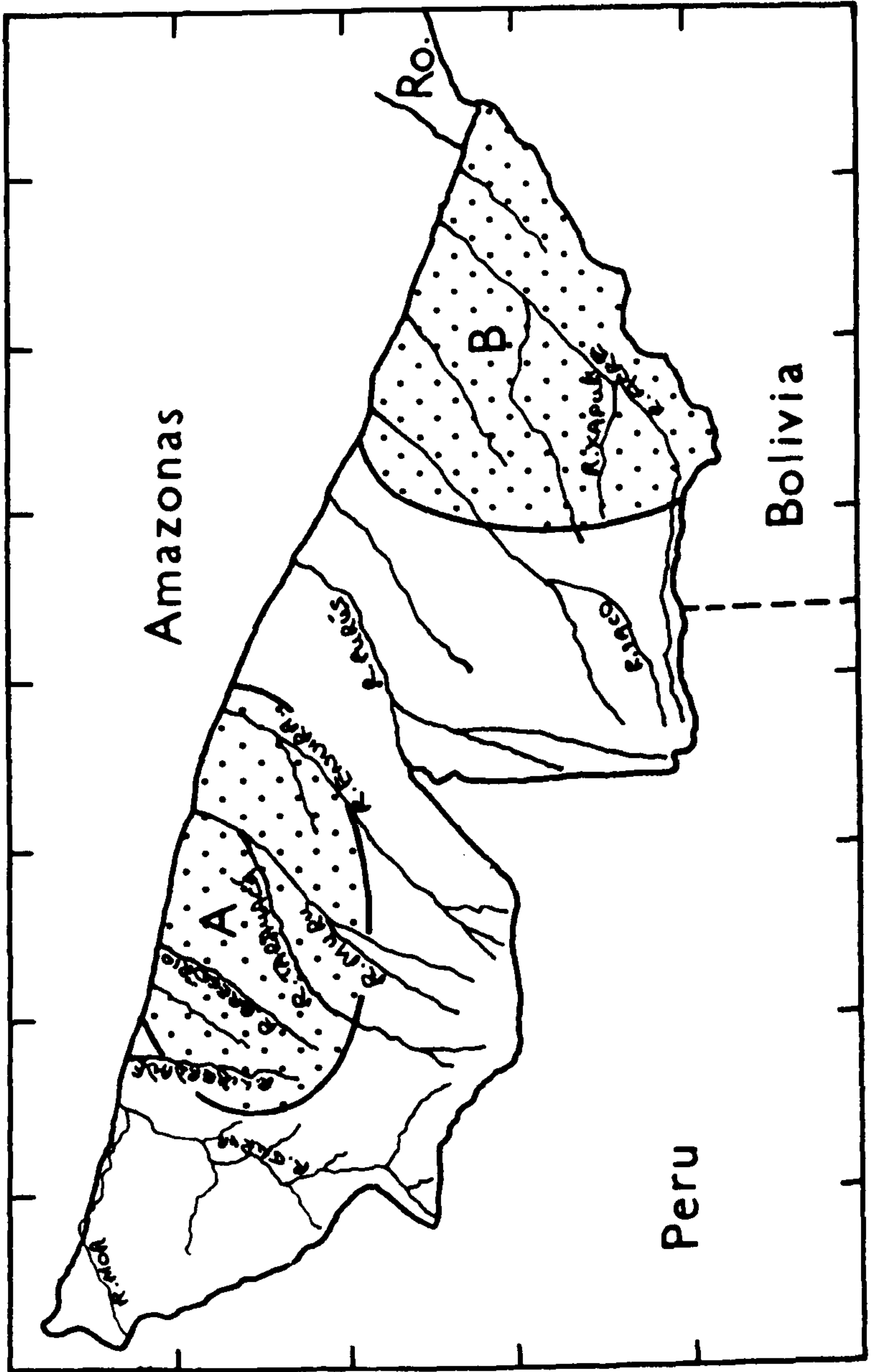
The system of rent was also imposed on the seringueiros as a means of continuing his subjugation/exploitation. By paying rent, the seringueiro was effectively acknowledging the seringalista's title to the seringal and denying his own right of posse/usocapião.

According to the following informant, an ex-book-keeper on the same seringal as the previous interviewee, this practice began in the late 1940's and became dominant in Tarauacá and Feijó during the

1. Quoted in Aquino:1982:94/5.

MAP 8

Principal area of :
 A Seringeiros Autonomos
 B Seringeiros who rent



1950's and 1960's as the seringalistas got further into debt:

"I was a book-keeper on Seringal Alagoas...It was very large then, divided into three separate areas each with a manager in charge...The seat (where the seringalista formerly lived) had 100 colocacões, there was another area more up river with 120 colocacões, and another further up river with 150. The manager of each did what the seringalista did...left merchandise in the 'centro' by mule train and brought back rubber which he took to the patrão at the end of the year. The seringalista then began to charge rent for the colocação...it was 70 kilos of rubber (per annum) for two estradas...afterwards, when the law of the union arrived, it changed to 10%...whoever produced 100 kilos, paid 10 to the patrão."(1)

He then goes on to distinguish between the situation of those who lived on the 'beira' (those areas near a river bank or town) and those who lived in the 'centro' (the heart of the seringal):

"The beira belongs to the occupier, to the seringueiro autonomo...he doesn't pay anything...Only 5 years ago (1978), the seringueiro had to negotiate directly with the patrão, he couldn't sell pelias of rubber on the outside...Now, since the union arrived here, the seringueiro has more freedom...if he was still in debt to the patrão, he paid off that debt and the rest of the rubber was his...He could sell to the marreteiro or bring it here into Tarauaca...but, in the centro, the patrão is still boss...but he can't keep a check on everything, you know...if someone produced 500 kilos (in a year) for the patrão and 100 or 200 to sell outside, the patrão would never know." (1)

For those seringueiros living in the centro and obliged to pay rent, the amount charged varied considerably even though the Estatuto da Terra sets it as a maximum of 10% of the product. In the centro, where it is impossible to obtain legal assistance and there is always the threat of eviction, it is the seringalista who sets the

1. Field interview, ex-book-keeper, Seringal Alagoas, Tarauacá.

percentage. Following interviews with a number of seringueiros of the interior of Tarauacá and Feijó, it became apparent that the seringalista charged as high a rent as the seringueiro could manage. This is not to say that all seringalistas of these two municipalities ignored the provisions of the Estatuto da Terra, for some did charge the 10% rent, rather the charging of higher rents predominated, particularly on the upper rivers. The situation is summed up in the following interview with the President of the Rural Worker's Union in Tarauacá:

"The other really serious problem here that causes a great deal of difficulty is the problem of rent...The Estatuto sets it at 10%...and some of them pay only 10%...but the majority say that it is the owner who gives the orders on his property and he says that he isn't the Estatuto da Terra, says that he isn't the Union and those that want to tap rubber and only pay 10% can go and tap on the property of the Union...Some of them charge a rent of 70%, 80% or 60% ...the amount of rent depends only on how much they think that they can charge this unfortunate seringueiro...This unfortunate is in need, he has to tap that group of trails to feed his children...and so he has to pay a monstrous rent ...and at the end of the year, there is not enough rubber to pay off his account. Many of them produce only 300 kilos and pay 100 in rent, others produce 200 kilos and pay 100 to the patrão." (1)

The previous sections have shown that, between 1950 and 1970, Acre's social and economic structure underwent a dramatic transformation. Firstly, the economic base and, therefore, the power base, of the seringalista class was seriously eroded and even disappeared in a large proportion of the state, although somewhat strengthened in other areas with the imposition of rents. Secondly, a new class of

1. Field interview, STR President of Tarauacá.

of independent producers was created, the barranqueiros and the seringueiros autônomos, whose right to the land on which they lived and worked was recognised in law, but not translated into documented title deeds. The imposition of rents in other areas signified that these seringueiros did not have a right to a land title. Thus, when the 'Paulistas' arrived in the Purús micro-region in the early 1970's, i.e., that area of the state where the highway first penetrated, they found the seringalista in control of neither land, nor labour, and the resident population, the seringueiro autônomos and barranqueiros, maintaining only a tenuous hold on their land. The following section will discuss the role of the Acrean state government in the consolidation of the process under discussion.

2.2. The Dantas Administration, 1970 - 1974.

The crisis of the seringal enterprise in Acre with the concomitant differentiation of the seringueiro population in the three distinct geographical locations (the seringueiro autônomo/barranqueiro in the valleys of the Rivers Purús, Acre, Xapuri and Iaco; the barranqueiro/seringueiro renters in the valleys of the Rivers tarauacá, Muru and Envira; and the continuation of the traditional system on the Rivers Juruá, Moa and the upper reaches of the other rivers) was decisive in delimiting the trajectory of the struggle for land in these areas following the invitation that was extended by Governor Wanderley Dantas in 1970 to 'Produce in Acre, Invest in Acre, Export via the Pacific'.

The acceptance of this invitation, firstly, by individual ranchers and, later, by large companies, began a chain of events that culminated in the expulsion of many seringueiros from their colocações, manifest in a considerable rural-urban exodus, particularly to Rio Branco. As the Deputy Leader of PMDB-Acre, Deputado Manoel Pacífico, comments:

"...following the collapse of the rubber economy came the introduction of ranching on Acrean land...this attraction of the large companies, of investors from the South, from the Centre-West, came especially during the governorship of Wanderlei Dantas and it transformed our land into a land of great social conflict. The seringueiro was expelled from the colocação of which he had been posseiro, but where at least he had his few animals, his subsistence plot...and the cities of Acre went through this phase of population expansion without anyone, the government included, foreseeing that this expelled labour force would not be absorbed. It was also the time of extreme violence, once the owners brought in their own gunmen...this was accompanied by the burning of houses and all forms of corruption of judges and policemen...and the politicians gave cover to this activity which would have been worse had the Church and the Rural Worker's Union not come to the defence of these classes... fighting the injustices that were being committed...each time in a more violent form." (1)

According to the national daily, 'O Estado do São Paulo',:

"The land rush really began in October of last year (1971), precipitated by Governor Wanderlei Dantas who, in São Paulo, appealed to southern entrepreneurs to invest in Acre. The advantages? Money that the state doesn't have, a budget of only 102 million cruzeiros, but the highways were coming, the land available and the government offering support in research and documentation to those groups deciding to invest. The investors responded, the adventurers as well." (2)

1. Field interview, Rio Branco.

2. O Estado de São Paulo, 27/8/1972 quoted in CEDEPLAR:1979:228.

The invitation was based on the premise that Acre needed to diversify its economic base and develop capitalistic activities such as ranching which were assumed capable of generating self-sustained growth (pace federal statements of the period noted in the introductions). It will be shown that these expectations were not realized because, in large areas of the state, land that had previously been the object of the seringueiro's labour was transformed into the object of speculation and the displaced rural population could not be absorbed into the urban labour-force.

From the early 1970's, Acre became the scene of violent confrontations between the seringueiro population and those who claimed title to their land. Many seringalistas who had disactivated their seringais in the 1950's and 1960's came back in the early 70's to regain control over them, once the price of land had begun to rise rapidly. Between 1972 and 1976, land prices in Acre rose by a minimum of 1,000% and reached 2,000% in those areas close to the arterial highways (1), precisely those areas in which the majority of seringueiros autônomos were to be found - the municipalities of Rio Branco, Xapuri and Brasiléia. According to the then Coordinator of INCRA in Acre, Dr. Assis Canuto:

"After reviewing their position, many seringalistas changed their minds and returned to sell their seringais. This resulted in the worst conflicts here in Acre between entrepreneurs and seringueiros or posseiros. The man who had remained on his colocação, who continued to tap rubber, carrying on subsistence activities and who, in certain cases, had even managed to for a small herd of cows...this man,

1. Mesquita:1977a:4.

his presence, was ignored in the transactions over land-holdings in Acre, in the act of selling the seringais that became the object of speculation. The businessman from the South, often ill-advised and unprepared and very often ill-intentioned, attempted to expel this man from the land, without recognising his rights, his traditions in the area, and offered ridiculously low compensation and sometimes none at all." (1)

The state government under Dantas began a campaign in the interior, particularly in the valleys of the Acre-Purús, in an attempt to allay the fears of the resident seringueiro population. In the words of one seringueiro autônomo in the interior of Xapuri:

"We are now in '84 right? They came in '72 and '73, somewhere around that time. But before these people arrived...at this time the state governor was Wanderlei Dantas and he put out a lot of propaganda on the radio...he even organised it that some seringueiros without radios were given them...so that they all could hear the propaganda talking about the New Acre...that many people were coming from the outside to develop Acre...all that stuff...Well, we didn't know who or what they were, but soon the fruit of this began to appear...it was the expulsion of the seringueiro from his colocação, from where he had been born and reared...perhaps with 30 or 40 years on that land...He was forced off and often he could not take anything with him...He arrived in the city without a home, without anything...He had to live in the house of someone else...some went to Bolivia as well...So this was the false fruit of the New Acre that had been propagated on the radio...At this time, the worker, the seringueiro...you know, he didn't understand his rights at all...to stay on the colocação...When we heard that such and such a patrão...because at this time there was a patrão who said that he was the owner...well, when this patrão said that he had sold the seringal to someone from São Paulo who wanted to build a ranch, the seringueiro really thought that he was the new owner, when in fact he wasn't...Nowadays, we realize this...The way I see it, the seringalista never was the real owner of the land, he was always the one who used the seringueiro's lack of knowledge and innocence...It was the same with the authorities, they are all the same...as we say, they are all cats in the same sack...So it was easy for them to legalise things for the new 'owners'...they gave all the rights to them and none to the seringueiro." (2)

1. Press report quoted in CEDEPLAR:1979:229.

2. Field interview, seringueiro autônomo of Xapuri.

The Dantas administration promoted the sale and occupation of Acre's seringais in the full knowledge that there were thousands of seringueiros with rights of posse to their land and without any attempt to regularise such claims prior to the arrival of the southerners. Dom Moacyr Grecchi, the Bishop of Acre-Purús, comments:

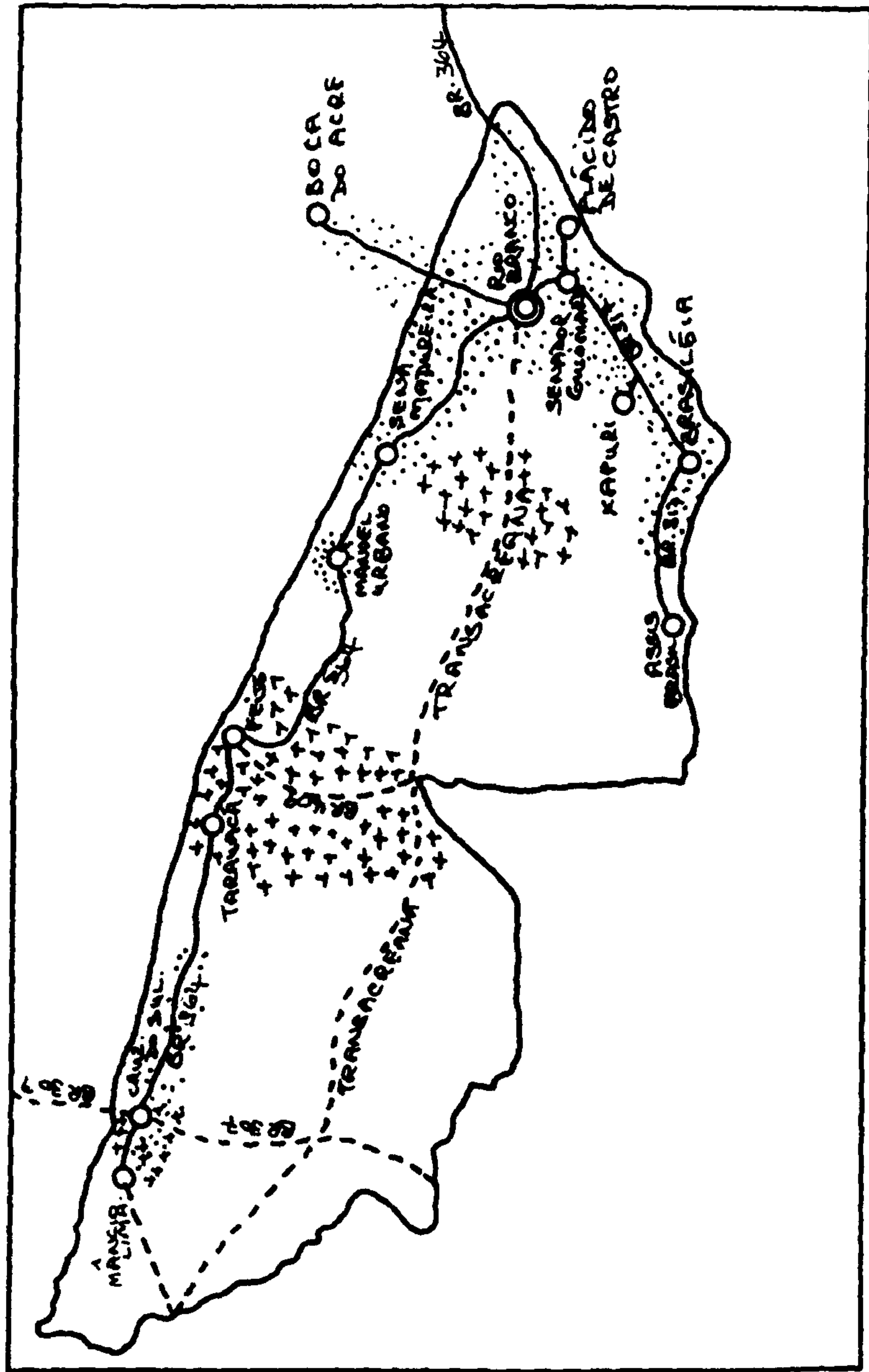
"The publicity campaign which offered advantages to the entrepreneurs from the state government was practically an invitation to occupy Acrean lands, presented as a paradise to investors, a New Canaan, having neither the droughts of the North-east, nor the frosts of Parana - 'Invest in Acre, a sound proposition'. What is more, this was done before proceedings to regularise land titles, a necessity for the avoidance of the rural chaos and social insecurity that one now sees in Acre." (1)

According to Geraldo Mesquita, who succeeded to the governorship of Acre in 1974, more than 5 million hectares changed hands in the state between 1971 and 1975. This is equivalent to over one third of the state productively used surface area. In the majority of cases, the change over was from a seringalista to an investor from the South. Governor Mesquita also notes that, of the 15,192,000 hectares of which the State of Acre consists, between 1970 and 1974, some 4,280,000 hectares were sold to only 284 proprietors all of whom were resident outside of the state. This gives an average size of 151 square kilometres per property (2).

The occupation of the state was not an homogeneous process. Again Acre can be roughly divided into three space/time zones in which the occupation took a different form (see Map 9). These zones, not incidentally, correspond directly with the three areas noted in the previous section, the home of the seringueiro autônomo, the seringueiro renter, and the seringueiro cativo.

1. Grecchi:1979:309.

2. Mesquita:1977b.



MAP 9

Principal areas of:

- SMALL RANCHES
- +++++ LARGE RANCHES

Highways:

- CONSTRUCTED
- PROJECTED

The first area to be occupied was the southern section of the state in the early 70's, the municipalities of Rio Branco, Xapuri and Brasiléia. These three have since been subdivided into six with three new municipalities being created: Assis Brasil, Plácido de Castro and Seador Guiomard (Quinari on older maps). This was the principal zone of disactivated seringais and thus of seringueiros autônomos.

For the most part, the new arrivals were small and medium size, individual ranchers who bought areas of up to 1,000 hectares and utilized their own capital. They were attracted by the 'availability' of land, its low price relative to the area from which they originated, and the existence of a functioning road network (the BR-364 Rio Branco- Brasília highway, which reached this part of Acre in 1969, and the BR-317 Rio Branco-Xapuri-Brasiléia highway) which guaranteed access to the capital and facilitated the commercialisation of their future production. This area came to be almost totally 'owned' by these proprietors from the South, but, as will be demonstrated later, this ownership did not necessarily signify effective control.

The second area to be occupied, in the mid-1970's, consisted of the valleys of the Rivers Iaco, Envira and Tarauacá. It was here that the large groups from the South bought up extensive areas of up to 1,000,000 hectares (10,000 square kilometres). The aim of these groups seems to have been speculation, rather than the

immediate productive use of the land and they were recipients of the fiscal and financial incentives offered by SUDAM for the 'development' of the region. While no accurate figures are available, few cattle were moved onto these estates. The following is a list of the principal groups that were attracted to Acre with the approximate size of their landholdings:

1. Atalla Coperçucar	-	600,000 ha.
2. Paranacre	-	450,000 ha.
3. Atlanta Boa Vista	-	510,000 ha.
4. Viação Garcia	-	600,000 ha.
5. Agipito Lemos	-	520,000 ha.
6. Coloama	-	1,000,000 ha.
7. Bradesco	-	500,000 ha. (1)

All of these companies form part of the empire of large groups with their headquarters in the South. Viação Garcia, for example, is part of the group that owns one of Brazil's largest airlines, Cruzeiro; while Bradesco is a large national savings and investment banking group.

It is interesting to note the role of the seringalistas of this area in its subsequent occupation. Large sections of the municipality of Tarauacá came under the control of just two seringalistas during the 1960's when BASA began to call in its debts. These two in their turn called in the debts of some of the smaller seringalistas to pay off their own debt to BASA and became the owners of whole

1. 'O Varadouro' No.19., May 1980, Rio Branco.

river valleys. One of the two, then an elected senator for the ARENA party and now a presidentially appointed senator for the PDS, Senator Altiver Leal, became the patrão of the Rivers Gregório, Acurauá, and the Riozinho da Liberdade, and also controlled half of the Rivers Tarauacá and Muru. Senator Leal himself fell victim to BASA in 1972 and opted to sell large sections of his property to those companies from the South, rather than allow BASA take over his seringais in payment for his debts. The following interview with Senator Leal is quoted with the permission of the interviewer, Terri Vale de Aquino:

"The thought of transforming this region of Tarauaca into ranching or the possibility of agriculture did not cross our minds. We wanted only to continue producing rubber. But, as it turned out, from 1964 onwards, the Banco da Amazonia (BASA) brought out a new system of restricting credit and turned the honest seringalista into a discredited man. It also brought about the downfall of rubber production. Well, the bank was restricting credit, so I began to call in the money that was owed to me by the (smaller) seringalistas... These seringalistas in their turn, not having capital to work with, clearly did not have the margins necessary to continue in production. When all of this came about, we began the transformation of Acre... I am speaking from experience, because I was the largest producer of rubber in Brazil. I was the seringalista with the most credit in the Banco da Amazonia. Credit fell by the hour; production fell by the hour; and I fell from being the largest producer in Brazil hour by hour. I owned one hundred seringais. I had a trunk that held kilos of titles. I bought the land that C. had, that A.F. had. I bought because no-one had credit. Someone would come up to me and say: "Seu A.L., I want to sell my seringal.", and I would say: "O.K. I'll give you 5 contos now and the rest over 5 years." Well, I thought that in five years the debt would not be worth anything. I was going to pay it off like I would by a bottle of Cachaca (cheap cane spirit). I bought many seringais like this. The owner just wanted to be free of his debt with the bank. But then came my turn, the bank intervened in my debts. Well, here I thought: "I will sell my seringais to the Paulistas and start ranching myself as well. But I won't sell to those adventurers who only want to speculate in land. I will sell right away to the big companies." (1)

Seanator Leal, then, was personally responsible for the implantation of large 'ranches' over a vast area. Most of the groups were in receipt of, or expected to receive, support from SUDAM. However, once the conflict that was engendered by the actions of the seringalistas and ranchers achieved national press coverage, largely through CONTAG (1) and Church publicity, the federal authorities cut off federal resources to these groups until the conflict was resolved. As will be shown, some of these companies reverted to rubber production on the basis of renting estradas to local seringueiros, others deforested large areas and awaited the arrival of the promised new federal highways.

The third zone, that of the Rivers Juruá, Moa and parts of the Liberdade and Gregório, was virtually untouched by the ranching 'front'. This was the last area to be reached by the Brasília-Acre highway, a large stretch of which, in between Cruzeiro do Sul and Sena Madureira (see map 9), is still only trafficable in the months of July and August. Communications with the rest of Acre is achieved by air. The river networks link Cruzeiro do Sul with Manaus, not Rio Branco. The relative isolation of this area and the continued predominance of small seringais assured the continuation of an economy devoted to the extraction of rubber based on the traditional seringalista-seringueiro cativo complex.

It is interesting to note that this is also the only area in Acre in which neither the ranchers, nor the marreteiros, have penetrated in any numbers. It is also the area in which the Rural Worker's Union

1. Agricultural Worker's Confederation.

has had the least impact. Of crucial importance to the understanding of this is the role of the Church. While this will be discussed in detail in the next Chapter, it can be noted here that the Church in Acre is divided into two dioceses. That of the Acre-Purús is the base of the 'Servos de Maria', an Italian order which has actively involved itself in the organisation of seringueiros into self-help groups and has organised similar 'grass roots' groups in the urban shanty towns. The Bishop, Dom Moacyr Grecchi, is the present president of the Church's Land Commission which has played a leading part in the fight to secure the rights of posseiros. The diocese of the Juruá is the base of the order of 'Espírito Santo', a German order, which takes a more traditional pre-Vatican 2 assistentialist role and which refuses to engage in disputes over land.

The remaining section of this chapter will discuss the situation of the indigenous population of Acre during this post-war period.

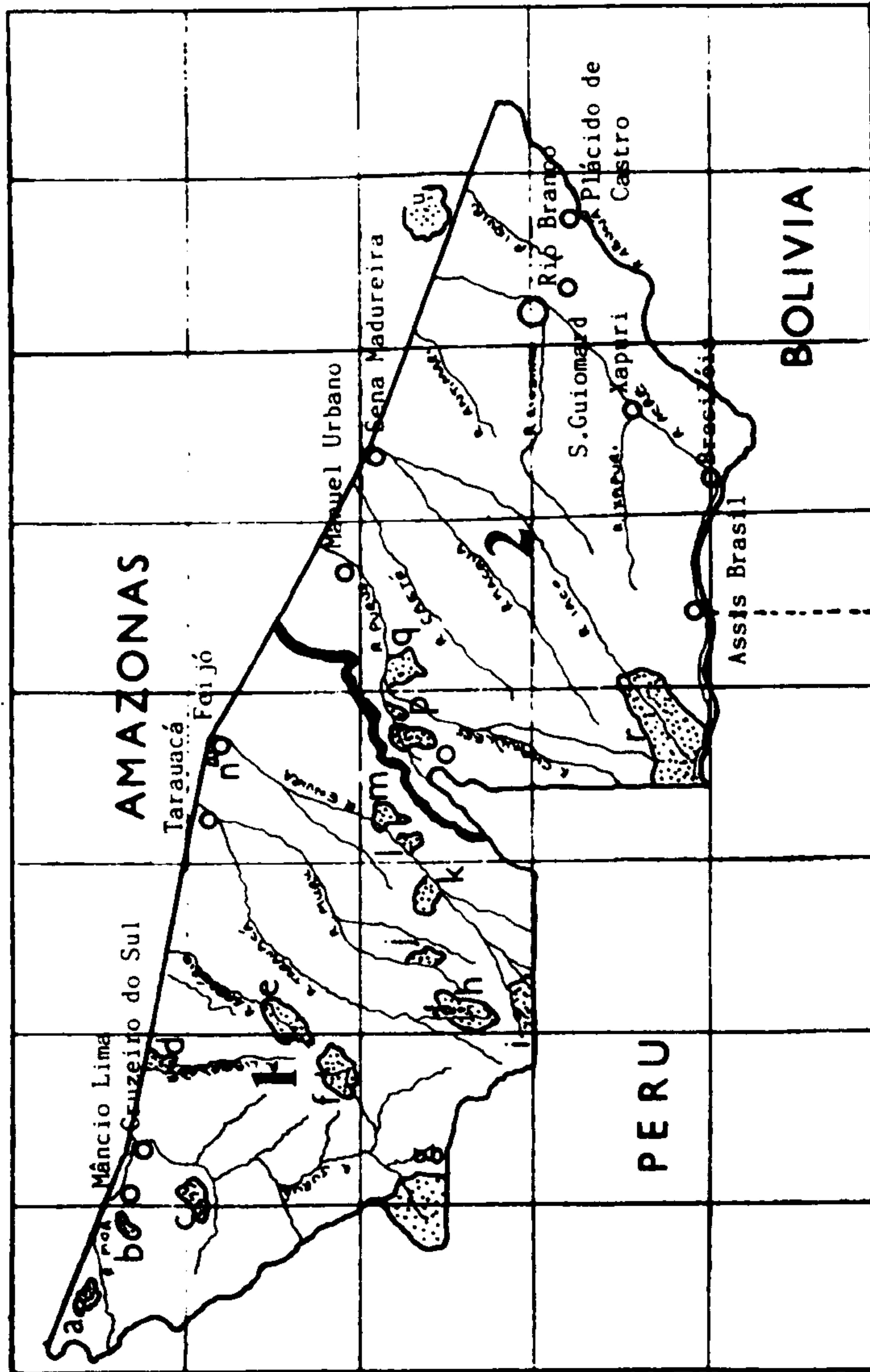
2.3. The Indigenous Population.

It is estimated that there were over 3 million Indians living in Brazil when it was 'discovered' in the 16th century. By 1980, there were an estimated 220,000 remaining (1) of which approximately 9,000 live in Acre (2). These latter are divided into 11 discrete tribal groups each with their own language and what remains of their customs after their enslavement on Acre's seringais. The spatial distribution of Acre's indigenous population is shown on Map 10 overleaf. It will be noted that the Purús micro-region is almost totally devoid of tribal groups. The Xapuri, the Catiana and the Canamari tribes that were known to have resided in this part of the state when Manoel Urbano's expedition arrived in 1861 have all disappeared, sharing the fate of the estimated 87 tribes that have vanished in Brazil since the turn of the century (3). Only the Manitenéri and the Iaminauá and two small groups of Kaxinauá and Katuquina remain in this micro-region and these are restricted to the upper reaches of the Purús, Iaco and Acre rivers which are only accessible in the flood months of December and January.

As was shown in Part 1, the tribes of Acre were caught in a pincer movement consisting of Peruvian cauchoeiros moving eastwards and Brazilian seringueiros moving west. These two fronts reached the Purús and its tributaries, the Acre and the Iaco, in the late

1. Souza Nasser:1982:52. 2. Comissão Pro-Índio-Acre.
 3. Ribeiro:1977:239. See also the works of Chandless which give details of the tribal groups that he encountered on his various expeditions.

MAP 10



- a. Nukuini - 23,000 ha.
- b. Poianauá - 15,200 ha.
- c. Iaminauá - 23,700 ha.
- d. Katuquina - 11,300 ha.
- e. Katuquina/Iauanauá - 50,000 ha.
- f. Kampa - 60,000 ha.
- g. Kaxinauá - 81,750 ha.
- h. Papavô - 40,400 ha.
- i. Kaxinauá - 52,950 ha.
- j. Kaxinauá - 20,400 ha.
- k. Kulina - 43,750 ha.
- l. Kulina - 10,270 ha.
- m. Kaxinauá - 37,150 ha.
- n. Katuquina - 3,840 ha.
- o. Kulina - 39,200 ha.
- p. Kaxinauá - 12,500 ha.
- q. Kulina - 53,800 ha.
- r. Manitenéri/Iaminauá - 36,800 ha.
- u. Apurinã.

1 MICRO-REGION OF THE JURUA.

2 MICRO-REGION OF THE PURUS.

DISTRIBUTION OF INDIAN LANDS

DELIMITED BY FUNAI.



1870's and a massacre of the indigenous population resulted. The area to the west of the Purús, the micro-region of the Juruá where most of Acre's tribal population is found, was not penetrated until after 1890 when the policy toward the Indian population had changed from annihilation to enslavement.

The tribal groups that survived remained isolated on the seringais on which they were forced to work until the inter-war years when some, e.g., certain sections of the Kaxinauá, were 'emancipated' following the collapse of the rubber economy. Others remained captive on the seringais. It was through the use of forced Indian labour that some seringalistas were able to keep their seringais intact notwithstanding the low price of rubber in the market. On the one hand, the Indian grew subsistence crops with which the seringalista maintained his own family and sold at a profit to his non-indigenous seringueiros. In addition, the Indian was also forced to produce rubber for little if any payment. Access to women and children only being allowed when the tapping season finished (1).

After the post-1950 crisis of the Acrean rubber economy, many of the tribes, particularly those on the isolated upper rivers, reverted to traditional activities. This was the case with the Manitenéri and Iamainauá of Seringal Petrópolis on the upper Iaco and also for some groups of Kaxinauá and Katuquina in the remote areas of the state near to the Peruvian border. Here, access by boat is only possible at the height of the rainy season and the nearest towns are between one and two months journey on foot (2).

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1. Such was the case with the Poianauá noted on pp.82ff.
 2. Data here and in subsequent pages taken from field interviews with FUNAI, Comissão Pro-Índio & CIMI and tribal members.

Two other groups, one of 250 Kaxinauá and the other of 120 Katuquina, migrated from the seringais on which they had been subjugated to new areas close to the towns of Tarauacá and Feijó where they engage in subsistence agriculture. These groups are economically indistinguishable from their white barranqueiro counterparts who view rubber tapping as a continuation of their subjugation. As one Kaxinauá states:

"It is better to live in the service of agriculture, doing one thing one day and something else the next, than work tapping rubber...Working with rubber means working for the patrão. In agriculture, no...he lives freely...with rubber, no...he is a slave...he lives with the halter of the patrão around his neck. I live well here on this river bank...I mean, I don't own anything, but I don't owe anything either. I am free. Everything that we plant here is for our own family." (1)

It must be noted, however, that some of the Katuquina, who live on the opposite bank of the river to the town of Feijó, work as day labourers transporting rubber from the boats on the river bank to the warehouses in town. Females from the village work as domestic servants. On average, the Indian day labourer receives one fifth of the salary received by the non-Indian equivalent. The Katuquina girls rarely receive wages for their domestic work, they are paid in food and cast-off clothing.

Other indigenous groups remained on the seringais, but, unlike their white seringueiro counterparts, rubber tapping is a

1. Quoted in Aquino:1982:89.

secondary activity to be engaged in only when essential commodities need to be purchased from the barracão or from town. Persistent contact with the white population has created a demand for goods produced by 'civilized' society. When the French priest, Constant Tastevin, visited the Juruá in the 1920's he noted the 'primitive' life-style of the indigenous population. In particular, he commented on the use of bows and arrows for hunting and earthenware for cooking, as well as the use of forest products, e.g., gourds, as utensils. (1)

Acre's tribal groups are now totally reliant on rifles and ammunition for hunting, industrially produced kitchen utensils, kerosene for lamps, batteries for radios, and commercially produced sugar and salt. They depend on trade for these items and, thus, must continue to produce cash crops. For the Indians of the interior this cash crop has to be rubber. This is the case for one of the Kaxinauá groups on the Jordão who tap rubber for exchange at a number of barracões in the area and who also trade with local marreteiros:

"Here on this seringal we tap rubber, but we plant a garden as well. We can't buy everything from the patrões. The garden...its vegetables are for us to eat with our families...the rubber is for when we need to buy ammunition, salt, sugar, a change of clothing...If we only tapped rubber, we would be in debt to the patrão...with the garden, no...the vegetables are all ours. If we didn't plant the garden, how could we feed our families? Here on the upper rivers of the frontier (with Peru), you can't sell crops, because even the patrões have gardens now. We who live here work one day for one patrão and for a different patrão on another day...We also have some pigs and chickens that we sell to the marreteiro for things of value...You can't live just tapping rubber on these upper rivers." (2)

1. Tastevin:

2. Quoted in Aquino:1982:96.

For this group of Indians , then, rubber production is seen as a means of supplementing subsistence production, for the purchase of items not producible on the seringal. This differs from the position of the seringueiro autônomo. For the latter, subsistence production is seen as a means of supplementing rubber production, as a means of lessening his dependence on the marreteiro. This is an obvious simplification of a complex issue, the way in which the two view themselves. However, the two orientations manifest themselves in the respective production figures of the two groups.

As has been noted previously, the seringueiro autônomo of the Purús can expect to produce between 700 and 1,000 kilos of rubber per seven month tapping season depending on : the number of trails on his colocação; the number of seringueiras per trail; the number of trails he taps in a given season (usually either 2 or 3); the seringueiro's state of health etc. By comparison, the Indian tapper, although using the same methods, will produce far less. For example, the Katuquina of the River Gregório, who control the Seringal Sete Estrelas of 20 colocações (with a total of 76 trails) each with one family working it, produce approximately 2,000 kilos of rubber per annum. That is, an average of 100 kilos is produced per colocação compared to the 700 to 1,000 kilos of the seringueiro autônomo. Similarly, the Kaxinauá of the River Jordão produce an average of 300 kilos per colocação per annum (1).

In the following field interview, the leader of a group of 390 Kaxinauá on the River Jordão describes how they came to control

1. Field interviews on the Gregório and in Feijó.

the seringais on which they now live. Of particular interest, here, is the higher rent that was charged by the former seringalista (70 kilos per estrada for Indians while the norm for non-Indian seringueiros was 70 - 100 kilos for a colocação of 2 to 3 estradas) and the fall in production from 600/700 kilos per colocação to 300 kilos once the group broke away from the seringalistas control:

"We have six seringais here...Bonfim, Jardim, Fortaleza, Soroacaba, Transval and revisão...I have been a seringueiro for a long time...I began to tap rubber when I was 9 years old. The white man who said that he was the owner of our land was Raimundo Ramo...When I was young, we used to pay a rent for our estradas, 70 kilos for each trail. I always worked 3 estradas, so at the end of the year, I paid 210 kilos of rubber. I always took it to Faria, I always worked for him. Faria was Raimundo Ramo's manager...At that time, the Old One (my father) had 12 trails on Seringal Fortaleza...this land was ours. Seringais Fortaleza and Soroacaba had already been abandoned by the whites (in the 1940's)... Well, raimundo ramo decided that some of this land of ours belonged to him and so he cut a trail right through the middle of it and said that the land on this side of the trail was his and that our's was on the other side. So we went to town, Feijo, a month's journey on foot, to see what could be done. Raimundo Ramo said that he would kill us, that the seringal was his, that we had never worked on it...that we never did any work, that we only wanted to steal what belonged to others...So we went down river to see what rights we had...We sold all the rubber we had and bought three air tickets (from Feijo) to Rio Branco, but FUNAI (1) did nothing...Then we bought air tickets to Brasilia without telling anyone, but they found out and arrested us...the Federal Police...The held me and Agostinho, but the Old One had an identity card and so he was allowed to travel...We had spent all our money on the tickets and so the two of us spent two days without food until the chief of FUNAI (in Brasilia) sent a telegram to say that we could travel. When we got there, they sorted out our problem...but Raimundo Ramo carried on threatening us even though he had lost... eventually he gave in and the other whites on the seringal began to leave because they saw that he had lost. They abandoned Jardim, Transval, Revisão, and Bonfim and, so, with the other two, Fortaleza and Soroacaba, we were left with

1. FUNAI - The Federal Indian Agency.

six seringais with just over 300 estradas. There are 120 of our families on these now, each one with 2 or 3 estradas ...each family produces around 300 kilos a year. We tap for only two or three days a week. The rest of the time we go visiting, fishing, planting our crops...we go hunting... The white seringueiro has to live by buying rice and manioc, but we plant corn, bananas, manioc and mundubim...the whites have beans, the mundubim is iur type of bean...we plant it on the beaches in May and June...It is December now, the time of our Mariri festival, the festival of green corn." (1)

The arrival of the ranching enterprises in the Juruá micro-region in the mid-70's marked a new phase in the oppression of some of Acre's indigenous population. On the one hand, their land was directly expropriated by these enterprises. On the other, their land was also invaded by white seringueiros displaced by the same process. FUNAI, the agency responsible for Indian affairs, only began to operate in the state in 1972. It began to delimit tribal areas in 1977, that is, map out their provisional dimensions, but, by 1984, not a single tribal area had been officially demarcated according to Article 198 of the Constitution which guarantees the right of self-determination to Brazil's Indian tribes on their own tribal areas. The article also prohibits access to the latter by the non-indigenous population. The following examples show that this article is being systematically violated.

