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Peru's Indian Peoples and the Challenge of Spanish Conquest: Huamanga to 1648

The Political Economy of Dependence

The secret of an enduring exploitative system is, on the one hand, its capacity to organize coercion on behalf of the rulers, and, on the other hand, its ability to make the exploited "need" their exploiters. On the one side, coercive violence equips society's leaders to punish defiance of major rules and institutions. On the other side, dependency promotes "voluntary" consent to oppressive relationships. To the extent that the exploited rely on their superiors for basic needs, they must accept or even initiate obligatory relationships which subject them to continued exploitation. The subtle coercion of dependence supplements the naked coercion of force, and extractive relationships acquire greater sophistication. In an industrial capitalist society, for example, the economic dependence of proletarians is so extreme that entrepreneurs need not resort to extracrilic compulsions to find workers.

The pressure of economic necessity suffices to drive men and women to "volunteer" themselves for exploitation. Free labor, cut off from access to the means of production, has no alternative but to sell its labor-power to capitalist producers, in exchange for wages to pay for subsistence. (The rise of extensive social welfare programs in some countries has not provided alternative subsistence strategies to large enough numbers of people to change the general pattern of dependence on wage work.)

In Huamanga, by contrast, the colonial regime consolidated by Toledo was premised upon exploiting economically self-sufficient ayllus and communities. This meant that extracrilic compulsions, including physical force, played a prominent role as the indispensable activators of extractive relationships. As we have seen, the tributes and mitas sponsored by the state, and the extralegal exactions mediated by corregidores and local power figures, met with repeated resistance which only strong coercive measures could overcome. Over time, of course, control of power and violence enhanced the ability of colonial elites to create dependencies which pressured Indians into more "voluntary" compliance. Indian village officials retained political posts subject to approval by the colonial state; ayllus and communities turned to Spanish juridical institutions as a source of protection; and Indians placated Catholic priests who mediated relations with the powerful Spanish gods. These "extracrilic" dependencies added to the colonials' repertoire of weapons more subtle instruments of discipline. But unless they eroded the material self-sufficiency of peasants, they did little to make the economic process of exploitation more sophisticated. The essential dynamic behind the Toledan institutions remained political—the repeated mobilization of superior power, in naked or subtle form, to coerce tributes and labor drafts out of an economically independent peasantry.

Yet we have also seen that by the early seventeenth century, Indians increasingly sharpened skills enabling them to circumvent certain coercive pressures. In a context of declining population, Indian resistance—flight, subercfuge, and adroit judicial politics—crippled the state-sponsor ed mitas and tributes which had fueled the prosperity of the late sixteenth century. Indeed, one might expect the rapid decline of legal tributes and labor drafts to have plunged Huamanga's commercial economy into depression.

But the colonial economy of Huamanga did not stumble into a prolonged decline until much later in the seventeenth century. Somehow, early seventeenth-century entrepreneurs found alternative means to exploit labor, without depending as greatly upon the largesse or coercive power of the colonial state. In many cases, they did not need to apply any coercion at all to attract laborers. To understand why, we will need to consider the economic forces unleashed by Toledo's reorganization. The revitalized regime of the late sixteenth century saddled the Indian countryside with severe economic demands accompanied by a growing commercialization of relationships. The combination tended to weaken the self-sufficiency of local economies, to increase the monetary needs and obligations of the Indians, and to stimulate a certain degree of internal differentiation into rich and poor. By 1600, a growing sector of poor ayllus and households had no choice but to rely on occasional wage labor to cover their monetary obligations, and to make up for shortfalls in subsistence. In addition, increasing numbers of Indians decided to escape the heavy burdens of ayllu life entirely by emigrating to new settings of life and work. In both cases, the poor and the émigré often had little choice but to "volunteer" for exploitation by wealthier colonials who, presumably, provided their clientele with lands, subsistence, wages, and protection. This chapter explores how such dependencies arose, and made it possible to avert a crisis of the commercial economy during the years 1600-1640.
ORIGINS OF THE LABOR PROBLEM

The crisis of the official state institutions derived from two elements. First, the Indians learned ways to weaken the original Toledan institutions. In a context of declining demography and substantial emigration from communities, aggressive judicial politics enabled Indian groups to shrink the legal pool of tributes and labor drafts to a much smaller scale by the early seventeenth century. Moreover, the Indians tended to disrupt the remaining quotas at every turn. Individuals escaped from mine work; ayllus backed noncompliance with dilatory legal tactics; chiefs conspired with corregidores to sabotage enforcement of legal tributes and mitas; and communities brought suits to shut down mita-powered obrajes (see Chapter 5).

Second, economic and demographic trends increased the demand for exploitable labor. Huamanga's mining and commercial prosperity encouraged producers to expand agricultural, ranching, manufacturing, artisanal, mining, and commercial enterprises. In addition, dynamic economic zones such as the cities of Huancavelica, Huamanga, and Castrovirreyna, and certain districts of Angaraes-Huanta-Vilcashuaman attracted an inflow of fortune-seekers and independent producers. The inflow of migrants compounded the natural increase of a Spanish-mestizo population less susceptible than Indians to death caused by microbes of European origin, or by overwork and abuse. By the early seventeenth century, a growing mass of thousands of Spaniards and mestizos aspired to exploit Indian labor and to profit from an expanding economy.

