From Santiago Atitlán to the Pan Maya Movement: National Educational Reform, Local Power and Social Change in Guatemala

by

Michael O'Sullivan

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ABSTRACT

From Santiago Atitlán to the Pan Maya Movement: National Educational Reform, Local Power and Social Change in Guatemala

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Michael O'Sullivan
Doctor of Education, 2001
Graduate Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning, Collaborative Graduate Programme in Comparative International and Development Education
University of Toronto

This study follows the tenets of the Naturalistic inquiry. It allows the participants in any collective process to tell their own stories. I examine two Guatemalan Mayan non government organisations, ESEDIR and PRODESSA. They follow a *radically reformist* strategy at both the national and the local level to implement the provisions of the 1996 Peace Accords. Of particular importance to this study is their involvement in promoting educational reform.

Internationally, this is an era in which the traditional left is experiencing a theoretical and programmatic crisis. Politically, this crisis has led to the virtual disappearance of the reformist (or revolutionary) political party as the preferred vehicle of social change and the rise in influence of social movements. In Guatemala this has meant the decline in influence of the URNG, the former guerrilla organisation, now a legal left-wing political party, and an expanded role of the Pan Maya movement.

The social change strategy of this movement consists primarily of working in the local communities to prepare people to become protagonists in their own development.

Thus, the local development councils not only bring specific services to their communities, but in preparing themselves to do this, they enhance the political literacy and organisational capacity of the communities. Many Mayan organisations also work nationally to promote policies and practices designed to meet the pressing needs of the Maya majority of the population.

ESEDIR and PRODESSA were chosen as case studies as they represent two Maya organisations that work simultaneously at the local and national level to achieve social change *from a Maya perspective.*

I conclude that Guatemala, despite its uniqueness, is part of an international phenomenon characterised by the emergence of new social movements to provide leadership to previously marginal social sectors. It is unlikely that this movement alone will be able to overcome those social forces that oppose the far-reaching social changes promised by the Peace Accords. However, by creating a strong community base and extracting concessions at the national level, they are creating the preconditions for a long-term process of political struggle which has the potential, in alliance with others, of effecting transformatory social change in Guatemala.

Acknowledgements

As individualistic as the process of producing a thesis might seem, it is, nonetheless, an activity that depends greatly upon a broad network of support.

I would never have been able to complete this task without the support of my thesis supervisor, Dr. Joe Farrell. My first attempt to write a doctoral thesis 20 years ago floundered for lack of supervision. In addition to reading my drafts with an impressive attention to detail, Joe instilled a sense of academic self-confidence in me that has been shaken by that earlier experience. Thanks, Joe, I am truly grateful.

The other two members of my thesis committee, too, made significant contributions to this thesis. Dr. Daniel Schugurensky was particularly helpful in working with me to frame the opening and concluding chapters. His comments about what constituted the essence of this work were truly insightful. Dr. Harry Smaller repeatedly interrupted his sabbatical year to respond to electronic versions of early drafts and his combination of detailed comments about my grammar to challenges about my theory were appreciated and helpful. Thanks to both of you.

I am very appreciative that none of my advisers made agreement with either my methodology or theoretical approach a precondition for their continued support. While they informed me of their perspective, their challenge to me was that I be consistent and coherent, not that I be in agreement with their own particular perspective.

Dr. Jim McCrorie, a friend and former colleague from my years as a student and sessional lecturer at the University of Regina, played the role of external examiner during my defence. His written comments caused me to revisit several key aspects of this work and to defend and/or modify these points. Nor was this the first time he played this role. In

1976 Jim was the external examiner for my M.A. thesis on Salvador Allende's government in Chile.

Thanks, too, to Dr. Bud Hall who read my thesis in preparation to serve as the reader at my oral defence. Unfortunately illness prevented from attending that day.

Another friend and former colleague who made an important contribution to my ability to handle this task is Dr. Phil Hansen, the Chair of the Political Science Department at the University of Regina. When my shortcomings with respect to my grasp of any political theory that had been generated in recent decades was pointed out to me, Phil agreed to guide me through distance reading course in the theory of social change and new social movements. He read and commented on a very lengthy paper that I produced as a result of that exercise. Extracts from that effort appear throughout this study.

I owe a great deal of thanks to CUSO, the Canadian non government agency that first put me in touch with ESEDIR and PRODESSA. Kate Roberts, the desk officer for Guatemala, arranged the first trip in 1998, and subsequently I was supported by her successor, my friend and former colleague from my days at CUSO, Adriana Figueroa. I am also grateful to Rolando (Chico) Ramirez, CUSO's Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean and a friend since we shared an apartment together in Chile in 1972. His support for my collaboration with ESEDIR and PRODESSA made it possible for me to do the research that resulted in this study.

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Thanks to Keith Woodend who used his computer skills to produce the dedication page.

Last but not least, once again, thank you Caitlin for your love and forbearance and Julia for your love, support, confidence and for the beautiful artwork that you created that is depicted on the dedication page and which inspired the title of this thesis. I love you both.

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CHAPTER ONE

Rational: The Inspiration for My Work

What This Study is About

Despite the fact that Guatemala is rarely prominent in the news of the world, this small country holds a fascination for many observers who recognise that its significance far outstrips its geographic size (108,890 sq. km), its economic importance or its small population (about 12.6 million). There are two unique features of Guatemala that I am concerned with in this study. The first is that it is one of the very few countries where the indigenous population is both a majority of the total population[1], and was the target of a genocidal counter-insurgency war by the country's military forces. This campaign was conducted ostensibly against the armed opposition, the constituent groups of which operated under the collective name Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG).[2] In practice, however, the counter-insurgency operations were directed chiefly at the Maya indigenous population, which was considered to be the social base of the armed

[1] Strictly speaking it might be more accurate to say that it is one of the very few countries where the indigenous population forms a majority, or near majority, of the population because, as we shall see, there is considerable controversy about both the absolute size of Guatemala's population and what percentage of that population is indigenous. Some analyists suggest that as much as 60% of the population is indigenous while official statistics put it at about 47%. (See Chapter 8 for a further discussion of this issue). For my purposes I assume that 50% of the population is indigenous but, in fact, it doesn't really matter. What is significant is the fact that millions of Guatemalans are indigenous, many speak indigenous languages, dress in indigenous clothing and practice indigenous religions.

[2] The URNG was composed of four organisations which had taken up arms against the government: el EGP, el Ejército Guerrillero de los Pobres, the Guerrilla Army of the Poor; las FAR, or Fuerzas Armadas Rebeldes, the Revolutionary Armed Forces; la ORPA, la Organisación del Pueblo en Armas, the Organisation of People in Arms; and el F. U., el Frente Unitario, the Unitary Front, a group dominated by ORPA but which included elements of the EGP and the PGT, the Guatemalan Communist Party. (Armon, et al., 1997, 39).

groups, with horrific consequences for tens of thousands of Maya men, women and children, most of whom didn't have any connection with the guerrilla.[3]

The second unique feature is that Guatemala is one of the few countries where such a bitterly fought war was ended on the basis of a negotiated peace that not only put an end to the hostilities but provided for far reaching social, economic and political changes in the country favouring those same Maya and other indigenous peoples.

Despite these unique characteristics, however, I shall argue that a study of Guatemala will shed light, not just on the specific conditions prevailing in that country, but on a global phenomenon which forms part of a much larger trend that is of significance to the theory and practice of social change world wide.

It is my contention that this study represents a small chapter of an emerging global story about the struggle of people whose voices have not been effectively heard for inclusion and recognition in an era of uncertainty that I have come to call the *post-orthodox* era. It is post-orthodox and, as a result, uncertain in the sense that the received truths of two of the most important tendencies in the world of far-reaching social, political and economic change, namely the Leninist and the social democratic left have, for all intents and purposes, been repudiated or, at least seriously called into question. Marta Harnecker (1999), for example, a leading Latin American Marxist scholar, argues that the Latin American left as a whole is experiencing a deep theoretical and programmatic crisis (see Chapter 3) in this, the post Soviet era, and it is searching for new ways of advancing what she calls the "anti systemic struggle." One strategy that she identifies that the left is following and which needs to be systematised theoretically is its strategy of seeking to hold

[3] Some 440 Maya villages of non-combatant civilians were destroyed during the Guatemalan military's scorched earth campaign designed to eradicate the URNG's social base (see ODHA, 1998; CEH, 1999).

municipal office in order to effect reforms at that level (Harnecker, 1999, 375 – 393). Work at the local level (although not necessarily through municipal structures) is an important strategy that will be reviewed at length in this study.

Despite characterising this as being a *post-orthodox* era, I have chosen to avoid the term *post-modern*. I do not find post-modernism's critique of collective political action to be helpful in clarifying the prospects for social, political or economic change in Guatemala. While the post-modern critique of "patriarchy parading as universal reason, the increasing intensification of human domination over nature in the name of historical development, or the imperiousness of grand narratives that stress control and mastery" (Lyntard, cited in Giroux, 1991, 2) has unquestionably made an important intellectual contribution to a necessary reconsideration of previously unquestioned modernist assumptions, I agree with Cohen and Arato that "the political applications of this orientation are not very satisfying" (Cohen and Arato, 1992, 613). This is the case because

> ... they tend to favour one side of the dualisms against the other. Hence, the defence of difference against equality, particularity against universality, responsibility against rights, relatedness against autonomy, and concrete thinking against abstract reflection. In our view, this tends to throw out the baby with the bath water. The task, rather, is to formulate the second set of principles in ways that do not eliminate or establish hierarchies for difference, plurality, or particularity. For example, we ought to try to conceive of equality without insisting on sameness, universality without annihilating multiplicity, autonomy and rights on the basis of a philosophy of communicative interaction rather than atomistic individualism. Moreover, the cultural principles of modernity are not in themselves responsible for their one-sided application or interpretation. All of these principles are open to new interpretations. (Cohen and Arato, 1992, 613).

Getting Beyond Totalising Theory and Welcoming Ambiguity

Jean Anyon's 1994 article "The Retreat of Marxism and Social Feminism" was most helpful in assisting me to grapple with the issue of the need to subject Marxism to

re-examination while not necessarily accepting what is undoubtedly the most articulate alternative posed to Marxism in recent years, post-modernism. Anyon's article is an attempt from the point of view of a Marxist scholar to address the issue of the inability of many Marxists, at least in 1994 when she was writing, to get passed a mechanistic application of old categories to new data. She, in fact, welcomes the energy injected into scholarship by the emergence of post modernism. She writes

> ... the new scholarship has taught me a respect for ambiguity – an appreciation of partial theories and of the complexities and possibilities of an attempt to assess local networks. I have also gained a healthy respect for the power of discourse – and of totalising narratives – to influence subjectivity. I have gained a new understanding of the uncertainty that must attend reliance on any one discourse.[4] (Anyon, 1994, 120).

Nobody, or so it seems to me, of whatever political or theoretical persuasion should be opposed to the challenge represented by such a situation. Surely one's own grasp of theory can only be improved as a result of such a debate.

In the spirit of identifying characteristics about post modernism that provoked rethinking in her mind, if not total acceptance of its postulates, she acknowledges three "analytical heuristics" of post modernism one of which is the importance of the local. Because of the importance of the local in a discussion of my work focusing as I do on local power and political work at the local level, I will review her comments on this topic and in this way will shed some light on how I chose to proceed and why.

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[4] The tolerance for ambiguity and partial theory could well be explicitly extended to a tolerance for the ambiguity of concepts in transition or concepts we can't live comfortably with while, simultaneously, we have difficulty living without. An example of the former would be the concept "social movement" which is undergoing a radical change as social movements thought of as a class based phenomenon gives way to social movements as multi-sectoral alliances based on everything from the affirmation of sexual orientation to the protection of the environment. An example of the latter would be the concept of culture. Everyone sense what is meant by cultural differences when they visit a new country but many would repudiate it as a scientifically valid concept. Another concept that I rely upon in this work that is undergoing reconsideration is that of "community" thought of as a place of residence. As will be seen in Chapter 6, this concept is certainly "contested terrain".

The problem, according to Anyon, is not with the concept of the local, but with the particular way that post modernism posits it. That is, given post modernist abhorrence of what it calls "totalising theory', one can never generalise beyond the local experience because all voices are seen as equal, all experiences are equally legitimate. How can we, the post modernist would argue, generalise about a municipal civic movement composed, as it may be, of the poor, of middle class activists, of indigenous people, gays, organised workers, etc? It is therefore complicates, at best, and renders impossible, at worst, the development of national or global strategies.

In contrast with this, Anyon argues for what she calls "socially useful theory". By socially useful theory, Anyon means "theoretical approaches that will be of real help in the fight for a better world." She speaks, by way of illustration, of the political objective of achieving "economic democracy". She writes "By naming this project, I recognise and want to emphasise that the particular program for which a theory is actually used is not a matter of epistemology or other theoretical criteria, but of political values." (Anyon, 1994, 129).

The struggle to implement in Guatemala any one of a series of concepts, or projects as Anyon calls them, such as economic democracy, social justice and multiculturalism, are all projects which, having been named (in the Peace Accords), need in Anyon's words "a program for which theory is actively used." She argues

> Useful theory would be neither total (and therefore seamless and deterministic) nor completely ad hoc and applicable to only one locale. Rather, it would acknowledge the complex narratives that connect larger social structures and daily life, and would seek what sociologists have long called middle-range theories .... It is important that middle-range theories could elucidate social origins and contours of people's problems without suppressing a sense of personal agency – because these theories do not impose a totalising, over-determined view of the system in which changes are sought. (Anyon, 1994, 129).

I leave it to the reader to decide but it is my contention that, in effect, that is what I have done in this work. I articulate "useful theory" in the sense that the theory on New Social Movements, on Local Power, and reconsiderations pertaining the role of the state, which are found in these pages, is practical, speaks directly to the Guatemalan situation, and is neither totalising nor ad hoc.

Certainly, then, while I avoid the temptation to uncritically apply preconceived theory to the Guatemalan situation, I do not, however, take an anti-theoretical approach to this study. On the contrary, consistent with Harnecker, it is my view that it is important to construct new theory based on the lived experience of the popular movements precisely in order to address the theoretical and programmatic malaise that she identifies. In these pages, I present some theoretical constructs which I found useful in helping me to interpret the significance of two of the many organisations of the broad based Pan Maya movement which figures in this study: ESEDIR (la Escuela Superior de Educación Integral Rural – The Superior School of Integrated Rural Education) and PRODESSA (el Proyecto de Desarollo Santiago – the Santiago Development Project). The reader will have to decide the extent to which I have been successful in describing both theoretically and empirically a particular process of social change that carries the potential of being both transformatory and emancipatory. The reader will also be left to decide, based on their knowledge of other experiences in other countries, the extent to which I have described a process that is representative of a wider global phenomenon despite its particular national characteristics.

Prologue: Repression and Resistance in Santiago, Atitlán

The prologue to this story occurred in the early days of December, 1990 in Santiago, Atitlán.[5] The villages around Lake Atitlán are in a region that had been long victimised by the violence. The guerrilla was active in the area and the Guatemalan army had a heavy handed presence which had led to the death of many local suspected leftist sympathisers.

On December 1, 1990 a small group of men dressed in civilian clothes came to the home of 19 year old Andrés Ajuchán Sapalú and attempted to forcibly take him away. Neighbours, attracted by the shouts for help from the intended victim's family, rushed to the house and thwarted the kidnap attempt. In the ensuring confusion, as the intruders attempted to flee, shots were fired and one neighbour was wounded in the leg. None of the perpetrators managed to escape, however, and upon capture by the neighbours they were identified as being soldiers from the local garrison located 2 km from town. In due course, a military patrol arrived and freed their companions at gunpoint and returned to their near-by base.

The local people, now about 200 in number, wanted the perpetrators of the attempted kidnapping returned to the municipal offices and went to the out-going Mayor – elections had recently been held – to seek his support. He refused to get involved. Undeterred by this official indifference, the people convened a public meeting in the traditional fashion by ringing the bells of the local Catholic Church. Soon thousands of people had converged upon the town centre. It was now December 2.

[5] The following account is a summary of the study of these events done by Sosa Velásquez (1998, 83 - 95) who based his work on interviews with eye-witness and documentary accounts of the events of December, 1990.

Those assembled, now numbering in the thousands, condemned the kidnap attempt and denounced the more than 10 years of violence to which the community had been subjected at the hands of the local military unit. The meeting then took the decision to march on the military base and demand an explanation for the attempted kidnapping. According to eye-witness accounts reported by Sosa Velásquez (1998, 86), some 15,000 people – men, women and children – carrying improvised white banners, walked the two kms. to the base. They shouted that they were coming in peace and that they wanted peace with the military. When the demonstrators arrived at the base they demanded that the garrison commander appear before them to hear their complaints. Instead of dialogue, they were met with gunfire, at first aimed over their heads but soon aimed directly at them. Within minutes 12 lay dead and 23 were wounded. One of the wounded would subsequently die.

In the past, as was the case, for example, after the massacre in 1978 at Panzos, under such circumstances, and faced with such opposition, the army would have occupied the entire area and eliminated the leaders, real and presumed, of the protests. This time, however, they did nothing as the community swung into action. Within a few days they convened a second mass meeting which was attended by Guatemala's national Human Rights Ombudsman. This was very significant because in the past the victims of such military repression received no support from any national official. At that meeting, three demands were made that were presented to the government: that there be an investigation of the massacre; that those responsible for the massacre be punished; and that the army withdraw from the area. A final point was agreed upon at that meeting which was that from that moment on the local population would assume the responsibility for its own security.

Thousands of people signed the declaration that was approved at the meeting, a brave act in Guatemala in 1990 especially under the circumstances.

The Emergency Committee also demanded of the guerrilla forces of the URNG that they cease operating on the territory of the municipality as it was these operations in the area that provided the excuse to the military for being in Santiago in the first place.

In what constituted a revival of the national civic movement which had been crushed over the previous decade and a half, the people of Santiago received massive support from popular organisations, development agencies, trade unions, churches, political parties and national and international human rights groups. The events of Santiago led to the first real opening for the organisations of the civil society in Guatemala for many years.

The reaction of the country's president, Christian Democrat Vinicio Cerezo, to the demands of the people of Santiago was to justify the massacre. He stated that it was provoked by the demonstration which, he said, had been manipulated by subversives. This response has been attributed to the fact that he was under pressure from the military high command. Others, however, in a radical break with the silence that had met such actions in the past, were not so quick to support the military. The Human Rights Ombudsman said that the matter should be dealt with according to law and with respect for humanitarian values, while the Congress, no doubt impressed by the massive public repudiation of the military action in Santiago, passed a resolution asking the army to withdraw from the community and called upon the government to compensate the victims and their families.

The overwhelming national and international repudiation of the events in Santiago coupled with a mass protest in Guatemala City where the villagers brought the bodies of their dead to the capital's Central Park, quickly convinced President Cerezo to back down. As a result, the army did withdraw from the base (which is now a campus of one of

Guatemala's universities); several low ranking officials were convicted and sentenced to long jail terms for their involvement in the massacre of December 2; and the local community took over the duty of policing the municipality.

How was this allowed to happen and what were the implications? To place this in a broader context, it will be remembered that the Central American Peace Process was, by 1990, well advanced. The Contra war against the Sandinista government of Nicaragua had ended with the electoral defeat of the Sandinistas earlier that same year and the peace process in El Salvador, while not yet concluded, was moving forward to an eventual negotiated settlement. Under these circumstances, there was tremendous international pressure on the Guatemalan government to end the civil war. Because of the Central American Peace Process (see Chapter 4), certain offices like that of the Human Rights Ombudsman had been created and expectations about basic rights had been raised. Furthermore, early contacts between the URNG and the government were in process through a complex process of mediation (see Chapter 4). These conditions combined to discourage those who otherwise would have been able to act with impunity against the wishes of those who argued for restraint.

The implications of the events of December 1 and 2 and the protest movement arising from these events were significant both for the local community and, in a symbolic sense, for the country as a whole. For Santiago these events constituted the beginning of a process of demilitarising the municipality and the beginning of the construction of a form of local power that was autonomous from the state. (See Chapter 6 for a discussion of this concept). For the country as a whole, these events represented the first defeat of the military at the hands, not of their armed adversaries, but of unarmed civilians bearing

banners backed by a national civic movement unafraid to take a stand, and supported by international church and solidarity organisations.

The people of Santiago went on to create an admirable structure of local power which is documented elsewhere (Sosa Velásquez, 1998). Santiago does not figure in the communities included in this work but no study of the process of transformatory social change in Guatemala in this, the post-conflict era, would be complete without recognising that much of what is occurring in Guatemala today started, at least symbolically, in that municipality on December 2, 1990 when the people said *basta*, enough, and marched in their thousands to a military base, the occupants of which had for so long sowed terror in their community, and demanded justice. That march of two kms., it turns out, was only the beginning of a very long road along which hundreds of thousands, indeed, millions of Guatemalans are journeying in their efforts to give expression to the same aspirations that motivated the men and women of Santiago – a life of justice, lived in peace.

The story of ESEDIR and PRODESSA is only one account of many that can be told about this struggle but it is a story that helped me to understand the much larger reality that is emerging in Guatemala in the post-conflict era.

Some Personal Reminiscences

Guatemala has fascinated me for years. In 1981, during the worst years of the war, I made my first trip to Guatemala. I drove to Guatemala from Canada with my then partner and our nine-month old daughter, Caitlin, and spent 10 days in the country. A number of memories from that trip will always stay with me:

- The obese border official with an ivory handled pistol tucked into his belt who handed the U. S. dollar "entrance tax" we had to pay to his equally corpulent female companion who deftly tucked it away in her ample bosom;

- The Hacienda police officer at a road block some 10 kms inside the border who took Caitlin in his arms, cuddled her, and then negotiated the price of getting her back – her negotiated value (expressed in 1981 prices) was a carton of Marlboro cigarettes, U. S. $20.00 cash and my favourite cowboy hat.
- The unmarked car with polarized windows that pulled us over on our second day in the country which contained one uninformed military officer and four civilian henchmen; while the officer interrogated me about what we were doing in the country, two of these hoods – and this was clearly done for our benefit - grabbed a passer-by and beat him to within an inch of his life. The victim was finally allowed to crawl away on all fours. The officer didn't miss a beat in his questioning and I, for once in my life, had the good sense to keep my mouth shut. At the end of this performance, the officer extended his hand and welcomed me to Guatemala, assuring me that "you are well protected here."
- The official at the Canadian embassy, who, when I went there to denounce the incident just mentioned, and demand a phone number I could call 24 hours a day in the case of an emergency, in effect accused me of lying saying that the Government of General Lucas García assured the Embassy that such abuses had been ended;
- The flight a few days later of the Canadian Embassy staff back to Canada as a result of death threats that were directed at them after the news broke that Canadian citizen Raul Léger had been killed during a confrontation with the

army when he and his Guatemalan companions were found in an ORPA[6] safe house in Guatemala City;

- The national TV news every night which included close to 30 minutes of an hour broadcast devoted to listing the details concerning the 25 to 50 civilian dead found by the roads and in other public places in the previous 24 hours with grizzly details of the state of their injuries in what can only be considered a process of collaboration by the local media to assist the army to instil a climate of terror in the population.

Other images, too, positive ones, remain of that trip such as meeting men and women who were involved in the struggle against the counter-insurgency state and whose bravery and commitment impress me to this day.

In the early days following my return to Canada from this 1981 trip I became intensely involved with Guatemala solidarity work and was very aware of what was going on in the country at that time. My involvement with this work declined in subsequent years as did my familiarity with the changing circumstances in the country and I did not get back to Guatemala until the late 1980s when I made two quick trips on behalf of the NGO for which I was then working. Those trips, however, lasting only a few days each, were not very conducive to learning a great deal about the country and it wasn't until August of 1998 that I had a chance to truly re-insert myself in Guatemala and reacquaint myself with something of its new reality. As a result of this 1998 trip, and the working relationship formed with the leadership of ESEDIR, I was invited back the following summer to

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[6] The ORPA, the Revolutionary Organisation of the People in Arms, was one of the four organisations that made up the URNG.

conduct an impact study on the work of their graduates in the communities to which they returned after spending 10 months in the school's community development program.

The images that I retain of my visits to Guatemala in 1998, 1999 and 2000 were much less dark than was the case in 1981, although some were still sobering:

- I witnessed poverty both in the capital and in the countryside that was as desperate as anything I had seen in almost 30 years of travelling, studying and working in Latin America;
- I got to know the staff of ESEDIR and it's sister organisation PRODESSA who shouldered heavy work loads and onerous time commitments to engage in educational and/or development work in the country in the Mayan communities from which ESEDIR draws its students and in which PRODESSA supports development work;
- I learned about the peace process and the resulting Peace Accords that created the framework, if not the guarantee, for social, economic and cultural improvement either as a result of government initiative or more likely, as the result of the initiative of organisations like ESEDIR and PRODESSA which with local and international financing were working with local communities and other national organisations to implement key aspects of the Peace Accords.
- I gained a series of impressions about the Maya people, who by every criteria, had every reason to be inward looking and resigned to their fate, but who, despite everything, take pride in their culture, demonstrate a love for their land, and exhibit a strong desire to improve the lot of their children.

In short, I witnessed a people who, with the support of a network of organisations, are committed to creating a New Guatemala which is democratic, socially just and

multiethnic, multicultural and multilingual – a Guatemala which has yet to be created where never again will there be a repeat of the abuse, intolerance and violence that has so characterised their history.

During my involvement with ESEDIR in 1998 and 1999 I was so impressed with the work that ESEDIR and PRODESSA were doing that I decided to switch my thesis topic from a study of the autonomy process on the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua to a study of the work of these two organisations and the context in which it is occurring. The present study is the product of those visits and another made in 2000.

What the Reader Will Find in These Pages

Chapter 2 describes my methodology and field work. I follow a naturalistic method of inquiry in the tradition of Patton (1990) and Lincoln & Guba (1985). I make no claim in this chapter as to having demonstrated a cause/effect relationship between the work of the two organisations that constitute the subject of my study, ESEDIR and PRODESSA, and the changes that have taken place either in the rural communities where they work or with respect to their efforts to effect the national project of educational reform. While I suggest that such a relationship could undoubtedly be demonstrated I point out that my objective in doing this study was different – to show that the Peace Accords, which came into full effect in 1996, have greatly facilitated the ability of ESEDIR and PRODESSA to support the efforts of local people in the Mayan communities in which they work to improve their political, economic, social and cultural conditions of their communities. An evaluation of the effectiveness of their specific activities would be a fascinating and important undertaking but that will have to await another study.

Chapter 3 suggests new approaches to the theory of socio-political change. It is here that I make the argument for considering this to be an era of *post-orthodoxy* and of

uncertainty by suggesting that both the Leninist and Social Democratic conceptions of social change oriented parties are in crisis and that they are being surpassed, in practice, by a New Social Movement paradigm which attaches strategic importance to strengthening the organisations of civil society. I suggest that these developments need to be theorised on the basis of the lived experiences of social movements around the world, of which this is only one example.

Chapter 4 is an overview of recent political history that begins with the liberal-democratic revolution of 1944 and its overthrow in 1954 and moves to the first outbreak of armed opposition to the new regime in 1960 through to a detailed examination of the peace negotiations and resulting Peace Accords that were finalised in 1996. It concludes by discussing the difficulties that have thwarted the implementation of many of the provisions of these Accords. This chapter, in effect, provides the historical framework in which to understand the context in which ESEDIR and PRODESSA work. I argue that despite the great difficulties placed in the way of implementing the reforms provided for in the Peace Accords, nonetheless they serve to facilitate and legitimise the work of those who are struggling to bring about the transformatory social change that is necessary to convert Guatemala into a democratic and socially just multicultural, multiethnic and multilingual state.

In Chapter 5 I pursue the theoretical discussion begun in Chapter 3 and introduce the notion of the Pan Maya movement in Guatemala as an example of the New Social Movement paradigm which has emerged from experiences in Europe and the United States. I also introduce the two Maya organisations that constitute my case study, PRODESSA and ESEDIR. They serve as examples for purposes of this study of the many Maya organisations of the civil society that form part of this broader Pan Maya movement.

In Chapter 6 I analyse the theory and practice of local power, a concept which has been appropriated by everyone from the World Bank to the political left, and attempt to identify its progressive content all the while being mindful of its contradictory nature. In this chapter I also examine the preferred place where many of the Maya organisations of the civil society do the work of building the base of the Maya movement, the local community.

Chapter 7 constitutes the first of two chapters on the work at the local community level being done by PRODESSA and ESEDIR. This chapter constitutes a lengthy summary of internal documents produced by PRODESSA that analyse the conditions that prevailed in 1997 in four of the *micro-regions* in which PRODESSA and ESEDIR work. These four micro-regions are the communities that I visited in preparation for this study. In Chapter 7 I show how PRODESSA prioritises its work based on these micro-regional diagnoses.

In Chapter 8, the second of the two chapters on ESEDIR and PRODESSA's locally based activities, this work is described and analysed in the words of the PRODESSA and ESEDIR field workers and collaborators who are actually doing it. Chapter 8 also defines the three categories of activity that PRODESSA engages in (education, production and community organisation) and makes the link between PRODESSA's local development work, and ESEDIR's 10 month residential program which prepares young Maya men and women drawn from these same communities in *community development from a Mayan perspective*.

Chapter 9 deals with the work of ESEDIR and PRODESSA at the national level. The national work takes the form of supporting efforts to bring about a national educational reform that would reflect Guatemala's long ignored multicultural, multiethnic and

multilingual reality and which is designed to instil democratic values and practices in young people. I recognise that this chapter only touches the surface of the educational work being done at the national level. Time constraints in the field coupled with my focus on the work at the local level conspired against my being able to research the full richness of this aspect of ESEDIR and PRODESSA's work. It is a theme worthy of further study. Despite this shortcoming, this final substantive chapter links the local work of these two organisations to their national work and makes the point that ESEDIR and PRODESSA are two of the very few organisations, Maya or otherwise, that work both at the local level and at the national level, thus giving them a unique perspective on issues of both a national and a local concern.

Chapter 10 represents an attempt to summarise my findings, draw some preliminary conclusions and suggest areas that require further research.

CHAPTER TWO

Research Approaches and Procedures

As I explained in Chapter 1, my interest in studying Guatemala resulted from an intensely personal experience in that country in 1981 at the height of the civil war. My interest in, and commitment to, doing the specific study of ESEDIR and PRODESSA was sparked years later under circumstances which I will describe below.

Once I undertook this task, I took stock of the tools I had or could reasonably acquire in order to allow the people with whom I would meet to tell me their stories and to allow me to situate their stories into the larger picture of a model of social transformation. What made the interpretative side of this particularly challenging is that the very model of social transformation is itself being transformed in the light of rethinking old and new social change experiences in the wake of the fall of the Soviet style socialism and in light of what can only be considered the failure of late 20th century revolutionary guerrilla movements world wide to bring about regimes that are socially just, democratic and inclusive.

This required a dual learning strategy on my part, one oriented to the theorisation of social change in what I have come to call the post orthodox period, and the other related to relying on an approach to my field work that would permit those being interviewed to tell their stories and reveal their truths. In this way these practitioners, drawing on their own experience, make a very important contribution to the process of theorisation. It was my intention to avoid the error that can so easily happen, of being the outsider who, while not experiencing that reality in my daily life, nonetheless applies a theoretical explanation to a particular situation when that explanation arose from significantly different circumstances.

The Importance of Theory

This, however, does not deny the importance of theory or even of theory that emerges from other realities. On the contrary, in order to engage in a process of theorisation that is locally based and locally validated, one must be up to date on current theoretical debates and developments. The original sin of theoretical dogmatism is not considering the experience of a new situation in light of theory developed elsewhere, it is, rather, the uncritical application of that theory without taking into account how local circumstances might alter, indeed significantly alter, its appropriateness.[7]

This is particularly true in a field such as the social sciences, where much has been turned on its head over the past twenty to forty years. Certainly previously unassailable principles ranging, on the right, from the tenets of positivism as the preferred, indeed only, legitimate mode of analysis of social reality, to, on the left, the very foundations of the Leninist model of social and political change have been challenged and, in many cases, replaced with alternative paradigms.

The realisation that I hadn't kept up with these developments during my long absence from university circles was brought to my attention as I did my course work. As a result, I approached an old friend and former colleague, Dr. Phil Hansen of the University of Regina. Dr. Hansen, a specialist in current political theory, agreed to supervise a directed reading course on social movements, political change and the creation of knowledge. The results of that exercise, and subsequent reading, thinking and dialogue, both in Canada and in Guatemala, are found throughout this work but especially in the

[7] There are countless examples of this from the orthodox left political error of applying the Leninist theory of the vanguard party to even the most democratic of states, to the application of Rostow's "stages of growth" theory, based on the U. S. experience, to Third World countries, to trying to explain all human behaviour based on Skinnerian stimulus-response theory.

more theoretically oriented Chapters (Chapter 3, The Need for a New Theory of Socio-Political Change; Chapter 5, The Pan Maya Movement: Survival Strategies give Way to a New Social Movement; and Chapter 6, Local Power: The Basis of the Mayan Movement). During this period of reflection, I moved away from a neo Leninist paradigm of political change where the party is the preferred, if not the sole, change agent, and the objective of that party is to 'capture' the state and to dismantle it while simultaneously putting an end to any organisations of the civil society that aren't creations of the party. I came to accept a paradigm which puts social movements at the centre of the change strategy and values the civil society as an important place where democracy can be built and strengthened even when the party of the left wins power.

Nor is the evolution in my thinking complete. A number of issues central to conceptualising social and political change in the post orthodox age are far from clear. For example, what will the relationship be among the various social movements in a given country? What about the relationship between social movements and more explicitly political movements? What about the role of left parties, elections and non-electoral activities in long run struggle for social, economic and political change? Guatemala, along with countless other countries in both the North and the South will undoubtedly continue to be of ongoing interest with respect to this complex issue as the social movements deal with changing circumstances and the left wing parties evolve their strategies as well.

Research Approach: Finding a Home

Another component in my shift in thinking and one that was at least as important as the process of reading, writing and discussion that centred on how to theorise social movements was becoming aware of Naturalistic inquiry as a research paradigm. This occurred in the graduate seminar on Qualitative Research offered by Dr. Barbara Burnaby.

The rigour and passion for this field of study that were communicated during that course coupled with the skills that were imparted greatly enhanced my research ability and served me well in my field-work in Nicaragua where I conducted project monitoring exercises within the framework of York University's partnership with a local university, URACCAN, and in Guatemala.

The biggest change that occurred in my thinking as a result of coming into contact with Naturalistic inquiry was overcoming a strong tendency to fit reality into my theoretical perspective whereas I now feel much more comfortable with the notion of shaping theory to reflect reality.

I can recall my early enthusiasm in the 1970s for reading Lenin on the party and then judging the left politics of the day by that eternal standard (developed for Czarist Russia but no matter, there's got to be a fundamental truth here somewhere); or reading Frank (1967) on the development of underdevelopment (and Brazil and the 'Asian Tigers' be damned, they are unimportant exceptions that can be explained); or reading Debray (1974) on guerrilla warfare in Latin America and just knowing that this pretty well summed up what I needed to know about social change on that continent.

In my own defence I had a growing suspicion that this was a bit too easy. I was attracted early to movement style political work; to more sophisticated expressions of dependency theory such as that formulated by Dos Santos (1973, 1974) and Cardoso and Faletto (1979) whose work took into account the fact of capitalist development in the periphery. Wallerstein's work (1974) on world systems theory also made an important contribution to weaning me from earlier, more problematic, interpretations of north – south relations. Of great importance to my growing appreciation that the observation of social phenomena needs to be nuanced was my experience of living for a year in Allende's Chile

where I wrote my master's thesis in political science on the "Chilean road to socialism." It has to be said, however, that, as important as my Chilean experience was to making me see the complexity of that rich experience, my take on Chile was not without its ambiguities. I took the position that while Cuban style revolution made sense in the circumstances that prevailed in historically non democratic societies, in the context of a country with strong democratic traditions such as Chile, the strategy of combining winning electoral office with a mass movement strategy made sense. That was fine. This point of view appreciated the strategic significance for the advocates of the democratic socialist transformation of Chile that was gained with Allende's election and the role of the mass movement in pressuring the government from below to engage in the most far-reaching reforms that the situation allowed. I then went on to argue that if it were not for the influence within the governing coalition of the reformist Communist Party, the coup could have been avoided and democratic socialism built in Chile. In effect, I had a foot in each camp – my more or less orthodox Marxism clashed with the reality I perceived and not wanting to deny either Marxism, as I understood it, or reality in which I was living in Chile, I adopted a hybrid that caused me to support the Unidad Popular while remaining highly critical of its dominant tendency, a tendency which, after all, had for all intents and purposes, defined the strategy that I claimed to support. That same eclectic approach, applied to Canada at the level of practical politics, simultaneously kept me out of Canada's social democratic party, the New Democratic Party, and the more dogmatic Leninist pre party formations of the era.

Returning, however, to the influence of Naturalism on moving me beyond the anomalies that faced me in Chile as I tried to fit Allende's political *experiment* into more or less Marxist categories, Glesne & Peshkin (1992) cite 'Jill' who they report as saying that she felt that she had found a research home when she learned that qualitative research existed (cited in Balaisis, 1999, 78). I felt that way, too, as Dr. Burnaby, through such authors as Patton (1990), Lincoln and Guba (1985), Cronbach, et al., (1980), Stake (1975) and many others, revealed an approach to knowledge creation that respected the truth of the informants, respected reality and yet lent itself to theorisation or the generalisation necessary to make sense of this world. Julia Balaisis captures the essence of this when she writes:

> In accordance with a post-positivist, naturalistic paradigmatic world-view my understanding of knowledge is that it is experienced, constructed and constantly emerging. Knowledge is subjective, personal, and while not measurable, is observable through induction. Reality itself is emergent and constitutive of multiple truths. (Balaisis, 1999, 78).

The main tenets of the dominant positivist paradigm are well known as is the critique of it offered by the authors noted above. I will, therefore, not enter into a description of these two contending schools of thought with the exception of dealing with the issue of "cause-effect."

On Getting Beyond "Cause-Effect"

In a comment made to me about an early draft of this chapter, one of my thesis committee members suggested "that almost all naturalists are paradigmatically positivist" and he noted that he has "never met or read one who was willing to seriously give up on the cause-effect assumption." He went on to say that in my 1999 evaluation of ESEDIR's impact in the communities in which their graduates work (O'Sullivan, 1999) there is an obvious presumption by the leadership of ESEDIR that, by providing their students with

the particular educational experience that they offer, this will lead to certain social changes in the communities in which they work as a result of this training. It is obviously true that the ESEDIR leadership believes this and I have no doubt after my experiences with ESEDIR that the graduates are, indeed, very much involved in the process of social change in their communities. Now, that being said, I never claimed in my 1999 study, nor do I in this one, that there is a 1:1 relationship between social change defined in any specific way in a given community and the presence of one or more ESEDIR graduates working in that community.

I did note that approximately three-quarters of the graduates were active in one or more community organisation and the vast majority of the community leaders interviewed spoke highly of the energy, competence and diligence of most of the former students. It is, however, difficult, indeed impossible, to say with certainty that their ESEDIR experience explains either their level of activity or the high regard in which they are held.

It is certainly undeniable that change is occurring in the communities in which the ESEDIR graduates work. (See Chapter 8 for more details). Community organisations are being established, institutional strengthening and capacity building are occurring. Adult basic literacy is being offered by ESEDIR graduates and other collaborators of PRODESSA. Peasants are learning more environmentally friendly farming techniques. The products produced by local artisans are being improved as a result of technical assistance and their products are being more effectively marketed by the local people themselves. Roads are being built as are schools and community halls. Clean water, electricity and health clinics are coming to communities that never had these services before. ESEDIR and PRODESSA people are centrally involved with these initiatives but then so too are others and at the same time, some or even all of these things, and other very

worthwhile things completely different from these activities, are happening in communities where ESEDIR and PRODESSA do not work. Can we say, then, that these things are happening because of ESEDIR's program of community development from a Mayan perspective?

There are many obstacles to saying this. Some of the graduates finished their studies as many as 10 years before my field work and over the course of that time they have been influenced by many things from collaboration with other development agencies, the presence, or lack of presence in their communities of PRODESSA, and other educational experiences, both formal and non-formal, that they had in the intervening period.