In 1973, the 60 remaining members of the Kampa tribe who lived on the River Envira had their land incorporated into the 600,000 hectares bought by the Atalla Coperçucar combine in the municipality

1. Field interview, Kaxinauá leader, Feijó.

of Feijó. This community had abandoned rubber production with the collapse of the seringal on which they lived in the early 60's. The arrival of the ranching company marked their transformation into forced unpaid labourers clearing the forest to make way for pasture on the new ranch, Fazenda California. In 1977, the entire Kampa group left the area and walked to their present home on the upper reaches of the Envira. They return downstream to Feijó only twice a year to sell their produce of beans and dried fish and to purchase essential commodities not available to them up river.

Paranacre, another ranching company, which bought 450,000 hectares in the municipality of Tarauacá including 50,000 on the River Gregório occupied by 170 Iauanauá and 118 Katuquina (Noke Koembu branch). Although this 'reserve' was delimited by FUNAI in 1977, Paranacre refuses to recognise the rights of the Indian occupants until FUNAI actually officially demarcates their tribal area. Paranacre was one of the enterprises that came to Acre with the promise of SUDAM assistance. When these incentives were cut off following the escalation of violence in the state, it re-introduced rubber production on the basis of renting rubber trails to the seringueiro population that still remained. As has been noted, this allowed firms such as Paranacre to engage in production without losing control of the land. Between 1974 and 1982, Paranacre forced two groups of Indians to produce rubber for 'sale' at the barracão that was constructed in the middle of the Iauanauá village in which a manager was installed. The chief of the Iauanauá describes their situation:

"There are 170 of us Iauanaua. No-one knows how long we have lived on this Seringal Kaxinaua on the River Gregorio. For as long as anyone can remember we have lived here. Until last year (1982), we worked for the Paranacre Company. It was real slavery. We couldn't tap rubber without the permission of the manager. Even if we opened up a new estrada on our own land and with our own labour, we still had to pay them rent...They never told us that we had any rights to this land, or even to the houses that we lived in. So we obeyed them, we didn't know that anything else existed. ...We lived here, thinking that Paranacre was greater than everything else and that we had to obey its laws. We were slaves just like during the time of the seringalistas. We only began to understand our situation when I went to Rio Branco and I heard people talking about our land and that we shouldn't be the slaves of Paranacre." (1)

An elder of the Noke Koembu corroborates this:

"We here are the Katuquina, but we are also called Indian and Noke Koembu. My name in the language of the Noke Koembu is Paua and the name of our chief Antonio Barbosa is Mokan. I am Antonio's uncle. We have lived here for a long time, many of us were born here and many of us have died here on this river. Before now, we didn't know that FUNAI existed, nor anything else. When Sales (the Iauanaua chief) went to Rio Branco and began talking about our situation here, what Paranacre did to us, well, then we knew that FUNAI existed. Before we knew this, we were tied to Paranacre. We couldn't give orders, not even in our own houses, because they gave all the orders...They said that Paranacre was the owner of everything around here because they had bought it...and this thing about the work, they treated us as if we were employees of the seringal. The gardens that we tended, all the produce went to Paranacre. We cleared rubber trails for them. They said that we would earn some money...but they told us one price and, when we finished, we were given another. In the end, we had nothing." (2)

In 1982, with the aid of CIMI-ACRE (3) and CPI-ACRE (4), the Iauanauá and Katuquina refused to work for Paranacre and began to

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1. & 2. Field interviews taken during 'Indian Week' in Rio Branco, April '83.
 3. Conselho Indigenista Missionário, Council of Missionaries to Indians.
 4. Comissão Pro-Índio, Pro-Indian Commission.

produce rubber independently which they transport by river to Eirunepé in the neighbouring state of Amazonas.

The Kulina of Seringal Fronteira on the Rivers Purús and Maronaua also suffered invasion of their land, both by displaced seringueiros and marreteiros. The former began to tap rubber trails that had been abandoned when the seringal collapsed. The latter began to cut down hardwoods on the reserve. According to one of the Kulina leaders:

"The marreteiros said that they had rights to this land because they are white. They cut down our trees, fish in our lakes, hunt our animals, invade the land of the Indian which is our land and which FUNAI promised to demarcate. Last winter (when the rains permit river transport), like the winter before, two marreteiros, Waldemar Moura and Jorge Clementino, tried to collect timber on our land... We watched them and asked them for payment. We got nothing, just a little salt and some printed cotton to make clothes."(1)

The tribal area of the Apurinã, in the border region of the states Acre, Rondônia and Amazonas, is also threatened. The present crisis began in the early 1970's when a local fazendeiro (2) sold part of the tribal land to 15 families of colonists from Paraná. This operation is known as 'grilagem' (landgrabbing) or more precisely 'esticamento' (stretching) and involves the initial purchase of a piece of land and the subsequent illegal annexation of adjacent areas. It was only when the colonists arrived that they realized that they had 'bought' part of the tribal area.

1. Quoted in CIMI:1983.

2. Landowner or rancher.

The Apurinã requested a demarcation of their land by FUNAI in Rio Branco so as to settle the increasing violence that characterised the dispute (the use of armed gunmen by the fazendeiro and retaliation by the Apurinã). In 1976, FUNAI delimited the tribal area, but excluded from it the land occupied by the colonists without demanding compensation for the Apurinã. The latter continued the struggle and, with the aid of CIMI-ACRE and CPI-ACRE, reached an agreement in 1983, some 7 years later, that involved the transfer of the colonists to an INCRA Project in the Rio Branco area and the return of the tribal land.

Another dispute involved the same tribe and the ranching company, Monasa. In the words of Rivaldo, the Apurinã leader:

"The main problem that we are now facing is the aggression of two fazendeiros and the firm Monasa who say that they have bought all of our land and who are threatening to throw us off. All of us Indians who live on the Rivers Tacaqueri, Peneri and Seruini. In the old days, all this land was devoluta, free land. Then, about 50 years ago, this man, Arminio, came from Manaus. This man then sold the land to Nasser Ibrahim, a lebanese merchant who later sold it to Monasa. And now Monasa is trying to expel us from our own land... In March of 1982, the 'Doctors' from Monasa came to the village with the police and began to threaten us. One of the 'Doctors' said: 'Look, its like this. This land belongs to Monasa and you all know this.' Then I said to him: 'No. We lived here long before Monasa existed in Brazil. We work here the same way as we have always worked.' We suffered the same oppression from the 'Paulista' fazendeiro, Jose Cordeiro, who bought Seringal Maripua that stretches from the banks of the Purus to the banks of the Peneri. When he saw that there were only us Indians living here, he extended his land right up to the banks of the Sapatini. He stole a lot of our land. It stretched from the Peneri, across the Tacaqueri, across the Mixiri, across the Seruini, across the Tumia and the Acima, right up to the banks of the Sapatini. Then he sold a large piece

of this land, our land, to Mario Marecho who built a saw mill right by our village of Nova Vista. He began to cut down our Brazil-nut trees and made the game run away. So now, where can we hunt? Where can we collect nuts?." (1)

The conflict under discussion in this chapter is essentially a struggle over the control and subsequent use of land. It has been shown that the occupation of Acre cannot be treated simply in economic terms, as the expansion/penetration of 'modern' capitalism into the 'backward' countryside or the dynamism of the capitalist enterprise versus the inertia of petty commodity/subsistence production. The occupation of Acre took place not only with the tacit consent of both the federal and local state governments, but also with their actual participation in the direction of the occupation and the implementation of measures aimed at its facilitation. Most importantly, this directed occupation took place without any prior move on the part of the authorities to legalise the situation of the posseiro and Indian vis-à-vis the land on which they lived and worked. The following chapter will discuss the consequences of this (in) action.

1. Press release by CIMI/CPI-ACRE, also quoted in 'Folha do Acre', 8/11/1983.

CHAPTER 3 : THE SHANTY TOWN, FINAL STAGE OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT?

3.1. The struggle for land.

The corporate invasion of Amazônia, characterised by the implantation of large-scale agro-ranching and mineral enterprises in areas that had been formerly occupied by peasant farmers, extractivists and indigenous groups, had severe social repercussions for the region as a whole. In Acre, which has no known mineral resources, the principal activity of the newly arrived entrepreneurs was ranching, although in many instances, as has been shown, this was merely a façade for speculation in land.

Such ranching activity, whether real or phantom, involved the clearance of large areas of forest, of trees to make way for pasture, and of the resident population to make way for cattle. This process, firstly, destroyed the economic base of traditional extractivist and subsistence activity and, secondly, as a corollary of the first, disaggregated whole communities as the rural population was forced to abandon its land to join the swelling ranks of the urban poor.

In opposition to this, the principal role of these rural communities has been to struggle to impede the development of this process, to maintain their access to land. This struggle has united a variety of class and non-class associations, both within and outside of the affected areas. Thus, whereas the ranchers seek to claim exclusive use of and definitive rights to the land, to deny others access to it, the struggle of the rural population and allied groups represents a move towards the redemocratization of land, the promotion of its social use.

This chapter will discuss the rise in rural conflict in Acre during the 1970's and the social effects of this, in particular the mobilisation of the rural small producer class despite the aggregation of an array of forces in favour of capital, and the crisis that overtook the urban centres, Rio Branco especially.

3.1.1. Land clearance.

Once the seringais had been bought, the main pre-occupation of the new owners was to 'limpar a terra', a phrase that means literally 'clean/purify the land', but which in rural Brazil has come to signify the process through which the rural population is forcibly expelled from its property. From the summer of 1970 onwards, such acts of violence against the posseiros of Acre began to increase as did the area of forest that was burnt down and seeded from the air to make pasture.

The first areas to be affected were those adjacent to the Rio Branco-Xapuri-Brasília highway, the BR-317, which gave direct access to the capital:

"Here in the municipality of Brasileia, the first seringal to be sold was Seringal Etelve in 1970. Now there are two ranches on it. It was bought by three partners... three owners who bought a whole seringal... they bought around 48,000 hectares... Well, this Seringal Etelve of Joao Tomas used to produce about 36 tonnes of rubber every year. Now it doesn't produce any, not even a single kilo... They cut down more than 20,000 seringueiras... They cleared Colocacao Plantao, which was mine, with 9 estradas; Colocacao Fracase, which was my brother's, with 7 estradas; Colocacao Santa Rita, that was worked by my other brother, 10 estradas; Colocacao Encruzilhada with 9 estradas; Colocacao Toari, 7 estradas; Colocacao Jiquitaia, 7 estradas; Colocacao Manicoba, 12 estradas; Colocacao Manicobinha, 3 estradas; Colocacao Tracaja, 7 estradas; Colocacao Centro das Bravas, 9 estradas... all of these colocacoes are now covered in grass... there are very few ranch hands to take the place of the families who used to live there... these families, who

once lived on colocacoes full of seringueiras, now have no land at all, not even a piece the size of your finger."(1).

Almost the whole of the area bordering the BR-317 was bought by the 'Paulistas'. By 1972, most of this more accessible land had changed hands and the prospective ranchers then turned their attention to the interior of the municipalities traversed by the BR-317, i.e., Rio Branco, Xapuri and Brasiléia:

"I live here on the Seringal Floresta, here in Xapuri... I was born and brought up on Seringal Santa Fe which is now a ranch ... at that time, we had never heard tell of the Union, we didn't even know what a Union was... We just used to trade with the patroa in those days... When I was a little older, we moved to Seringal Filipina, where today there is another ranch. The forest on both Santa Fe and Filipina is almost totally cleared... This began in '72 and '73 when the buyers from the South came." (2).

In 1973 - 1974, with the arrival of the large ranching companies, deforestation began in the municipalities of Feijó and Tarauacá and later, as they moved outwards along the BR-364 highway, land clearance began in the municipalities of Sena Madureira and Cruzeiro do Sul:

"Well now, these ranchers from the outside started coming more or less in '73... there were only a few then, but every year they kept on coming... some left as well, two or three... On Seringal Ararique, they cleared 2,200 hectares and then didn't do anything with it. Most of it is already covered in brush and they will have to burn it down again... they got rid of the seringueiras, and the seringueiros and their homes, all of it... just for speculation, because they haven't put any cattle on the land that they cleared."(3).

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1. Field interview, ex-seringueiro living in Brasiléia.
 2. " " , seringueiro autônomo, interior of Xapuri.
 3. " " , Agricultural Worker's Union delegate, Tarauacá.

As the deforestation became more widespread, so the incidence of violence increased. This was not simply because a greater area was being cleared, but, as will be demonstrated, because the rural population began to realize the long term consequences of this activity, i.e., the permanent loss of their livelihood.

The methods used to evict the seringueiro and barraqueiro population varied a great deal and, to a certain extent, depended on the form of occupation of the land. In the case of those seringueiros who still produced rubber under the regime of the seringalista, once the latter sold the seringal, the new owners tried to make it impossible for the seringueiro family to continue and thus force them to leave the colocação of their own accord thereby relieving the owner of the responsibility of paying indemnities.

The owners, who at this time were not interested in continuing rubber production, began to cut off the supply of goods that were formerly available in the barracão. They re-introduced the prohibition of the planting of subsistence plots and burnt down areas already planted. Obstructions were placed on the varadouros (1) and estradas to hamper production. This combination of actions made it difficult for the seringueiro to pay off any debt that he had, which would be deducted from any compensation received, and caused the families to suffer extreme deprivation. Pressure also came from the local authorities; the police and the military were used alongside the rancher's armed gun-men to wage a psychological war of intimidation and the judiciary convicted those who retaliated. Compensation, when it was offered, was either very low or

1. Varadouro - forest trail that runs between colocações/seringais as opposed to the estrada along which the seringueiras were located.

on the basis of exchanging the *colocação* for another area often much smaller and distant from a river or access road.(1).

In the case of the abandoned *seringais* of the Purús and Acre valleys, occupied by *seringueiros* and *barraqueiros* for up to 20 and 30 years without interference from the former *seringalistas*, the conflicts were much fiercer. This was because: firstly, this group had a legal right to remain on the land that they occupied and worked; secondly, they were not in a state of dependence on the *barracão* for essential supplies as were their *seringueiro cativo* counterparts; thirdly, the experience of free labour gained by this group of autonomous producers made it less likely that they would simply abandon their *colocações* without resistance. The expulsion of these *de facto* *posseiros* centred on a two-pronged attack which focussed on the question of the ownership of the land and on the impedance of the production and the commercialisation of their rubber/ agricultural product.(2).

With reference to the question of the ownership of land, there was an attempt to persuade the *posseiro* that he had no rights to remain on his *colocação*, that these had devolved to the new 'owners'. It must be remembered that, while the *posseiro* had a legal right to his land, many *posseiros* were not aware of this right. In addition, the majority of the rural population were illiterate and used to conducting their business transactions by word of mouth rather than with documents. Thus, a principal method of cheating the *posseiro* was the falsification of land titles. This was the traditional craft of the '*grileiro*' or land-grabber, a permanent figure on Brazil's moving frontier. The *grileiro* wants the land not for himself to work on, but for sale at a quick profit. During the

1.& 2. Data collected in the field.

initial implantation stage, profits are high on land that has been 'cleared'. In 1970, the price of land per hectare ranged between 5 and 12 cruzeiros. One year later, it had risen to 300 cruzeiros per hectare, an increase of over 2,400% in just 12 months.(1). In his tale 'O Grilo', written in 1920, Monteiro Lobato describes the activities of the grileiro:

"The grileiro is a magician. He makes papers look older; he revives official stamps of the Empire; he invents tax documents; he thinks up genealogies; he understands how old fools were able to write even though they died illiterate; he knows how to embarrass judges and to bribe clerks."(2).

The technique of the grileiro is to use jagunços, armed guards, to forcibly evict the posseiro family and then to register the 'posse' in his own name. Whilst these areas were generally small in size, they were easy to sell to farmers/ranchers from outside of the state who were ignorant of the land's history and who, in many cases, purchased the property in sales and auctions in their own state without having seen the land prior to the sale.

There was also the 'grilagem', land-grabbing, of the seringalistas themselves prior to the sale of the seringal. Some expanded their land through the process of 'esticamento' described in the previous chapter, often the land absorbed by this action contained posseiros who were unaware that this had taken place. The first inkling that they had of this activity was when they were confronted by the new 'owner' with his bill of sale and his jagunços. Seringalistas also altered and/or forged their title documents. The Commission for Land Discrimination (CDT) that was set up by INCRA in 1976 found titles allegedly issued by the Province

1. Mesquita:1977b.

2. Quoted in Asselin:1982:34.

of Amazonas prior to 1898 which were in excess of the statutory 10,000 hectares that the province enforced during this period. Other titles dating from 1889 describe the land as being adjacent to the frontier with Peru, yet this boundary was not demarcated officially until 1909. There are also Bolivian 'titles' that give concessions in the 'Tierras Devolutas' (Terras Devolutas in Portuguese) when, in Spanish, 'public lands' are called 'Tierras Baldias'.(1).

Other ranchers sought to re-impose traditional forms of servile relations as a means of establishing their claim to the land, in particular the imposition of a rent. The following field interview was taken on the Seringal Pontão da Barra, a seven day walk northwestwards from Xapuri, it describes the course of events that followed the arrival of the new owner of the seringal:

"It was more or less in 1973 that the Paulistas arrived. They said that we had to pay a rent for our three estradas, so we had to pay them 120 kilos (of rubber) a year...I had no experience then of dealing with these people. No-one had pieces of paper, everything was done on trust. So when they said that, if we didn't pay, then we would have to leave, I was one of the ones who paid...I didn't have the means to leave this colocação, as I still don't...I can't leave this seringal because I don't have a trade...I don't have the knowledge to get a good job...I have to live on this seringal, don't I?...I thought it better to pay so that I kept the right to stay on this colocação...They collected this in the first year and then, in the second year, they asked for more and so we all resisted, me and my brothers who had colocações nearby...After that they wouldn't come onto the seringal, they were afraid...Well, in the third year, the Union started up...We already had the experience of not paying rent anymore...They (the owners) wanted to use violence, but they didn't come near us anymore...but they burnt down the house of a neighbour of mine...I went over there, it's about an hour's walk, and I saw no-one, only the house burning...It was this that has really stuck in my mind...Well, the Union came and started to tell us about our rights to land and then everyone on the seringal got together and began to confront the owners."(2).

1. INCRA-Acre, CDT, mimeo, undated.

2. Field interview, seringueiro autônomo, interior of Xapuri.

When these attempts to persuade the seringueiro autônomo/barraqueiro that they had no right to land did not succeed, more violent methods were used: houses were burnt down; land was cleared, including the estradas and subsistence plots of the posseiros; trees were felled dangerously close to posseiros' homes; jagunços and police were used to intimidate them; there were also numerous cases of false arrest and imprisonment. Another action taken was to impede the access of the marreteiro which cut off the seringueiro's means of commercialising his product and his supply of essential goods:

"That time (1974) was a difficult period for me...I was trading with the seringueiros on Seringal Boca da Estrada (Rio Branco) and I had already made arrangements to meet the families that lived on the other side of the seringal where they had begun to build the ranch. When I arrived at the entrance to the 'varadouro' that ran behind the new ranch-house, there were three armed men waiting there. The leader said: "Where do you think you are going?". "I am going to meet the families that live over there." He said: "Who gave you permission?" "Look," I said, "I have always come through here, just with the authority of the posseiros who live here. They are the owners of their own posse." "That may be, but you are not going to get through to them anymore." (1).

Throughout this early period of confrontation, i.e., 1970 - 1974, INCRA, the federal agency responsible for the co-ordination and implementation of policy concerning land-titling regulation, was totally ineffective. Prior to 1974, the local representation of INCRA in Acre consisted of six officials based in Rio Branco who had to cover the whole state and these were under the control of INCRA's regional co-ordinating office in Goiânia, over 2,000 kilometres away. INCRA's ineffectivity/inactivity during this period can be gauged by the fact that, in its first two years of operation in Acre, 1972 and 1973, it regulated a mere 81 titles that covered an area of just 7,737 hectares. (2). This has to be compared with

1. Field interview, ex-marreteiro living in Sena Madureira.
2. INCRA-Acre, Coordenaria Regional CR-14, Rio Branco.

the over 5 million hectares that changed hands in the state between 1970 and 1974. In 1974, INCRA issued/regulated no titles at all because it underwent internal re-organisation.

Prior to the summer of 1974, there was an almost total lack of Acrean press coverage of the conflicts that were occurring in the rural areas. Where they were reported, it is couched in terms of the criminal acts of seringueiros against the property and persons of the new 'owners'. Given the high incidence of violence and the close proximity of social, political and economic power in small towns such as Rio Branco, there is more than a suspicion that local press houses and the Dantas administration colluded so as to avoid the state being classified as an area of social tension at a time when the state government was trying to attract capital from the South of the country.

Here, then, are the elements that, in conjunction, formed an almost insurmountable barrier to the rural population of Acre in their struggle to retain control of the land and which functioned to further the transformation of that land from being the object of labour to being the object of speculation and exploitation:

1. The activity of the Dantas Administration, 1970-1974, which both invited the southern entrepreneurs to invest in Acre and did nothing to resolve the issue of land title regulation prior to their arrival.
2. The actions of the entrepreneurs themselves, their ability to purchase land at rising prices, to buy off officials and to hire gun-men etc.

3. The collusion of those agencies entrusted with the impartial dispensation of justice and the maintenance of law and order, i.e., the judiciary, the police and the military.
4. The ineffectivity of INCRA, the land titling agency.
5. The suppression of information regarding the conflicts in the countryside by the local press.

This combination of elements delimited the options that were open to the rural population in their struggle to retain control of land. In practical terms, there were only two choices: to counter the activities of the ranchers despite the fact that there was an impressive array of forces seemingly at their disposal, or to abandon their land and migrate to either those areas as yet unaffected by the violence or to the urban centres. The following two sections will outline the history of those posseiro families who remained on their *colocações*, section 3.2. will concentrate on what happened to those families who migrated out of the conflict zones.

3.1.2. The 'Empate'.

The Acrean climatic year is divided into two distinct seasons, summer and winter. These are not distinguished in terms of temperature, which varies from 20 to 35 degrees centegrade, but in relation to rainfall, which is in excess of 2,000mm per annum. During the winter months, from October until April, it rains every day and, at the height of winter, December and January, the rainfall makes it impossible to collect rubber as it mixes with the latex in the tigelas, collecting cups, and they overflow. The summer months, May until September, are dry and this is the time of year that the rural population burns down small clearings in the forest on which to plant their subsistence plots. Throughout the summer a smoke haze covers the sky and, when flying over the jungle in one of the small six-seater air taxis that ply their trade between the small Acrean townships, numerous fires can be seen.

During the 1970's, the summer months also became the months of confrontation. On the one hand, the ranchers attempted to prohibit the posseiros from clearing their subsistence plots. On the other hand, as the deforestation caused by the ranchers became more generalised, so the posseiros themselves began to organise in an attempt to prevent it.

In July 1974, at the height of the violence of that year, a seringueiro from the Seringal Catuaba in the interior of Rio Branco shot and killed the manager of the seringal who had been recently appointed by the new owner. The seringueiro had shot in defence of himself and his family and it became impossible for the authorities and the press to maintain their apparent attitude of indifference to the process by which the posseiros were being evicted.

It became obvious that this was not an isolated case, but part of a more widespread phenomenon. In addition, the grouping together of posseiros to prevent further deforestation, at least in the eastern half of the state, gave the appearance of a united front even though there was little contact between the groups that operated on different seringais. The grouping together for self-protection and the preservation of their livelihood clearly represented an advance in consciousness with respect to their right to the land, at least in terms of the posseiros' moral right to the land on which they lived and worked, for many were still ignorant of the fact that they had a legal right to it.

The situation clearly worried the state government, 1974 was not only an election year, but was also the first year that any significant numbers of posseiro families had fled the conflict areas and arrived in the state capital and the other urban centres without any prospect of being absorbed into the urban labour market. They were a visible sign that all was not right in the countryside and, as voters, represented a threat to the government. The ruling party, ARENA (1), fielded Geraldo Mesquita as the candidate to succeed Dantas. Mesquita based his campaign on curbing the excesses of the ranchers and legitimising the rights of the rural population to land. Mesquita was duly elected.

Just before Mesquita took office, perhaps in anticipation of it, INCRA created a Joint Co-ordinating Office for the neighbouring states of Acre and Rondônia, INCRA-CR14. It must be remembered that, at this time, Rondônia was bearing the brunt of the migratory movement that was steadily flowing northwards into Amazônia and was receiving over 10,000 migrants per annum. Given the agencies statutory duties vis-à-vis land regulation and the

1. ARENA - Aliança Renovadora Nacional.

Federal Government's policy of promoting capital investment in the Amazon region, INCRA's new programme in Acre centred on the following three priorities:

1. The regularisation of the situation of those who were legitimate posseiros on 'terras devolutas', i.e. public lands.
2. The regularisation of the situation of those large property owners with legitimate title to land so as to facilitate their access to credit/federal incentives and thus enable them to commence productive activity.
3. An enquiry to ascertain which areas of the state were suited for expropriation in the 'social interest' and which would be distributed at a later date to those rural families that had already migrated to the urban areas. (1).

To implement this programme, INCRA created a special commission, the Commission for the Discrimination of Land (2), in 1976. The essential question to which the Commission addressed itself was the complex problem of ascertaining which land was 'terra devoluta' and which was privately owned, i.e., the object of a legitimate land title. The answer to this question was crucial to the resolution of the land crisis because 'posse' is only possible on terras devolutas. Therefore, if it could be proved that a given area of land had previously been titled, then the seringueiro autônomo or barranqueiro did not have the right of posse. (3)

The Commission based its evaluation of the legal status of land in Acre on the premise that, according to the Land Statute of 1850, Terras Devolutas

1. INCRA-Acre, Coordenaria Regional, CR-14, Rio Branco.
 2. Comissão de Discriminação de Terras no Acre.
 3. The Commission's first task was to resolve the question of titling. The question of 'expropriation in the social interest' did not arise until 1976 when rural violence reached new heights. See Chapter 4.

only lost their status as public lands when they came into private ownership. This change was only possible through the issue of a legitimate title by a competent authority. Given Acre's history, the competent authority was deemed to be one of the following:

1. The Province of Amazonas (prior to 1898).
2. The Independent State of Acre (1898 - 1904).
3. The Republic of Bolivia (prior to 1903).
4. The Republic of Peru (prior to 1903). (1).

Land titles that were not descended from or based upon titles issued by one of the above were treated as invalid and the land itself regarded as terra devoluta. When this was found under the control of others, it became the possible object of 'posse', subject to the provisions of the Estatuto da Terra. This, in effect, meant that INCRA recognised the right of posse of many of those seringueiros autônomos and barranqueiros who had remained on the seringais after they had been abandoned by the seringalistas.

However, INCRA's acceptance in principal of the right of posse did not assure that right. Part of the problem lay in the mode of operation of the Commission itself. Under Law No. 6.382 of the 7th of December, 1976, INCRA Commissions had to follow a set routine. The first step consisted of obtaining a description of the area, detailing its limits, the persons who lived on it, the history of previous occupation and so on. After this, the President of the three-man Commission invited those concerned in the dispute to a hearing. The invitation was extended through advertisements in the local press and on the radio and through notices posted on buildings in the nearest urban settlements and in Rio Branco, the capital.

1. INCRA-Acre, Coordenaria Regional, CR-14, Rio Branco.

The parties concerned were required to appear before the Commission within 60 days of the initial announcement at a place designated by it, usually the municipal capital. The Commission then had a further 30 days to deliver its verdict.

The actions of INCRA and the bureaucratic form that the enquiries took suggest that INCRA was not primarily concerned with the legitimation of a posseiro's title to land, rather the overriding pre-occupation was the regularisation of the legal situation of the land itself. In many cases, the announcement that a given property was to be the subject of an investigation did not reach the attention of the small producer, this was especially the case for those who lived on the more distant seringais. It must be remembered that the latter traditionally only make one visit a year to the municipal capital, usually on the anniversary of the city's Saint's Day. In addition, as yet no Rural Worker's Union network had been organised to carry such information into the interior and INCRA officials did not venture out of the townships. Also, the Commission sat the whole year round and did not take into account the hardships that travel to a hearing might bring to the small producer with a family to support, rubber to tap, crops to sow and harvest, apart from the vagaries of the weather which makes varadouros impassable in the rainy season and rivers non-navigable in the dry season. In the words of an INCRA official in Brasília:

"At the moment, we can only work close to the city and then only when the roads are open. Places like Assis Brasil are now closed to our operations until after the rains stop... We never travel by motorised canoe, the jeep is our only means of transport. So, the public that we are serving is essentially those who live alongside the highway and then only in the summer months."(1).

1. Field interview, INCRA official, MA-Projeto Aquiri, Brasília.

As Table 3.3.1. below shows, from its creation in 1972 up to and including 1981, INCRA had issued a total of only 8,514 titles, which covered an area of only 429,281 hectares, in the State of Acre.

Table 2.3.1. - INCRA-Acre: Land Titles issued, 1972 - 1981.

Year.	Number of titles.(a).	Area in hectares.(b).	$\frac{b}{a}$
1972	32	2,141	66.9
1973	49	5,596	114.2
1974	-	-	-
1975/78	2,396	63,800	26.6
1979	319	25,098	78.7
1980	2,596	164,361	63.3
1981	3,122	176,122	56.4
Total	8,514	437,118	51.3

Source: INCRA-Acre, Coordenaria Regional, CR-14, Rio Branco.

The final column of the above table (b/a) shows that the average size of property to which INCRA issued a title was 51.3 hectares. This indicates that titles have in the main been issued to small subsistence farmers, who principally live in or near the urban centres or on INCRA re-settlement projects (1). It is impossible to definitively state the average size of a seringueiro's *colocação* due to lack of demarcation, density of undergrowth, irregular shape of property and so on. The seringueiros themselves measure them in terms of the length of time it takes to walk its length and breadth. However, discussions with seringueiros and Rural Worker's Union officials point to a figure of between 200 and 300

1. INCRA re-settlement projects will be discussed in the following chapter.

hectares for a colocação of only 3 estradas, i.e., the minimum number of estradas for a lone seringueiro to occupy himself for a six-day working week. Many colocações are greater than this, having up to 12 estradas. Thus, even using the lower figure of 200 hectares per colocação, it is probable that seringueiros make up only a small fraction of those issued with titles. This again is perhaps a reflection of INCRA's practice of prioritizing areas of easy access, i.e., near towns, highways, access roads, all of which are areas with a higher percentage of agricultural as opposed to extractivist activity.

With reference to the titles that were issued, mention must also be made of the type of title issued. As Chapter 2.1. noted, these fall into three categories: License to Occupy (LO); Authorisation to Occupy (AO); and Definitive Title (TD). No figures were made available by INCRA as to the breakdown of titles issued according to type for the whole period, just those for 1981:

Table 2.3.2. - INCRA-Acre: Titles Issued, 1981.

Type.	Number.	%.	Area in Ha.	%.
L.O.	554	17.7	26,553	15.1
A.O.	1,289	41.3	92,855	52.7
T.D.	1,243	39.8	42,784	24.3
Others.	36	1.2	13,930	7.9
Total.	3,122	100.0	176,122	100.0

Source: INCRA-Acre, Coordenaria Regional, CR-14, Rio Branco.

Thus, of the titles issued in 1981, 59% (LO's & AO's) did not confer ownership, these titles covered 67.8% of the total hectarage.

In addition, both INCRA and IBGE (1) census statistics do not present the whole picture. According to the INCRA census of rural properties taken in 1978, there were 9,167 rural properties in Acre which covered an area of 12,676,668 hectares, i.e., 83.1% of the total area of the state:

Table 2.3.3. - Acre : Rural properties according to legal status of occupant, 1978.

Status.	No. of Establishments.(a)	%	Area occupied.(b)	%	$\frac{b}{a}$
Occupation (2).	7,870	85.9	1,474,810	11.6	187
Ownership (3).	1,297	14.1	11,201,858	88.4	8638
Total.	9,167	100.0	12,676,668	100.0	1383

Source: INCRA-Acre, Coordenaria Regional, CR-14, rio Branco.

The INCRA census, then, puts the number of properties subject to occupation at 7,870 covering an area of 1,474,810 hectares. The 1980 Agricultural Census of the IBGE, outlined in the table below, puts the number of occupied properties at 12,010 covering an area of 5,679,531 hectares, or 37.2% of the surface area of the state compared to the INCRA census of two years earlier which claims to have covered 83.1% of the state's area.

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1. Instituto Brasileira de Geografia, the agency responsible for carrying out national census taking.
 2. Including posseiros and those occupants with AO's and LO's.
 3. Including those with TD whether occupied by proprietor or administrator or renter.

Table 2.3.4. - Acre Rural properties according to legal status of occupant, 1980.

Status.	No. of Establishments. (a)	%	Area occupied. (b)	%	$\frac{b}{a}$
Occupation (1)	12,010	43.9	1,481,190	26.1	123
Ownership (2)	15,361	56.1	4,198,341	73.9	273
Total.	27,371	100.0	5,679,531	100.0	207

Source: IBGE, Censo Agropecuário, Acre, 1980.

According to personnel of INCRA and the IBGE in Acre, interviewed informally in the field, the consensus of opinion is that INCRA grossly inflated its figures as to the area surveyed. The reason given by INCRA staff was that the Regional Coordinating Office was under constant pressure from both the Federal and State Governments and the Media to resolve the situation in both Acre and Rondônia. The census gathering was done with the help of large numbers of unskilled persons to supplement INCRA's full-time employees. In the event, the census was not completed in time and the data for some areas was estimated. The poor performance of INCRA vis-à-vis land titling was attributed to lack of personal documentation on the part of the rural population and difficulty of access, particularly in the rainy season.

INCRA, along with the other federal and state agencies in Acre, also suffer from a chronic shortage of trained technicians. The non-availability of Acreanos skilled in cartography, soil analysis etc. has necessitated the importation of personnel from other, mainly southern states. To induce them to travel, INCRA offers free accommodation, travel, meals and other living expenses on top of their salaries and contracts of one or two years. Thus, there is a high rate of staff turnover and

staff do not have sufficient time to become acquainted with the complex situation in the state.

On the one hand, then, INCRA and the Mesquita Administration openly stated that de facto posseiros should have their claims to land legitimised, although, as has been shown, this was proceeding very slowly. This must have demonstrated to the posseiros that their actions to halt the deforestation and the implantation of ranches was justified and, in addition, that this struggle must continue because of the long delays involved.

Out of this situation, between 1974 and 1976, there emerged a significant level of organisation amongst the posseiros of the Purús micro-region, the scene of the most violent clashes between the opposing factions. This took the form of the grouping together of posseiros for what is locally known as an 'empate', a joint show of force to prevent the rancher or his peões from carrying out further deforestation before the area had been the subject of an INCRA enquiry.

When the news was circulated on a given seringal that the 'owner' intended to clear a section of the forest, the posseiros of the seringal grouped together to check the advance of deforestation by confronting the peões and threatening them physically if they continued in their work. It is impossible to identify the origins of this form of organisation, whether it arose from traditional agrarian associations/ self-help groups such as the exchange of labour at harvest time, or whether it arose spontaneously from the present conjunctural elements.

However, the 'empate', co-operation for the defence of land and the forest on it, came to be and still is the most commonly used tactic to halt the advance of the 'ranching front'. The following three examples are of 'empates' that took place in 1976, 1978 and 1980.

On the 28th of October 1976, approximately 100 posseiros attacked a group of 25 peões (day labourers hired by the ranchers to clear the forest) on the Seringal Nova California in the municipality of Feijó. According to the foreman of the peões:

"We suddenly heard the noise of the posseiros as they ran towards us screaming and shouting. We were very alarmed because there seemed to be a lot of them. Most of the peões ran off into the forest. I went to speak to the leader of the posseiros to try and sort out the problem, but I was beaten up and my arm and my eye were injured. Other peões that were caught were also beaten." (1)

A much larger 'empate' occurred two years later on the border between the states of Acre and Amazonas in the municipality of Boca do Acre, Amazonas. This particular 'empate' shows the high level of solidarity between posseiros of different municipalities and states which was, in part, a 'natural' progression from the spontaneous actions of the posseiros on isolated seringais, but also to the activities of the Church and the Rural Worker's Union which began to take effect in mid and late 1970's. The latter will be the subject of the section that follows.

"It was 7 o'clock on Sunday morning, on the 2nd of September of last year (1978), when the signal to leave was given. The Jaguncos (2) camp was at Km 38 of the BR-317 in the municipality of Boca do Acre, just over one kilometre from the mutirão (3) of over 300 rural workers. The camp of the peões was also

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1. 'O Rio Branco', 30th October, 1976.
 2. Jagunço - hired gunman.
 3. Mutirão - traditional gathering for mutual aid at harvest time etc. which is also used in Acre to describe the gathering before the empate.

nearby. The workers divided into two groups and marched towards the camps. The workers only had machetes and axes while the jaguncos had modern arms. The workers shouted: "We are not criminals, we only want peace and justice, we only want what is ours." Over 100 of the posseiros had come from the state of Acre, representatives of the Rural Worker's Unions of Brasileia, Xapuri, Rio Branco, Feijo, Tarauaca and Sena madureira and even Cruzeiro do Sul. Many had travelled over 400 kilometres to arrive at the site of the mutirão, travelling on difficult roads, setting an example even to their own Union leadership. Most of the jaguncos ran into the forest leaving behind their arms and ammunition, followed by over 40 posseiros. The rest of the posseiros encircled the camp in an attempt to capture the others. The leader (of the jaguncos), Jose Goncalves Sobrinho, was captured. At the other camp, the posseiros rounded up 20 peões along with their foreman, Gutemberg Adriano and their employer, Manoel Adriano. The arms abandoned by the jaguncos - rifles, revolvers and shot-guns - were handed in to the Federal Police in Rio Branco along with Manoel Adriano, Jose Goncalves and Gutemberg Adriano." (1).

Seringal Nazaré, in the municipality of Xapuri, was the location of another 'empate' which involved over 50 posseiros on the 27th of March, 1980:

"We went from house to house collecting men and then we all left together. Some of us were a bit worried because we had heard that there might be up to 50 armed men waiting for us. But, by mid-day, we numbered 52 men and so we went to stop them clearing the forest. We arrived there at 2 o'clock in the afternoon. Some of us had already walked for 7 hours to get there. When we arrived, we found 9 labourers from the ranch, some were Acreanos, some were from outside... Laci was the operator of the chain-saw... It was he that had told us some days earlier that they were going to deforest the area even if it meant that our blood was going to flow on the land... This Laci is a criminal... he has already received money for killing seringueiros.

We walked towards them slowly. They didn't do anything. We talked with Laci and the other peão that was with him... We told them that they couldn't carry on with their work. We said that we weren't trying to cause problems for them, but we were there to guarantee the survival of the seringueiro posseiros who lived by tapping rubber on this seringal. But, if they carried on clearing the forest, then they would suffer the consequences. We said that this time we were only 52 men, but, if necessary, we would bring 100 the next time. Well, they

1. 'O Varadouro', October, 1979.

said that they would stop the work. Some of our posseiros wanted to destroy the camp and all of their equipment to show them that we weren't the cowards that they had said we were. We told them to leave and take their equipment with them. They said no, so we gathered up their supplies and hammocks and clothing and made a bonfire with them." (1).