The squeeze on state-sponsored supplies of labor and tributes thus occurred at a time when economic and demographic forces boosted the Spanish-mestizo sector's thirst for labor. A tiny elite of thirty or forty people grabbed most of the shrinking regional patrimony (see Chapter 4). Even for the high elite, this patrimony grew less and less adequate to sustain expanding enterprises or provide revenues for investment, and a growing sector of lesser elites, pretenders, and petty producers were closed out of major shares of the state's labor drafts and tributes in the first place. An early revisita of the region, around 1599, cut the mita de plaza allotment of ninety-eight lesser citizens of Huamanga, many of them farmers, to only one Indian each. A modest farmer who depended on the year-round labors of two or three mitayos could not easily absorb a reduction of one or two workers. Like the high elites, he would search for alternative means of securing labor that would save him from scaling down his operations.

ALTERNATIVES AND SOLUTIONS

The adaptations available to alleviate the shortage were diverse and well-known. During boom times, legal mitas and tributes, complemented by the extralegal exactions of corregidores and other functionaries, had supplied massive amounts of labor, goods, and money revenues to an expanding commercial economy. But the colonials had never relied exclusively on mita, tributes, or extralegal coercions by officials. They had supplemented their access to surplus labor and products with a range of alternative relationships: slavery of Africans and in some cases foreign Indians; personal servitude imposed on yanaconas and other dependents; and wage labor contracts or agreements for varying time periods.

These relationships had emerged in "civil society," as expressions of "private" relations and coercions relatively free of direct sponsorship by the formal political structure of the state. Mita and tribute functioned as official extractive institutions; their very dynamic continually bound exploiter and exploited to the legal coercive authority of a strong central state. Slavery, personal lordship, and contracted labor, on the other hand, bound exploiter and exploited directly to one another. The colonial state, at various moments and in different degrees, legally sanctioned, encouraged, and even purported to regulate such relationships. But the initiation, internal dynamics, and socioeconomic significance of these relationships reflected private or extraofficial initiative more than state edict.

As long as the mita supplied plentiful cheap labor, its success limited the attraction of alternative labor arrangements to an auxiliary level. Africans were comparatively expensive, justifiable mainly for social prestige and to fill positions demanding special training, productivity, or trustworthiness on the part of ethnically isolated slaves. Yanaconas carried more economic and demographic weight, especially in agriculture and ranching. They required no purchase price, and they could learn to perform tasks requiring Andean or Hispanic skills. Still, the possibility of obtaining cheap infusions of fresh labor for limited time periods dampened the usefulness of long-term relationships with dependents who demanded lands, goods, and reasonable treatment for their labors, which the Spaniards often thought they performed negligently. On large estates owned by powerful men and women, resident yanaconas probably represented a numerically modest, though essential, source of labor in the sixteenth century. The availability of mita labor similarly restricted the demand for wage laborers. Dynamic mining centers like Huancavelica and Castrovirreyna attracted a stream of experienced mine workers who had loosened or abandoned ties to their home communities. But these laborers earned twice the wages of mitayos, and were attractive primarily to supplement the extractive work of mitayos in especially rich veins, or to perform skilled work in other phases of the productive process.

What distinguished patterns of labor in Huamanga in the early seventeenth century was not the existence of slavery, yanaconaje (long-term personal bondage), or wage labor, but their increasing importance in production. Even in enterprises where the mita continued to supply the bulk of the
work force, judicial politics and changing community demography made the state-run labor drafts an outmoded institution of the past, destined to
decline as a reliable source of labor. Alternative relationships arranged in
"civil society," which circumvented dependence upon the labor patrimony of
the state, represented the dynamic, growing forces of the future. By creating
a large, varied clientele of personal dependents and contracted laborers,
a colonial could protect production from labor scarcities and disruptions which,
increasingly, accompanied state-controlled labor.

Thus even African slavery, relatively costly in a highland economy where
profits depended on large inputs of cheap labor, grew into a significant eco-
nomic force by the 1600s. The prestige attached to owning slaves had always
guaranteed a certain demand for blacks, especially for household and urban
services. The suitability of ethnically isolated Africans for extremely intense
or skilled labors widened the market, and a brisk slave trade flourished in
Huamanga. In the seventeenth-century countryside, slave labor dotted the
vineyards, sugar haciendas, and farms of prosperous zones. A census of
Huancavelica in 1592 counted over 240 slaves in the city. In certain mines
with major refining mills, slavery could reach surprising (though still modest)
proportions. In 1616, the half-owner of a Castrovirreynia mine-hacienda
complex held eighteen slaves to complement the labors of fifty-two mitayos.

More impressive than the spread of slave labor was the growing impor-
tance of yanacona in agriculture, ranching, obraje manufactures, and
even mining. Conditions of long-term bondage varied considerably, even
within single enterprises, but normally implied an obligation by the master
to provide for the subsistence and needs of dependent Indians by granting
rights which usually included lands and an annual wage credit. In ex-
change, the yanaconas owed certain labor services to their masters, who
expected personal bonds to take precedence over ayllu bonds. But the work
and loyalties of Indian serfs often displayed the "neglect" and sabotage nor-
mally associated with dependent labor. It is now about five years . . .
complained the lord of a notoriously troublesome native, "that he plants for
himself on my lands without helping me in anything." Moreover, the
wage credits accumulated by many yanaconas over the years, if uncancelled
by debits and sales of overpriced goods, could prove burdensome. The
evidence suggests that elites and other substantial citizens did not resort to ya-
nacona on a large scale if they could obtain labor drafts for limited time
periods, with fewer long-term obligations, from the mita, extraofficial cor-
véses arranged by Spanish or Indian functionaries, or other means. In 1577, a
rural estate of a powerful citizen utilized the labors of twenty-seven commu-
nity peasants, but only five yanaconas and four Indian "cowboys" (sapineros).
Similarly, a farming partnership between two local grandees in 1601 relied
on mitayos for at least three-fourths of the full-time labor force. Another par-
nership, in 1609, on lands sufficiently productive to warrant hiring a Span-
ish administrator, placed only six yanaconas on the consolidated holdings.12