What is true, however, is that their year at ESEDIR, the skills that they learned there and the development philosophy that they were taught, were experiences common to all of these people. In my field interviews in 2000 I noted that there was a shared vision expressed by all of the ESEDIR graduates about the need to empower the local people and not just to do projects with or without the involvement of the people. This common vision found expression in the field-work of PRODESSA, the agency through which virtually all of my informants in the rural areas collaborated.

Not all development agencies subscribe to what might be called an "empowerment or transformatory development strategy" although many do to one degree or another. It is certainly not my intention to prove, nor is it my contention, that PRODESSA and ESEDIR are the only agencies doing community level work that is trasformatory. Rather I am simply presenting their work as a case study in taking advantage of a particular moment in history to do work on behalf of the aspirations of the community which they serve, in this case, the Maya population of those areas where they have chosen to work. It would undoubtedly be possible and, indeed, would be very be interesting to do a comparative

study of the micro-regions within which ESEDIR graduates are concentrated and in which PRODESSA works, and other regions where other agencies not associated with ESEDIR and PRODESSA work, and develop an instrument that would correlate their development philosophies and their community development practices and compare and contrast these different experiences. I would go so far as to speculate that there would, indeed, be a demonstrable link between the quantity and quality of development work in the areas where these two agencies work but I did not attempt any such comparison for this study.

With respect to what I set out to demonstrate, originally, because of my close involvement with ESEDIR, I intended to defend the proposition that ESEDIR, through its graduates, was involved with the task of implementing the social and economic provisions of the Peace Accords. As I gained insight into ESEDIR, I began to realise that once the graduates left the ESEDIR 10 month residential program, for the most part, they severed their ties with the School and worked primarily, although my no means exclusively, through PRODESSA, either as volunteers or, in a few cases, as field staff.[8] My research proposition was then modified to one of defending the notion that both ESEDIR and PRODESSA were working to implement the social and economic provisions of the Peace Accords. Alas, my field experience, (and this is where the Naturalistic paradigm help me clarify my thinking), showed me that at best I could show that their work was guided by the spirit of the Peace Accords, or by the aspirations contained in the Accords, but that no cause-effect relationship could be demonstrated that tied the implementation of the Peace Accords with the activities of either PRODESSA or ESEDIR. The possible exception to

[8] In fact, as will be explained below, one of the concerns of the ESEDIR leadership that led to my 1999 study was precisely this severing of ties upon graduation and specifically the drop-out rate of ESEDIR graduates from the follow-up distance education program that was designed to upgrade their qualifications.

this is their work on the Educational Reform where they are a very important part, but nonetheless, a part of a much broader effort.

Richards (1982), in his evaluation of a pre school community based program in Chile, had to deal with the inappropriateness of insisting on demonstrating such cause-effect relationships in social programs, especially those related to empowering local people in a variety of ways. In the first instance, he observed that the objectives of the program he was evaluating were "imprecise" and "thus could not be properly evaluated from the point of view of working from preordinate objectives." (Richards, 1982, 39). He then critiqued the very concept of preordinate objectives (e.g., project or program objectives against which the implementation of the project must be measured and judged) and cited Scriven's (1972) argument that

> ... since evaluation determines the worth of a thing, it is properly concerned with the thing itself, not with the intentions that were in the minds of its creators and managers. One can even argue that the evaluator works best when she does not know the objective of the thing she studies, since she can best ascertain the real effects if her mind is not clouded by knowledge of intents. (Richards, 1982, 42).

I would argue that this constitutes a compelling way of approaching ESEDIR and PRODESSA's work. Once ESEDIR's students graduate they return to their communities where the vast majority become involved with local community organisations (O'Sullivan, 1999). Some, indeed, most work full-time as teachers and volunteer to work on community projects on a part-time basis while others, a few, take on such work full-time. Older graduates may not live in an area where PRODESSA works at this time although the 1999 Impact Study showed these people to be as active as those who lived in areas still supported by PRODESSA. Most of the recent graduates are likely to live in an area where PRODESSA works and are thus able to collaborate with PRODESSA and take advantage

of the structure and supports it offers. The work that the graduates can do will be affected by the community in which they live, the challenges and opportunities offered by that community, and the personal circumstances of the graduate. In short, ultimately every ESEDIR graduate is free to choose the nature and the intensity of the volunteer work that they wish to do. So while the objectives of the ESEDIR academic program are very precise, the objectives of what happens once the graduates leave the program are very imprecise indeed. The ESEDIR leadership have hopes and expectations of their graduates, it is true, but nothing more. Therefore when we "evaluate" ESEDIR's work or attempt to link the work of its graduates to a bigger concern, like the implementation of the Peace Accords, it is undoubtedly best to limit ourselves to describing what is happening, preferably in the words of the participants in the process. We should consider their understanding of the relationship between their studies at ESEDIR, the field work they are doing and the Peace Accords. We must then let the reader draw his or her own conclusions about linkages that they might perceive. Julia Balaisis, whose thesis is cited earlier in this chapter, put it well when she said in a private conversation that such linkages are not "hard and fast" and that we have to be open as researchers to the experience of those working on the ground and neither negate their experience nor force it into our own categories. This is what I have attempted to do in this study.

The Fieldwork and Interviews

It is important to take a moment to discuss the nature of my fieldwork and to say something about the interviews that I conducted.

I have collaborated with ESEDIR on three occasions. The first visit was in August, 1998 when I returned to Guatemala after a 10 year absence. I visited at the request of Kate Roberts, the field officer responsible for Guatemala in the regional office of CUSO in Costa

Rica. Kate asked me to report to her on the appropriateness of CUSO selecting ESEDIR as a partner agency. This trip, only two weeks in duration, afforded me the opportunity to visit several micro-regions[9], including one, Cabricán, to which I would return in 2000. I interviewed staff and observed both ESEDIR and PRODESSA's work in the field. I was greatly impressed with ESEDIR and I wanted to learn more about their work and I agreed to return a year later to conduct the evaluation (Impact Study) of ESEDIR's work. That visit, which lasted a month, was very intense as, assisted by a Nicaraguan colleague with whom I had worked closely, I trained and co-ordinated 9 teams of 3 students from that year's class who gathered the data that formed the basis of my report. This involvement taught me much about the theory and practice of ESEDIR and gave me an insight into their self-critical attitude and openness to change, all of which impressed me greatly. At that time I decided to conduct this study and I returned the following year to do my field work.

My field trip in 2000 lasted about 5 weeks and was divided between two week long trips first to San Cristóbal and Puruhlá to the north of the capital and then to Concepción, Tutuapa and Cabricán to the west of the capital. The rest of my time was spent in the capital. In the rural areas I interviewed PRODESSA field workers, many of whom, but by no means all, were ESEDIR graduates, the Directors of each of the four micro-regional offices and "others" who ranged from Mayors, to community leaders, to teachers in local schools. (See *Interviews Effected in Guatemala*, in the Appendices). In the communities, basically who I interviewed was determined by who was available to be interviewed. For example, some PRODESSA field staff were away and couldn't be reached during my stay

[9] A "micro-region" is actually a sub-division of a *municipalidad*. A *municipalidad* in Guatemala is best translated as "county" not municipality because a *municipalidad* consists of an urban centre which serves as the political seat for the *municipalidad* and a number of associated *aldeas* or rural villages. These rural villages are grouped into *microregiones* for administrative purposes and PRODESSA, rather than spreading itself too thin by trying to serve the entire *municipalidad* selects one *microregión* in which to work.

in their micro-region. Thirty of the total of forty interviews conducted were of people collaborating with ESEDIR and/or PRODESSA at the community level. Of these, five were of people working with ESEDIR and/or PRODESSA in micro-regions other than the four I visited who happened to be in the capital or in one of the regions I visited. The remaining 10 were ESEDIR or PRODESSA staff or academics or officials in the capital. In short, this is a modest number of interviews. The insight gained in these interviews was supplemented by my work the previous summer on the Impact Study, by my 1998 visit, and by library and document research both in Canada and in Guatemala. In addition, of course, I had countless informal discussions with students and staff on campus and in the field all of which helped me form impressions of the work of these two organisations.

How My Field Work Was Organised

ESEDIR draws its students from six of the "micro-regions" where its sister organisation, PRODESSA, has offices. In the early years, following the 1988 initiation of its community development leadership program, ESEDIR drew students from a wide area but found that they didn't have the resources to properly follow up either during the student's field work during their 10 month residential program or once they completed the program and returned home. In 1997 PRODESSA, whose development work was also spread thin, decided to concentrate their efforts in specific geographic areas or, as they put it, to "microregionalise" their work. ESEDIR, too, decided from that point on, to draw the students from the same micro-regions in which PRODESSA works. (See the map in the Appendices).[10] This approach has multiple advantages for ESEDIR. PRODESSA staff,

[10] Both PRODESSA and ESEDIR have projects outside of the core micro-regions. In the case of ESEDIR they have two programs designed to qualify in-service elementary school teachers both in their profession and in community development as teachers are expected to play a leading role in their communities. Since I did not have the opportunity to study these relatively new initiatives, they do not form part of this research project.

who know their micro-region very well, help in the recruitment of new students.[11] They are also able to place the students in a work situation for their practicum which takes the form of several multi-week visits to the community during the 10 month program. Following graduation, when the students return to their communities, most return to their full-time jobs as primary school teachers, but some end up working full-time or part-time either directly for PRODESSA or in community projects organised and financed by PRODESSA. Many, of course, end up volunteering with other local initiatives such as community based development committees, sports clubs, Maya organisations or they serve as advisers to a range of citizen's groups but the existence of the PRODESSA office provides an established network for them.

These micro regions where PRODESSA's work is centred, were carefully selected in 1997 – 98. The selection process involved doing an in-depth study, the results of which are examined at length in Chapter 7.

Following a careful review of the conditions prevailing in a number of possible areas where they could work, PRODESSA chose eight micro-regions, later reduced to six because of financial considerations, taking into account the probability that in six years, their efforts would lead to a level of community organisation that would be self-sustaining and that PRODESSA could then safely transfer its efforts to another micro region without the danger that the organisations they supported in the past would stagnate or collapse.

[11] The issue of recruitment was studied in the impact study conducted in August, 1999. EDEDIR has a profile required of potential students (see chapter 5). In the early years, the students tended to be somewhat older and experienced community leaders. More recently, this supply of highly qualified potential students essentially having been exhausted, increasingly ESEDIR has been recruiting less experienced or even totally inexperienced youth to the program. Needless to say, the switch from preparing mature students with years of experience providing community leadership to working with inexperienced youth, however promising their potential may be, has impacted significantly on ESEDIR's work. ESEDIR is grappling with the implications of this issue for its future programming.

PRODESSA's six year strategy (1998 – 2004) for each of these micro regions is described in the document entitled Mapa Estratégico de PRODESSA (see Appendices). It entails a step-by-step plan to take local organisations from a low institutional capacity and levels of consciousness of Maya values to ever higher levels both organisationally and in the sphere of values. This, as we shall come to appreciate, very much complements ESEDIR's curriculum and expectations of its students. I wEnt to four of these six micro-regions in July, 2000.

The Interview Questions

With respect to the actual interviews, at first I closely followed an interview guide. This guide begin by establishing some basic information about the person being interviewed including when, if applicable, they graduated from ESEDIR, what their paid employment was, and some information about the organisations with which they did community work and the extent of that work. Most of the ESEDIR graduates interviewed were involved in a number of different community organisations but their level of engagement ranged from very intense, particularly in the case of those working full- or half-time with PRODESSA, to much less intensive involvement in the case of those working full-time at paid employment as teachers, for example, who did volunteer work with community organisations after school or on weekends.

My first substantive question related to their understanding of a distinction made by ESEDIR in its documents between development conceived simply as economic growth or an increase in services (more health clinics, better roads, access to potable water) and

development as a process of social, human and political *transformation.*[12] This question, following as it did my request that they list the activities that they were involved in, was my attempt in an open ended way, to encourage the *egresados* to analyse their work within a framework to which they had been exposed at ESEDIR in order to to see if there was any evidence that they operated on the basis of this distinction and were able to articulate it. This question constituted an attempt to recognise, following Lincoln and Guba, that "realities are multiple, constructed and holistic" (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, 37) and that aspects of this reality can be revealed by letting the informant tell his or her story. An analysis of the results of this questions will be provided in Chapter 8 of this work so I will limit myself to saying that no ESEDIR graduate gave the impression of not understanding this distinction and each had some ability to explain their understanding of it, often with reference to specific examples from their community work. Several argued that one could not engage the peasantry in a dialogue about transformation without doing so within the framework of practical projects that brought benefits to their community.

Continuing the spirit of encouraging the informant to reveal their reality through story telling, I asked them what was the greatest challenge facing them as community development workers.[13] The brief answer is that most said that dealing with lethargy and scepticism in their communities was the greatest challenge. This response represents a significant challenge for ESEDIR and PRODESSA and the Maya movement as a whole because the energy levels of even the most dedicated community worker can fail after years

[12] The English translation of this question follows: According to ESEDIR's Proyecto Educativo there are two kinds of development: development defined as an increase of goods such as, for example, more clinics, better roads, access to potable water, etc., and development defined as a process of transformation – human, political and social transformation. Are you in agreement with this distinction and to what extent, in practice, does your work contribute to development as you define it?

[13] The question was "What is the most important challenge that you face in your work in your community?"

of resistance by community members to their efforts. Fortunately, as discussed in Chapter 8, the stories also revealed successes of the sort that motivated people to keep going.

The next question I asked them attempted to move the informant from the role of story teller to that of playing the role of constructor of theory in that I was asking each to them to interpret what they did locally in the context of a larger, national Maya movement. Was the work that they were doing in the community, in their opinion, part of something bigger, a Maya movement, or was it strictly of local significance?[14] Most had some notion of being part of a larger Maya movement although none of the informants that I interviewed in the communities were involved with anything but local work.

I then asked them how they viewed the process of decentralising the state and the construction of local power.[15] It must be said that the question couples two concepts that, while related, are far from the same thing and, indeed, in the minds of some, should not be linked. Decentralisation refers to the decentralisation of government decision making which may or may not (most likely the latter) increase local participation in decision making. Local power, as explained in Chapter 6, refers to the phenomonenon of increasing the ability, in a variety of ways, of local people to control their destinies. That may or may not involve working through formal government structures or it may rely exclusively on working through non governmental structures.

This question elicited a variety of answers depending upon the apparent political sophistication of the informant. It was clear that decentralisation was an issue that everyone was keenly aware of although there was a high degree of scepticism about

[14] The question was "In your opinion does that work that you do in the community form a part of a broader movement, a Maya movement, or rather is the impact of your work strictly local?"
[15] The question was "How do you see the decentralisation of the state and the construction of local power? What to you understand by local power? How to you see the process of decentralisation?"

whether the government would actually let go of their centralised authority and implement this reform. As the decentralisation of key government programs is an important component of both the Peace Accords and for many forms a key element of their strategy of *poder local* (local power), I thought it was important to ask both academics who were analysing events from a national perspective and activists in the local communities whose work would be greatly affected by such measures, what they thought was going to happen with respect to this commitment and the parallel activity of constructing local power. While the community activists tended to rely on their gut instinct to predict the extent of the anticipated decentralisation and the academics, for their part, made predictions based on their studies, there was, nonetheless, a consensus among both categories of informants to the effect that nothing approaching the decentralisation contemplated in the Peace Accords would be achieved.

The final question put to the graduates was, in retrospect, the most problematic. It related to the distinction between the objective of building what they understood to mean by local power at the community level and the notion of *regional autonomy*.[16] Regional autonomy had been raised as a negotiating point during the negotiations of the Peace Accords but had not made it into any of the Peace Accords. I was attempting to determine if there was active support for this more radical notion of indigenous control over their affairs, however, so many of my informants at the community level either had no notion of this latter concept or confused it with local power that I stopped asking about it after several days. This question would be taken up again with the intellectuals and national leaders I interviewed in the capital.

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[16] The question was "Do you see a distinction between local power and regional autonomy for the Mayan people? Is regional autonomy a realisable objective in the long run?"

Following my visit to the four micro regions which took place during the period July 10 – 22, 2000 I spent the rest of my field visit to August 6 in Guatemala City interviewing academics and representatives of Maya political and other specialised organisations whose offices were in the capital.

By the time I was interviewing in the capital I had gained a great deal of confidence doing the interviews, I was more familiar with the issues and some background history and I was able to adjust the interviews greatly depending upon to whom I was speaking. In short the interview guide that I had used in the micro regions proved to be of no further use. Certainly my interview with the head of the Association of Municipalities about decentralisation was very different than my interview with one of the leaders of COPMAGUA, an important Maya political organisation, or with intellectuals at various think tanks whose expertise led to wide ranging conversations that took unexpected turns.

In the micro regions my questions tended to concentrate on the narrower issue of the role of the ESEDIR graduates and PRODESSA in their community work. In the capital, my questions tended to stress the larger issues of the possibilities of, and limitations to, transformatory change in Guatemala. All of these questions were asked in an open ended fashion and frequently led to other, unscripted questions which expanded on earlier answers or explored issues that I had not anticipated when the interview began. The range of those interviewed was wide although, with three exceptions, Dr. Jorge Solares, a Ladino intellectual and astute observer of Guatemalan politics, Olga Pérez, of INCIDE, and Rudy López of the Guatemalan Association of Municipalities, they all identified with the Maya movement. My informants spanned the spectrum from local peasant leaders to local development activists, from local politicians to academics and national leaders of the Pan Maya movement. This variety, coupled with the essential agreement I got on basic issues,

acted as a form of triangulation as I was getting information from a variety of perspectives and experiences.

Of the 40 interviews I did, 21 were tape recorded and transcribed. The others were not recorded for one of two reasons: for several days I was separated from my tape recorder when my backpack, in which it was stored, was left in a PRODESSA office and didn't catch up with me for 3 days and because the opportunity for several interviews occurred unexpectedly and I didn't have my tape recorder with me. In these cases I took particularly careful notes. For this study I have cited almost exclusively from the interviews that were taped and transcribed because of enhanced accuracy.

Ethical Review

During the Ethical Review stage concern was expressed by the Ethical Review Committee that I hide the identities of my informants given the recent history of repression in Guatemala. Of the 40 people I interviewed only five requested anonymity. The others insisted that they be cited by name. Since my Letter of Informed Consent stipulated that the interview would be anonymous, in all cases but the five mentioned, the Letter of Informed Consent was changed by hand to reflect the informants' insistence that they be cited by name. This is now the norm in Guatemala since the signing of the Peace Accords. Virtually all the publications cited in my bibliography, whether written by Guatemalans or by visiting academics, name their sources. An exception is the study by Jonas (2000) which was based on interviews conducted mostly prior to the signing of the final Peace Accord and she had promised anonymity. While Guatemala is not without its political violence, as the murder of Bishop Geraldi in 1998 attests, nonetheless, Guatemalans are determined to build an open and democratic society and feeling the freedom to speak openly and on the record is an important part of that determination.

CHAPTER THREE

The Need for a New Theory of Socio-political Change

Introduction

Guatemala is undergoing a process of social, political and economic transition. Just where this transition is leading is far from certain. The starting point for the changes is clear, however. It is represented by the Peace Accords signed between early 1994 and late 1996 by the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG) and the Government of Guatemala. Where it will end is another question. The final result could be

- as far reaching as a radical restructuring of social, economic and political structures and practices in such a way as to create a democratic and socially just multicultural, multiethnic and multilingual society respectful and inclusive of all its citizens including the historically marginal Maya people; or
- as limited as a process of state modernisation, the establishment of procedurally free elections and an improvement in the basic rights of the ordinary citizens of the country with a view to further integrating Guatemala into the global economy.

The future of Guatemala could also include some aspects of both of these scenarios and include unforeseen aspects as well.

The future of the country is being fought out by at least three protagonists each of which has discrepancies within its own ranks.

1. There are those among the traditional elite who resisted the peace process in the first place, who then opposed granting any social, economic or political concessions in the resulting Peace Agreements and, failing that, are now

working hard to ensure that as little change occurs as possible despite the progressive provisions of the Peace Accords.

2. The more enlightened sectors of the ruling class see the Peace Accords and the interest of the international community in Guatemala, as an opportunity to leave behind a shameful history of war, repression and backwardness and modernise the state structure and the economy in order to gain acceptance in the world community and access to world markets. They are the proponents of the more limited modernising approach mentioned above.
3. Finally there are those social sectors which have been excluded from the mainstream of Guatemalan society whether they be Mayan or Ladino who would push the Peace Accords to their logical democratic and social conclusions and create a New Guatemala that is based on the values associated with the radical restructuring option noted above.

The advocates of the transformatory social change option are not united behind a single coherent strategy much less a single political party which has as its aim the achievement of specific goals by agreed upon means. Not only is there no single social change oriented party whose leadership is accepted by a significant percentage of the Guatemalan people but partisan electoral politics is not embraced by many progressives as it is seen as divisive. Rather, events, such as the development of local power, discussed in Chapter 6, are unfolding and are in need of systematisation and theorisation with a view to providing to the advocates of transformatory change, both Ladino and Maya, an analysis of what is possible to achieve given the present correlation of social and political forces. This, in turn, might suggest conscious strategies for the most effective way to move forward towards the implementation of the provisions of the Peace Accords.

Wainright (1994), following her study of the women's movement in Europe and of the progressive movement in Eastern Europe in the years following the fall of communism makes the point that without a rigorous theorisation of a new social vision and resulting social change strategies, social change advocates are dependent upon "stories" – stories of successful experiments at home and abroad which, while inspiring, do not constitute an "alternative to the rationalities of state and corporation." (Wainwright: 1994: 86).

Guatemala is a land of stories which demand to be theorised with a view to developing an appreciation of exactly what is occurring in Guatemala as a result of the political conflicts that accompany the process of modernisation and reconstruction following the end of the civil war.

Our ability to comprehend the changes occurring in Guatemala can no longer be based upon the simple dichotomy of reform or revolution which underlay the theoretical perspectives and the resulting armed strategy of the revolutionary organisations that participated as the protagonists in the recently concluded civil war. In place of this traditional dichotomous approach which was displaced by events over which the revolutionary forces had no control and to which they could only react, we must construct a new paradigm that emerges from the daily reality lived by those struggling for far-reaching change in Guatemala. This daily reality takes the form of a struggle for social inclusion, political reform and economic justice which is occurring within both the explicitly political sphere but more particularly within the civil society at the national and community level. An important protagonist in this struggle is the still emerging Pan Maya movement (see Chapter 5), which is struggling to define its interests and enlarge its sphere of influence on a variety of issues that range from linguistic and cultural rights, to the rights of indigenous

women, to demands relating to the more equitable distribution of resources destined for economic development or services such as those related to health and education.

Getting Past the Classical Left Theory of Capturing the State

The stories that are emerging from Guatemala involve a struggle to bring about a far reaching restructuring of the institutions of the political and civil spheres. Such a restructuring has the *potential* for transformational social change.[17] Can a study of these experiences contribute to a theorisation that will advance an understanding in the Guatemalan setting of structural adjustment, social change and the origin of knowledge? Can such theorisation facilitate the intervention by whole populations in ongoing processes that only now are beginning to emerge? Can this happen in a way that leads to an ability to conceptualise a social transformation strategy based on the realisation of the best of the social, political and economic traditions of both liberal democracy, democratic socialism and, in the case of Guatemala, elements drawn from Maya traditions, without the short-comings associated with these traditions?

No one presently engaged in the struggle for social change in Guatemala is posing their strategy in terms of destroying the existing state, viewed as Leninist orthodoxy would

[17] In this work I speak of social or political transformation. In the not too distant past the transformation sought by the left was, in the case of the non revolutionary left, invariably involved a state centred strategy aimed at capturing (electorally or otherwise) the state to use it to effect reforms. The revolutionary left sought to capture the state to transform it to an instrument that would serve in the revolutionary transformation from capitalist to socialist society. Today, such orthodox approaches are no longer unquestionably or uncritically available to us. For one thing the political left is facing what Phil Hansen in a private communication describes as a "crisis of agency" where it is no longer clear who (defined in social class and political party terms) will lead the transformation. In Guatemala, as I shall point out in Chapter 5, there is a feeling among the Mayan leadership that the insurrectionary organisations failed to meaningfully represent the aspirations of the Maya people and now, in the post conflict era, it is precisely the Maya organisations that are at the centre of social change in Guatemala. Similarly what constitutes "transformatory change" is not as clear as perhaps it once was. Does it, at this stage, as Hansen suggests, involve "the establishment of practices and institutions which bridge gaps separating those struggling for different things." If so, where does this take us politically? Is agency necessary – presumably it is – and if so, how is it affected in an era where the all knowing party is in deserved disrepute. Poulantzas, for example (see below), did not reject the concept of party or parties, nor shall we. Just how such an agency emerges in Guatemala with a new type of party based on a new social movement remains to be seen.

have it, as an instrument of the present ruling class, in order to replace it with another, popular or people's state which would, as a result of its popular class and revolutionary nature, represent the interests of the majority and quickly move to substitute itself for the now superfluous independent organisations of civil society. The strategy that is emerging in practice in Guatemala is one of creating a vibrant civil society by strengthening the capacity of ordinary people working through their own organisations to make decisions about social, economic and educational priorities in their community while demanding of the state that national priorities increasingly reflect local needs.

In the past, many adherents of the revolutionary left were sceptical, indeed, hostile to liberal democracy and the rights and freedoms associated with it. The anti-democratic experiences in the ex Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, however, have convinced many who, in the past, might have given short shrift to liberal democracy and the values and practices associated with it, that it is essential not to abandon the liberal democratic rights. As Wainwright argues, based on her study of European movements, the new social change oriented movements reflect a recognition that democracy must be expanded by meshing together the values, institutions and best practices of representative liberal democracy with the values, institutions and best practices of base level democracy in the popular organisations, at the point of production and in the community. (Wainwright, 1994). Such an approach has implications for the organisations of civil society.

This constitutes a significant break from the conventional wisdom of both the Leninist paradigm of transformatory societal change and with the social democratic notion of winning power through elections and then affecting social change through the legislative process while the popular organisations applaud, or complain, from the sidelines.

To better understand emergent thinking on social change in the era of post-orthodoxy, I will begin with the work of Nicos Poulantzas (1978, 1983), the originator of the notion of the State as a site of class struggle. He developed the idea of a strategy of profound, indeed transformational, societal change, that was neither orthodox in the Leninist sense nor social democratic in the Western European tradition. Rather, he postulated a dynamic relationship between electoral democracy, mass movements, the organisations of civil society and the preservation and extension of democratic rights.

Poulantzas: The State Conceptualised as a Site of Class Struggle

For Lenin, the state was the object of the revolutionary forces. The role of the party, on behalf of the working class, was to capture and then smash the state and rebuild a revolutionary state to represent the interests of the workers and their allies. For orthodox Leninists, there was no thought of working within the capitalist state to move it in a progressive direction. It was considered enemy territory.

The social democratic left, too, always pinned their political hopes on winning the state. In their case however, their intention was not to destroy it and to replace it with a state of a different type but rather to administer the existing state on behalf of the people. Social democrats have always been more open to working within the state structure even when the government in power was not of their political persuasion.

Despite the differences in these two approaches, the common point is that both are state-centred, top-down strategies for effecting social change.

While the state, politically reformed, modernised and decentralised is an important component of the New Guatemala envisioned by the Peace Accords, I would argue that in Guatemala the state has not been converted into the central object of political action. Rather, the strategy that has come to the fore in Guatemala is the notion of encouraging the

emergence of an invigorated civil society and working to instil democratic values and practices through participation at the local level either in municipal organisations or in community groups created by the people to achieve their own ends.

There is, of course, room for an important role for the state in such a situation. An invigorated and proactive civil society can, of course, prepare the social and political base for a movement capable of effectively pressuring the state to implement the reforms consistent with the provisions of the Peace Accords thus creating a dynamic between new forms of popular power at the base and progressive reforms at the level of the state. This is a far cry from the "capture the state" mentality of Leninism or traditional social democracy.

Poulantzas began to question the wisdom of "capturing the state" as he became concerned about the incapability of the Soviet style regimes to institute political democracy and the failure of social democratic regimes to institute anything that could be remotely considered to be transformatory social change. He developed a theoretical critique of both the Leninist and social democratic models of social change and began to articulate an alternative model based on the transformatory potential of the new social movements *combined* with the electoral strategies of the political parties of the left. He spoke of the need to go beyond the "left electoral bloc" and create a "transformatory social bloc" and noted that any electoral party, regardless of how progressive it may be, not continually pressured from below by a base level movement committed to transformatory social change, would inevitably not go beyond timid reformism. (Weber: 1983: 55).[18]

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[18] This parallels Macleod's (1997) observation that local power, if not part of a national strategy for social change, will become mired in neo-liberal decentralisation and privatisation models. This, too, is Veltmeyer's (1997) concern (see Chapter 6). It also helps explain concerns expressed by popular sector critics of the URNG that it accepted over "soft" provisions in some of the Peace Accords because of their own partisan interests (see Chapter 4).

Poulantzas' critique of both the Leninist and social democratic strategies was not an empirical critique that "it didn't work." It was a theoretical critique designed to show how the basic Leninist and social democratic assumptions about the state and democracy, so apparently different from each other, shared the characteristic of being flawed in such a way that a truly *democratic* transformation of society would never emerge from either strategy.

Poulantzas' views were based on the dual notion (i) of the state as a site of class struggle rather than seeing the state as a distant and fortress-like instrument of the ruling class in the Leninist conception or an instrument of the political party in power in the social democratic conception and (ii) of the fact that power is not exercised exclusively within the state apparatus but also located in the social, economic, cultural and civil spheres and thus can be experienced in whole or in part in some of these spheres. Furthermore, he recognised that the old Marxist duality of proletariat vs. the bourgeoisie was not the only potentially transformatory struggle in capitalist society. Poulantzas made reference to cultural, feminist and ecological movements among others which he described as "a new horizontal social conflict which cannot be reduced solely to the vertical class struggle." (C. Bucci-Glucksmann, 1983, 298).

In (even imperfectly) democratic capitalist societies, such as Guatemala, the institutions through which the popular will is expressed and which engage in varying degrees in conflict and/or collaboration with the state, are frequently the institutions of civil society.[19] When this relationship between the state and the institutions of civil society are conflictual, this is struggle "at a distance", i.e., it occurs outside of the state apparatus. When the relationship is collaborative, such as occurs when an organisation of the civil

society, for example, administers a program financed by the state, or plays an advisory role on policy matters, but does so in a manner that pushes the state to be more responsive to the public's needs, this can be seen as an example of carrying the struggle on within the state apparatus.

Leninist orthodoxy would have it that these organisations of the civil society need not continue to exist after the establishment of the "worker's state" for, after all, the state now represents the interests of the working class, and the organisations of the civil society simply represent a redundancy at best or sectoral and divisive interests at worst. Poulantzas argued against this position suggesting that they should continue to exist even after the party of the left comes to power so that politics continues to happen at the level of the community and popular organisations. Poulantzas took this position because he was concerned about the issue of democracy under socialism as he witnessed the exodus of the Boat People from Vietnam and the advent of the Pol Pot regime in Cambodia. "It is for this reason that he came to re-evaluate the importance of political liberties and the critical role of intellectuals in relation to their own political parties in any democratic transition to democratic socialism," (Jessop. 1985, 19). Nor was he only concerned about the lack of democracy in what was then called "actually existing socialism" but he worried about the anti democratic tendencies of "authoritarian statism in the West as well as the East." (Jessop, 1985, 19).

The practical implication of his observation is that what was regarded as reformist in the old Leninist paradigm (struggle for basic rights, struggle for community level control

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[19] Political parties, too, can play this role.

over decision making) becomes an integral part of the process of social transformation and a goal in itself.[20]

Given that in both the advanced capitalist countries where the days of the Keynsian welfare State and the historical compromise of Fordism are over, and in countries such as Guatemala where such largesse was never available and won't be in the future, the kind of statist solutions aspired to by both social democrats and Leninists, are highly improbable. This implies a process of conceiving of a new type of state and a new relationship of the state to the people. A "reduced state" (*l'Etat moindre*) which cannot offer the variety of services needed by society (and, as we shall see, few states are more 'reduced' than the Guatemalan state) must encourage new and creative ways of delivering those services and sooner or later this is going to involve organisations in the civil society. The struggle for the progressive forces of whatever political stripe in any given society is to ensure that the 'reduced state', this *Etat moindre*, not be allowed to become a neo-liberal state with little or

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[20] It is my contention that the left, not only in Guatemala, but globally, is in considerable disarray both theoretically and strategically. It goes well beyond the focus of the present work to examine the origins and history of this situation in detail but a number of factors that I address attest to the local manifestation of this crisis of the left. These factors, which are examined in Chapters 4 and 5, include the failure of the armed organisations to win power militarily; the resulting strategy of these armed organisations to effect a de facto alliance with the modernising sectors of the ruling class to negotiate the Peace Accords on the basis of what amounts to a radical liberal-democratic program of reform; the left-Maya split in 1991 based on the left's apparent inability to incorporate Maya cultural demands into their program; and the emergence of the Pan Maya Movement as the primary force for progressive social change in the country.

In explaining this situation, I attach considerable importance to the emergence of the Stalinist mind-set in the 1930s which viewed any "revisionism" of Marxism (e.g., any attempt to modify it to suit changing conditions) as highly suspicious at best and frequently as heresy. Of course, not all Marxist thinkers, particularly many in the West, felt constrained by these limits and Marxism did continue to grow and be enriched despite the chill of Soviet orthodoxy. Poulantzas, by way of example, went well beyond the influence of Stalin and identified shortcomings inherent in Lenin's formulations as contributing to strategical practices which were not conducive to fusing democratic notions with socialism. The origins of the crisis of the left will undoubtedly continue to be debated but what is important to us is that the present era, characterised as it is by the explosion of the social change movements around the world and the resulting process of theorisation unrestrained by past orthodoxies, is contributing to a much needed rethinking of radical social change theory both within and outside of the Marxist tradition.

no social or regulatory role but rather it be a *facilitating* state that is responsive to the social and economic aspirations and basic needs of the population.

Applying Poulantzas' theory to Guatemala, it can be argued that, for example, participation in bipartite committees, like the Committee on Educational Reform (see Chapter 9), is an example of struggling within the state. Promoting a civil movement, on the other hand, to pressure the government to pass an Educational Reform package and to vigorously implement it, is an example of struggling at a distance. Involvement in local development issues could simultaneously involve struggling within the state and struggling from a distance depending upon the organisation through which one was working and the relationship of the local people to the official channels of decision-making.

Civil Society Theoretically Conceived

Poulantzas, in effect, calls upon us to pay attention, not only to the state as the object of political action, but also to give considerable importance to the role of social movements in the process of change and to consider the terrain upon which they act, civil society.[21]

I have briefly reviewed the concept of social movement (a subject to which I shall return in Chapter 5). I will now consider the role of civil society as the place where ordinary men and women, through their organisations, can bring about a significant change in their lives with or without reference to the state depending upon ideological preferences of the particular organisations (and of the state, for that matter) and prevailing circumstances.

[21] By directing our attention towards social movements as important political actors, Poulantzas implicitly shifts our attention away from the notion of the "party" as the preferred, indeed ultimately, only vehicle capable of leading the movement for social and political change. While Poulantzas does not reject the importance of political parties he situates them in a very different context than the previous orthodoxy had done and in so doing breaks with the Leninist notion of the vanguard party.

Cohen and Arato (1992), arguing for a new and dynamic understanding of civil society suggest that "... what is needed is a conception of civil society that can reflect on the core of new collaborative identities and articulate the terms within which projects based on such identities can contribute to the emergence of freer, more democratic societies." (Cohen and Arato, 1992, 441).

Bonamusa's Classification of Civil Organisations

As in any dynamic social space, in civil society there are different "logics" and a wide range of often contradictory interests and, as a result, often conflicting demands and expectations. Bonamusa (1997) explores this complex reality.

The first "logic" that Bonamusa identifies is what she calls the *economic logic*. It is represented by business associations, unions and various economic interest groups.

The *social logic* is represented by Non Governmental Organisations, community organisations and what she calls all those organisations that are ethnic, religious, cultural or gender based.

Finally, the *political logic* is represented by the social movements, some Non Governmental Organisations, and, in the case of Colombia, where she is writing, the armed organisations, both the revolutionary and counter revolutionary organisations. (Bonamusa, 1997, 71).

It is not surprising, given the contradictory social forces that operate on the varied terrain of the civil society, that there are conflicting conceptions as to the role of the organisations of civil society. Bonamusa identifies three such conceptions.

The first conception is a class-based but ultimately apolitical vision which sees the civil society as the place where the socio-economic and cultural needs of the popular classes can be met without reference to the state. Advocates of this view see the civil

society as the 'society of the organised poor' (Bonamusa, 1997, 75) and the main protagonists in this scenario are the base level or popular organisations. This approach also includes a role for 'non popular' support groups that provide technical assistance and advice. The struggle to achieve equity is at the centre of this vision and it will be achieved "with the realisation of specific social projects and not as the result of demands that the state redistribute the wealth ..." (Bonamusa, 1997, 75). Far from encouraging the state to become involved in social issues, this approach is, in effect, "a strategy to strengthen civil society as an alternative to the state where democracy and social justice will be realised as projects of civil society." (Bonamusa, 1997, 75). As a result, those who work within this vision have no incentive to engage in politics and while they undoubtedly collectively make an important social, economic and cultural contribution on behalf of the poor, they certainly are not involved with any movement to transform the structures of inequality which form the basis of the injustices they are attempting to ameliorate. This category would include non governmental organisations established to provide a wide range of services not provided by the state.

The second conception is based upon a vision that attaches a great deal of importance to creating a close working relationship between the state and the organisations of the civil society. In effect, the role of the organisations of civil society in this conception is to administer projects of the state, or otherwise work in very close collaboration with the state, on the assumption that the state represents the public interest and the civil society is there to assist the state achieve its goals. Such an approach is typical of those agencies which are established in response to government initiatives to act as delivery vehicles for public programs or which, whatever their origin, have come to depend for their continued existence upon accepting contracts from the state in order to survive.

The third vision is the neo-liberal or "modernisation" vision and sees the growth and protection of a public sphere as central to its concept of good governance but this public sphere is not identified only with state activities. The public sphere is defined as the field of collective or common interest and both state agencies and non governmental organisations will be active in that sphere discussing policy options and delivering public services. There is, in effect, a negotiated or de facto division of labour between state agencies, the organisations of civil society, and even the private sector. In this vision, the public welfare is the responsibility of all, not just the prerogative of the state. Similarly, the setting of public policy is not limited to the traditional political sphere but rather is part of this social, public sphere where participation in decision making over public policy by all those who will be affected by it is encouraged. (Bonamusa, 1997, 78 – 79).

This approach is really a variant of the modernisation approach where a vital civil society working in a relationship with a modernised but perhaps "reduced" state combine to offer the necessary services to the public. This conception is closest to that being promoted by World Bank President Wolfonson. (see Chapter 6).

As useful as these classifications are as a starting point for analysis, in reality, most NGOs, consciously or unconsciously, work within the framework of more than one of these approaches and in so doing constitute themselves as variants on these classifications. Both ESEDIR and PRODESSA, for example, are non governmental organisation of civil society working to meet the needs of an identifiable social sector – rural Mayas – primarily through their development projects and educational work. In this sense they would be seen as part

of the first conception identified by Bonamusa.[22] At the same time, at least some of this work is done in partnership with the Ministry of Education from which they receive financial support for delivering services that the Ministry deems important. In this respect they fit within the second conception. Finally, borrowing from the third conception, ESEDIR and PRODESSA work hard to contribute to a larger movement whose goal it is to accumulate the political capacity to pressure the government into modernising, democratising and otherwise fulfilling its obligations as outlined in the Peace Accords.

And so, while drawing from some aspects of all three of Bonamusa's categories, ESEDIR and PRODESSA operates outside of the framework of other aspects of these same categories. Examples of this include

- their explicit strategy to transform the state in opposition to an important characteristic of the first conception;
- not seeing themselves as an extension of the state as envisioned in the second conception even though they do enter into agreements with the state; and
- by having a far more expansive notion of the role of a radically transformed state in contradistinction to the much more limited notion of modernisation explicit in the third conception.

Thus, ESEDIR and PRODESSA, and many similar organisations, would seem to constitute a hybrid category of politically active NGOs that simultaneously provide services to the popular sector and engages in dialogue with the state with a view to effecting reforms today while seeking a substantive transformation in the long run.