From 1974, then, the dynamic of the process of appropriation of Acrean land was significantly modified by: firstly, the change in the position of INCRA; secondly, the change in the orientation of state policy following the election of the Mesquita Administration; and, thirdly, and most importantly, the retaliation of the posseiros and their transformation from groups working in isolation into an organised force. In addition, as the three previous quotes show, all taken from the local press, the struggle of the posseiros was receiving detailed media coverage.

Two new elements were to facilitate the consolidation of posseiro organisation, the activities of the Church and the creation of the first Rural Worker's Union branches in Acre under the guidance of CONTAG, the national Confederation of Agricultural Workers. As will be shown, however, these were to have a contradictory effect. While, on the one hand, they effectively channeled opposition to the advance of the 'ranching front', they also, exactly because of this, suppressed the spontaneous actions of the posseiros. In the early 80's, this was to cause a rift between certain of the branches of the Rural Worker's Union and the Church and CONTAG.

1. 'O Varadouro', May, 1980.

3.1.3. The mediation of the Church and CONTAG.

The increasing involvement of certain sectors of the Brazilian Church in what were formerly regarded as temporal activities followed the diffusion of ideas concerning the role of the Church in society that emerged from the sitting of the Second vatican Council from 1962 to 1966, and from the Conferences of Latin American Bishops at Medellín in 1968 and Puebla in 1979.

Prior to Vatican 2, the Church in Latin America had an almost anthropological conceptualisation of what constitutes rural society. The Church perceived rural communities as static, incapable of auto-transformation, subject to the influence of external, mainly urban, forces: television and the cinema. Within this paternalistic vision, the rural population were seen as unable to distinguish between good and evil, and, thus, the Church's role was protectionist and assistencialist.(1).

The explosion of social movements throughout Latin America in the 1950's and 1960's, which concentrated on reforms of the economic base, the creation of socialist states, and the struggle for agrarian reform, forced the Church to revise its thinking. This is not to suggest that there were no elements within the Church that supported these movements, rather it was the Church's official stance that was becoming isolated from events that were rapidly overtaking it. Certainly, on the one hand, the Church was concerned with the danger of losing its flock, particularly in the rural areas, as this had already happened to a certain extent in the cities. On the other hand, however, sectors of the clergy were also

1. De Carvalho:1982.

concerned to eliminate the social injustice which appeared to be on the increase even as economies were developing.(1).

The dilemma of the Latin American Church at this time is expressed in the following statement by the Archbishop of Recife, Dom Helder Câmara:

"I must confess that for many centuries the Church supported the authorities, the existing order. We did so in order to be able to help the poor, but what we preached was a passive Christianity, holding up the joys of eternal life against the suffering of life on earth. And while we supported what amounted to social disorder, the United Nations were proclaiming that two-thirds of mankind live in inhuman conditions of misery and hunger. This was impossible to sustain." (2).

The 'Liberation Theory' that grew out of Vatican 2 and after was based on the premise that capitalism itself was responsible for the existing social inequality in Latin America. This was stated quite emphatically by the Bishops at Puebla:

"The free market economy, which is the prevalent system on our continent, legitimised by liberal ideologies, has accentuated the difference between rich and poor by putting capital before work and economic before social needs." (3).

There are, of course, significant elements within the Church that have openly condemned Liberation Theology as a move towards communism and atheism. The Chilean Bishops, for example, issued a statement in 1975 in support of the Pinochet regime which overthrew Allende:

1. De Ávila:1980.
 2. Interview quoted in 'South', No.3, /rd December, 1980, p.21.
 3. Quoted in MacCarthy:1980.

"We recognise the service paid to the state by the Armed Forces to liberate it from a Marxist dictatorship which seemed inevitable and would have been irreversible... We believe and acknowledge that the Armed Forces interpreted the wish of the majority on 11 September 1973 and in so doing removed an immense obstacle to peace." (1).

A similar position is taken in the writings of 'The Society for the Defence of Tradition, Family and Property' (TFP), the lay arm of the traditional sector of the Church, which was founded in Brazil in 1960 and which now has societies in 13 countries of Europe and the Americas. Of significant importance to the TFP is what it sees as the assault on private property of the new movement. In its pamphlet on the 'crisis' in France following the election of Mitterand, 'What does self-managing socialism mean for communism: a barrier or a bridgehead?', the TFP searches through the edicts of earlier popes to justify their position. The principal source is Pious XII:

"It is for this reason that Catholic social teaching, besides other things, so emphatically champions the right of the individual to own property. Herein also lie the deeper motives why the Pontiffs of the social encyclicals, and also We Ourselves, have declined to deduce, directly or indirectly, from the labour contract the right of the employee to participate in the ownership of operating capital, and its corollary, the right of the worker to participate in decisions concerning the operations of the plant. This has to be denied because behind this question there stands that greater question - the right of the individual and of the family to own property... It is a right of personal dignity; a right, to be sure, accompanied by social obligations; a right, however, not merely a social function." (2).

Liberation Theologists that the social obligations of property owners have not been fulfilled and look to the statements of recent popes to justify their claim to 'orthodoxy'. For example, John XXIII, in 'Mater e

1. Evangelio y Paz, September, 1975 - quoted in MacCarthy: 1980.
2. Discorsi e Radiomessaggi di Sua Santità Pio XII, Vol. XIV, p. 314.

Magistra', 119, states:

"Above all, the total of worldly goods are destined to guarantee a decent standard of living to all men." (1).

And Paul VI, in 'Popularum Progressio', 23, :

"Private property does not constitute an unconditional and absolute right to any person." (2).

And, finally, John Paul II, in 'Laboran Exercens':

"It is not an imperative of the nature of things that private property be usually owned by an individual. In principle (and notably in modern conditions of economic life), it is legitimate and even preferable that the right of property be normally exercised by groups of persons instead of individual proprietors, thus better fulfilling its social function. This would be the socialisation of property." (3).

With reference to landed property in general, and capitalist agriculture in particular, Liberation Theologists turn to Pious XII's address to the Congress of the Italian Confederation of Agriculturalists on the 15th of November, 1946, where he denounced agrarian capitalism which:

"...appropriated land and turned it from being no longer the object of love into an object of cold speculation. The land, once a generous provider for the urban population, as well as for the population of the countryside, comes to produce only for speculative purposes. Then the people suffer hunger and the farmer is debt-ridden and on the road to ruin, and the economy of the country fails because it needs to import essential at high prices from the outside." (4).

1. CELEDAC:undated:60. 2. De Ávila:ibid. TFP:undated.
4. Materne:1980:101.

These texts provide the basis of the Latin American Bishops' position in relation to land : that land was a gift of God to all men, a natural good that was not the product of labour, but rather that labour itself legitimated possession of it. The 'progressive' clergy came to conceptualise landed property relations in terms of the dichotomy - 'land of exploitation' and 'land of labour'. The former is land which is appropriated by capital to create profit. Profit can only derive from the exploitation of the labour force that works upon it, or from its non-use, i.e., land lying idle for speculation. 'Land of labour' is land that is possessed by those who work on it, neither the object of exploitation, nor of speculation.

The conceptualisation of 'land of labour' is directly related to the right of family, community and tribal ownership of land. In terms of Brazil, these rights are enshrined in the 'Estatuto da Terra' of 1964 and the 'Estatuto do Índio' of 1973. The Church, however, became concerned that, while these acts have as their objective the promotion of the social use of land, these have been subverted by the actions of political parties and pressure groups. The problem for the clergy has been how to be committed without taking sides, i.e., taking a political role. The basic conflict was resolved at Puebla when the Conference distinguished between politics in the general sense which was related to the common good, and party politics which were the concern of the laity.(1).

With the socio-economic engagement of the clergy, it has been increasingly difficult to distinguish between political activity in the general sense

1. MacCarthy:ibid.

and party politics particularly as the 'progressive' clergy have taken a pioneering role in the raising of political consciousness of both the rural and urban masses. They have published a great deal of documents relating to political struggles in the Brazilian countryside and, especially since the creation of the Church's Land Commission (CPT) (1) in 1975, have become actively involved in the disputes themselves.

The Church in Acre is spatially and ideologically divided into two bishoprics. That of the Acre-Purús has its cathedral in Rio Branco and is under the dominion of an Italian order, Os Servos da Maria, who follow the post-Vatican 2 Liberation Theology. The Bishop, Dom Moacyr Grecchi is president of the CPT. In contrast with this, the See of the Juruá, with its cathedral in Cruzeiro do Sul, is run by a German order, Espirito Santo, which follows a policy of minimal interference in politics and maximum emphasis on spiritual guidance.

During the early 1970's, the clergy of the Acre-Purús diocese restricted its activity to the urban areas, priests visited the small communities of the interior rarely, once every two or three years to perform marriages and baptisms. In the urban areas, the Church began to organise 'Christian Communities of the Poor' (CEB's) (2), in which the participants were taught the Gospels and discussed their application to everyday life. In effect, the CEB's were a means of politicising the urban population and were destined to be the source of lay ministers, community leaders, union officials, and eventually local political leaders.

1. CPT - Comissão Pastoral da Terra.

2. CEBs- Comunidades Eclesiais de Base. This is MacCarthy's literal translation; 'grass root organisations' conveys their function more clearly.

The crisis that overtook the rural areas of Acre during the Dantas Administration was instrumental in the extension of the Church's political activity into the rural areas of the state, in the orientation of posseiros and seringueiros as to their rights to land and in denouncing the violent acts that were being perpetrated against them. The then Bishop, Dom Giocondo, issued a document in 1973, 'A Cartilha do Seringueiro', which detailed the rights of each category of land occupant and this was distributed throughout the micro-region of the Purús.

The death of Dom Giocondo and his replacement by Dom Moacyr Grecchi in 1976, at the height of the expulsion of posseiros from their land and their subsequent migration to the shanty towns of Rio Branco, saw a dramatic increase in the Church's activity in the rural areas with the clergy taking a more aggressive political role along the lines of Vatican 2 and Medellín. According to Manoel Pacífico, an ex-priest of the diocese and now the vice-president of the ruling PMDB party (1):

"Your question regarding the position of the Church is very interesting. The Servos da Maria created the diocese of Acre-Purus in the 1920's, but it was not until after the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council that the first signs of a Church committed to social and political action began to appear... and especially after Medellín in 1968 the Church here began to adopt positions clearly in defence of the marginalised masses, the seringueiro, the rural labourer, the urban poor... This was particularly the case after the appointment of Dom Moacyr Grecchi when the Church began to take a more clearly defined position. However, we cannot forget that even during the time of Dom Giocondo we had begun this work. Well, after the Vatican Council and the meeting of the Latin American Bishops at Medellín, we began to reappraise the situation of the poor in Acre. We felt that the only way to help them was through direct involvement with them, teaching them of their rights and, through the teachings of the Gospel, show them how to participate more in the political field. It must be said that, while this was happening in the Valley of the Purus, the Church of the Juruá remained tied to the older

1. PMDB - Partido do Movimento Democrático Brasileiro.

more traditional way of teaching. The Church there is much more closed and most of its priests are of German origin. Apart from problems that they have with language, their relation to the people is much more directive, there is less participation." (1).

The Servos da Maria played a crucial part in the formation of a network of rural unions in the Acre-Purús valleys which were later extended to the Juruá Valley. The practices of the ranchers were denounced by the Church both to the press and to CONTAG, the Brazilian Confederation of Agricultural Workers. It was in response to this request that CONTAG sent one of its officials, João Maia, to Acre in 1975 to organise the posseiros, seringueiros and colonos (2) into municipality based unions (3). In addition, the Church extended the use of its facilities to the fledgeling unions. In the words of the President of the Rural Worker's Union in Brasiléia:

"The Church exercised an extremely important role here in Acre, even to the extent of encouraging us to join the Union. The Church was one of the first to open its doors to the Union...we didn't have a Union headquarters then...and it was also the first one to speak out against the actions of the ranchers and their gunmen and to appeal for CONTAG to come and help us." (4).

The arrival of João Maia, the CONTAG delegate, marked the beginning of a new phase in the struggle for land in Acre. As was shown in the previous section, rural resistance in the form of the 'empate' was initially fragmented organised around the 'mutirão' or self-help group isolated on its own seringal. As the conflicts became more generalised and were publicised by the Church and the press, so the 'empates' became organised on a wider base, the co-operation of posseiros on neighbouring seringais

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1. Field interview, Rio Branco.
 2. Colonos - subsistence farmers.
 3. Field interview with João Maia, Rio Branco.
 4. Field interview, Union President, Brasiléia.

and later of the municipality as a whole. The actions of the Church in conjunction with CONTAG organised what had been a spontaneous resistance movement into a statewide network of Rural Worker's Unions (STR's) (1), each based on a single municipality with CONTAG supplying advice, information and services such as lawyers to act for the seringueiros in particular disputes. The first STR was created on the 21st of december, 1975, in Brasília and was shortly followed by the creation of STR's in the rest of the Purús micro-region and, by 1980, they had been established in seven of Acre's 12 municipalities (2).

The following interview with an official of the STR in Brasília gives an example of what the intervention of CONTAG signified for the traditional relations between seringalista and seringueiro:

"When the Union came, the organisation of agricultural workers that came here to Acre to organise the people ... it was CONTAG... well, they got the seringueiros together to tell what their situation was... to get them to ask for what was rightly theirs and to have a representative of the seringueiros, a seringueiro himself, to go to the Congress in São Paulo, or rather in Brasília and tell them of the suffering of the seringueiro... to see with his own eyes and hear with his own ears and to speak with his own words... to find out what the law said and what rights the workers had... When they organised this, the first Congress was in '80, and it was Wilson, Wilson Pinheiro, who went from this union in Brasília to Brasília... When he got back from there saying that the price of rubber was 83 cruzeiros a kilo... he came back from there with a paper saying this, he arrived here and told everybody... he went to all the offices of the union (throughout the state) to tell them the price of rubber... Well, it was the greatest confusion in the world ... the seringalistas said that it was a lie, that Wilson was a liar... here they only paid 59 cruzeiros at that time ... so we seringueiros said that we weren't going to sell for 59. The seringalistas told us to pay off our debts and go and sell our rubber to anyone who was prepared to pay 83. They called us seringueiros robbers, liars,

1. STR - Sindicato dos Trabalhadores Rurais.

2. The 5 new municipalities created in 1980 have yet to form STR's.

shameless. But none of us were trying to force the patrão to pay 83. We were just saying that this was the current price and that, if they did not pay it, then we would bring it into town to sell." (1).

The next interview, with the President of the STR in Xapuri, details the history of a longstanding dispute on the Seringal Santa Fé, Brasília, which was the first to be resolved in the state by a joint agreement between union, posseiros and proprietor:

"Look, it's like this, the history of conflict on the Seringal Santa Fé... it's been going on for a long time... It used to be a proper seringal, the seringueiro produced rubber and other things... there was a patrão, the supposed owner of the land, called Guilherme Lopes... He was the seringalista, he bought rubber and brazil-nuts... and sold merchandise... Throughout this time, he regularly had seringueiros jailed, he was the seringalista who most often entered the door of the police station with the seringueiro... He never had enough merchandise, he never kept enough merchandise in the barracão... and when the seringueiro sold his rubber to someone else so that he could buy the essentials that he needed for his family, he used to tell the police... He did this to a lot of seringueiros... Now then, when the sale of the land began... to the large landowners from the South... he was one of the first to sell... when the supposed new owner arrived, this Paulista with his lawyer and such, his group of men... in the middle of the seringal was a state school... well they all got together there and Guilherme Lopes ordered all the seringueiros to meet them and he said that he had sold the seringal and that from then on it had a new owner... Once this meeting with all the seringueiros had finished, they then called each one, one by one, into the office of the school and, as each one entered, the lawyer gave him a blank piece of paper and said: "Sign your name here, anyone who doesn't sign will be shot, same as if we were killing a dog."... Well, they signed without knowing what it meant... after they had signed, he (the lawyer) wrote above the name that they had promised to abandon their colocação and all their possessions... It was like this for all of them... only one resisted, didn't accept, he was threatened a lot afterwards... the situation became impossible in the end, they put in a manager who made a lot of arbitrary decisions, he refused to store goods in the barracão and wouldn't let the seringueiros sell to the marreteiro so that they could buy things they needed... but we had already begun organising

1. Field interview, branch official of the STR, Brasília.

the union here and so the struggle really started...even the 4th Company (of the army) became involved, they arrested seringueiros and took them prisoner in the 4th Company headquarters in Brasileia...a series of confrontations took place...We kept on resisting and after a time a group from INCRA arrived to try and sort it all out...the posseiros weren't going to leave because the documents that they had been forced to sign were illegal, but Guilherme Lopes had already sold the seringal to the new owner...INCRA did nothing and the new owner said that he had waited long enough and that he was going to start clearing the forest. The first year he burnt down a large area and the posseiros got together in groups of 100 and 120 to stop him. The second year he tried again, but we came back to resist it. In the third year, knowing that we were going to resist...because we were fighting for the preservation of the forest...the seringueiras, the castanheiras and our subsistence plots...well, he decided to appeal to CONTAG, the union, to make an agreement. This agreement was to be the model, the first one made at the level of discussion between union, posseiros and proprietor...We had 10 meetings with the posseiros and the owner...the posseiros had been ill-treated for a long time and didn't want to accept...only after the tenth meeting when we suggested that the owner gave land in exchange in a situation favourable to transport...Well, it was right that they accepted...we were fighting for land, so, at that time, I think it was right to accept...Now, it fell to each posseiro to argue over the size of the area and they negotiated well...He also had to stop pressurising them and give in to the needs of the posseiros...An agreement was reached in which some remained on their posses for up to two years until they could occupy their new land, the land that they had received in compensation and that they could carry on tapping rubber until they moved...The agreement stated that as long as the posseiros had a contract for tapping rubber for up to two years, then their colocação would not be deforested. So, the agreement had been made. Some went right away to their new land, others stayed with up to two years to move. Well, the next year, it was last year in 1982, what happened was that he didn't respect the agreement with some of the posseiros and he tried to clear the forest in areas in which they had been given permission to remain until they moved...they felt betrayed so they reacted...They got together over 100 men and went after the peões of the rancher. They gave in and stopped work. Then he got a new gang of peões to burn down the area, this time with a gato (foreman) and jaguncos (gunmen) to force them to keep on working. After we attacked them, the police intervened on the side of the owner and arrested 112...According to someone that we know well, who works for the owner, he (the owner) sent for the police...the government gave in because it was election time and this gave him weight...the landowners represent economic power in the state and threatened the government. Well, the police arrived, armed to the teeth and arrested the first group of 75. Then, shortly after, they arrested another group of 37. This last group was dragged along the ground and beaten up...but eventually, we all met together again with a lawyer from CONTAG, a good lawyer...

and the owner had to give compensation for the area that was affected...but the owner had won in the end...he had deforested the whole seringal...Its overgrown now,with pasture only in some small parts." (1).

Agreements such as the one noted above were to prove disastrous for the posseiros that entered into them. As the above interviewee states, the STR's thought them reasonable at the time, but experience was to show that monetary compensation and offers of alternative areas of land were to leave the seringueiro family in a much worse situation and proved to be mere stepping stones to the shanty towns of the urban centres.

On the one hand, monetary compensation, unlike land, does not produce and evaporates quickly given the situation of rapidly rising prices and inflation at over 200% per annum. On the other hand, the land offered by the ranchers in exchange for the colocações of the seringueiros were usually much smaller in area and generally more isolated. With a smaller area of land, the seringueiro could produce less rubber. This signified that he had to engage in agricultural activity over and above that for subsistence. To do this commercially, however, not only does he need access to his property by road or by river to facilitate the commercialisation of his product, which was unlikely as he was usually offered more marginal land, but he would also require credit from the bank to purchase seeds etc. and to support him until the first harvest. The fact that the acquisition of the new area resulted from a trilateral or bilateral agreement between himself and the proprietor and possibly the union meant that it had not been authorised by INCRA (The latter was concentrating on resolving such disputes with the offer of a plot of up to 100 hectares on its own re-settlement projects, as the next chapter will show). This in turn meant that the seringueiro still did not possess a

1. Field interview, President of the STR in Xapuri.

title to his own piece of land, while having forfeited his right of 'posse' on his former *colocação*. Not being in possession of a Definitive Title was sufficient reason for the bank not to extend credit facilities. Thus, many of the *seringueiros* who made such agreements found themselves in a position where they could no longer remain on the land and were forced to migrate to the cities.

- Once the effects of such agreements were understood, the STR's changed their position to one in which the only way of resolving such disputes was the legitimisation of the rights of 'posse' of the resident rural population, i.e., a return to the position that had been held prior to the intervention of CONTAG. The 'hard line' stance of the STR's, from the point of view of the ranchers, meant that the latter now regarded the STR's as the principal stumbling block to the resolution of the situation and the STR leadership became the new target. The logic of their argument being that, if the head is cut off, then the rest of the body will die. Union officials were threatened and bribed. The following interview describes attempts by the ranchers in Xapuri to subvert the local union leadership:

"We have won many things with the Union's help...at first we heard about the Union in Brasileia, the first one to be organised in Acre...then, in 1977, we organised our own, here in Xapuri...at that time, the Church had also begun to send out leaflets on worker's rights, that no-one was obliged to leave the land on which he had been working without proper compensation...but we found that those who accepted money were worse off and so we began to organise ourselves against this...then the patrões, I mean the ranchers, together with the police and jaguncos began to put pressure on us... they also pressurised out President...that, if he didn't do such and such a thing, then...after that, they used another tactic, offering money, offering land, so that he would abandon us and move over to their side...Here, in this municipality, our first President was an old man...in the beginning he worked well, but then he started to change, because of what

the ranchers were offering...he would come into the forest and say one thing, but, in the town, he would say another...so, after a while, we got together a group of posseiros and elected another President, a woman...She was from this seringal (Floresta) and she was very honest and never sold herself...she was never afraid, inspite of being a woman...women here are humiliated a lot, men don't believe that they are capable...Machismo is still very great here." (1).

The violence against the Union leadership in Acre reached its peak in 1980 when, on the evening of July the 21st, the President of the STR in Brasília was shot three times as he watched television in the local union headquarters. He subsequently died of his wounds. One week later, local posseiros murdered the foreman of a nearby ranch whom they suspected of being one of the culprits. The situation in Brasília at this time is described by an ex-delegate of that STR, who later became the President of the STR in Xapuri:

"I was also arrested under the National Security Laws... I mean, when the situation...the conflict, it was really tense at this time, but there was a very good union organisation...I mean, a high level of consciousness amongst the posseiros of the municipality of Brasileia...In the Union at this time...the Union was very strong and had a good leader called Wilson Pinheiro...the tense situation in Acre began then. The latifundiários (2) of the region got together and ordered the death of the Union President, the strongest in Acre...so that the Union movement would then collapse...and so it happened...on the 21st of July, 1980, he was killed in the Union office. However, the rural workers did not back off because Wilson was a leader...I mean, he defended the workers on the land, but what he defended was really what each worker was already committed to defend...the right to land. So then Wilson was not the cause of the situation, it was all of us...it was generalised and, as Union leader, he was firmly on the side of the workers...On the day of his burial, the (Union) members swore vengeance over his body and appealed for justice. They gave a period of seven days for the authorities to account for the assassin. As it happened, after a week had gone by, the authorities hadn't shown that they had done anything, or even been interested in finding the killer...so, after the seven days, there was a public demonstration in solidarity with

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1. Field interview, seringueiro autônomo, interior of Xapuri.
 2. Latifundiário - generic name for large landowner.

our dead leader, it was for the mass on the seventh day after his death...and various Union leaders came from the South of the country, from the whole country, including one of the most famous Union leaders, Luiz Ignacio da Silva, Lula...and the Union leaders of Petroleiro and Campinas... Well, the next day the workers were already organised, they got on a lorry and went looking for the fazendeiros (1) and killed one whom they suspected of being a culprit in the murder of Wilson. From then on the situation became generalised...several posseiros were arrested and tortured, and we were arrested under the National Security Laws. We were put through several questionings by the Federal Police, afterwards we were interrogated again in Manaus under the charge of having incited violence at the public demonstration and urged them on so that they killed the boss of this fazenda...but all of this was just an excuse, they were out to get us...because, really, the people who killed this fazendeiro had already made up their minds and we were there to show our solidarity...so then, the workers had given their answer, killing this fazendeiro. So the Government had to sort out the situation and it decided to expropriate more than ninety thousand hectares (2) of land...but this didn't solve the problem, because the workers ended up in the same situation in a relatively short space of time, in difficulties with the land...because, without assistance...without education, health, transport, finance and agricultural credit as well as technical assistance...well...because this man, the seringueiro, lives in a difficult situation...we were born, we were trained in this type of work...extractivism...we take the latex from the seringueira, smoke it and make rubber from it from the day that we are born...both before and after the Acrean revolution, the main source of wealth here was always rubber and brazil-nuts. This is still the case in spite of it already being almost eliminated...So...there isn't anything to substitute it except agriculture...but it isn't stimulated...the Government doesn't give enough assistance to the small farmer to teach him to work, I mean, to...accustom him to this new type of work...up to now this hasn't happened and the Acreano is in a really difficult situation." (3).

This violent episode was to be repeated eighteen months later in December, 1983, when a Union delegate of the same STR was shot dead outside of the same headquarters. Again, local ranchers were implicated in the crime, one of whom was later arrested and his arsenal of weapons confiscated. The confrontations in the early 80's led to a re-alignment

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1. Fazendeiro - rancher/landowner.
 2. Aproximately 347 square miles.
 3. Field interview, President of STR, Xapuri.

of political forces in Acre. Firstly, state agencies such as INCRA and SUDHEVEA (1) began to increase their activities in the state in an attempt to find a definitive solution to the crisis that was affecting both the rural and the urban areas. Secondly, some STR's, notably those of Xapuri and Tarauacá, began to lose faith in the ability of CONTAG to resolve the situation of the posseiros. Part of this lay in the mode of operation of CONTAG, i.e., the use of legal channels and a tendency to compromise by acceptance of compensation and/or alternative areas of land, but party politics also played an important part in this disaffection with CONTAG and, to a certain extent, with the Church as well.

Prior to the elections of 1982, CONTAG, the STR's and the Church had jointly supported the campaign of the Partido dos Trabalhadores, the PT (2), the election was won, however, by the PMDB, the main opposition party. After the election, both the Church and CONTAG, as well as certain of the STR's, Brasiléia and Rio Branco, for example, became more associated with the reformist position of the PMDB which supported the resolution of the crisis through the actuation of INCRA and SUDHEVEA, i.e., supporting the posseiros' claim to land, but on INCRA resettlement projects or SUDHEVEA co-operatives (3), rather than the legitimisation of existing 'posses'.

The two positions are outlined in the following two field interviews. The first is with João Maia, who came to Acre as representative of CONTAG and stood for the PT in the 1982 elections and was defeated. In 1983, he joined the PMDB and was being tipped as the new state Minister for Agricultural affairs when this researcher left Acre in January, 1984. The

1. SUDHEVEA - Superintendência da Borracha, the Federal Rubber Agency.

2. PT - the Worker's Party.

3. To be discussed in the next chapter.

second interview is with a delegate from the STR at Xapuri, a seringueiro from Seringal São Pedro, a five day walk from the city.

"At this moment in time, we need a party of the masses, open to all...not like the PT which is 'obreirista', just open to workers, because this excludes many people who could contribute to the struggle...What is important is for the electorate to seek power and this can only be done by participating directly in government, not by staying on the outside...This is what happened in the last elections (of 1982), the PMDB was elected as an heterogeneous front...we need to strengthen the popular sections and form groups that are allied to the people. There will only be democracy when the people participate...I have a great deal of respect for the proposals of the PT, but there is a tendency for the party to be exclusive, to represent just one group, the workers and not see the broader issues that affect the situation...Large areas have been appropriated by INCRA for the rural worker...the struggle now is for the improvement of conditions of production and commercialisation." (1).

"It was just then, in the heat of the confusion, the flight of the seringueiros from their colocações to the city and to Bolivia, that a 'Paulista' arrived here by the name of João Maia...He was admired a great deal, he was the person sent by CONTAG to create the Unions here in Acre...and he was ready to fight...but, since then, we have lost confidence in him because...Its like this, the rural workers are more knowledgeable today, they don't believe any more in CONTAG. CONTAG is not working like it used to, its not developing the work that it started in the beginning...I don't know whether it is João Maia or all of CONTAG, but it is said that he is a great landowner now in the municipality of Quinari (Senador Guiomard) with many cattle...at least this is one reason that many workers here no longer believe in him...but, while the politics of the system carried on, the actions didn't...at the time of which I am speaking, CONTAG was more honest, when the government was elected by the Military...nowadays...and who knows how this came about...now we have a government that was elected by the people and I don't know why, but CONTAG changed, it doesn't want to fight anymore...perhaps it was because that they thought that their role was just to create the Unions, help them for a certain period of time and then leave...I'm not sure, but it seems that CONTAG and the PMDB say the same things...It is the same with the Church. In the beginning, it was very good, they were really good...the padres were persecuted from the start and this happens even now...there were times when we thought that we would lose some of our 'companheiros' in the Church...Padre Claudio and even the Bishop, Dom Moacyr...

1. Field interview, Rio Branco.

but today they are calmer when talking to us...I don't know whether this is a form of tactics, but they also moved further away...The Church and CONTAG did help us a lot, but its different now...Our Union here...its intention is to move forwards..we still haven't won the right to stay on our land...because the activities of the ranchers have not stopped...it is a little easier now and the so-called rural exodus is slowing down, but now they are changing their tactics...at the time when they arrived, they threw the seringueiro off his land, they threatened him with gun-men, with the police, all of this...later the workers began to organise themselves and resisted these things...then they tried to fool the worker into accepting a plot of land given by INCRA or perhaps some money in compensation... but our people here were always poor, nobody ever had the possibility of getting hold of a large amount of money and so some of them accepted...even CONTAG told us that it was better to take the plot and the money and give up our fight here...but why?...we have worked all of our lives here on these colocações, we die and leave it to our children and our children pass it on to our grandchildren...and the money that they are offering now...600,000 cruzeiros, one million, sometimes 2 million for one colocação...but how long will it last under the present conditions, the cost of living and inflation...the money will run out and with it all the means we have of surviving...after that we would have to work for a rancher, or as a day labourer in the city, and who knows how long before we would eventually become a robber...the Union in this municipality is trying to unite the workers and refuse the money of the ranchers and the plots of INCRA and move towards the future with each of us in control of his own land..." (1).

The above illustrates the contradictory nature of the activities of such organisations as the Church and CONTAG. On the one hand, they have directly aided the posseiros in their struggle against the ranchers and have helped them to achieve a level of organisation that they may not have attained without such help. On the other hand, however, a direct result of the creation of such an organisational structure has been the channelling of resistance along a particular path, in this case, legal arbitration. This has suppressed the spontaneous actions of the posseiros themselves and, to a certain extent, undermined the struggle for the

1. Field interview, seringueiro autônomo, Seringal São Pedro.

right to remain on their own land.

The ineffectivity of federal agencies to resolve the land problem has, as noted above, moved some STR's to reject what they see as agrarian reform from above. Other STR's, however, continue the dialogue with these agencies. Chapter 4 will provide an analysis of the paths that the two opposing sections of the STR's have taken. The examples chosen will be Brasília, which is firmly committed to CONTAG and the programmes of INCRA and SUDHEVEA, and Xapuri, which has rejected both and has attempted to create an agrarian reform from below. Prior to this, in the section that follows, an examination of the situation in the urban centres will be given.

3.2. The flight from the countryside.

The crisis through which the rural areas of Acre were passing, characterised as it was by an increasing incidence of violent confrontation, directly resulted in a mass exodus from the affected areas. The main areas of conflict, the municipalities of Rio Branco, Xapuri and Brasiléia, each suffered a net loss in their rural population between 1970 and 1980. Of the remaining municipalities, only Cruzeiro do Sul, the only municipality not touched by the ranching front during the decade of the 70's, maintained the same rate of population growth in its rural areas as in the urban.(1).

The seringueiro and barraqueiro families who migrated, either through expulsion, intimidation or fear, moved in two distinct directions: either (a) into rural areas as yet untouched by the conflict, principally Bolivia which adjoins all three of the hardest hit municipalities, or (b) into the urban centres of the state, mainly Rio Branco, the capital.

3.2.1. The migration to Bolivia.

Pando Province, in the north of Bolivia, is similar in relief, climate, flora and fauna to its neighbours, the states of Acre and Rondônia. The area between the River Abunã, which forms part of the border with Brazil, and the River Beni to the south is rich in seringueiras and has been traditionally tapped by Brazilian seringueiros. In the early 20's, when Schurtz visited the area as part of the United States Department of Commerce 'Crude Rubber Survey', he found that only 25% of the population were native Bolivians, 35% were Brazilians, 10% Peruvians, 8% Syrians,

1. See Table 3.5.1. overleaf.

Table 2.3.5. - Acre: Distribution of rural and urban population according to (1) the absolute population of each municipality, (2) as a % within the municipality and (3) as a % of the total state population.

Municipality.	1960.		1970.		1980.		
	Total.	Urban.	Rural.	Total.	Urban.	Rural.	Total.
Brasileia.	(1) 10,535	2,742	9,758	12,500	5,015	9,574	14,589
	(2) 100.00	21.94	78.06	100.00	34.38	65.62	100.00
	(3) 6.58	1.26	4.47	5.73	1.66	3.18	4.84
Xapuri.	(1) 13,382	2,029	11,598	13,627	3,122	11,570	14,692
	(2) 100.00	14.89	85.11	100.00	21.25	78.75	100.00
	(3) 8.35	0.93	5.32	6.25	1.04	3.84	4.88
Rio Branco	(1) 47,882	36,095	48,750	84,845	92,304	47,757	136,061
	(2) 100.00	42.54	57.46	100.00	67.84	32.16	100.00
	(3) 29.89	16.56	22.36	38.92	30.63	14.52	45.15
Sena	(1) 22,486	3,816	19,082	22,898	7,566	22,613	30,179
Madureira	(2) 100.00	16.67	83.33	100.00	25.07	74.93	100.00
	(3) 14.03	1.75	8.76	10.51	2.52	7.50	10.02
Subtotal	(1) 94,285	44,682	89,188	133,870	108,007	87,514	195,521
Purús.	(2) 100.00	33.38	66.62	100.00	55.24	44.76	100.00
	(3) 55.85	20.50	40.91	61.41	35.85	29.04	64.89

Continued...

Table 2.3.5. Continued.

Municipality.	1960.		1970.		1980.	
	Total.	Urban.	Rural.	Urban.	Rural.	Total.
Feijó.	(1) 14,091	2,178	13,708	4,179	15,374	19,571
	(2) 100.00	13.71	86.29	21.44	78.56	100.00
	(3) 8.80	1.00	6.28	1.39	5.10	6.49
Tarauacá.	(1) 20,193	3,860	20,197	6,903	21,455	28,358
	(2) 100.00	16.05	83.95	24.34	75.66	100.00
	(3) 12.60	1.77	9.27	2.29	7.12	9.41
Cruzeiro do Sul.	(1) 31,639	9,837	34,356	13,062	44,791	57,853
	(2) 100.00	22.26	77.74	22.58	77.42	100.00
	(3) 19.75	4.51	15.76	4.34	14.87	19.21
Subtotal Juruá.	(1) 65,923	15,875	68,261	24,162	81,620	105,782
	(2) 100.00	18.87	81.13	22.84	77.16	100.00
	(3) 41.15	7.28	31.31	8.02	27.09	35.11
Total Acre.	(1) 160,208	60,557	157,449	132,169	169,134	301,303
	(3) 100.00	27.78	72.22	43.87	56.13	100.00

Source: IBGE, Censo Demográfico, Acre, 1970 & 1980.

N.B. Municipalities have been maintained along the divisions of the 1970 Census for purposes of comparison.

5% Europeans, 2% Japanese and 15% miscellaneous.(1).

The Province lacks a highway system and communications between the provincial capital, Cobija, and the capital of the Republic, La Paz, are made via the daily air service managed by the Bolivian Air Force. The rubber produced in Pando has, therefore, been traditionally exported through Brasiléia, Acre, or Guajará Mirim, Rondônia, and there has been considerable friction in the past between the Bolivian and Brazilian authorities over the quantity of rubber that has passed through these two centres without first having been subject to Bolivian taxation.

Cobija is situated on the opposite bank of the River Acre to Brasiléia, a rowing boat is used to ferry persons in between the two towns in the winter, visitors have to wade across in the summer when the water is only ankle deep. Only Brazilian goods are found in the run down shops and the Brazilian cruzeiro is preferred to the Bolivian peso as the medium of exchange (as it is to the Peruvian sole in the town of Inapari which is situated on the Peruvian bank of the Acre opposite the Acrean town of Assis Brasil).

When the ranchers began to expel Acre's seringueiros from their land, the seringais of Bolivia were an obvious choice for the displaced population, many having relations working across the border on seringais managed by Brazilians. No official statistics are available, but it is estimated that between 1972 and 1978 over 10,000 Acrean seringueiros crossed the border in search of a colocação.(2).

1. Schurtz:1925:216.

2. Estimate given by CONTAG and the CPT in Acre. It is probable that this is an overestimate, but no Bolivian statistics are available as the period falls in between two censuses. Many Brazilian seringueiros returned to Acre when news arrived that INCRA was distributing land.

Those who migrated to Bolivia were principally unaccompanied males whose families either moved in with relatives or migrated to the shanty towns that sprang up around the periphery of the urban nuclei. One such shanty town is Sibéria, originally the site of the barracão of the now disactivated Seringal Sibéria and located on the left bank of the River Acre opposite the town of Xapuri. The inhabitants of Sibéria are all seringueiro families who, for a variety of reasons, no longer have a colocação in the interior of the municipality.

In a short field survey carried out in November, 1983, there were a total of 84 roughly constructed wooden huts in Sibéria with a resident population of just over 400 persons. Most of the huts (63) did not have piped mains water, this was drawn from the river or from one of the few wells. None had a drainage system, pits are dug for toilets and bathing takes place in the river or under a bucket of river water. During the rainy season, the pits overflow and the sewerage collects in pools outside of the huts until it finds a rivulet that will carry it down to the river.

There is no employment for the inhabitants of Sibéria, save from the few low paid manual tasks in the brick houses of Xapuri across the river, domestic servant or washerwoman. The lack of employment forces the men to seek work elsewhere, on the ranches or else in Bolivia, even though the level of exploitation on the Bolivian seringais is higher than it is/was in Acre. Firstly, the Brazilian seringueiros in Bolivia are forced to pay a high rent; secondly, the price given for rubber is much lower and the cost of goods sold in the barracão much higher than on the seringais of Acre; thirdly, the seringueiros suffer constant harassment from the Bolivian authorities and are subject to an annual tax per 'estrada' which Bolivian seringueiros are not.

Examples of this situation are given below, the first is a statement by an Acrean who had been a seringueiro in Bolivia for 37 years, the statement was made to the STR in Brasília when the seringueiro arrived there to enquire about the possibility of land on an INCRA project. The other two are interviews taken in the field in Pando Province in January, 1984.