But whatever the initial preferences of the elite, the declining credibility
of the mita and the strong demand for labor guaranteed that yanacona
would grow more attractive. Lesser figures with modest political influence,
of course, had always needed to search for alternatives to the state's labor
patrimony. By the 1600s, powerful families and institutions were engaging
in the same search. In 1618, an inspection of a Jesuit hacienda near Hu-
amanga counted sixteen yanaconas, eleven of them heads of families. With
relatives, the "attached" residents on the hacienda totalled forty-four In-
dians, thirty-two of them old enough to work.13 That same year, accounts
from a leading gentlewoman's hacienda in Vilcashuaman identified ten of
twenty-nine workers as yanaconas. Just as important, the estate tended to
convert the other nineteen laborers, technically "community" Indians, into
long-term residents whose life and work relations, in practice, resembled
those of yanaconas. Of the nineteen "community" Indians, ten had lived on
the hacienda at least two years; of these, probably six had been residents six
years or more.14 Earlier, rural labor strategies focused on labor drafts to
complement a modest "core" of resident Indians. Now, the emphasis had
shifted somewhat, to expanding the "core" of resident laborers and to secur-
ing outside labor unrelated to the mita.

Obraje manufacturers witnessed a similar shift of emphasis. To counter
conflicts with communities which lowered or disrupted mita labor drafts,
the owners tended to pull ayllu Indians more fully into the orbit of the obraje
complex. By settling natives on obraje lands, and taking care of their tribute
or mita obligations, an entrepreneur, in effect, assimilated ayllu Indians to
yanacona-like status as indefinately resident dependents.15

By 1620, the yanaconas had become so integral to Huamanga's social and
economic structures that no authority could rewrite the new demographic
map. Toledo had hoped to stabilize the yanacona population by legalizing
bonds formed well before his reign, but prohibiting new retainers except
with special license.16 By the 1600s, a growing sector of lesser colonials and
powerful elites had acquired considerable numbers of new Indian retainers
who now played an expanded role in the production of fmd, textiles, and
craft goods for Huamanga's mines, cities, and commercial networks. This
was the context in which Viceroy Borja tried unsuccessfully to revive the
Huancavelica mita in 1618 (see Chapter 5). The reform plan was to revital-
ize the mita pool in part by sending "new" yanaconas back to their ayllus. In
Huamanga, "the citizens and residents, seeing . . . the great harm that
would befall them for removing the Indian yanaconas from their haciendas,"
prompted loudly. Borja reluctantly accepted the advice of his appointed rep-
resentative, Don Alonso de Mendoza, that he legalize the yanaconas (pro-
vided that masters would pay to hire replacements for retainers who skipped their aylus' mita obligations. Borja prohibited further expansion of yanacona, but Huamanga's Spaniards continued to "hide all the [mita] Indians who leave Huancavelica in estancias and haciendas ... throughout this bishopric."

To supplement their expanded forces of personal retainers, Huamanga's colonials turned increasingly to various forms of labor contracting. Given the limited number of potential yanaconas, stiff competition for them, and the obligations imposed by long-term seigneurial relationships, few colonials of significant economic stature could rely on such relationships to supply most all their labor needs. The growth of yanacona, and to a lesser extent slavery, expanded the "core" labor forces attached to various colonials, but could not eliminate the need for additional labor from the outside.

To fill out one's labor force, and to secure an infusion of extra laborers during busy times, an entrepreneur "rented" Indians for limited time periods in exchange for a remuneration which often included money wages. The records of a sugar estate in the 1630s, for example, made plain that only by hiring wage laborers, from nearby communities and from far away, could the hacienda satisfy its fluctuating demand for labor. Indian wages, especially to cut, transport, and mill sugar cane during harvest season, accounted for the great majority of the administrator's expenses. The managers of an obraje responded to the strong market for textiles in the 1590s by hiring Indian laborers, for periods ranging from several days to several weeks or more, to supplement their force of mitayos and yanaconas. In obrajes, as in agriculture, the decline of the mita heightened the importance of personal retainers and hired laborers. In mining, a key source of income for the entire regional economy, the expansion of wage labor relationships played a crucial role. Despite the presence of hired Indians, the mining boom of Huamanga in the last quarter of the sixteenth century had been built chiefly upon the labors of large mita contingents. By 1630, the mining mitas had dropped off sharply, and the market was expanding for skilled mine workers who commanded twice the wages of mitayos. By mid-century, production at Huancavelica continued at a healthy rate, but the demand for labor had driven the wages of voluntary workers up even further, to three and a half times the daily wage of mitayos.

In the city of Huamanga, notaries recorded a series of asientos, labor contracts between individual Indians and prospective masters, which proliferated from the 1590s on. A survey of seventy-eight such contracts in the period 1570-1640 shows that they normally represented more than a simple exchange of labor-power for money or commodities. The Indian turned himself (or, on rare occasions herself) over to a master for a substantial period, usually a year, both as a repository of labor-power and, more broadly, as a client human being. The native promised to stay with the employer throughout the time of the contract, and often to do "all that might be ordered him." The master agreed not only to pay wage money, but also to commit himself to the broader welfare of his dependent. He would provide a specified amount of subsistence goods, especially food and clothing, restore the Indian to good health in times of sickness, and might even look after the native's religious instruction. The contract might specify a promise to teach the native a trade, or to protect him from the mita. For general work in agriculture, ranching, or domestic service, the monetary component of the exchange was usually modest (12-24 pesos of 8-9 reales a year), and might represent simply one of several mutual obligations. In two out of three apprenticeships, the Indian apprentice held no rights at all to monetary compensation for his labor. Only in the case of skilled or specialized labor by Indian artisans, artesanos (muleteers, drivers of animal trains), and the like did the monetary aspects weigh more heavily. Artisans earned 40-60 pesos a year, and arrieros 80-130 pesos. In addition, their contracts sometimes spelled out special rights which increased the hired Indian's income or earning capacity. One arriero held the right to use his master's animals to make "all the trips that he wishes . . . from this city to other places."