[22] Bonamusa also includes "non popular" as one of the characteristics of these organisations. I hesitate to apply that to ESEDIR and PRODESSA as most of their staff members are definitely drawn from rural Maya villages. There are exceptions, of course, but not enough in my opinion to cause them to be considered somehow non popular or petit bourgeois.

Gramsci and Civil Society as a Terrain of Ideological Struggle

Antonio Gramsci, the leader of the Italian Communist Party at the time that Soviet power was being consolidated in the Soviet Union, realised that the Leninist strategy of simply capturing the State might well work in Russia where "the State was everything" and civil society was "gelatinous" but it was insufficient for modern Western democracies where class rule was effected in a variety of ways in addition to direct repression organised through the police and military services of the State apparatus.

Gramsci became aware of the significance of what came to be called ideological hegemony, i.e., the notion that the ideas of the ruling class penetrate the thinking of the subordinate classes and become, to one extent or another, the way of thinking of those subordinate classes thus inhibiting their ability to develop their own world view. This revelation occurred to Gramsci when he noted that the Italian Catholic Church, even after the formal separation of church and state, in alliance with the most reactionary sectors of Italian society, maintained its influence against the reform projects of the Italian modernising bourgeoisie,

> through its organisation of everyday social life in civil institutions such as church functions, education, neighbourhood festivals, and its own press ... [As a result], ... the Catholic Church was able to occupy many of the trenches of civil society and to constitute a powerful barrier to the formation of liberal, secular bourgeois hegemony on this terrain." (Cohen and Arato, 1992, 144).

The opposite side of this observation about the organisations of civil society being carriers of ruling class culture and ideology is the potential of creating organisations of civil society to promote the culture and ideology of the subordinate classes and popular movements.

Gramsci was concerned about the tendency of Leninism to reduce the struggle to the dichotomous class struggle which was resolved by capturing the state apparatus, as described above. This approach led the revolutionary thinkers to forget abut the "defensive trenches" of the existing system (Gramsci, 1971, 235), defined as "forms of culture and association that protect bourgeois society even when the economy is in crisis and the power of the state has crumbled." (Cohen and Arato, 1992, 143). For this reason Gramsci argued that civil society, and especially its cultural institutions, must be the "central terrain to be occupied in the struggle for emancipation." (Cohen & Arato, 1992, 144).

At the same time as he was concerned about the reductionism inherent in the Leninist strategy, Gramsci never broke with the Leninist conception of the need to *capture* and *destroy* the existing state and to create a new socialist state. For Gramsci, the struggle within civil society was "to erode the existing forms of social integration, to create alternative associations, and to prepare the subject of revolutionary politics." (Cohen & Arato, 1992, 150). This was an instrumentalist approach to civil society and once civil society had served its purpose there was no reason why it should continue to exist. Gramsci never doubted that the state and the party would be the instruments of social change following the revolution and "he states that it is essential that the old mechanisms of producing bourgeois hegemony be eliminated. Within the functionalist interpretation, this would of course mean the end of a pluralistic system of parties, unions, and churches." (Cohen & Arato, 1992, 150).

Despite this important limitation, Gramsci provides invaluable theoretical insights into the nature of civil society and the possibility of knowledge transmission and knowledge creation within it . Latter day theorists including, as we have seen, Poulantzas, have been able to move from the particularities (and democratic shortcomings) of his

theoretical work to a new interpretation of the role of civil society and related ideological issues to further our understanding of the progressive potential of civil society as not only a site of struggle but as an end in itself. Cohen & Arato speak of developing "a *positive normative attitude* to the existing version of civil society or, rather, to some of its institutional dimensions" out of which can come "a principled version of radical *reformism.*" (Cohen & Arato, 1992, 154).

Civil Society and the Protection of Fundamental Rights

Cohen and Arato state that "fundamental rights must be seen as the *organising principle* of a modern civil society" (Cohen and Arato, 1992, 442). This normative statement has significant implications for their conceptualisation of the role of social movements and the relationship of civil society to political society and the economy. They argue that within a capitalist market society there are three complexes of rights:

- those concerning cultural reproduction and socialisation (freedom of thought, press, speech and communication, protection of privacy, intimacy and the inviolability of the person);
- those which mediate between civil society and the market economy (property rights, contract rights and labour rights); and finally,
- those which mediate between civil society and the state (political rights).

The balance of forces and the institutionality of civil society in a given society mirror these ever changing dynamic relationships. These shift according to a series of complex considerations including the balance of political forces in a given society and, for example, the nature and the role of civil society in a given situation. In democracies, these

relationships will be formalised as laws as workers, women, environmental activists, business lobbyists, etc. win recognition in whole or in part from the state for their concerns.

This model, however, makes clear that

> while the state is the agency of the legalisation of rights, it is neither their source nor the basis of their validity. Rights begin as claims asserted by groups and individuals in the public spaces of an emerging civil society. They can be guaranteed by positive law but are not equivalent to law or derivable from it; in the domain of rights, law secures and stabilises what has been achieved autonomously by social actors. (Cohen and Arato, 1992, 441).

A strong civil society in itself, of course, does not guarantee that progressive, much less transformatory, change will occur. As noted, Gramsci's interest in the power of the institutions of civil society arose from his observations of the reactionary role that the Catholic Church was able to play in Italian politics after the separation of church and state through the ideological penetration of its point of view in the working class and other popular organisations of the time. He realised that this reactionary ideology could be confronted with a radical, popular world view and that a transformatory ideology could become a force to be reckoned with in civil society but this would require a conscious effort on the part of the progressive sectors to articulate and instil such an alternative ideology. For Gramsci, of course, the creation of progressive associations of the popular classes in civil society was a strategy to accumulate forces for a revolutionary socialist transformation of Italian society. For the new social movements of the present day, the creation and continuance of such organisations is an indispensable precondition for a vigorous democracy under presently existing conditions and under any new regime that might emerge as a result of future socio-political change that collective action may bring about.

The fact that the existence of civil society is no guarantee of progressivism and democracy is attested to theoretically by the existence of a neo liberal model that identifies

the extension of civil society with the further incorporation of hitherto marginal sectors of the population into the capitalist mode of production. This model is the one being followed by the World Bank, for example, and in the case of Guatemala has as its objective the modernisation of the state and the further incorporation of Guatemala's economy into the process of globalisation. These neo liberal advocates of the expansion of civil society are primarily interested in expanding market relations in Guatemala although the rhetoric of local control and democracy are a part of the discourse associated with these initiatives. "Only a model that differentiates civil society from both state and economy, and analyses the mediations among them, can avoid such misinterpretations of the project of its reconstruction" (Cohen and Arato, 1994, 464).

In short, the popular organisations operating on the terrain of civil society have the potential of being progressive and even transformatory but there will be a dialectic between processes centred in popular struggles taking place in the civil society and those taking place in political society.[23] Indeed, within civil society itself class struggle will occur as organisations representing those that benefit from the present order (or a not highly modified version of it) vie with those organisations that represent those popular sectors who seek a far reaching transformation of the present order.

In Guatemala the peace process which ended the civil war and opened the road to the flourishing of civil society in the present era was initially primarily a process in the political sphere (negotiations between the URNG and the Government of Guatemala) while secondarily the civil society, organised through the Assembly of Civil Society (ASC), made

[23] Wainwright (1994) argues that this dialectic was seen in Poland where the old regime was toppled because of the opposition affected through civil society which reverberated through political society and in Hungary where political initiatives and negotiation were the decisive factors in the fall of the old regime.

demands on the negotiators to include provisions important to them. With the signing of the Peace Accords in late 1996 the work of implementation has shifted significantly, although not exclusively, from the political sphere to that of civil society.

The danger for the popular organisations in the context of a process of expanding civil society and modernising the state is that the dominant class through their institutions such as the World Bank "will seek to limit the reconstruction of civil society to the dimension of a suitable environment for market economic self-regulation." (Cohen and Arato, 1992, 489).

It is for this reason that the new social movements must be consciously aware of the need to see the expansion and strengthening of civil society as a "reflexive continuation of both the democratic revolution and the welfare state" (Cohen and Arato: 1992: 489) by which is meant the expansion of democracy and the improvement in socio-economic equality.

Civil Society as the Terrain and Target of Collective Action

For Cohen and Arato, the social movements constitute the "dynamic element in processes that might realise the positive potentials of modern civil society" (Cohen and Arato, 1992, 492) and the civil society is both the terrain and the target of collective action. By this is meant that democracy must be practised in the organisations of civil society. It is not good enough for social movements, and the organisations which are a part of these movements, to struggle for free elections and the rule of law without applying basic democratic principles to themselves. The normative value that underlies this approach to civil society is that for democracy to fully exist, the institutions of civil society must themselves be democratic.

Charles Tilly argues that in the Western democracies the broadening of the franchise in the 19th century expanded the legal space in which advocacy organisations could work. The history of Guatemala will undoubtedly record that the insistence by the URNG that the civil society be consulted and their input considered during the peace process, and their subsequent involvement in service provision and community development initiatives, created the space required for civil society to fully re-establish itself and to grow after years of repression. This has resulted in Guatemala in the civil society becoming "the indispensable terrain on which social actors assemble, organise and mobilise ..." (Cohen and Arato, 1992, 502).

Unfortunately, social movements, unlike political parties, especially political parties dedicated to far reaching structural transformation, rarely have a comprehensive critique of existing society or a transformatory strategy. The possible exception to this shortcoming in the West at least is the women's movement. It has

> ... a dual logic and a clear emancipatory potential: an offensive, universalist side concerned with political inclusion and equal rights, along with a defensive, particularist side focusing on identity, alternative values, and the overturning of concrete forms of life marked by male monopolies and a one-sidedly rationalised everyday practice. The first dimension links feminism to the tradition of bourgeois-socialist liberation movements and to universalist moral principles. The second links it to the new social movements. (Cohen and Arato, 1992, 529).

In Guatemala, it is arguably the Pan Maya movement that plays this role as it is concerned simultaneously with "political inclusion and equal rights" as well as with a focus on identity and alternative values.

Civil Society as a Space for the Creation and Dissemination of Knowledge

Civil society is simultaneously a site of struggle for social change and a space within which democratic practices are nurtured and from which the state is held

accountable for its policies and procedures. Such a site is also the space where a great deal of non-formal knowledge can be generated and disseminated. As I have noted, from a social transformation perspective, the mere existence of civil society does not guarantee that unambiguously progressive developments are occurring. Similarly we cannot presume that the knowledge that is being generated and disseminated as the organisations of civil society confront the challenges for which they were created is socially progressive. Indeed, Gramsci would argue that if left to its own devices, the knowledge generated within civil society will mirror the dominant ideology of the larger society. However, it is also true that alternative, popular knowledge can and does emerge from civil society and, if systematised and theorised, can become a coherent world vision in contrast with the presently existing dominant vision. All movements in democratic societies where such free expression is possible have their chroniclers, their 'organic intellectuals' to use Gramsci's term, who contribute to a theorisation of the experiences of the various popular organisations or movements. Certainly the women's movement, the environmental movement, the union movement and now the Maya movement in Guatemala have such people whose views influence, to one degree or another, the self-perception and direction of the movement.

It has long been recognised, especially in adult education circles, that active participation in the events of the day, especially where these events challenge prevailing orthodoxies, has the impact of promoting skill development and raising consciousness in a way that is rare in ordinary times. (Welton, 1987; Smith, 1995). Certainly, anyone who has participated in a social movement has witnessed or experienced how participation in that movement has awakened talents, leadership abilities and a thirst for knowledge that did not exist prior to the launching of the social movement in otherwise very ordinary people.

Neither liberal-democracy, with its system of voting for those to whom the electorate entrusts to make all the political decisions between elections, nor the Soviet form of democratic centralism and one party rule, encourage the growth of human potential which can result from wide-spread involvement in social or political action and decision making. To realise this potential for the generation of knowledge and its application in the solving of daily problems at the community and higher levels by those directly affected by these decisions will take a conscious effort to devise consultative and/or participatory democratic structures that borrow from the best practices of liberal democracy and the ideals of communitarian democracy. To this we must add an appreciation of the kind of "knowledge which ... validates theoretical, experimental, tacit and social dimensions (and which) has radical implications for the character of democracy. (Wainwright, 1994, 109). Wainwright suggests that to get a picture of what this might involve can be gleaned from a study of the practices of contemporary social movements. This same is certainly true for Guatemala today. As the Mayan people build communities and organisations and institutions at the local, regional and national level that reflect their values and aspirations and meet their daily needs we can begin to discern what characteristics a society might have that includes these values and aspirations.

A Theory of Knowledge Formation

I alluded to the importance of this knowledge generation or theorising when I wrote about the need to systematise stories. Stories are not unimportant but as Bloom (1956) states, our cognitive skills operate at six levels ranging from the simple knowledge of facts to synthesis (creation of new ideas) and evaluation (ability to consider options and to form judgements). Stories are, for the most part, usually near the bottom of this hierarchy of cognitive ability. What is true of individuals is also true of social and political movements

– in order to comprehend the world we must get beyond the simple knowledge of the facts and move towards the ability to critically judge and consider options.

Hilary Wainwright attempts to construct a theory of knowledge formation that is based on what we have learned from the experience of social movements involved in the struggle for social justice and societal transformation.

There are many different kinds of knowledge – tacit, experiential and theoretical. Few would deny this but the question is whether one form of knowledge is superior to the others. Certainly, the old-style Communist parties valued "correct theory" above all, while many social activists would put experiential learning as the preferred form of gaining knowledge about the world. (Balaisis, 1999). Wainwright argues that all forms of knowledge are necessary to fully understand a problem or phenomena. (Wainwright: 1994: 103 – 104). I would argue that experience is only as educational as our ability to analyse it and theory is only as illuminating as our ability to generalise from ever-changing lived reality.

Wainwright bases her search for a theory of knowledge on the very different experiences of the new left in Western Europe and that of the opponents of Communist Party rule in Eastern Europe. In addition she looks at the failures of both Soviet and Keynesian social engineering and rejects such statist solutions of both the left and the centre-left as she seeks to conceptualise the strategies needed by a social force which is capable of challenging the dominant neo liberalism of our era.[24]

[24] By the late seventies the idea of "the state", or even the government, as instruments of social improvement was losing credibility under pressure from several directions ... there were failures specific to actually existing socialism, East and West, both of which had held out the action of the state as the measure by which socialism should be judged. It was the suppression of individual and collective rights and the economic stagnation of the Soviet block which did most to undermine socialism as a programme of change led by the state. But in the West, unhappy day-to-day dealings with the welfare state, and experience of government

Whereas Cohen and Arato focus their attention on civil society as the place where social movements can most effectively wage their struggles for social justice and democracy and from where democracy, once won, can most effectively be defended, Wainwright is specifically interested in how alternate social visions come into being and suggests that sharing knowledge is an essential precondition for both social transformation and democracy before, during, and after the transformation.

> My argument grounds a bottom up approach to social transformation in a recognition that the knowledge shared at the base of a society is essential to a socially effective and just society. Moreover, such knowledge can only be fully utilised if those at the base are involved in economic and social decisions. I have therefore emphasised the importance of democratic citizens' and workers' movements, not simply as a subordinate fourth estate or a way of keeping politicians on their toes, but as the basis of a new mentality of government. (Wainwright, 1994, xxi – xiii).

Wainwright argues that the European social movements, but most notably the women's movement, "were and are more or less practising a new understanding of knowledge." She writes

> The new understanding of science which their practice indicates views experience and theory, feeling and intellect in a relationship of mutuality; and that mutuality occurs as a process rather than a fixed moment of verification or falsification. Experience, rather than simply yielding facts which confirm or falsify general laws, provides clues to underlying structures and relationships which are not observable other than through the particular phenomena or events that they produce. The precise character of such structures can only be understood by paying attention to the details of experience of the events and phenomena that they generate, its variations as well its recurrences. Moreover, feelings can be signs of an inadequacy in an influential interpretation of experience; to be fruitful, however, there needs to be a context in which this doubt leads to the assessment of other theoretical interpretations and if necessary the forging of new analytic tools. The socialising of knowledge is in many ways about sharing these different sources of knowledge and stimuli to further inquiry, to explain a social problem and identify the resources for change." (Wainwright, 1994, 7).

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interventions that repeatedly failed either to stimulate prosperity or to achieve social or ecological objectives, meant that a continuum could be credibly conjured up of failed social engineering .... (Wainright 1994: iv).

For Wainwright this "assumes a view of knowledge as a social product, distributed, valued and appropriated in ways that are potentially transformable; and in turn implies that the possibilities of radical and democratic social change depend to a considerable extent on democratising and socialising the organisation of knowledge." (Wainwright, 1994, 8). This occurs, as alluded to above, when movements arise and people become involved in struggling to survive and/or transform their world around them. Until that happens, as Gramsci noted, people tend to accept the dominant ideology that they have learned within the family, in school, picked up from the mass media and heard in the streets repeated as "common sense" a thousand times. Once they become involved in collective action, however, new ways of viewing the world open up to them. Whether this stays at the level of individual awareness, as stories, or whether this becomes systematised and shared depends upon the ability of leaders, perhaps Gramsci's "organic intellectuals" to intervene and make what is happening conscious and give it theoretical expression. Intellectuals have been struggling to give such expression to the experience of the many social movements that have emerged in Eastern and Western Europe and in Latin America since the 1960s.

Marta Harnecker and the Crisis of the Latin American Left:

Marta Harnecker cites Immanual Wallerstein as saying that in the final decades of the 20th century the crisis facing the progressive movement is so profound that it will take two decades at least to elaborate a coherent "anti-systemic" strategy. (Wallerstein, cited by Harnecker, 2000, 1). She comments that the old political models of social change have collapsed while new ones have yet to prove themselves. (Harnecker, 2000, 2). This crisis coincides with the process of neo-liberal globalisation that has had such negative effects upon the socially and economically excluded sectors of many Latin American societies. In

effect, neo-liberalism, rather than allowing the poor a more complete economic participation in society, as it promises, tends to limit their economic participation to surviving in the informal subsistence economy. (Harnecker, 2000, 2).

While she recognises a series of difficulties facing the left ranging from broad based scepticism about political parties leading to wide-spread indifference to the fact that the right has appropriated the language of the left (see the discussion of empowerment and local power in Chapter 6), she nonetheless argues that the left is not "empty handed" with respect to alternative strategies. (Harnecker, 2000, 2).

Prior to discussing these alternatives she notes that, despite the fact that widespread social change is not on the short-term agenda, this is no excuse for throwing up one's hands in the face of the challenge. Politics, for Harnecker, is not "the art of the possible" but the "art of making possible the impossible", to cite the title of her book on the subject. (Harnecker, 2000, 4). Specifically, she argues that this means "constructing a correlation of forces favourable to the popular movement" which, consistent with Poulantzas' perspective, is "to change the traditional vision of politics [which] tended to reduce politics to the struggle related to the judicial-political institutions and exaggerated the role of the state; [and oriented everything] to the political parties and thought of the dispute as being about the control and orientation of the formal instruments of power." (Ruiz, cited by Harnecker, 2000, 5).

Harnecker argues that it is an error to attempt to construct a political force that has as its objective far-reaching social change without building a corresponding anti-systemic social force. This requires a strategy and a strategy requires a systematisation of experiences (in other words a theorisation of experiences). For Harnecker this implies the

existence of a "political subject capable of orienting its activities on the basis of an analysis of the overall political situation." (Harnecker, 2000, 6).

In Guatemala, unlike a number of other Latin American countries, where there are mass based parties of the radical left, there is no recognised "political subject" whose leadership is broadly accepted. Neither the URNG nor the FRNG, the two left wing political formations, can be seen as providing broad-based leadership to the movement for transformatory social change. There are, however, a number of social and/or political movements of which the most important numerically is the Pan Maya movement. While I will argue that the Pan Maya movement, in and of itself, will not be the agent that effects transformatory social change in Guatemala, it is now contributing, and will continue to contribute, to creating the conditions "to make possible tomorrow what appears today to be impossible." (Harnecker, 2000, 4). In this sense the Pan Maya movement is radical reformist and not merely reformist for as Harnecker points out, not all reforms reinforce the existing power structure. (Harnecker, 1999, 395). Indeed, within the Guatemalan context, Beverley makes the argument that if the demands of the Maya movements go beyond the demand for formal equality and constitute a demand for "epistemological, cultural, economic and civil-democratic equality all at once then the logic of the politics of multicultural identity goes beyond the possibility that they be contained within [the logic of] neo-liberal hegemony." (Beverley, 1998, 17).

What is at issue in Guatemala is the extent to which the social movements, and specifically the Pan Maya movement, is playing the role of creating the preconditions for future transformatory struggle while addressing the immediate and pressing needs of its poverty stricken social base. Such an approach contrasts with engaging in practices that while perhaps meeting some of these needs are, in effect, reinforcing the further neo-liberal

integration of Guatemala into the world capitalist system at the expense of building a socially just and democratic multicultural, multiethnic and multilingual Guatemala.

Social Change and Gender In Guatemala

Mayan women are triply oppressed – they are oppressed as women, as Mayas and as a social sector suffering poverty or extreme poverty. Their traditional role as mother, wife and subsistence cultivator is well intact. Their ability to leave their communities for short meetings, let alone to study or play a role at the municipal, regional or national level is still highly restricted by communal norms and this is reinforced by a poverty so extreme that taking the local bus to the next town is prohibitively expensive. While individual Maya women have made their mark on the movement and, indeed, on Guatemala as a whole, the Maya movement remains male dominated. Exceptions certainly exist. People like Rigoberta Menchu and lesser known activists such as a number of the remarkable women associated with PRODESSA and ESEDIR who I interviewed also come to mind but they are exceptions.

PRODESSA has attached considerable importance to working with women in their communities and ESEDIR has made efforts to ensure that women constitute a solid percentage of their annual student body in their residential program. Recent classes have typically had 25 to 30% women and certainly some of their female graduates, such as Ana Morales and Feliciana Mendez (both of the class of 1991) hold positions of responsibility, Ana with ESEDIR itself and Feliciana with the Rigoberta Menchu Foundation. Despite this, it is premature to discuss the emergence of a Maya women's movement.

Interestingly enough, experienced, veteran observers of Guatemala who have written highly acclaimed book length studies have omitted this issue except in passing. Susanne Jonas' (2000) study of the peace process, Morna Macleod's (1997) study of local

power and Kay Warren's (1998) study of the Pan Maya movement barely touch on gender issues. Similarly, Guatemalan sources such as Gálvez (1997, 1998) and the various authors who are published in Sieder's (1998) volume are silent on this question.

None of the activists involved with PRODESSA or ESEDIR with whom I have spent time over the course of my three visits and with whom I discussed this issue were complacent about it. There is a recognition by everyone working both at the local level and at the national level that in order to achieve the emancipation of the Maya people and the transformation of Guatemala, women must be fully involved with the process. Steps are being taken at the local level, some of which are documented in this study, but Guatemala is a long way from a qualitative transformation in the role and expectation of Maya women and that too must be studied, systematised and worked on over the very long run.

Summary Observations on the Need for New Theory

In the 1960s to the 1980s the Guatemalan left, as elsewhere in many other places in the Third World, operated on the assumption that transformatory social change would occur as a result of an armed assault on state power and that the local social movements would operate within the logic of that insurrectionary strategy. By the 1980s, however, it had become clear that this strategy, successful at least in the politico-military sense in Cuba in 1959, was not going to succeed in Guatemala.

Furthermore, it was becoming of concern to ever larger sectors of the population that the old strategies of the left were both exclusionary and undemocratic. With respect to the former consideration, certainly the majority of the Guatemalan population, the Mayan people, felt excluded from, but very negatively affected by, the insurgency strategy. So too, the issue of democracy within the popular organisations and the organisations of the left continued to be of concern and led to the creation of organisations of the civil society where issues of

importance to the popular sectors could be discussed in spaces controlled by them. This kind of questioning was deepened with the fall of Soviet style socialism and the rise of new social movements world-wide. Questions were raised about patriarchy and authoritarian models of left-wing political organisation and the new social forces took to the streets to give expression to their demands.

These new social forces, or New Social Movements, as they came to be called, founded organisations which had one foot firmly planted in the civil society and in the reality of the lives of their members and another foot planted in the political realm. Whereas the old left political parties, whether Marxist or social democratic, were very much creatures of the political realm, the new organisations were more broadly based and, perhaps not ironically, more narrowly focused. Their focus was on the issues of interest to their supporters usually, although not always, narrowly defined. This focus on the interests of their supporters is simultaneously their strength and their weakness. The strength such a focus provides is self-evident, while the weakness arises from the fact that they often have a sectoral rather than a strategic vision of social and political change.

The forces of social change in Guatemala find themselves in the situation where some have backed away from political parties and work exclusively in the sphere of civil society while others engage in politics in so far as it reflects their supporters' interests. The Pan Maya movement, for example, as we will see in Chapter 5, operates both in the civil and the political spheres but not in the partisan sense. The Pan Maya leadership has shown little interest in founding a Maya political party or joining forces with the existing parties of the left. Indeed the decision of Demetrio Cojtí, Guatemala's leading Maya intellectual and an acknowledged leader of the Pan Maya movement, to take the job of Deputy Minister of Education in the present right-wing FRG government of President Portillo, indicates a political eclecticism, to

say the least, which can only be based on feeling comfortable with working with whosoever will assist you in advancing your goals - in this case, advancing the process of educational reform. While Dr. Cojti undoubtedly satisfied himself that by accepting such a position he could significantly move forward the educational agenda (and by extension, important aspects of the cultural agenda) of the Pan Maya movement, there must be deep concern in the minds of many Maya leaders about the wisdom, perhaps even the morality, of working so intimately with the party of General Ríos Montt who stands charged with genocide for the massacres committed by the military during his presidency (1982 – 83).

Other Maya leaders have run as candidates with one of the two left parties while still others have sought municipal office with non partisan civic movements. Not surprisingly, given that we are dealing with a movement, there are different attitudes among the leadership of its many component parts about the best way to be politically involved.

What seems clear at this time is that, to the extent that there is consensus within the movement, is that primary importance is being given to the strengthening of the Mayan organisations at both the local and the national level and, similarly, strengthening the participation of the Mayan people at these two levels. In effect, this is a study of that consensus.

Having established at least some of the key concepts that provide us with a lens through which to appreciate the movement for social change presently occurring in Guatemala and the work of the two organisations upon which I focused my field work, I shall now turn to an historical overview which will establish the context within which this process is unfolding.

CHAPTER FOUR

Recent Historical Background: War, Negotiated Peace and Frustrated Implementation of the Peace Accords

The Revolution of 1944 – 1954:

For the vast majority of Guatemala's population, both Maya and Ladino, the 20th Century constituted 100 years of misery resulting from some of the worst poverty in Latin America. It also involved close to half a century of state sponsored violence that left over four hundred villages totally destroyed, some 200,000 non-combatants dead, 40,000 civilians "disappeared" and untold thousands, combatants and non-combatants alike, maimed.[25] In addition over 100,000 Maya peasants had to flee to Mexico where years would pass before they would be able to return home. (Armon, et al., et. al., 1997, 23).

To the extent that there was respite from the violence during the last century it was only because the traditional elites who governed, often through military dictatorships, managed to impose their rule so completely that those who desired change were unable to mount an effective opposition. When this authoritarian rule was challenged, as it inevitably was, then those that benefited from the old order did not hesitate to unleash a devastating campaign of terror against its opponents, real and imagined.

The modern political history of Guatemala undoubtedly begins in 1944 when the military dictatorship of the day was overthrown by a broad middle- and working-class

[25] Jonas (2000, 35) notes that there has been controversy about just how many civilians were killed and how many disappeared. Conservative estimates put the dead at 100,000 however, both the Catholic Church in its study of the human toll taken by the war (ODHA, 1998) and the report of official Truth Commission (CEH, 1999) cite a figure of 200,000 civilians killed or disappeared." Others such as Armon (1997) cite somewhat higher figures.

coalition and the first of two reform governments came to power in what came to be known as the Revolution of 1944 – 1954. (Armon, et al., et. al., 1997, 24).

For 10 years the country enjoyed what has been described as "the only genuine democratic experience in Guatemala's entire history" (Jonas, 2000, 18).

> The two governments of Juan Jose Arévalo (1945 – 1950) and Jacobo Arbenz (1951 – 54) guaranteed basic democratic liberties (including free elections), abolished forced labor (which had been nearly universal for the indigenous population), granted minimum wages and basic rights for workers and peasants, and increased social welfare and equality. In addition, the Revolution modernised Guatemalan capitalism, undertaking agricultural diversification and industrialisation programs, fomenting national enterprises, and regulating foreign investment to serve national priorities. Most significiant was Arbenz's far-reaching (but capitalist) agrarian reform of 1952, which distributed land to over 100,000 peasant families. (Jonas, 2000, 18).

Sieder (1998 c) says that the 1944 Revolution "laid the basis for the growth of a Maya citizenry, by ending forced labour, enfranchising indigenous men ... and, through the introduction in 1952 of a programme of redistributive agrarian reform" (Seider, 1998 c, 101 – 102). Furthermore, she noted that "political parties and labour organisations extended their operations to the countryside, stimulating the development of an indigenous 'civil society'. (Seider, 1998 c, 102).

Many landless peasants, many of whom, although by no means not all, were indigenous, used the provisions of the Agrarian reform to address land issues.

This, combined with measures which created *indigenous communities* and *campesino communities* as separate bodies within the municipalities, had the combined effect of challenging "*ladino* dominance over the structures of rural municipal government." (Seider, 1998 c, 102).

Despite these advances Seider notes that the revolutionaries of 1944 – 54 never got past "positivist assimilationist sentiments towards the indigenous population, and state

policy, while it recognised difference in principle, was still aimed at resolving 'the indigenous problem'." (Seider, 1998 c, 102).

The traditional Guatemalan ruling class, whose political and economic interests were being challenged by this democratisation and modernisation of the country,[26] found a powerful ally in the United States following the expropriation of unused land belonging to the United Fruit Company. This measure, taken against one of the United State's most powerful multinational companies of the day, coupled with the anti communism of the 1950s, caused the US to support the military overthrow of the Arbenz government and welcome the establishment of a thoroughly reactionary and repressive regime which reversed the reforms of the previous 10 years. (Armon, et al., 1997, 23 – 23).

Needless to say the new government was unwilling to change the conditions which had led to the 1944 Revolution in the first place. Furthermore, the economic growth which followed the coup did nothing to ease these conflicts. On the contrary, it merely served to augment them. This was the case because the promise of profits from expanded agricultural production led to the forced expropriation of land from the mostly Maya peasantry. The beneficiaries of these expropriations were frequently senior military officers who were learning the benefits of their involvement in the state structure for the accumulation of personal wealth. This led the senior ranks of the military to become *de facto* members of the traditional economic elite while the vast sectors of these Maya

[26] The resistance to modernisation and democratisation that led to the military coup of 1954 is still very much a part of the political agenda of traditional sectors of the Guatemalan elite. Despite the fact that even the World Bank favours reforms that modernise and democratise developing countries as a part of the preconditions to achieve development, these sectors steadfastly resist such efforts (See pp 49 – 54).

peasants were converted into semi-proletarianised seasonal rural workers who migrated to the sugar and coffee plantations on the Pacific coast at harvest time.[27] (Jonas, 2000, 19).

Few, if any, of the plantations were unionised. Not only were there ongoing attempts to unionise these farm labourers but there was also support for the rural agricultural workers among university students and there is little doubt that many of the Maya plantation workers became politically aware for the first time as a result of their contact with Ladino union activists. Jonas notes that the impact of the coming together of trade union consciousness and ethnic issues led to a situation where

> ...class divisions ... become much more explosive through their intersection with ethnic divisions. For centuries, the indigenous population has been subjected to one or another form of forced labour; the state, in particular the army, has defined for itself the vocation of disciplining, controlling, and repressing the indigenous majority of the population. In a situation approaching de-facto apartheid, issues of ethnic identity and democratic rights for the indigenous majority have become central. (Jonas, 2000, 20).

Faced with deteriorating socio-economic conditions and official indifference or worse, vigorous social movements, but particularly the trade union movement, with a tremendous capacity to intervene both directly on behalf of their members and on broader social and political issues, came into existence.[28]

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[27] Roger Plant suggested that by 1997 this pattern was not longer as common as it was in earlier years. He writes "... it used to be the case that over a million indigenous family members worked as migrant labourers for part of the agricultural cycle. Work on the cotton, coffee and sugar plantations during the harvest season was a strictly indigenous labour market. This appears to be changing, as casual labour is now provided by a floating and rootless labour fore, indigenous and non-indigenous, which resides on the south coast throughout the year." (Plant, 1998, 92). Some of my informants, however, spoke to me about the disruptive effect upon community life as migrant worers leave their homes in search of seasonal employment. Of course, not all of these to to the coast as the prospects of jobs in El Salvador, Mexico, the capital and even the United States attract these workers.

[28] Dr. Jorge Solares, of FLACSO, spoke to me of the "effervescence" of the union movement in the 1970s and the impressive ability of this movement to paralyse the government through is ability to mobilise its supporters. Following the destruction of the (primarily Ladino based) union movement, the Maya movement would grow and take its place as the country's foremost popular social movement. (Interview with Dr. Jorge Solares, July 28, 2000).

> … these movements continually exerted new pressures upon the state and the established social order. These pressures were contained by a level of repression at times unmatched anywhere else in Latin America; one generation after another of movement leaders and activists, as well as centrist political opposition leaders, was eliminated by the army and illegal paramilitary forces. Even the systematic repression failed to stop the reemergence of popular movements in one form or another, although it severely restricted their functioning. (Jonas, 2000, 20).

The Armed Conflict: 1960 – 1996:

The armed struggle against the governing civilian/military bloc that emerged followed the 1954 counter revolution began in 1960 when the youth wing of the Guatemalan Communist Party (PGT) and young military officers, who had led an unsuccessful revolt against senior officers, combined forces to form the FAR (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias). Inspired by the *foco* strategy of the Cuban revolutionaries, they commenced guerrilla operations in the eastern region of the country (Vinegrad, 1998, 210). This conflict occurred in the Ladino populated areas well removed from the Maya highlands where the ferocious counter-insurgency campaigns of the 1970s and 1980s were waged in the later years of the conflict.

By 1968, the Guatemalan army, supported by U. S. military advisers, had put an end to the armed opposition in this first theatre of operations. In the years following this initial setback, the largely Ladino[29] leadership of the armed organisations abandoned the *foco* strategy[30] as being overly militaristic and lacking a political base, and came to the conclusion that their natural support base was not the Ladino peasant of the eastern region of the country but the Maya peasant of the north and western highlands. To prepare for the

[29] Ladino is the term used in Guatemala to describe all Guatemalans who speak Spanish and are not, or do not recognise, their indigenous roots.

[30] The *foco* military strategy of guerrilla warfare refers to the practice of establishing a small guerrilla movement in the countryside and then recruit supporters from the population as the war progresses from an early stage of isolated rebel attacks to a more generalised war as the guerrilla forces grow. It is the strategy followed by the Cuban revolutionaries and later by Che Guevara in his ill-fated Bolivia campaign.

next armed confrontation with the Guatemalan state these leaders "spent several years being educated by the indigenous population and organising a political support base in the highlands before renewing armed actions later in the 1970s." (Jonas, 2000, 23).

In this the revolutionary leadership was highly perceptive. The Maya population had survived for hundreds of years as a result of its isolation from the mainstream of Guatemalan society. However, as a result of being thrown off the land and being converted into rural wage labour, the semi-proletarianised Maya peasants had become politicised by the change in their life circumstances. They brought home from the plantations where they worked the message of the need to organise to defend their rights. This contributed to the creation of a base of support for the armed opposition and a small number of Maya men and women did join the guerrilla although none rose to senior leadership positions.[31] The conditions created by the armed conflict also led to the eventual creation of a Maya movement capable of intervening politically at the national level.[32]

The results of this shift in strategy were as unexpected as they were tragic. In response to the undoubted early successes of the renewed guerrilla campaign in the late 1970s, the military massively retaliated dealing such a heavy blow to the insurgent groups and to the Maya population that lived in the areas of conflict that the guerrilla did not

[31] It would be a mistake to presume that there was deep and on-going support for the guerrilla forces among the Maya population. Certainly it is safe to say that there was sympathy for the aims of the guerrilla but over time, particularly as the war led to army attacks on Maya villages in reprisal for guerrilla activity in their area, the Maya population became increasingly wary. The attitude of the residents of Santigo Atitlán, for example, reported in Chapter 1, was typical of the views of many and that was that they would be very relieved if both parties to the conflict would withdraw from their region and leave them in peace.

[32] It is important to be careful with this concept of a politicised Maya population. The first point to note is that the politicisation occurred among the semi-proletarianised Maya, those that depended upon wages for economic survival. Of those that worked for wages, I must distinguish between landless Maya farm workers and those who supplemented their income form their small plots of land with wage labour. The other consideration is the impact the civil war had on this politicisation. Particularly after the terror of the early 1980s, many of those politicised Maya were dead, displaced or simply terrorised into silence. It is true, however, that this process of politicisation did create a sector of Maya who were to become the leaders of the emerging Pan Maya movement.

recoup its military capacity until near the end of the1980s[33] and the civilian population came, understandably, to distrust the guerrilla knowing that its very presence in their area would bring the wrath of the army down on them. The result with respect to human suffering has been well documented. (See ODHA, 1998, CEH 1999). The strategy of the Guatemalan military which was based as much on attacking the presumed civilian social base of the guerrilla as it was on attacking the insurgents themselves. Indeed, little distinction was made between them. The resulting campaign has been characterised as genocidal by both the Catholic Church (ODHA, 1998) and the Clarification Commission (CEH, 1999) in their reports.

> A major reason for this second defeat of the guerrillas and the suffering inflicted on its supporters among the population was the failure to have anticipated the scorched-earth, genocidal war unleashed by the Guatemalan security forces; hence, tens of thousands of highlands Mayas were left unprepared to defend themselves... The aim of these genocidal policies was not only to eliminate the guerrillas' popular support base but also to destroy the culture, identity, and communal structures of the indigenous populations. (Jonas, 2000, 24).

By the late 1980s important elements within the guerrilla, as they surveyed the damage to the civilian population and considered the impossibility of achieving their objectives militarily, began to realise that they would have to change strategy.[34] Nor was the armed opposition in the form of the URNG alone in this realisation.

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[33] It is interesting to note the absolute numbers of those who bore arms during the conflict. At the time of demobilisation in early 1997 the fighting forces of the URNG's four component groups (EGP, FAR, ORPA and the FU) had only 3,614 men and women in their ranks. The army had 46,000 officers and other ranks, not all of them combatants of course but the ratio of army/guerrilla is impressive when one considers that the army agreed to negotiations only after they sought for years using the most brutal methods imaginable to eradicate this small force of armed opponents (Armon, et al., et. al., 1997, 37 – 39).

[34] The URNG made its first proposal to recently elected President Cerezo in the fall of 1986 but received no reply. They would wait half a decade, in effect, for the commencement of formal negotiations. For its part, the military activity launched a "final offensive" against the URNG forces in November, 1987, just after the signing in August of the same year of the Central American Peace Accords. By 1991 the URNG was still undefeated and the army agreed to participate in the peace talks. As late as 1993, however, even after several accords in the series were signed, the army was still refusing to consider the notion that the process be UN moderated and the results be UN verified. Both of these did, in fact, occur. (See Jonas, 2000, 37-38).

> Guatemala's economic elite, which had supported authoritarian rule in the past, came to see the pariah status of the country as a liability for their business dealings, especially in the emerging world of global assembly lines, the European Union, and transnational investment opportunities. After years of U. S. sanctions for human rights abuses and European support of grassroots organising, Guatemala could not re-enter the community of nations without a definitive peace. While politically leery of other Guatemalan sectors on many issues, the business community came to recognise the economic interests involved in a move to a more open society. (Warren, 1998, 54).

The Guatemalan army, too, facing pressures from their supporters in the economic elite, international pressures arising from the broader Central American peace process and the growing realisation that they could not defeat the URNG militarily, reluctantly came to the same conclusion. (Jonas, 2000, 37 – 47).[35]

The Peace Negotiations: 1991 - 1996

It is not my intention to write a history of the peace negotiations between the Government of Guatemala and the URNG. It is, however impossible, to fully appreciate contemporary Guatemalan socio-political processes, including those in which ESEDIR and PRODESSA play a role, without understanding the provisions of the Peace Accords and something about the process through which they came into existence. Some of the Agreements,[36] such as the *Agreement on the Identify and Rights of Indigenous Peoples (AIDPI)*, speak directly to the kind of work of ESEDIR and PRODESSA do, while others, such as the *Agreement on the Strengthening of Civilian Power and on the Role of the Armed Forces in a Democratic Society*, create the conditions which allow them to do this work. In short, such provisions create the necessary political space. My treatment of the

[35] It is impossible to say precisely when the military opted for the peace process because they were deeply internally divided on this issue and at various points in time one or the other faction would have the upper hand. Jonas (2000) captures this process in her description of "The Mined Road to Peace."