"My name is Sebastião Bezerra da Souza. I am Brazilian, married, and 51 years of age. I have a wife and 10 children and I have spent 37 years working in Bolivia. My right eye was scarred after a fire and my other eye is bad after a life of smoking rubber. I am the son of an Arara Indian, my father was Jose Bezerra Sampaio... he was an Acrean Indian ... I was born in Acre, too... The Arara tribe disappeared during the wars between the tribes. I know many seringais from Placido de Castro to Bahia (near Assis Brasil). There the military steal our rubber, they come with machine guns and ask who is Brazilian. Everything is a threat over there. I have one blind eye, a hernia, one bad leg, but even so, with my sons I produced 2,218 kilos of rubber last year. I took it to the barracão of Senhor Roberto Silva and was still in debt for 2,400 cruzeiros. Because of this I decided not to work for a patrão this year. I work further out (from the river) and I have already produced 1,080 kilos, that was between April and October. I sell to one person, I sell to another. At least the Brazilian marreteiros are paying 140 cruzeiros a kilo, the Bolivians only give you their small change. For a long time now, I have been wanting to tell this to someone in authority who might intercede for us. From Placido de Castro to here, I know many seringais: Fortaleza, Santa Rosa, Colonia, Buena Hora, Continental, Copacabana, Mercedes, Mucuripa, Pavilão, São João do Caramano, União, Bela Flor, Campo Esperanca, Costa Rica, Brasil, Riacho, Marina, Adelia. These are the 19 seringais on which I have worked. They are all populated by Brazilians." (1).

"It was between 1972 and 1978 that most of us Acreanos came to Bolivia. It was then that they started selling the seringais and the people from the South came to buy them. I used to work on Seringal Porvir (Brasileia), but, when the land was sold, they said that they didn't want to have anything to do with rubber, that their work was with cattle and grass... Well, you can't eat grass... we were forced off our colocação and so I came to Bolivia. I had to pay a rent in advance so I took my rifle and watch as payment. Only Brazilians have to pay a rent... I still pay rent now, 50% of my production, just

Statement made to the STR at Brasília on the 20th October, 1981.

like a meieiro (1), but I also have to pay for goods in the barracão... Since I have worked here, I have never had a credit balance in my current account. I had to send for my wife and four children because they lived with her mother in Brasileia and we didn't have enough to pay for food. At least on the seringal I can grow some rice and beans and a little corn." (2).

"It is very precarious over here... especially with the price of merchandise in the barracão. The patrão buys his goods in Brasileia and brings them out here to sell to us seringueiros. A can of cooking oil (900ml) costs 1,000 cruzeiros in Brasileia here it costs 3,400 cruzeiros. It is the same with other things. Powdered milk (454gms) is 1,600 there, it is 3,800 here and coffee costs 2,400 a kilo here and only 700 or 750 there. What can I do? I have to feed my children, but, working here, I can't save so that I can buy a colcação back in Xapuri. I am always in debt." (3).

In April, 1983, the Bolivian Customs in Cobija, frustrated in their attempts to collect taxes on rubber passing over the frontier, introduced a 20% tax on the rubber production of Brazilian seringueiros in Pando Province. If a seringueiro refused, then all his possessions were confiscated including the stock of rubber that he had already produced, his rifle, his household goods etc. During the months that followed, there was a regular stream of arrivals at the STR office in Brasília complaining of their treatment at the hands of the Bolivian Authorities. The imposition of this new tax on top of the already crippling rent and poor rate of exchange in the barracão made it impossible for many seringueiros to continue and so they arrived in Brasília in transit for the shanty towns of Rio Branco and the other urban areas. (4).

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1. Meieiro - a seringueiro who works for his board and 50% of his production. Generally a single man saving to buy his own colcação.
 2. Field interview, Seringal Santa Cruz, Pando Province.
 3. Field interview, Seringal Floresta, Pando Province.
 4. Data collected from informal interviews STR, Brasília.

3.2.2. The urban crisis.

The demographic occupation of Acre, based as it was on an essentially rural activity, extractivism, that necessarily involved the dispersal of the population over a wide area, did not develop a significant urban network until after the Second World War, even in 1980 more than 50% of its population lived in the countryside. Such urban centres that did exist in the earlier period were entrepôts whose economic activity revolved around the export of rubber and the import of subsistence goods.

Following the crisis of the rubber economy in the 1920's, many of these townships entered into a state of decline from which many of them have not recovered. Sena Madureira, which boasted of its electric tram cars and street lighting at the height of the rubber boom, is now a small town of just over 7,000 inhabitants most of whom live in small wooden huts in the shanty towns on the edge of the city. Xapuri, Tarauacá, Feijó and Brasiléia have all ceased to be the commercial centres that they once were, many of the large warehouses that were managed by the 'Casas Aviadores' (1) are now partitioned off into temporary accommodation for prostitutes and displaced families.(2).

Some townships have almost disappeared completely. In the 1920's, Porto Válder and Taumaturgo both possessed a courthouse, a school, a post office, and their own newspapers. Now, even though the maps published by the IBGE locates them as urban centres of significance (Vilas), their populations have declined at every fall in the price of rubber. Porto

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1. Casas Aviadores - Merchant houses that advanced credit to the seringalistas in the form of cash, tools, subsistence goods etc.
 2. Field observations.

Válter consists now of a group of 69 huts with a resident population of 331; Taumaturgo has 15 huts with a population of 69.(1).

Thus, when the inhabitants of the rural areas began to be expelled from their *colocações*, it was only Rio Branco, the capital, that had conditions that would sustain migrant absorption to any significant level. The following table shows that, while urban expansion has been a continuing process, it accelerated after 1975.

Table 2.3.6. - Acre : Distribution of population according to rural and urban areas, 1940 - 1980.

Year.	Absolute Population.			% Population.		
	Total.	Urban.	Rural.	Total.	Urban.	Rural.
1940.	79,768	14,138	65,630	100.00	17.72	82.28
1950	114,755	21,272	93,483	100.00	18.53	81.47
1960	158,852	33,534	125,318	100.00	21.11	78.99
1970	215,299	59,307	155,992	100.00	27.55	72.45
1975	260,200	81,970	178,230	100.00	31.50	68.50
1980	301,605	132,174	169,431	100.00	43.82	56.18

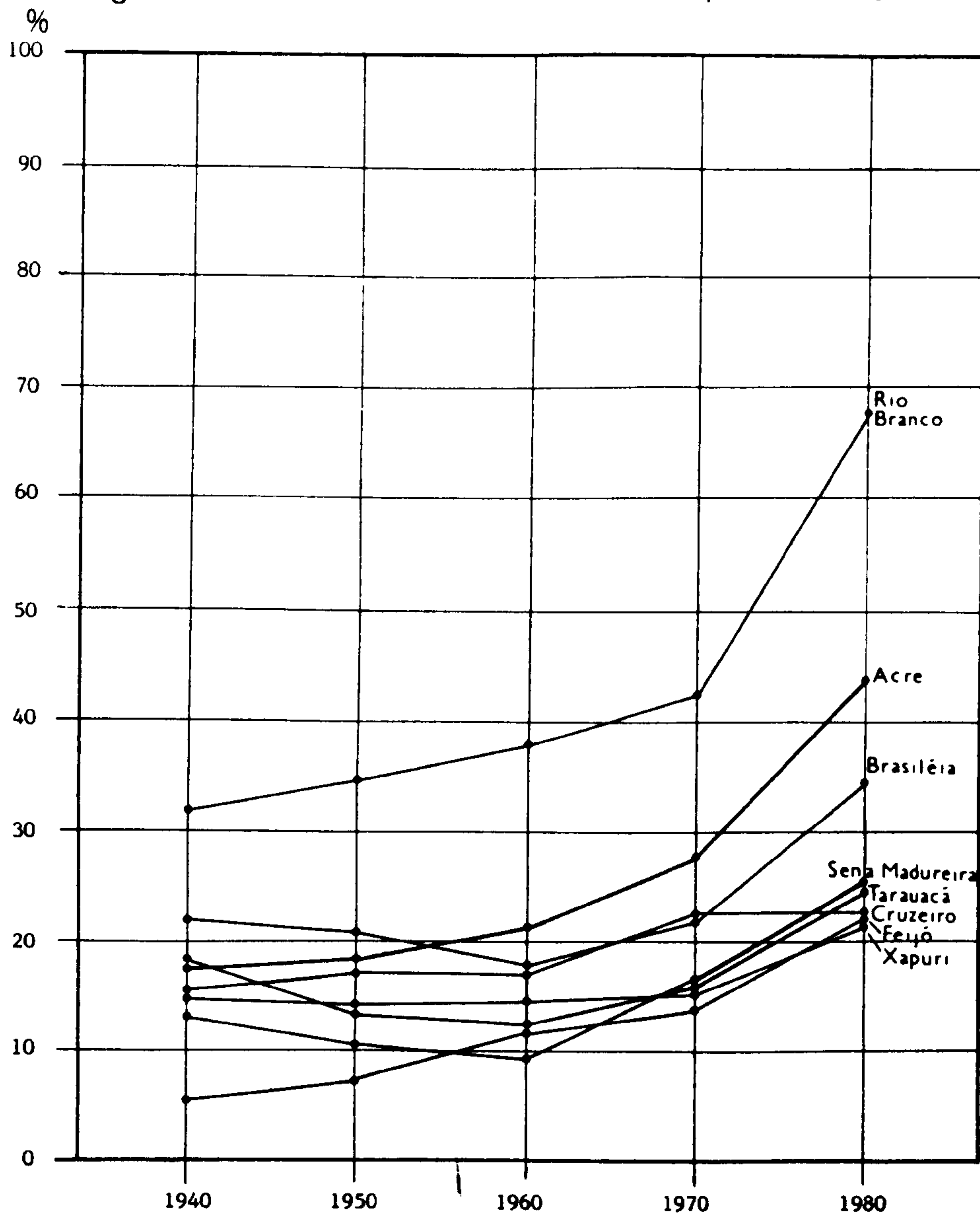
Source: Governo do estado do Acre, Anuário Estatístico, 1981.

The municipality of Rio Branco bore the brunt of this urban expansion, its urban population (2) rose from 36,095 in 1970 to 92,304 in 1980, an increase of 155.7% in just 10 years. The statistics for the capital itself are 34,531 in 1970 to 87,449 in 1980, an increase of 153.8%. The Figure overleaf demonstrates that this expansion was not mirrored by Acre's other municipalities. While the urban population of the

1. IBGE, Censo Demográfico, Acre, 1980.

2. Including sub-urban population and those smaller urban nuclei in addition to the capital city itself.

Figure 6 - Acre: Index of Urbanisation, 1940 - 1980.



Source : Anuário Estatístico do Acre, 1981.

*The municipal divisions that were in operation in 1970 have been used for the 1980 figures so as to allow comparisons to be made.

municipality of Rio Branco as a whole was 67.84% in 1980, all the other municipalities, with the exception of Brasiléia (1), are clustered in the 20 - 30% band.

According to CEDEPLAR's study of migration in the state of Acre (2), the city of Rio Branco enjoyed a vegetative growth rate of 3% per annum during the decade of the 70's, that is an annual geometric increase in population of 3 per 100 persons, taking in to account the live birth rate and the death rate. Table 3.5.3. shows that the real rate for the municipality of Rio Branco was 9.39%. This suggests that the urban explosion during the 70's was primarily due to in-migration.

It is obvious that part of this in-migration may have come from outside of the state. The 1980 Census of the IBGE puts the number of migrants who lived outside of the state in 1970 at 15,797 of which 9,516 migrated to the municipality of Rio Branco. Within the state, the number of inter-municipal migrants was 17,331 of which 12,752 or almost 74% migrated into the municipality of Rio Branco.(3).

The principal donor areas were the rural areas of the state as Table 3.5.3. illustrates. If the vegetative growth rate of the capital of 3% is used as a yardstick, the urban sectors of all the municipalities, with the exception of Cruzeiro do Sul, show an annual rate of population growth in excess of the vegetative growth rate. This signifies that out-migration is less than in-migration. The low figure, 2.84%, for Cruzeiro do Sul suggests that there has been considerable out-migration

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1. Brasiléia is a special case in that it is the location of several new INCRA resettlement projects which are at present being occupied mainly by families from outside of the state. The latter reside in the urban area until allocated a plot. There were 1,150 out of state migrants resident in 1980 of which 410 were from Paraná.
 2. CEDEPLAR:1979:174. 3. IBGE, Censo Demográfico, Acre, 1980.

Table 2.3.7. - Acre: Demographic growth of rural and urban areas according to municipality, 1970 - 1980.

Municipality (1).	Absolute Population growth.			Rate of Annual Increase (2).		
	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural	Total
Brasília.	2,273	-184	2,089	6.03	-0.19	1.54
Xapuri.	1,093	- 28	1,065	4.31	-0.02	0.75
Rio Branco.	56,209	-4,993	51,216	9.39	-1.08	4.72
Sena Madureira.	3,750	3,531	7,281	6.84	1.70	2.76
Feijó.	2,019	1,666	3,685	6.56	1.15	2.09
Tarauacá	3,043	1,258	4,301	5.81	0.60	1.64
Cruzeiro do Sul.	3,225	10,435	13,660	2.84	2.65	2.69
Acre Total.	71,612	11,685	83,297	7.80	0.72	3.24

Source : IBGE, Censo Demográfico, Acre, 1980.

(1). The municipal divisions that were in operation in 1970 have been used for the 1980 figures to enable comparisons to be made.

(2) The formula used to calculate the rate of annual increase was: $r = \frac{1}{t} \cdot \text{Log } e \frac{P^1}{P^0} \cdot 100$

from the city, either via the river network to Manaus in the neighbouring state of Manaus, or by air to the state capital, Rio Branco.(1).

The rural sectors of all the municipalities experienced an extremely low rate of annual population growth and three municipalities, Brasiléia, Xapuri and Rio Branco, show a negative growth rate in the rural sector, exactly those areas with the highest incidence of rural conflict during the 1970's. The exception again is Cruzeiro do Sul, the municipality least affected by rural conflict, which had a rural population growth rate of 2.65%, only slightly lower than its urban growth rate.

The state authorities were totally unprepared for the influx of such large contingents of migrants into the urban areas. In 1976, which was after the conflict had begun, the state authorities predicted that by 1980 the urban population of the state would have risen to 92,800(2) whereas the figure actually reached was 132,174, an actual annual growth rate of 8.4%, not 4.5%. Also, the urban labour market was incapable of expanding in the short term and thus unable to absorb the large numbers of arriving migrants.

Acre's present urban employment profile has been shaped by a variety of distinct though inter-related phenomenon. Firstly, urban expansion, as has been shown, is of relatively recent appearance. This was in part due to the concentration of labour on extractivist production in the rural sector. This signifies that the demand for manufactured goods was not met by local industry, but through importation from Europe and other regions of Brazil. Thus, while this developed the commercial

1. There are no exits from Cruzeiro do Sul by land. Both the BR-364 to Rio Branco and the TransAmazonica are untrafficable for most of the year. 2. Anuário Estatístico do Acre, 1981.

sector, manufacturing concentrated on traditional activities such as furniture making and ceramics. This infant secondary sector was not capable of absorbing more than a fraction of the urban unemployed, expanding as it was with the in-flow of migrants from the rural areas.

As has been shown, between 1975 and 1980, the time of intense struggle in the countryside, Acre's urban population grew from 81,970 to 132,174, an increase of 50,204. During the same period, as Table 2.3.9. overleaf shows, the secondary sector generated a mere 717 new jobs. According to the 1980 Industrial Census, the breakdown of Acre's industrial labour force relative to the size of industrial unit was as follows:

Table 2.3.8. - Acre: Industrial Labour Force, 1980.

Size of Labour Force.	No. of Industrial Units. (a).	Total Labour Force. (b).	Average Labour Force. (b/a).
From 5 - 9	55	353	6.4
" 10 - 19	30	429	14.3
" 20 - 49	24	693	28.9
" 50 - 99	5	366	73.2
Total.	114	1,841	16.1

Source: IBGE, Sinopse Preliminar do Censo Industrial, Acre, 1980.

The majority of these industrial units are located in the capital itself. Table 3.5.6. gives the spatial distribution of both industrial units and the industrial labour force for 1970, 1975 and 1980. It shows, not only that both industrial units and labour are concentrated in Rio Branco, 55.1% and 70.9% respectively in 1980, but that the trend is towards a greater concentration of both in the capital.

Table 2.3.9. - Acre : Manufacturing Industry, 1960 - 1980 , according to the number of Industrial Units (a), Number of Employees (b), & average labour force (b/a).

	1960.		1970.		1975		1980.	
	a.	b/a.	a.	b/a.	a.	b.	a.	b/a.
Non-metallic Minerals.	23	147 6.39	50	303 6.06	59	367 6.22	34	397 11.68
Wood.	47	117 2.49	20	76 3.80	22	222 10.09	36	567 15.75
Furniture.	21	44 2.10	10	*	12	37 3.08	3	47 15.67
Food/Drink.	47	108 2.30	69	210 3.04	60	251 4.18	21	337 16.05
Rubber.	0	0 0.00	1	*	2	*	5	239 47.80
Others.	12	28 2.33	23	*	12	*	15	254 16.93
Total.	150	444 2.96	172	726 4.22	165	1124 6.81	114	1841 16.15

Source: IBGE, Censo Industrial, 1970 & 1975, and Sinopse Preliminar do Censo Industrial, 1980.

* No data available.

Table 2.3.10.- Acre : Spatial Distribution of Industrial Units and Labour Force, 1970 - 1980, as a %.

Municipality (1).	% No. of Units.		% No. of Employees.			
	1970	1975	1980	1970	1975	1980
Rio Branco.	29.7	53.4	55.1	43.1	64.8	70.9
Cruzeiro do Sul.	25.6	12.6	15.9	18.9	11.0	10.8
Sena Madureira.	18.6	9.5	7.5	12.5	6.2	5.9
Brasília.	4.6	6.8	8.7	3.7	2.4	1.7
Tarauacá.	5.8	6.8	3.6	8.2	7.2	4.2
Xapuri.	6.4	6.1	3.6	5.3	3.9	3.9
Feijó.	9.3	4.8	5.6	8.3	4.5	2.6
Total.	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: IBGE, Censo Econômico, Acre, 1970, and Governo do estado do Acre, Cadastro Industrial, 1975 & 1980.

(1) The municipal divisions that were in force in 1970 are used throughout.

As noted, these small workshops are based on traditional industries mainly connected with the building industry and food production. The 1980 distribution of industrial labour force and industrial units in the Rio Branco urban area is given below:

Table 2.3.11. - Rio Branco: Industrial activities, 1980.

Activity.	% of Industrial Units.	% of Labour Force.
Brickworks & Potteries.	24.0	23.2
Furniture.	16.5	2.5
Sawmills & Coffin Making.	12.9	25.4
Food/Drink.	30.9	23.1
Others.	100.0	100.0

Source: Governo do estado do Acre, Cadastro Industrial, 1980.

The labour absorption capacity of Acre's manufacturing industry has altered little during the early '80's. With reference to Rio Branco, the Director of SENAI-ACRE (1) stated in December, 1982:

"We have a list of 144 industries registered...which correspond to approximately 4,900 employees. What we would call a large firm here is a factory with 80 employees...Our medium size firms employ between 15 and 20, and the small firms employ 5." (2).

A second factor in the shaping of Acre's urban employment profile

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1. SENAI - National service for Assistance to Industry.
 2. Industria e Produtividade, Ano 15, No.165, Jan, 1983.

is the tradition of low technological activity and the lack of educational and training facilities in the rural sector, a factor that is also significant in the urban areas. The Censuses of 1970 and 1980 put the level of literacy (the ability to read and write) in the rural areas at 22.93% and 25.25% respectively. The figures for the urban population were 67.68% and 70.97%. These are probably overestimates, in many instances the ability to sign one's name is taken as evidence of literacy. However, this restricted the migrant to the bottom end of the urban labour market, to low paid/unskilled jobs. The only two sectors that were in a phase of expansion in this period and which were able to absorb labour of this type were the commercial and bureaucratic sectors, although this, again, was primarily in Rio Branco.

The development of the commercial sector through the importation of manufactured goods and subsistence items has already been noted, as has the boost to commercial activity in the capital given by the completion of the Brasília-Rio Branco highway in 1979. During the 1970's, demand for imported manufactured goods increased for a variety of reasons : agricultural equipment and products for the ranching sector (tractors, chain-saws, chemical defoliants etc.); luxury goods and imported foodstuffs, particularly for the middle class/ bureaucratic element of the population. In addition, the greater % of urban population relative to the population of the state as a whole created a crisis in the provision of foodstuffs, not only because of the rising numbers of urban poor who needed to be fed, but also because of the smaller % of direct producers in the countryside. Thus, large quantities of staples needed to be imported.

The expansion of commercial activity was paralleled by the expansion of the bureaucracy. The elevation of Acre to statehood in 1962 and the creation of the various programmes for Amazônian development led to the implantation of a plethora of federal assistencial and technical agencies in the state and municipal capitals. These were followed by a rapid expansion in banking and other facilities to service this section of the urban population. The shortage of locally trained personnel, in part due to the lack of educational and training facilities noted above, signified that for many of the technical and administrative functions, staff were recruited from outside of the state.

In addition, the number of bureaucratic employees was greatly increased during the run-up to the 1982 elections when the political machine of the ruling PDS party handed out jobs for political favours, many of them sinecures. For example, the hospital in Brasiléia employs three ambulance drivers to work a rotation of three eight-hour shifts. The hospital has no ambulance. The 'drivers' stated that they received the appointments for work done during the PDS campaign. Similarly, in Tarauacá, the small wooden one-room school on the bank of the river has one class teacher and 43 pupils. It also employs 11 'serventes', a carpenter, a glazier, a caretaker, a driver etc., all on full salaries.(1).

According to the present Governor of Acre, Nabor Rocha Júnior, in July of 1983, the number of Federal and State employees had reached a total of 25,000, or approximately 18% of the economically active population.(2).

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1. Field interviews in Brasiléia and Tarauacá.
 2. Field interview, Rio Branco.

The state itself, then, is by far the largest employer in Acre. The vast majority of bureaucratic personnel are based in the capital and it is around this group that a large sector of the economy of the city, and therefore the state, revolves. Firstly, the bureaucracy directly employs technical, administrative as well as non-skilled staff such as drivers etc. Secondly, it is this sector which has created a demand in the commercial sector for unskilled low paid shop assistants, warehousemen etc. as well as the bureaucrats themselves being the direct employers of home guards, nannies, washer women, odd job men and other domestic labour.

The following table shows the importance of the tertiary sector as an employer of labour in relation to the secondary sector in Rio Branco:

Table 2.3.12. - Rio Branco: Distribution of Urban Labour according to sector, 1970 & 1975. (as a%) (1)

Sector.	% of labour force.	
	1970	1975.
Industry.	16.5	17.2
Commerce	63.4	62.1
Services.	20.1	20.7
Total.	100.0	100.0

Source: Governo do Estado do Acre, Diagnóstico Socio-Econômico do estado do Acre, 1978.

This distribution is reflected by the data compiled in two studies concerned with the employment prospects of rural-urban migrants in

1. The figures for 1980 had not been published.

the Rio Branco area. The first was undertaken in 1977 by FUNBESA (1) using a sample of the heads of migrant families in two of the largest migrant absorbing districts of the city, Bahia and Palheiral. While the sample is small (136 heads of families in Bahia and 240 in Palheiral) and information regarding the methodology of the sampling procedure not available, the figures point to a high proportion of migrant heads of families working in the tertiary sector.

Table 2.3.13.- Occupational distribution of heads of families in the migrant districts of Bahia & Palheiral, 1977, as a % of sample.(2).

Occupation of head of family.	Bahia.	Palheiral.
Agricultural day-labourer.	11.0	32.9
Building.	33.5	11.6
Domestic.	12.5	11.7
Commerce.	6.7	2.9
Other Unskilled Labour.	13.2	4.2
Others.	23.1	36.7
Total.	100.0	100.0

Source: FUNBESA-Acre.

It is interesting to note the greater % of agricultural labourers in Palheiral and the greater % of construction workers in Bahia. The two districts are adjacent to each other and both were established in the mid-70's, but Bahia is marginally (two years) older. This may account for the fact that the labour force of Palheiral still retains

1. FUNBESA - Fundação de Bem Estar Social - Acre.

2. For a spatial location of these districts, see Map 3.1.

its labour connections with the countryside, while that of Bahia has become more absorbed into essentially urban occupations.

The findings of FUNBESA are echoed by the second study, that of Renato Nunes da Silva of 1981. Da Silva uses the migrant population of Rio Branco as a whole as his universe, but again his sample is small, 272 'economically active heads of families'. The following table from Da Silva shows that whereas the majority of his migrant sample (57%) formerly worked in the primary sector, after migration 82% of the sample were employed in the tertiary sector.

Table 2.3.14. - Rio Branco: Occupation of Economically Active Heads of Families prior to and after migration.

Sector.	Occupation prior to migration.	Occupation in 1981.
Primary.	57	5
Secondary.	5	13
Tertiary.	38	82
Total.	100	100

Source: Da Silva: 1981: 125.

While providing a useful indication of migrant employment patterns in the urban environment, the studies of FUNBESA and Da Silva present a somewhat distorted view. Although the FUNBESA study concentrates on the more recent migrant absorbing districts, its limitation of the sample to 'heads of families', male or female, means that its findings do not take into account the varied economic input of other family members. In addition, the heading entitled 'others' is exceptionally large (23.1% of the Bahia sample and 36.7% of Palheiral's) and aggregates the unemployed, the underemployed and those who are

employed but do not 'fit' into the other categories.

Da Silva's study suffers from the same problems as that of FUNBESA and is more restrictive in the sense that his sample is limited to 'economically active heads of families'. Also, his sample is spread through all of Rio Branco's districts and thus takes in both the earlier settled (and perhaps voluntary) and more recently settled migrant groups without distinguishing between them. Both studies fail to discuss the social aspects of the migrant family's life in the shanty towns of Rio Branco.

It was noted above that the massive influx of migrants into the urban areas during the 70's found the authorities totally unprepared and unable to meet the social needs of the migratory contingent. The first problem to confront the migrant family is housing. During the 1970's and into the 1980's, there were two distinct building explosions in the capital. To the north of the city on the higher ground there was a rapid development of brick built houses for the middle classes, the public functionaries and those engaged in commerce. These houses all have gardens, piped water, sanitation, electro-domestic equipment and, frequently, air conditioning.

To the west of the city centre, on the low ground near to the river, are the migrant reception areas, densely crowded wooden shacks constructed on swampy wasteland by the migrants themselves with roughly hewn wooden furniture, no gardens, no sanitation, no power supply and often without water. The following table shows the rapid demographic growth of the principal migrant receiving districts of Rio Branco.

Table 2.3.15. - Demographic growth of principal migrant receiving districts of Rio Branco, 1975 & 1981.

District.	1975 (b)	1981 (b)	b/a
1. Aeroporto Velho.	455	2,330	5.12
2. Palheiral.	476	4,132	8.68
3. Bahia.	1,240	3,212	2.59
4. João Eduardo.	0	2,351	-
5. Cidade Nova.	2,055	5,504	2.68
6. Quinze.	1,707	5,589	3.27
7. Triângulo.	471	1,456	3.09
8. 6 de Agosto.	1,806	5,172	2.86

Source: SUCAM Census of 1975 and Governo do Estado do Acre, Anuário Estatístico, 1981.

The above shows that, in the short space of six years, these peripheral districts expanded rapidly. As one area filled up, so the migrants colonised adjacent areas. Whilst some of the new residents were the married children of the inhabitants of older established districts, many were those who had been expelled from their *colocações* in the countryside.

The district of João Eduardo is a typical example of this form of urban land invasion. In 1979, the area was a swampy wasteland adjacent to the expanding migrant districts of Bahia and Palheiral (See Map. 11.). The area had been used as a dumping ground for household waste and also as an escape route for small time criminals fleeing from the police. Towards the end of 1979, after a third person had been murdered and dumped on the wasteland, the residents

MAP II

Rio Branco

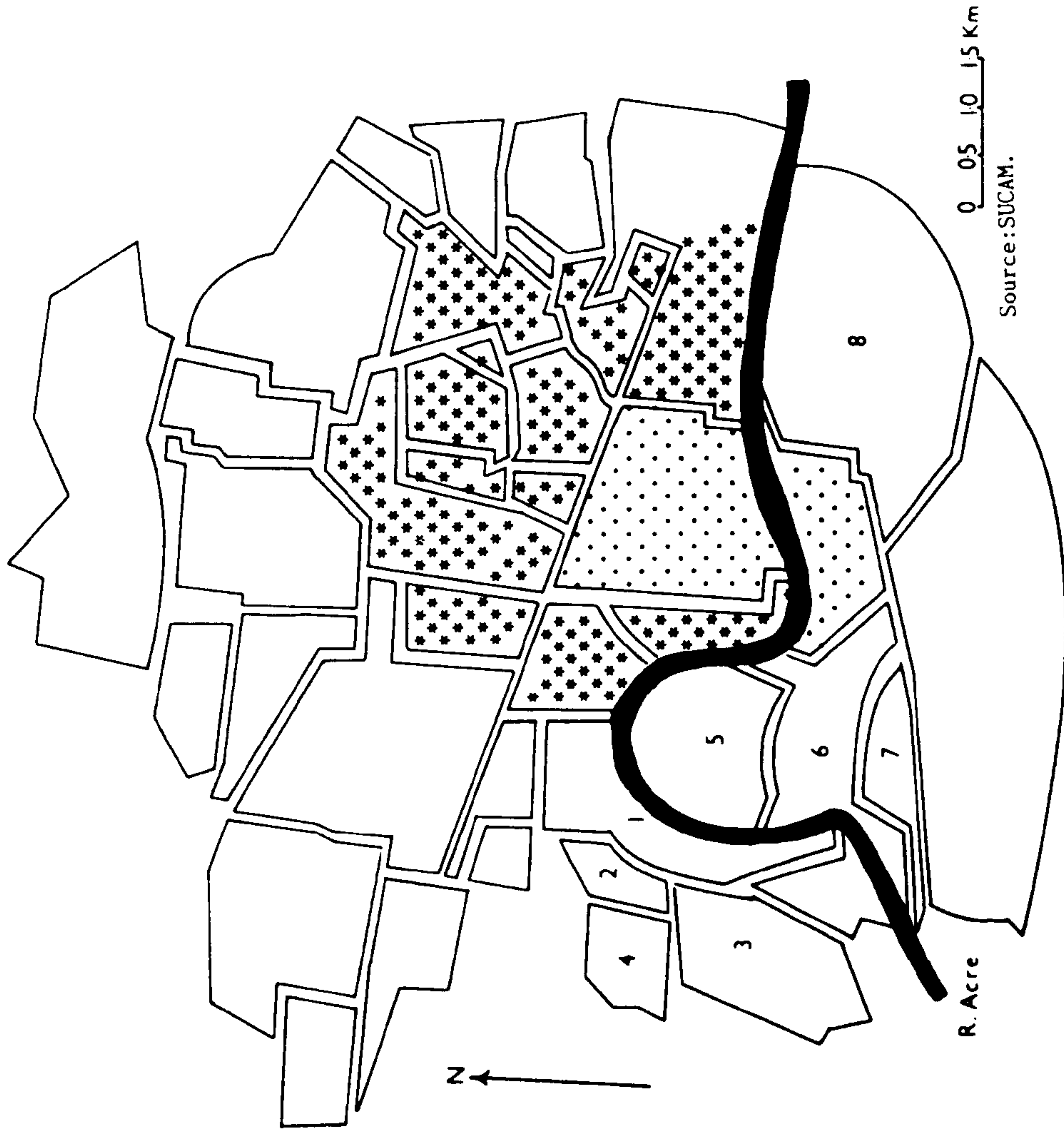
Principal Areas of
Migrant Absorption, 1975 - 1984.

- 1 Aeroporto Velho
- 2 Paiheiral
- 3 Bahia
- 4 João Eduardo
- 5 Cidade Nova
- 6 Quinze
- 7 Triângulo
- 8 6 de Agosto

 Urban Area, 1920

 Urban Area, 1950

 Urban Area, 1980



of Palheiral and Bahia joined together in 'mutirão' and cleared the area of trees and undergrowth. Within two weeks the frameworks of wooden shacks began to appear and by 1981 the population resident on the former wasteland had reached 2,351. The houses are like those in Sibéria, Xapuri, single story wooden constructions on stilts, many with corrugated iron roofs that deafen when it rains. There is no drainage system and no water supply. There is no school and no health post. The narrow paths that meander in between the huts are covered in a choking dust in the summer and ankle deep in mud in the rainy season. Only those houses which lie close to the main pathway between João Eduardo and its neighbours, Bahia and Palheiral, have electricity. None have areas where kitchen gardens can be planted.(1).

According to officials in the City Mayor's Office, the number of land invasions in the Rio Branco urban area averages approximately 70 families per month, or 5,000 persons per annum (2). Apart from the obvious strain on municipal resources, in many cases the local authorities cannot resolve the problems of such areas. This is because many of the invasions are on land that is the property of a third party. The municipal authorities, unlike INCRA, have no powers to expropriate land in the 'social interest' and must await the outcome of often lengthy court proceedings. During this time it is illegal for the municipal authorities to install social facilities such as water and sewers, or schools.(3)

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1. Field observations and interviews.
 2. Field interviews various staff of Mayor's office.
 3. Ibid.

In addition to the difficulties of finding employment and adequate housing, the urban poor, migrants included, face the problem of severe food shortages. It is paradoxical that the winter months in Acre, precisely the time of year when corn and rice are being harvested throughout the state, are the months of food shortages in the urban areas. The overriding problem that has yet to be successfully resolved is that of the transportation of the surplus of small producers to the urban centres, particularly Rio Branco. While the rivers are navigable in the winter months, these flow in a northeasterly direction towards Manaus not to Rio Branco. The highway network, with the exception of the BR-317 Rio Branco - Brasília, is trafficable only in the dry season from July to early October, i.e., the period of clearing the land for planting, not the time of harvesting.

Since World War 2, Acre has consistently been a net importer of food-stuffs. Each winter, plane loads of essentials are flown into the capital from the Centre-South loaded with potatoes, tomatoes, carrots, cauliflowers, cabbages, garlic, onions, and fruits such as apples, pears and grapes as well as crops that are grown locally, but in insufficient quantities to satisfy demand such as oranges, sweet-potatoes, paw-paws, pineapples and bananas. According to a survey undertaken by the Acrean state government in 1978, the average cost of a selection of these imported items was 600% higher than in the other state capitals of the Brazilian federation.(1).

The food crisis is not limited to Rio Branco, the other townships also suffer from periodical shortages. The summer of 1983 was catastrophic

1. Secretaria do Desenvolvimento Agrário, Acre.

for local food production, it was exceptionally wet and many small producers were unable to complete the traditional slash and burn process for the clearing of subsistence plots prior to planting. What little was harvested was reserved for 'on-farm' consumption. Of Acre's smaller townships, Feijó and Tarauacá were the hardest hit. During the month of December of 1983, the price of rice rocketed from 400 cruzeiros per kilo to 1,500 cruzeiros, and beans rose from 250 cruzeiros to 1,200. In November of the same year, the state government was forced to import 1,800 tonnes of rice from neighbouring Rondônia to be sold at subsidised prices in the markets of Rio Branco to avoid threatened food riots. The train of lorries took six weeks to cover the 580 kilometres from Porto Velho, Rondônia, to Rio Branco because the BR-364 was awash in several places.(1).

State government schemes to resolve this situation have consistently failed. In September 1981, a horticultural complex was constructed alongside the BR-364 with the specific object of growing garden produce for the population of the capital. Thirty houses were constructed along with a storehouse, an office, residential buildings for technical staff; tractors and other farming implements were supplied and the whole area irrigated. Of the original 30 families that occupied the plots, only 9 were left by April, 1983, and these had all reverted to subsistence agriculture for auto-consumption.

Of the reasons given by those who remained for the failure of the project, two were regarded as root causes: firstly, the lack of a permanently trafficable road, the project was constructed 63 kilometres

1. Field observations.

away from Rio Branco on the BR-364 which was impassable after the first rains in October, thus preventing the commercialisation of the product; secondly, and directly related to the first, the occupants were unable to meet the interest payments for the credit that they had received for seeds, fertilizers and equipment. Many of those who left simply abandoned their plots and returned to Rio Branco. On a visit to the site in April 1983, most of the abandoned plots were overgrown with scrub, the houses were in a state of collapse and farming implements were laying rusty in the warehouse.(1).

A second horticultural complex was completed in February, 1983, near to Acre's second city of Cruzeiro do Sul. It was ready to be occupied, houses had been constructed and serviced with water and electricity, the plots had been marked out and cleared of trees, and irrigation work had been completed. By July, 1983, it still had no occupants. This was because the state authorities, armed with the knowledge of what had happened to the previous horticultural complex and also aware of the growing criticism amongst the rural populace that rural projects (particularly those managed by INCRA) were being occupied by migrants from outside of the state, decided to restrict access to the complex to those who were Acreanos, either native or with substantial residence in the state, and who also had horticultural experience. No-one was found in the Cruzeiro do Sul area that matched this dual qualification and by February, 1974, the problem had not been resolved and the forest had begun to take over the plots.(2).

1. Field observations.

2. " " and interviews with Director and technical personnel of SENAR-Cruzeiro do Sul (Serviço Nacional de Assistência Rural). It is interesting to note that of SENAR's technical team of 7, the Director and 3 others were from the state of Paraíba, the rest were from Pará & Bahia. None had been in Acre more than 6 months.

The failure of the horticultural projects and also those of INCRA (which will be discussed in the next chapter) and the subsequent necessity to import essential foodstuffs at high prices, has placed a crippling burden on the urban poor, even those who have some form of employment. In November of 1983, the official minimum salary in Acre was 52,000 cruzeiros per month, but many families of the shanty towns earned less than this. Given a rent of 15,000 cruzeiros a month for a one-roomed wooden shack without sanitation, but with a water supply and electricity, and an additional cost of 6,000 cruzeiros for two containers of butane gas for cooking during the month, this does not leave much for the purchase of food. In a field interview in the district of Palheiral, Rio Branco, in December, 1983, a 28 year old mother of 5 children explained how she managed on the weekly food allowance that the family received from her husband's odd-jobbing work:

"We have 6,00 cruzeiros to spend on food every Sunday in the market. I wait in the queue to get 5 kilos of rice sold by the government at 350 cruzeiros a kilo and 3 kilos of beans at the same price. This makes 2,800 cruzeiros which leaves me with 3,200. Instead of buying cooking oil, which is expensive, I buy 200 cruzeiros worth of beef dripping... that leaves 3,000. I also buy 5 kilos of macaxeira (1) at 100 cruzeiros a kilo and 3 kilos of bones to boil with the beans... I also buy 2 kilos of farinha (2) as well. This has to last until the following Sunday, when I buy the same again... Eggs, meat, milk, fruit and vegetables?... We haven't bought those in a long time." (3).

Many of the residents of Rio Branco's outlying districts do not have the ready cash to purchase food items in the city's central markets, apart from during the first two weeks of the month when the residue

1. Macaxeira, a species of Manioc, a root crop boiled and eaten like a potato.

2. Farinha, cassava flour.

3. Field interview, Palheiral, Rio Branco.

of the monthly wage is still available to be drawn upon. For this group, the last two weeks of the month are spent buying foodstuffs on credit from one of the many small stores that dot the shanty towns. These stores are generally a small room appended to the side of a shack, some specialise in the sale of cachaça, the local sugar cane spirit, others sell food items on credit, but at very high prices. The debt has to be paid off at the beginning of the month, but this leaves the family with little with which to survive the rest of the month and thus they are forced to buy goods on credit and so the process continues. The following table gives a comparison of the prices of essential goods in December, 1983, between the central market of Rio Branco and the credit stores in the district of Palheiral.

Table 2.3.16. - Rio Branco: Comparison of price of staple food items, December, 1983. (in cruzeiros).