In truth, the range of relationships generated through labor contracts and agreements varied considerably, and to equate them with modern wage labor would distort their character. Various degrees of compulsion lay behind some of the "agreements," which turned out to mask more coercive relationships. Receipt of wages was by no means automatic, and a contracted worker whose subsistence was provided for might have to work six months before he could claim a wage. Some contracts, particularly in the case of putting-out systems or seasonal harvests, represented collective sales of labor-power by aylus and ethnic groups rather than direct, individual contracts.

Even in the case of freely hired individuals, which grew increasingly important from about 1600 on, we find a broad spectrum of relationships. At one end were relations which constituted early forms of wage labor. The predominant feature of the bond was the worker's sale of labor-services in exchange for a money wage, or in some cases a share of the commodities he produced. Continuation of the relationship depended on short-term agreements and personal decisions. In mining, textile production, and agriculture, this kind of relationship enabled entrepreneurs to hire Indians on a temporary basis without assuming too many responsibilities to dependents in the long run. At the other end of the spectrum were agreements which imbedded the "sale" of labor-power in a much broader set of human bonds applicable for a year or even longer. This kind of relationship, more seigneurial in flavor, enabled colonials to hire Indian workers who temporarily expanded the colonials' clientele of "attached" dependent laborers. To the extent that a master could impose debts upon a hired Indian, he or she might wipe out the laborer's wage credits, lengthen the term of service re-
quired to "pay back" debts, and eventually enmesh the contracted Indian in a long-term, yanacona-like relationship. In a sense, many asientos represented a kind of rental of yanaconas. An Indian rented to the master broad authority over the native's life and work for a year or longer, in exchange for subsistence, wage credits, protection, and other services. The colonials themselves sometimes referred to such hired Indians as "yanaconas in accordance with the contracts and agreements which have been made with them."

But in all these cases, labor contracting bore witness to the growing importance of a certain kind of market for the services of individual Indians who hired out their labor-power. In some cases, the item sold was labor-power pure and simple, unencumbered by other bonds, and freely traded for money or precious metals. Often, the sale of labor-power was enmeshed in a broader set of mutual obligations which linked masters and dependent laborers, and tended to reduce the practical significance of the monetary element in the transaction. To talk of the kind of generalized labor market associated with nineteenth-century industrial capitalism would, therefore, misconstrue the comparatively narrow, embryonic character of voluntary wage labor in Huamanga. The "market" for free labor was primitive at best: shallow in scale, irregular in supply, vulnerable to political control, and colored by compulsions which rounded up "vagrants," robbed workers of wage payments, and tied some laborers to long-term, coercive relationships.

Nonetheless, despite all these limitations, the contracts offer some evidence of a labor market mechanism. Peasants who descended from Huamanga to work in the vineyards and farms of coastal Ica, where Indian labor was comparatively scarce, earned five to ten pesos more a year than their counterparts in Huamanga. As the seventeenth century wore on, the demand for hired labor tended to press wages upward. In the city of Huamanga, the average annual salary promised to asiento contract Indians for unspecialized labors was, besides subsistence, about fifteen pesos in the period 1596-1602 (sixteen contracts). By 1609, the average had climbed to about twenty pesos a year (eight contracts); ten to fifteen years later, wages averaged about twenty-four pesos (ten contracts). In Huancavelica, the daily wage owed to non-mitayo workers climbed from some seven reales around 1600 to as much as twelve reales mid-century. Increasingly, colonials who lacked sufficient access to mita and other forms of forced labor had little choice but to offer wages and other remunerations to Indians who "volunteered" to work.

THE ROLE OF INDIAN CONSENT

Indeed, the remarkable aspect of the rise of yanaconaje and labor contracting was the degree of voluntary consent by Indians to such relationships. To be sure, colonials continued to use force to recruit laborers. And as we have seen, once a bond was initiated, whether by choice or compulsion, coercive pressures frequently shaped the texture and further evolution of the relationship.

But the evidence suggests that, by the seventeenth century, many producers came to depend upon the willingness of Indians to work for colonials. Huamanga's Spaniards "promise the moon," complained a knowledgeable observer, to lure ayllus Indians to become resident yanaconas on rural estates. Colonials offered rising wages to contracted workers precisely because they could not counteract labor shortages by force alone. In many cases, Indians migrated long distances to work for employers with whom they were unlikely to have had significant bonds previously, coercive or not. Two out of every three "unspecialized" Indians who entered asiento contracts with Europeans in the city of Huamanga came from rural provinces beyond the immediate countryside surrounding the city; the city itself contributed less than a tenth of the Indians (see Table 6.1). Most of the migrants appear to have joined relatively unknown masters, people who had not enjoyed much influence or stature in the Indians' original homelands.