[36] I will use the terms Agreements and Accords interchangeably to refer to what are known as, according to the translation, either the Peace Accords or the Peace Agreements.

Peace Agreements is one that takes as a starting point how the provisions that I touch upon affect, directly or indirectly, the work of ESEDIR and PRODESSA.

While formal negotiations between the government and the URNG did not begin until January, 1991, the stage began to be set as early as 1986 when recently elected Christian Democratic President Vincio Cerezo signed the Central American Peace Accord which provided for a national dialogue in search of peace. (Torres-Rivas, 1997, 21). As a result, the National Reconciliation Commission (NRC) was established under the leadership of a bishop, Msgr Quezada Toruño.

In 1989 the NRC convened a National Dialogue which succeeded in achieving two important things. One of these was to bring together in 15 working groups a wide range of organisations from the civil society. This initiative was a precursor to the subsequent creation of the Assembly of Civil Society which would play a significant role in the peace negotiations. (Armon, et al., et. al., 1997, 15).

The next accomplishment was a series of meetings between the URNG and the organisations of civil society including a meeting held in Ottawa in November, 1990 with the most important sectors of Guatemala's economic elite organised through the CACIF, el Comite Coordinador de Asociaciones Agricolas, Comerciales, Industriales y Financieras.[37] (Torres-Rivas, 1997, 21).

By 1991 the impact of these preliminary steps, the pressure of the international community, and the military stalemate combined to bring the protagonists to the bargaining table.

[37] The CACIF plays the role of a very powerful Etat-général of the Guatemalan ruling class. The CACIF and the military were virtually indistinguishable during the period of the war and no Agreement could be signed without the support, or least acquiescence, of CACIF.

The early negotiations resulted in the signing of two "pre-agreements", the 1991 *Agreement on Demilitarisation* and the 1992 *Agreement on Human Rights.* (Jonas, 2000, 40).

This apparent good start would prove illusionary, however. As progress was being made sectors of the army were getting increasingly nervous as they saw the impact on the Salvadorian military of the Peace Accords signed in 1992 in that country. This nervousness was reinforced with the publication the following year of that country's Truth Commission into human rights abuses committed by the El Salvadorian military. (Jonas, 2000, 41).

Furthermore, despite the fact that it was the URNG that had shown the earliest openness to a negotiated peace, even they were not clear or united on just what importance to attach to the process of negotiation. Was it a tactic to create space or a strategy to achieve social transformation? (Jonas, 2000, 32). It seems that what might have been a tactic for many of the URNG's leaders in the early stages of the process became a strategy over time.

Things were further complicated when a political crisis erupted in Guatemala in May-June of 1993 when

> ... President Serrano Elias attempted a Fujimori-style authoritarian takeover of his own government, instituted media censorship, and attempted to disband Congress, the Supreme Court, and the Constitution. A surprising alliance of business elites, union groups, students, and indigenous leaders convinced the military that such a regime would lack international and national legitimacy. The takeover's failure demonstrated the powerful fluidity of interests and factions in Guatemala and the growing citizen involvement in national politics. (Warren, 1998, 54).

These events resulted in the coming to office of the outspoken Human Rights Ombudsman Ramiro de León Carpio in June, 1993 (Lovell, 1995, 95) and the temporary

suspension of the peace negotiations. In fact, contrary to the role that one might expect from the former Human Rights Ombudsman, de León, in collaboration with "peace resisters" in the army, attempted to scuttle negotiations entirely by presenting conditions they knew to be utterly unacceptable to the URNG. This approach, however, was rejected outright by the now influential key international players and this led directly to the United Nations becoming centrally involved with the negotiating process. (Jonas, 2000, 41 – 42).

While the military remained opposed to the UN moderating the peace process their opposition was undercut by the consolidation of international pressure over which they had no influence.

The URNG, too, had to be convinced of the wisdom of U. N. involvement and the replacement by a U. N. official of Msgr Quezada Toruño as moderator but the events of 1993 convinced them that if the negotiating process was to be viable, the U. N. would have to play a central role. Consequently, late in the year a junior UN official, Jean Arnault, was named moderator of the peace process. (Jonas, 2000, 42).

The First Peace Accords of 1994:

The Framework Accord; The Agreement on a Timetable; and The Comprehensive Accord on Human Rights

Negotiations resumed in Mexico and were moderated by U.N. representative Arnault. Very quickly three agreements, two of a procedural nature and one substantive, were signed.

On January 10, 1994 the parties signed the *Framework Agreement for the Resumption of the Negotiating Process between the Government of Guatemala and the Unidad Revolucinaria Nacional Guatemalteca.*

On March 29, 1994 they signed the *Agreement on a Timetable for the Negotiation of a Firm and Lasting Peace in Guatemala* and on the same day they signed the *Comprehensive Agreeement on Human Rights.*

While the first two of these Accords were essentially procedural agreements, nonetheless both of them contained important provisions.

The Framework Agreement For The Resumption of The Negotiating Process Between The Government of Guatemala and The Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG).

The *Framework Agreement* provided for United Nations representative Arnault to play the role of moderator and, in so doing "raised the stakes by involving the UN directly." (Jonas, 2000, 71). It also provided for the establishment of "the Group of Friends" composed of Colombia, Mexico, Norway, Spain, the United States and Venezuela which would have the effect of keeping the pressure up on both parties even to the extent of engaging in serious arm twisting to unblock stalled negotiations. (See below).

The Creation of The Assembly of Civil Society (ASC)

In addition to involving the UN directly in the Peace Process, the other very significant provision in the *Framework Agreement* was its recognition that, while the negotiations were bilateral, the civil society of Guatemala had a great stake in the outcome, and agreed that an *Assembly of the Civil Society* (ASC) should be established. This would provide the institutional framework for civil organisations to debate the issues that would be coming up for negotiation and to develop positions on them. These positions would then be transmitted to the parties at the negotiating table and would be taken into consideration during negotiations. This Assembly would be chaired by Msgr

Quezada Toruño, the chair of the National Reconciliation Commission. (UN, 1998, 9 – 14).[38]

The establishment of the Assembly of the Civil Society (ASC) and the provision that its voice be heard at the negotiating table in the manner described above was the result of the fact that

> Many Guatemalans found it ironic and disconcerting that antagonistic armed forces with little experience in democracy were negotiating the fate of the nation in distant, secretive talks in Europe and Mexico. In response to these tensions, the Assembly of Civil Society set up consultative discussions with civilian leaders from a variety of social sectors to provide advisory documents for the peace process. The assembly brought together representatives of groups with very different politics and created space for debates and alternative proposals. Maya activists worked through the Co-ordinator of Organisations of the Maya People of Guatemala (COPMAGUA), which commissioned position papers from different groups and worked toward a consensus on key issues in order to influence the assembly. In this way, *popular* and Maya groups, among others, gained institutionalised representation and the opportunity to organise their own parallel meetings in a process that might otherwise have thoroughly marginalised civilian input. (Warren, 1998, 55).

Until 1993 the repression had ensured that the popular organisations or even change oriented organisations of the middle and upper classes could not operate openly, however, during the political crisis of the attempted "autocoup" of Serrano, fearing a reversal of the slow process of democratisation, the "popular forces had come together for the first time to play a role in mainstream national politics, and they even participated in a national dialogue with CACIF ...." (Jonas, 2000, 43).

It's doubtful that the negotiators who included the provision for the creating of the ASC foresaw the tremendous role it would play in the renewal of democratic political life

[38] It is important to point out that no one participated at the negotiating table except the delegation of the Government of Guatemala (which constantly changed) and the delegation of the URNG (which was basically composed of the commanders of the component organisations). The organisations of the civil society, including the Maya organisations, could only make their presence felt at the negotiations by presenting position papers outlining their point of view on the issues being discussed at the table.

in Guatemala. The importance of the ASC experience came up time and again in my interviews. Because of the repression, the established and experienced organisations of civil society, particularly the unions, had been destroyed and their leaders killed. The new organisations had no experience in intervening in a national political debate and in the case of the Maya organisations, they had no tradition whatsoever of modern, western style political involvement to draw upon. The *Framework Agreement* not only provided for the creation of the ASC but insisted that in order to bring a position to the table, the ACS member organisations had to come to a consensus among themselves and do so within the timetable established for negotiations. This requirement forced these organisations to develop both their organisational capacity and their political sophistication very quickly.

The Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights

This was one of the more significant of all the Agreements and the provisions contributed to the difficult and far from complete process of demilitarising Guatemalan society.

A number of important provisions are found in the *Human Rights Agreement* although the most controversial, that relating to the creation of a Clarification Commission, would be postponed for a separate agreement signed over a year later.

In the Agreement, both parties agreed to respect human rights in Guatemala in accordance with "the constitutional provisions in effect ... and international treaties, conventions and other instruments on the subject (of human rights) to which Guatemala is a party." (UN, 1998, 23).[39]

[39] All references to the Guatemalan Peace Accords in this work are taken from the official UN English version of the Accords.

The Government agreed to respect the autonomy and protect the freedom of action of the Public Prosecutor's Office and the Counsel for Human Rights (Section 2) and of non governmental human rights organisations and workers (Section 5).

Among the provisions was a commitment by the government to ensure that alleged human rights violators would not receive impunity. In this regard, the government undertook not to "sponsor the adoption of legislative or any other type of measures designed to prevent the prosecution and punishment of persons responsible for human rights violations." (UN, 1998, 25). As we shall see, the Congress attempted, partially successfully, to circumvent this provision.

In addition the government undertook to "initiate in the legislature necessary legal amendments to the Penal Code so that enforced or involuntary disappearances and summary or extra-judicial executions may be characterised as crimes of particular gravity and punished as such ..." (UN, 1998, 25).

The Agreement also recognised the existence of, and the need to put an end to, the illegal and/or clandestine security forces (Section 4). In a country where the government had for years resolutely denied that such units existed or that such crimes occurred, the very inclusion of this provision was a significant step forward and a public recognition of what human rights and victims rights organisations had been saying for years.

The Agreement also committed the government to ensuring that the infamous Civil Patrols, which pitted neighbour against neighbour and through which the military was simultaneously augmenting its numbers and militarising Guatemalan society, were truly voluntary and if instances were found where recruitment was forced – which most of it was – that this would be ended. (UN, 1998, 26 – 27).

Of particular significance was the reaffirmation of both parties' intention, provided for in the *Framework Agreement*, to invite the UN to establish a Verification Mission that, in addition to verifying the implementation of the human rights situation would be "a component of the overall verification of the firm and lasting peace agreement." The UN Verification Mission would be an important component of ensuring that the process of implementation of the Accords (or failure to implement) was documented by outside forces thus ensuring that an element of accountability was injected into the process.

This Agreement was to take effect upon signing, however, so as to make their point dramatically, the peace resisters, those opposed to a negotiated settlement both inside and outside the military, struck back dramatically by assassinating the head of the Constitutional Court just days after the Agreement was signed. (Jonas, 2000, 44 – 45).

The June 1994 Accords

The last two agreements of 1994 were signed in Oslo in June. These were the *Agreement on Resettlement of the Population Groups Uprooted by the Armed Conflict* and the *Agreement on the Establishment of the Commission to Clarify Past Human Rights Violations and Acts of Violence that have Caused the Guatemalan Population to Suffer.* This latter Agreement became known as the Clarification Commission.

The Agreement on Resettlement of The Population Groups Uprooted by the Armed Conflict

The *Agreement on Resettlement* dealt with returning home or to "another place of their choice in Guatemalan territory" (UN, 1998, 38 – 39) of those people both inside and outside of Guatemala who had been forced to leave their homes and spend years in hiding, in military controlled "model villages" or in exile in camps in Mexico.

It is noteworthy that included in the definition of "uprooted population" are "internally displaced persons, either dispersed or in groups, including the *popular resistance groups* (my italics, MOS)." (UN, 1998, 38). The popular resistance groups, as well as communities that spent years in Mexico, form a part of the population which the ESEDIR primary school teacher training program serves in the Ixcán region in the north of the country. The popular resistance groups had been previously considered to be an extension of the URNG (Jonas, 2000, 74) and thus were explicitly targets of the counter insurgency campaign of the army. Their inclusion served to legitimise them as *bona fide* displaced persons.

The government agreed to facilitate the legalities relating to everything from replacing missing personal documentation to normalising matters relating to land ownership especially where land owned by the returnees is occupied by others on the basis that the land was voluntarily abandoned. Where it proves impossible or impractical to return the landowner's rightfully owned but presently occupied land the government undertook to provide compensation and seek alternative places to settle those so affected.[40]

Another provision that is important to the work of ESEDIR with the formerly displaced populations is the recognition by the government of the validity of the education of teachers and health promoters in these communities and the promise to recognise their informal studies and grant them equivalent credit. (UN, 1998, 41).

Finally, the Agreement undertook

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[40] In practice this had not always led to entirely happy results. Many of the communities exiled for years in Mexico could not return to their own villages and were relocated in already existing communities which did not welcome them for a variety of reasons including: political reasons (the returnees were viewed as guerrilla sympathisers and the established communities were viewed as collaborators); religious reasons (the returnees were predominately Catholic and in some cases the established communities were Evangelical) and for reasons related to having to share the land.

> ... to eliminate any form of de facto or *de jure* discrimination against women with regard to access to land, housing, credits and participation in development projects. The gender-based approach shall be incorporated into the policies, programs and activities of the comprehensive development strategy. (UN, 1998, 46 – 47).

Despite what Susanne Jonas calls this Agreement's "positive potential for an (unspecified post war) future" (Jonas, 2000, 74), it was not greeted very enthusiastically by the refugee communities. The vagueness of the provisions for resettlement coupled with the fact that the Agreement would not come into effect until a final Peace Accord was signed did not impress the presumed beneficiaries of these measures. Nor would this be the last Agreement that failed to satisfy those who felt their aspirations were being bargained away at the negotiating table. Indeed, such was the case with the very next Agreement that was signed.

Agreement on the Establishment of the Commission to Clarify Past Human Rights Violations and Acts of Violence That Have Caused the Guatemalan Population to Suffer.

The last Agreement to be signed in 1994 came to be known as the *Historical Clarification Commission* or even more simply the *Truth Commission.*

This very short Agreement with the very long name would be the most controversial of all the Accords and would only be signed only after the international community exerted considerable pressure upon both parties to modify thier initial position. The URNG's opening position was that the Commission had to have the right to "name names." The Government delegation, which included three Generals, took the position that there would be no *Clarification Commission* at all. The Generals had been influenced by the Truth Commission report in El Salvador which had, in fact, identified human rights violators by name and had led the Guatemalan military to vow that this would not happen to them. As the result, in Guatemala

> The Agreement finally forged under these pressures established a commission to shed light on past human rights crimes, but without naming the names of the individuals responsible or having any faculties to prosecute them. (Jonas, 2000, 64).

The Accord was greeted with such scepticism both among the public and within the ranks of the URNG that the URNG leadership felt compelled to issue a statement in which it "acknowledged the weaknesses of this Accord and recognised the deep unease with which many viewed the peace process to date." (Vinegrad, 1998, 219).

We shall see that despite this initial disappointment, the actual work of the Clarification Commission and its final report did not disappoint the public.

The Agreement on the Identity and Rights of Indigenous Peoples (AIDPI):

While all of the Accords noted above are important to Guatemala and touch upon ESEDIR and PRODESSA's work, the next accord to be signed, the *Agreeement on the Identify and Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (AIDPI), is undoubtedly the most central to the work of ESEDIR given that it deals specifically with the aspirations of the Maya people, as articulated by such national Maya umbrella groups as the COPMAGUA. (See Chapt. 5).

Despite the fact that the AIDPI has been characterised by the peace resisters as being a document that puts indigenous rights before those of the Ladino minority and in so doing they have successfully used this Agreement to fuel opposition to the implementation process, such a critique is less than truthful. The AIDPI can be seen as representing a carefully considered approach to forge national unity on the basis of an inclusionary strategy. This claim is based on an approach which values intercultural dialogue and the peaceful coexistence of Guatemala's diverse ethnic communities based on a recognition of the unique contribution to the country of all cultures present within its border. This, in turn, can only happen by giving access to all of Guatemala's national ethnic groups to the rights,

responsibilities and benefits of full citizenship.[41] How effectively this can happen in a highly stratified society like Guatemala is, of course, another matter and the efforts of organisations like ESEDIR and PRODESSA to achieve this will be examined in detail elsewhere in this study.

The Main Provisions of the AIDPI:

Preamble:

The preamble defines the indigenous people of Guatemala as the Garifuna people,[42] the Xinca people[43] and the Maya people. The Mayas are defined in the Accord as a people which "consist of various socio-cultural groups having a common origin."[44] (United Nations, 1998, 59).

The Agreement states that "because of its history, conquest, colonisation, movements and migrations, the Guatemalan nation is multiethnic, multicultural and

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[41] Roger Plant makes this point as follows: the AIDPI "is not merely an instrument concerned with the identity and rights of one ethnic sector. Implicitly, one can argue that it is trying to do two things at once. By promoting greater indigenous participation in society, and by recognising and strengthening the specific cultures and institutions of the Maya and other indigenous people, it aims to create a new model of a more inclusive nation." (Plant, 1998, 81). Jorge Solares (1999) in a work cited elsewhere in this study, takes the opposite position, arguing that the AIDPI, in effect, renders Ladinos invisible because it is only indigenous concerns that are dealt with in it. He makes the point that if the Maya movement is to be successful in promoting the transformations that it advocates, it will have to do so in alliance with popular ladino sectors because otherwise these will be successfully manipulated by the traditional elites as was done in the campaign during the 1999 referendum on constitutional change

[42] The Garifuna people are a black Afro-Caribbean peoples who are found in Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. They are the descendants of escaped slaves and the local indigenous peoples. While only numbering in the thousands their culture is a vibrant but threatened part of the Caribbean coast of the three countries mentioned.

[43] The Xinca people number less than 300 and as a people are on the verge of extinction. They live in some isolated communities in the otherwise Mayan areas of the western highlands.

[44] There was a debate in Guatemala the mid 1990s as the Peace Accords were being negotiated as to whether there is a Maya people. Morales (1998) argued that the indigenous peoples of Guatemala, far from being a single Maya people, are the descendants of 22 distinct peoples, many of whom were actually enemies to each other, whose original cultures have been transformed with the passage of time as the result of contact with the Ladino culture. These indigenous peoples, Morales argues, far from being an identifiable people distinct from the Ladino population, are part of a new emerging Guatemalan nation and culture combining indigenous and Ladino traits into a new synthesis. Advocates of the Maya perspective, which is by far the dominant perspective and the one which forms the basis of the Peace Accords, argue that the 22 language groups were 22 branches of a distinct Maya people with a common cosmovision and common cultural traits which remain viable today albeit in altered form. (Rodriguez, 1992).

multilingual in nature." (United Nations, 1998, 59). This assertion is very important because it sets the tone for a *national* reform rather than a *separatist* or *regionalist autonomist* approach to redressing indigenous grievances and because that conceptualisation of Guatemala forms the basis for much of the rest of the Agreement.[45]

The preamble undertakes to recognise and respect the various rights of the indigenous people "within the unity of the Guatemalan nation, and subject to the indivisibility of the territory of the Guatemalan State." (United Nations, 1998, 59).

Finally the preamble recognises that the historical and contemporary discrimination to which the indigenous people have been subjected impedes the consolidation of national unity and impedes the achievement of the country's "economic, political, social and cultural potential." (United Nations, 1998, 60).

Specific Provisions:

1. Identity of Indigenous Peoples

The first provision of the AIDPI recognises the identity of the indigenous peoples and makes the connection between constructing national unity and "respect for and the exercise of political, cultural, economic and spiritual rights of all Guatemalans." (UN, 1998, 61). Operationally the Agreement mandates that this be formalised through an amendment to the Constitution.

[45] The absence of any reference in the Agreements to regional autonomy (the closest reference to the notion of region is regionalisation in the sense of decentralisation), is a significant political statement demarcating this process from one based on the creation of indigenous controlled autonomous regions, an idea which had a great deal of currency after the creation in Nicaragua, of the two Autonomous Regions on the Atlantic Coast. Given that there are few areas of the country where Maya languages and cultures don't intermingle coupled with the fact that given that Guatemala in the past lost large tracts of land to Mexico and more recently lost Belize, at first to the British and then to independence, any regional autonomy rhetoric is seen as impractical at best and down right foolhardy at worst. This issue is taken up again in Chapter 8.

2. Struggle Against Discrimination

The Agreement formally recognises the existence of racial discrimination and the need to change "thinking, attitudes and behaviour." Operationally this takes the form of providing for making ethnic discrimination a criminal offence; reviewing legislation to abolish any law that has discriminatory impact; creating offices for the defence of indigenous rights so as to promote the effective protection of such rights. (UN, 1998, 62).

Similar provisions are included that are specifically directed at protecting the rights of indigenous women and call for making sexual harassment a criminal offence, establishing an Office for the Defence of Indigenous Women's Rights and implement the Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

In addition the Agreement calls upon the Government of Guatemala to incorporate into the Criminal Code the provisions of the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination and to pass in the Congress all the provisions of ILO Convention No. 169, Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989.[46]

3. Cultural Rights

The Cultural Rights section of the AIDPI is one of the longest and undoubtedly the one that most directly bears upon ESEDIR's work as it contains the educational provisions of the Peace Accords.

[46] Cojtí writes that "Convention 169 is an international convention that outlines the minimum rights of the indigenous peoples of the world. Its basic premise is that the indigenous people are permanent or eternal and the basic concepts which define them are respect and participation. It also employs the concept of peoples and not groups or populations. The Convention does not push for assimilation and uniformity but rather it supports pluralism and the social, economic, cultural and political distinctiveness of the indigenous peoples. It provides space for the traditional law of the indigenous peoples and for the creation and control of their own institutions." (Cojtí, 1998, 72).

One of the provisions of the Cultural section states that "Maya culture is the original basis of Guatemalan culture and, in conjunction with the other indigenous cultures, is an active and dynamic factor in the development and progress of Guatemalan society" and it goes on to say that "the development of the national culture is therefore inconceivable without recognition and promotion of the culture of the indigenous people." (UN, 1998, 64). To achieve this, it is stated that "educational and cultural policy must be oriented to focus on recognition, respect and encouragement of indigenous cultural values." (UN, 1998, 64).[47] While the indigenous people themselves are seen as the authors of their cultural development, the state is accorded an important role.

> The role of the state is to support that development by eliminating obstacles to the exercise of this right, adopting the necessary legislative and administrative measures to strengthen indigenous cultural development in all fields covered by the state and ensuring the participation of indigenous persons in decisions on the planning and execution of cultural programs and projects through their organisations and institutions. (UN, 1998, 64 – 65).

Specifically, with respect to areas of the culture that receive special attention in the Agreement, we find included issues such as the use of indigenous languages and the reform of education so as to reflect the culture and contributions of both the Ladino minority and the indigenous majority. Also included are the right to use indigenous names including people's names and place names; recognition of indigenous spirituality and values;

[47] The Peace Accords, as previously noted, recognise peoples other than the Maya people making up the indigenous people of Guatemala. They also recognise the Garifuna and Xinca peoples. Certainly the Garifuna, in the areas where they live, constitute a sizable population capable of making their presence felt politically and culturally, the fact that the Maya people represent a majority of the country's population and are numbered in the millions means that in practice it is the Maya people whose interests will weigh most heavily when the Accords speak of indigenous rights. At the same time it must be said that the Maya organisations have been scrupulous in tying the interests of the minority indigenous peoples to their interests in subsequent negotiations and activities.

protection of temples, ceremonial centres and holy places; use of indigenous dress; recognition of indigenous science and technology and provisions relating to the mass media. All of these are important and all have played an important role in the affirmation of the Maya people in recent years. I will limit myself to reviewing two of these cultural themes: language and education given their direct relevance to the work of ESEDIR and PRODESSA.

(i) Language:

The AIDPI recognises the importance of recovering and protecting indigenous languages and of promoting and development and use of those languages. To that end, the Government undertook to grant official status to indigenous languages and to list those languages in the Constitution that would be recognised, promoted and protected. In addition the government undertook to

> ... promote the use of all indigenous languages in the educational system, to enable children to read and write in their own tongue or in the language most commonly spoken in the community to which they belong and [... to] protect bilingual and intercultural education and institutions such as the Maya schools and other indigenous educational projects. (UN, 1998, 65).

The importance of these provisions which provide for the use of indigenous languages in school cannot be overstated as the level of illiteracy in these languages was and is in excess of 90% and to the extent that Maya children spend any time in a school setting at all, the majority of those who do, do so in Spanish language unilingual schools where the Maya languages are not taught and/or actively discouraged. (Tay Coyoy, 1996, 47 – 65).

Implementation of the language provisions, as any Canadian knows, will not be simple, especially given that there are over 20 indigenous languages. Warren reports that some Maya leaders want all languages to be given equal status to Spanish while others,

mindful of the cost of translation and the practical barriers such an approach would put in the way of implementation, argue for making Q'ichee', the dominant Maya language which is spoken by about 1 million people, the "official" Maya language on a par with Spanish and this would be "complemented by the use of regional languages for public services, local schools, courts, and administration." (Warren, 1998, 59).

It is not hard to predict that this point will be the subject of heated debate over a long period of time both within the Maya movement and in the larger society.

(ii) Educational Reform:

The Agreement states that the educational system "must be responsive to the cultural and linguistic diversity of Guatemala" and that it must recognise and strengthen "the cultural identity of indigenous peoples" and make education accessible and the curriculum inclusive.

In order to achieve this the government undertook a series of commitments including the following reforms:

- Decentralise and regionalise the system in order to adapt it to linguistic and cultural needs ...;
- Incorporate the educational concepts of the Maya and other indigenous peoples, particularly in the philosophical, scientific, artistic, pedagogical, historical, linguistic and socio-political areas, as part of the overall reform of the educational system;
- Expand and promote intercultural bilingual education and place emphasis on the study and knowledge of indigenous languages at all educational levels;

- Include in educational syllabuses programs that strengthen national unity through respect for cultural diversity;
- Recruit and train indigenous bilingual teachers ... to develop education in their communities ...; and
- Increase the budget of the Ministry of Education, so that a substantial part of this increase can be allocated to the implementation of educational reform. (UN, 1998, 69 – 70).[48]

The Agreement undertook to continue programs already in existence such as the Maya School program and the Bilingual Education for Indigenous Peoples program. The Agreement also agreed to promote the establishment of a Maya University and the National Council of Maya Education, issues of high priority to ESEDIR and PRODESSA.

Finally with respect to education, the Agreement provided for the establishment of a joint commission (COPARE) with government and indigenous organisation representatives whose mandate was to design an educational reform based upon these principles. Participation in this joint commission, the preparation of its Report and the follow-up to it would become a major commitment for ESEDIR and PRODESSA in subsequent years is considered at length in Chapter 9.

4. Civil, Political, Social and Economic Rights

As important to ESEDIR and PRODESSA as the education provisions in the AIDPI are the provisions relating to civil, political, social and economic rights. Indeed, it is difficult to separate the educational work of ESEDIR and the community development work of PRODESSA and the focus of each of these organisations is inextricably

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[48] For a discussion of the deficiencies of the public educational system as it affects the Maya population, see Chapter 9.

intertwined with the advancement of the civic, political, social and economic rights of the Maya people at both the national level and at the community level.

The first provision in the section on civil, political, social and economic rights in a subsection entitled Constitutional Framework is the undertaking by the Government to promote a constitutional reform which would define Guatemala as a "multiethnic, multicultural and multilingual" nation. Subsequent provisions, under the sub-title Local Indigenous Communities and Authorities seek to operationalise at the community level how this provision, so radical in the context of Guatemalan history, would function.

The AIDPI recognises that the local community plays a particularly important role in preserving the indigenous culture and that an important aspect of that is "the role of the community authorities that were constituted in accordance with the customary norms of the communities, in the management of their affairs."[49] The Agreement states

> Recognising the role of the communities, within the framework of municipal autonomy, in exercising the right of indigenous peoples to determine their own development priorities, particularly in the fields of education, health, culture and the infrastructure, the Government undertakes to strengthen the capacity of such communities in this area.
>
> To this end, and in order to promote the participation of the indigenous communities in the decision-making process in all matters which affect them the Government shall promote a reform of the Municipal Code. (UN, 1998, 72 – 73).

[49] The reference to the "customary norms of the communities" refers to the highly controversial issue (both in Guatemala and in Canada) of the relationship between indigenous traditional law/custom and the norms of the dominant legal order. There is, in fact, an entire section of the AIDPI devoted to this issue wherein the government undertakes to "recognise the right of the indigenous communities to manage their own internal affairs in accordance with their customary norms ..." (UN, 1998, 76). While, as with so many other points touched upon in the Accords, this one has been far from resolved, it certainly is very much on the political agenda (See, for example, Seider 1998 c).

The Agreement then outlines certain provisions that would be incorporated into the Municipal Code including selection of community leaders, respect for customary law and provisions ensuring that the municipalities have the necessary financial resources to be able to be "the instruments of their own development." (UN, 1998, 73). [50]

Another key provision of the AIDPI is the provision for the political participation of indigenous people at all level of decision-making. Recognising the absolute exclusion of indigenous people in decisions that affect their lives, the Agreement states that

> ... it is necessary to institutionalise the representation of indigenous peoples at the local, regional and national levels and to ensure their free participation in the decision-making process in ... national life.
>
> The Government undertakes to promote legal and institutional reforms to facilitate, regulate and guarantee such participation. It also undertakes to plan such reforms with the participation of representatives of the indigenous organisations through the establishment of a joint commission on reform ... (UN, 1998, 74 – 75).

Closely related to this issue of local power and participation at the municipal level is the question of regionalisation by which is meant "the advisability of having a regional administration based on far-reaching decentralisation and deconcentration,[51] the pattern of which reflects economic, social, cultural, linguistic and environmental criteria." To achieve this, the Government undertook

> ... to regionalise the administration of the educational, health and cultural services of the indigenous peoples on the basis of linguistic criteria; in addition, it undertakes to facilitate the effective participation of community representatives in the management of education and culture at the local level in order to guarantee efficiency and relevance." (UN, 1998, 74).

[50] The issue of increasing the financial viability of the local government and the evolution of "local power" will be examined at some length in Chapter 6.

[51] Deconcentration, or *deconcentración*, can be thought of as an administrative restructuring that disperses some decision-making geographically (decentralisation) but keeps it firmly in the hands of government decision-makers.

5. Joint Commissions

To study certain provisions, AIDPI promised to establish three Commissions: an Educational Reform Commision; a commission on indigenous land issues and how to increase the participation of indigenous people in national life. These Commission were to have an equal number of Government and Indigenous members, the latter to be selected by the indigenous organisations of the Assembly of Civil Society.

All three of these Commissions were, in fact, established and we will study the work of one of them, the COPARE Commission on Educational Reform, in Chapter 9.

The AIDPI: Some Summary Comments

Jonas describes the AIDPI as containing "far-reaching changes." It was, she noted, "considered a landmark achievement for a country whose population is 60 percent indigenous." (Jonas, 2000, 45). She observed, however, that despite this "by no means did it fulfil all the demands of Guatemala's organised indigenous movement, but it did lay the basis for future gains." (Jonas, 2000, 45).

Warren writes of concerns about AIDPI expressed by the Maya leadership themselves who

> ... hold that the accord process was seriously compromised by secrecy, limited Maya input, and disregard of indigenous norms of consultation with communities and elders. Of great concern is the fact that the final document dealt only obliquely with collective rights. Major issues such as the recognition of regional autonomy, historic land rights, and the officialisation of Maya leadership norms were deemed irreconcilable and dropped. In practice, governmental "promises to promote" the various legislative reforms outlined in the accords left many loopholes and ambiguities in a political system where anti-reform forces are experienced and well-organised. (Warren, 1998, 56).

This latter point, of course, anticipates the serious issues of implementation that have plagued the Peace Accords since they were signed.

Despite these concerns, on balance the Maya leadership see the AIDPI, and the process within the Assembly of Civil Society, as an important step forward for their people.

> ... the decision to make indigenous rights a separate stage in the peace negotiations – which, after all, were explicitly convened to demobilise guerrilla and counterinsurgency forces and establish the framework for political peace – signified a breakthrough for the movement. After summarising critiques of the assembly's process, Mayanist representative José Serech reported that some Maya groups nevertheless concluded: "The accord widens and opens space in all levels of national life ... space that until our time has been historically reserved by the colonisers and their descendants. It is a formal instrument to combat racism." (Warren, 1998, 56 – 57).

A somewhat less ambiguous assessment of the AIDPI was provided in an interview I had with Manuel Salazar, a Maya whose career includes time as the Deputy Minister of Education and who was a signatory to this Agreement in his capacity as a member of the Government's negotiating team. I asked him what he had hoped to achieve through his participation in the negotiating process and he identified seven points that he wanted addressed in this Accord.

> The first is that the Maya, Garifuna and Xinca peoples be recognised legitimately as peoples; the second is that the State recognise and give official recognition to the use of the local Maya language particularly with respect to education, the administration of justice and public administration; a third aspiration was to achieve through this national agreement the recognition that the Guatemalan nation is multiethnic, multilingual and multicultural; a fourth is to recognise the existence and validity of Maya spirituality; another is the recognition of the traditional ways to resolve conflict and administer community justice; a sixth .... is that the State promote a solution to the land problem ...; and a seventh which is the need on the part of the Nation to come to an intercultural understanding between all the peoples and nations that form part of the Guatemalan nation. (Interview with Miguel Salazar, 28 July, 2000, Guatemala City).

I have gone through the AIDPI with these comments in mind and it seems clear that Lic. Salazar's hopes were realised although, of course, implementation is another matter.

The Changing Political Context:

The AIDPI was signed on March 31, 1995 and the next Agreement, the *Agreement on Social and Economic Aspects and the Agrarian Situation*, would not be signed for 14 months, May 6, 1996. Much would change in the intervening period.

President León de Carpio's administration, which was only a care-taker government that filled in after the failure of Serrano's "autogolpe" and his subsequent exile, was coming to an end. The November, 1995 elections would pit the PAN, whose presidential candidate was the aristocratic businessman Alvaro Arzú, against the FGR, the party of former dictator General Ríos Montt.[52] Also on the ballot was the FDNG, a party formed from the popular left drawn from the growing social movement represented in the Assembly of Civil Society.

The URNG, which had always taken the position that elections should be boycotted, called upon its sympathisers to vote. This signalled a switch from relying on armed struggle to seeking to achieve political ends through peaceful means. The URNG also agreed to suspend its military operations during the last two weeks of the election campaign. (Jonas, 2000, 46).

Arzú defeated the Ríos Montt candidate, Portillo, by a slim 2% margin in the second round of voting as no candidate achieved a majority in November. This result has

[52] The 1985 constitution prohibits anyone who took power in Guatemala illegally from later running for President. Rios Montt had led a military coup and presided over a brutal military regime in 1982 and was thus ineligible. As a result Alfonso Portillo, and not Rios Montt, ran as the FGR candidate in both 1995 and 1999. Portillo, the defeated FGR candidate would have his day, however, as he won the 1999 election and is now President. Rios Montt, with his long shadow, is the president of the Congress.

to be considered the best outcome possible because it is hard to imagine that a Portillo administration would have been able (or even inclined) to see the negotiating process through to completion.[53] While the FDNG only won 6 of the 80 congressional seats, it was enough to make them the third largest party in the Congress while a number of FDNG or *Movimiento Civico* candidates won races for mayor including in Guatemala's second city, Quetzaltenago.[54] (Jonas, 2000, 47).

Even before his narrow victory, Arzú initiated secret contacts with the URNG and soon after taking office he showed his seriousness about the peace process through "shake ups in the army and police to purge the most corrupt elements." (Jonas, 2000, 51). In response, the URNG halted offensive armed actions. The government, for its part, halted offensive counterinsurgency operations. (Jonas, 2000, 51). This marked the de facto end to the war.

The other significant factor that characterised the period between the signing of the AIDPI and the *Agreement on Social and Economic Aspects of the Agrarian Situation*

> ... was the presence and active functioning of MINUGUA throughout Guatemala. Although the actual human rights situation remained fairly dismal, MINUGUA represented the first direct, on-the-ground, ongoing

[53] Jonas speculates that Arzú's "patrician/ruling class background" allowed him to feel "less beholden or intimidated by the army" than his less socially well-situated predecessors (Jonas, 2000, 51). Arzú appointed a "centre left peace cabinet" and began to treat the URNG as a negotiating partner rather than as an enemy. Jonas, who met Arzú in a 1994 working session in the U. S. which informally brought together Guatemalan political and business leaders with URNG representatives, describes herself as "particularly struck by Arzú's openness to dialogue with political/ideological opponents." (Jonas, 2000, 67). It would seem that Arzú was an example of the right person at the right time.

[54] The *Movimiento Civicos* are an interesting political phenomenon as they allow people who either do not feel that any of the existing political parties represent them or, particularly as the community level, feel that party politics divides the community, to launch campaigns for municipal councils without getting involved n the complications of partisan party life. One ESEDIR graduate, for example, successfully ran for Mayor as a *Moviemiento Civico* candidate (Bernardo Ramírez in Cabricán) while others, taking a different approach, have run as candidates for the FDNG, a left-wing party founded during the peace negotiations (as was the case with the unsuccessful candidacy of PRODESSA Deputy Director Daniel Domingo in Aguacatán).

> international presence in Guatemala, and this shifted the balance of forces within the country. (Jonas, 2000, 47).[55]

The UN's role, however, was openly opposed by most of Guatemala's elite, especially after their El Salvadorian counterparts complained to them about the UN's work in that country. Arzú did, in fact, respond to this sentiment and worked to limit the UN's verification role both before and after the final Agreements were signed.

The Agreement on Social and Economic Aspects and the Agrarian Situation:

This comprehensive and controversial Agreement was signed in Mexico City on May 6, 1996. It is comprehensive in that its provisions touch upon a long list of social and economic issues that range from encouraging democratic decision-making at the community level, to addressing the discrimination systematically practised against women, to the role of the state in providing social services, to mention only a few. As its title suggests, this Accord also deals with one of the most difficult issues facing rural Guatemala – land tenure. It is controversial because of all of the Accords, it is undoubtedly the least specific and can be thought of more as an document that "opens door" rather than one that prescribes specific steps towards solutions. I shall return to these concerns after reviewing the provisions of the Agreement.

In the Preamble the Agreement takes as its starting point the need to establish a firm and lasting peace based on "social and economic development directed towards the common good, meeting the needs of the whole population" recognising that the socio-

[55] MINUGUA, la Misión de las Naciones Unidades en Guatemala, is the name given t the UN Verification Mission. Although provided for in the June Accord it didn't arrive in Guatemala until November – its absence corresponded to a worsening of the war and of human rights violations which proceeded and followed upon the signing of the Human Rights Accord (Jonas, 2000, 45) an act which can only be attributed to the "peace resisters" sending out strong messages as they had with the assassination a few months previously of the head of the Constitutional Court following the singing of the first Human Rights Accord.

economic conditions in the country "represented a source of conflict and instability." (UN, 1998, 87).

The *Agreement on Social and Economic Aspects and the Agrarian Situation* states that

> Socio-economic development requires social justice, as one of the building blocks of unity and national solidarity, together with sustainable economic growth as a condition for meeting the people's social needs. (UN, 1998, 87).

The negotiators agreed upon a clearly Keynesian role for the state in achieving the desired outcomes:

> The State should pursue democratisation in order to expand those possibilities for participation and strengthen its role as a leader of national development, as a legislator, as a source of public investment and a provider of services and as a promoter of consensus-building and conflict resolution. (UN, 1998, 88).

Democratisation and Participatory Development

The first provisions of the Agreement addressed the issue of democratisation and participatory development. These sections state the importance of democratising and making more participatory the process of social and economic development and seeking consensus-building through "effective citizen participation in identifying, prioritising and meeting their needs." (UN, 1998, 88). The Agreement states that citizen participation doesn't simply lead to democracy but also contributes to productivity and economic growth.