Food Item.	Price in Central Market.(a).	Price in Palheiral (b).	$\frac{b}{a}$ as %.
Rice (kilo)	350	800	2.29
Beans (kilo)	350	750	2.14
Powdered Milk (454gm tin)	1,200	1,800	1.50
Dried Meat (Kilo)	1,600	2,500	1.56
Cooking Oil (900mm)	1,450	2,200	1.52
Coffee (kilo)	1,800	2,650	1.47
Total Cost of Group of Items.	6,750	10,700	1.47

Source: Field Survey using a sample of 10 traders from each location. Prices were found to be relatively standardised among each group.

In late 1983, small co-operatives were created in several of Rio Branco's shanty town districts (Bahia, Palheiral, João Eduardo and Quinze) with the object of purchasing large quantities of food items from wholesalers in the city. This would, firstly, cut out the middlemen of the district and, secondly, act as a hedge against inflation which was in excess of 200% per annum at this time. These are still in their infancy and, in the initial period, were unable to cope with the problem that the majority of the families of such districts still buy food from the credit stores and thus were unable to pay in advance for a month's supply even though the costs were much lower (up to 60%). Several organisations, among them the Church and Oxfam, have begun to try and resolve this problem by giving loans for the initial purchase of stock.(1).

The future, however, remains bleak for the vast majority of Acre's urban population. It seems unlikely that the state will be able to develop its urban employment market to any significant extent in the near future, nor the necessary improvements to the road network. In addition, there are few prospects of the migrant population returning to the land as the next chapter will demonstrate. Meanwhile, the shanty town districts of Rio Branco continue to expand as do crime and prostitution as a means of surviving the crisis. In the words of Ulysses Guimarães, the President of the PMDB party:

"There are two Brazils. Those who cannot sleep because they are hungry, and those who cannot sleep because they worry about what the hungry may do." (2).

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1. Field interviews, the Church, Oxfam's Field Director, and co-operative members, Rio Branco.
 2. Quoted in 'The Guardian', 25th April, 1984.

3.3. The ecological question.

The Brazilian Regime's programmes for the 'development' of Amazônia via the construction of a vast network of arterial highways to facilitate the resettlement of thousands of peasant farmers and the implantation of large-scale ranching and mineral enterprises has prompted the publication of a number of books and articles, as well as much media coverage, in recent years. The authors in the main are unanimous that the demise of the Amazon rain forest is imminent, that Amazônia's fragile eco-system cannot endure the predation of the roadbuilders, colonists and ranchers. Their position is encapsulated in such titles as 'Farming the Amazon: The Devastation Technique' (1), 'Can Amazônia Survive its Highways?' (2), and 'Amazon Jungle: Green Hell to Red Desert' (3).

The Federal Government's position is somewhat ambivalent. On the one hand, it has pointed out that environmental protection cannot be economically or socially afforded until after significant development has taken place (4). On the other hand, it has initiated programmes to monitor the ecological violence that is occurring through such agencies as INPA (5) in Manaus and the satellite programme of the Brazilian Forestry Commission, the IBDF (6).

Of particular importance is the IBDF's programme for assessing the extent to which Brazil's forest cover is being eroded. The basic information for the programme is furnished by the data and images

1. Anderson:1972 . 2. Goodland & Bookman:1977.
 3. Goodland & Irwin:1975. 4. Denevan:1973.
 5. INPA - Instituto Nacional de Pesquisa na Amazônia.
 6. IBDF - Instituto Brasileiro de Desenvolvimento Florestal.

provided by the U.S. Landsat series of satellites which were launched in 1972, 1975, 1978 and 1982. According to the Landsat information, Acre was almost totally covered by dense tropical forest up to and including 1972. By 1980, deforestation had taken place over a total area of 462,684 hectares, an area which corresponds roughly to 3.03% of the total surface area of the state. This relatively low figure does not seem to give cause for alarm. What is significant, however, is that, while the detected area of deforestation in the state between 1972 and 1978 amounted to 246,450 hectares, the area burnt down between 1978 and 1980 was 216,234 hectares, an advance of 87.7% in just two years.(1).

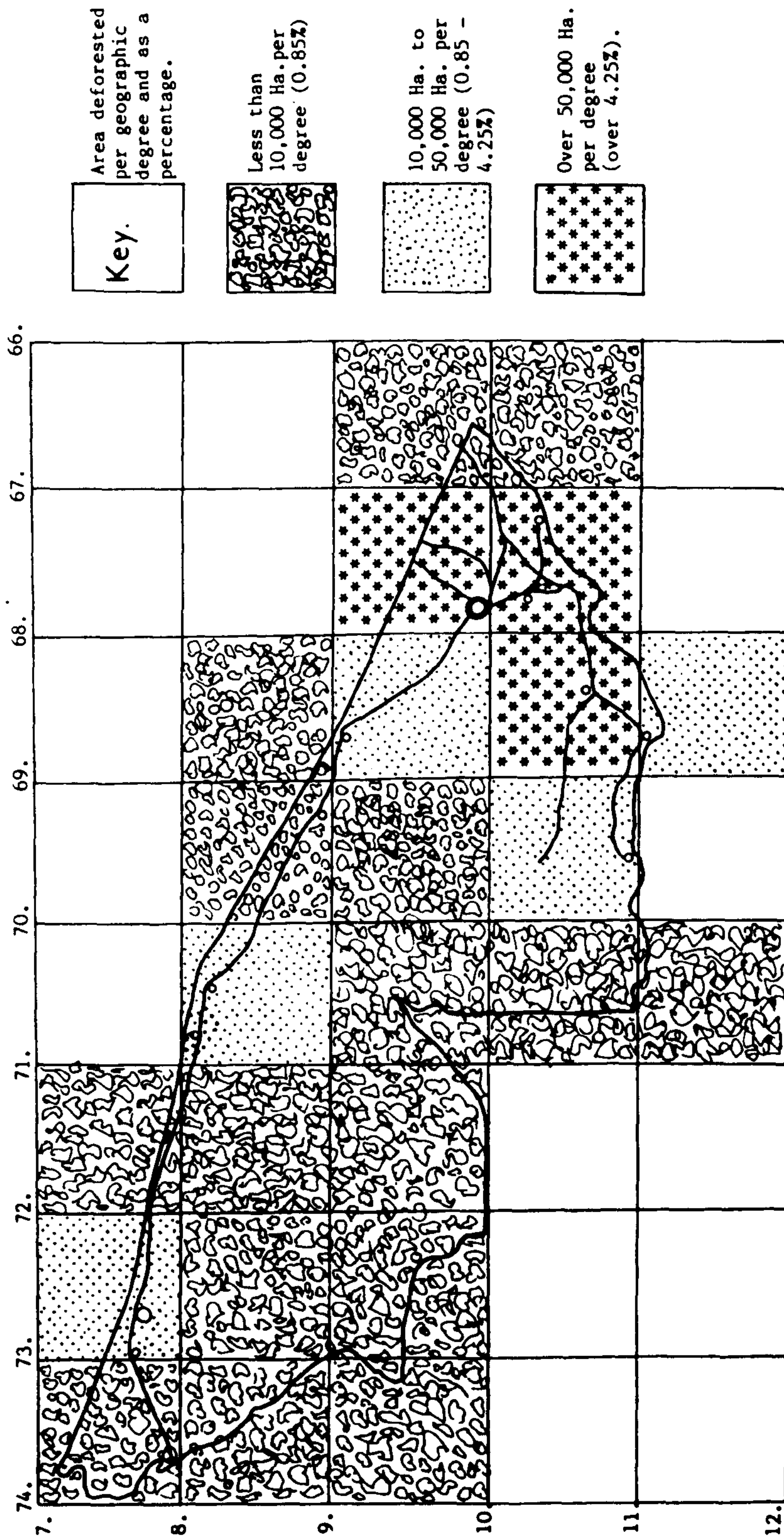
The IBDF's calculations took into consideration three levels of deforestation: Low, i.e., less than 10,000 hectares per geographic degree (less than 0.85%); Medium, i.e., between 10,000 and 50,000 hectares per geographic degree (between 0.85 and 4.25%); and High, i.e., over 50,000 hectares (over 4.25%). Superimposed over the map of Acre (see Map 12. overleaf), the 1980 Landsat images show that the areas of the state with the highest indices of alteration to the forest cover are exactly those considered critical at the 1978 mapping: the areas alongside the federal highways; those around the urban centres; and the sites of ranching and colonisation projects (2).

The advance of deforestation has been greater in the Purús micro-region than in the Juruá for it is here that the greatest number of highways and ranches are located. Between 1978 and 1980, forest

1. IBDF:1982:Programa de Monitoramento da Cobertura Florestal do Brasil, Acre.

2. Ibid.

MAP 12 Acre: % Deforestation, 1980.



Source: IBDF - ACRE

alterations were up 276% on the 1972-1978 period; 125% up in Senador Guimard; 84% up in Xapuri; and 125% up in Brasiléia. In Tarauacá, there are areas of pasture near to the city, but total forest cover over the rest of the municipality. Between Feijó and Manoel Urbano, there are small isolated areas of pasture along the BR-364, but total forest cover elsewhere. In the municipalities of Cruzeiro do Sul and Mâncio Lima, large ranches have been sown with pasture along the BR-364 and, again, the rest of these two municipalities are still totally covered in forest.(1).

It is clear that the greatest percentage of deforestation is directly related to the transition from traditional shifting agriculture to ranching and farming. The role of the IBDF in this transition has been to try and limit the extent of deforestation and to protect the soil from erosion. To accomplish this, it has prohibited deforestation near to river banks, springs and hillsides, and has set a maximum limit of 50% deforestation per property. However, IBDF-Acre has a total of only 7 forest rangers to carry out this task over the whole state, an area of some 152,589 square kilometres.(2).

In addition to the obvious inadequacy of IBDF staffing levels, there is also the suspicion that IBDF-Acre is operating in a biased manner. According to an administrative officer of the IBDF office in Rio Branco, of the IBDF prosecutions between 1980 and 1983, the overwhelming majority, some 92%, were prosecutions against small producers and only 18% against large landholders. The political role of the

1. Ibid.

2. Field interview, Director of IBDF-Acre.

IBDF in Acre is illustrated in the following discussion of a land dispute that took place in Tarauacá in the summer of 1983.(1).

As has been noted earlier, the summer months in Acre are a time of burning small forest clearings for the planting of subsistence crops. These plots are seeded after the second rain in August, the first rain is light and only serves to dampen the soil, the second rain is much heavier and can last two or three days. In July, 1983, the local representative of the IBDF in Tarauacá ordered the cessation of burning forest clearings on the Seringal Novo Destino and Fazenda Cinco Estrelas, two of the largest properties in the municipality both of which have large numbers of posseiro families living on them. The IBDF urged that the ban was imposed because this form of activity was damaging the forest.

However, the restriction was limited to the approximate 600 posseiro families of the area, seringueiro autônomos and barranqueiros. The IBDF stated that licences for deforestation could only be issued if the posseiro had the authorisation of the 'owner' of the property. Here, the IBDF was clearly refusing to acknowledge the right of 'posse' of these families. The 'owners' of the two estates refused to give this permission to the posseiro group, yet gave it to those who rented colocações on their land. Thus, this was an obvious attempt on the part of the proprietors to deny the posseiro group the right to cultivate crops and so force them to abandon their 'posses'.

During this time, INCRA, the agency responsible for settling land

1. Field interview, Administrative Officer, IBDF-Acre, Rio Branco.

disputes, kept a low profile. The agency's representative in Tarauacá stated in an interview that there were only 120 posseiros listed on the INCRA register in Tarauacá and none of these lived on the disputed land. The local STR, however, has a list of 3,189 posseiro families who live in the municipality, 612 of whom live on the two properties where the dispute was taking place.(1).

The situation in Tarauacá rapidly became the focal point of pro-posseiro activity in the state. A public demonstration took place in Tarauacá on the 16th of July after which 6 posseiros were arrested by the Federal Police and allegedly beaten and tortured. This was followed by demonstrations of solidarity in Rio Branco and the other Acrean townships. The Bishop of Acre-Purús, Dom Moacyr Grecchi, who is also President of the CPT (2), made a statement in support of the posseiros at the public meeting in Rio Branco on the 17th of July and, the following day, masses were celebrated for the posseiros of Tarauacá in all of the churches of the Acre-Purús diocese.(3).

The posseiros continued the clearance of their subsistence plots, but in 'mutirão', in groups of up to 40 men for self-protection against the peões of the landowners and the federal Police. The posseiros argued that they had to continue clearing the land because this needed to be carried out before the rains came otherwise they would have no food for the next year.(4).

At the end of July, the state governor intervened in the situation and asked the President of the IBDF in Brasília to adjudicate in

1. Field interviews, Tarauacá. 2. CPT, the Church's Land Commission.
3. Field interviews, Tarauacá, Rio Branco & Xapuri.
4. Ibid.

the matter. In the middle of August, the IBDF rescinded the order banning the activity of the posseiros which had by then been hampered by the early arrival of the rains. The stalemate will continue, however, until the right of the posseiros to a Definitive Title is legitimised by INCRA.(1).

In April of the same year, another dispute took place involving the IBDF, small producers and local ranchers in the municipality of Brasiléia. The land occupied by 16 families of small agriculturalists each with an area of between 20 and 30 hectares directly adjoins two ranches located on the former seringais of Carmen and Porvir, 15 kilometres away from Brasiléia on the road to Assis Brasil. The two ranchers began to spray their properties with Agent Orange, a chemical defoliant used extensively in Viet Nam. Their intention was to poison the vegetation and allow it to dry out prior to burning later in the year. The pilot overflowed the small farmer's properties poisoning crops and fruit trees. Six of the residents were taken to the local hospital suffering from intestinal problems.

Despite evidence given at the IBDF enquiry that this indiscriminate use of defoliants over a large area had broken the IBDF's code regarding deforestation in that river banks and hillsides had lost their forest cover, the IBDF decided not to prosecute the ranchers. The latter also refused to compensate the small farmers for the damage that was done to their persons and property and told them to initiate court proceedings, a long and expensive process. In addition, during the enquiry, it transpired that Agent Orange had been

1. Ibid.

used previously in the state on two large properties in Tarauacá, those of Paranacre and Viação Garcia.(1).

Although these two cases were the gravest to occur during the summer of 1983 and are, therefore, perhaps not representative, they do illustrate the ineffectivity of the IBDF and perhaps point to bureaucratic complicity in the struggle between ranchers and posseiros/small farmers.

With reference to the advance of deforestation, it is probable that this will continue unchecked, particularly if the proposed TransAcreana highway is constructed as planned in 1986. The TransAcreana was proposed by the Dantas administration as part of its campaign to bring southern entrepreneurs to Acre by offering them access to the ports of the Pacific. It is projected to cut through the interior of the state from Rio Branco to Bouqueirão da Esperança in the municipality of Cruzeiro do Sul close to the border with Peru. The highway will be 700 kilometres in length and will pass through the interior of the municipalities of Sena Madureira, Manoel Urbano, Feijó and Tarauacá, at a distance of approximately 100 kilometres from the municipal capitals.(2).

The highway, then, will penetrate the least occupied areas of the state, thus providing limited benefit for the population as a whole. The state government argues that it will provide a means of commercialising the agricultural product of the thousands of subsistence farmers

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1. Ibid. The extent of the deforestation on these two properties through the use of Agent Orange is not known as it occurred after the 1982 Landsat programme.
 2. See the map of Acre's projected highways in Chapter 2.

who live in the interior. This argument is somewhat unrealistic. Firstly, the highway will not provide access to the markets of the smaller towns such as Feijó, Tarauacá and Manoel Urbano as the highway will be too distant from them and no side roads are planned that will link them to it. Secondly, given the distances involved and the climate, the markets of Rio Branco will also be out of range. Thirdly, given that the other highways in Acre are only trafficable for two months of the year, it is reasonable to assume that the TransAcreana will suffer from the same problems after the rains come.

However, the TransAcreana will pass right through some of the largest properties in the state causing an inevitable rise in the price of land and probably the eventual expulsion of the posseiros that live on them. The first stretch of the highway between the River Acre and the River Iaco is 113 kilometres long, but pass through only 13 properties. Similarly, in the municipalities of Tarauacá and Feijó, the highway will pass directly through the ranches of Paranacre (450,000 hectares) and Fazenda California (427,000 hectares) respectively (1).

If constructed, the TransAcreana will stimulate further deforestation in areas as yet untouched by this process. According to a technical study undertaken by INPA, if the present rhythm of destruction of the Amazon's forest cover is maintained, then the forests of Rondônia and Goiás will have disappeared by 1988, of Mato Grosso by 1989, Maranhão by 1990, Pará by 1991, Acre by 1995, Roraima by 2002, Amazonas by 2003, and Amapá by 2059. (2)

1. INCRA-Acre, Coordenaria Regional, CR14, Rio Branco.

2. Quoted in 'Folha do Acre', 13th of August, 1983.

CHAPTER 4 - MANAGING THE CRISIS.

The failure to resolve the twin problems of rural violence and accelerating urban expansion forced the Federal and State governments to reconsider their strategies. This chapter will detail three schemes which were devised in the late 1970's and early 1980's to promote the economic emancipation of the seringueiro so as to ensure his permanence on the land. In particular, the discussion will illustrate the differential and often contradictory nature of state activity in Acre throughout this period. The three schemes under discussion, those of INCRA, SUDHEVEA, and the Church (with allied groups), whilst not the only forms of mediation in the life of the seringueiro at this time, were the most significant in that it was on their success or failure that the future of Acre's rural population depended.

4.1. INCRA Colonisation Projects in Acre.

Although INCRA's policy in Acre seemed to move through 180 degrees in the mid-70's and appeared to support the posseiro in his claim for the land on which he and his family lived and worked, the previous chapter has shown that the two main lines of action taken by INCRA at this time, i.e., discrimination and arbitration, both served to subvert INCRA's stated policy commitment of 'fixing' the posseiro to the land.

In the first instance, INCRA's discriminatory activity centred on the issuing of land titles for either those large properties which were proven to have legitimate titles dating from before 1898, or for

smaller properties with a median size of 25 hectares (1) which made up the agricultural nuclei near to the principal urban centres. Thus, land titles were issued either to latifundios 'by dimension' or to minifundios, i.e., properties of less than the regional module size, both of which INCRA had promised to eradicate. In addition, by concentrating on these two numerically small groups, INCRA had failed to resolve the titles of the vast majority of Acre's posseiro population which left them still open to expropriation through violence.

Secondly, INCRA's role as 'independent' arbiter between the posseiro and those who sought to dispossess him focused on persuading the posseiro to accept an alternative parcel of land in exchange for the area on which he had previously worked. In theory, this should have been of benefit to both the parties concerned, but in practice it was detrimental to the position of the posseiro. Firstly, the acceptance of another parcel of land had the effect of confirming the other's right to the original property whilst at the same time denying the posseiro's right of 'posse'. In addition, the alternative plots were generally of a much smaller size, in many cases less than 10 hectares (2), and often distant from access roads or river banks. This signified that in a very short space of time these plots would probably be abandoned by their new occupants who would return them to the 'owner' in exchange for a small monetary compensation for any improvements made during the brief occupation.

The newly created Rural Worker's Union (STR), on the other hand, fought for a minimum of 50 hectares for these exchange plots and

1. INCRA-Acre, Coordenaria Regional CR-14, Rio Branco.

2. Ibid.

advised posseiros not to leave their colocações unless this was met. As has been noted, it was soon realised that not even a 50 hectare plot was sufficient to maintain the seringueiro and his family as there were too few rubber trees in this area and commercialisation of any surplus subsistence crops was not possible in areas far from the towns. The STR's, particularly that of Xapuri, began to counsel their members not to move at any cost, that the only fair resolution to the situation would be the titling of their posses in their entirety.

However, for those who did accept another parcel of land, a thorny problem still existed in that INCRA did not automatically issue a definitive title for this land. A significant proportion of posseiros interviewed in the field stated that the INCRA agent had guaranteed this verbally. In addition, many posseiros believed that, if their property had been included in the INCRA census of rural properties of 1978, and if they were regularly paying their land taxes, then these would be sufficient grounds for the issuing of a title. This was not the case. As chapter 3 noted, none of these factors were considered by INCRA's Land Commission in its discriminatory procedure.

Neither discrimination, nor arbitration, then, were able to resolve the crisis in the rural areas and, therefore, did not stem the flow of migrants to the towns. During the late 70's, INCRA's policy underwent another significant change with the creation of the Directed Settlement Projects (PAD's) as the principal means of solving the land problem.

4.1.1. The Directed Settlement Project - PAD.

The impetus for the creation of the PAD's (1) in Acre did not originate in INCRA itself. The latter was still smarting from its attempts at colonisation along the TransAmazonian Highway and was still under considerable pressure in Rondônia due to spontaneous migration. In addition, INCRA's previous attempt to organise a settlement project in Acre, the PIC (2) at Xapuri in 1974, had been a dismal failure with only six families eventually being settled and all these had abandoned the PIC within two years (3). Rather, the creation of the PADs was directly due to the criticism of INCRA from the STRs and the Church as well as from pressure exerted by the Mesquita administration at a federal level. The mid and late 70's had witnessed a number of Parliamentary Commissions on the Land Question to which both Geraldo Mesquita, the Governor of Acre, and Dom Moacyr Grecchi, the Bishop of Acre-Purús, were called to testify.

Faced with the problem of large numbers of Acrean families without access to land or using violent retaliation to maintain that access, and the almost total lack of state owned lands on which to relocate them, the Federal Government through INCRA expropriated 700,000 hectares in Acre in December, 1976; 292,000 hectares in the municipality of Sena Madureira and 408,000 in the interior of Rio Branco. These two areas were destined to become the sites of PAD Boa Esperança and PAD Pedro Peixoto respectively on which a total of 8,000 families, or approximately 40,000 persons, were to be settled.

-
1. PAD - Projeto de Assentamento Dirigido.
 2. PIC - Projeto Integrado de Colonização (Integrated Colonisation project).
 3. Field interviews, Xapuri.

The basis of settlement on these projects as outlined by INCRA was:

1. That the occupation of the areas should be by families and not private enterprises of which most should come from those already dispossessed of their land and who were now living in the urban area of Rio Branco.
2. That each family should be allocated a plot of up to 100 hectares (80 hectares being the mean).
3. That, while a variety of crops should be cultivated, the long term aim was not subsistence, but the provision of a cash crop income for each family. It was envisaged that rubber would be the principal cash crop and each family would be encouraged to plant between 3 and 10 hectares of rubber trees. (1).

While it was felt that the cost of the land and necessary infra-structural developments should be socialised, i.e., provided by the state, the pressing need to relocate large numbers of families in a short space of time persuaded INCRA that the model for the new projects should be the PAD, which it had already begun to use in Rondônia, rather than the earlier model of the PIC. In essence, the PAD is distinguished from the PIC in two significant respects (2):

1. The responsibility for the execution of the project does not rest solely on INCRA, but is divided between a number of federal and local state agencies.
2. The financial and technical characteristics of the prospective colonist are taken into account.

1. Extensão Rural, Vol.2, No.2, March/April, 1981.

2. See p.157ff for a discussion of these in relation to INCRA projects in Rondônia.

The distribution of functions between the various agencies in Acre is as follows:

1. INCRA: Demarcation and distribution of plots and the selection of candidates.
2. COLONACRE (1): Creation of an infrastructure for the commercialisation of the colonists' product (roads etc.) and loans of machinery to them.
3. CAGEACRE (2) : Creation of warehousing and storage facilities.
4. EMATER (3) : Technical assistance, short courses on agricultural techniques, and the distribution of seeds and plantlings.
5. BANACRE (4) : Credit.
6. Other local state agencies: Health, education, power and water supplies, sanitation etc.

The expropriation of land in the two project areas began in the summer of 1977, but by early 1979 only 50,000 hectares of the projected 700,000 had been taken possession of by INCRA. These were in Gleba Xiburema, a section of PAD Boa Esperança, with a total of only 15 families having been settled. The year of 1978 had been one of heated debate over the two projects, particularly by the landowning faction which was facing expropriation. The latter called in 'expert witnesses' to the INCRA tribunals who testified that given areas were infertile, that they were rife with malaria and other infectious diseases, that the seringueiro was ignorant of cultivation techniques and would starve to death, that seringueiros were naturally lazy and needed a patrão to force them to work (5).

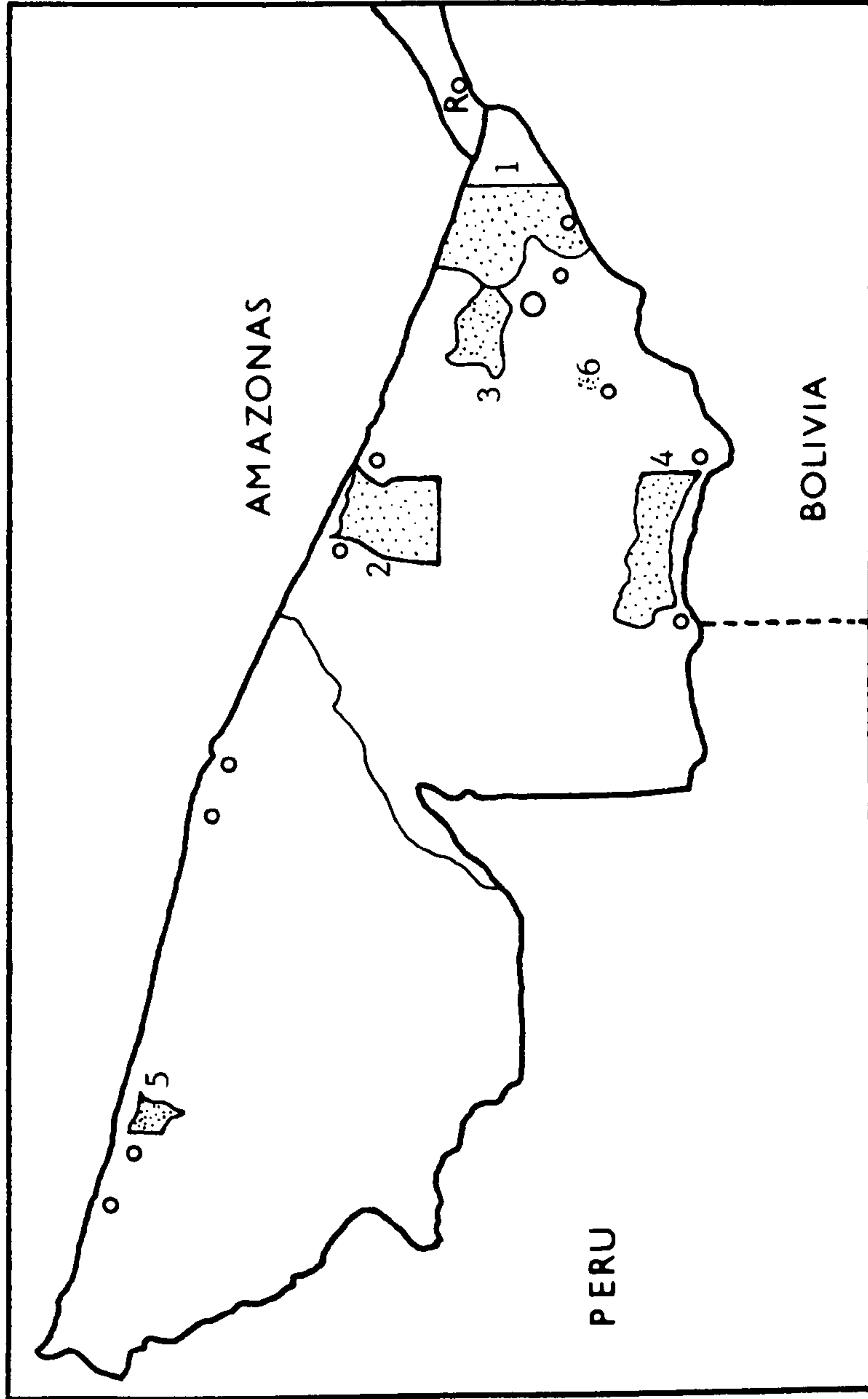
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1. COLONACRE: Companhia de Colonização - Acre, Acrean Colonisation Co.
 2. CAGEACRE : Companhia de Armazéns Gerais e Entrepósitos do Acre; Acrean Warehousing and Storage Company.
 3. EMATER : Empresa de Assistência Técnica e Extensão Rural; Technical Assistance and Rural Extension Company.
 4. BANACRE : Banco do Acre; Acrean State Bank.
 5. Local press reports throughout 1978 and early 1979, in particular the monthly 'O Varadouro' and the daily 'O Rio Branco'.

The work of forming the PADs was virtually frozed during this time and it was only with the resurgence of rural conflict in the summer of 1979 that INCRA pressed ahead. In March, 1980, almost four years after the enabling legislation had been passed, the settlement of PADs Boa Esperança and Pedro Peixoto began, although much reduced in the latter as over 150,000 hectares had been invaded by landless seringueiros from the municipalities of Rio Branco, Brasiléia and Xapuri. The increased incidence of violence in these three municipalities, which culminated in the assassination of Wilson Pinheiro, the president of the STR in Brasiléia on July the 21st, 1980, resulted in the expropriation of three more areas totalling 187,072 hectares. These were destined to become the PADs Humaitá, Quixadá and Santa Luzia. The map and table that follow give the location of the PADs in Acre and their settlement details.

The INCRA PADs were set up primarily to resolve the crisis in the urban areas, especially the capital, Rio Branco. On the one hand, the offer of land on a PAD was considered by INCRA as the principal means of absorbing surplus labour from the shanty towns of the capital. In addition, it was seen as a means of diffusing the tension in the countryside for both the alleged landowner and the posseiro would have access to land, the former on the disputed property and the latter on the PAD. It will be shown, however, that the form that the projects took and their mode of operation directly contributed to the continuation of the rural exodus, rather than helping to stem it.

Firstly, there was a long delay between the initial expropriation of the land and actual settlement on it. By mid 1980, only 1,436 families had been placed on the original two projects: 1,171 on

MAP 13 Acre: INCRA Colonisation Projects.



1. PAD Pedro Peixoto.
2. PAD Boa Esperança.
3. PAD Humaitá.
4. PAD Quixadá.
5. PAD Santa Luzia.
6. PIC Xapuri.

Table 2.4.1. - Acre : INCRA Directed Settlement Projects, 1977 - 1983.

PAD.	Location.	Area in hectares.	Projected No. of Families.	No. of Families placed by 12/83.	No. of Acrean families.	%	No. of Non-Acrean fam.	%
Pedro Peixoto.	Rio Branco.	408,000	5,000	3,291	2,761	84	530	16
Boa Esperança.	Sena Madureira.	292,000	3,000	341	212	62	129	38
Humaitá.	Rio Branco.	62,918	700	598	431	72	167	28
Quixadá. (1)	Brasiléia.	54,452	600	493	319	65	174	35
Santa Luzia.	Cruzeiro do Sul.	60,700	800	341	48	14	293	86
Total.		887,072	10,100	5,064	3,771	75	1,293	25

Source: INCRA-Acre, Coodenaria Regional, CR-14, Rio Branco.

(1) Including extension Santa Quitéria.

Pedro Peixoto and 265 on Boa Esperança. When interviewed, INCRA technical staff blamed the delay on the lack of cooperation from the other agencies and the non take up of lots by ex-possieros following an STR and PT campaign in early 1980 which publicised the failure of the state consortium to keep its promises. As will be shown, the campaign was justified. As late as January, 1984, almost six years after the initial expropriations, the projected access roads were far from completion. The majority of colonists have to walk distances of up to 20 kilometres along jungle paths to reach the nearest highway where they can catch a bus into the nearest urban centre, which makes commercialisation of their product almost impossible (1).

Secondly, the criteria for selection of prospective colonists, based as they were on financial/economic capacity and knowledge/experience of modern agricultural techniques, denied access to the PADS to many Acreano applicants. INCRA justified the inclusion of these criteria on the grounds that those who met the required standard would be more likely to succeed and, in addition, less state resources would be needed over the long term. However, the tradition of rudimentary slash and burn agriculture in Acre coupled with the history of debt peonage via the aviamento system which denied the possibility of capital accumulation to all but a few seringueiros, signified that the ex-possiero/barranqueiro who lived a life of deprivation in the shanty towns of the capital was extremely unlikely to be able to meet either of INCRA's selection criteria. Yet it was precisely for the settlement of this group that the PADs were created. Table 2.4.1. shows that by December, 1983, 25% of the PAD colonists were migrants from outside of the state.

Apart from the lack of an adequate infrastructure, the most pressing problem that faced the new colonist was credit provision. A breakdown of the credit extended by BANACRE from 1978 to 1980 in the municipality of Rio Branco where two of the PADs are located is given in Table 2.4.2. This shows that BANACRE extended credit to only 642 small landowners, i.e., those with less than 100 hectares, during the whole of the three year period. The under manager of BANACRE in Rio Branco stated in interview that the bank had not extended credit to most of the PAD applicants because INCRA had not issued them with a definitive title and therefore they were not the legal owners of the land on which the credit would be utilised. INCRA officials in their turn stated that titles would not be granted until the plot holder had made sufficient improvements to the land. Two of the three INCRA requirements were the construction of a house and the clearing of a stated % of the area of the property for cultivation. The third was the planting of permanent crops such as rubber and cocoa as opposed to short cycle subsistence crops. This left the colonist in a situation in which he would only receive credit for permanent crops if he was in possession of a definitive title, yet the latter was denied to him until he had already planted those crops (1).

Of the 246,537 cruzeiros loaned by the bank to small landholders, 8% was destined for short cycle subsistence crops, 5% was allocated to cattle rearing, and the majority, 87%, was intended for the creation of small rubber plantations. However, given the fact that seringueiras, rubber trees, take from 6 to 9 years to mature, i.e., before they can be tapped commercially, the small farmer needs a cash income in the meantime

1. Field interviews, PAD Pedro Peixoto and Rio Branco.

Table 2.4.2. - BANACRE : Finance destined for rural establishments in the municipality of Rio Branco (1978-1980).

Area of Rural Unit (Ha's).	Number of Units.		Object of Finance.(in 1000Cr)		Total. Absolute.	%
	Absolute.	%	Agriculture. Ranching. Plantations.			
0 - 99	642	72.8	20,604	11,250	246,537	74.3
100 - 999	206	23.3	15,657	35,000	50,657	15.3
1000 - 9999	28	3.2	870	27,500	28,370	8.5
10000 +	6	0.7	160	6,250	6,410	1.9
Total.	882	100.0	37,291	80,000	331,974	100.0
% Finance.	-	-	11.2	24.1	100.0	-
						64.7

Source : BANACRE, Rio Branco ,also quoted in Da Silva, 1981, p.91.

both to purchase essential supplies and to service the bank loan for the creation of the plantation. The lack of infrastructural development, especially the absence of access roads and crop storage facilities, meant that, even if the small producer did have a surplus to sell, he would have extreme difficulty in commercialising it. Like his seringueiro autônomo counterpart, the small producer on the PAD cannot store his surplus until the winter months when prices rise significantly, he must sell it as soon as possible to whoever will buy it at a price set by the purchaser, either the marreteiro or a relatively wealthy PAD colonist with transport.

The following section gives the results of a field survey undertaken in PAD Pedro Peixoto during the months of December, 1983, and January, 1984. It details the plight of the small farmer on the PADs and discusses the tendency towards the settlement of non-Acreanos on them.

4.1.2. Field Survey of PAD Pedro Peixoto.

Towards the end of 1983, it became apparent through local press reports and discussions with officials of the various agencies involved, as well as with the STR leadership, that the PADs were no longer serving the purpose for which they had been originally conceived, i.e., the absorption of Rio Branco's surplus labour force and the relocation of posseiros in dispute over their land. The local press in particular was reporting the arrival of large numbers of migrants from outside of the state who were taking up lots on the PADs.

It was decided to conduct a survey to ascertain what was happening on the PADs. Given the time of year, the height of the rainy season, the lack of access roads, and the reticence of INCRA to furnish hard data on such a sensitive issue at a time when it was under severe criticism from several sources, it was not possible to undertake a survey based on a random sample of the PAD population. It must be remembered that PAD Pedro Peixoto alone covers an area of over 4,000 square kilometres, much of which is inaccessible for all but two or three months of the year.

A survey was carried out of Glebas (1) G, F and N of PAD Pedro Peixoto as this was one of the first areas of the project to be settled, most of the occupants had occupied their properties from between two and four years, and would provide information regarding the viability of economic activity on the project as well as furnishing information regarding the origins of those who had settled on it.

A health post was chosen as a base from which to conduct the survey. This was situated some 81 kilometres from Rio Branco along the BR364 highway and occupied a central position in the area to be studied. During the two months of the survey, 110 families were interviewed using a short questionnaire and informal conversations some of which were taped. The family population of the 3 Glebas was 524 at the time of the survey, thus the sample contained just over 20% of the resident population. A 'snowballing' technique was used in that, when a head of a family (i.e., mother or father) arrived at the health post, s/he

1. Gleba, which literally means the 'soil', is the basic administrative unit of the PAD which is subdivided into a varying number of lots.

was asked to participate in the survey. In keeping with the hospitality that was shown throughout the whole field trip, not one person refused. After that person's business at the health centre was completed, s/he was accompanied home. This often involved a journey of 15 kilometres or more on foot. The interview would normally take place in the evening with the whole family gathered around. Later, the interviewee was asked if their neighbour would wish to participate. The next day, a younger member of the household would accompany me to the neighbour's house, to act as both a guide and as an introduction to the neighbour. This process was continued for two or three days each week over a period of just over two months. On some occasions, e.g., when neighbours were gathered together in one house for a union meeting or celebration, it was possible to interview several persons in a short space of time (1).

Table 2.4.3. shows that, of the 110 heads of families (2) interviewed, only 28 had been born in Acre and only 27 of the 110 resided in Acre for more than six months prior to taking up their plot on PAD Pedro Peixoto. The largest group by far (34.5%) were those who were born or had last resided in the South of Brazil. The other main group were those who had been born in the North-East of Brazil (20.9%). Thus, over 75% of the families interviewed had migrated to Acre from another state.

The data collected relating to the migratory history of both the male and female heads of families, i.e., of both the mother and father of each family, shows that the male was more likely to have migrated on a greater number of occasions than the female, as Table 2.4.4. illustrates.

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1. See Appendix for a translation of the questionnaire.
 2. Taken as male except in the 3 cases where a widow or single woman was head of the family.

Table 2.4.3. - PAD Pedro Peixoto Survey : State of Birth and Previous State of Residence of Heads of Families (1).

State.	State of Birth.		State of Prior Residence.	
Acre.	28		27	
Rondônia.	0		6	
Amazonas.	2		3	
Sub-total				
Northern Region.		30		36
Ceará.	13		7	
Sergipe.	3		2	
Paraíba.	3		2	
Rio Grande do N.	1		1	
Pernambuco.	1		0	
Bahia.	2		0	
Sub-total				
North-East Region.		23		13
Mato Grosso do S.	1		4	
Mato grosso.	0		3	
Sub-total				
Centre-West Region.		1		7
Minas gerais.	9		3	
Sao Paulo.	4		2	
Esp. Santo.	2		1	
Sub-total				
South-East Region.		15		6
Paraná.	10		42	
Santa Catarina.	8		0	
Rio Grande do S.	20		2	
Sub-total				
Southern region.		38		44
Bolivia	2	2	4	4
Spain.	1	1	0	0
Total.	110	110	110	110.

(1). See note 2 ,previous page.