Colonial masters, of course, battled against having to count on voluntary compliance by migratory Indians. Entrepreneurs frequently sought to "tie down" contracted workers and yanaconas alike in long-term relations of debt, mutual dependency, and personal lordship. Or they held back on full wage payments to increase the likelihood that a temporary laborer would return later. To collect payment on past labors, an Indian might have to submit to yet another round of labors. Such measures were significant and widespread, but we ought not exaggerate their success. Many Indians held enough power or alternatives—including escape—to collect some wages and leave after limited stints of duty. A colonial who sought to lure and maintain access to contracted laborers and, to a lesser extent, yanaconas had to live with that fact of life. More than he or she might have wished, the

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Table 6.1. Places of origin, Asiento Indians, 1670-1640

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City of Huamanga</th>
<th>Immediate rural environs</th>
<th>Rural provinces of Huamanga</th>
<th>Outside Huamanga (the region)</th>
<th>Unknown</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of cases</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of all cases</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>14.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>% of identified cases</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>69.7</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Natives contracted in the city of Huamanga to serve European masters, excluding cases of skilled Indian specialists such as artisans and artisans.

**Includes one case from Andahuaylas, one from southern part of "valley of Janja," and two from Parinacochas— all regions that bordered on the formal hinterland of Huamanga.

Source: Appendix D, Table D.1.
colonial relied upon a certain measure of consent on the part of the Indian. From time to time, enterprises which paid considerable wages to hire temporary or contracted laborers halted production “because nobody showed up” to work.99

Fortunately for the colonials, however, dependents and workers seemed to gravitate towards them. Dynamic zones and enterprises functioned as economic poles or magnets which drew Indians to work in mining, agriculture, ranching, crafts and other skilled specialties, manufactures, transport, and domestic service. To some extent, prosperous centers had always exerted such a pull on the ayllu countryside. But colonial producers had earlier depended heavily on the state’s coercive power to raid ayllus for labor in mines, textile workshops, sugar or coca plantations, and commercial farms or ranches. By the 1600s, as the stream of peasants and vagabonds looking for work or for masters rose to new heights, many colonials found that they need not rely as heavily on coercion to recruit and hold laborers. A person of means could tap the flow of Indians into Huamanga, Huancavelica, Castrovierrrey, Vilcashuaman (the trading center), and other commercially prospering zones. The emphasis of Indian grievances began to shift subtly. Now, many Indians complained not that they had been forced to work, but that entrepreneurs reneged on fair payment of wages.100

The options available to colonial entrepreneurs had changed dramatically. In 1570, the economic self-sufficiency of ayllu society constituted a roadblock to the extraction of surplus labor. Only repeated applications of force, under the aegis of a powerful state, could spur the development of the colonial economy, especially in mining. Fifty years later, the colonials still could not dispense with force to exploit Indian labor. But coercion was more private or extrajudicial in character, less bound to the formal legal institutions of the state. Moreover, coercion often could not meet the needs of major and minor entrepreneurs. Voluntary agreements between Indians and their employers or masters came to play a crucial role in continued production, above all in mining.101 Ayllu access to land and labor still posed constraints upon the exploitation of Indians, but no longer in the same way. What had changed?

THE DECAY OF AYLLU SELF-SUFFICIENCY
What had changed was the capacity of Indians to meet economic needs and obligations independently. For colonials, mining and commercial capital constituted the cutting edge of economic enterprise and development. For ayllu Indians, the development of a prosperous mining and commercial economy controlled by colonials generated forces which, over time, disrupted their self-sufficiency. The prosperity created by Toledo’s regime imposed severe burdens on Indians and at the same time, induced a certain monetization of obligations. As a result, ayllu Indians contended with growing needs for money or its equivalent just as colonial relationships tended to undermine their capacity to earn money independently by marketing a surplus of commodities. Moreover, local commerce tended to exacerbate internal differentiation into rich and poor which distributed economic burdens, and the resources to satisfy or avoid them, in highly unequal ways. By the seventeenth century, an emerging population of poor Indians needed to work for colonials to meet economic needs or obligations, or to escape the burdens of ayllu life entirely. Originally, Toledan institutions relied on superior political power to exploit independent ayllu economies; eventually, these very institutions generated economic conditions which limited ayllu independence, and thereby reduced the necessity of political coercion.

A certain portion of the Indians’ “need” for money was, of course, simply a direct expression of coercive relations. The state regularly demanded tributes in silver or gold; corregidores, priests, and their allies used their positions to “sell” commodities to captive Indian markets at inflated prices; legal regulations forced native communities to pay salaries to schoolteachers, or fees to itinerant judges.102 Colonials used monetary equivalencies to collect on unfilled tributes or mitas, or to impose new burdens. An Indian blamed for the death or loss of a pack animal owed the owner a debt worth at least a year’s wages.103 These politically imposed obligations—tributes, forced sales, salaries and fees, debits—forced Indians to earn substantial amounts of money or its equivalent.