To achieve this, there is provision for including organised groups in the process of social and economic decision-making, including those representing rural and urban workers and small farmers.

To facilitate participation and consensus building, the Agreement provides for the decentralisation to the departmental and/or municipal level the identification of the need for and the subsequent delivery of government services.

There then follows a number of measures designed to promote such popular participation all the while reinforcing the state's management capacity. These provide for decentralising government services and strengthening the capacity of the municipalities to play an enhanced role[56] in local development and the delivery of decentralised services.[57]

The Agreement notes the importance of the "active participation" of women and provides for eliminating all forms of discrimination against them by recognising

> ... the equal rights of women and men in the home, in the workplace, in the production sector and in social and political life, and ensuring that women have the same opportunities as men, particularly with regard to access to credit, land ownership and other ... resources. (UN, 1998, 93).

Specific provisions then follow relating to women and education, housing, health, and labour; women's right to participate in all levels of decision making and finally a commitment to revise national legislation and regulations so as to eliminate

> "... all forms of discrimination against women in terms of economic, social, cultural and political participation, and to give effect to the government commitments deriving from the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women." (UN, 1998, 94).

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[56] Key to this component is the work of the National Association of Municipalities in strengthening the capacity of local municipalities to handle these functions. (See chapter 6)

[57] Demetrio Cojti Cuxil, the Maya intellectual who is, at the time of writing, is the Deputy Minister of Education in the FGR Government of President Portillo wrote in 1997 of the civil service, that it was " .... 'obese and inoperative'. The public employee is unmotivated and inactive. The unions have won extra power which allows them to block state policies. For this reason, policy on legislative changes frequently do not pass through key offices of the central government. Here centralism and inoperability go hand in hand. This inoperability of the state bureaucracy has gone and goes against the achievement of indigenous rights." (Cojti, 1998, 67).

Social Development:

This section makes a strong statement in favour of strong state action in the economy and with respect to social well-being of the population with a view to "correcting social inequities and deficiencies, both by steering the course of development and by making public investments and providing universal social services." (UN, 1998, 95). In response to what is called "the population's urgent demands", the Government undertook to increase "significantly" the budgets of health, education and job creation.

Agrarian Situation and Rural Development

The Agreement addresses one of the most difficult issues to face Guatemala, the land question. The systematic treatment of this issue is, arguably, the first time it was dealt with seriously since the end of the Revolution of 1944 – 54.

The Agreement speaks of the "absolute necessity" of agrarian reform and notes the concentration of land ownership and the relationship of that issue to poverty and extreme poverty in the countryside.

It is recognised that solving this problem will not be easy and that it involves dealing with all facets of rural life ranging

> ... from modernisation of production and cultivation methods to environmental protection, as well as security of property, adequate use of the land and of the labour force, labour protection and a more equitable distribution of resources and the benefits of development. This is also a social process whose success depends not only on the state, but also on a combination of efforts on the part of the organised sectors of society, in the awareness that the common good requires breaking with the patterns and prejudices of the past and seeing new and democratic forms of coexistence. (UN, 1998, 109).

Noting that what is called the "essential elements of a global strategy for rural development" are outlined in previously signed Agreements, the Government undertook, in line with these provisions

> ... to promote an integral strategy covering the multiple elements which make up agrarian structure, including land ownership and the use of natural resources; credit systems and mechanisms; manufacturing and marketing; agrarian legislation and legal security; labour relations; technical assistance and training; the sustainability of natural resources and the organisation of the rural population. (UN, 1998, 110).

There then follows a variety of provisions designed to operationalise this undertaking including participation (strengthening the capacity of rural organisations); gaining access to land (land trust and funding mechanisms); technical assistance; legal reforms (to, among other things, protect communal land); labour protection and environmental protection.

Modernisation of Government Services and Fiscal Policy

Assuming it has the will to play a proactive role in fostering its country's socio-economic growth, a competent public administration and an adequate tax base are essential preconditions to being able to play such a role.[58]

With respect to the modernisation of the state, the government committed itself to a measure that contributes to, although it should not be viewed as synonymous with, local power, an important theme which is developed in Chapter 6.[59] The government will

> ... deepen the decentralisation and redistribution of the powers, responsibilities and resources concentrated in the central government in order to modernise, render effective and streamline government services. Decentralisation should ensure the transfer of decision-making power and sufficient resources to the appropriate levels (local, municipal, departmental and regional) so as to meet the needs of socio-economic

[58] A book length study could (and undoubtedly will) be written on the issue of tax collection and tax reform in Guatemala. Guatemala has one of the lowest levels of taxation in Latin America and one of the lowest levels tax collection in Latin America. In short, those that should pay, don't. As a result Guatemala's expenditures in health, education, social services, infrastructure and all other basic services is dismally low. Jonas details the successful battle against tax reform conducted in the early days following the signing of the Peace Accords. (Jonas, 2000, 169 – 174). More recent efforts to confront this problem in the form of a social contract style Pacto Fiscal involving the civil society and the government are being met with great skepticism. Jonas refers to the issue of taxation and fiscal policy as overshadowing even the land issue and describes this issue as "the most contested elements in the Accord." (Jonas, 2000, 80).

[59] The issue of how decentralisation can contribute to, but not be seen as being synonymous with, local power is developed in Chapter 6.

> development in an efficient way and promote close cooperation between government bodies and the population. (UN, 1998, 122).

As we shall see, the implementation of this decentralisation component of the Peace Accords, while not without difficulties and frustrations, is occurring.

Critical Evaluation of the Agreement on Social and Economic Aspects and the Agrarian Situation:

Jonas notes that the *Agreement on Social and Economic Aspects and the Agrarian Situation* contains provisions "that could open the door to possible future longer-range changes in the direction of modernising the state and the landholding structure." (Jonas, 2000, 78) and that while it made

> no immediate structural transformations, it envisioned a more just and humane development model, with a stronger social orientation and a general goal of closing the huge gap between rich and poor in Guatemala. (Jonas, 2000, 78).

As with so many of the Accords, this one too, rather than being a guarantee of the reforms provided for, or alluded to, it constitutes a document that legitimises many of the long denied aspirations of a majority of the population and facilitates the work of those that are struggling for implementation. We will return to this theme below.

With respect to the land question, the potential gains were restricted by the *real politique* of the correlation of political forces around this issue at that time.

> ... the accord did not mandate a full-fledged land reform, which was politically infeasible (unacceptable to CACIF), or a reform of articles 39 – 40 of the Constitution to stipulate the "social function of property," a long-standing demand of the Left and popular movements. Such a constitutional reform would have required a Constituent Assembly, opening up a nightmarish Pandora's box and, in any case, would have also been unacceptable to CACIF. Rather, the accord took the approach of agrarian modernisation: market-assisted land redistribution, with commitments to promoting peasants' access to land ownership and sustainable use of land resources. (Jonas, 2000, 79).

In short, the solution to the land problem contained in the Agreement was hardly a comprehensive land reform but "it outlined incipient steps towards modernizing the landholding system." (Jonas, 2000, 79).

Jonas does not accept the critique of some in the popular sector who denounced the Agreement as embodying the government's neo-liberal goals. Nor does she accept the positive spin put on the Agreement by some in the international community when they describe it as a major step forward in all respects. She comments that "on balance, both of these above interpretations appear somewhat exaggerated." She writes

> ... this accord was one of the weaker or "softer" accords: Certainly it did not resolve the massive structural inequities giving rise to the war. But in combination with other accords, it did provide the space for political forces to put those issues on the agenda. In this respect, the accord could be most positively understood not by itself but in conjunction with the rest of the accords – particularly the Accord on Indigenous Identity and Rights. In reality, this was about the best that could be expected, given the privatising, pro-business orientation of the Arzú government and the need to have CACIF and the IFIs on board for the entire peace process. And certainly the accord did provide an opportunity to begin addressing the massive problems of poverty affecting 90 percent of the Guatemalan population. (Jonas, 2000, 81).

Vinegrad supports Jonas' contention about the Accords opening doors in in the future when she notes that we should not reject out of hand "the determination of the URNG leadership to present negotiations as the art of the possible at a given moment." (Vinegrad, 1998, 220).

The Agreement on the Strengthening of Civilian Power and on the Role of the Armed Forces in a Democratic Society

In some respects this Agreement, which was signed in Mexico City on Sept. 19, 1996, was the most important of all those signed to date because, if implemented, it meant the curtailment of the counter-insurgency state and the establishment of civilian control

within the context of what the Agreement called "republican, democratic and representative system of government." (UN, 1998, 130).

The importance of this Agreement cannot be understated because no process of democratisation, no program of socio-economic justice, no human rights agenda could be implemented without (i) a modern state to facilitate it, (ii) a system of security that protected rather than threatened the well-being of the population and (iii) a military whose role was limited to protecting national sovereignty, not one of "supervising" the population through a counter-insurgency lens.

To this end the Parties to the Agreement agreed that

> Together with the agreements already signed, this Agreement seeks to create the conditions for genuine reconciliation among the people of Guatemala, based upon respect for human rights and the diversity of its peoples and on their shared determination to overcome the lack of social, economic and political opportunities, which undermines democratic coexistence and restricts the development of the nation. (UN, 1998, 130).

With respect to the modernisation of the governmental apparatus, the Agreement outlined a series of measures touching on the Executive, the Congress and the Judiciary, all of which, especially the latter two, were in deep disrepute because of incompetence and corruption. (UN, 1998, 133 – 134).

(i) Reforms Relating to the Security System:

Lack of personal security, defined both in terms of fear of death and disappearances due to political involvements, real and imagined, and in terms of fear of being the victim of common criminals is a major concern in Guatemala. While politically motivated criminal acts have diminished substantially since the end of the war (although they have not disappeared entirely as the 1998 murder of Bishop Gerardi attests), the level of crime from assaults in the street, to armed robbery to kidnappings for ransom, has reached epidemic

proportions in Guatemala. No one is safe and under such circumstances the demand for "law and order" is widely supported in Guatemala.[60]

Security is defined broadly in the Agreement and is considered to include more that security from external threat (the role of the military) or from threats to public order (the role of the police). Rather it is seen as a concept which includes respect for human rights; respect for the multicultural, multiethnic and multilingual nature of the nation and tied in with social justice, the creation of democratic institutions and the conciliation of conflicting interests. (UN, 1998, 138). Within this broad concept, the Agreement asserts that

> ... the security of the citizens and the state cannot be dissociated from the citizen's full exercise of their political, economic, social and cultural rights and duties. Social and economic imbalances, poverty and extreme poverty, social and political discrimination and corruption, among others, are risk factors and a direct threat to democratic coexistence, social peace and, hence, to democratic constitutional order. (UN, 1998, 138).

The Agreement provides for the establishment of an Advisory Council on Security to help the executive branch implement this notion of security. It also provided for the creation of a National Civil Police (PNC) to replace the various police agencies under military control. The PNC would be a professional police force that with the help of international trainers would be competent, professional and respect human rights.[61]

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[60] Everyone has their story ranging from the petty (my pocket being picked on a city bus in August, 2000) to intimidating (one friend who was robbed at the point of a machine gun in a military style operation where at least 6 gunmen set up a barricade on a major highway and robbed over 100 cars at one time) Another potentially tragic incident involved a woman who works at an institution associated with ESEDIR. She had her car stolen at a stop light by two pistol brandishing gunmen who ordered her and her daughter into the street. Her daughter, a young mother, had her infant with her and the gunmen debated taking the child for ransom but for whatever reason decided against it. Several days later the owner of the car received a phone call from a man who identified himself as a Colonel who told her he had information about the whereabouts of her car and for $5,000. said he could arrange for it to be returned to her. She hung up on him. These stories are unfortunately far more common than might be imagined.

[61] As with all of the Accords, what is provided for and what has been achieved in the succeeding almost five years, are rarely identical. I comment on the transition from the frankly counter-insurgency, military controlled Policia Nacional (PN) to the new Policia Nacional Civil (PNC) later in this chapter.

(ii) Reforms Relating to the Military:

The Agreement stated that

> The role of the Guatemalan armed forces is defined as that of defending Guatemala's sovereignty and territorial integrity; they shall have no other functions assigned to them, and their participation in other fields shall be limited to co-operative activities. (UN, 1998, 144).

The Agreement provides for promoting a number of constitutional reforms designed to put the military under civilian control, to limit the role of the military courts to military matters and to more narrowly define the role of the military in a manner consistent with democratic principles.

The Agreement also provided for the formulation of a new military doctrine which

> ... shall encompass respect for the Guatemalan Constitution, human rights, the international instruments ratified by Guatemala in the military field, protection of national sovereignty and independence, the territorial integrity of Guatemala and the spirit of the agreements on a firm and lasting peace. (UN, 1998, 145).

The Agreement also provided for, among the many provisions affecting the military, a reduction of military personal and the military budget and the reorientation of military training to reflect the new restricted role of defending national sovereignty.

With respect to related issues, the Agreement demobilised and disarmed the very divisive Civil Patrols, the existence of which had extended the military's organisation into the communities and pressed civilians into service to patrol their own communities to protect them from "subversives." Needless to say, subversives were found and summarily dealt with leaving a legacy of bitterness in the communities where executioners and victim's families live side by side, attend the same church and see each other every day.[62]

[62] As we shall see in Chapter 7, one of the communities that ESEDIR and PRODESSA work in was founded by ex-Civil Patrol members whose presence was no longer tolerated in their community of origin after the dismantling of the Civil Patrols.

Critical Observations on the Agreement on the Strengthening of Civilian Power and the Role of the Armed Forces in a Democratic Society:

Jonas has high praise for the Agreement despite certain cautions, but first the praise.

> The breadth and depth of the reforms mandated in this accord made it the linchpin of the peace process. It went well beyond what might have been expected, given the decades of military domination in Guatemalan state and society. Observers present at the jubilant signing ceremony in Mexico City characterised it as "an entire revolution, given Guatemala's recent history." Indeed, every phrase of this accord expressed an important subtext of the peace process: the great desire to make a break from the past... Combined with a commitment to full ideological pluralism and cultural pluralism ... it consummated the commitment to the de-centaurisation and democratisation of Guatemala. (Jonas, 2000, 84).

This said, the Agreement contained what Jonas calls "certain ambiguities, loopholes and omissions" including the fact that to be fully implemented, constitutional amendments are required and these involve winning the support of a two-thirds vote of Congress and approval in a national referendum, an initiative which was defeated in May, 1999.

She concludes that "despite its transformatory potential, this accord – like the others – was to be subject to the second round of 'negotiations,' the battle for implementation." (Jonas, 2000, 86).

The Remaining Agreements

Five more agreements, some of them with significant provisions, would be signed, all of them in December, 1996. They are

- The *Agreement on the Definitive Ceasefire* signed in Oslo on December 4;
- The *Agreement on Constitutional Reforms and the Electoral Regime* signed in Stockholm on December 7;
- The *Agreement on the Basis for the Legal Integration of the URNG* signed in Madrid on December 12;

- The *Agreement on the Implementation, Compliance and Verification Timetable for the Peace Agreements* signed in Guatemala City on December 29; and the once that gave force and effect to all of the others,
- The *Agreement on a Firm and Lasting Peace*, also signed in Guatemala City on December 29, 1996.

The Question of Amnesty

The only really controversial issue raised by the above listed Agreements, and it raised a storm of protest, was the amnesty extended to members of the armed forces. Its provisions provided that as long as members of the military could reasonably argue that any crime they were accused of was related to the belief that their victim was engaged in "political crimes" then they could claim immunity from prosecution. In short, if a soldier, or ex soldier, was accused of kidnap and murder, but could make an argument that he had reasonable grounds to believe that his victim was supporting the URNG, for example, he could claim immunity.

To counteract this possibility the Agreement did say that such immunity would not "extend to crimes which, under domestic law or the international treaties ratified or signed by Guatemala, are imprescriptible or are not subject to an extinction of criminal liability." (UN, 1998, 193).

The Congress, however, was anxious to protect its friends in the military and days after the signing of the Agreement, Congress passed the National Reconciliation Law.

> The conservative/rightist-dominated Congress was far more disposed than the negotiating teams to amnesty virtually all crimes committed by the army. Only the FDNG and the Unión del Centro Nacional (UCN) ... voted against it. Under extreme pressure from domestic and international human rights organisations, Congress incorporated into the final version of the law exemptions from amnesty covering the crimes of genocide, torture, and forced disappearances, as well as for crimes involving the

> undue use of force against persons being held in custody of the armed forces. Not exempted from amnesty were extrajudicial executions that did not fall under the previous categories; this became the main issue for ongoing protests and challenges to the law, including its constitutionality. (UN, 1998, 90 –91).

Citing several studies, Jonas suggests that the effect of the Congressional action was to send the issue back to the very imperfect judicial system, "but a judicial system that was also slated for total overhaul under the accords." "In short", she argued, "the law opened up what was to become one of the major battles during the years of accord implementation." (Jonas, 2000, 91).

Putting the Peace Agreements in Context

As was pointed out by the previously cited unnamed observers to the signing of the Sept. 19th Accord which provided for the reduction of the power of the military, the Peace Accords, taken as a whole, do constitute "an entire revolution, given Guatemala's recent history." However, to the extent that the Accords constitute a revolution, it is a very different revolution than that contemplated by the various armed organisations that took up the struggle in the 1960s and 1970s. Far from being a socialist revolution or even a national-popular revolution, the Peace Accords constitute a statement of political agreement undertaken by the Government of Guatemala and the URNG to promote a liberal-democratic revolution. It must be recognised, however, that this liberal-democratic revolution was not made by the liberal-democratic bourgeoisie alone (represented by President Arzú and his peace cabinet) rather, its ingredients emerged from a prolonged revolutionary struggle and it characteristics were given definition at the negotiating table with input from the civil society including, very importantly, the Pan Maya movement. It is a revolution which envisions the end to the militarisation of Guatemalan society and which seeks the modernisation of the country's political and economic infrastructures. It

also includes provision for progressive social policy and it provides for the establishment of participatory democratic practices that reflect the existence of the practice of local power at the community level.

In effect what happened is that an armed organisation, the URNG, with less than 4,000 men and women under arms, facing a ruthless and experienced adversary of far more than 40,000, managed to achieve through negotiation something far in excess of accepting what Jonas calls a "neo liberal peace" by which she means simply agreeing to the absence of armed conflict in exchange for the revolutionaries' integration into the post war society (Jonas, 2000, 220).

The slow movement after 1986 towards the negotiating table and the ups and downs of the peace process once the protagonists began meeting face to face are a reflection of the differences within the Guatemalan elite, divided as they are, into traditional and modernising sectors. It also was a function of the lack of clarity, to which I alluded earlier, in the URNG as to the wisdom of committing to the process of a negotiated peace.

Within the bourgeoisie, the modernisers realised that the content of the reforms proposed at the bargaining table: a modern democratic state; the integration of the indigenous population into a multicultural, multiethnic and multilingual nation; the provision of widespread access to basic services such as health, education and job training; combined with an essentially unregulated market place, was not in conflict with their basic interests. This was especially true if the implementation of the provisions was done in a manner consistent with neo-liberal precepts. Indeed, on the contrary, the most perceptive among them, including President Arzú, saw that such a liberal democratic transformation of Guatemala would, in fact, be in their long-term interests as they sought to refurbish

Guatemala's tarnished international image and become a more accepted member of the international community.

For its part, the URNG came to see this as the opportunity to snatch significant advantage from a deadly stalemate and to create new conditions of future struggle while working to achieve as many reforms as the current balance of political forces permitted on behalf of the popular sectors and indigenous peoples that make up the vast majority of the Guatemalan population. Of course, if such reforms will only transform the lives of the majority if they are implemented in a way that defies the neo-liberal logic and it is from this contradiction that the conflict between these momentary and uneasy allies emerges – it is the conflict that Jonas refers to as the "battle for implementation."

The traditionalists of the economic elite, of course, were totally opposed to all of this for both ideological reasons and reasons of self interest. Those involved with agro export or tied into the free trade zones (the maquilladoras) were well served by the low wage situation and the abundance of landless rural labourers. Their preference was to win the war militarily or, failing that, to achieve the negotiated disarmament of the URNG with as few concessions as possible.

A number of factors at the time of the negotiations did not favour the traditionalists. In the first place, by the early 1990s, Guatemala represented the only armed conflict in the region as a result of the Central American Peace Process, the electoral defeat of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua and the negotiated end to hostilities in El Salvador. By this time, no one in the international community had much patience for the concerns of the peace resisters. Furthermore, internally, as noted above, a decisive moment occurred at the time of the failed "autogolpe" of President Serrano in May-June, 1993.

It may seem ironic that it took an armed revolutionary organisation inspired by the Cuban revolution in alliance with forward looking members of the Guatemalan ruling class, such as President Arzú, to drag important sectors of the elite and the military to the ante chamber of the 20th Century. Perhaps, however, the irony rests, not in the fact that the revolutionary forces were the carriers of the liberal-democratic revolution but that the modernising sector of the Guatemalan ruling class had to enter into a *de facto* alliance with the revolutionaries to defeat their common enemy, the traditional sectors of the ruling elite.

There has been some question raised as to the ability of the URNG, as a political force, to play a leadership role in implementing the Accords in a transformatory way, given its role in negotiating them in the first place. Vinegrad addresses this point noting that in the period following its legalisation the URNG "has remained cautious on ideological questions, preferring to cast itself as the democratic, multi-class expression of a new project of national unity in which the main task is to ensure full compliance with the Peace Accords." (Vinegrad, 1998, 224). One consequence of this approach was to dull the URNG's capacity to act as critic of the then PAN government with which it had negotiated the Peace Accords leading to the "criticism from the left ... [which) ... suggest the existence of a political pact with the Arzú government." (Vinegrad, 1998, 224). This observation, of course, sets up our entire argument about the crisis of the left parties and the role of the New Social Movements.

And what of the popular classes and most significantly for purposes of this study, the Maya people? It is they, in alliance with non Maya popular sectors, who will largely determine if the Peace Accords are destined to become the impetus for neo liberal modernisation and democratisation of the state or, if on the contrary, they reflect the beginning of a profound transformation of Guatemalan society that goes well beyond the

liberal democratic logic and become the means to fulfill the aspirations of the popular sectors so long excluded from the mainstream of Guatemalan society. Should this latter scenario occur, it will happen, not primarily because of legislative and constitutional reforms provided for in the Accords, but because of political and social pressure from below that is based on a coherent vision of a new Guatemala based on the emergence in practice of new social relationships and new socio-economic realities. This is, of course, not predetermined, but depends on uses made of the political space opened up by the Accords.

Certainly Warren is convinced that the Pan Maya movement plays the role of the primary agent of social change promoting and actually effecting the implementation of the Accords. She notes that with support from funding from overseas sources, Pan Mayanists

> ... are working most actively to promote Maya schools as forums through which children might gain education supportive of indigenous culture and language. Additionally, they continue to publish a wide variety of educational texts for the schools and scholarship on indigenous issues, and to press for legal recognition of indigenous customary norms and the authority of elders n rural communities. (Warren, 1998, 63).

In an entirely different realm, using the openings provided by the Accords, and specifically the commitment to decentralise government services, the Maya leadership is hoping to reintroduce the issue of autonomy, which, as I have already noted, was lost during the negotiations. Warren (1998, 63) cites Demetrio Cojtí on this issue.

> Isn't it possible to conceive of Guatemala as a free association of Maya and *mestizo* communities which undertake common objectives but preserve their respective integrity and identity? Mayanists consider this federal form of political organisation an idea that is still not feasible, and therefore accept the location of their project for national liberation within the framework of the pyramidal State ... In this model, the ethnic diversity and autonomy of each ethnic group would not be complete, but would function as the intermediate level of government. Autonomous regions or micro-regions would be formed from counties (*municipios)* composed of

> the speakers of the same language. (Cojtí Cuxil in *Siglo Veintiuno*, Feb. 16, 1995).

> There can be no other choice than that the central state apparatus carries out the supra-ethnic functions that concern all individual members of society (such as national defense, diplomatic relations, common standards), while the particular ethnic region could and should exercise administrative and legislative powers in areas that directly affect its existence and well being (education, culture, social work, police, health, etc.) (Cojtí Cuxil, in *Siglo Veintiuno*, Aug. 28, 1994).

This is a political division of power reminiscent of Canadian Federal/Provincial power sharing with which most Canadians would feel both familiar and comfortable.

Creating National-Popular Hegemony Based on Multiculturalism

John Beverley argues that

> ... if the politics of identity, such as is found in the Maya rhetoric, is essentially a demand for equal opportunity ... then it is compatible with neo-liberal hegemony. More, it represents the possibility of the integration of one sector ... previously subordinate to the state and to the system of production and the capitalist market...

> But, if these demands are not so much for formal equality, but rather for an epistemological, cultural, economic and civil-democratic equality all at once then the logic of the politics of multicultural identity goes beyond the possibility that they be contained within (the logic of) neo-liberal hegemony. (Beverley, 1998, 16 – 17).

Beverley seems to be saying that if the Pan Maya movement, rather than simply demanding equal opportunity to participate in the dominant culture, demands and seeks to achieve integration on their own terms – acceptance of their own languages, culture, a demand for the political power required to make the decisions that affect their lives, an education system that reflects their needs and access to basic social services as a right - then the system as it is presently structured will have to be transformed to accommodate these demands. A precondition for this is that the Pan Maya movement establish itself as distinct from, without distancing itself from, the Ladino popular movement so that, based

on this strong sense of self identity, they can effect mutually beneficial Maya-Ladino alliances from a position of strength – strength based on their sense of Maya identity and strength based on a clear social vision and associated political strategy.

It remains to be seen if the demands of the Maya Movement and the institutions that they create themselves or demand of the state are such that they can be accommodated within the logic of a Guatemalan state reformed in the manner contemplated by the Peace Accords or if they threaten the logic of such a state. What seems clear is that, as Jonas reminds us more than once, the Accords created the space for this issue to be contested.

> ... the peace process in Guatemala was, first and foremost, *national* in character. In this respect, the substantive Accords signed between 1994 and 1996 represent a unique national learning exercise in consultation and pact-making in a country characterised by the historical absence of mediation and negotiation. The confidence built up between the different sectors and actors involved in the negotiation process – which spanned over a decade – represents a unique form of political capital. The current challenge is to broaden that initial pact to one in which the majority of the population actively participates in the process of national transformation. Only if such broad participation is secured will the rights promised in the Accords stand a chance of being realised. (Vinegrad, 1998, 246).

Gustavo Porras, commenting on what challenges Guatemala will face following the signing of the Peace Accords, noted in 1997 that "a nation's fate does not depend basically on that which is in its documents or laws but rather depends on the protagonism of its people." (Porras, 1998, 4).[63] The documents in the form of the Peace Accords exist and the laws may or may not exist depending upon the topic under discussion. These facts are not unimportant but what is truly important is that the popular sectors including the Maya people, are taking advantage of the space provided by the Accords to organise themselves in civic organisations, to participate socially, culturally, economically and politically at the

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[63] Gustavo Porras was once a leading guerrilla who split with the EGP over strategy and later participated in the peace negotiations as part of the government team.

local level while their leaders with clearly defined agendas are very much in evidence at the national level.

I will now turn to the "battle for implementation" within the legal and constitutional sphere and thereby complete our review of the historical context within which ESEDIR and PRODESSA work.

Implementing the Peace Accords

When considering the implementation of the Peace Accords we need to keep in mind that there are some reforms that require congressional approval and/or constitutional amendment to implement. These would include such provisions as those which define the new role of the military in a democratic society; formally declaring the country to be a multicultural, multi-ethnic and multilingual nation; a much needed reform of the judicial system; and a recognised role for indigenous traditional law.

Other aspects of implementing the Peace Accords, however, can be made by the organisations of the civil society without recourse to congressional action or to constitutional reform simply by taking advantage of the space created by the ending of hostilities and the legitimisation provided by many provisions in the Accords which need no further legal action but only need to be acted on. An example would be provisions encouraging participation by local citizens in municipal development issues.

There is, of course, a relationship between what is happening in the civil society and in the communities and the issue of effecting the necessary legal changes required to fully implement important provisions of the various Accords. This is so because the involvement of ordinary citizens in taking control of their daily lives, in promoting reforms as they become aware of the need for them, increases the pressure on the government and the Congress to implement the necessary changes.

A note of caution must be introduced at this time. Even in the most advanced democracies, popular demands, however broad based, for far-reaching social change do not necessarily lead to the implementation of the corresponding political reforms by government. In societies, such as Guatemala, with less well established democratic traditions, the resistance to such demands will be resisted even more effectively thus increasing the challenge facing the reformers.

A good example of this is the Educational Reform, an issue to which I will return at length in Chapter 9. Commissions, such as the Bipartite Commission on Educational Reform (COPARE), can be established as they are already provided for in the Peace Accords, proposals can be generated, curriculum can be developed and tested in selected schools, teacher training can include the new assumptions but in order that the reform be implemented nationally and the resources provided at the scale needed, an educational reform law must be passed. This has not happened at the time of writing but piecemeal initiatives such as those taken by the Ministry of Education, coupled with a significant public interest fuelled in no small part by NGOs like ESEDER and PRODESSA, are generating a wide social base for such changes. Sooner or later, the issue of educational reform will be posed as a national issue with significant public support behind it. Of course, the opponents of the reform will be out in force as well and this issue, like so many others associated with the implementation of the Peace Accords, will be fought out on the public stage.

In short, the Maya movement and other sectors committed to implementing the Peace Accords must keep up the pressure on the authorities to fulfil their obligations to the

process of implementation but, at the same time, these advocates of change should not wait for the Government and the Congress to act.[64]

FDNG[65] Congressional deputy Rosalina Tuyuc, a Maya, notes that there are powerful interests in the Congress opposed to the inclusionary provisions of the Peace Accords and spoke of her frustrations with those deputies that do not know, or do not wish to know, the provisions of the Peace Accords and who legislate over them rather than in conformity with them. (Tuyuc, 1998, 239).

To counteract this obstruction in Congress of the Peace Accords, Tuyuc called upon civil society to get involved as suggested by the strategy outlined above so as to pressure the Congress to act in favour of Accord implementation. (Tuyuc, 1998, 239).

Much of this study deals with the efforts by ESEDIR and PRODESSA to follow the first part of this advice and move forward the spirit and, in many cases, the actual detail of those provisions of the Peace Accords which relate to community development, local power and the educational reform.

With respect to those aspects of the implementation process that require legislative action and/or constitutional change, writing after the defeat of the May, 1999 Consulta Popular or referendum on constitutional reform, Jonas asks "to what extent and in what respects" will "the promise inherent in the peace accords of a 'New Guatemala' be realised?" She asks "is Guatemala moving toward reinventing itself for the Twenty-first Century? Or is a unique historical opportunity about to be lost?" (Jonas, 2000, 137).

> The nuances of interpretation vary depending on the question, Compared to what? To Guatemala's own (pre-peace) past - forty-two years of

[64] This process of creating pressure on the government and Congress undoubtedly suffered a set-back in May, 1999 with the defeat of the constitutional reform package during the *Consulta Popular*. This event will be discussed below.

[65] The FDNG, the New Guatemala Democratic Front, a pro peace progressive political party, emerged from the popular organisations of the civil society in the mid 1990s.

> repression and thirty-six years of Cold War civil war? To the utopian hopes expressed at the time of the peace signing, when Guatemala was being seen by some optimists as a possible example for other countries? Or, on the contrary, to widespread scepticism about whether anything ever changes in Guatemala? What can realistically be expected from the peace accords? (Jonas, 2000, 137).

Jonas, as I have already noted, takes the position that "the accords, as signed, opened up the possibility for significant changes. Though not transforming Guatemala, they sought to modernise, rationalise, demilitarise, democratise, normalise – and lay the basis for possible more profound transformations in the future." (Jonas, 2000, 137). Transformations which, to be achieved, will involve a movement for social and political change that will emerge from the popular sectors – both Ladino and Maya - and pro democracy sectors of the middle class.

This view is reinforced by Vinegrad who suggests that the strength of the Accords is found in the learning experience provided to the civil society during the negotiations and the opportunity for broad participation in their implementation. (Vinegrad, 1998, 246).

The peace resisters, both those inside and outside of Congress, are not sitting back and allowing the Peace Accords to be implemented unopposed. They acquiesced during the final stages of the negotiations but following the signing of the Peace Accords the balance of political force seemed to shift to favour the peace resisters. (Jonas, 2000, 138). The public attitude, already sceptical about the shortcomings of the "soft accords" was reinforced by the "largely accurate perception that nothing in people's daily lives was improving ..." (Jonas, 2000, 138). This was due to the Accords being largely political while what affects people's lives is largely economic, especially when some of the most pressing political issues (e.g., peace and war), were resolved as a result of the Peace Accords.

Demilitarisation

One of the most pressing issues that does require a constitutional amendment is the role of the military and the demilitarisation of Guatemalan society. It is true that a process of demilitarisation was begun by the ending of the war and it is also true that this can be deepened through such activities as promoting democratic values within schools, ensuring that democratic practices and values prevail within the organisations of civil society, popularising the values and skills required to bring about a culture that promotes the peaceful resolution of conflict, etc. However, to constitutionally limit the military's role in society and thereby to give legitimacy to the process of demilitarisation in all its aspects – social, legal, political, economic – a constitutional amendment abolishing the expansive role assigned to it in the present (1985) Constitution must be approved.

This has not happened. It was supposed to happen on May 16, 1999 as a result of a referendum (the Consulta Popular) held to ratify fifty amendments to the constitution. That day, to everyone's surprise, including the opponents of the proposed changes, the reform package was defeated and the movement to bring about such changes suffered an important defeat.

Because of its importance to all aspects of Guatemalan life, I will review the efforts to achieve demilitarisation as an example of the difficulties that those attempting to implement the Peace Accords are facing and to put that example within the context of the failed Consulta Popular.

The *Agreement on the Strengthening of Civilian Power and on the Role of the Armed Forces in a Democratic Society* provided for a series of constitutional reforms which would curtail the size and the role of the military and subject it to civilian control. Closely related to this was the issue of the abolishment of the Policia Nacional (PN), the

national police force that was indistinguishable from the military, and the creation of the Policia Nacional Civil (PNC), a new national police force under civilian control and trained by international trainers in police methods suitable for a democracy. What was not very clear in the Accord was how to handle the transition period between the time of the signing and the creation of the new police force and the approval of the constitutional reforms limiting the army's functions. (Jonas, 2000, 147).

This became particularly important as the results of two considerations: one was the fact that the 'transition period' has been indefinitely prolonged by the defeat of the constitutional reform defining the new role of the military; the other is that Guatemala was, and continues to be, suffering the previously mentioned wave of violent crime that the new police force is apparently not capable of stopping. This has led to the army, with considerable public support, patrolling the streets and highways of the country in a fashion reminiscent of their war-time role. (Jonas, 2000, 147).

Edgar Gutiérrez, writing in late 1997, takes the position that Guatemala "is not experiencing a process of demilitarisation, rather one of readjusting the relations of civilian – military power." (Gutiérrez, 1998, 33). Nothing that has happened since he wrote those lines leads me to believe that the situation has changed.

Gutiérrez argues that Guatemala has been a militarised society by which he means that "social, political and economic relations have been *administered*" in a military fashion. (Gutiérrez, 1998, 33). He noted that militarisation becomes part of the culture of society and that rather than learning the skills of negotiation and compromise, "a good part of the logic of social organisation is translated in terms of destroying or even annihilating your opponent or that which is different (in terms of political ideology or simple opinion)." (Gutiérrez, 1998, 34).

While the one-third reduction of the army was achieved "the reductions were made almost entirely among foot soldiers, leaving the officer corps virtually intact." (Jonas, 2000, 149). Gutiérrez notes that former military personal of all ranks who have been demobilised over the years in their tens of thousands, along with the leadership of such para military organisations as the disbanded Civil Patrols, constitute a vast network of like-minded, anti democratically inclined individuals who hold a significant share of the local power in municipalities throughout the country. (Gutiérrez, 1998, 38). Such a presence could very well constitute a powerful impediment to democratic participation at the local level by those who have internalised the victimisation experienced by the forces represented by these men.[66]

As for the military budget, it too was supposed to have been cut by one-third and

> ... on paper, the mandated one-third reduction of the budget for the armed forced was carried out (allowing for inflation). However, the military budget remained secret (not subject to congressional supervision), and there were arguments coming from the Defence Ministry that the army's budget would have to be increased in absolute terms, as the necessary cost of 'professionalisation.' (Jonas, 2000, 149).

The fact that the military budget remains secret and is not subject to congressional review tells us a great deal about the role of the military in Guatemalan society!

Another factor, the importance of which should not be minimised, that has impeded the process of demilitarisation is the wave of violent crime referred to above. The perfectly understandable insecurity of the population in the face of what is perceived as the immanent danger of common criminality has led to an acceptance by the population of the

[66] This point was made by ESEDIR General Co-ordinator Mario Recancoj in comments he made at a seminar held with ESEDIR staff to discuss my research project. He commented that people of his generation had grown up under the influence of the counter-insurgency ideology and with the fear of repression that prevailed during the armed conflict. He suggested that the hope for the future lay with the youth whose values are being formed in the post-conflict era. (Comments made by Mario Recancoj, August 3, 2000).

military patrolling the streets of the capital, of other major urban centres and the main highways, a role which should correspond to the police and not the military.[67]

Even if the new police force was up to the job, there is some question as to just how much of a step forward it represents over the old Policia Nacional, the military controlled police force that it replaced. The new PNC is made up of many former military personal or members of the old militarised police. (Gutiérrez, 1998, 35).

I gained an interesting insight into the question of the preparedness of the PNC to assume their role from a conversation with, of all people, a uniformed RCMP constable who was waiting for his flight to Montreal at the Guatemala City airport on the morning I left Guatemala in early August, 2000 following my most recent visit there. Intrigued by his presence, I struck up a conversation with him. He was nearing the end of a two year stint with the UN Verification Team and he had been assigned to work with the PNC. In addition to assuring me that I didn't want to see the inside of a Guatemalan jail, he told me that he felt the Government of Guatemala had made a mistake contracting with the Spanish police to be their primary trainers because, he asserted, the Spanish para military police spent more time teaching them to march than they did teaching police techniques and that they were woefully unprepared to assume their duties following their basic training. He suggested the RCMP would have been a far better choice as trainers![68]

[67] In the second week of August, 1999 I was staying in a hotel in the old downtown of Guatemala City where the army had literally occupied Zona 1, arguably one of the most violent parts of town. Patrols of one PNC officer and a dozen soldiers certainly kept order, and reminded the population that the military had not gone away.

[68] The thought of the RCMP as the agency responsible for training the Guatemalan police conjures up in my mind images of the PNC, in their Olive Green fatigues, on horseback, doing intricate manoeuvres to music provided by a marimba band, the marimba being a xylophone type instrument which is undoubtedly the most typically Guatemalan of musical instruments.

Guatemala, in short, is imbued with a military consciousness imposed in a variety of ways – through indoctrination in schools, through service in the military, and through the imposition of the military presence throughout the country throughout the entire period of the war. A process of democratisation will have to address this mentality even in the minds of those who never served in the military. In addition to this ideological factor we must consider the impact on the public of the significant presence of the military performing duties of the civilian police, a civilian police force that is both militarised and is proving itself to be incompetent at controlling street crime. This alone constitutes a mix that places many obstacles in the way of the process of demilitarisation of Guatemalan society. The defeat of the constitutional reforms that would have formally reduced the role of the military and redefined it was simply the most recent obstacle to achieving demilitarisation. I will now review the events that led to that event. The misadventures that characterised this process speak volumes about the complications facing those Guatemalans who are committed to implementing the Peace Accords.

The Preparations for the Consulta Popular

The Arzú government sent the proposals for the constitutional reforms required by the Peace Accords to the Congress in May, 1997, only four months after the final Accord had been signed. In the Congress, the combined strength of the PAN, the party of the government, and the FDNG, the left wing pro peace party, guaranteed enough votes to get the two-thirds approval needed to send the package to the people in the form of a referendum. The government decided "to develop a strategy for reaching consensus with opposition parties in Congress ... in order to broaden the legitimacy of the reforms and to prevent those parties from sabotaging them later in the game, during the referendum." (Jonas, 2000, 190).

The result was months of inter-party wheeling and dealing which ultimately led to the emergence in May 1998, a full year later, of a bloated package of reforms that had ballooned from thirteen proposed amendments sent by the government to Congress to fifty. Thirty-seven proposals, many of them unrelated to the Peace Accords, had been added by the opposition parities in the intervening period. (Jonas, 2000, 192).