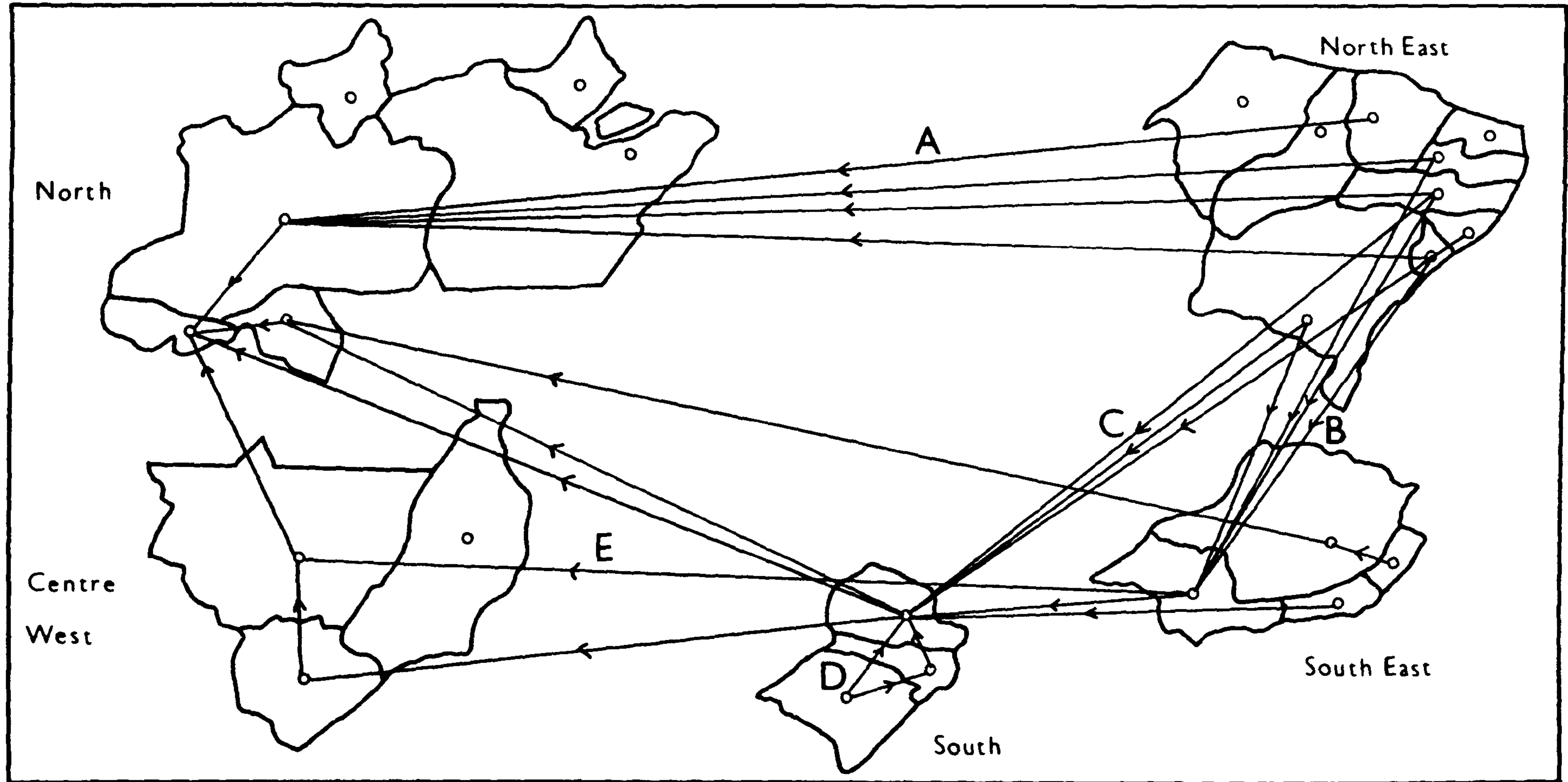
Table 2.4.4. - PAD Pedro Peixoto Survey : Migration of Male and Female Heads of Family.

1. Husband and wife born in the same state although not necessarily married there.	47
2. Wife born in first state to which husband migrated.	36
3. Wife born in second state to which husband migrated.	1
4. Wife born in third state to which husband migrated.	1
5. Husband and wife born in different states and both migrating to state where they were married.	7
6. Husband born in first state to which wife migrated.	10
7. Single persons.	8
Total.	110

When the migratory details of both the male and female heads of each family are added to those of each of their parents, which gives a picture of family migration over two generations, the resulting pattern reproduces almost exactly (1) the sum of Brazilian inter- and intra-regional migration during the 20th century. It must be remembered that only 110 families were interviewed, yet their combined migratory histories include most of the principal migratory flows that have occurred since the Rubber Boom. The histories of these 110 families have been combined in the map overleaf which shows five main migratory routes:

- A. The traditional route to the west for those escaping from the droughts of the North-East.
- B. The migration from the North-East to the factories of Sao Paulo.

1. The exceptions are the migration from the North-East into Maranhão in the 1920's and the 'March to the West' into Goiás in the 1940's.



MAP 14

Migratory Routes to Acre.

- C. The migration from the North-East to the agricultural frontier of Paraná.
- D. The 'moving agricultural frontier' within the Southern region which began with the settlement of Rio Grande do Sul and subsequently of Santa Catarina and Paraná.
- E. The migration from the cities of the South and South-East and from the mechanisation of agriculture/Itaipu Dam in the South to Acre, either directly or via the stepping stones of Mato Grosso and/or Rondônia.

Only 5 of the 110 families interviewed stated that both the male and female heads of the family and their parents had all been born in Acre. Of the rest, 41 families had experienced interstate migration once in two generations, 39 had migrated between states twice, 21 had migrated between states three times, and 4 had migrated four times. Of the latter, 3 families had taken a similar route from one of the states in the North-East to Rio Grande do Sul to Santa Catarina to Paraná and finally to Acre. The fourth family had migrated from Sergipe in the North-East to Sao Paulo to Paraná to Mato grosso do Sul and then to Acre.

The distribution of size of families is given in Table 2.4.5. This shows that the 110 families consisted of 576 persons giving an average family size of 5.24. All were nuclear non-extended families, i.e., parents and children with no grandparents etc. In only three cases was there an extra adult and in each case this was the brother of either the wife or the husband. 24 of the families stated that they were the vanguard of a larger family migration and other

relatives would follow once they were established. Of these, the largest group (18) were last resident in Paraná.

Table 2.4.5. PAD Pedro Peixoto Survey : Distribution of Family Size.

Number of persons in Family.	Number of Families.
1	8
2	13
3	14
4	15
5	14
6	10
7	10
8	10
9	4
10	9
11	2
12	1
Total	110

Of the 107 male heads of families, 22 stated that they were unemployed during the period immediately prior to their arrival at PAD Pedro Peixoto. 14 of these were resident in Rio Branco at the time and 8 were resident outside of the state. 6 stated that they had been unemployed for longer than 6 months. Table 2.4.6. gives the occupations of these 107 males prior to taking up their lots on the PAD and shows that the majority had been employed on the land : 31 renters of land; 28 seringueiros ; 8 landowners ; and 6 ranch/farm hands ; a total of 73 or 68% of the sample.

Table 2.4.6. - PAD Pedro Peixoto Survey : Occupation of Male Heads of Families Prior to Arrival on PAD (1).

Occupation.	Total Number.
Renter of Land.	31
Seringueiro.	28
Landowner.	8
Driver.	7
Ranch/Farm Hand.	6
Factory Hand.	6
Bricklayer.	5
Carpenter.	2
Gold Prospector.	2
Baker.	2
Brickmaker.	1
Mechanic.	1
Photographer.	1
Painter.	1
Shop Assistant.	1
Stevedore.	1
Nightwatchman.	1
Fisherman.	1
Barber.	1
Tailor.	1
Total.	107

(1) Including the previous occupation of those who were unemployed immediately prior to their arrival on the PAD or migration to Acre.

Thus, 67 of the 107 had previously occupied land. If the 28 seringueiros are excluded, 26 or 66% of the remaining 39 occupied areas of less than 20 hectares. The distribution of landholding is given below.

Table 2.4.7. - PAD Pedro Peixoto Survey : Size of Rural Property Occupied by Landowners and Renters of Land Prior to Arrival on PAD.

Size of Property in Hectares.	Number of Families.	% Number of Families.
0 - 9	11	28
10 - 19	15	38
20 - 29	4	10
30 - 39	2	5
40 - 49	3	8
50 - 59	3	8
60 - 69	0	0
70 +	1	3
Total.	39	100

The average property size of the 39 was 19.26 hectares which can be compared to the average property size of the 110 plots sampled on PAD Pedro Peixoto of 76.37 hectares, a breakdown of which is given in Table 2.4.8.

The sample can be roughly divided into two main groups: the urban unemployed, both from Rio Branco and the cities of the South and South East; and those who were forced by circumstances to move off the land that they occupied. This is reflected in the reasons that each family gave for undertaking the migration to PAD Pedro Peixoto.

Table 2.4.8. - PAD Pedro Peixoto Survey : Distribution of Property Size on the PAD.

Size of Property in Hectares.	Number of Families.
50 - 59	4
60 - 69	20
70 - 79	44
80 - 89	36
90 - 99	4
100 - 109	1
110 - 119	1
Total.	110

Of the 42 families whose last state of residence was Paraná, the principal reasons given for leaving that state were : the construction of the dam at Itaipu and the subsequent flooding of their land (27); the desire to own land rather than rent it (9); the wish to secure a better future for the children (2); continued frost damage to crops (1). All stated that they came to Acre because of the low cost and availability of land. In the words of one migrant who was born in Sergipe in the North-East and who had rented land first in Rio Grande do Sul and later in Paraná :

"I rented 4 hectares of land in Sao Miguel de Iguacu (in Parana), but it was difficult to support my wife and four children. It had been the same in Rio Grande do Sul..... when you rent land, it is a hard life... Well, they built the dam and we had nowhere to go... I have never lived in the city... and land was too expensive in Parana... I heard from INCRA that there was cheap land available in Acre,

so we came here...and now we have our own land...84 hectares... and our children now have a future." (1).

Of the 31 ex-seringueiros, i.e., those whose previous residence had been elsewhere in Acre or in Bolivia, the main reasons for the move to PAD Pedro Peixoto were : Lack of work and/or high cost of living in the city of Rio Branco (12) ; their expulsion from the land by the 'new landowner' (11) ; the desire to own land (5) ; the vision of a better life as a small farmer than as a seringueiro (3).

The prime reasons for the migration of the remaining 37 families were: the high cost of living in the city (15) ; unemployment (8) ; a more secure future for their children (7) ; ownership of land (6) ; and the search for adventure (1).

The data given above has shown that PAD Pedro Peixoto is not serving its original function, i.e., the absorption of surplus Acrean labour. 64% of the sample in the three Glebas surveyed were refugees from the crises that have afflicted the rural and urban areas of the rest of Brazil. It must be noted again that these three Glebas were amongst the first to be settled on the PAD , yet only 24.5% of the families were previously resident* in Acre. According to field staff of both INCRA and EMATER, the tendency on the Glebas that were occupied later was for an even greater concentration of out of state migrants (2). It may be the case that the three Glebas surveyed were closer to access roads and therefore more desirable, but this does not explain the disparity between INCRA's official figures given in Table 2.4.1. of 84% settlement of Acreanos on PAD Pedro Peixoto and the 24.5% shown in the survey sample. That the later PADs were occupied by predominantly out of state migrants will be proven in section 2.4.3.

1. Field interview, PAD Pedro Peixoto.

2. Field interviews, Rio Branco and Cruzeiro do Sul.

*. Resident in Acre for at least 12 months prior to arrival on PAD.

When questioned about this phenomenon in a press conference given in Rio Branco in October, 1983, the Director of INCRA-Acre stated that INCRA would allocate land only to those who met its selection criteria, i.e., those with adequate financial resources and agricultural expertise. However, the survey of PAD Pedro Peixoto shows that, apart from four exceptions, the out of state migrants on the PAD were no more qualified than the Acreano colonists.

In the first instance, the financial and/or economic capacities of the migrants are reflected in the capital that each family possesses. After having been settled on the PAD for between 2 and 4 years, the 110 families possessed between them : 65 petrol-driven chain saws ; 1 lorry ; 3 jeeps ; 5 cars ; no tractors or agricultural machinery. The capital equipment of the average family amounted to a single chain saw. The families also possessed between them : 5 horses ; 105 head of beef cattle split into 3 herds of 80, 15 and 10 ; 325 dairy cattle spread amongst 20 families, with 3 large herds of 120, 60 and 30, the remaining 17 families having an average of 6 head. The vehicles, the beef cattle and most of the dairy cattle were concentrated amongst 4 families all of whom had previously owned land and three of whom had occupied the largest size properties shown in Table 2.4.7. The life-styles of the other 106 families were virtually indistinguishable. Thus, in terms of INCRA's first selection criterion, there was no reason for such a high proportion of out of state migrants.

A case can perhaps be made for the greater agricultural experience of those who had migrated from the rural areas of the South where 'modern' agricultural techniques are used, but, in the context of the PADs of Acre, this argument also breaks down under scrutiny. Given that the intended

cash crop on the PADs was rubber and therefore not within the expertise of those from the South, coupled with the fact that most seringueiros and barranqueiros had experience of subsistence crop cultivation, then the grounds for selecting non-Acreanos over Acreanos on the basis of agricultural qualifications are also false.

It is also important to note that the lack of capital accumulation on the part of the majority of colonists, Acreanos and non-Acreanos alike, is in part, if not directly, due to the non-completion of infrastructural developments and the lack of technical and financial assistance, all of which had been promised to the colonists. Of the 110 interviewed, 108 were in possession of an 'Authorisation to Occupy', while only 2 had been issued with a 'Definitive Title'. Both of these families were members of the 'leading' group of 4 noted on the previous page. One had waited 4 years for the issue of the title, the other had waited 18 months. As has been mentioned previously, the lack of a definitive title severely restricted the colonists' access to credit, reflected in the fact that only 16 of the 110 had been granted credit by BANACRE and this was restricted to credit for subsistence crops, not permanent cultures.

None of those interviewed had been serviced by COLONACRE. The tracks that lead to their lots are impassable for most of the year except by vehicles with four-wheel drive, e.g., jeeps, which only three families possessed. EMATER technicians had visited only 10 of the 110, 9 regarding the planting of rubber trees and 1 regarding pest control. It must be noted that not one of the interviewees had begun the planting of rubber trees at the time of the survey, the principal reason given being the lack of credit provision for permanent crops unless a definitive title was held. In addition, none of the colonists had access to the

storage facilities of CAGEACRE. These were located in the urban areas and inaccessible to all but those with vehicles as the Glebas surveyed were 81 kilometres from Rio Branco where the nearest warehouse was situated.

With reference to the commercialisation of the colonists' surplus, only 16 of the 110 had sold a portion of their production during the year prior to the interview. 7 of these were ex-seringueiros who reverted to rubber tapping for the provision of a cash income and who sold to local marreteiros. 4 were owners of their own transport and thus the markets of Rio Branco were accessible to them. These also gained a cash income by transporting other colonists and their families to the city as well as acting as marreteiros themselves. The remaining 5 sold their surplus either to local marreteiros or to one of those families who had transport. The quantities of produce sold by these 5 is given below:

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
Rice.	800Kg	1,200Kg	-	-	-
Manioc.	-	-	-	-	2,000Kg
Beans.	-	-	90Kg	1,000Kg	850Kg
Corn.	2,100Kg	600Kg	5,000Kg	3,600Kg	-

The income gained from these sales was minimal and used to buy an annual change of clothing for each member of the family and for the purchase of small items for the home. The approximate income received by the above 5 was 490,000Cr, 460,000Cr, 531,000Cr, 710,000Cr, and 497,000Cr respectively. The highest income of the group, that of 710,000 cruzeiros, is approximately 10% less than the annual income of a seringueiro autônomo in the same municipality.

The above has demonstrated that: firstly, INCRA seemingly gave priority to the settlement of out of state migrants on the PAD at a time when Rio Branco was unable to absorb the surplus labour that had already arrived and was continuing to arrive from the rural areas of Acre ; secondly, the bias towards out of state migrants could not have based upon the INCRA's stated criteria of selection as in the main the two groups are indistinguishable ; thirdly, once settled, the colonists received little, if any, support from the agencies that were allocated this task . The following section will discuss the settlement of other INCRA projects in Acre and will demonstrate that this situation was not limited to PAD Pedro Peixoto.

4.1.3. The 'New Acreanos'.

During the two decades that followed World War II, the Amazon was treated, firstly, as a 'resource frontier', as a region whose natural wealth could be tapped to resolve the country's chronic balance of payments problem, and, secondly, as an 'agricultural frontier' for the absorption of the thousands of landless peasants of the North-East. In the 1970's, the region became the object of speculation by the industrial corporations of the South-East who sought to continue the predation of the Amazon via the implantation of agro-mineral complexes. From 1980 onwards, Amazônia, and Acre in particular, was once again being used as an escape valve for the crises that were occurring in other states of the Union.

Once such crisis was discussed in the previous section, the problem that was affecting small farmers in the agricultural South. Another was that of the industrial decline of the cities of the South-East

where real incomes were falling causing a concomitant reduction in the demand for non-essential goods. This in turn threw large numbers of workers onto the already saturated labour market. One manifestation of the crisis through which the urban poor were passing were the food riots in São Paulo during 1983.

At such a crucial period, labour will seek employment wherever it appears, even if this means confronting totally new situations such as those that exist in the 'frontier' regions. Such a situation existed in Europe after the First World War at which time thousands migrated to Brazil and the United States. In the late 70's and early 80's, INCRA began to promote Acre as the answer to the land crisis of the South and unemployment in the South-East. In one respect, INCRA was repeating the actions of the Dantas administration of the Early 70's by inviting migrants to come to Acre before it had resolved the situation of the resident rural population.

In May, 1982, 52 families arrived in Acre from the shanty towns of São Paulo and were installed on PAD Humaitá. The cost of their travel was borne by INCRA who also guaranteed to pay each family the equivalent of the monthly regional minimum salary for the first six months of their stay in Acre. However, this group arrived at a time of year when it was impossible to clear the forest by burning for the creation of subsistence plots. This had to wait until the months of August and September when they had already used up four or five of the six monthly salaries. Thus, when they finally were able to plant, they were without a cash income and harvest time was over five months away (1).

1. Field interviews, PAD Humaitá and Rio Branco.

Eighteen months later, in October, 1983, only three families of the original 52 were still resident on their land. The others had either migrated to the city of Rio Branco or else returned to Sao Paulo. One of those who remained explains their predicament:

"I was a soldier in the army back in Sao Paulo and I came here to Acre with my father to try our luck...INCRA made many promises...that the cost of living was cheaper in Acre than in Sao Paulo...which is a lie...that we would receive adequate assistance...that we would find roads already constructed...It was only three weeks ago that the side road was finally completed, but even now the bus cannot travel along it...We still have to walk eighteen kilometres to the bus stop on the main road...Its a long way with a sack on your back, but how else can we bring in essential supplies?...and once the rains come, we are totally isolated....INCRA jeeps have four wheel drive, but they won't bring in supplies up here...they say that they haven't enough petrol to do this...Last year my father became ill with tuberculosis and went back to Sao Paulo on the advice of the doctor in Rio Branco...It has been three months since I last heard from him...I stayed because we came to this place to settle, not to keep moving all the time." (1).

The following summer, when travel by road was again possible in the state, the same process was repeated. In August, 1983, 601 families, a total of 3,051 persons arrived in Acre to settle on INCRA projects. 311 families migrated from the industrial zone of Betim in the state of Minas Gerais. None had any previous experience of agriculture. The principal prior occupations of the male heads of families were : steel worker ; clerk ; bricklayer ; carpenter ; shop assistant ; and factory worker. Of these 311 families, 188 received lots on PAD Santa Luzia in the municipality of Cruzeiro do Sul, and 123 were settled on PAD Quixadá which lies along the BR 317 Highway that runs between Brasília and Assis Brasil. The other 290 families migrated from the industrial belt of Sao Paulo. 287 went to PAD Pedro Peixoto and 3 to

1. Field interview, colonist, PAD Humaitá.

PAD Boa Esperança. In October of the same year, a further 80 families arrived in Acre from the municipality of Mundo Novo in the state of Mato Grosso do Sul. They came from an area that had been inundated following the construction of the Itaipu dam. These families were also settled on PAD Quixadá (1).

Families from each of the migrant groups were interviewed in the field and all stated that INCRA had painted a glowing picture of life on the PADs of Acre that did not match the reality of the situation that that confronted them after their arrival:

"There in Sao Paulo they showed us a film with roads passing the front gate of each lot, land already marked out, wood ready cut to build our houses, ambulances attending the needs of the farmers and SUCAM (2) winning the battle against malaria.... All this in the offices of INCRA in Sao Paulo... Look... You can see for yourself, we were the victims of a great lie." (3).

"INCRA, back in Mato Grosso do Sul, said that Brasileia was a beauty... a very healthy area... and that INCRA would solve any problem that we had and that we would realize our dreams ... It isn't possible that they lied so much... that they did us such an injustice... I still cannot believe it." (4).

The image of Acre as the 'Promised Land' was also propagated in the leaflets distributed by INCRA-Acre throughout the South and South-East. The following is a translation of an open letter from the Director of INCRA in Rio Branco which was given to each of the prospective migrants from Minas Gerais:

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1. Details from field interviews and local press releases.
 2. SUCAM - The Superintendency for Medical Assistance.
 3. Field interview, colonist, PAD Pedro Peixoto.
 4. Field interview, colonist, PAD Santa Luzia.

"The candidate that meets the requirements of INCRA will be located on an agricultural plot of between 50 and 100 hectares. He will be given access to rural credit for whatever crops that he wishes to plant with the guarantee of technical assistance from INCRA or one of the other state agencies dealing with rural development. The period of finance will vary according to type ; one year for subsistence crops; three to five years for permanent crops. Each plot may be cleared to up to 50% of its total area, leaving the rest as forest reserve.

The type of agriculture to be undertaken on the projects is subsistence interspersed with permanent crops such as coffee, cocoa, guarana, and rubber. The object is to promote a minimum accumulation that is sufficient to economically emancipate the holder.

A Directed Settlement Project (PAD) functions under a local administration run by an officer of the regional office. INCRA's on the projects are restricted to the demarcation of lots and the implantation of a physical infrastructure (roads, bridges and culverts) and a social infrastructure (health posts, accident units and schools).

On Project Pedro Peixoto, there is an Integrated Cooperative For Agrarian Reform - CIRA - that manages an association of lot holders, grouping them together for joint economic action with the result that there is real cooperation between them.

The main object of the colonisation projects is to establish a climate of cooperation between the farmer and the state so as to promote the rational use of the land.

Aldemir Fernandes de Souza." (1).

When the colonists arrived on the PADs, they found that access roads had not been constructed, ready cut timber for house construction was not available, there were no schools and few health posts, and, in many instances, the plots were distant from the arterial highways with some families having to carry their belongings distances of up to fifty kilometres. They also later found out that their monthly income of 30,600 cruzeiros was not sufficient for even their basic food supplies. In the words of one migrant who had made a journey of over 3,100 kilometres from Mundo Novo in Mato Grosso do Sul to PAD Quixadá:

1. Translated from a copy in the hands of a colonist on PAD Santa Luzia.

"Winter is coming. What is going to happen? INCRA in Mundo Novo promised that within 90 days we would receive cut timber to build our house....but the first ones to arrive on the project four months ago still haven't received theirs...imagine how long we will have to wait...and our lot is almost 40 kilometres from the highway...how can we bring food and goods all that distance?...How can we carry out at person who is sick during the winter?...We have begun cutting down the forest...but we are using axes...there isn't any petrol for the few chain saws that some families brought. In Brasileia, there is a petrol shortage and the customs in Cobija (Bolivia) won't let us bring any across the river...The clearings are for next year's crops...It is already too late to plant for this year...Some plots had paths cleared for INCRA's lorries and these were only covered in brushwood, so some families have managed to clear these to plant for this year...For us, we will harvest some crops for next year, but this year will be bad...We have a monthly allowance from INCRA of 30,600 cruzeiros, but this doesn't last us the whole month and it will only be paid for six months...What will happen then?...How will we be able to get money?...and the next year?...We will have green corn, brice and, later, beans and manioc for us to eat...but we will have none to sell to buy medicines, clothes, salt, sugar, and powdered milk for the children...and other small things...It is impossible to find employment around here...and the 30,000 cruzeiros only lasts a fortnight...some of us have large families with small children...the older ones understand and carry on, but the youngest cry all the time...It is four days now since the dried milk ran out...my wife can only give the baby boiled water with sugar in it." (1).

When these families arrived in Acre, the official regional minimum salary was just over 38,000 cruzeiros a month. It had been at this level for 5 months. One month later, it rose to over 52,000 cruzeiros, but even this rise of 37% did not match inflation for the same period which was running at 240% per annum. PAD colonists received a monthly salary of 30,600 cruzeiros per family regardless of family size. However, when the official minimum salary rose, the colonist's salary did not. Thus, the colonist family were expected to live on an income that was only 59% of what was officially regarded as the minimum on which an average size family could survive.

1. Field interview, colonist, PAD Quixadá.

The following letter, which was received by the Church's Land Commission (CPT) in Rio Branco, illustrates the financial crisis of the newly arrived migrant family. It is from the wife of a colonist on PAD Quixadá, who lives 95 kilometres away from Brasília along the BR 317. The highway is only paved for the first 35 kilometres, the remainder being impassable during the 9 month rainy season. Supplies are brought onto this PAD from Assis Brasil and Brasília by marreteiros at greatly inflated prices. For example, at the time the letter was written in October, 1983, a kilo of rice cost 350 cruzeiros in the markets of Rio Branco, 600 cruzeiros in the retail outlets of Brasília, and 1,000 cruzeiros from the marreteiro on PAD Quixadá, increases of 71% and 185% on the Rio Branco price. The figures for a kilo of beans were 350 cruzeiros in Rio Branco, 800 cruzeiros in Brasília, and 1,500 cruzeiros on PAD Quixadá, i.e., increases of 129% and 329% above the price in Rio Branco (1).

" I ask the Brothers of the Catholic Church in Rio Branco to help us as much as you can with food, second-hand shoes and clothing, and corn and rice seeds to plant.

Please send these things because we are desperate. The monthly allowance from INCRA lasts us for only two weeks and after that we have nothing in the house.

We live near the town of Assis Brasil, but we have no crops to sell. We cannot travel there (to Rio Branco) because we cannot afford the fare. We asked this lorry driver to carry this letter to you out of his love of God.

There are many parents here who are worried about the lack of food and the lack of schools for our children to study in. Here things are very expensive. A tin of cooking oil costs 2,000 cruzeiros, a kilo of sugar 800, a kilo of cassava flour is 1,500, a kilo of beans 1,500, a tin of dried milk 1,800 and a kilo of rice is 1,000 cruzeiros.

The Nuns sent us some blankets, a hammock, spoons and saucepans because we did not have these things when we arrived. There are fourteen of us at home. The Sisters arranged some second-hand clothes for the men to work in, as well as some shoes for them. They are almost without clothing.

This letter is from kilometre 95.

Luiz Ferreira Dias.
29th of October, 1983." (1)

1. Quoted with the permission of the Diocese of Acre-Purús.

During a field trip to PAD Quixadá in September, 1983, a group of 13 families from the group who had migrated from Minas Gerais were encountered camped alongside the BR 317, the highway that runs along the southern boundary of the project. The following statement was made by one of the prospective colonists:

"We arrived at this drop-off point at 11 o'clock on a Wednesday night without anywhere for us to sleep... We managed to huddle together, men, women, and children, under a piece of canvas to keep us dry... up until now, INCRA has not yet even allocated lots to us so that we can start clearing the land... We arrived here 30 days ago and we still haven't received land for us to work." (1).

The publicity campaign waged by INCRA in the South and South-East of Brazil, which advertised Acre in terms of its cheap and readily available land, was intended to relieve the crises affecting these regions by stimulating an ordered, officially sponsored migration to the newly created PADs. However, like the previous INCRA attempts at colonisation along the TransAmazonica and in Rondônia, the publicity triggered off a large spontaneous migration. No official figures were available as to the actual size of this spontaneous migration, but the Secretary for Agricultural development in Acre estimates that, in 1981, over 100 such families arrived in the state and that the figure was in excess of 200 for both 1982 and 1983 (2).

Informal discussions with local STR's and the CPT suggest that the spontaneous migrants come mainly from the rural areas of the South and South-East, i.e., the interior of Paraná, Sao Paulo and Mato Grosso do Sul. Some migrated directly to Acre, others via Rondônia where they

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1. Field interview, Colonist, PAD Quixadá.
 2. Field interview, Rio Branco.

found no land available on the PADs.

In the main, these families tend to be financially better off than those migrants sponsored by INCRA. They are ex-landowners, rather than ex-renters of land. The previous landholdings of 26 families interviewed during the last three months of 1983 ranged between one and one quarter Alqueire (1) and 11 Alqueires, i.e., between 3 hectares and 27 hectares with an average of 3 Alqueire, or just over 7 hectares. The principal reason given for the migration to Acre was that land could no longer support the extended family network.

Each family must pay for its own transport costs for the journey of over 3,000 kilometres from Curitiba in Paraná or Sao Paulo. In addition, they must support themselves in the urban areas of Brasiléia or Assis Brasil, i.e., near to PAD Quixadá, until they are allocated a plot by INCRA. This may take up to 3 months. The families must listen to the official broadcasts on the radio each week, waiting for their names to be called by INCRA.

Once a plot is allocated, the family is taken by INCRA to inspect the land and, on acceptance, they are then given a period of 90 days to 'improve' it. This consists of clearing a given percentage of the plot, which varied between 5% and 15% among the colonists interviewed. This percentage is arbitrarily set and seems to depend on which INCRA official the colonist is dealing with, rather than the size of the plot and the available labour force. The family must also construct a house.

1. Alqueire - a unit of land measurement which equals 24,400 square metres in Sao Paulo and the southern states of Brazil and 48,800 square metres in Minas Gerais.

Those who do not complete the 'improvements' in the stipulated time may face expulsion from the project, although the 90 day period is sometimes extended during the rainy season, or if a family is in some special difficulty. The following interview is with the mother of a family from the interior of Sao Paulo:

"I was born in Tupã in the interior of Sao Paulo. My father is Spanish, from a small village near Granada. He came to Brazil in 1924 in a whole boatload of Spaniards. Nearly all of his village, including the priest, was on board. My mother came from Minas, as did her parents. The whole family came to Acre three years ago (in 1980), more than thirty of us. Land is very expensive in Sao Paulo... Here, we have room to spread, although the climate is less healthy... We bought land here, 53 hectares, but it was not enough for us all... so my brother and I, we went to INCRA and asked if we could be put on the list for two plots of land next to each other... We waited and waited, then the news came on the radio calling all those chosen off the list to come and inspect their plots on PAD Quixada... INCRA was giving the land to us, not selling it... Our plot was 76 hectares for myself, my two children, my father and my eldest daughter's husband. My brother, his wife and eight children were given the plot next to ours... it was 83 hectares. Doctor Nemezio, the INCRA man in charge of the project, told us that we had 90 days to clear 3 hectares on our land and 4 on my brother's. During this time, we lost three members of the family... my daughter, my sister-in-law, and her daughter... My sister-in-law died because there was not enough blood in the hospital in Brasilia for the transfusion... She needed 5 litres and I could only persuade enough people passing the hospital gates to give 4 litres and so she died... This left my brother with seven children to look after... my father was very ill too and needed constant attention... So we couldn't clear the land in the time given by INCRA. I managed to clear only one hectare... I explained what had happened to Doctor Nemezio and that at the time we didn't even have food in the house because we had to use our supplies to feed all the people who came to the funeral... but he just gave our land and that of my brother to two other families and we had to come here to Brasilia." (1).

It must be stated, however, that, although this was a particularly tragic case, it was exceptional. It was the only instance encountered during the whole field trip, which included visits to all the PADs, that

1. Field interview, ex-PAD colonist, Brasília.

involved the eviction from a PAD of a self-financing out of state migrant family. In addition, not one family of this category was known to have abandoned a plot on a PAD of their own accord.

The PADs of Acre, then, which were originally destined for the settlement of landless Acreanos, were occupied by three distinct groups of colonists as shown in the matrix below:

	Acreano.	Non Acreano.
Self-financing	1	2
INCRA sponsored finance	0	3

Category 1 consists in the main of ex-seringueiros and their families who moved from their *colocações* or from Rio Branco to the PADs in the hope that at least they would have a permanent home for which they would receive a definitive land title. The combination of the lack of adequate family resources, the non-completion of infrastructural development, the non-availability of credit, and the lack of technical assistance, has minimalised the possibility of this group's successful and permanent settlement on their land. Production centres on subsistence cultivation for auto-consumption with few prospects of commercialising any surplus. At best this existence is precarious.

The third category is composed primarily of ex-renters of small rural properties and unemployed urban workers. They are distinguished from the first category only in terms of their out of state origin and the pitifully small allowance that they receive from INCRA during their first six months stay in Acre. They too suffer from the problems

noted for category 1 and, again, they are unlikely to remain as permanent settlers on the PADs. The case of the 52 families from Sao Paulo who arrived on PAD Humaitá in May, 1982, illustrates the predicament that these families face once they are abandoned on their plots. The sponsored families who arrived from the South and South-East in the summer of 1983 face the same future.

The study of Hébette and Acevedo (1) of the PADs in Rondônia suggests that their prime function is the provision of a reserve army of cheap labour for the larger properties that border onto the PADs. This is not the case in Acre where such larger properties are devoted either to cattle ranching, which requires a minimum labour force, or function as a reserve of value and remain unproductive requiring no labour force at all. For both the first and third categories noted above, the PADs of Acre merely delay the inevitable. They are used by INCRA as dumping grounds for the resolution of crises elsewhere. As such, the PADs of Acre function as stepping stones from and to landlessness and/or unemployment.

The situation of those in category 2, the self-financing out of state migrants, contrasts sharply with the other two groups. Of significant importance are the capital assets of these families prior to their arrival on the PADs. This is illustrated in the PAD Pedro Peixoto survey by the four families who between them owned all of the vehicles, all the beef cattle and most of the dairy cattle. Only these four were prospering, both from their own production and their role as middlemen for the other small producers. While no move towards concentration in land had occurred amongst the survey group by the

1. Hébette and Acevedo: 1982: 18

end of the field trip to Acre in January, 1984, it seems likely that these families will eventually incorporate the land of their neighbours into their own.

The above sections have discussed the role of INCRA projects in Acre and have shown that, in their present form and functioning, they cannot provide a long term solution to the problem for which they were created. Section 4.2. which follows will continue the discussion of state intervention and detail the activities of SUDHEVEA in the quest to 'fix' the Acreano on his land.

4.2. Operation PROBOR.

At the turn of the century, Brazilian natural rubber production amounted to 98% of the total world rubber production. By 1980, this had fallen to 0.7%. Prior to 1951, Brazil had been self-sufficient in rubber, but with the expansion of manufacturing industry greater and greater amounts began to be imported, mostly synthetic. In terms of natural rubber, Brazil produced 10% more than it consumed in 1965. Ten years later production amounted to only 32% of consumption. During this period, natural rubber fell from 29,290 tonnes per annum to 18,606 tonnes, a drop of 36.5%, while consumption of natural rubber rose from 26,554 tonnes to 57,946 tonnes, an increase of 118% (See Table 2.4.9.). The problem was exacerbated by the oil crisis of 1973/4 which saw a dramatic rise in the price of petroleum products. Synthetic rubber increased in price from 21.63 cruzeiros per kilo in 1973 to 32.78 cruzeiros in 1975, a rise of almost 52% (1). The gap between

1. Superintendência da Borracha, Anuário Estatístico, Mercado Nacional, 1981.

Table 2.4.9. - Brazil : Production & Consumption of Natural Rubber, 1965 - 1974, (in Tonnes).

Year.	Production. (a)	Consumption. (b)	$\frac{a}{b} \times 100$
1965	29,290	26,554	110
1966	24,347	30,862	79
1967	21,494	32,133	67
1968	22,959	38,156	60
1969	23,950	35,072	68
1970	24,976	36,739	68
1971	24,231	41,761	58
1972	25,818	44,219	58
1973	23,402	51,156	46
1974	18,616	57,945	32
Total for Decade.	239,073	394,597	61

Source : Superintendência da Borracha : 1981 : *ibid.*

consumption and production of natural rubber widened during the 70's and by 1980 the value of imported natural rubber had reached 85 million U.S. dollars per annum (1).

As a partial answer to its balance of payments problem, the federal government inaugurated the 1st Programme for the Incentivisation of Natural Rubber Production - PROBOR 1 - in July of 1972. At this time, Brazilian natural rubber production was confined to Amazônia, over 30% of which was produced in Acre. Production techniques on the seringais had altered little since the Rubber Boom period. There had been only one significant technological innovation, the introduction of the Tapper's Knife, or Faca de Seringa, which had a fine blade and a gauge for depth of cut. This occurred in the 1920's and prior to this the seringueiro had used a small hand-axe, or Machadinha, which produced a thicker cut in the bark of the tree which gave more latex in the short term, but which would eventually kill the tree.

According to SUDHEVEA, the average annual production of an Amazonian seringueiro was in the region of 500 kilos. This was in contrast to his counterpart on the plantations of Malaysia who produced 4,000 kilos per annum. Also, whereas a seringueiro might find between 300 and 600 rubber trees naturally dispersed throughout his *colocação* of 200 hectares, approximately 500 trees could be concentrated in one hectare using plantation methods. Thus the main aim of PROBOR 1 was to incentivise the introduction of rubber plantations. As Table 2.4.10. illustrates, the new plantations were not to be restricted to the Amazon Basin, rubber's natural habitat. Bahia in the North-East was also to be a major recipient of PROBOR funds.

1. Extensão Rural, Vol.2, No.2, March/April, 1981.

Table 2.4.10. - PROBOR 1 : Area Contracted and Planted by 30/12/1980.(1).

State.	Number of projects.	Area Planted.	Area to be Planted.	Total Area.	Average Project Size
Acre.	47	3,554	3,942	7,496	159
Amapá.	4	420	0	420	105
Amazonas	66	3,929	2,874	6,803	103
Bahia.	78	3,697	479	4,176	54
Mato Grosso.	32	3,262	171	3,433	107
Pará.	47	2,280	0	2,280	49
Rondônia.	60	990	422	1,412	24
Total.	334	18,132	7,888	26,020	78

Source : Superintendência da Borracha , Sinopse de Atividades , 1980.

SUDHEVEA were not able to furnish information regarding the actual size of property on which each of the above projects were implanted. In the case of Acre, the median size of 159 per project suggests that such properties were well in excess of 300 hectares, given the IBDF (2) prohibition of deforesting more than 50% of any property and the probability that rubber plantations would be only one of the uses to which the land would be put. The Information Officer at SUDHEVEA's office in Rio Branco stated in an informal discussion that the majority of PROBOR 1 projects in Acre were located on properties in excess of 1,000 hectares (3). Hébette and Acevedo's work in Rondônia also points out that it was the larger property owner who was more

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1. Area measured in hectares.
 2. IBDF : The Brazilian Forestry Commission.
 3. Field discussions, SUDHEVEA, Rio Branco.

likely to benefit from state projects as these were more likely to receive credit from banking institutions, were more able to deal with the bureaucratic apparatuses, and were more likely to have alternative cash incomes which enabled to plant crops such as rubber that took time to mature (1). Thus, PROBOR 1 was not aimed at the small producer, but sought to increase rubber production through the creation of plantations on larger properties.

PROBOR 1 was not successful. SUDHEVEA laid the blame on the lack of public belief in the viability of commercial rubber production, given the failure in the 1940's of such large plantations as Ford's in Pará, and also on the lack of suitably qualified personnel to manage the plantations. Of the 18,132 hectares already planted only 1,000 hectares were actually producing rubber by the end of 1980 and these were not in Amazônia, but in Bahia (2).