But the colonial regime also promoted more subtle and willful needs for money, or for goods and services which cost money. From the start, Indian communities had adapted aggressively to commercial opportunities available in an expansive colonial economy. They used revenues not only to meet colonial demands, but also to fund new needs or choices. In a prospering, commercialized economy almost any obligation became a commodity with a market price, and Indians often preferred to commute tribute and mita into monetary equivalents. By substituting money payments for that portion of tributes originally designated in kind, ayllus protected harvests and herds assigned to subsistence.104 By paying mita claimants the money needed to hire substitute workers, ayllus reserved more of their people for local life and work. By paying off chiefs and notables who oversaw distribution of mita burdens, individual Indians escaped designation as mitayos. And once designated, a peasant might avoid the cruel work regime by “renting” an Indian to replace him in the mita. The price commanded by a mitayo replacement soared as high as thirty-six pesos (of eight reales)—nearly six times the annual tribute owed to the state.105 To protect their interests Indians, as we have seen, mastered the art of judicial politics; litigation, however, cost considerable sums of money for fees, bribes, travel, urban living, and the like.106
The colonial situation thus generated new needs; indeed the Indian market for Hispanic-style goods and services was not entirely artificial. Items such as shears, knives, and candles served useful purposes; knick-knacks, games, and puzzles exerted a more exotic appeal. Hispanic symbols and attire held the prestige associated with power. Their lure extended more broadly than the wealthy Indians who most easily afforded them. Consider, for example, the careful specifications of an Indian boy’s contract to work for a citizen of Ica. The boy, who had migrated from Huanta, would receive twelve pesos a year, and “a very gallant set of whatever [American-made] clothes he chooses—shawl, shirt, pants, hat, shoes, and blanket.” More than ever after the defeat of Taki Onqoy, Indians had to respect the power of Christian gods, including saints. Such respect implied a market for religious objects, wax and candles, paintings of churches, and other goods and services offered to the deities. Away from their homelands, mitayos contended with strong pressures to enter market transactions, especially in the mines. Such experiences led to tastes and dependencies which created a certain market for brandy and wine.

Now as long as ayllus produced sufficient goods for subsistence and market sale, a certain need for revenues by no means drove large numbers of Indians to work voluntarily on colonial enterprises. By selling a surplus of coca, animals, wool, textiles, foodstuffs, Spanish or Indian handicrafts, and other commodities, Indians could earn needed funds. This is precisely what happened in the 1570s and 1580s, when many groups accumulated impressive cash reserves. The problem was that, over time, colonial relationships despoiled ayllus of the capacity to produce and control a surplus, or even enough for their subsistence. Royal officials siphoned off community cash by outright fraud, or by arranging long-term loans never paid back. Spanish and Indian entrepreneurs laid claim precisely to the lands and resources most suited for profitable commerce or production. Expropriation of strategic resources—irrigable lands, coca plantations, valuable herds, beautiful cumbi textiles as well as everyday cloth—constituted a double blow. The expropriations not only damaged the ayllus’ capacity to earn revenues, but also to produce goods needed for subsistence and ritual. Having to purchase such essentials expanded further the need for revenues. When ayllu reven-ues fell short, chiefs might sell surplus lands unworked by declining community populations. But such expedients restricted further the long-run potential of subsistence economies.

Indeed, the cumulative effect of colonial extraction and Indian population decline threw the subsistence economy itself into precarious straits. Tribute and mita drained away needed goods and labor-time, and disrupted expectations and reciprocities essential for local production. The combined impact of population losses, tribute, and mita shrank the amount of human
energy regularly available for ayllu and household economies. Declining productivity could prove disastrous to societies whose kin groups had always relied on large reserves to tide them over poor harvests. As local peoples lost their ability to fill warehouses in "good" years, the crop failures which normally plague Sierra agriculture every few years took on new significance. To survive, peasants would have to purchase foodstuffs. As the resources, labor-time, and storage capacity of subsistence economies deteriorated, the scope of local commodity exchange expanded. Markets probably fluctuated widely from year to year and place to place. But significantly, rural Indians began to need money or credits for essentials once produced and distributed independently—coke, salt, maize, ají, even coarse cloth for everyday use.

Not all Indians shouldered such burdens equally; nor did they all have to. On the contrary, given an unequal distribution of power, resources, and burdens in native society, the colonial regime tended to stimulate further differentiation into rich and poor. Major kurakas, municipal functionaries, lay assistants of priests, village artisans, women heads of household, and farasteros enjoyed legal exemption from mita and, in most cases, tribute. Not surprisingly, Indians who accumulated surpluses tended to emerge from these privileged groups. The families of common tributaries on the other hand, had to use whatever "extra" resources they could muster to bribe officials or to "rent" substitute laborers, if they wished to avoid the mita. The poorest tributaries might have little choice but to indebted themselves to pay for a substitute, or else serve the mita. But if they served, their meager economic base decreased the likelihood that they could save significant wages, or mobilize kin to look after fields during their absence. Deteriorating fields, of course, left them more vulnerable than ever to commercial relations. As commodity circulation and a certain monetization of obligations penetrated local life, those with political or economic advantages gained while others floundered in a sea of tributes, corveés, debts, and subsistence problems. The process of differentiation was, by modern standards, incomplete since the poorest ayllu peasant almost invariably retained access to some land, labor, and redistributive rights. But equally as significant, land itself began to circulate as a commodity even among Indians. In commercially active zones, farasteros, local Indians, and entire ayllus bought lands from individuals and ayllus short on funds.

By choice and by compulsion, Huamanga's people had become integrated into an extensive commercial economy which redefined the needs of households and individuals. Itinerant merchants of all races established personal contacts in the Indian countryside. In certain zones, the small storekeeper—the vendor of coca, maize, salt, candles, cloth, wine, brandy, and other wares—became a notable rural figure. The upper levels of Indian society, of course, formed the readiest market for Hispanic wine, clothes, foods, weapons, horses, and the like. But as we have seen, rising needs for revenue burdened the lower levels of society least able to afford them. Ayllu peasants financed purchases by elites, shared collective responsibility for coerced tribute and sales, supported costly legal battles, developed tastes of their own for "Hispanic" commodities, strained to earn funds needed to avoid the mita, and suffered subsistence deficits which drove them further into the market.