With respect to the reform package that was eventually placed before the voters, a review of the 50 pages of amendments that, at the time of writing, almost two years after the Consulta Popular could still be found on the Guatemalan Electoral Commission's web site, is an indication of the confusion that confronted the Guatemalan voter. Side by side, with substantive provisions emerging from the Peace Accords such as the declaration that Guatemala is a multicultural, multiethnic and multilingual nation is a listing of the duties of the President; along with the recognition of the legitimacy of traditional Maya law is a seemingly endless section on the functioning of the courts. The opposition couldn't have confused the issues involved more if they had tried, and there is good reason to believe that the explosion in the number of reforms put to the people in the Consulta Popular was, in fact, a very conscious strategy by those who wanted the package to be defeated.

There would still be more than one drama on the way to the actual referendum. The government, for example, postponed the referendum process when Central America was hit by Hurricane Mitch. Guatemala was the least affected country and no justification for postponing the vote could be attributed to that event that so devastated Honduras and Nicaragua but that is precisely what the government did. In the meantime opponents of the reform challenged the package before the Constitutional Court leading to further delays. Finally, the date was set for the referendum, May 16, 1999, fully two years after the original package of thirteen reforms had been sent to Congress.

The campaign in favour of the reforms was flawed by overconfidence on the part of its hard core supporters and indifference on the part of its soft supporters. The FDNG and the URNG, so convinced were they that the Sí would win they did not set aside other priorities to concentrate fully on the campaign. (Jonas, 2000, 195). On the other end of the Sí political spectrum, despite the fact that the PAN, the official governing party, and even the opposition FRG, the party of former dictator Ríos Montt, officially supported the Sí vote, they barely participated in the public campaign.[69]

The No campaign, on the other hand, frightened by early support for the reforms, campaigned all out, especially during the final three weeks. Jonas describes what she calls the "No blitzbrieg." A "Sí" vote, they argued

> ... would 'Balkanise" Guatemala ..., rekindle the war, turn over the country to Indians (or, alternatively, to the URNG), force everyone to learn obscure Maya languages (rather than a modern second language like English), and replace the legal system with indigenous customary law. Teachers who spoke only Spanish would lose their jobs. Private property would be confiscated if located on Maya "sacred sites." The reforms would convert Guatemala into a racist state (dominated by indigenous peoples); the redefinition as a multiethnic nation would violate the principle of equality by giving extra "privileges" to the indigenous population. And (from the evangelical churches) the reforms would permit exotic Maya religions to take over and persecute good Christians. (Jonas, 2000, 197).

This strategy coupled with the misplaced complacency of the Sí forces would lead to a disaster.

The Results of the Consulta Popular

On the day of the vote, May 16, 1999 the results shocked everyone both in terms of the bad turn-out (only 758,000 people voted, representing 18.55 percent of registered

[69] In her analysis of the role of the governing PAN's role in the defeat of the reform package, Jonas notes "... the PAN's indifference ... towards the reforms and ... the internal divisions within the PAN. It is clear that the PAN politicians did the minimum possible for the Si ... It simply was not a priority." (Jonas, 2000, 205).

voters)[70] and the results (the No vote won in every category although not in every part of the country).

> Contrary to all the predictions ... the No prevailed over the Sí by a margin of 55 to 45 percent of valid votes. The Sí won in most rural indigenous areas of the country ... but the outcome was decided in Guatemala City. (Jonas, 2000, 199).

Some of the results were quite convincing (for example the questions relating to congressional reform and the question relating to executive branch reform lost by a convincing 15.5% and 12.7% respectively) while the question relating to indigenous rights only lost by 5%. (Jonas, 2000, 199).

Geographically the support for the constitutional changes, as reflected in the vote, tended to be found in the rural, indigenous departments that had been hardest hit by the civil war. Sololá, for example, an indigenous department that suffered greatly during the war, had a 30 percent voter participation rate which contrasted with the 18.55 percent national average. It also contained the community that had the highest voter turn-out, 44.6 percent. (Jonas, 2000, 199). Sololá is the department in which Santiago, Aitlán is located and while Jonas does not identify the community which had this high turn-out, it is hard not to believe that it is Santiago, a community which is very much aware of the power of political action. An exception to this pattern was Quetzaltenango, a Maya department where the Maya mayor of the departmental capital opposed the reforms because of

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[70] Jonas noted that the low voter turn-out "shocked" observers but I must admit to not being overly surprised. In a country with no democratic tradition to speak of where politics, especially electoral politics, even when it was allowed to happen without military intervention when they didn't like the results, never led to addressing the needs and aspirations of the either the Maya population or poor Ladinos, it would be unreasonable to expect a large voter turn-out regardless of how significant the issue. It is simply not a part of people's consciousness under such circumstances.

provisions in the package that he disagreed with which affected municipal politics. He campaigned in favour of the No because of this disagreement.

In Departments with Ladino majorities, and especially in Guatemala City, the vote favoured the No. In the capital, for example, 75 percent of the voters voted No – indeed, the vote in Guatemala City was so large that its results predetermined the national outcome. As with the Sí vote where Quetzaltenago represented an important exception to the voting pattern in indigenous departments, there was a Ladino department that also voted against the trend – Petén was the hardest hit Ladino department during the war and it voted in favour of the reforms. (Jonas, 2000, 199 – 200).

One can only conclude that despite their historic exclusion from the electoral process, the Maya population that did come out to vote understood that the reforms would positively impact upon their interests and voted Sí while Ladinos, impressed with the No campaign that was based largely on fear mongering, voted against the reforms on a largely racial basis. This, of course, raises the question of the extent to which the Pan Maya movement is disposed to work with the Ladino popular sectors to overcome these fears and form alliances based on mutual respect and an interest in advancing their shared interests.

Implications of the Results of the Consulta Popular: An Irreversible Defeat or a New Beginning?

FLASCO's Jorge Solares suggests that a major weakness of the Pan Maya movement's strategy for implementing the Peace Accords is precisely the tendency of important sectors in that movement to write off the entire Ladino population as being the beneficiaries of the present system and, as a bloc, being racist towards the Maya majority. As a result the popular sectors of the Ladino community, themselves excluded and despised by the traditional Ladino ruling classes, are easily influenced to oppose that which is

characterised as giving privileges to the Maya people. (Solares, 1999, 1 – 2). I shall return to this question below.

There were undoubtedly other factors that contributed to the defeat of the reforms. In addition to the previously mentioned well financed and very competent No campaign, the less competent Sí campaign, the role of the evangelical churches in assuring a No vote, Jonas also refers to what she calls the "punishment vote" against the politicians, particularly those of the governing PAN, who would soon go down to electoral defeat in the upcoming national elections, who had continued to disappoint the electorate and who were associated, however reluctantly, with the Sí campaign. (Jonas, 2000, 200 – 204).

Nor should we underestimate the impact of the addition of the thirty-seven amendments made by Congress most of which were unrelated to the Peace Accords. Not only did this dilute the impact of the reform package but led to some indigenous leaders, as was the case of the Mayor of Quetzaltenango, to oppose what they would have otherwise supported. Jonas comments that "many analysts believe that the major peace accord reforms would have been approved if they had been on the ballot alone." (Jonas, 2000, 204).

The question facing the proponents of implementing the Peace Accords is what is the significance of this defeat? Was the defeat of the reform package in the Consulta Popular an irreversible defeat for the process of creating a New Guatemala?

For Solares the answer is no, this is not an irreversible defeat but it must represent the beginning of a new way of thinking about the way forward for the largest single component of the pro Peace Accord movement, the Pan Maya movement.

He notes that the AIDPI, the Indigenous Agreement, for all its strengths, in effect renders the Ladino people invisible when it discusses the interethnic structure of the

country. With respect to the Ladinos, Solares asks how will the state represent them? He notes that it is not a very compelling argument to take the position that

> ... if it is to rescue the dignity of the indigenous who were always excluded from political life, does one continue to exclude those equally excluded Ladinos? We must ask ourselves are the Ladinos a homogeneous group who enjoy as a whole political privileges and benefits from a state made by them and only for them? (Solares, 1999, 5).

Solares rejects such a simplistic analysis noting that within both the Ladino community and the Maya community socio-economic differences cut across ethnic lines and that poor Ladinos and poor Mayas have much in common. The possibility of creating Ladino-Maya strategic alliances is taken up in the next chapter.

With this complex historical reality involving war, negotiation, peace and the struggle at the national level to implement the peace plan, I now turn to an analysis of the Pan Maya movement, arguably the most coherent social force in the struggle to build a democratic and socially just multiethnic, multicultural and multilingual New Guatemala.

CHAPTER FIVE

Guatemalan Pan Mayanism: A New Social Movement Emerges[71]

Introduction

Guatemala is one of the few countries in the Americas where a majority of the population retains its indigenous identity. While estimates of the Maya population range from the official statistic of 47% of the national population (1994 census) to the 60% cited by many social scientists (Warren, 1998, 12), in some regions of the country in excess of 80 and indeed 90% of the population is Maya.[72] Despite its numerical weight, Guatemala's indigenous population has suffered centuries of discrimination and exclusion at the hands of the Ladino socio-economic and political elite. (Salazar, 1996).[73]

The policy of marginalizing the native population has led to their impoverishment and to their political powerlessness but it has also contributed to the survival of the Maya culture. Whole communities speak their indigenous languages, practice ancient religious rites (albeit, in some cases, touched by Catholicism) and see the world through what is commonly referred to as the Maya cosmovision or world view. (Esquit & Gálvez, 1997). Thus, unlike Canada, where indigenous cultures have been lost or relegated to small geographic spaces, in Guatemala the Maya culture is sufficiently intact that in a democratic,

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[71] The term Pan Maya is employed because there are approximately 20 distinct Maya linguistic and cultural communities that contribute to the emerging Maya hybrid identity. These range in size from several that count only 5,000 speakers or less to the Mam and K'ichee' language groups with almost 700,000 and 1 million respectively. (Warren, 1998, 16).

[72] See Chapter 9 for population statistics.

[73] The concept of Ladino, which in Guatemala has replaced the term *mestizo*, essentially means someone, whether ethnically Maya, or not, who does not, or is not perceived, to share Maya values or to live within the Maya culture. I would argue that for some Mayanists, someone who was born and raised Maya could be considered Ladino if they had gone away to get an education, lived and worked in the city, spoke Spanish, and essentially cut their ties with their roots. Thus I see it as a cultural concept. Carol Smith, cited in Warren, argues that "the distinction between Ladino and indigenous groups become polarised and rigidified so that Ladino came to signify *non*-indigenous in culture and descent late in the nineteenth century." (Warren, 1998, 10).

multicultural and multilingual society, the Maya culture could well be the dominant, albeit far from exclusive, culture. Ensuring that the Maya culture is recognised, valued and protected is the objective of what I shall call, following Warren (1998), the Pan Maya movement.

In the 1980s, throughout Latin America, the dictatorships which had come into being during the previous decades began to fall and were replaced to one degree or another by formally democratic governments. In virtually all of these cases organisations representing the aspirations of large segments of the population - aspirations that could only be fulfilled with a political opening, a political democratisation - appeared on the political stage and played a role in the fall of the dictatorships and/or the reconstruction of society in the transition period to democratic rule. Guatemala was no exception to this development. (Thesing, 1999).

Even during the 1980s, Guatemala's so-called "Lost Decade," when the repression was at its worst and the death squads were killing indiscriminately, organisations appeared that ranged from those representing the relatives of the disappeared to those dedicated to community development at the local level. The late 1980s and early 1990s, just prior to the initiation of the peace negotiations between the armed insurgency and the government,

> ... grassroots organisations with strong ties to the Left – among them the Committee for Campesino Unity (CUC), National Coordinator for Guatemalan Widows (CONVIGUA), Mutual Support Group (GAM), council of Ethnic Communities Runujet Junam (CERJ), Highland Campesino Committee (CCDA), and national Council for Guatemala's Displaced (CONDEG) – rededicated themselves to pressing for influential roles in national politics. (Warren, 1998, 34).

As we will come to appreciate, despite the significant number of Maya in these organisations, these were not considered to be truly Maya organisations by the leadership of the Pan Maya movement who tend to work through organisations devoted to educational,

linguistic and cultural issues, because the *popular* Left Mayas stressed social justice and class issues over Maya cultural issues.[74]

Not surprisingly, then, given this perspective, at the same time as these *popular* Left organisations were active, a number of Pan Maya cultural organisations were emerging. The *raison d'être* of these organisations were defined in ethnic terms and ignored class-based issues. These organisations had an agenda that "eventually set them apart from ... the popular organisations." (Esquit and Gálvez: 1997: 47). Such organisations would form Rajpopi'ri Mayab' Amaq' (Guatemalan Council of Maya Organisations), a co-ordinating body.

This process of the emergence of organisations based on concerns such as ethnicity, as was the case with parallel developments in other countries from Europe and North America to Latin America, allowed previously marginal social sectors to move to centre stage. This gave a voice to demands that were previously mediated and muted through *popular* Left organisations. In the case of Guatemala, it was the Pan Maya movement, speaking on behalf of and claiming to represent the aspirations of the majority of the country's population, that claimed this role. The Pan Maya movement quickly grew from a handful of organisations, none of which had any prominence, to an increasingly articulate national movement made up of many organisations of varying degrees of political sophistication interested in the whole range of social, economic, cultural and political issues that touch the lives of Guatemala's indigenous population. (Esquit & Gálvez, 1997).

[74] Warren notes that education and cultural issues were, by far, the issues to which the early Maya activists gave priority. She comments that "since the mid 1980s, educated Mayas have worked to created a social movement focused on the cultural revitalisation and unification across language divides of indigenous Guatemalans ...." (Warren, 1998, 36). If one reviews the mandate of the vast majority of Maya organisations (Galvez, et al., 1997), it is clear that cultural, linguistic and educational issues predominate although as a result of the need to prepare positions for the peace process, policy issues related to the complex task of nation building came to assume increased importance in the mid 1990s.

Movements representing previously marginal sectors of society on a basis other than social class are referred to as *New Social Movements*.[75] (Cohen & Arato, 1992, 511).

The New Social Movements paradigm is associated with post-Marxist thinkers who argue that "theories stressing the primacy of structural contradictions, economic classes, and crises in determining collective identity are inappropriate to contemporary collective actors ...." (Cohen and Arato, 1992, 510). Today, Cohen and Arato argue, "collective actors focus primarily on issues of social norms and collective identity. This means that the logic of collective interaction entails more than strategic or instrumental rationality." (Cohen and Arato, 1992, 510).

> ... contemporary collective actors see that the creation of identity involves social conflict around the reinterpretation of norms, the creation of new meanings, and a challenge to the social construction of the very boundaries between public, private, and political domains of action (Cohen and Arato, 1992, 511).

This implies a theory of the creation of knowledge and the creation of an explanatory theory arising from the experiences of mass movements operating within the realm of civil society.

In fact, Warren refers to the Pan Maya movement as a movement for Maya "cultural resurgence" and analyses how it is distinguished from, indeed largely rejected by, the *popular* left. She notes that the leaders of this movement propose

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[75] The concept of "social movement", and by extension, New Social Movements, is undoubtedly much less well grounded that it arguably was in the mid 20th Century. Traditionally, for many students of social movements, these were primarily class based phenomena (e.g., Lipset [1968] writing on the prairie farm movement or Thompson [1975] writing on the working class movement in England). Of course, the suffrage movement, crossing class lines at it did, defied this class-based categorisation and perhaps paved the way for the New Social Movement paradigm.

With the emergence of what has been designated *New* Social Movements to distinguish it from the old, we are perhaps appropriating old terminology to describe new phenomena. This, of course, has an honourable tradition but we have to be careful to ensure that we adequately reconceptualise old concepts. An example of this reworking of terminology can be found in Mundy and Murphy (2001) who devote a lengthy article to clarifying terms so as to be better able to study the new globalised social movements that are now emerging as a political force.

"... a serious multicultural (pluricultural) model for participatory democracy. This model recognises multiple national cultures rather than the overarching Hispanic standard for nationalism that predominates in Latin America. This mandate defines cultural, linguistic, and political rights for Maya citizens and legitimises their claims for cultural and political space in the country's educational, judicial, and administrative systems. (Warren, 1998, 13).

With respect to the creation of new knowledge, Warren characterises the Pan Maya movement as one that "has pursued scholarly and educational routes to social change and nation building, in contrast to the mass mobilisations of the *popular* Left ..." (Warren, 1998, 4). Many of the Maya leaders have founded Maya research institutes or organisations dedicated to Maya education ranging from the Academy of Maya Languages; Association of Maya Middle Schools; Association for the Study, Research and Promotion of Maya Culture; Centre for Maya Research and Documentation and the list goes on.

Just as important as the formal centres of knowledge creation is the experience of organisations like PRODESSA which, based on their work in the communities, has the opportunity to systematise their experiences and contribute to the policy formation at the national level. No Maya research centre nor the Educational Reform Commission could produce anything of relevance to the communities without the input of organisations working in those communities and making that experience available to those working "at the centre." Daniel Domingo, the Deputy Director of PRODESSA responsible for educational work, is right when he comments that ESEDIR and PRODESSA's local work "sustains" their national work. (Interview with Daniel Domingo, July 27, 2000 – see Chapter 8).

Factors which contribute to the growth of social movements include a new political context which allows issues not previously present on the public agenda to grow in importance and an increasing capacity of movements to organise themselves for sustained

action and not disappear after a brief foray onto the public stage. Both of these conditions are fulfilled in Guatemala.

Warren, drawing on the work of political scientist Deborah Yashar, notes that "the current moment of politicised resurgence in the Americas is tied to the democratic opening that occurred in many Latin American states in the 1980s and 1990s." She writes

> As authoritarian governments were pushed by international organisations to liberalise their regimes, hold elections, and honour basic civil rights, indigenous groups emerged publicly to press for concerns that had no legal channel in the repressive years before. As we will see, Yashar's state-focused explanation fits the contemporary Guatemalan case very well and, furthermore, raises the important issue of which state-formulated policies generate ethnic responses and how governments attempt to channel identity politics for their own ends. (Warren, 1998, 9).

The Pan Maya Movement as an Example of the New Social Movement Paradigm

The New Social Movements have emerged in Guatemala, as elsewhere, on the basis of issues such as gender, sexual orientation, the environment, human rights and, significantly, for our purposes, ethnicity. What is new about the New Social Movements is "the presence of actors or values which the movement represents that were previously weak or non existent on the political scene." (Gálvez, et al., 1997, 18).

> ... the term *new social actor* refers primarily to the recent *importance that the collective practices of these social subjects have acquired* and that they exist *objectively*. Thus in the case of Guatemala, for example, this importance can derive from (a) ... the redefinition or the revitalisation of their demands and ... the expression of these – such as is the case of the indigenous people in which their ethnic consciousness plays and important role; (b) the emergence of organised collective action, little developed prior to the 1980s – such as occurred with the women's movement (c) the impact that these practices had on the political moment during which they emerged, such was the case with the movement of the victims of violence. (Gálvez, et al., 1997, 18).

To this notion that New Social Movements involve actors or values that were "previously weak or non-existent on the political scene", I should add actors or values that were inadequately represented by previously existing, traditional movements.

Essential to the definition of social movements is

> ... a question of conducts that are socially conflictive, but which are also culturally oriented. Within them exist the reference to an adversary, but also the formulation of a viable option. In social movements there is the combination of a principle of identity, which defines who they are; a principle of opposition, which defines the adversary; the principle of wholeness, which defines the sense of purpose. (E. Faletto cited in Gálvez et al., 1997, 21).

Gálvez suggests that the Maya movement fulfils all three of these characteristics of the definition of a social movement with the principles of identity and opposition playing determinant roles "in the formation of the Maya movement from the beginning of the present decade and is present in an explicit form in the public statements of the majority of the Maya organisations." (Gálvez, et al., 1997, 21).

Firstly, the principle of identity is highly visible in the Maya movement. It is both strongly asserted through a positive promotion of Maya culture and values as well as negatively asserted through a notion of who we are *not* – Ladinos.

Secondly, Falleto's principle of opposition is also present. Understandably, there is a targeting of the state as being racist and, consistent with this belief, the insistence that the state and all the institutions that constitute it be transformed into multicultural, multiethnic and multilingual entities that include rather than exclude the Maya majority and their values, culture and aspirations. The other target, however, seems to be the Ladino people, who, irrespective of their socio-economic circumstances, who are often demonised as the *other* (Warren, 1998, 20). This demonisation, combined with the negative cultural definition referred to above, makes any alliance with the Ladino popular sectors difficult.

How can those presumed to be so profoundly *other*, indeed, racist as this characterisation implies, and thus by implication the beneficiaries of the racist state, be allies in any strategy aimed at transforming that state? I will return to this issue of possible Ladino-Maya alliances below.

Finally, in relation to the principle of wholeness, or a defining the sense of purpose of the movement, this became explicit as the Pan Maya movement clarified its perspective as it prepared its positions in the Assembly of the Civil Society for discussion during the peace negotiations between the armed opposition and the Government of Guatemala. This principle of wholeness is captured in "a series of principles with respect to human rights, civic liberties, the nature of the state" (Gálvez, et al., 1997, 22) which found their way, in whole or in part, into several of the Peace Accords signed between 1994 and 1996. (See Chapter 4).

The Ladino-Maya Split within the Popular Movement

What emerges here is a new social movement that indeed has the three principles of identity, opposition and wholeness but which, woven into these principles, has a trait that compromises its ability to make strategic alliances which, I will argue, must be made in order to achieve their objectives in the long run. This difficulty takes the form of apparently writing-off of the Ladino population, regardless of social circumstances.

I hasten to point out that it is quite understandable why the Pan Maya leadership came to think this way. They are reacting to a process of historical exclusion that continues and which deeply affects the thinking of many, although by no means all, otherwise progressive Ladinos.

There is no doubt that Guatemalan society is profoundly racist and that it affects all strata of national society. I need only cite several examples such as that of the genocidal

war unleashed against the indigenous population; the wealthy landowners who have used the Maya as cheap rural labour; the tourist operators who commodify the Maya people as tourist attractions; the poor Ladino who says "I may be poor but at least I'm not an Indian." It is difficult to overstate the depth and breadth of racism in Guatemalan society.

Nor has the *popular* Left been unaffected by this racism. At the 1991 Continental Meeting for Indigenous, Black, and Popular Resistance, where 259 delegates from 25 countries representing fifty-one ethnic groups convened to discuss strategies for social change on the occasion of the 500th anniversary of the arrival of Colombus in America, there were two Maya tendencies represented in the Guatemalan delegation. These were the *popular* Left Mayas representing organisations such as the CUC, CONVIGUA and GAM and five "independent" Mayas named to the delegation, according to Warren "at the last minute." (Warren, 1998, 33).

This meeting would constitute a water shed for the Maya movement as a demarcation occurred there that characterises the movement to this day. In describing the congress overall, Warren notes that

> Through its leadership and working documents, the congress argued for a unified theory of oppression, the continued relevance of economic class as the master inequity, and the capitalist world in the guise of Western neo-liberalism as the prime engine of oppression. In their post-revolutionary discussions of colonialism, neo-colonialism, and self-determination, the *popular* movement portrayed itself as the vital political umbrella. (Warren, 1998, 34).

This, it was clear from the conference documents that there was no room for an indigenous movement without reference to the broader *popular* Left organisations. One conference document stated:

> ...the unity of all oppressed and exploited sectors is vital for the attainment of autonomous self-determination. Moreover, it is necessary to

> be attentive to hegemonic sectors' attempts to divide the movement by encouraging traditional and reductionist ethnic positions ...
>
> The popular movement as a whole is the best guarantee indigenous peoples have for their struggle to rescue sovereignty, maintain their connection with the earth and nature, and preserve the spirituality of their culture's communities. The transformation of their position should have *popular* content, and oppose imperialism and its domestic agents. (cited in Warren, 1998, 34).

This approach, while very acceptable to the *popular* Left Maya leadership represented at the meeting was not at all acceptable to the leaders of the Pan Maya new social movement. Demetrio Cojtí, undoubtedly Guatemala's leading Maya intellectual, an acknowledged leader of the Pan Maya movement, and presently the Deputy Minister of Education, reflecting on the Second Continental Meeting, summed up the attitude of the those who rejected this approach when in 1997 he wrote

> *Popular*-Maya organisations were not considered part of the Pan-Maya movement because they did not demand indigenous rights. Rather they demanded social rights, especially fundamental ones such as the right to life and physical integrity ... Their involvement in social struggle[76] was evident at the Second Continental Meeting – they cheered in support of Cuba and condemned the United States. Since they manipulated the indigenous issue and very few indigenous delegates came from other countries, Mayanists rejected these meetings. The Left's colonialism was evident at the final march, headed by Leftist Ladinos followed by platoons of illiterate peasant Indians making up the body of the march. (Cited by Warren, 1998, 35).

This statement amounts to a strong rejection of the *popular* Left in 1991 by the Pan Maya leadership. Such a rejection was significant. The Guatemalan *popular* Left, despite the massive oppression to which it had been subjected during the previous two decades, had been the hegemonic force in the civic (as opposed to armed) movement for transformatory social change. As Dr. Jorge Solares mentioned in his interview with me,

[76] Warren (1998, 35) clarifies Cojti's use of the term "social struggle" in this context to mean "class struggle."

the *popular* Left would soon be eclipsed in this role by the Pan Maya movement. (See Chapter 4).

The Pan Maya leadership made a decision not to subordinate itself to this *popular* Left strategy which gave predominance to class politics at the expense of ethnic, and other non-class issues. In so doing they responded to a push and a pull.

The push was from the *popular* Left leadership that rejected the validity of the Mayanists as independent political actors and the values they espoused and insisted that the emerging Pan Maya movement subordinate its particular interests to the larger class based *popular* Left strategy. The pull was in the direction of an international phenomenon of which the Pan Maya movement was the Guatemalan expression, namely the emergence world wide of new social movements based on criteria other than social class and political conflict defined in class terms.[77] It is not hard to understand the attraction of the latter approach especially in light of the attitude expressed by the representatives of the former.

With respect to the push away, Warren speaks of what she characterises as the "widespread intolerance of indigenous activism and its distinctive political agenda" (Warren, 1998, 39) and cites a series of complaints, some of which are delivered in rather vitriolic (racist??) terms, about the Pan Maya movement ranging from their alleged separatism and ethno-centricism to their romanticism of Maya community life and cultural values to their avoidance, because of their culturalist orientation, of the real politics of Guatemalan reality. (Warren, 1998, 40 – 41).

The Mayanists, of course, dispute these and other criticisms, and, as Warren notes, insist that they are willing to effect alliances with other social forces but they "remain

[77] For a further discussion of this phenomenon see Wainwright (1994), Weber (1983) and Poulantzas (1983).

convinced of the distinctiveness of their vision, which they find neither translatable into nor reductive to the agendas of other groups." (Warren, 1998, 41).

The pull was that of a logic that has certainly come to characterise the international movement for social change especially since the widespread questioning of class based strategies over the past several decades. The Pan Maya movement is virtually a text book example of this phenomenon. Keeping in mind the definition of what constitutes a new social movement, since the mid 1980s the Mayanists

> ... have worked to create a social movement focused on the cultural revitalisation and unification across language divides of indigenous Guatemalans, who most observers now agree make up a marginalised majority of the national population. The Pan-Maya movement seeks recognition of cultural diversity within the nation-state, a greater role for indigenous politics in national culture, a reassessment of economic inequities, and a wider distribution of cultural resources such as education and literacy in indigenous languages. (Warren, 1998, 36 – 37).

A Bases of Hope for Creating Ladino-Maya Strategic Alliances

Without wanting to minimise the divide between the Pan Mayanists and the "Maya *popular*" tendency, Cojtí also wrote a somewhat less strident or divisive analysis of these two tendencies within which the difference is defined as a matter of degree, not in the inseparable terms implied above. For example, he notes that

> ... as a result of the Cold War and the internal conflict, within the bosom of the Mayas who are opposed to ethnic assimilation, are found two tendencies with respect to priorities (social, ethnic), practice (social struggle, cultural struggle), and the final objective (social equality and/or the equality between Peoples). (Cojtí, 1997, 39).

Cojtí categorises these two tendencies as the "Maya Popular" tendency and the "Maya Cultural" tendency and suggests that these are not necessarily mutually exclusive categories but rather reflect where first priorities lay. Those who give priority to the

social struggle tend to make alliances with the popular sectors among the Ladinos and leave the cultural/ethnic struggle for a future time, while those who give priority to the cultural/ethnic issues, while not disinterested in the social struggle, are less interested in making alliances with Ladino sectors that do not share their ethno-cultural aspirations.

This characterisation which stresses where first priorities lay and not inseparable divides may very well be the basis for future collaboration just as the Mayanist leadership was able to collaborate with the URNG leadership in getting their demands to the table in the 1994 – 1996 period of negotiating the Peace Accords.

Warren captures something of the complexity of this issue of class and multi-class strategies when she writes

> When Mayanist leaders assert that "class conflict is not the issue" but rather all forms of contemporary colonialism and racism are, one sees the heterodoxy and originality in the movement. What they mean here is that "class struggle" is not their unitary framework. They seek to build a cross class movement – a new sort of Maya solidarity – that would include middle class professionals and business people as well as cultivators, students, teachers, development workers, and rural shopkeepers. In fact, urban migration for employment or physical safety and novel organisational involvements means that members of many extended families routinely have multiplied class/ethnic identifications, localised in different ways in rural and urban space. (Warren, 1998, 49).

Will the Pan Maya social movement on its own be able to achieve the goals of the Maya people as they define them? It is highly unlikely given the need to effect significant reforms to the Constitution, the need to pass new legislation and reform existing laws, and the need to change the structure and practices of the state administration. Intellectual movements and their leaders can and must play an important role in social change, and undoubtedly a sense of Maya identity and Maya self confidence is emerging as a result of the work of this Pan Maya new social movement. However, events such as the serious setback suffered in the Consulta Popular with the defeat of the changes proposed to the

Constitution that would have implemented important aspects of the Peace Accords (discussed in Chapter 4), and the slow progress on the educational reform (discussed in Chapter 9), to cite just two examples, are warning signals that politically the movement is weak and will have to reach out to other, Ladino, social sectors.

Will the leadership of the Pan Maya movement effect such alliances in the future? Undoubtedly they realise that this is necessary but, from what we have learned from the events leading to the split with the *popular* Left in 1991 at the time of the Second Continental Meeting, in order that they happen such alliances will have to be respectful of the autonomy of the Maya organisations and of their political agenda. Today, any alliance effected will involve a Maya movement with a history of political interventions and a history of movement building, the successes and failures of which have matured the Mayanist leadership. It will also involve a *popular* Left whose weaknesses over the past 10 years have become apparent and whose attitudes with respect to the nature of the political force that must be built to achieve their goals has been modified by events.

In fact the gulf to be bridged may not be as wide as we might suspect. Warren points out that even though some commentators argue that the divide between and Ladino *popular* sectors and the Pan Maya movement is "unbreachable or irreconcilable because of ideological or class differences," she argues that, on the contrary, this divide is, in fact, "bridged quite frequently by individuals who are active in both camps or who borrow ideas from other groups for their own uses." (Warren, 1998, 64).

> In responding to *popular* critiques, Mayanists have sharpened their class analysis. They see Ladino poverty as an important issue that needs to be addressed, and they recognise that the racism of the Ladino underclass is economically fueled. (Warren, 1998, 64).

Demetrio Cojtí has directly addressed this issue. Writing in 1997 he divides the Ladino population into three sectors. One is based on the major landowners and the professional middle class who feel threatened by an empowered Maya people. Another is a sector which he calls a "democratic, anti-colonial Ladino, of differing political tendencies, who is sensitive to and in solidarity with the indigenous peoples" (Cojtí, 1997, 69) and who is seeking ways to operationalise this unity in diversity. In this broad social sector is found business people, academics, trade unionists, religious, etc. and this sector represents the hope of constructing a multicultural and multiethnic Guatemala. Among the organised Ladino sectors there also exists a certain sensitivity and support for the social and ethnic demands of the Mayas. Here we can mention the workers' unions, the Catholic church, some political parties ... and independent personalities. All of them recognise that the indigenous peoples of Guatemala can no longer be conceptualised and treated negatively. (Cojtí, 1997, 69 – 70).

Finally, Cojtí notes that there is a third sector of Ladinos who he describes as the urban and rural majority who are essentially side-lined by politics, however, this status doesn't prevent them from having political views related to changes in ethnic relations in the country. Citing a study reported in Guatemala's largest newspaper, he writes

> The first studies of this sort indicate that there are Ladino sectors who would be open to having indigenous governmental officials, the legalisation of indigenous languages and the teaching of some of them, and reject any possibility of an ethnic war between Mayas and Ladinos, etc. (Cojtí, 1997, 70).

Clearly such an analysis bodes well for the possibility of effecting alliances between the Maya movement and broad sectors of Ladino society.[78] Of course, for

[78] Nothing is ever simple in Guatemala is a recurrent theme in Jonas' study. Cojti's observation would lead us to think that the Ladino popular organisations could have been counted on to actively support the Si in the

alliances to materialise, the Ladino community, too, will have to rethink its position vis-à-vis the Maya majority and Warren writes that, in fact, this is happening.

> For their part, many intellectuals on the Left have changed their views on indigenous issues over the years and moved away from total assimilation as the only future for indigenous communities. Mayanists have long admired the courageous work of *popular* human rights activists who publicised human rights abuses at great risk to themselves. They certainly agreed on the importance of demilitarizing civilian life and disbanding civil patrols, which functioned as prime movers in the government's counterinsurgency policy and which parents feared would socialise their sons into violence, corruption, and disrespect for the moral authority of their families. (Warren, 1998, 64).

In short, there is much common interest between progressive and *popular* class Ladinos and the Maya people and, as suggested above, there are activists who are working with a foot in each camp, the so-called *popular* Maya activists who are bridging the gap and bringing the issues of importance to the poor on both sides of the Guatemalan ethnic divide.

> From the time of the Second Continental Meeting in 1991 to the present, Mayas active in the grassroots Left have become increasingly engaged in cultural and ethnic issues ... (thereby raising) ... the possibility of new Maya alignments across old political cleavages. Maya members of the Committee for Campesino Unity (CUC), for example, created a splinter organisation, the National Indigenous and Campesino Coordinator (CONIC) to focus their efforts more squarely on indigenous land struggles. In recent years, Mayas from a variety of political backgrounds have begun to ... use an indigenous ecological discourse in overlapping ways to interconnect Maya cosmology, agricultural rituals, strategies for socio-economic change, land issues, and rights struggles. (Warren, 1998, 65).

In effect, there are three progressive forces at work here: the Pan Maya movement with its culturalist and multi-class approach, the Ladino *popular* Left approach with its

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Consulta, but Jonas presents a sombre analysis of their role. "Popular organisations in other sectors (trade unions, human rights, development, and student organisations) did less outreach for the Si than would have been expected – in part, a measure of their priorities and their level of engagement with the peace accords, and in part a measure of their political weight by 1999 (as compared with the ASC years). One refreshing contrast was the activity of the more recently formed Women's Forum." (Jonas, 2000, 207).

class based political change approach and the Maya *popular* Left with a strategy that has roots in the other two traditions.

Solares remains convinced, however, as mentioned above, that despite the existence of these other two forces, it is the Pan Maya movement that has the initiative. This is so because of its emergence on the national stage over the past decade and its growing political experience, that is in a very good position to articulate popular demands. The magnitude of that which the Mayas can accomplish depends on the creation of a true political force that generates an authentic social movement directed at the transformation of the inter-ethnic relations in the heart of Guatemalan society and with the state. In other words, to work in favour of the reconstitution of the state in conformity with the multi-ethnic face of society because democracy in Guatemala must necessarily pass through inter-ethnic justice[79] and *to keep in mind that the strength to achieve these objectives comes from within the movement and all the rest is secondary* (emphasis mine, MOS) (Solares, 1999, 11 – 12).

The strengths of the Pan Maya movement include the fact that there are leaders among them from a variety of traditions even if the hegemonic group is presently, and may well remain for years to come, drawn from the culturalist tradition. And so while we might ask, as Warren does,

> Do the recent lines of dialogue, collaboration, and self-examination between the Pan Maya and *popular* movements mean there will be a new unified paradigm, a new synthesis of social movements? Will the early division of labour between collective cultural rights and education, on the one hand, and human rights abuses and agrarian issues, on the other, continue after the accords. (Warren, 1998, 67).

[79] Edelberto Rivas Torres is cited by Cojti as saying "If in Guatemala the multicultural question is not resolved, there will be neither economic growth nor democratic governability." (Cojti, 1997, 65).

She, in effect, answers her own question by stating that at the level of official movement discourse the Pan Maya movement does promote ethnic politics and separatism, but

> ... in practice, the impulse toward separatism has been moderated by alliances with other groups to transform state and society fundamentally: to change conventional social procedures, renegotiate the terms by which people live, and transform the cognitive structures that shape meanings and identities ... these are thoroughly revolutionary changes, without, however, seeking to topple the state. (Warren, 1998, 67).

Olga Pérez can perhaps be seen as a sophisticated representative of the Ladino *popular* Left. She is the Director of INCIDE, a national organisation dedicated to supporting the development of "multi-sectoral alliances" at the municipal level. In a fascinating interview she made some interesting observations which demonstrate that there is still some distance to travel before the old concepts that so frustrated the Pan Maya leadership in 1991 are overcome. At the same time, she holds out the importance of alliances.[80]

She prefaced her remarks on this topic by saying that she rejects the term Ladino as being a *counterinsurgency* term and commented that for years "to be Indian was to be communist and (to be) Ladino was not be Indian" and to be "superior." She attributes this false dichotomy to three factors, one of which, the influence of U. S. anthropology aided and abetted by the U. S. State Department, she clearly ranks as being the most important. She noted that the U. S. anthropologists who developed this approach arrived on the heels of the 1954 counter-revolution against Arbenz. In the 1970s with the support of the U. S.

[80] INCIDE, of which Olga Pérez is the Executive Director, was created in 1994 to "build a bridge between the change from an armed strategy to the search for peace through political means and is an institution that has worked precisely to generate conditions in the civil society such that the transition from war to peace generates participation. Three years ago (e.g., 1997, MOS) we specialised in work at the municipal level to generate ... a model of democracy built from below..." (Interview with Olga Pérez, August 1, 2000).

State Department, they promoted what she calls an *ethnic* conception of the indigenous peoples that valued the struggle for cultural rights over the social struggle thus splitting the popular and the revolutionary movements. Pérez does recognise that the indigenous movement is "also the result of the armed struggle and of the social struggle" but she returns to her insistence on the importance "of the policy of the United States" while admitting that the left mishandled the issue as a result of an *economistic* vision which "denied the demands and the identify of the indigenous peoples and sought to explain everything in terms of the class struggle."

She takes up the argument, referred to above, about the split which occurred at the Second Continental Meeting in 1991 where she was a member of the Guatemalan national co-ordinating team. Consistent with the position of the *popular* Left, she argues that this meeting represented one of the most important opportunities to bring together "the Indian, Black and popular movements" but its impact was undercut by the U. S. analysis of the struggle of the Indians not being for land but for culture. What good is it, she asks, to make your cultural demands "if you are going to continue to be poor and dispossessed?" While she recognises that the struggle for social justice should not involve renouncing one's culture, she nonetheless feels that the divisions that occurred at the Second Continental Meeting led to a "fragmentation" of the popular forces leaving the left very vulnerable.

Her solution is consistent with the views of people like Dr. Solares who argues for the need of Maya – Ladino alliances to bring about the transformations required in Guatemalan society. It is a response which, however, fails to address what the Pan-Maya movement will correctly perceive as a negation of their right to enter such alliances from a position of strength. She states

> We no longer believe in uni-sectoral organisations. This country has to construct multi-sectoral forces ... not building only indigenous organisations alone. For us, the time has passed for that traditional organisation of times past which ... was very important ... but to promote processes at the municipal level which articulate multiple forces at the local level. We do not believe that any sector can advance by itself. There has to be local alliances in which different agents or actors of local power form a movement. But it's going to be from below and it is not going to be one of those great monstrosities that say they are the Central of the workers ... INCIDE is working to support this coming together of the forces of local power with the Municipal government and (also working) to give it a national expression. (Interview with Olga Pérez, August 1, 2000).