In October of 1977, SUDHEVEA launched its second programme, PROBOR 2, details of which are given in Table 2.4.11. It will be noted that the average project size had fallen from the 78 hectares of PROBOR 1 to 36 hectares. In the case of Acre, the decrease was more emphatic, dropping from 159 hectares to 17 hectares. No hard data on these projects in Acre was available from SUDHEVEA-Acre except that, by December, 1983, none were in commercial production. According to the Director of SUDHEVEA-Acre, the decrease in project size was attributed to the greater success rate of PROBOR 1 in Rondônia where the median was 24 hectares. Success rate here indicates the shorter time taken from initial finance to actual planting and also the greater percentage of contracted land actually planted (3).

1. Hébette & Acevedo: Ibid.

2. Extensao Rural: Ibid.

3. Field interview, SUDHEVEA, Rio Branco.

Table 2.4.11. - PROBOR 2 : Area Contracted and Planted by 30/12/1980 in Hectares.

State.	Number of projects.	Area Planted.	Area to be Planted.	Total Area.	Average Project Size.
Acre.	416	1,950	4,971	6,921	17
Amapá.	16	10	143	153	10
Amazonas.	692	4,022	24,621	28,643	42
Bahia.	109	425	2,928	3,355	31
Espirito Santo.	134	300	3,790	4,090	31
Maranhão.	1	0	5,000	5,000	5,000
Mato Grosso.	119	2,222	15,255	17,477	147
Pará.	134	1,970	5,320	7,290	54
Rondônia.	732	1,540	11,403	12,943	18
Total.	2,353	12,439	73,431	85,872	36

Source : Superintendência da Borracha:1980:Ibid.

Finance for such projects was advanced by the Banco da Amazônia, BASA. Table 2.4.12. gives details of the credit issued by BASA for rural establishments in the municipality of Rio Branco up to and including December, 1980, i.e., finance which covered both PROBOR's 1 and 2. This shows that, while the majority of the recipients (81%) possessed properties of less than 100 hectares, the lion's share of the finance for rubber plantations (89%) went to those with properties of over 1,000 hectares.

Table 2.4.12. - Banco da Amazônia : Finance Destined for Rural Establishments in Rio Branco up to Dec.1980.

Area of Rural Units (Ha's).	Number of Units.		Object of Finance (in 1000Cr).		Total.	
	Absolute.	%	Agriculture. Ranching.	Plantations.	Absolute.	%
0 - 99	256	81	10,420	615	14,530	5.0
100 - 999	12	4	0	2,907	26,707	5.8
1,000 - 9,999	38	12	0	90,186	115,183	40.0
10,000 +	11	3	0	19,744	233,371	49.2
Total.	317	100	10,420	113,452	389,791	100.0
% of Finance.	-	-	2.0	22.1	75.9	-

Source : BASA , quoted in Da Silva :1981:88.

SUDHEVEA was confronted by three major problems in terms of the implementation of its PROBOR 1 and 2 programmes in Acre. Firstly, during PROBOR 1, which concentrated on locating projects on larger properties, it found that finance given by BASA was being diverted from the creation of plantations to other uses. Property owners found it more profitable to invest the loans in enterprises outside of the state, or else use it to set up commercial ventures in the state itself (1).

Secondly, the struggle in the Acrean countryside during the 1970's, i.e., the decade in which PROBORS 1 and 2 were created, centred on the expulsion of seringueiro families from their colocações. The land on which the latter lived was deforested to deny them their livelihood. This inevitably reduced the number of naturally dispersed rubber trees in the affected municipalities which contributed to the fall in rubber production. In addition, the struggle on the part of the seringueiro population against future deforestation did not and could not distinguish between clearing the land for cattle or clearing the land for plantation rubber, as both inevitably meant their forcible expulsion from the land.

Thirdly, during PROBOR 2, SUDHEVEA experienced difficulties over the implantation of small projects on the INCRA PADs. The colonists of the latter had been expected to create small rubber plantations of between 3 and 10 hectares on their properties. However, as has already been noted, many were unable to obtain finance for this task as they did not possess a definitive title to their land. Those that did obtain credit

1. Field interview, Director of SUDHEVEA-Acre, Rio Branco.

found that their position was still precarious in that they had difficulties in repaying the finance because of problems concerning the commercialisation of their other crops.

By December, 1980, eight years after the inauguration of PROBOR 1, less than half of the area contracted had been planted (See Tables 2.4.10/11). In 1981, SUDHEVEA initiated a third programme, PROBOR 3, which had as its target self-sufficiency in rubber production by the year of 1992. This was ambitious given the failure of the previous two programmes and the fact that Brazil was importing 70% of its rubber at the time. An initial target of 500,000 hectares of new rubber plantations was set to be implanted during the ten years that the project was to last. Thus, PROBOR 1, 2 and 3 combined were projected to have a total of almost 362,000 hectares of rubber under cultivation. It was also estimated that, by 1992, a labour force of 200,000 seringueiros would be employed on the plantations created under PROBOR 3 (1).

The following section will detail the implementation of PROBOR 3 in Acre and in particular will note its differential effect on the class formations of the two micro-regions of which the state consists.

4.2.1. The Mini-Usina and the ASSER.

Unlike its predecessors, PROBOR 3 was directly aimed at the small landowner. It was felt that the latter, given adequate technical and financial assistance, were best able or more likely to meet the

1. Superintendência da Borracha : 1981 : Terceiro Programa de Incentive á Produção de Borracha Natural - PROBOR III.

production targets set by the programme. At the same time, the creation of a small plantation would provide this group with a cash income without prejudicing their continued cultivation of subsistence crops (1).

Amongst PROBOR 3's subprogrammes was a financial package for the construction of a total of 500 'mini-usinas' throughout the ten states involved in the programme. A mini-usina is a small rubber-processing plant, capable of being run by a labour force of three, that converts latex into a higher quality rubber product than traditional methods. It was envisaged that each mini-usina would serve between 20 and 40 small producers depending on the size of their plantations.

In contrast to traditional Amazonian methods of rubber production, plantation/mini-usina production involved the rational organisation of natural resources, a higher level of technology, and a greater division of labour. However, it is not capitalistic per se. The size of the projects of PROBOR's 1 and 2, combined with monopoly control of land and labour, necessarily signified that relations of production would centre on the possession/non-possession of the means of production. The new model envisaged under PROBOR 3 was of individual small producers who cooperatively owned the mini-usina and furnished the labour with which to run it (2).

In the case of Acre, however, BANACRE and BASA, the two principal financial institutions, remained resolute in their refusal to provide credit to small producers not in possession of a definitive title.

1 & 2. Ibid.

On the other hand, INCRA, as has been noted, would not provide such a title without improvements to the land that required an input of capital. In direct response to this dilemma, the Acrean state government launched an operation in early 1982 that came to be called 'PROBORZINHO', or 'Little PROBOR' (1). In this, the state guaranteed credit facilities to any small producer, whether in possession of a definitive title or not, for the creation of a 3 hectare rubber plantation on his property.

A prime motivating factor for this action was the realisation on the part of the Acrean authorities that developments in other parts of Brazil posed a direct threat to Acre's position as leading producer of natural rubber. In particular they noted the growth of plantations in the states of Bahia and Espirito Santo which had been financed under PROBOR 1 and 2 and which were nearer to the industrial centres of the South-east. By 1980, Bahia was producing 13.9% of Brazil's natural rubber production (2). In addition, there were reports in the local Acrean press that the financial incentives of PROBOR 3 were stimulating the substitution of crops for rubber in state of Sao Paulo where "large areas of coffee were being turned into rubber plantations" (3), whereas only 2,000 hectares were projected under PROBOR 3 in Acre. According to the Secretary of Agricultural Development in Acre, 1,200 hectares were planted under the PROBORZINHO scheme during 1982 and 1983. However, these were a minimum of six years away from commercial production (4). The breakdown of the total area of

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1. Also called 'Mutirão PROBOR'.
 2. Superintendência da Borracha: 1981: Ibid.
 3. 'O Varadouro', NO. 23, Aug/Sept. 1981, Rio Branco.
 4. Field interview, Rio Branco.

plantation rubber that had been created prior to December, 1982, is given in Table 2.4.13. below.

Table 2.4.13. - Acre : Area of Plantation Rubber according to Municipality as of December, 1982.

Municipality.	Area (in Ha's).	% Area.
Rio Branco.	878	15.0
Senador Guimard.	400	6.8
Sena Madureira.	436	7.5
Xapuri.	489	8.4
Plácido de Castro.	120	2.1
Brasiléia.	173	3.0
Assis Brasil.	0	0.0
Manoel Urbano.	0	0.0
Sub-Total Purús.	2,496	42.8
Cruzeiro do Sul.	2,511	43.0
Feijó.	393	6.7
Mâncio Lima.	326	5.6
Tarauacá.	110	1.9
Sub-Total Juruá.	3,340	57.2
Total Acre.	5,836	100.0

Source: Estado do Acre, Anuário Estatístico, 1981.

Paralleling this action on the part of the state government, SUDHEVEA also launched a new initiative in the state. SUDHEVEA was committed to increasing Acre's rubber production in as short a time as possible, yet it had encountered problems in the implementation of projects based on rubber plantations. Thus, its new effort was not aimed at the PAD colonist, who was now the object of the state's PROBORZINHO programme, nor the larger property owner as in PROBOR 1 and 2. It was directed at the seringueiro autônomo who had remained on his *colocação* and who continued to produce rubber in the traditional manner.

Up until this point, the seringueiro autônomo and barraqueiro had been denied access to both state and federal development funding. In part, this was due to their position as occupiers of land without title. Yet it was precisely because of the policy of INCRA, i.e., to resolve the 'problem' of this group by their translocation to the PADs, that land titles had not been granted to them. SUDHEVEA's new campaign, which united the mini-usina with the free labour of the seringueiro autônomo, was to dramatically alter the situation of the latter. Although, as will be shown, the campaign had different effects in different geographical locations.

Within two years of the start of the programme, i.e., by January, 1984, 19 mini-usinas had already been constructed : 14 in Brasiléia; 3 in Xapuri; and 2 in Tarauacá. The concentration of all but two in the southeastern portion of the Purús micro-region was not accidental. Firstly, this part of Acre, the municipalities of Brasiléia and Xapuri, was the area in which the highest concentration of seringueiros autônomos were to be found. This labour force was still actively

engaged in rubber production and were free agents in that they controlled the land on which they worked and therefore were masters of their own labour-power. Thus, they were ideal for SUDHEVEA, an independent labour force experienced in rubber production that could be formed into producer cooperatives based on the mini-usina.

Secondly, this portion of Acre had been the scene of major confrontations throughout the previous decade. This had an obvious affect on the rubber economy. As Table 2.4.14. overleaf demonstrates, rubber production fell dramatically between 1971 and 1981 in both Xapuri and Brasiléia. In 1971, Xapuri produced 1,132 tonnes of natural rubber, but only 679 tonnes in 1981, a fall of 40%. The figures for Brasiléia show an even steeper decline: 1,250 tonnes in 1971 to 403 tonnes in 1981, a drop of almost 68%.

Thirdly, although the area had suffered the brunt of deforestation in the state, the resistance put up by the resident seringueiro population meant that there were still a significant number of colocações still in production. However, the poor terms of trade with the marreteiro had forced many of the seringueiros to produce rubber only to exchange for essentials and to concentrate on subsistence cultivation. Field interviews in both Xapuri and Brasiléia point to the fact that the seringueiro who dealt with the marreteiro was more likely to tap only two rubber trails in a season, rather than the 'norm' of three trails. The colocações of seringueiros interviewed in these two municipalities contained a varied number of rubber trails with a minimum of three and a maximum of twelve, giving an average of between six and seven. Thus, provided sufficient incentive was offered, these de-activated trails could be brought back into production relatively quickly.

Table 2.4.14. - Acre : Rubber Production According to Municipality (1), 1962 to 1981 (Dry weight in Tonnes.).

Municipality.	1962.	1971. (a)	1981. (b)	$\frac{b}{a}$
Rio Branco.	3,041	2,934	4,791(2)	1.63
Xapuri.	2,352	1,132	679	0.60
Brasiléia.	694	1,250	403	0.32
Sena Madureira.	1,428	1,616	1,160	0.72
Sub-Total Purús.	7,515	6,932	7,033	1.01
Cruzeiro do Sul.	1.148	718	1,161	1.62
Feijó.	388	748	753	1.01
Tarauacá.	823	888	842	0.95
Sub-Total Juruá.	2,359	2,354	2,756	1.17
Total Acre.	9,874	9,286	9,789	1.05

Sources : Estado do Acre, Anuário Estatístico, 1975 & 1982 ;
Superintendência da Borracha : 1981 : Ibid.

- (1) The municipal boundaries of 1971 have been retained to facilitate comparison.
- (2) Rio Branco's production, here, is greatly inflated as it includes rubber produced in Bolivia and illegally imported across the border into Plácido de Castro.

Fourthly, southeastern Acre also had the lowest concentration of the newly formed rubber plantations which, as has been noted, was again in great part due to local resistance to deforestation. Table 2.4.13. shows that Brasiléia had only 173 hectares of the whole municipality devoted to plantations, a mere 3% of the state total. Even once these began producing, Brasiléia would still remain the municipality with the lowest annual rubber production in the state. Thus, again, it presented itself as a prime target for SUDHEVEA activity.

Southeastern Acre, and Brasiléia in particular, given its previously high production levels, its experienced free labour force, and disactivated trails that could be readily re-opened, was an almost ideal candidate for SUDHEVEA. According to the chief technician of SUDHEVEA in Brasiléia, the only stumbling block which worried the agency at this time was the lack of trust that local seringueiros had in state agencies (1).

This problem was quickly overcome in Brasiléia, at least in terms of SUDHEVEA. INCRA was still viewed with suspicion. The position of SUDHEVEA in the municipality was improved following a change in the policy of the local Rural Worker's Union, the STR, after the assassination of the STR president, Wilson Pinheiro, in the summer of 1981. The new leadership, whilst still insisting on the seringueiro's right of posse over his *colocação*, moved away from the earlier intractable position in which only the recognition of existing *colocações* in their entirety was acceptable. The STR recognised that the position of its members could not be resolved without state intervention and that, providing the long term aim of land titling

1. Field interview, Brasiléia.

was achieved, then each side must be prepared to negotiate.

The earlier and later stances of the STR in Brasiléia were essentially identical to the positions held by the two main opposition parties in Acre at that time, the PT and the PMDB. The former argued that the seringueiro had an inalienable right to his posse and that he should hold his ground especially now that rubber production was being prioritised by the federal government. The PMDB on the other hand, which had just begun its campaign for the 1982 elections on the platform of 'popular participation' under the present governor, Nabor Junior, argued that there must be a dialogue between the parties to the dispute over titling, i.e., between the state and its agencies and the STR and its members.

The STR's in Xapuri and Tarauacá, the two other municipalities in which mini-usinas have been constructed, stuck to the PT's non-cooperation policy, although for different reasons as will be demonstrated. The STR in Brasiléia moved towards the PMDB, and later CONTAG, position and entered into a dialogue with the two main state agencies involved, INCRA and SUDHEVEA. At the same time, the latter launched a massive publicity campaign in the municipality promoting the concept of mini-usina production through the issuing of leaflets, posters, advertisements on the radio, and visits by technicians to branch meetings of the STR both in Brasiléia and in the interior.

The result of the joint talks, held as they were in the middle of the publicity campaign, was the acceptance by the STR members of a comprehensive package for the seringueiro autônomo. The package was

founded on five essential points:

- 1) INCRA agreed to temporarily freeze the planned extension to PAD Quixadá on the former Seringal Santa Quitéria which was to have covered 70,000 hectares. INCRA had intended to settle the area without first resolving the situation of the resident seringueiros. While this did not directly result in the granting of land titles to them, it did give them a breathing space during which time their case could be considered.
- 2) Seringueiros could only participate in the programme if they met SUDHEVEA's selection requirements. Firstly, the seringueiro had to be a seringueiro autônomo, i.e., not working for a patrão and therefore with right of posse over his colocação. Secondly, he must have produced a minimum of 200 kilos of rubber in the previous tapping season. Thirdly, he had to form a producer cooperative with his neighbours. This was to be called an ASSER, or Association of Seringueiros. The mini-usina would belong to the ASSER and not to the members that belonged to it, thus membership could change over time without financially prejudicing the ASSER.
3. BASA guaranteed to provide cheap credit for any group of seringueiros that SUDHEVEA formed into an ASSER. This was set at 35% per annum, much lower than the inflation rate of the time which was running at 220% per annum. The credit was given on the understanding that SUDHEVEA underwrote the loan and supervised the construction of the mini-usina and its management in the early stages.
- 4) SUDHEVEA agreed to train the seringueiros in the operation of the mini-usina and guaranteed that its rubber product would be purchased. It also guaranteed that the price offered for each kilo of rubber produced by the mini-usina would exceed the current price for rubber produced in the traditional manner. SUDHEVEA had already

held negotiations with two companies from Sao Paulo who agreed to purchase the product provided that the total mini-usina production of the municipality passed through their hands.

5) A company was formed, COBAL, which was to create a chain of stores, one in each Acrean municipality. The aim was to provide the seringueiro family with foodstuffs and other essential items at a price that was lower than could be obtained by local traders or the marreteiro. By bulk purchase, COBAL could store non-perishable items as a hedge against inflation and sell them to the seringueiro at cost plus overheads. The seringueiro would also be allowed to purchase merchandise on credit against the next month's production. COBAL was to use SUDHEVEA's vehicles to transport the seringueiros' monthly orders to drop-off points along the BR 317 highway where the seringueiro would pick them up. On the return journey, the lorries were to transport the monthly product of the ASSERs back to the SUDHEVEA depot where it would be weighed and graded. (1).

Thus, in contrast to the situation of the colonist on the PAD, SUDHEVEA had managed, in Brasília at least, to overcome the four principal stumbling blocks to the accumulation of capital on the part of the small rural producer:

1. The commercialisation of the product.
2. The provision of essential goods at a low price.
3. The provision of cheap credit without the need for a land title.
4. Readily available technical assistance.

Before discussing the workings of the ASSER, mention must first be made

1. Data collected from field interviews at SUDHEVEA, INCRA, BASA & STR in Brasília.

of changes in the mode of producing rubber in Acre. The production process is divided into three basic operations. Firstly, there is the tapping process, or 'corte'. This takes place in the morning and occupies the seringueiro from between three to four hours depending on the size of the trail being tapped. The corte is carried out in the same manner throughout the state of Acre. The sole innovation in the period since the Rubber Boom was the already noted introduction of the 'Faca de Seringa', or tapper's knife, which replaced the 'Machadinha', or hand-axe, as the means to incise the bark of the rubber tree.

The second part of the process is the collection of the latex which is also carried out in the traditional manner throughout the state. The small cups, 'Tigelhinhas', in which the latex is gathered are emptied into a rubber impregnated hessian sack which the seringueiro carries on his back as he runs from tree to tree. The collection takes approximately the same time as the 'corte', i.e., three to four hours.

The third operation involves the transformation of the liquid latex into a solid form so that it can be transported to the point of sale. It is in this aspect of production where there has been some recent innovation. At present in Acre, there are three distinct ways of processing the latex, each of which is concentrated in a different geographical area of the state.

The traditional process, as Part 1 has illustrated, involves the smoking of the latex over a funnel-shaped clay oven. A wooden paddle is slowly revolved by hand over the mouth of the funnel from which smoke emanates. The latex is poured gradually onto the paddle where it hardens. This is continued each day in the late afternoon and early evening until a large

ball, or 'Pela', of around 60 kilos is formed. The size of the pela is limited by the weight that the seringueiro can carry on his back as many have to transport the pela in this manner if they do not have transport vehicles or animals.

This method is still employed in most of the Juruá micro-region and along the Rivers Chandless, Caeté and Iaco in the Purús micro-region. Two litres of latex are required to produce one kilo of rubber. Thus if a seringueiro produces 20 litres of latex from his trails per day, which is the average for the region, his daily product will be 10 kilos of rubber. This process is long and arduous as well as being harmful to the vision. The working day of the seringueiro who uses this method may last from 4 o'clock in the morning to 6 or 7 o'clock in the evening. If the seringueiro taps his three trails twice a week, which is normal, then he is left with only one day per week on which he can tend his crops, hunt for game, or transport his product to the patrão.

Along the river valleys of the Acre and Xapuri, a new process was introduced in 1980. Technicians of EMATER in Acre, the agency responsible for the provision of technical assistance to the colonists on the PADs, had been experimenting with a variety of forest products to find one that would coagulate the latex and thus avoid the dangerous smoking process. The result of this research was the introduction of the use of the sap of the Caxinguba tree which is native to the region. After the latex is collected, the seringueiro pours it into a large metal basin and adds three spoonfuls of the sap to every ten litres of latex. The latex begins to coagulate immediately and after 24 hours has become

solid enough to be able to cut it with a knife into strips. The latter are then placed in a large wooden press in the form of a lattice work in several layers. The lid of the press is then put on and large hardwood blocks laid on top. On some presses there is a capstan which is turned to aid the squeezing out of surplus moisture. By the next afternoon, the rubber is in the form of a large solid block which is stacked in the open until it is ready to be transported. Rubber produced by this method is called 'Prancha', the Portuguese word for plank or block whose form it resembles.

Each day, then, after tapping the rubber trail and collecting the latex, the seringueiro using this method must first add caxinguba sap to that day's latex. Then he removes the processed prancha from the press and refills it with the previous day's coagulated latex. This process takes between one and two hours. Thus, the seringueiro saves time and avoids the smoking which may blind him. There is a drawback, however, in that there is more water loss from the latex with each kilo of processed rubber requiring 3 litres of latex, rather than two. The seringueiros who use this method are prepared to accept this loss both for health reasons and for the fact that they have more time to engage in subsistence cultivation. In the words of a seringueiro autônomo on Colocação Caboré, Seringal Boa Vista, in the interior of Xapuri:

"I have always tapped rubber...I start early in the morning at around 5 o'clock and walk to the trail that I will be tapping that day...Here, on this colocacao, I have 17 trails, but we are only tapping 8...I tap 3 and the two meieiros tap 3 and 2 each...We normally take about 4 hours for the corte and the same for collection...this is with trails of between 150 and 180 rubber trees...We don't smoke the rubber now...we put sap in to coagulate it, then cut it into pieces and set them in the press and it comes out like a wooden board...when you smoke it, it looks like a ball...We found out about

this method some three years ago when one of my brothers came back from a visit to Rio Branco...It has changed our lives a lot...We tap and collect the latex and then just leave it to coagulate...we don't have to do anything more...we can work at something else...our crops, or go hunting, or visit neighbours...We use the sap of the Caxinguba tree which grows all around here...we use two or three spoonfuls in every five latas (10 litres) of latex and it starts to thicken right away...smoking the rubber used to be a major problem...that smoke in my eyes used to leave me half blind for several hours afterwards...the heat of the oven also burned the legs and they would really hurt when you went into the cold water of the river to wash the soot off... We don't have any of this now with the prancha." (1).

The prancha process is restricted to the municipalities of Rio Branco, Xapuri, and parts of Brasiléia, even though the Caxinguba is found throughout the state. Seringueiros of Cruzeiro do Sul and Feijó who still use the traditional method explained in field interviews that they had heard of the use of Caxinguba when members of the local STR had returned from a union conference in the state capital. Some stated that they did not use it because they still worked for a patrão who would not accept the water loss and associated fall in production. A seringueiro who produces 60 litres of latex a week from his three trails would produce 30 kilos of rubber by smoking, but only 20 kilos of prancha. Other seringueiros interviewed, who were not tied to a patrão, but exchanged their rubber for merchandise in the urban centres, stated that most local traders would only accept 'pela' rubber as currency. Those that did accept prancha did so at the price of 'sernambi', the lowest grade of rubber which normally consists of the scraps of latex that dry overnight in the incisions made in the bark of the rubber tree or the droppings on the floor of the smoke house. Sernambi fetches only one third of the price of rubber in pelás.

1. Field interview, seringueiro autônomo, Seringal Boa Vista, Xapuri.

The third method of processing the latex in Acre is the production of 'folhas defumadas', thin smoked sheets, in the mini-usina. As noted, the latter are only to be found in three municipalities : Brasiléia which has 14, Xapuri with 3, and Tarauacá with 2. The mini-usinas in Xapuri stopped functioning shortly after they were installed for reason which will be discussed later and one of the two in Tarauacá was still in the experimental stage at the time of the field research. So, in practical terms, folhas defumadas are only produced in one municipality, Brasiléia.

The first folha defumada was produced in 1981 in the experimental mini-usina that was constructed for training the seringueiros of Brasiléia. The mini-usina consists of two corrugated iron sheds. The first, which has a raised floor to prevent flooding in the rainy season, is where the latex is processed. The second, smaller shed, is the smoke-house.

The latex arrives from the seringueiros each week in 20 litre plastic jerry cans. A sample of the latex is taken and its specific gravity measured with a hydrometer. The specific gravity may vary according to the age of the tree, the amount of rest that the tree has had in between successive tappings, and the quantity of rainfall that has been mixed in with the latex. Latex with a specific gravity of 350, which is normal, will produce 1 kilo of rubber per $2\frac{1}{4}$ litres. This is compared to 4 litres per kilo when the specific gravity is a low 250 which may occur in the rainy season.

After the sample has been tested, the latex is poured into shallow trays and a few drops of coagulant are added. Citric acid may be used

for this purpose. The latex is left to coagulate for three hours. The residue liquid is then drained off, leaving a white doughy mass. This is rolled out with a rolling pin into thin sheets, approximately 6mm thick. The trays are then cleaned to be ready for the next batch.

Following this each sheet is passed through the first mangle, the rollers of which being smooth, which has three settings for the gap between the rollers. The sheet is passed through several times, the gap being progressively closed. It is then put through the second mangle which has a thread on each roller. This leaves a series of criss-crossed diagonal lines on each side of the sheet, a mark which is used to distinguish the sheet which is ready for the next stage from the one that is not. Finally, the sheets are washed in clean water and hung onto wooden racks to dry. They are left here for three hours before being taken to the smokehouse where they will remain for 60 hours at a temperature of 60 degrees centigrade. This completes the process.

The product that is obtained, the folha defumada, is superior in quality to both the pela and the prancha rubber. The latter tend to contain impurities either through their accidental introduction or directly because of the conditions under which they are produced and occasionally by design so as to increase the weight. The folha defumada, therefore, commands a higher price than the others. In January, 1984, pelas fetched 1,500 cruzeiros per kilo. Prancha was bought for between 1,800 and 1,850 cruzeiros a kilo. The price of folha defumada, however, was 2,360 cruzeiros, over 50% more than the traditional pela (1). Thus, by

1. Price of pela and prancha as paid by the storekeepers in Brasília and Xapuri. Price of folha defumada as paid by SUDHEVEA in Brasília.

becoming members of a mini-usina producer's cooperative, the seringueiros not only received the benefits of the SUDHEVEA package, i.e., credit, commercialisation, technical assistance, and low priced goods, they also obtained a substantially higher price for the product.

The minimum volume of latex for the mini-usina to remain a viable proposition is 1,000 litres per month, while the maximum capacity is 5,000 litres. Thus, each mini-usina is capable of producing between half a tonne and two tonnes of high quality rubber per month. At full capacity, over a nine month tapping season, the 14 mini-usinas of Brasiléia could produce 280 tonnes in a production year. This is equivalent to 69% of Brasiléia's annual production for 1981 (1).

To remain in continuous production, the mini-usinas require a full-time staff of between 2 and 4 workers. This labour force may be supplied from among the ASSER members on a rota basis, but it has become standard practice on the mini-usinas of Brasiléia to employ wage-labourers to perform this task. The field technician of SUDHEVEA in Brasiléia stated in an informal discussion that 11 of the mini-usinas in the municipality employed such wage labour, but this was not verified as members of only six were interviewed during the field trip, all of which used wage-labour. Of these six, the labour force was generally made up of the unmarried sons of ASSER members who were paid a specific monthly wage and did not participate in any profit sharing.

The wage-labourers are employed by the ASSER itself, not the individual members. The latter are also paid by the ASSER for the quantity of

1. See Table 2.4.14.

latex that each supplies. The greater an individual's production, then, the greater his cash income. It is normal for the ASSER to pay its members a fixed percentage of the price obtained for the rubber at SUDHEVEA's door. This percentage varied between 60% and 65% among the ASSERS visited, the remainder being used by the ASSER to pay its labour force and for running costs. The latter are minimal as the machinery is hand operated and the only other requirements are coagulant, water and fuel for the smokehouse. As only a few drops of coagulant are required for each batch, only one or two cans are needed per month and these can be purchased for the price of two kilos of finished product. The water and fuel (dried palm nuts) are natural products and simply require labour for their collection. Any balance that remains at the end of the year may be redistributed amongst the members or ploughed back into the ASSER for new equipment etc.

Even if the ASSER does not employ outside labour, the seringueiro member finds that the time he spends producing rubber is much reduced. Although he still taps rubber and collects the latex, he then has only to store it in jerry cans until the end of the week when he transports it to the mini-usina. He does require transport, however, to do this, normally an oxen or mule, as the jerry cans are heavy and awkward to carry. None the less, even if he has to spend time on a rota system working in the processing plant, a maximum of three days per month, he finds that he can devote more of his labour to cultivation and other duties during the afternoon and early evening.

The advantages of mini-usina production are illustrated in the following two interviews. The first is with the manager of SUDHEVEA's

branch in Brasília. The second is with the president of the ASSER Santa Helena which lies on the former Seringal Montevideu and borders on PAD Quixadá.

"The only criterion that we use is productivity... We get together a group of at least 12 seringueiros and explain to them the advantages... We ask how much each one could produce in one month... We only require him to be a seringueiro... that he knows how to tap rubber... then he can belong to an association... It does not matter whether he has a definitive title or not... We are not interested in whatever title he has for his land... the advantages of producing folhas at a mini-usina over the traditional pela method lies in the quality of the product and the higher price obtained... we classify rubber by its colour and the level of impurity... there are four classifications... there is little price difference, just 200 cruzeiros between classes 1 and 4... but it is sufficient incentive to the seringueiro to produce a good quality... even class 4 is much better than that of the pelas which contain sticks, stones, and soil mixed in with the rubber... pelas sell today for around 1,500 cruzeiros a kilo, while the folhas get over 2,300... yes, you do get less weight loss (with the traditional method), but the seringueiro still needs 2 litres of latex to produce 1 kilo of rubber and for this he will get 1,500 cruzeiros and he still has all the work of smoking to do... this takes a lot of time... with the mini-usina he has only to carry the 'lata' (two litre can) of latex over to the mini-usina that belongs to his ASSER and he will receive 1,500 cruzeiros without any more work... this gives him the whole afternoon to do other things." (1).

"SUDHEVEA arrived here in 1981... the first meeting was in the local school... It was with Doctor Cezar, the Director of SUDHEVEA, ... with Mesquita, who was then Governor of Acre, ... and also the representative of BASA in Belem... and three other people... technicians from SUDHEVEA... they came to talk to us about producing rubber... what a mini-usina was... and how we could get a better price for our rubber... How COBAL was going to sell us our merchandise cheaper... We thought about it and it seemed that it could work... Then SUDHEVEA said that we would have to form an Association and that BASA would give us credit... we needed between 15 and 20 seringueiros grouped together to organise a mini-usina... later, the technicians came to my colocacao to meet us all together... all seventeen seringueiros who wanted to join together in this Asser... each one had a colocacao... mine had nine trails, others had nine, ten, and six ... one had only three... well, he wrote our

names down on a piece of paper and then read to us the rules of the Article of Association...when we accepted, he asked us how many trails we each tapped...I said three ... "More or less how many litres of latex does each trail give?"...Now then, we here in Acre and Amazonas don't work in litres, we work with latas (1)...each lata holds two litres...so my trails give 10 latas...10 latas is 20 litres ...3 trails of 10 latas is 30 latas...30 latas gives 60 litres of latex...He added all this up on paper and asked how many days in a week I tapped...I said that I worked on a basis of 4 or 5 days tapping, sometimes 6 days when I haven't any other obligations...but, with a family...and I have to cultivate my crops...and hunt...and if someone is sick...I have to take time off ...He asked me what was the minimum as the finance from the bank would be based on that ...I said three days tapping which produced 60 litres per week...He asked all of us in turn...one said 70, another 100, one said 20, another 100, and another 120 litres...but the one who said 120 had another person tapping on his colocacao, there were two of them producing this...He added it all up and it came to 4,400 litres per month...He then said that he would take the details down to the bank to be approved... the manager of the bank accepted right away...and we all went to the bank the following week...All our names were on a piece of paper and we all signed it...It was the first time that I had put my feet inside the door of a bank... Our association is the ASSER Santa Helena...the bank loaned us 1,979,321 cruzeiros...this was at the beginning of 1982 ...I was treasurer at the time and Antonio, my brother, was president...I opened our account at the bank and a couple of weeks later the money was handed over...there was so much for the construction of the mini-usina, so much for transport animals, we bought oxen...so much for supplies to last us the first few months...We bought ten oxen for our members...whoever needed one, was given one...each one cost 20,000 cruzeiros...the bank had loaned us the money at 35% interest per annum...so we sold the oxen to the members for 27,000 cruzeiros to be paid back in 9 monthly instalments of 3,000 a month...this was to be deducted from the money that they were to receive for their production...some of them could not pay every month, but as long as they paid within 12 months, it was alright...When they paid the last instalment, the oxen no longer belonged to the ASSER, it belonged to the seringueiro...My oxen died on the road to my colocacao, but the others said that I should not bear the whole cost and one gave 3,000 cruzeiros, another 2,000, another 1,000...others gave different amounts and this paid for a new ox...We have been running the mini-usina for nearly eighteen months now and we are producing about 1,200 kilos of rubber every month...we could produce up to 1,600 kilos, but we need to tend our crops...We don't like to buy much in COBAL, it is better to produce less rubber and grow our own crops...rice, beans and corn...rather than spend money on buying them...The ASSER gets 2,360 cruzeiros per kilo

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1. 'Lata' literally means 'tin' or 'can', but in the interior of Acre signifies 'two litres'. The expression derives from the two-litre dried milk tins that the seringueiros utilize to store latex immediately prior to beginning the traditional smoking process.

for this folha defumada which gives us an income of around 2,500,000 cruzeiros a month...we only spend 400,000 cruzeiros a month in COBAL...the rest is our profit...Yes,we employ two workers to run the mini-usina...one gets 60,000 cruzeiros a month,the other gets 45,000...They process the latex into folha defumada and despatch the supplies to the seringueiros' colocacoes from where COBAL drops them off on the highway... They do everything...all we do is tap rubber and bring the latex into the mini-usina every week...If they get behind in the production,some of us will help them to get rid of the backlog...We are all very happy with the way things are going...We now all eat well and sleep in a good bed with a soft mattress...We did have some small problems in the beginning...When we got the loan,the interest was 35% and we had to pay it back in 12 months...but,when the mini-usina was built,it was at a time when we couldn't tap rubber because of the rain...so we couldn't pay back the loan in the time that they gave us...So the bank gave us another three years to pay at the lower interest of 12%...We will be able to pay this back without any problem...The only thing that is worrying us is this thing with INCRA and the new colonists who are cutting down the rubber trees in our area (1)." (2).

Using the figures given in the previous two interviews and projecting them over a nine month tapping season,an approximation of the annual accounts of the ASSER Santa Helena may be constructed which will give the approximate average monthly income of the ASSER member:

ASSER Santa Helena.

Total Production (10,800 kilos at 2,360Cr/kilo)	25,488,000Cr.
Payments to members for production at 1,500CR/kilo	16,200,000
Wages of two employees: 12 x 105,000Cr.	1,260,000
Payments to COBAL : 12 x 400,000Cr.	4,800,000
Bank repayments on loan plus 12% annual interest.	897,293
Total debits.	23,157,293
Annual Balance:	2,330,707Cr.

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1. The problem of the colonists will be discussed later in this section.
 2. Field interview,ASSER Santa Helena,BR 317 Brasília.

Income of ASSER member.

Payment for production (635 kilos at 1,500Cr.).	952,500 Cr.
Less cost of Oxen.	27,000 Cr.
Annual cash income.	925,500 Cr.
Monthly cash income.	77,125 Cr. (1).

Although the seringueiro who produces prancha or pela rubber is unlikely to achieve the production levels of those who produce folha defumada, it is useful to compare the possible monthly incomes of these three seringueiro groups using the 635kilo per annum production level of the ASSER member:

		Index.
1. Seringueiro producing folha defumada.	77,125Cr.	100
2. " " pela.(2)	79,375Cr.	103
3. " " prancha.(3)	97,896Cr.	127

The monthly cash incomes of the seringueiros in groups 2 and 3 are higher by 3% and 27% respectively. It must be remembered that both these groups must pay transport costs for both the commercialisation of their product and the delivery of supplies to their colocação (4). In addition they must also pay for the cost of supplies. The cash income of the ASSER member is exactly that. SUDHEVEA provides transport and the goods from COBAL have already been debited from his account. at the ASSER.

The possibility of on-farm accumulation and escape from the self-perpetuating cycle of debt is a distinct possibility for this group, as is further internal social differentiation. The trajectory of the latter, towards the socialisation of capital or its concentration, is as yet an open question to be determined by future political developments.

1. Excluding any redistribution of ASSER profits. 2. At 1,500CR./Kilo.
3. At 1,850Cr./Kilo. 4. Unless trading with the marreteiro.

Towards the end of 1983, a serious problem arose for the members of the ASSER Santa Helena and their neighbours. Without forewarning SUDHEVEA, the local STR, or the ASSERs in the area, INCRA went ahead with the settlement of PAD Santa Quitéria, the extension of PAD Quixadá, which was projected to cover 70,000 hectares. Much of this land was already occupied by seringueiros autônomos including the members of three ASSERs who had already constructed mini-usinas and had begun production.

When confronted by the local STR, INCRA stated that it was forced to settle the land because of the large numbers of out of state migrants that had arrived in Acre during the summer of that year. In addition, even though the 'posses' of the seringueiros varied from 200 to 500 hectares, because they were resident within the area of an INCRA project, these were to be reduced to the INCRA 'norm' of 100 hectares and the remainder re-allocated to the new colonists (1). Here, INCRA was behaving in an arbitrary manner and possibly was breaking the law in that the right of posse of the resident seringueiros was being ignored.

This created serious problems both for the seringueiros and for the future of rubber production in the municipality. Firstly, the colocações of the seringueiros were extensive precisely because the natural dispersion of rubber trees determined this. If a colocação was limited to 100 hectares, then the seringueiro would at best find sufficient trees to create two rubber trails on his property. Thus, his income would be greatly reduced.

1. Field interview, STR President, Brasília.

Secondly, the reduction of the *colocação* to 100 hectares would prejudice the *seringueiro's* ability to put his children to work once they reached adulthood. As has already been noted, a feature of many *colocações* is the number of trails which are de-activated or 'resting' between tapping years. It is normal for the young males of the family to begin tapping when they reach the age of twelve. At this age they usually tap only a single trail which is augmented to two after two years and then to three when they are 15 or 16. The loss of trails through the reduction of the size of the *colocação* would make this impossible.

Thirdly, settlement by colonists necessarily signifies further deforestation and this in an area that had already borne the brunt of this process. Not only would the colonists' subsistence plots cut right through existing rubber trails and disrupt current production, they would also reduce the rubber tree capital of the municipality in terms of future production. This placed in jeopardy the whole concept of the *mini-usina* as a viable alternative.