By the seventeenth century, money and debt weighed heavily on ayllu life. For an emerging population of poor Indians, access to ayllu lands and resources, labor, and redistributive rights simply no longer sufficed to provide for unavoidable necessities. Even if precious metals did not change hands much, necessities now included the means to pay off debts or earn monetary credits. The wills of wealthy Indians began to record lists of debts collectible from other natives. The debts, often petty by Hispanic standards, included not only direct loans of money, or sales of "luxuries" like wine. The lists also mentioned basic subsistence goods: several bushels of corn here and there, and in at least one case chuño, the freeze-dried potatoes usually eaten as a food of last resort. Occasionally debts landed Indians in jail. More often, probably, rising needs for revenue gave monetary advances new force in Indian life. One out of six asientos in Huamanga linked the labor contract to a prior debt or money advance. Juan Moroco, for example, received an advance of nineteen pesos "that he paid an Indian [to replace him] in the mines of Huancavelica." Others hired themselves out to employers who agreed to pay off creditors and thereby keep the debtor out of jail. In the 1570s the corregidor of Lucanas had relied on sheer coercion to extract a surplus. A half-century later, his counterpart used money advances, credit, and commercial relationships to build a more sophisticated repertoire of devices to persuade Indians to comply with unwelcome demands. Growing monetary needs, a severely strained subsistence economy, and substantial internal differentiation had undermined the vital, independent ayllu economies encountered by the first conquistadores of Huamanga.

POVERTY AND DEPENDENCE

Over time, then, colonial relationships gave rise to economic dependencies driving natives into the arms of colonials. On the one side, pauperized ayllus and households depended on occasional wage labor to earn needed funds or credits. Only the most fortunate or wealthy could generate enough revenues independently—by producing a marketable surplus, controlling local trade, or pursuing relatively autonomous work as artisans or muleteers. From time to time, the rest had to volunteer their labors to entrepreneurs who controlled dynamic sectors of the commercial economy. On the other side, the burdens of ayllu life weighed so heavily that a certain propor-
tion of Indians fled outright. To escape the onslaught of tributes, mitas, subsistence shortfalls, and debts, they left for new lives as forasteros, outsiders. As we shall see, at least some of the runaways depended on colonials for economic sustenance or social protection. Like poor ayllu Indians, émigrés often found that they "needed" their exploiters.

In the case of émigrés, we ought not underestimate the trauma inherent in their decisions to flee their old lives. Escape brought relief from ayllu burdens, but it also cut people off from the society where their ancestors had lived; where ethnic and ayllu gods looked over the wellbeing of their children; where people acquired individual identities and sustenance because they lived as members of larger social groups; where a person dreaded social isolation and depended on bonds with local relatives, ayllus, hills—with nature itself. We ought not assume that emigration, in a social rather than physical sense, was always permanent or absolute from the start. In some cases forasteros retained significant links with relatives in their original homelands; in others, those bonds took time to erode.

But whatever the difficulties of a decision to flee, however strong their reluctance, people abandoned ayllu life. Sometimes, Indians made fateful choices at moments of extreme duress. We know, for example, that a certain proportion of mitayos ran away while laboring in mines away from their homelands. More generally, some evidence suggests that young, single males experienced a special kind of life crisis. As they approached the grim threshold of marriage, household responsibilities, and tributary status, what could they look forward to? As hadas, big men, they would enter a stage of life in which they enjoyed greater status and claims to ayllu land and resources. Yet once they committed themselves to life as big men, they would assume family responsibilities restricting their mobility further, and faced a potentially miserable lot as poor tributaries. At this juncture in the life cycle, apparently, a number of people broke away. An inspection of one district, ayllu by ayllu, listed over three-fourths of the men who fled as single rather than married; most of the older absentee, men forty or fifty years old, were said to have left as youths—"over twenty years ago," or "since a boy." (A somewhat different life crisis is suggested for young women in Chapter 7.)

Some migrants undoubtedly shielded themselves from colonial society fairly successfully. They descended to remote, often treacherous jungles east of Huamanga; they gained access to land through semi-clandestine relationships with ethnically alien Indian communities; or they swelled vagabond populations as far away as Lima. But all these options had definite limits. The tropical selva was ecologically and socially forbidding to many sierra Indians. Life amidst foreign ayllus was not always possible or welcome from either side's point of view. Nor did it immunize a forastero from the monetary economy, especially if the outsider had to buy or rent lands, or married into a community. Finally, even vagabonds might seek occasional employment, or protection from Indians and officials who hunted runaways to collect on tributes or mitas.

Out-migration thus generated people who turned to colonials for wages, subsistence, or protection. The émigrés expanded the force of skilled wage laborers who kept the mining economy going; merged into the population of yanacas living on Hispanic farms, ranches, and haciendas; sought out apprenticeships with urban artisans; drifted in and out of work as day laborers; or agreed to long-term asiento contracts in cities like Huamanga. Given the Indians' limited alternatives, a colonial patron competing to lure servants might offer relatively attractive conditions of life. Consider, for example, the case of Anton Yucra, who agreed to serve on the haciendas of Pedro Serrano Navarrete for two years. In exchange for his service, Yucra earned rights to twelve pesos and a set of clothes each year, a ration of corn, and use of some fields "in whatever location he wishes, at the cost of the said Pedro Serrano, using his oxen and plowshares." Perhaps most important from Yucra's point of view, the contract specified that Serrano "has to free and save him from the mitas of Huanacavelica and Choclococha [Gastrovirreyana] and other personal services." In Vilcashuaman, Yucra's original province, ethnic groups complained bitterly that the owner of an obraje-hacienda complex lured ayllu Indians away, further sapping the economic base of ayllu society.