It is hard to believe that the strategy offered by Olga Perez can be fully realised in practice until the *popular* Left and the Pan Maya movement can move beyond the particular history that led to their 1991 parting of the ways and enter into such collaboration on a basis of strength and mutual respect. This implies both Mayas and Ladinos have to move on this issue. It takes at least two to form an alliance. To paraphrase Nicos Poulantzas (1978) "one thing is certain, alliances will be respectful or they will not be at all."[81]

From Social Marginalisation to Political Protagonism: The Emergence of the Pan Maya Movement

How did this new social movement come about after 500 years of marginalisation and oppression? Over the years various strategies were employed by the Maya people from armed conflict to cultural nationalism in the face of official attempts to destroy, incorporate or ignore them, depending upon the era. It is noteworthy that the liberal constitution promulgated after the 1871 revolution had the effect of excluding the Maya peoples from the mainstream of Guatemalan society because it defined Guatemala as a unitary state, based on Western culture, the Spanish language and the Catholic religion. (Gálvez, et al.,

1997, 36 – 39). The Constitution of 1985, adopted during the civil war in which the Maya people were major participants both as combatants and as victims, was a very different document attempting, albeit timidly, to recognise the rights of communities and of indigenous peoples to their cultural identity to social rights and to bilingual education. It also recognised that Guatemala is "... formed by diverse *ethnic groups* among which are found *indigenous groups of Maya descent* which must be "protected and respected". (Cited in Gálvez, et al., 1997, 44).

Whereas the constitutional protections in the 1985 constitution, such as they are, were "given" to the Maya people, the provisions in the *Agreement on the Identity and Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, signed as part of the Peace Process in 1995, were negotiated from a position of growing strength and thus reflect a broader vision of the role of the Maya people in Guatemalan society.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the armed conflict and the resulting process of negotiating the peace contributed to the increased consciousness of the Maya people and the growth both qualitatively and quantitatively of their organisations. The violence associated with the war, far from defeating the Maya people, forced them to intensify their process of self-identification and to redefine their strategies of struggle. The other factor that contributed to this growth was the process of negotiation which, while it occurred between the armed insurgents and the government, gave the organisations of the civil society including the Maya organisations, the opportunity to put their demands on the negotiating table and to have their voice heard.

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[81] Poulantzas actually wrote "But one thing is certain: socialism will be democratic or it will not be at all." (Poulantzas, 1978, 265).

The political process that led from political marginalisation to an ability to influence national politics was also accompanied by an increase in Maya consciousness at the community level and an expansion of Maya leadership at all levels. These two phenomena were closely linked as the increasingly educated leadership articulated the notion of what it means to be Maya.

It is as a result of these considerations that observers such as Gálvez do not consider the contemporary Pan Maya movement to be five centuries old despite the fact that the Maya have been resisting their dominators for that long. While there has been indigenous resistance from the time of the arrival of the Spanish into their territories, Gálvez points out that the strategies of the Maya opposition to their oppression underwent significant changes over the years. Such a change occurred in the 1980s justifying its categorisation as a New Social Movement.

The Hierarchy of Contemporary Maya Organisations

The Pan Maya movement is growing very quickly and literally hundreds of Maya organisations exist. They range from local community committees devoted to improving the living conditions of the inhabitants of their village to regional and national associations some of which have a great deal of political sophistication. According to Esquit and Gálvez (1997, 51 – 53) there are four levels of Maya organisations.

The first level organisations are those that work at the community level to deal with such issues as education, health care, clean water, cultural practices and the like. These organisations are not interested in taking stances on political issues beyond the normal controversies which confront community groups as they work to meet their immediate needs in a situation of scarce resources. These first level organisations, however, may be a

conduit to a broader world if, as is frequently the case, they work with NGOs from outside of their community.

The second level organisations are made up of two or more first level organisations and work at a regional level to achieve the same kinds of objectives as the first level organisations they represent. They remain very close to the people and their immediate needs.

The third level organisations are made up of first and second level organisations and they promote Maya demands before the state and are often referred to as political co-ordinators. These were the organisations that came of age during the peace negotiations and have transformed themselves to deal with the post conflict era.

The fourth level organisations are the ones which have the broadest and most complex mandates. These include El Comite para el Decenio del Pueblo Maya (CDPM); la Coordinación de Organisations del Pueblo Maya de Guatemala (COPMAGUA); el Consejo Nacional de Educación Maya (CNEM); la Mesa Nacional Maya de Guatemala (MENMAGUA) and el Consejo Nacional Maya Nim Popb'il. Accordng to Esquit and Gálvez,

> Each of these organisations was established with specific objectives. COPMAGUA was to work within the peace process, and represented the Maya sector in the Civil Society Assembly. MENMAGUA is a platform for co-ordinating its member organisations for relations with international co-operation. The CNEM was to promote educational systems in line with the reality of the Maya people, and the CDPM, was to provide follow-up in Guatemala organising around the Decade of the Indigenous People of the World... (Esquit & Gálvez, 1997, 52 – 53).

At the time of writing there is no fifth level of organisation, i.e., a political organisation that simultaneously represents the collective aspirations of the national Maya movement and provides a forum for debating divergent visions which, in a class stratified

society with unresolved gender issues, must sooner or later come to the fore in the Pan Maya movement which is, itself, not affected by these considerations.[82] While the fourth level organisations all work at the national level, the absence of a single unifying organisation similar to Canada's Assembly of First Nations represents a level of political co-ordination that has yet to be achieved.

Because our research is oriented to taking a close look at the Maya movement as it is involved in education and because PRODESSA is represented on it, I shall describe CNEM, the National Council of Maya Education, one of the fourth level organisations.

The National Council of Maya Education (CNEM)

CNEM was founded in 1993 by diverse Maya educational organisations of which PRODESSA was one. Most of these organisations ran Maya schools and the creation of CNEM created a network of such schools and linked them to broader issues. CNEM was strengthened in its early days by its involvement in the debate over the National Education Law during the Ministry of Celestino Tay Coyoy, the first Maya cabinet member.

> The CNEM has addressed the historical-political need to unify educational efforts directed toward the Maya population, given the deficiency of the national educational system. It emphasises the importance of the Mayas becoming protagonists in their own education, and the development of an inter-cultural education system for all of Guatemalan society. (Esquit and Gálvez, 1997, 54).

This interest has led to CNEM promoting educational reform and in its national congresses, it has demanded that the state "respect Maya values, thinking and philosophy in education and in the conduct of national affairs."

[82] It will be recalled that in Chapter 3 I referred to Cohen and Arato's observation that the organisations of civil society must themselves be places in which struggle over social issues including the democratic governance of the organisations themselves, can and must be debated. To date, this has not been a major issue in the national Maya organisations but sooner or later, given the debates and issues to which I have referred, it is reasonable to expect that such issues and contradictions will come to the fore.

In 1996 CNEM, whose credibility is enhanced by the fact that it is recognised by name in the *Accord on Indigenous Rights and Identity*, advocated an educational reform, which was understood as

> ... the process of restructuring the educational apparatus, with the aim of offering the national community a transformed and modernised system, in accordance with the socio-cultural context, that values the diverse expressions of cultural identity as a substantive contribution to the human, integral and inter-cultural development of Guatemala ... (CNEM, June, 1996, cited in Esquit and Gálvez, 1997, 54).

Nor is the CNEM the only repository of the thinking of the Pan Maya movement on education. I have already noted the multiplicity of Maya organisations dedicated to promoting Maya education. Warren commented on the breadth and depth of this interest and listed the main components of the Pan Maya educational initiatives.

> (1) Language revitalisation, literacy training in Maya languages and local language committees;
>
> (2) The revitalisation of Maya chronicles of culture, history, and resistance to the Spanish invasion ... There is great fascination with the Maya shape of time ... the great precision of ancient eclipse predictions, and the complex religious associations with historical astronomy... Another striking characteristic of the movement is its historical consciousness – its multiculturalist sense of the ways Mayas were written out of national history and its urgency to imagine new histories.
>
> (3) The production of culturally inclusive school texts and teacher training materials for use in intercultural school programs. Activists have been successful in creating Maya elementary and secondary schools in some communities as a viable alternative to national schools.
>
> (4) The revitalisation of Maya leadership norms, specifically community councils of elders, midwives, and Maya shaman-priests.
>
> (5) The dissemination of an internationally recognised discourse of indigenous rights, focusing on recognition and self-determination. The movement envisions a radical transformation of Guatemalan politics to accommodate a *pluricultural* nation with decentralised state services ... (Warren, 1998, 39).

These values were subsequently reflected in the proposals that make up the Educational Reform Design that will be examined in Chapter 9.

ESEDIR and PRODESSA: Two Maya Organisations in the Service of Transformatory Educational and Socio-Economic Change

I argued in Chapter 3 that ESEDIR and PRODESSA do not fit neatly into Bonamusa's classification of organisations in the civil society. They represent, rather, an amalgam of points taken from each category that she describes. In like fashion, it has to be said that ESEDIR and PRODESSA do not fit into Esquit and Gálvez's *levels* of Maya organisations. They are neither community organisations of the first level nor membership organisations of the second to fourth levels. Rather they are specialised agencies within the Maya movement that were created, ironically, by non Maya La Sallian Brothers, to serve Maya communities. Most of the staff of both ESEDIR and PRODESSA are now Maya and the theory and practice of both organisations are steeped in the Maya cosmovision (or world view) that informs the larger Pan Maya movement.

ESEDIR and PRODESSA were founded in 1988 and 1989 respectively. The former was founded as a 10 month, post secondary, residential rural community leadership training programme leading to a Diploma in Community Development from a Mayan Perspective and the latter was founded as a rural community development agency which over the years, has become a large and highly respected non governmental development organisation.[83] Despite the fact that ESEDIR predates PRODESSA, ESEDIR, despite having a great degree of autonomy, is formally, at least, subordinate to PRODESSA.

[83] This appreciation, made in the context of a casual conversation, comes from Mario Silvestre, the former director of IDESAC, once undoubtedly Guatemala's "premier" development agency. Sr. Silvestre is now the Guatemalan director of IBIS, a Danish agency.

Both ESEDIR and PRODESSA were founded by members of the La Sallian religious order, a generally conservative community of Catholic brothers who, decades earlier, had founded the Instituto Indígena Santiago (IIS), a normal school which prepares young Mayas to be elementary teachers in their rural communities. The IIS, now half a century old, shares its campus in Guatemala City with ESEDIR. PRODESSA's head office is located at the same site as well.

In addition to the full-time 10 month residential leadership program offered at the Guatemala City campus which is the focus of this study, in recent years ESEDIR has expanded its program delivery and now offers part-time distance education teacher training programs in two regions of the country, Barillas, in the department of Huehuetenango, and in the Ixcán region which straddles two departments, Huehuetenango and the Quiché. The latter area is where a number of recently established communities are found that are made up in whole or in part of communities that were displaced internally during the war or exiled to Mexico where many spent 10 or more years in exile, before returning to these new internal settlements. Successful completion of the combined programme in pedagogy and community development from a Mayan perspective that are offered at these two locations prepares the students both for their work as bilingual primary teachers and as community leaders, a role which most are already playing. When you consider that teachers in the small communities are often the only people to have even a full high school education, much less post secondary studies, and they are often called upon to play leadership roles in the community, this combination of pedagogy and community development makes a lot of sense. It is no accident that most, although by no means all of the students in ESEDIR's 10 month Community Development from a Mayan Perspective programme, are teachers. Not only are they among the few people in a given rural

community with the prerequisites to attend a post-secondary institution, but in many cases, they have been active in their community associations.

The senior staff person at ESEDIR is the General Co-ordinator, Sr. Mario Recancoj. Sr. Recancoj reports to Brother Oscar Azmitia f. s. c, the Director of PRODESSA. Brother Oscar was the General Co-ordinator of ESEDIR in the early 1990s.

The teams in which ESEDIR staff are divided have specialised functions and include, for example, the team which is responsible for the residential phase of the academic program, another which is responsible for distance education, while another has responsibility for curriculum development and publications. Each Team Leader is part of ESEDIR's central leadership (el Equipo de coordinación) and both the central leadership team and the specialised teams meet frequently to discuss their work. In short, ESEDIR has created a very collaborative style of leadership consistent, as we shall see, with the pedagogical principles that they espouse.

Micro-regionalisation

In 1997 PRODESSA, which, like ESEDIR in the early years, programmed in a wide range of geographic locations throughout the country, conducted a strategic planning exercise. They recognised that to be more effective, they had to reduce the number of communities in which they were working and at that time they undertook to "micro-regionalise." This meant choosing 8 micro-regions, or parts of rural counties or *municipalidades* in which they would work. PRODESSA developed a six-year strategy for each micro-region covering the period 1998 – 2004 with a view to creating a sufficient level of sustainability within the selected communities so that by 2004 they could relocate their efforts to other communities without fear that the organisations in the original

communities would collapse when they moved on. The results of their deliberations are summarised in Chapter 7.

ESEDIR, too, followed this lead realising that to be fully effective, they had to draw their students from a reduced recruitment area and furthermore, the existence of a PRODESSA office, program and field staff in their areas of recruitment would help immeasurably in their recruitment and support work to both their students during their practica and their graduates following their return home. Consequently, ESEDIR now draws its students exclusively from these same micro-regions.

ESEDIR and PRODESSA's Mandate:

The vision of both ESEDIR and PRODESSA is based on a thorough analysis of the Guatemala reality and is expressed through what in the Guatemalan context is a radical social change model.[84] The mandate of both organisations emerges directly from this vision. ESEDIR, for example, defines itself as an "alternative educational centre" which seeks to develop leadership skills among potential community leaders with a view to supporting "community self-management based on the three pillars of community work as defined by PRODESSA: **organisation, production and education**" (ESEDIR, n.d., 6) (see Chapter 6). What this means is that every activity that PRODESSA undertakes in a community and thus every course that ESEDIR students study must support efforts to give

[84] What constitutes "radical" is invariably contextually and historically determined. Given the 500 year history of the repression of Mayan and other minority rights and the more recent history of death squads killing and "disappearing" thousands of people for advocating basic democratic and cultural rights for the Maya people, a demand for the democratic and human rights that we in Canada take for granted is viewed by some as very threatening and therefore as very radical. Furthermore, the demand for such rights can lead to a process of political radicalisation if those presently in power steadfastly refuse to grant what is now accepted internationally to be quite reasonable demands. I point this out because ESEDIR is not a partisan political organisation promoting a partisan political project, however, they recognise the political nature of their work, as does PRODESSA as, certainly, in the context of Guatemala all work on behalf of the poor and especially the Mayan poor, quickly becomes political. The ESEDIR vision is found in the document entitled "Escuela Superior de Educación Integral Rural: Proyecto Educativo", Guatemala (n.d.)

organisational expression to community aspirations, must be related to increasing the productive capacity of the community so as to improve the standard of living and must have a potentially transformatory educational component.

Both organisations define themselves as Maya organisations and their documents and the statements made to me during my interviews by their staff, collaborators and the ESEDIR students are filled with references to the Maya world view (cosmovision). Both ESEDIR and PRODESSA work exclusively in Maya communities although in those communities they work with everyone, Maya and non Maya. Most but by no means all of ESEDIR students are Maya. It may seem ironic or contradictory that organisations founded by a Catholic order and still supported by them and, in part, administered by members of that order, would consider themselves to be Maya and to practice Maya spirituality. The fusion of the Catholic religion and Maya religiosity is a fact of life in Guatemala and ESEDIR and PRODESSA and the Maya/Catholics that make up the vast majority of their staff, students and collaborators in the communities represent that phenomenon.

We will return to the issue of vision and mandate below.

The Transformation of ESEDIR: The Emergence of a Maya Organisation

Shortly after ESEDIR's establishment, Brother Oscar Azmitia was named to succeed Brother Sebastian, the founder. In the beginning ESEDIR was not explicitly working from a Mayan perspective, furthermore a number of problems had been identified so Brother Oscar began a process of transformation of ESEDIR and he instituted such changes as

- ensuring a more careful selection of students;[85]
- orienting the curriculum more specifically to the rural Mayan reality;
- ensuring that the content of each course could be justified with reference to the organisation's mission; and
- instituting an ongoing process of program evaluation.

By 1993 Brother Oscar had passed the daily leadership of the programme to staff teams responsible for the sectors of work noted above. These teams, as they assumed their responsibilities, began to define what they viewed as deficiencies in both the vision and the operation of the school. These concerns included the difficulties related to

- measuring the impact of their work in the communities;
- being able to support the students when they were back in the community;
- integrating the values of Mayan culture into the programme and the daily lives of the staff and students of the school;
- providing equal opportunities for women within the programme;
- ensuring the commitment to the community by some of their students despite a more rigorous selection process;
- freeing ESEDIR from its dependency on external financial resources;
- defining a curriculum of interest and relevance to the students; and
- creating the space ESEDIR wanted to have in which their students could play more of a leadership role with respect to directing their own process of education.

[85] For a discussion of the recruitment of the ESEDIR participants see the section, below, entitled Recruiting Tomorrow's Leaders.

This process of transformation was reflected in the strategic thinking that was occurring in PRODESSA which had recently been founded and which shared office space and, often, personnel with ESEDIR.[86]

This self-critical approach, characteristic of both organisations, has proven to be a great strength and subsequent processes of evaluation aided by outside evaluators helped ESEDIR and PRODESSA address some of these issues. In the case of ESEDIR, the curriculum was adjusted and reforms to various aspects of their work were instituted but some of the issues identified above continued to be of concern and led, for example, to the invitation extended to me to conduct an impact study in 1999, all of which is part of ESEDIR's ongoing efforts to adjust its practices to maximise its impact.[87]

ESEDIR's Notion of Education in the Service of Social Change

ESEDIR seeks to develop leadership skills among community leaders (or future community leaders) with a view to supporting "community self-management" based on the concept of community work defined, as previously noted, around PRODESSA's central themes of "organisation, production and education." Its curriculum and its practices during the program are also designed to instil in its *egresados* (as the graduates of the 10 month residential program are called) the values, skills and knowledge that it hopes will form the basis of a democratic, multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and multi-lingual Guatemala based on social and economic justice.

ESEDIR has built its curriculum and practices upon the clearly articulated educational and social values consistent with this objective. These values, in Canadian

[86] As mentioned, Brother Oscar would later become the Director of PRODESSA and his successor at ESEDIR, Daniel Domingo, would later become the Deputy Director of PRODESSA. Over time, ESEDIR graduates became field workers or volunteer collaborators in PRODESSA's micro-regional offices.
[87] I am indebted to Sr. Daniel Domingo, the General Co-ordinator of ESEDIR at the time of my first visit to their campus in 1998 for this historical overview.

terms, are modest: they speak of a "new society where peace is real and justice and solidarity exist, one where human rights are respected and where people work for the common good." (ESEDIR, n.d., 31).

> This hope which at times seems unrealisable is rooted in the life of the communities, in its daily experience, its solidarity, its respect, and in the daily practice that serves as the base to define our philosophy, a model to orient the educational project and to clarify the role that it must play in the transformation of society. (ESEDIR, n.d., 31).

ESEDIR seeks to train community leaders dedicated to a democratic and participatory community based vision of local development. These are seen as the motivating force of integrated development and self-determination of the Mayan people within the context of the Guatemalan nation state.

> We understand by leaders all those people, men and women, who are committed to community work and who are disposed to work, following their training, for the benefit of the communities. These persons are the principal subjects of the process. (ESEDIR, n.d., 46).

ESEDIR students are given courses that involve a critique of "what is" and include the study of the theory and practice of social change. They also study Mayan religious values and practices. The ESEDIR students also receive a course in the workings of municipal government, in small-scale rural economic development, in rural ecology and in small-scale agriculture and animal husbandry. In other words, they are being trained to help people improve their daily lives while working with them to assume control over their lives politically, socially and culturally.

Recruiting Tomorrow's Leaders

In order to achieve this goal, ESEDIR attempts to recruit students who, among other characteristics, have demonstrated that they

- have a history of struggling in their communities to satisfy their own basic necessities and those of others .... ;
- are committed to the common good over and above their individual well being;
- have demonstrated respect for others;
- recognise and denounce injustice and oppression; and
- identify with and live fully their Mayan culture. (ESEDIR, n.d. 54).

In short, ESEDIR is seeking to recruit young men and women who reflect the values behind the social change vision that ESEDIR espouses and who have demonstrated the willingness to play a leadership role and to learn the skills necessary to provide that leadership based on these values. Not surprisingly, PRODESSA field staff are very much involved with identifying potential ESEDIR students in their communities.

It is interesting to note that the ESEDIR community development program has experienced a significant shift in the profile of its students in recent years compared with that of the first almost 7 or 8 years. In those early days, typically the students were in their mid to late 20s, or even older, and had a number of years of leadership experience often under trying circumstances given that the civil war was still very much a factor in the period from 1988, the year of ESEDIR's first class, to 1996. Even if there were no armed conflict occurring in all the zones from which students were drawn, there was certainly the "chill" of the general repression of community work, which was frequently characterised as being political by the military. As a result the students were older, mature and tested.[88] Recent classes, however (and these certainly include the young people I got to know in the

[88] The greater experience as leaders and the somewhat older average age became apparent during the interviews done for the 1999 impact study where people in their late 30s or 40s at the time of the interview indicated that they had gone to ESEDIR 8 or 10 years before after working as leaders in their communities for many years prior to being selected.

classes of 1998, 1999 and 2000) were young, inexperienced and, as I discovered in the in-depth interviews conducted with the class of 1999 during the Impact Study, frequently did not meet the requirements of the formal "profile" expected of new students outlined in the *Proyecto Educativo* and cited above. In effect, in the areas from which ESEDIR draws students, most of those who met the profile and who were interested and able to attend the 10 month program had already done so. This leaves ESEDIR in the position of having to offer a leadership training experience to *future* community leaders rather than to actual community leaders. This *de facto* shift in recruitment patterns, which is common among educational institutions, is the subject of considerable discussion as the organisation comes to terms with the pertinence of the present model given these changes.[89]

In my field interviews, José Yac, an ESEDIR distance education facilitator, addressed this question when he referred to the importance of identifying the "true leaders" of a community for leadership training at ESEDIR so to avoid the necessity of staring from zero with them as they must do with recent in-takes of younger students. (Interview with José Yac, July 12, 2000).

It is undoubtedly true that mature and proven community leaders will respond differently to the educational experience that ESEDIR provides than will young and inexperienced youth. Furthermore the impact that these two groups will have upon their return to the community will be very different. Already established leaders will be able to apply their new values, skills and knowledge immediately as they resume the work they left behind to study at ESEDIR while the young people will have to win acceptance as leaders,

[89] Indeed, it is highly likely that by the time that this thesis is presented, ESEDIR will have decided upon a new educational 'model' which will reflect these changing circumstances. One of ESEDIR's great strengths, as mentioned, is its self-reflective capacity and its willingness to adjust its practice with the changing times.

a time-consuming process.

From a Critique of "What is" to a Pedagogy of Hope

Both ESEDIR and PRODESSA are very much involved with educational work. ESEDIR in the obvious way of providing formalised educational experiences with established curricula in institutional settings in either a residential or distance-education format. PRODESSA's educational work, takes the form of training community leaders within the context of their development work in the micro-regions. Both organisations are involved with promoting the Educational Reform at the national level and locally. It is therefore important to understand their analysis of education in Guatemala, both what it is and would it should be. ESEDIR's basic educational document, the *Proyecto Educativo*, offers that insight.

ESEDIR's analysis of the curriculum of the schools that do exist is highly critical. They argue that the Guatemalan educational system is

- elitist, discriminatory and ethnically exclusive;
- authoritarian and vertical;
- falsely neutral and apolitical; and
- based on the divorce between intellectual and manual work.

It is, they write

> ... an uncreative school, without stimulating materials or resources, with rigid daily schedules and yearly calendars. It is a place where one wastes one's time and where the teaching is predominantly verbal, directed and one way. The teaching strategy is mechanical and repetitive and everything is controlled by the teacher. This last fact creates passivity in the child. (ESEDIR, n.d., 25).

This leads to students

> ... who attend educational institutions but these serve to reproduce an educational system which lacks a critical sense; [an educational system] which advances an authoritarian model and which inhibits creativity and expressive capacity; which does not recognise cultural diversity and, as a result, favours the dominant culture; which does not take into account the expectations and necessities of an education which is determined by its context and, as a result, suffers in its relationship to reality. (ESEDIR, n.d., 25).

. ESEDIR, however, is interested in more than simply critiquing the present situation. It attempts to model alternative theory and practices and to encourage others to adopt these in their own work. I have already mentioned its residential program in *community development from a Maya perspective* which is truly an alternative school in the sense that its practice there reflects is critical pedagogical approach. Similarly, its in-service teacher training program in Barrillas and the Ixcán is directed to preparing teachers to integrate the pedagogy that ESEDIR has developed over the years into their teaching. In addition, both ESEDIR and PRODESSA provided expertise to the COPARE, the Commission on Educational Reform. As a follow-up to this latter activity, both organisations are presently involved, along with other NGOs, in the work of winning public support so as to bring about the implementation of a program of educational reform consistent with the principles established in the COPARE Report. (See Chapter 9 for details).

It is important to cite ESEDIR's educational philosophy at length as it lies at the heart of its own curriculum and educational practices; it gives coherence to that which they are imparting to the community development activists and teachers that they are educating and reflects the social change orientation of the community development work and technical assistance that both ESEDIR and PRODESSA give to such bodies as the COPARE.

ESEDIR recognises that educators have to make a choice. Either the work that they do serves the status quo which, as we have seen, they argue is the case with the system of education as it is presently organised in Guatemala, or they can work on behalf of the poor.

> Education, then, is a practice with a political sense ... which [has the potential] to work in favour of the most marginal sectors by being critical of the system ... which reproduces ... poverty, discrimination and social injustice... (ESEDIR, n.d., 35).

"There is no such thing", the document asserts, "As a neutral educational practice." The choice, when educators find themselves standing before a social reality characterised by "justice transgressed, liberty and human rights violated, the worker exploited" is to accept the situation, as the official system of education did for so many years, and for the most part, continues to do, or to exercise what ESEDIR calls the "political option" and take a position "for justice, for liberty, for democracy and ethics and the common good." (ESEDIR, n. d., 35).

> The educational system of whatever society including Guatemala, reflects the policies and ideologies of the governing groups who use the school to control, consolidate and justify a particular social system. However, in the traditional school, education is considered apolitical. While this situation is maintained, the educational system's role in the process of social transformation will range from little to nil and the people will remain asleep. The school involves itself in politics not only for what it says but for what it does not say; not only for what it does but for what it fails to do. It is for this reason that when politics is returned to education, education converts itself into a significant tool at the service of social development and not only in the economic service of certain groups. In this way, education provides a constant support to the construction of a democratic and multi-cultural society.
>
> It may appear difficult to educate ourselves in politics but when we do so within Mayan principles, within the context of dialogue, of democratic participation, self management, in creativity, ... in liberty, justice and hope, we are educating ourselves politically. (ESEDIR, n.d., 35).

Promoting education based on such a vision is an essential precondition in ESEDIR's view to create the new social structures necessary to bring into being a society that reflects these values.

ESEDIR's Curriculum for Community Development From a Mayan Perspective

The curriculum followed by ESEDIR students and described in the *Proyecto Educativo*, includes courses that are designed to realise the following specific goals:

Educational:

To strengthen the research capability and the critical capacity of the community leaders so that they can, in a participatory fashion, seek solutions to the problems of the population. This is what will be referred to in Chapter 7 as the ability to conduct community *diagnostics*.

Cultural:

Recuperate, systematise, live and share the values of Mayan culture; advance intercultural relations in order to construct a fraternal, multilingual and multicultural society. This, and gender issues, are undoubtedly the most important of the "cross cutting themes" that touch on each of the three pillars or axis (production, education, organisation) of PRODESSA's community development work.

Social

Impart the knowledge about and methods by which activities can be undertaken to raise the standard of living of the population.

Politics:

Analyse the reality of the structures [of power] in the country in order to make proposals for the establishment of a multicultural, just, egalitarian and democratic society; consolidate democratic leadership in the community; promote the participation of the

Mayan leaders within the process of peace and democracy; promote forms of organisation that respond to the organisational and political forms of the Mayan communities.

Economic:

Promote the learning from self and from others of basic technical knowledge with respect to agriculture, animal husbandry and small industry; promote community level productive projects; promote community distribution and sales of locally produced goods.

Ecology:

Recuperate Mayan knowledge and technologies and alternative knowledge and technologies which favour productive processes that permit the rational use of natural resources, the conservation and improvement of Mother Nature.

Student Experiences:

In addition to courses that explicitly expose students to the considerations enumerated above, ESEDIR organises two kinds of practical experiences that put these values into practice.

The one relates to field work undertaken in the form of two- and three-week practica during each of the two semesters where, under the guidance of the local PRODESSA staff and visiting ESEDIR extension workers, the students do a community analysis (or diagnostic) of the community in which they are working (their home community if possible) and seek to involve the community in the search for solutions to resolve the problems that they have identified in their analysis. This problem-solving or solution-seeking takes the form of calling a community meeting and presenting the problem to the community members present at the meeting, seeking solutions and organising the community to resolve the problem. Occasionally this will lead to an ongoing project for one or more of the students when they return to the community and

sometimes it will lead to less satisfying results such as a frustrating experience of not being able to make any head way with the community in a particular situation. In all cases, it constitutes a real life involvement in community development.

One final point should be made. Legally, PRODESSA and ESEDIR are two separate organisations, ESEDIR being a "project" of PRODESSA. In practice, they work so closely together as to be one organisation with one part that specialises in formal education and another that specialises in community development. When speaking of the world view or the practices of these organisations, it is virtually always the case that what is true for one of these organisations is also true for the other.

Following a review of the concept of local power I will turn to an examination of the practices of these organisations in the local communities.

Summary Observations on the Pan Maya Movement

The Maya movement of resistance to domination is centuries old. What is new is the form it is presently taking. Historically, for example, Maya religiosity and the use of Maya languages have acted as a buffer to the penetration of the official language and culture and they constitute very old survival strategies in Guatemala. What is new is the demand that native religious practices and native languages be recognised by the state and be given institutional expression in order to become a part of the national fabric.

> It is precisely these new strategic components – the demands and the proposals – put forward not in a local and community context, but in relation to all of Guatemalan society and the state, which define the quantitative and qualitative breakthrough between the old and the new indigenous resistance in Guatemala. (Esquit and Gálvez, 1997, 85).

This indigenous resistance takes the form of a New Social Movement which has become a very important component, perhaps the most important component at the present time, in the movement for social change in Guatemala. I argued that this New Social

Movement is characterised by (i) conducts which are socially conflictive; (ii) the articulation of viable options to the status quo; (iii) a principal of identity; (iv) a principle of opposition, and (v) a sense of purpose. More specifically as it related to the Pan Maya movement, this particular New Social Movement is primarily concerned with "cultural resurgence" which is taking advantage of greatly enlarged political space in which to grow and to put forward an agenda which was not previously present.

Under pressure, the Guatemalan state conceded a great deal of space to the Pan Maya movement and all the organisations of the civil society. Now, several years later, as international interest and involvement in the Guatemalan situation is lessening, so to the pressure on the state is lessening and the "peace resisters" can even more effectively slow down or attempt to stop the efforts to implement the Peace Accords.

The Ladino community too, not used to "Maya power" is reacting to this new, articulate and powerful movement on behalf of a people who in the past were on the margins of society and on the margins of their consciousness. The potential for a racist backlash is great and will only be lessened if both the Pan Maya movement and progressive Ladinos are capable of building bridges and work towards common goals, an objective to which all give lip-service but which, as we have seen, faces considerable obstacles.

I shall now turn to a discussion of the place where many of the organisations of the Maya movement work, the local community, in their effort to support community members who are working to build local power, the basis of a vital national movement.

CHAPTER SIX

LOCAL POWER: THE BASIS OF THE MAYA MOVEMENT

Decentralisation, Local Power and Participatory Democracy

While the Pan Maya movement develops its political capacity to articulate its demands and to effectively pressure the state at the national level, the movement cannot ignore the work that has to be done to satisfy the pressing needs of the vast majority of ordinary Maya who work and live out their daily lives at the local community level. It is here, in local communities where the impact of social change (or the lack of it) will be felt. Since any movement is only as strong as its base it is, therefore, very important to study what is happening at the local level because nothing of lasting significance can happen at the national level if the Maya movement is weak or non existent in the communities.

It is helpful to analyse the involvement of the Mayan organisations at the community level within the framework of three concepts: decentralisation, local power and participatory democracy. These concepts are frequently linked although they should not necessarily be linked nor should they be considered synonymous.

Decentralisation refers to the handing down of specified government functions to an office or agency at the sub-central or even community level. It is essentially an administrative act that is not inherently good or bad; progressive or reactionary.

Local power is the exercise of power at the community level. In most cases, for local power to be effective, there would have to be a range of policies and services needed by the community over which they exercised control. Again, while the normative statement might be made that local power is 'good', it is not inherently progressive for if local elites, for example, exercise that power in favour of their own interests, the general population may very well not benefit from it. Participatory democracy, on the other hand,

is usually considered both 'good' and 'progressive' although the exercise of that democracy may, or may not, be exemplary.

These concepts are very useful although they must be handled with caution, as must strategies arising from them, because they have been adopted by everyone from the political left and the indigenous organisations on the one hand to the World Bank, US AID and the United Nations on the other. (Macleod, 1998, 19). In short, these concepts have come to mean many things to many people.

Henry Veltmeyer warns against uncritically embracing such concepts. He writes that "no concept is as central in the study of development, or as problematic in its application, as *participation* ..." (Veltmeyer, 1998, 304). Participation, and the associated concept *participatory development* "has been closely linked to a widespread process of government decentralisation and local community-based development." (Veltmeyer, 1997, 304).

It is important, when discussing decentralisation and participation, to make the distinction between broadening the base of decision-making and simply altering the physical location of offices that are still controlled centrally, as has occurred, for example, in the decentralisation of the Ministry of Education in Guatemala, a case that I will review in Chapter 9. Similarly, handing control over to a regional elite that will be no more responsive to local needs than were the central decision-makers hardly constitutes a step towards participatory community control.

Given that decentralisation and participation can mean many things to many people, this whole phenomenon has complemented the neo-liberal agenda of downsizing the state sector and has even given this policy a progressive appearance in that it seems to favour local participation in decision-making and service delivery.

This is particularly true now that even the neo-liberals, or at least the more sophisticated among them, have become alarmed by the political instability that has occurred as a response to the widening gap between rich and poor as the structural adjustment programmes associated with globalisation achieve precisely what they were established to do. The response by agencies such as the World Bank to this development is to argue that structural adjustment must include minimal standards of health, education, social security and welfare (Veltmeyer, 1997, 306). To ensure that such social expenditures are delivered in the most efficient and effective manner possible, World Bank and similar thinking strategists have come up with the idea of inviting the participation of the beneficiaries of such policies in the process of service delivery at the local level. This was not meant to be socially transformatory by any means. For the advocates of this form of participation

> Development was, and is, predicated on changing not the system that produces its socio-economic conditions but changing the position of women – or of agricultural producers, the urban poor, or other intended beneficiaries of the development process – within the system; to remove any barriers to their equal access or opportunity. (Veltmeyer, 1997, 306).

In short, the strategy hopes simultaneously to implement a model of efficient and effective targeted program delivery with winning the support of the intended beneficiaries by inviting them to participate to one degree or another in providing these services.

Veltmeyer identifies five basic characteristics of this neo-liberal approach, each of which constitutes "a pillar of an associated theoretical model."

(i) an emphasis on *participation*, that is the incorporation of the targeted beneficiaries, in particular women and the poor;

(ii) *decentralisation* of decision-making related to the design and the financing of development programmes and projects, sharing the authority and power of vital decisions with local governments and community-based institutions (*partnership)*;

(iii) targeting the poor – prioritising the problems and conditions of extreme poverty, alleviating and mitigating them with policies and projects financed with a special Social Investment Fund;
(iv) specific policies related to health, education and productive employment – and, in a number of versions, small and micro-enterprise development – with the aim of incorporating women and the poor into the development process, *empowering* them and securing their active participation; and
(v) *structural reforms* (including the privatisation of social services) that will provide an appropriate institutional framework for the new social policy and the process of social development involved. (Veltmeyer, 1997, 310 – 311).

While this sophisticated model includes the notion of empowerment it is the empowerment of being marginally integrated into the prevailing market economy rather than the empowerment of being able to effect transformatory social change. It is this latter, far more radical, notion of empowerment that underlay the alternative concept.

> … empowerment – constituting and capacitating the objects of the development process as active subjects, involving them in each and every phase including initial diagnosis and the determination of the community's problems and needs. (Veltmeyer, 1997, 306).

This alternative approach, too, has its basic principles:

(i) development as empowerment, the expansion of choice, the realisation of a potential given to every human being in equal measure;
(ii) the need to go beyond the state and the market, the development agencies identified in the dominant development discourse, towards the community, the locus and the key agency of the development process;
(iii) popular participation as the *sine qua non* of the development process, its goal, means, and agency;
(iv) the necessary conditions of participatory development are that it be human in scale (small), local or community-based, and people-led; and
(v) that it requires both equity (a more equitable distribution of society's resources, that is, social transformation) and democracy, predicated on a fundamental change in the nature of the state and its relation to civil society. (Veltmeyer, 1997, 307).

For both of these approaches the municipality is the preferred site of local power and citizen participation.

Veltmeyer particularly challenges what he considers to be the left's uncritical acceptance of the notion of the municipality as the most appropriate site to achieve local power and popular participation. He suggests that municipalities are not communities in the sense implied in the concept "community development." He defines community as "an organic unity bound together by social bonds, relations of mutual obligation, common interests, and shared social identity." (Veltmeyer, 1997, 320). He suggest that, in fact, this decentralisation "tends to undermine and weaken – even destroy – the organisational and political capacity of traditional community – or class based organisations, and, in the process, weaken the ties of people to their increasingly fragmented communities." (Veltmeyer, 1997, 319).

Veltmeyer is correct to warn us that the concept *community* puts us on the edge of a slippery slope. This concept can hide as much as it reveals. Communities, certainly defined as places of residence, are class divided and frequently characterised by conflict resulting from competing interests. Nonetheless, I submit, community defined as a place of residence constitutes an important reference point in the lives of people and the struggle over how that community should be organised and governed to meet the needs of its residence is a site of struggle that progressives cannot ignore for if they do, they cede it to their adversaries. Even Veltmeyer recognises a possible exception of importance to our study. He notes that the community as he defines it, above,

> ... does not seem to exist, except perhaps, to some extent, in small-scale societies constituted by the indigenous peoples in the Andean highlands of Peru, Bolivia, and Ecuador, the Amazonian rain forests, for Guatemala and the Southeast of Mexico. (Veltmeyer, 1997, 320).

These fractured communities, communities with which the people have weakened ties, communities which by definition seem to be relegated by Veltmeyer to the category of highly problematic sites of progressive struggle, are said to have the following three characteristics:

> (i) a minority in control of the means of production and political authority – and power;
> (ii) various middle strata dependent on petty production or public service within the locality or oriented towards, and dependent on, connections to the outside world (in terms of communications, culture , and often even with respect to economic activity or employment); and
> (iii) large numbers of segmented and poorly organised low-income small producers, low-wage hunters and gatherers, and an underclass of landless or otherwise marginal workers, many of them forced to migrate in search of subsistence. (Veltmeyer, 1997, 320).

I challenge this narrow definition of community that seems to assume that only working class voluntary associations, on the one hand, and pre capitalist "small-scale societies" such as an isolated indigenous village, on the other, can be considered communities. A community is no less a community because, for example, it has a minority that controls power. The issue is not the existence of a "power elite" for that can be addressed by democrats within the community challenging, hopefully successfully over time, the control exercised by such a group. Rather the issue is community of interest. Similarly, even where one lives can fit one's definition of community even if there are struggles going on between those who would monopolise power and those who would democratise it. Indeed, the struggle to democratise a city, town or village is evidence that it is an important element in the lives of its residents and that its benefits can be enhanced if the resources it has to offer are subject to democratic decision-making. In effect, Veltmeyer's definition of community is a rather orthodox Marxist one while the definition of community that underlies the views of those he criticises is more consistent with a "new

social movement" perspective. This latter perspective asserts that communal interests may well cross class lines on many issues particularly if the political objective of social and political struggle is what is normally categorised as liberal-democratic rather than revolutionary socialist as is presently the case in Guatemala if one takes the Peace Accords as constituting the framework of the progressive social change agenda that is achievable at this historical juncture.