Throughout the month of January, 1984, discussions were held between INCRA, SUDHEVEA and the local STR. During these, INCRA argued that the fault lay with the *seringueiros* themselves in that they had not taken advantage of the PROBOR programme and created small plantations on their *colocações*. The STR in their turn pointed out that this would have been impossible as COLONACRE had been unable to supply sufficient saplings to meet existing demand. A compromise was reached whereby INCRA provisionally agreed to colonise 20,000 hectares of the PAD and freeze the settlement of the remaining 50,000 hectares for between 8 and 12 years. This time period was set so as to enable each

seringueiro to create a 3 hectare rubber plantation on his land.

Finance for the plantations was to be provided by BASA at a competitive rate (1). In case of accidental fire, BASA, SUDHEVEA and the seringueiro would bear the burden in the ratio of 50:40:10 and SUDHEVEA would retain responsibility for the cost of creating a new plantation. In the meantime, each seringueiro had to guarantee that all the rubber trails on his land would be used, that any which were presently disactivated or resting should be re-activated and allocated to meieiros (2) if family labour was insufficient.

The creation of such plantations by Brasília's seringueiro autônomo population should provide them with as least as much income as at present. Normal practice is to plant three saplings together and then remove the two weakest the following year. The size of the mature tree and the need for avenues between lines of trees limits the density of plantations to 476 trees per hectare. Thus, the possibility arises of planting the equivalent of 9 rubber trails within the space of three hectares which, under conditions of natural dispersal, would have been spread over 250 to 500 hectares.

Plantation production also opens up the possibility of tapping more trees during the working day with a subsequent rise in production which would obviously benefit the seringueiro. It also lends itself to the use of wage labour if the hectareage under cultivation is extended. Social differentiation had already begun in the municipality with the use of wage labour in the mini-usina. The

1. At the time of the field research this rate had not yet been set.
2. A form of share-cropping, see Chapter 2, section 2.2.2.

prospect opens up for the further use of off-farm labour if plantations are extended either through the use of wage-labour or *meieiros*. In addition, larger plantations with the concomitant rise in production levels could mean the eventual establishment of a mini-usina on each *colocação* as the planting of 9 hectares (1) would produce sufficient latex for it to be a viable proposition. Thus, the *seringueiro* of today could become the *seringueiro-patrão* (2) or *seringalista* of tomorrow.

The mini-usina is not of itself an agent of social differentiation. The changes in the social structure of *Brasiléia* were primarily determined in the contextual political arena. Firstly, the concentration of mini-usinas in *Brasiléia* occurred precisely because the political struggle in the countryside had resulted in a concentration of free labour in that municipality. Secondly, the goodwill of state agencies was combined to ensure that the mini-usinas would function, although there were some problems with INCRA. It is just as possible for the mini-usina to be an agent of class oppression, which may eventually be the case in *Brasiléia*, but which is a reality elsewhere in Acre, in the municipality of *Tarauacá* for example.

Although there are several disactivated *seringais* close to the town of *Tarauacá* which are occupied in the main by *seringueiros* *autônomos* and *barranqueiros*, rubber production in the rest of the

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1. Leaving six hectares in various stage of resting, the remaining three hectares, or the equivalent of nine trails, would, if tapped three times per week, produce 2,140 litres of latex per month which is well in excess of the minimum of 1,000 litres a month needed to service the mini-usina on a full-time basis.
 2. As noted in Part 1., the *seringueiro-patrão* is the *seringueiro* who also taps rubber, whilst furnishing '*aviamento*' to other *seringueiros*. This is contrasted to the *seringalista* who derives all his income via '*aviamento*'.

municipality is based on the traditional patrão/seringueiro cativo relation through the imposition of rent and/or the enforced trade with the barracão. Of the two mini-usinas already constructed in Tarauacá, one is owned by a seringalista and the other, a prototype built in the town itself, was sold by SUDHEVEA to a local merchant in late 1983 (1). There are plans to construct a further 19 mini-usinas in the municipality, all of which are destined to be constructed on active seringais under the control of the seringalista. This is in spite of the fact that there are sufficient numbers of seringueiros autônomos near to the town to warrant their inclusion in such a programme.

The local director of SUDHEVEA refused to comment on this situation except to say that the future of the mini-usina in the municipality lay with the seringalistas as it was they who owned the over 100 hectares that had already been planted with rubber trees. The latter, financed by PROBOR 2, are expected to begin commercial production in 1986/7 (2). The local manager of BASA confirmed that there was not a single instance in the municipality where finance had been granted to a seringueiro under the provisions of PROBORS 2 and 3 (3).

The accord with COBAL in Tarauacá was also not operational with COBAL outrightly refusing to sell supplies to seringueiros, yet openly selling to local seringalistas and merchants. Thus, the package that was offered to and accepted by the seringueiros of Brasília is being denied to their counterparts in Tarauacá by all three state agencies concerned. The following three interviews illustrate the dilemma

1. This mini-usina had not begun production by the time the field trip ended in early 1984.

2. Field interview, SUDHEVEA, Tarauacá. 3. Ibid, BASA, Tarauacá.

of the local seringueiro population facing this new means of exploitation. The first is with a seringueiro who rents a *colocação* from the seringalista who now obliges him to produce latex for his mini-usina. It shows how the change from *pela* production has led in this instance to a situation of greater dependence on the *barracão*:

"the mini-usina is very important...but only in those places like Brasileia where there are no seringalistas...there, the mini-usina belongs to the workers, the seringueiros themselves...here it belongs to the patrão with all the seringueiros on the seringal producing latex for it...We have to carry the latex to the mini-usina every two days because we have no animals and the seringalista won't supply them...a week's latex is too much to carry in one journey...its two hours walk to the barracão...this means that we cannot tap on that day, nor work in the garden...and so we have to buy more supplies from the barracão than we used to." (1).

The second is with a seringueiro who lives on the fringe of the same seringal, Seringal Belém, but who has the right of 'posse' over his *colocação*. This seringueiro began producing latex for the mini-usina, but found that this jeopardised his position as an autonomous producer:

*"I used to sell latex to the seringalista, but I changed back to producing *pelas*...the seringalista who own a mini-usina enslaves the seringueiro more than before...he does this in two ways...he is the only one in the area who will buy latex, but you have to buy supplies from the barracão...but his prices are higher than in town and soon you get into debt...if the debt becomed too great, then he can tell you that he won't sell you any more goods until you have paid it off...no-one else will buy latex, so how can you eat...if you have not paid by the end of the year, he can take you in front of the judge and you will lose your land to pay off the debt...with the *pela*, every marreteiro will buy it, every shopkeeper will exchange it for supplies...that is why I am now producing *pela* rubber again."* (2).

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1. Field interview, Seringal belém, Tarauacá.
 2. Ibid.

The third interview is with the President of the local STR who explains how his members are denied access to COBAL supplies and what effect this has on the members:

"...and another thing, the agreement (with SUHEVEA) stated that the price of goods sold by COBAL can only be increased every six months...but here with the patroa, the prices go up every day...If anyone says that COBAL was set up here in Tarauaca to help the seringueiro, then he is a liar... COBAL only sells to the local merchants and to the patroa ...and what is worse...is that in general the patroa does not want to live out there on the seringal...he wants to live here right in the centre of town...he has a manager to run the seringal...the patroa buys his supplies here from COBAL and stores them in his warehouse...when the goods are needed on the seringal, he loads them into his boat and charges the manager 160%...the manager then takes them up river and charges the seringueiro 300%, sometimes more... on the larger seringais there are under-managers, these buy at 300% and sell at between 450% and 500%...so a drum of (cooking) oil which comes out of the doors of COBAL at 4,000 cruzeiros, may cost as much as 15,000 cruzeiros on the upper rivers...because it passes from hand to hand and in the end it is the seringueiro who has to pay and who finds himself unable to pay his debts at the end of the year." (1).

In Tarauacá, then, the mini-usina is a symbol of dependence on the barracão for both the seringueiro cativo and the seringueiro autônomo. This situation has arisen as a result of a combination of economic and political factors: techniques of production; the inability of the seringueiro to accumulate given the system of debt peonage; the decisions and actions of local branches of state agencies. It is likely that, once the plantations become operational, the seringueiro will no longer find a market for his pelias, as the folhas are of higher quality and will be in greater demand. If they are to continue their profession as rubber tapper, seringueiros will be forced to either produce latex for one or other of the mini-

1. Field interview, STR, Tarauacá.

usinas ,or else will become wage labourers on the plantations themselves. The alternative is a return to subsistence cultivation.

Apart from the 19 mini-usinas planned for construction in Tarauacá, there are plans for 55 others : 40 in Cruzeiro do Sul ; 10 in Feijó ; and 5 in Mâncio Lima (1). All these are located within the Juruá micro-region where the majority of new plantations are to be found. In December, 1982, the municipality of Cruzeiro do Sul alone contained 43% of the total area of plantations in the state (see Table 2.4.13.). It seems inevitable that the future of rubber production in both micro-regions of the state will be based on the wage labour of former seringueiros who will have been transformed into plantation workers.

4.3. Project Seringueiro.

The municipality of Xapuri was also targeted by SUDHEVEA as a possible site for the location of ASSERs organised around the mini-usina. Like Brasiléia, Xapuri's rubber production had fallen steeply during the previous two decades. In 1962, the municipality produced 2,352 tonnes. This had fallen to 1,132 tonnes in 1971 and in 1981 Xapuri produced only 679 tonnes, less than 30% of the 1962 level.

SUDHEVEA was faced with three major problems in relation to the implementation of its programme in Xapuri:

1. The area had suffered considerable deforestation, particularly on either side of the arterial highway, the BR 317.

1. Field interview, SUDHEVEA, Rio Branco.

2. The bulk of its prospective clients, the seringueiros autônomos, lived in that part of Xapuri which was not served by access roads, i.e., on the seringais that line each side of the River Xapuri and the northern bank of the River Acre.
3. The local STR had a policy of non-cooperation with state organs until the problem of land titling had been resolved.

Faced with this situation, SUDHEVEA mounted a campaign to persuade seringueiros to form ASSERs in that section of the municipality in which the STR had least influence, along the 'Estrada Velha' (the old highway) and along the BR 317 that had been constructed to replace it. SUDHEVEA succeeded in persuading only three groups of seringueiros/barranqueiros to mount ASSERs at Santa Fé, Sempre Viva and Estrada velha. These were constructed at the beginning of 1983, but all had ceased to operate by December of the same year.

ASSER Santa Fé was surrounded by an area that had been colonised by subsistence farmers who had migrated to Acre from outside of the state. The latter had purchased their properties from the ex-seringalista. While, on the one hand, they had cleared large areas for crop cultivation which obviously reduced the numbers of rubber trees in the catchment area of the ASSER. Several were in receipt of PROBOR finance and had already initiated small areas of plantation rubber. These, however, were still a long way from commercial production and the ASSER closed for lack of latex. The seringueiros were unable to meet the credit instalments. Faced with the possibility that their future production of folhas defumadas

would be earmarked by SUDHEVEA for loan repayments and the real possibility that they would have no cash income available for the purchase of essential supplies, the ASSER members abandoned the mini-usina and reverted to the production of *pela* rubber which they could sell in the town itself or barter with the *marreteiro*.

The members of the ASSER Sempre Viva received the finance from BASA at the beginning of the rainy season. The mini-usina was constructed and the rest of the finance was used to buy supplies which were to tide them over the first six months until the mini-usina became fully operational. The summer of 1983 was exceptionally rainy, as had been the previous summer, and many of the *seringueiros* had not been able to burn clearings for subsistence cultivation. They harvested little the following spring and so had no on-farm produce to supplement the supplies already bought in and paid for from the finance already received. Over half the ASSER members were forced to consume these supplies before the tapping season had started and, like the members of the ASSER Santa Fé, were faced with a long period of no cash income and no supplies. Again, the members reverted to *pela* production and closed down the mini-usina. Not one *folha defumada* was produced by the ASSER during the 1983 production year.

The ASSER at Estrada Velha built the mini-usina and operated it for just three months. Not entirely convinced of the viability of the enterprise, a number of the members hedged their bets and sent only half of the latex that they produced to the mini-usina for processing

reserving the remainder for pela production to be sold if the ASSER failed. The ASSERs revenue was insufficient to pay off the finance from BASA and, after three months, almost half of the ASSER members withdrew from the cooperative (1).

The SUDHEVEA programme in Xapuri, then, was a total failure. Apart from the problems that occurred at the three mini-usina plants that were constructed, SUDHEVEA did not succeed to co-opt those seringueiros who lived on the more distant seringais. This was primarily due to the activities of the local STR whose policy of non-cooperation with state organs had been forged out of the experience of dealing with INCRA during the previous decade. However, the level of political consciousness of the STR members of Xapuri was also a product of the activities of the Centre for the Documentation and Research in Amazonia (CEDOP) which was set up in Rio Branco in 1981.

CEDOP consists of a small group of researchers, most of whom were members of or sympathetic to the position of the PT at the time of the field trip, who were committed to improving the economic situation of the Acrean small producer, especially the seringueiro. CEDOP is funded in the main through SUDHEVEA's 'Operation Seringueiro' which was set up as a sub-programme of PROBOR 3 to provide educational facilities for the seringueiros of the interior through the training of a number of seringueiros on each seringal who would eventually become the teaching staff of small schools that were to be built.

1. Data collected in the field.

In late 1981, CEDOP approached OXFAM for financial assistance to build a school and pay the subsistence and salaries of two full-time staff on Seringal Nazaré in the interior of Xapuri. The two staff, a married couple, built a home on the seringal and shared the lifestyle of its residents, tapping rubber and cultivating subsistence crops. This was an important factor in gaining the confidence of the local population as well as giving the two workers first-hand knowledge of the problems that confront the seringueiro and his family. Between December, 1981, and November, 1982, OXFAM funding for the project amounted to £29,337 which was allocated in the following manner:

	£
1. Project salaries and Admin. costs.	17,895
2. Supplies, tools and the hire of a mule train.	3,529
3. Two part-time salaries, rice huller and Travel.	6,712
4. Building costs, team transport and salaries.	891
5. Team travel to Sao Paulo.	310
Total.	29,337 (1)

From the experience gained by the two workers, CEDOP produced a manual with which to teach the seringueiro families literacy and numeracy, a manual based on the every day existence of the seringueiros themselves. The method used, called the Paulo Freire Method after the Brazilian educationalist who pioneered it in the 1960's, is founded on the philosophy that education is a political force and that it must be used to combat social inequality. The teaching manual that was produced by CEDOP, called

1. OXFAM Information department: Information Sheet BRZ 326M, July, 1983.

'Poronga' after the lamp that enables the seringueiro to work in the darkness of the early morning, bases its lessons on ten central issues taken from the historical and contemporary experience of the Acrean seringueiro:

1. Ecological devastation.
2. A comparison of the life of the seringueiro with the lives of other Brazilian workers.
3. The history of rubber production.
4. The struggle for land and the 'empate'.
5. Cooperativism.
6. The history of trade unions in Brazil and the formation of the STRs in Acre.
7. What is a 'posseiro'?
8. Health.
9. Education.
10. The exploitation of labour and the accumulation of wealth.

In addition to Poronga, which combined literacy training with political awareness, a manual for the teaching of basic arithmetic was also produced. Of a number of lessons attended during the field trip, two in particular illustrate the political nature of the method. The first involved teaching the adult students to read and write the two syllables 'ma' and 'ta' which form the word 'mata' (jungle). During the lesson the students were asked what value the 'mata' held for them and the answers were written on the blackboard : the provider of materials with which to build a house; the home of the animals and fish that the seringueiros hunt; the place where they grow their crops; the source of their

rubber production etc. The lesson ended with a resumé of the importance that the jungle held for the seringueiro and it was generally agreed that the jungle should be preserved at all costs. The second lesson was concerned with the teaching of percentages. Again this was not treated in isolation from real life, but in terms of how to calculate the percentage profit that the patrão and the marreteiro extract from the seringueiro.

Within 12 months of completing the school at Seringal Nazaré, five more had been constructed with the help of OXFAM and CEDOP on the Seringais Boa Vista, Floresta, São Pedro, Espalha and on the Estrada Velha. At present the emphasis is on teaching the adult, both male and female, although some children do attend classes. Lessons take place from Saturday lunchtime to Sunday afternoon and the students eat and sleep in hammocks in the schoolhouse as most live several hours journey away. The students are encouraged to participate in the lesson and each one takes turns at being the teacher under the guidance of one of the project team, as well as in cleaning the schoolhouse and cooking the meals.

During 1983, as a direct result of the education programme initiated by CEDOP, production cooperatives were organised on two of the seringais on which schools were located, Seringal Floresta and Seringal Boa Vista. The cooperatives which received loans from the Church's Land Commission, the CPT, in Rio Branco are cooperatives in the sense that individual producers join together at certain times of the year to communally sell their rubber product and buy in

supplies. This action enables them to by-pass the local middlemen, the small trader and the marreteiro, and deal directly with the large merchants of Xapuri and Rio Branco and so obtain a better price for their rubber product and the supplies at a lower cost.

The following two interviews with a member of each of the two cooperatives narrate how the cooperatives were created and the problems that beset them during the first year of operation. The first is with a seringueiro on the Seringal Floresta, which lies a day's journey on foot from Xapuri. Here, the seringueiros had previously traded with a marreteiro, but now deal with the largest merchant in Xapuri. The second is with a member of the cooperative on Seringal Boa Vista which lies further out from Xapuri, two or three days on foot. These seringueiros also traded with a local marreteiro, but now transport their produce by river to Rio Branco.

"This idea of the cooperative...it appeared to us to like a dream...the people who helped us with the school told us that it was possible...how to join together to sell rubber and buy supplies...We had never heard of a cooperative before...only in the cities of the South...we used to sell to the marreteiro who passes through here with his ox train, but now we sell directly to the merchant in the town...We began to get together in a small group...I think that the first time that we met to discuss this there were only three of us...after that, when we realized it was possible, we invited others to come and discuss the best way of going about it...It was difficult to organise because, to get a good price, you have to sell a lot of rubber...but while you are producing this rubber you have to eat...and every 15 or 20 days we had to sell some of our rubber to the marreteiro for supplies...so how could we build up a stock of rubber?...Well, we had heard that some organisations like CEDOP and the CPT were created especially for this type of thing...so we went to the CPT and they said yes, but we needed to give them a list of what we required before the money would leave the bank...We went back home and met with the others to discuss what we needed...food supplies, tools, pack animals...and we wrote

this down on a piece of paper for the CPT to consider ...we wanted to build a cooperative...for communal buying and selling...After we made our request,we had to wait...we wited a long time and some of our friends thought that it would never happen...and we were losing time as well,we were already half way through the tapping season...then it arrived...they had said yes and they would lend us 900,000 cruzeiros...this was in October, 1982...We had made the proposition in January...We all went into Rio Branco with the money to buy the supplies and materials that we needed...We bought food,axes,tools,'tigelinhas' (1)...we bought a mule to transport the rubber and the supplies and then we went back home... There was a problem right away...we got the money at a time when it is very difficult to work...winter was coming...During November,December,January,February and March,it rains a lot and we can produce very little... So,throughout the winter,we produced no rubber and ate up all our food supplies...another happened that I forgot to mention...the mule died...but things are getting better...We told the marreteiro that we wanted nothing to do with him...that we would pay off our debts to him when we had produced some rubber...at that time,I owed him around 40,000 cruzeiros which was a lot of money then ...rubber would fetch only just over 300 cruzeiros a kilo...now it is over 1,200...Another thing that held us up was the really bad summer of that year...Hardly anyone had been able to plant that year...I have never seen a summer like it...We plant here just for our own consumption and that year was so bad that we didn't have enough to feed ourselves...that is why we used up all the supplies...When it was time for us to start tapping ...at the end of April,the beginning of May...we hardly had any food left...but we managed to get by...I also forgot to mention that,when we bought all the food in Rio Branco,word got around and three more families wanted to join the cooperative...so there were nine families instead of six to divide the food between...and a few months later,one of the group left his family and moved in with another woman and her children...he wanted to support both families with our food,yet he wasn't producing any rubber to pay for it...We had to make him leave the cooperative,but he left owing nearly 60,000 cruzeiros...It was another disaster...Ever since then, though,we have been doing alright...When the supplies ran out,we decided not to deal with the marreteiro because we would have failed in what we set out to do... so we had to economise a lot on food...sometimes we only had corn porridge for a whole week...Once we started tapping,things improved a lot...We sold all our rubber together in town and bought five oxen...Oxen are cheaper and can carry more and,if one breaks a leg,at least you

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1. 'Tigelinha',the small cup which is placed below the incision in the bark which is used to collect the latex.

can eat it...no one eats mule...We sacrificed a lot to buy those oxen, but if we had to pay for freight charges ...It costs just under 30,000 cruzeiros to hire an animal to make the journey from our cooperative to town...and 30,000 for the journey back...each animal can carry between 80 and 90 kilos...If we didn't have our own oxen, we would have to pay this...What is five times thirty?...We would have to pay 150,000 cruzeiros to carry our rubber to town ...and another 150,000 to bring supplies back...We bought our last load of supplies a week ago...sugar at 435 cruzeiros a kilo, salt at 200 cruzeiros, soap at just over 350 a bar...Here, on the seringal, if we had to buy sugar here from the marreteiro, it would cost us 700 or 800 for a kilo ...and coffee would cost 4,000 cruzeiros while in town it costs only 2,800...It is the same with all the goods and with rubber as well...We took with us a total of 450 kilos of rubber to sell...in town we sold it for 1,250 a kilo... the marreteiro here only wants to pay 900 and he will rob you on his balances as well...WE have made some mistakes because we had no experience at this sort of thing, we weren't practical enough...the first mistake we made was to buy supplies and then sell them to ourselves at the same price...and the same with rubber...the price that we got in town was the price that each seringueiro received...We never thought of charging the members a little more for the goods that he bought and giving him a little less for the rubber...so that we would have something in case of an emergency...things like the death of the mule set us back a lot...it cost 150,000 cruzeiros...at that time, we could have bought three oxen for the same price...and if one had died, we would have been left with two...Our main problem now is how to pay back the loan to the CPT...they originally gave us two years to pay...we also borrowed 700,000 cruzeiros from Project Seringueiro also to be paid back in two years without interest...We went to see the CPT about an extension of the time period and they are considering it...It was Padre Claudio of the CPT who told us about this thing called a reserve fund...to help us through times of difficulties...It is a good idea, but we don't know yet how it will work...some of the members have complained that, if we deduct a percentage from the price of rubber, then those who produce the most will pay more into the reserve fund than those who produce less... and this is not fair...We are going to discuss this at our next meeting." (1).

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1. Field interview, Cooperative member, Seringal Floresta. When the cooperative was visited again in January, 1984, a reserve fund had been started. The members had agreed to a 20% increase in the cost of supplies, but not to a % deduction in the price that they received for their rubber product. The members felt that this would penalise those who worked harder.

"I came to this Seringal Boa Vista in 1973...I used to live near Brasileia, but I was alone and all my relations live here in this valley of the River Xapuri...First we worked for the patroa...then we traded with the marreteiro...and now we have a cooperative...The union began here in Xapuri in 1976 and I joined in 1977...Luiz Damiao was the president then and he went from house to house...to every family on the seringal...telling us about our rights to stay on the land...at this time, we had no idea of what went on in the outside...our only experience was here, working on the seringal...We didn't know how to express ourselves...we were embarrassed to speak up for ourselves...today we are not nervous at all...If I meet a person like yourself who I have never met before...I might speak correctly and I might not...but I won't be afraid to speak...for me it was a great experience...we learned a lot in this struggle together...about the rights that we have in the places that we work, our colocacoes...We didn't know this before...We had rights as human beings and we didn't realize...The cooperative is not working too well at the moment...mainly because some of the members still don't really understand the problems...They complain about each other, but don't do anything...It shouldn't be like that...We should talk openly about these things in the meetings...We are going to have a meeting this Sunday and I hope to talk about this...As leader of the cooperative, I have had to do a lot of traveling and things have been left...The work should be the responsibility of us all and so we must divide it between all the members...We have seven members...seven families on seven colocacoes...One of them wants to leave, but we will have to talk this over because the cooperative should work well and the more rubber that we can sell together, the better the price that we will get...and we can buy supplies in the stores of Rio Branco for the lowest price available...We charge each member 30% on top of the price that we pay for the goods...This goes to the cooperative...for example, we sell powdered milk for 900 cruzeiros plus 30%...that makes just over 1,150...there in the stores of Xapuri, the same tin of milk costs 1,700 cruzeiros and you still need to transport it to the seringal...So we still sell it cheaper...The member who wants to leave is complaining about the 30%...He doesn't realize that we need to do this if we are to move forwards...like when we bought two mules...we were unlucky because one of them died and we all had to pay for some of the cost...the 30% would be able to pay for such emergencies...We still have one mule and some friends on the seringal who will lend us animals from time to time...even to transport our rubber to the river bank (R. Riozinho) which is three hours away...We now have a boat with a motor for the journey to Rio Branco...Ronaldo from Project Seringueiro bought it for us...It takes us four days to get there...four days when the river is high...In summer, no-one can travel on the river, but, in winter, it is easy...We take four days to go downstream...travelling until it gets dark and beginning again

at first light...It takes five days for the journey back up-river...This year we went to Rio Branco twice, but when are better organised, we will try to buy a larger boat so that we only have to travel once a year...The money that we borrowed was a great deal for us out here on the seringal...we are not used to dealing in large amounts ...It was over two million cruzeiros...2,200,000...the motor on its own took 475,000 of this...and the boat was 85,000...and we also had to pay for fuel...The whole amount, all that we paid for the mules, the motor, the boat...and the expenses for the journey, was divided between the seven members...it came to 178,770 cruzeiros for each one...It wasn't easy for us because then rubber sold for only 560 cruzeiros a kilo in town and much less out here on the seringal...We are still having to buy some things in Xapuri because we used up the supplies too quickly...only sugar, cooking oil and dried milk is short ...but we decided not to buy oil because it costs too much...We have to economise a great deal at the moment so that we only buy things wholesale in Rio Branco... otherwise we will just be giving away our profits to the shopkeepers of Xapuri like before." (1).

The principal advantages of this form of cooperative are threefold. Firstly, each seringueiro family benefits in direct proportion to its own level of productivity. The more that is produced on the *colocação*, the greater that family's cash income. Secondly, each family benefits from the joint sale of rubber and purchase of supplies. As the interviewee from the cooperative on Seringal Floresta stated, goods were purchased in bulk at approximately 60% of the price that they formerly had to pay in town and much less than what had been charged by the *marreteiro*, while rubber sold for about 38% more. Thirdly, both the cooperatives had created reserve funds for future expansion or to aid members in times of hardship.

Another, less tangible, product is the experience that this form of organisation has given the members. This experience has been

Field interview, Cooperative leader, Seringal Boa Vista.

incorporated into the fund of knowledge of the whole community. In practical terms, it has motivated the local STR, to whom all the cooperative members belong, to formulate new policies based upon it. Firstly, in terms of its own organisation, the STR leadership in early 1984 had begun the task of persuading its members to take a more active role in union affairs. The aim was not merely to divide the work load more equitably, but to promote the politicization of members through active participation. Discussions were under way concerning the allocation of positions within the STR on a monthly rota basis instead on annual election as has previously been the practice. This move on the part of the STR, and by the two cooperatives, was an attempt to move away from the image of such organisations as assistentialist rather than participatory. As the president of the STR in Xapuri stated when interviewed:

"The members must understand that the union is the means by which they will pull themselves out of the situation in which they find themselves...membership does not end once the monthly dues are paid...more than half of the members think still think that the union is here just to provide assistance...it isn't just this...It does help the worker to fight injustice, but it must also work to raise the consciousness of the member...until we succeed in this, the seringueiro will continue to think of the union in the same way as he thinks of the Church...to go to in times of crisis...that is why we are trying to persuade them to become more involved...It is easy to elect someone to sort out problems for you, it is a lot more difficult to do it yourself...but this is the way forward...The members must realize that they are the union and the union is them." (1).

Secondly, the STR has begun to promote the formation of similar cooperatives on other seringais in Xapuri as the principal means of

1. Field interview, STR, Xapuri.

loosening the ties between the seringueiros and the local storekeepers and marreteiros. As of December, 1983, the CPT was considering applications for financial assistance from five such groups.

It must be noted that the activities of the cooperatives and the STR have generated much criticism from the traders in the town who foresee a total collapse of commerce in the municipality if they are bypassed and the seringueiros trade in the state capital. Several attempts have already been made to destabilize the two existing cooperatives, threats have been made against members and the Mayor of Xapuri called in the military to intervene in the municipality in October, 1983, as he thought that "communist backed seringueiros were ready to take over the town" (1).

4.4. Summary.

This chapter has discussed the implementation of three distinct strategies which have sought both to economically emancipate the seringueiro and ensure his permanence on the soil. It has been shown that the first scheme, that of INCRA via the creation of PADs, has not succeeded in this task. By far the most significant factor in this lack of success has been INCRA's failure to coordinate the provision of cheap credit and an adequate infrastructure. That this can be achieved in the context of Acre has been proven by the success of SUDHEVEA in Brasiléia. Whilst it is difficult to prove, INCRA's actions suggest that its overriding priority has been to relieve political

1. During the same month a U.S. Airforce General was quoted in a number of local and national newspapers as stating that Acre was a guerilla stronghold. See various editions of 'O Rio Branco' and 'O Estado do Sao Paulo' of October, 1983.

tension in the short term by sacrificing the long terms viability of the whole programme. The accent on crisis management has meant that, at best, the the immediate future of the majority of colonists on the PADs is the relative deprivation of subsistence cultivation with no immediate prospect of commercialising what little surplus that can be produced. At worst, the PAD becomes just one more stepping stone along the road to urban poverty.

The SUDHEVEA founded ASSERs based around the mini-usina and the cooperatives of Xapuri, which structurally resemble one another, do offer a viable alternative. Both these forms of cooperative activity, however, could not have begun without the mediation of outside agencies which provided both the intitial concept and the means to realize it, i.e., financial support at a low or zero rate of interest and practical assistance. The long term prospects of these two groups remains uncertain. On the one hand, neither the seringueiros of Brasília nor Xapuri have secure titles to their land. On the other hand, the transformation of Acre into one great rubber plantation seems ensured. If this is the case, then the members of both forms of cooperative must become small plantation owners if they are to compete and survive. Given the nature of the problem, an important factor must be the continuation of financial and technical support of agencies external to them. To receive such support, the members of the cooperative must rely on the political will of these external agencies. If it is not forthcoming, their future is bleak.

CONCLUSION.

This work has sought to provide a detailed empirical understanding of the historical formation of the rural class structure in Acre, with an emphasis on oral sources to illustrate the qualitative aspect of rural transformation, whilst firmly locating this process within the context of uneven capitalist development. It has been demonstrated that the Brazilian political economy has been and still is characterised by profound sectoral and territorial discontinuity. While this may suggest an apparent polarisation into two or more 'Brazil's', it reflects contradictions within the whole, rather than disarticulation between the parts.

Part 1 has shown that, although the Amazonian regional economy as a whole was devoted to the production and commercialisation of rubber, there was considerable empirical variation between the regional sub-units. Thus, when Acre entered the modern period, its population was predominantly rural and its economy still articulated to industrial capital via the Aviamento System which reproduced the dependence of the seringueiro on the barracão.

Part 2 began with an analysis of those factors external to Acre which moulded the trajectory of subsequent events. The post-1945 development programme was founded upon a strategy which encompassed an economic aim, i.e., capitalist industrialisation, and a conceptualisation of the desired societal end product, i.e.,

democratic centralism. In the drive to realise these aims, the agro-export sector remained structurally intact whilst expanding extensively through the spread of peasant production into the frontier regions of the South and Centre-West. Here, capitalist and non-capitalist units were articulated, the input of the latter being a prerequisite of the continued expansion of the former. The underlying philosophy was that secondary sector growth would stimulate the expansion of the other sectors. However, contradictions in this process, e.g., the relative deprivation of the rural labour force as compared to its urban counterpart, gave rise to considerable rural protest movements during the 60s.

The Military Regime, which came to power in 1964 in direct response to social unrest, was faced with the same dilemma as its predecessors: how to maintain the momentum of induced industrial development through which capital accumulation became concentrated, both socially and spatially, while guaranteeing social stability through apparent or real redistributive measures. As a partial answer to this dilemma, the state promoted capital investment in the Amazon and initiated a programme of Amazonian colonisation.

Following the Oil Crisis of 1973-4 and the failure of its colonisation programme in the Amazon, and given its continued ideological commitment to the 'model', the Regime began to emphasize capital investment in the region, via the POLAMAZONIA programme, at the expense of colonisation. Again, social unrest in the countryside,

and from allied groups at home and abroad, obliged the government to modify, but not interrupt, its programme by creating the PADs.

As has been shown, the PADs were to re-enforce concentration in land, rather than counter it. However, it cannot be asserted that the PADs were created to serve this purpose even though they may have functioned in this manner. Similarly, state induced capitalisation of agriculture in the South was promoted to resolve an externally created problem and conceived from within the logic of the current development model. It functioned to separate the small rural producer from the land, but its prime object was the increased production of export crops to ease the balance of payments crisis.

Here we see two essential processes at work : the restructuring effects of capital and the development of social resistance to it, with capital seeking to subordinate labour and the latter seeking to maintain or reclaim its autonomy. These two processes are not directly reducible to the economic and the political, as in the 'classical' Marxist antithesis of the 'forces' versus the 'relations' of production. Capital is as much a social relation as class consciousness is constrained by structural factors.

Following from this, the state cannot be treated as a simple aggregate which 'represents' a particular class. Such a position ignores the social nature of the state apparatuses. On the one hand, there is, in Brazil, a centralised decision-making body

which makes policy decisions dictated by its own normative orientation. Then, there are also the numerous individual agencies charged with executing various aspects of these policies. The success or failure of each agency is dependent upon a complex balance of forces, social and structural, internal and external to it.

In the same manner, the analysis of specific policies and their effects cannot be accomplished by simple reference to the class character of the state. Here we have seen state policies and programmes serving both the accumulation and legitimisation functions. There is no reason why 'creating the conditions for capital accumulation' and 'maintaining social harmony' should be treated as somehow contradictory or mutually exclusive. To do so would reduce state activity to being the mere instrument of one class in the subjugation of the another. It would be a cynicism to assert that the TransAmazonian colonisation scheme or the later PADs were not created because of a genuine concern to alleviate rural misery. However, this is not to say that the solution taken, i.e., translocation rather than structural change, was not prompted by political, rather than purely economic, considerations.

With reference to the unfolding of this double-edged process in Acre, the actions of the Dantas Administration mirrored those of the federal government by inducing capital investment in ranching without resolving the position of the resident posseiro population

vis-à-vis the land. Federal infrastructural development, the construction of the Brasília-Acre highway, and incentives through POLAMAZONIA, facilitated the process in which posseiros were expropriated and forced into the shanty towns of the state capital.

Those seringueiros autônomos who remained in the countryside began to resist expulsion by the ranchers, at first as individuals and, later, as a unified body. Two external agencies, the Church and CONTAG, played prominent roles in the series of events that led to the seringueiros of Acre becoming a 'class for itself' through the legitimisation of the seringueiros' claim to land and in organising the form taken by the resistance movement. This was not without cost to the seringueiros themselves in the sense that their cause was subverted to a certain extent.

An increase in the incidence of rural violence, the adverse publicity, and the continued rural exodus into the already saturated urban areas, forced the federal government to withdraw SUDAM incentives to the large ranching enterprises and to charge INCRA with the task of settling the dispute over land. INCRA failed to 'fix' the posseiro to the land. Firstly, it offered small exchange plots in inaccessible areas and, when this failed, offered plots equivalent to the regional rural module on land expropriated for this purpose, but did not provide adequate infrastructural development or credit provision.

As a consequence, the posseiros of two municipalities in particular, Brasiléia and Xapuri, rejected the INCRA alternative and tried to

carry on as independent small producers although in increasingly difficult circumstances. In the resurgence of violence that followed, a compromise package was put together between the seringueiros of Brasília, the state government, INCRA, and that other federal organ that had come to operate in Acre, SUDHEVEA.

SUDHEVEA, as has been shown, had one overriding imperative : to increase rubber production in the state. Given the problems related to plantation rubber and the existence of an independent labour force skilled in rubber production, but without the means to realize its production potential, SUDHEVEA overcame the immediate obstacles to their participation : credit for capitalisation without the prerequisite definitive title ; training in the use of the new equipment and management techniques ; commercialisation of the product. In Xapuri, similar obstacles were surmounted through the extension of no-interest credit from the Church and organisational orientation by Project Seringueiro.

The success of these cooperatives has depended upon a variety of factors. In the first instance, they were participatory ventures and have displayed a high degree of cooperation between individuals to achieve group aims. Secondly, and partly as a result of the latter, the participants have developed considerable managerial skills during the first years of operation. However, external inputs have been a major contributing factor. Without access to cheap credit and commercialisation possibilities, such cooperatives could not exist. Here, then, is the political element which may

determine the future of small producers in Acre. This is not to suggest that politics somehow overdetermines the economic. Rather, the relation between the two is open, to be investigated in each case.

Whether or not the cooperatives reproduce themselves through time as units founded upon family labour is also conjectural. It is just as possible for these units to become the locii of further social differentiation along the lines of the classical Marxist rural bourgeoisie/landless rural proletariat model as it is for them to become further socialised. While, in Brasília at least, a 'farmer'/'junker' path seems to be unfolding, this is by no means inexorable. There is nothing intrinsic to rubber production that will determine the social nature of that production.

It is not intended here to engage in a normative discussion regarding the preferability of successful rural production units based on family labour over shanty town life. Quotes in the text have demonstrated the qualitative benefits of the former over the latter. However, this work has shown that, given the political will, there is considerable scope for more small producer programmes to create rural production units that can and do compete in the 'modern' capitalist world.

PAD PEDRO PEIXOTO SURVEY.

Interview No.....PAD.....Area.....Glebe.....
 Name of Head of Family.....
 Status:Proprietor / Posseiro / Occupant / Renter.....
 Size of property.....
 Name of property.....
 How many persons live on the property: Adults.....Children.....
 What are the ages of the adults?:...../...../...../...../.....
 What are the ages of the children?:...../...../...../...../.....
 What is the level of education of the head of family?.....
 In what month/year did the family arrive on the PAD?...../.....
 Place of birth of: Municipality. State.
 Family head.....
 His father.....
 His mother.....
 His wife.....
 Her father.....
 Her mother.....

The family arrived in Acre on what date?.....Month.....Year.

Where did the family live before?

- 1.Municipality.....State.....From 19...to 19...
- 2.Municipality.....State.....From 19...to 19...
- 3.Municipality.....State.....From 19...to 19...
- 4.Municipality.....State.....From 19...to 19...

What was the previous occupation of the family head?.....

If agriculturalist, what size of property?.....

Was he Proprietor / Renter / Posseiro / Occupant?.....

For what reason did the family leave and migrate to Acre?.....

.....

Did he previously own a tractor?.....Use fertilizers?.....

What were his principal products?.....

.....

continued.....

Product. How much was produced? How many hectares were:
 1982. 1983. Planted. Financed.
 1982. 1983. 1982. 1983.

Coffee.				
Rice.				
Beans.				
Corn.				
Cocoa.				
Mandioca.				
Macaxeira.				
Rubber.				

If financed, through which agency?.....

Product Sales : Quantity Sold in Sold to Whom?

	1982	1983	
Rice.			
Beans.			
Corn.			
Mandioca.			
Rubber.			

Do you have a: Definitive Title.....Authorisation to Occupy.....from

INCRA? If TD, how long did you have to wait?.....

How many beef cattle?.....Dairy cows.....

Number of: Tractors.....Cars.....Lorries.....Jeeps.....

Chain-saws.....Horses.....Oxen.....Mules.....

Has EMATER.....SUDHEVEA.....COLONACRE.....visited the property?

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