The Indian countryside thus expelled a stream of pauperized ayllu Indians who left temporarily to accumulate funds or pay off debts, forasteros who fled permanently to establish new lives, and others caught in a more ambiguous, transitional situation. In varying degrees, the lives of all reflected the rise of dependencies which expanded the options available to colonial entrepreneurs. Whether or not Indians left ayllu society behind, from time to time they turned to wealthier people for wages, lands, subsistence, credit, protection. Economic dependence was not, of course, complete or irreversible. Yanacas often held plots of land or pastured their own animals, and as we have seen, Indian laborers were more mobile than colonials might have liked. Even in mines, where voluntary wage labor was most important, employers probably contend with a semi-independent work force. An Indian miner who commanded high wages might withdraw for a while, live off accumulated funds, or buy lands which allowed him to earn a livelihood as a petty cultivator. But whatever its limited or partial character, the Indians' economic dependence was real, and represented a sharp departure from the more self-sufficient Andean past.

THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF COERCION AND CONSENT

Huamanga's elite built its prosperity on contradictory trends. The very forces which drove colonials to bind laborers to serfdom also compelled
them to rely more heavily on voluntary agreements, including wage labor. Ayllu resistance, in the context of an expansive colonial economy and a changing demographic map (declining total Indian population, and within the total, a rising proportion of semi-clandestine forasteros), undermined the success of state-sponsored labor drafts. Forced to adjust to disruption and labor scarcity, entrepreneurs placed greater emphasis on developing exploitative relations in "civil society."

One such adaptation was to extend extraofficial and private forms of coercion. Gerónimo de Oré, for example, rented his obraje to the rural constable, who also happened to represent the local corregidor; this powerful functionary overstepped the formal boundaries of authority to rob hired workers of wages, impose illegal corvées, and the like. Colonialists went beyond such extralegal arrangements with bureaucrats, however, to cultivate direct lordship over personal dependents. One such practice, the purchase of African slaves to assume a more prominent role in production, sidestepped Indian society altogether. Other such practices expanded yanacona populations and, as we have also seen, enmeshed temporary workers in relations tending to convert them into long-term dependents.

But it was precisely because Indians did not succumb easily to coercive pressure, and even escaped if pushed beyond certain limits, that colonials came to rely also on a second adaptation: the use of voluntary agreements, contracts, and early forms of wage labor to secure native services. Forced labor alone, even if extraofficial and private in character, could not supply the needs of a dynamic regional economy. Indeed, the very existence of colonials eager to attract labor probably lessened the willingness of retainers to accommodate themselves to severely coercive masters.

Yanacona wage labor, both on the rise in the early seventeenth century, did not simply represent alternative or complementary labor strategies; they also represented extreme cases of opposite, contradictory tendencies. Because coercion was inadequate, colonials hired natives who agreed to work for wages. But because the labor market was shallow and irregular, and techniques of production tied profits closely to low labor costs, colonials could not rely on "volunteer" labor alone to provide a steady work force or high profits. Thus even as they turned to an emerging marketplace to find labor, entrepreneurs could not dispense with coercion. They continued to use force to recruit and hold on to laborers, and to minimize wage payments. They continued to defend mita quotas, shared up alliances needed to operate effectively as members of local and regional power groups, and imbedded purchases of labor-power in more seigneurial relations which constricted monetary exchange and bound laborers to overlords. Out of such contradictory tendencies arose apparent paradoxes: yanaconas who "rented" themselves by contract; servile forms of labor in which accounts of wages and debits played an important role; hired laborers whose employers owed back wages for years. A single unit of production could exploit mitayos, wage laborers, slaves, life-long yanaconas, and dependents whose rights and obligations distinguished them both from yanaconas and wage laborers.

One could express the matter in another way. On the one side, severe exploitation and a commercializing economy despoiled the native countryside enough to disrupt its capacity to support itself. Sheer survival or economic necessity therefore drove Indians to work more willingly for colonial patrons or employers. On the other side, colonial accumulation did not proceed so far that it cut people off from a subsistence economy altogether. The ability of natives to maintain or to reestablish access to a subsistence economy limited the rise of markets or freer forms of labor to an uneven, partly reversible process. Thus colonials could recruit a willing clientele of wage laborers and prospective dependents, yet they required considerable coercive power to insulate that Indians would not slip out of their grasp, that they would perform unwelcome labors despite access to their own subsistence economy, that an enterprise need not depend solely on cultivating a voluntary laboring clientele for its wellbeing. Given the limits on entrepreneurs' ability to exploit Indians or mestizos, imported Africans assumed an important role even in the highlands.

Salaried and servile labor, despite their contradictions, both reflected the rise of new dependencies in "civil society." There was a certain irony in the natives' bitter struggle against mitas and tributes. Even as they made inroads against formal extractive institutions mediated by a coercive state, Huamanga's Indians fell under the more direct sway of employers and masters. Integration of the natives into a commercial economy had taken on a life of its own, and generated a clientele of natives who turned to wealthier people for money or credit, or for a new subsistence shielded from outside demands. The new dependencies not only made it easier for colonials to find "voluntary" sources of exploitable labor, including wage laborers; they also broadened opportunities to bind serfs and clients in a tangle of mutual obligations, antagonisms, and loyalties. The rise of these new social and economic dependencies had not led to a sharp, absolute rupture with an earlier history of extraction based on violence and coercion. Nor had it led to a society whose ruling class could ignore the power of state officials. But coercive extraction had grown more private and extraofficial in character, and could be supplemented or reinforced by arrangements of mutual consent, including wage labor, which reflected the decline of Andean self-sufficiency. In short, an exploitative society had grown more sophisticated; it had made the exploited "need" their exploiters.