Furthermore, while I would agree with Veltmeyer that indigenous communities in Guatemala and elsewhere are communities, I can't agree with his reasons. I would suggest that Maya villages are prone to power struggles but that this does not eliminate these communities as sites of popular participation. It simply means that they will be, not surprisingly, sites of struggle between the people and local notables most of whom will, in all likelihood, be Maya.

This said, Veltmeyer is correct to point out the dangers associated with the strategy of constructing local power and seeking to achieve popular participation. The conclusion I draw from this is that you always have to keep the pitfalls in mind rather than simply abandoning the strategy out of hand.

The Concept of Power

When a social movement undertakes a strategy of achieving local power and popular participation, it is confronted with the necessity of dealing with the concept of power and the issue of who now holds it and what those excluded from it have to do in order to exercise it. This question has come to the fore in recent years in Guatemala. Of the many publications on this topic, two stand out as being particularly useful as overviews and case studies: Poder local: Reflexiones sobre Guatemala by long-time Guatemalan

resident Morna Macleod (1998) who is the Oxfam Australia representative in Guatemala and Poder local y participación democrática by Victor Gálvez, et al (1998).

Whether power has a negative, positive or neutral connotation depends upon context. Power is a complex concept that can emerge from having force, from having legitimacy, from having resources, from having integrity. Clearly these are different forms of power and can be wielded wisely or unwisely, in the common good or for the good of an individual or small group. (Macleod, 1998, 27).

MacLeod, in her analysis of local power, notes that recently feminist thinkers have distinguished between power as a form of domination and power as a creative force that leads to *empowerment*, a concept which has found its way into the literature and practice of community development. (Macleod, 1998, 27).

Even *empowerment* can have different dimensions and can range from the notion of power *over* which implies the ability frequently to act against the wishes of others to power in the sense of *empowerment.* Empowerment can be seen as

> 1. *Power* or *enabling strength* to resolve a problem, learn a new skill, achieve improvements for the community, etc.; 2. *Power* or *power within* a collective. Much more can be achieved through organisation than through individual efforts; 3. *Power* or *internal strength* within oneself – spiritual strength, dignity, self-esteem and respect for others. (Macleod, 1998, 27).

While we are most familiar with the concept of "power over" and political strategies in the past have presumed the need to accumulate this form of power in order to achieve the goals of the social change sector, Macleod suggests that it is important to consider other forms of power as well.

> In strategic terms we must transform our understanding of power and creatively resist *power over* ... We have to explore the concepts of *enabling strength, power within and internal strength* and their interconnections. In our development work, this means developing capabilities to find solutions to problems and to resolve conflicts; it means strengthening organisations,

building individual and collective skills and building solidarity. (Macleod, 1998, 27 – 28).

In a rural Maya community there are many poles of power ranging from that of the military commander and officers of the local garrison, the local economic elite, religious leaders, traditional Mayan elders, functionaries of the national government, local professionals like teachers and technicians, key members of the local development committees and municipal officials. All of these people exercise power in the broadest sense of the word and have to be taken into account in our consideration of how local power operates in any given location.[90]

Furthermore, as I have mentioned, factors which affect local power comes not only from within the community, but also from the outside. Agencies like the World Bank and the Inter- American Development Bank are of the opinion that local power should primarily be vested in the structure of municipal government and their projects give priority to the strengthening of the capacity of the municipalities to deliver services and build infrastructure. I will argue that there is no inherent contradiction between seeing the municipal structure as being the main structure through which local power is expressed as long as it is not seen as a substitute to strengthening the organisations of civil society at the municipal level as an integral part of the process of development.

In fact, in many communities in Guatemala, the space in which local power is exercised is the county or, as it is called in Guatemala, the *municipalidad* with its associated outlying villages, or *aldeas*[91] The structures through which development occurs

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[90] This observation alone should be enough to disabuse Vletmeyer of his notion that Maya communities are exceptions to his definition of community based on the absence of such class-based hierarchies.
[91] In Guatemala, the county seat or *municipalidad* is a relatively large urban centre which will usually have associated smaller villages *(aldeas)* within its administrative jurisdiction. Therefore, when I speak of development or politics at the municipal level I am thinking of a complex relationship between the dominant

are not just those of the municipal government. Certainly the municipal governments in Guatemala now enjoy greater resources than ever in the past. (Pape, 1996, 81 – 85). The country's Constitution mandates that 10% of the national budget must go to the municipalities (González, 1998, 75). Given the increment in their budgets from the national government and resources made available to them through international projects and a variety of development funds, the municipal governmental structure is a space that cannot be ignored by those promoting community development, whether they be working from a technocratic or a transformative perspective.[92]

However, in addition to this official structure there now exist a wide range of non-government organisations through which people can work to change their lives and improve the conditions in their community. These include traditional Mayan associations, development committees, civic and community movements, popular organisations, such as those defending human rights, promoting Mayan culture, women's issues, etc., and the national and international development NGOs to name just a few.[93]

While local power manifests itself in a particular geographic space, Macleod makes the argument that we should not think of local power simply in geographical terms. Rather local power is "a concept that takes into account the community's way of doing things and local forms of organisation." (Macleod, 1998, 39). In short, local power manifests itself

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urban centre and the outlying *aldeas*. Often the *aldeas* will feel ignored by the urban centre just as the local urban centre might feel ignored by departmental or central authorities.

[92] Despite this welcome development of the municipalities receiving a guaranteed percentage of the natinal budget the restraints on municipal government finances are extreme. Bernardino Ramirez, the Mayor of Cabricán, a micro-region of 14,865 inhabitants at the time of the 1996 census (PRODESSA, 1997 [a], 6), had a total core monthly municipal budget provided by the central government of Q. 12,000 to Q. 15,000 or U.S. $1,600 to U. S. $ 2,000. Calculated at Q. 7.5/U.S. $ 1.00. This budget had to cover all expenses including salaries and programs. Little wonder that Mayor Ramirez told me tht in order to run social programs he was incurring a growing deficit. (Interview with Bernardino Ramirez, July 18, 2000).

[93] Of the four micro-regions that I visited in July, 2000 I interviewed the Mayors of three of them. All spoke highly of the importance to their communities of the work of the NGOs and other agencies as well as of the

differently in each community where it is emerging. What is important, however, from a transformatory social change perspective, is that certain important elements be present whatever the particular form local power takes.

> ... the participation and *empowerment* are two key components for the construction and actualisation of local power. A third element is the decision making process in the community with respect to the affairs which affects its life and well being. [94] Although it is implicit in the concept of *empowerment*, it is important to remember that equity (both as its relates to gender as well as ethnicity) as a reference point of local power. In this way, local power is an expression of participatory democracy. [95] (Macleod, 1998, 39).

Local power then, if it is to be transformatory rather than administrative, is that which contributes to *empowerment*. It involves *mobilisation* on behalf of a project or a program of action – it is less the bringing of clean water to a community or the building of a school than it is the participatory process that made the provision of the service possible.

> By local power we understand the actions and organisational expressions at the level of the community, of the municipality or of the micro-region which contribute to satisfy the needs, interests and aspirations of the local population ....with a view to improving their life conditions (economic, social, cultural, political and personal) and in so doing converts them into subjects or protagonists of their own lives. Local power may or may not be constructed through representative organisations .... But also it might be achieved through collective actions such as occurred .... when the people demanded the withdrawal of the army from Santiago Atitlán. Finally, in the case of Guatemala, with its indigenous majority, common law and the resolution of conflicts by the traditional authorities of the community are an intrinsic part of local power. (Macleod, 1998, 39 – 40).[96]

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importance of the funds available from governments and non governmental sources to finance municipal projects. (See below).

[94] Macleod makes the point that in a development project effective community participation cannot be simply limited to consulting the community but rather making it possible for them to decide on the nature of the project and to participate actively in its planning, execution and evaluation. (Macleod: 1998: 39).

[95] Macleod cautions us that " ... in the case of Guatemala, that the concept of 'democracy' does not exactly represent Mayan thinking as the legitimacy of its traditional leaders does not rest on the process of elections nor do these community leaders necessarily occupy formal positions of power .... However, we feel that the notion of 'participatory democracy' is not in conflict with Mayan conceptions ...." (Macleod: 1998: 39).

[96] Macleod's definition of local power is process oriented and radical in the sense that it eliminates non transformatory practices from the definition. Gálvez, et al (1998) takes less radical, more structural approach, as follows: "*Local power* will be understood as the totality of expressions of power in an given administrative

Social Participation

Participation in a community activity or membership on a local committee does not necessarily imply that power has passed "to the people." Participation can take many forms, not many of which have transformatory implications. Indeed, while participation can be a dynamic experience leading those involved to questioning existing social relations and patterns of power, it can also serve to reinforce the status quo and reproduce the unequal power relations in the community as Veltmeyer correctly observes.

White (cited in Macleod, 1998, 43 – 44) has identified 5 levels of community participation, three of which clearly fall into this latter category of reinforcing the status quo. She cites *manipulated* participation, *nominal* participation and *instrumental* participation. The two former categories essentially involve a thinly veiled pretence of participation while power lies elsewhere. The latter involves supplementing the donor agency's financial and/or technical contribution with in- kind community contributions in the form of labour such as in the case of a road construction project that doesn't involve the community in any of the project decision-making or its impact on the community.

A more legitimate form of participation is what White calls *representative* participation. In this model a community development NGO, for example, will invite local people to form an organisation and within the limits imposed by the funds available from the NGO and from other sources, invite them to plan a community development project that the NGO will then finance. The population gets their voice heard and learns the skills of

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and judicial area (the municipality). This includes the power relations which are established by the municipal government with other entities of the central government working in the municipality as well as with other individuals, groups and associations of the local civil society (committees, neighbourhoods, organised or not, NGOs, churches, leaders, unions, professional and business associations, etc.). In this sense, it is considered that the *municipal government* forms a part of *local power* although it is not the local power per se as there also exists other expressions of local power which exist side by side with it." (Gálvez, 1998, 39). In this way

project identification, planning and execution while the NGO is assured that its project meets community needs, is broadly supported and increases the chance that it will be sustainable. Such participation "assumes a *representative* character and is converted into an effective mechanism through which the people can express their interests and insure they are met." (White, cited in Macleod: 1998: 44). This would be the most far-reaching form of participation that could be imagined within the logic of the World Bank's approach to decentralisation and local participation in decision-making and should not be dismissed out of hand as being simply a form of co-optation. Such decision-making forums can and should be considered sites of struggle.

The last category of participation that White identifies is what she calls *transformative* participation. This is the form of participation that interests us most as we review the role of the Pan Maya movement in the transformation of social, political and economic structures in Guatemala. By *transformatory* participation White means a process of empowerment that

> ... is based on the conception that the practical experience of participating in the analysis of options, in the taking of decisions and in the collective struggle against injustice is, itself, transformatory. It leads to a growing consciousness about the causes of poverty and the reasons for continuing poverty and creates an ever-growing confidence in their own capacity for involvement. (White, cited in Macleod, 1998, 44).

The financial support of outside agencies such as national or international NGOs or even multilateral agencies such as the World Bank does not in any way diminish the participatory or democratic or authentic nature of the expression of transformatory local power. What is at issue here is the model of participation, not who is financing the project.

Gálvez avoids the issue of what kind of decisions are being made and whose interests are being served while such considerations are at the heart of Macleod's concept.

What needs to be of concern is how and by whom people are selected to participate, what the process of decision-making is, how resources are channelled, what new skills are imparted to community members. Not every project or injection of cash leads to local power however welcome the resulting project may be. To allow the community to chose, for example, between a water project and a new school is to allow *the expression of preferences*, it is not empowerment. It may constitute an example of administrative decentralisation but it does not represent a transformation of power relations in the community. Such a transformation implies progressively handing over power to local people within a framework of self-management in their places of work, places of study and places of residence. (White, cited in Macleod, 1998, 48).

ALFORJA, the popular education network based in Costa Rica which has been long involved in issues relating to popular participation and community control, cites two conditions as being necessary for a viable socially significant decentralisation to occur.

> (a) ...there must be an effective transfer of the means, resources and authority from the central government to the municipal government;
>
> (b) the local governments must develop an authentic democratic practice in their work which presumes, among other things, interacting with the local social actors and politicians recognising their conflicts of interest and negotiating solutions based on consensus and respecting their autonomy. (ALFORJA, cited in Macleod, 1998, 58).

For ALFORJA, had decentralisation occurred within the context of the Keynesian social state, such a development would have represented a tremendous opportunity to strengthen local development with strong state support and to enhance local decision-making. Under the very changed circumstances of neo liberal decentralisation, however, where the state is either abdicating many of its previous responsibilities and/or giving financial support to local non governmental organisations that are now providing services

either for the first time or in place of the state's now disbanded delivery mechanism, there are risks inherent in what amounts to a new relationship between the state and the civil society. The risk is that rather than being a liberating or transformatory experience, the state's downloading of responsibility on the local level will lead to under-funded local organisations bearing the burden and making local people the target for discontent when the level of service proves to be inadequate. Keeping in mind Bonamusa's categories of the organisations of civil society reviewed in Chapter 3, we realise that there are of course, always groups prepared to play this role.

If that is the risk, the situation also contains an opportunity and that is the possibility of taking control of the quality of life at the community level. This opportunity arises from the fact that even the neo liberal themselves see the contradiction in their model which dismantles the welfare state, relies on the markets to be the motor of the economy and in so doing runs the risk of social conflict as poverty deepens, not declines, in the face of the impact of this model. (Macleod, 1998, 59; Veltmeyer, 1997, 306).

The Process of Decentralisation in Guatemala

Historically Guatemala has had a high degree of centralisation which greatly favoured the capital city (Gálvez, et al., 1998, 51) and while it will take years for this to change significantly, there has begun a process designed to redress this situation. As mentioned, since 1987 the municipalities have received a constitutionally mandated 8% of the state's income and since 1994 this has grown to 10 percent. (González, 1998, 75). The capacity of the municipalities to promote development has increased as a result of different

measures to strengthen them organisationally.[97] The municipalities have greater resources than in the past but these are limited in the extreme. However, the existence of this income coupled with the presumed enhanced role of the municipal government, raises expectations that cannot be met as I have documented in Chapter 8 in the case of Cabricán.

Fortunately there are other sources of revenue for development purposes although predictably these are not without their complications. (Gálvez, et. al., 1998, 51).[98]

None of the Mayors to whom I spoke in Concepción, Tutuapa, San Marcos; Puruhlá, AVP and Cabricán, Quetzaltenango were part of the experiment in decentralisation referred to in the footnote, above, and none spoke of any significant evidence that decentralisation to their communities had been implemented. One, the Mayor of Puruhlá, in reference to health services said that "they are talking about it" while another, the Mayor of Concepción, said that due to an agreement with the Ministry of Finance, certain taxes that until recently had to be paid by the tax payer in the capital, necessitating an inconvenient and costly trip there, could now be paid locally.

Rudy López of the National Association of Municipalities is believes that decentralisation will be achieved over time as the municipalities, through such measures as

[97] Rudy López, the Executive Secretary of the National Association of Guatemalan Municipalities, the body which represents the 331 municipalities of the country in their dealings with the central government, told me about the National Training Plan to enhance the administrative capacity of the country's municipalities. He recognised that most municipalities are not ready to assume even the minimal responsibilities they now have much less an increased level of responsibility. He put their lack of preparedness in perspective when he mentioned that some two dozen municipal offices do not even have telephones. About fifty of the 331 municipalities are part of a model program experimenting with decentralising government service delivery. Others won't be ready, in his view, to assume these responsibilities for years to come. (Interview with Rudy López, August 1, 2000).

[98] It is hard to imagine how little money the municipalities have to work with for 10% of Guatemala's abysmally low public revenues divided by the 331 municipalities is hardly enough to cover the operating costs of the local staff, such as it is, let alone leaving anything for programs. There have been other sources of revenue available to the municipalities and described in the next section, but in many cases the mandates of these Funds are coming to an end or they are difficult to access. In short, among many other problems, the fiscal problems of the municipalities will have to be seriously addressed before they can become effective agents of public administration.

the National Training Plan, become better able to handle their responsibilities. He admits, however, that the big issue is not so much training but rather providing a revenue base for the municipalities. He expressed the hope that a solution to this problem could be found in the recently signed *Pacto Fiscal*, an agreement between the government and the civil society, including the powerful business lobby, the CACIF, in which it was agreed that Guatemala's low level of taxation, and even lower level of tax collection, mentioned as a serious problem in Chapter 4, would be modified in such a way as to significantly increase government revenues in order to pay for the programs provided for in the Peace Accords. When pressed on whether he really thought that the increased tax provisions in the *Pacto Fiscal* would be implemented, he admitted to not being optimistic that this would happen, a prediction borne out by the failure at the time of writing, to reform the tax system. (Interview with Rudy López, August 1, 2000).

In the absence of such revenues, the municipalities had to seek funding from a variety of sources many of which were established by the international community in support of the peace process.

Sources of Development Funds

During the 1990s and particularly following the signing of the Peace Accords huge amounts of international money was made available from bilateral and multilateral sources. The United Nations, the World Bank, the Inter-American Bank and the European Community are among the most important multilateral contributors while USAID, Canada's CIDA and the Scandinavian countries are very active on the bilateral front. Dozens of international Non Governmental Organisations also have an important presence in Guatemala.

Eleven social funds have been created since 1989,[99] some of which no longer exist as they were given stipulated mandates which have expired. One of the most important funds, the FIS (el Fondo de Inversión Social), for example, founded in 1993, will cease to exist in 2001 while FONAPAZ (el Fondo para la Paz) ceased to exist in 1998.

The oldest of this complex of bureaucratic development agencies, however, are the government's Development Councils, which were created as part of the Christian Democratic Government's 1986 Regionalisation strategy. In 1987, the Minister of Urban and Rural Development announced a hierarchical system of development councils that involved national, regional, departmental, municipal and local councils. Needless to say, such a hierarchical structure would not be dynamic and its composition, which includes the representative of the military at each level, has been, to say the least, controversial. Furthermore, the base level organisation in this structure, the Local Development Councils which worked at the level of the *aldea*, were declared unconstitutional shortly after their creation leaving the micro-regional level Municipal Council as the one closest to the people. Even here there were difficulties as often there is confusion about who should take the lead: the Municipal Development Council, a creation of the central government, or the municipality itself.

Despite these difficulties the judgement as to their worth is not entirely negative. Gálvez writes that the Development Councils are, on balance, "an organisation created more for co-ordination than for execution" and they are less models of decentralisation than

[99] These are FONAPAZ (el Fondo para la Paz); FIS (Fondo de Inversión Social); FSDC (el Fondo de Solidaridad para el Desarrilo Comunitario; FODIGUA (el Fondo de Desarrollo Indigena Guatemalteco); ADR (el Fondo de Aporte al Desarrollo Rural); FONAGRO (el Fondo para la Reactivación y Modernisación de la Agricultura; FONATIERRA (el fondo nacional de tierra); FOGUAVI, El Fondo Guatemalteco para la Vivienda; el Fondo de Salud; and PRONADE (el Fondo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnologia y el Programa Nacional de Autogestión para el Desarrollo Educativo, this last organisation, unlike the others, reports to the Ministry of Education.

what he calls "deconcentración", by which I understand an administrative restructuring that disperses some decision-making geographically but keeps it firmly in the hands of government decision-makers. Gálvez concludes that the Development Councils "permitted a slow process of transferring responsibilities and authority towards local government." (Gálvez, cited in Macleod, 1998, 76). While this doesn't constitute transformatory local power by any stretch of the imagination it does represent a shift in the site of political conflict over the allocation of resources to the local level where community organisations have a chance of airing their concerns and presenting their priorities.

The impact that the funding agencies and the Development Councils have had on community development varies from community to community. How the possibilities provided by access to the funds affect the community varies with factors such as the level of mobilisation of the local population and the specifics of how a development funds are administered in a particular locality. Both Macleod (1998) and Gálvez et al (1998) document a range of experiences in community development which demonstrate successes and failures in achieving participatory democracy at the local level.

Remembering that I have defined local power as an inclusionary process of empowerment with respect to decision-making which affects the social, economic, cultural and political well being of the participants and their fellow citizens, we can look at three examples of local power, one of which is deemed a successful model and two of which are not. These contrasting situations will provide models against which we can make comparative judgements on the community work of ESEDIR and PRODESSA.

The First Case Study: CDRO - The Successful Fusion of the Mayan Cosmovision and Development:

The CDRO is the Co-operative Association for the Rural Development of the West (Asociación Cooperación para el Desarrollo Rural de Occidente). It was founded in the department of Totonicapán in 1984 and established an office and began work, a training program, in 1987.[100]

Totonicapán is one of Guatemala's most densely populated areas (270 people/km^2) in contrast with the national average of 70 people/km^2). Ninety-eight percent of the population is K'iche'. While some crops are grown – corn, beans, fruit trees and certain vegetables – the land is exhausted and better suited for forestry. Most of the local people have sought alternative employment to full-time work on the land.

> As a result, the local inhabitants have been artisans since the end of the 19th century, dedicating only 25% of their time to the land and spending the rest of their time on other productive activities such as potting, sewing, the production of furniture made of wood and leather, and commerce, all of which is concentrated primarily in the municipality of San Francisco el Alto, one of the most important commercial centres in the country. For this reason, despite the poverty, there are few workers who emigrate to the Coast seeking seasonal labouring jobs. (Macleod, 1998, 137).

While many of the traditional political and religious practices have been lost in Totonicapán there is a strong cultural and territorial identification which affects decision-making. For example, Macleod cites the example of businesses that won't expand beyond the point where they will have to go further afield and hire people who are not locals.

Prior to launching their activities in the community, the founders of CDRO analyzed the local situation and took note of the socio-economic circumstances facing the community and of the local development efforts of outside agencies. With respect to this

[100] This case study is drawn from Macleod, 1998, 137 – 148.

latter phenomenon, to the extent that the state was involved with development it entailed the provision of infrastructure and service from on high and had little social impact on the community. There were also what they called "parachuting" agencies that came into a community, developed a project, and disappeared.

The study noted, too, that the community was also divided along religious and partisan political lines and so the idea of the CDRO founders was

> ... to try to unify once more the community as it was once when our ancestors lived here. They lived in a community but the concept of community was that they shared what they had, they shared their land, they helped each other, they offered co-operation. This was lost as a result of religion and capitalism. We have to return to rescue what we consider is possible [to rescue] because there are things that can't be recuperated. (CDRO, cited in Macleod, 1998, 139).

CDRO is founded on the belief that the entire community must be involved in the "conception, elaboration, administration, execution and evaluation of its development projects." Another principal is "the unity of the community and the existence of a single program of development as a guarantee of non-manipulation from the outside."

As a part of their practice, every project is seen as an opportunity to strengthen local capacities both in commercial terms (financially successful operations) and in training terms (preparing local technicians to replace those from away even if the present staff drawn from elsewhere are Maya).

The *Pop* Organisational Form of CDRO

The Maya word *Pop,* is translated as *petate* in Spanish or *mat* in English. In the ancient Maya religious text the *Pop Wuj* the traditional authorities sat upon a mat while they consulted among themselves about the issues facing their people. The mat was oriented towards the four cardinal points – where the sun rose and where it set; towards the

land and towards the heavens. From this came the notion of horizontality in organisational structure. The CDRO is structured horizontally.

Organisationally, the CDRO in each community or urban neighbourhood where it operates is composed of up to eight sectoral or working groups. For example, in a given locale there might be some or all of the following eight groups: an artisans' group, a group of cultivators, a health group, an education group, an infrastructure group, a consumer group, a service group and a women's group. These eight groups, or fewer if a community did not require all eight, form the Community Council (Consejo Comunal) in their village or neighbourhood. This structure would be replicated in each community of the department.

All of the working groups of one sector, the artisans' group, for example, form the departmental artisans' co-ordinating group which is known as the Artisan sub system or Artisan Council which would make decisions affecting all of the artisans organised throughout the department of Totonicapán. Thus decision-making occurs at a variety of levels and within and across sectors.

There is also a General Assembly at which all of the 45 Community Councils (representing 550 working groups) can participate. The existence of 550 working groups creates the possibility of participation by a large number of people who have the opportunity to deal with a wide range of issues of local interest.

Apart from the eight sectoral programs into which CDRO's work is divided, they have two institutional programs: training and organisation. With respect to training, the program stresses teaching skills in doing feasibility studies, elaborating five-year development plans, management and administration of projects and teaching technical skills.

The CDCO also has founded a bank, el Banco *Pop*. El Banco *Pop* organises the credit used for the development projects that CDRO undertakes. From the beginning CDRO has preferred to use credit rather than donations and the interest rates they charge range from well below the commercial rate to well over it with the stronger groups and activities supporting the weaker. The Bank is so successful that it has established 8 branches despite the fact that at the time of Macleod's study in 1998, it was not yet a legally incorporated financial institution.

In the spirit of promoting sustainable development CDRO gives priority to supporting the establishment of profitable small enterprises some of which are marketing such products as shoulder bags, back-packs and jackets successfully into European and U.S. markets. Other product lines involve traditional style weavings designed for foreign consumption, colourfully decorated handicrafts made of wood and furniture. More recently, they have launched a line of dehydrated fruit, marmalade, biscuits and enriched bread, to name only a few.

Faced with the question about what this has to do with the Maya cosmovision, or world view, CDRO director Gregorio Tzoc says

> ... it is necessary to understand that society ... is changing. We can no longer live with sandals ... what we have to do is modernise ... As Mayas we well understand that technology ... is good as a means of communication, as a means to help us live. Now, this is not to say that we are in complete agreement [with all of this]. It's a matter of accepting that which doesn't do much harm ... (Macleod: 1998: 144).

CDRO's Strategy of Equilibrium

CDRO, operating as it does, within the Mayan cosmovision which stresses life's natural cycles sees its strategy as one of equilibrium and harmony consistent with a

philosophy based on such natural rhythms. In short, confrontation of any form is not a part of the approach.

> CDRO operates within an economic, social and political system whose injustices and under-development affects it profoundly. CDRO cannot eliminate this system, as a result it does not pretend that it can do so. The relationship with the system can be defined as one of equilibrium, as it presupposes the recognition of existing forces although its coexistence with these does not indicate agreement or subordination when these oppress or harm the population. The organisation does not oppose other efforts to organise the population but it always promotes a policy of unity. The position of equilibrium recognises the legality of the Guatemalan state but it also conducts itself by the legality of the community. (U'k'ux Wuj [Summary], cited in Macleod, 1998, 147).

There are those critics who argue that this is a position that accommodates CDRO to the system of exploitation that characterises the Guatemalan social, economic and political system. These critics implicitly or explicitly presume that confrontation is the only way to effect social change. Macleod doesn't agree. She writes

> … the strategy of equilibrium is a strategy of power, but it sees power … as a process of *empowerment*: having power to achieve (community) objectives, having force and power as an organisation and as a means to grant dignity to its members. It is an accumulation and an articulation of force, in this case, that of the communities from a Maya perspective. (Macleod, 1998, 147).

At first glance, the CDRO would seem to fit well within what we will come to understand as Bonamusa's first category of NGOs – one which works to improve the lot of the popular sectors without reference to the state. Macleod, however, based on the comment cited above, wouldn't agree with this categorisation for even if CDRO isn't working consciously to transform political power in its communities, its work is, in effect, paving the way for changes that will emerge as a result of the empowerment of local citizens in a way unknown in the past. The same can be said for the work of many of the organisations

associated with the Pan Maya movement – they are preparing whole communities of people for undefined struggles yet to come.

The work of CDRO does not conform to old certainties about how one promotes far reaching social and political change but then it's dealing with such uncertainties that this study is all about.

The Second and Third Case Studies: Non Participatory Models of Local Power:

Gálvez (1998) and his colleagues studied a number of communities and demonstrated that there is a wide range of experiences with respect to their success in implementing local power. Like the case of the CDRO experience, this research found successful examples of highly participatory forms of local power but they also identified two cases where old administrative practices and citizen passivity prevailed.[101]

The two communities in question are very different from each other. One, El Progreso in the Department of Jutiapa, is 98% Ladino and is predominately, but far from exclusively, rural. The other community, San Bartolome Milpas Altas in the Department of Sacatepequez, is an indigenous community (72% of the population) sufficiently close to Antigua Guatemala, the colonial capital and Guatemala's second city, that it is a favourite market for city residents to visit on weekends. Despite the fact that a major economic activity in this tiny municipality (7 kms square) is fruit trees, it is in fact an urban area.

The mayor of El Progreso, the Ladino community, is a powerful political figure regionally holding the position of president of the Regional Association of Municipalities. He has a charismatic personality. Most local decisions are made in his office and he doesn't hesitate to enter into conflict with just about anyone from the departmental

[101] The discussion of the situation in El Progreso and San Bartolome Milpas Altas are taken from Gálvez, et al (1998, 72 – 76).

governor to the local community organisations. There is one notable exception – he maintains good relations with the economically influential Association of Cattlemen.

There are both rural and urban committees of various sorts but their effectiveness, especially the urban committees, is negligible. The mayor, for example, has little use for the urban Neighbourhood Committees. When asked if he thinks it is important to strengthen them, he retorts

> Why? You tell me! … I never go to the meetings of a development committee because when you go to one of those meetings it is like the savour of the world just arrived and whatever problem they have they say "here is the mayor" and I'm not going to be able to resolve their problems. (Gálvez, 1998, 73).

Given this attitude and his positive relationship with the Association of Cattlemen, it is not surprising that the mayor's support comes from the rural areas. Any initiative he takes is opposed by the other political parties whose support lies in the urban areas. This further divides the community. Given the low level of organisation in the urban sector and the influence of the mayor's political opponents in the urban areas, the possibility of decentralised, participatory decision making is minimal until such time that an organisation that can overcome this dynamic begins to work effectively in this municipal area.

In San Bartolome Milpas Altas, the indigenous community, a similar situation of a low level of community organisation exists. To the extent that there are committees they are organised around specific tasks such as the committee which represents those who rent space in the local market and two others which are working to install a municipal drainage system.

The mayor is convinced of the permanence of the apathy of the local inhabitants and his perception has caused him to try to take the initiative on all aspects of community development although the results have not been very satisfactory. The mayor complains of

his failed efforts to motivate the people to assume greater civic responsibility and this even includes the elected officials who are so busy exercising their professions that they have little time to dedicate to their public functions. This situation of minimal to non existent citizen participation and inactive elected officials leads to a vicious cycle where there is little engagement by anyone in the affairs of the community except by the mayor who stands alone.

In both of these communities, the municipality is beset by a low level of organisation and divided by conflicting political loyalties. The mayor in both cases projects a strong personality and attempts to replace the active participation of the citizens.

Gálvez concludes his observations of these two municipalities on a sombre note:

> It is hard to consider how another model of municipal management might be applied with respect to citizen participation given the conflict in one case (El Progreso) and the apparent apathy of the residents in the other (San Bartolome Milpas Altas). The possibility of implementing another model would depend on a change in the situation of the municipality ... which would require modifications in the relations between the municipal corporation and the residents. (Gálvez, et al., 1998, 75 – 76).

Both of these cases are viewed by the local residents as "the way things are." In this sense the role of the two mayors simply reflect the low level of expectations of their constituents.

The CDRO experience shows that with time and patience even difficult situations can be dramatically turned around. The latter two case studies show that local power has certainly not taken root everywhere and that local conditions greatly affect the prospects for success of such an initiative in each municipality. This is the challenge facing ESEDIR and PRODESSA in the communities in which they work.

Building Local Power on the Ground: The Work of ESEDIR and PRODESSA

Local power is an important concept for PRODESSA in its work in the micro-regions. Virtually everyone associated with ESEDIR and PRODESSA with whom I spoke understood the concept to mean a phenomenon that while perhaps connected to the organs of the municipal government, was distinct from it and was expressed through popular community level councils. Indeed, Ana Morales, an ESEDIR graduate (1991), who is presently the co-ordinator of ESEDIR's residential program and who, until recently was an ESEDIR extension education worker in the Ixcán, didn't even mention formal government structures in her understanding of the concept.

> ... for me local power is when the communities assume their responsibility, first as individuals, as citizens. They are conscious that as citizens they have rights and obligations and they meet their obligations and demand their rights. At the community level I understand local power as organising as a community to be able to seek development space to promote their development, their space for participation as a community and to make decisions as a community (in favour) of themselves and their development. (Interview with Ana Morales, July 10, 2000).

Of course, Ana's definition of local power does not exclude the organs of municipal government and several of her colleagues did include them although invariably as a consideration subordinate to community organisations.

Edgar Roberto García is the PRODESSA director in Concepción, Tutuapa, San Marcos. In response to the request to elaborate on what he understands by local power, he replied that for him

> ... local power is the capacity that the people have to organise themselves at the community level, to build an organisation of their community where this organisation is going to take decisions and to do the things that they want in their community, when they want ... (It is also developing) the capacity to look for resources where they may be found .... For me that would be local power - when they take control of the community and of its development. (Interview with Edgar Roberto García, July 19, 2000).

It is interesting to note that the Mayor of Concepción is a member of the PAN who prides himself on the fact that during his first four years in office following the signing of the Peace Accords, a great deal of development activity, much of it in collaboration with NGOs, including PRODESSA, has taken place in his municipality. Despite the good working relation PRODESSA has with the local Mayor, Edgar Roberto didn't let the opportunity for doing joint work colour his notion of local power as being a form of power that emerges from the community rather than being one that is dependent to one degree or other on the municipality.

While Edgar Roberto has a good working relationship with a democratically minded mayor, Pablo Orozco, the PRODESSA director in Cabricán, has the good fortune of working in a micro-region where his predecessor as PRODESSA director was recently elected Mayor running as the candidate of a reform oriented civic movement.

Pablo's understanding of local power is succinct: "Local power is a unification of efforts to seek the integral development of the community." (Interview with Pablo Orozco, July 31, 2000). When asked if that included a role for the municipal government he replied that it did given the present municipal government.

There is no doubt that there is a close relationship between the municipal government and PRODESSA in Cabricán. Orozco noted that Mayor Ramírez "doesn't act like a former employee of PRODESSA rather [he acts] like a leader." Now

> ... we have a good co-ordination between the municipality and PRODESSA. We believe that this year (e.g., 2000, MOS) was one of historical change in Cabricán when the Mayor opened the doors to the institutions, the leaders, the communities .... We have to ensure that whatever actions we take not be outside the context of the local government and so we talk to him and he has been very receptive to this. (Interview with Pablo Orozco, July 31, 2000).

Despite the comment about ensuring that whatever actions PRODESSA takes "not be outside the context of the local government", in my subsequent interviews with PRODESSA staff and ESEDIR graduates in Cabricán, I did not notice that the community work of the PRODESSA field staff was any different than in any of the other micro-regions.

In fact, Orozco went on to note the creation of something which he described as "very important"

> ... and that is that the communities have formed something that they call an 'Assembly of Representatives'. This organisation is made up of more or less three elected leaders from each community ... What has this to do with our work? We ... train these people but we say to them 'you are not members of the municipal government, you are members of the community that negotiate, discuss, even (perform the function of doing) a social audit of the community and to take advantage of working in co-ordination with the municipality. (Interview with Pablo Orozco, July 31, 2000).

The importance of community based development work was stressed by other PRODESSA collaborators in Cabricán. Agricultural promoter Arnoldo Ríos Pérez, stressed the importance of organising the local people and preparing them to make project proposals and get funding, something which they had already succeeded in doing. He cited a range of successful projects that involved the NGOs alone, the municipality alone, and joint work between the two ranging from road improvement to school construction, from potable water to small productive projects with women. He mentioned that the literacy program run in conjunction with their organisational and small project efforts were paying off and that "they really are learning to read and write and run their own projects." (Interview with Arnoldo Ríos Pérez, July 25, 2000).

This approach to local work was also echoed by Brother Félix Lorenzo Valásquez, f.s.c, a Maya La Sallian brother who works with PRODESSA supporting teachers in the

local schools develop their capacity to transmit Maya culture and values. He commented, in response to the question about local power, that while it was a great advantage to have the Mayor on side, that local power had to "return to the people their voice and their influence" and not be dependent upon "the system". (Interview with Brother Félix Lorenzo Valásquez, f.s.c, July 25, 2000).[102]

In my interview with the mayor, after expressing his concerns about his financial constraints, he spent most of the interview talking about the need to promote the educational reform and revitalising Maya cultural practices in the municipality, both high priorities for ESEDIR/PRODESSA.

Julio Pop, the PRODESSA director in San Cristóbal, where the present mayor is a member of the now governing PRG, Rios Montt's party, lamented the defeat of the previous PAN mayor. He noted that PRODESSA was working to create an 18 member community based community council to promote development opportunities, and that the existence of this council

> ... creates a space to achieve other possibilities, to strengthen the process. But in reality, it depends a lot on the good or bad relationship that the council has with the mayor. At least with the Mayor we had before we had a space for dialogue, perhaps not an organic unity because the council was at an early stage, but at least there was a good communication. In the case of the new mayor, we have tried to create a space to share our work but it has not happened. (Interview with Julio Pop, July 12, 2000).

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[102] Brother Félix, in a country where thousands have remarkable stories arising from the repression, has one of the most remarkable stories I have ever heard. In 1982, at the height of the repression, when he was a student at la Universidad San Carlos in Guatemala City, was very involved with a campaign in support of the labourers on the big haciendas on the Coast who were struggling for better wages and working conditions. One day he was picked up by "persons unknown" and driven to "Alaska" which is what the locals call the highest point on the highway to the Pacific Coast where it is so cold in winter the road has been known to ice over. He was beat up and then he was crucified – nailed to a tree and left to die. Fortunately, and here Brother Félix likes what he obviously considers to be an irony given the tensions between the Catholic Church and the 'arriviste' Evangelicals, a Protestant Pastor came along, found him and saved his life. (Interview with Brother Félix Valásquez, July 25, 2000).

Clearly Pablo Orozco in Cabricán was pleased to have the opening represented by a close "friend of PRODESSA" as mayor, while Julio Pop found that not having a collaborative relationship with the municipal government narrowed the options open to PRODESSA but, as with Cabricán, the local work in San Cristóbal reflected the strategy of creating local capacity and to assume responsibility for community development. This came through especially strongly in the interview with PRODESSA field worker and women's project co-ordinator Karin Edith Cac Pacay. Karin Edith, in an energetic interview that almost wore me out just discussing her work, enthused about a range of activities occurring in the micro-region ranging from electrification projects run soley by women in one community, to demonstration plots, to installing latrines and doing public health work around the need for them. All of these projects involve learning organisational skills, taking responsibility for proposing projects, applying for them and being involved with their implementation. She spoke of joint projects with several other national and international NGOs as well as with local development committees. (Interview with Karin Edith Cac Pacay, July 13, 2000).

I spoke with Daniel Saquec, the Deputy Director of PRODESSA for organisation, and asked him if, in his opinion, local power and municipal government were synonymous. He said that

> ... it depends a lot on the dynamic unfolding the micro-region. In Cabricán, for example, the taking over the municipal government occurred through a civic movement and that civic movement is the product of community organisation over various years. There, yes, there is a relationship, a communication. Practically, I would say, [there is] a co-ordination of action. (Interview with Daniel Saquec, July 27, 2000).

He contrasted the Cabricán situation with the situation in those micro-regions where

> ... it is a traditional party that is in power which frequently doesn't have an integral and democratic participatory vision of development, that limits

> our contact with the mayor ... (Interview with Daniel Saquec, July 27, 2000).

Such would be the case in San Cristóbal with its PRG mayor. He made the following comment when he spoke of Puruhlá where the Mayor is a member of the PAN but works with PRODESSA

> ... We do not try to marry ourselves with the municipality because these are transitory governments. PRODESSA is involved with a process of accompaniment, of support and seeks to achieve a positive relationship where possible between community organisations [and the municipality] and a reactive relationship when necessary. That is why we don't get completely involved with the municipality but rather have a relationship of co-management or at least we co-ordinate our activities. (Interview with Daniel Saquec, July 27, 2000).

Marco Antonio Pérez, the PRODESSA director in Puruhlá signalled a concern about local power and PRODESSA's institutional ability to work towards its construction. He noted that local power was what PRODESSA calls "a cross cutting theme" (see below for a discussion of this concept) but while "everyone gives their opinion about local power ... in fact there isn't much clear thinking or a generalised criteria [about this concept]." (Interview with Marco Antionio Pérez, July 11, 2000).

I interpret this to mean that there is understandable confusion abut the relationship between the building of *political* power and simply organising citizens' committees to promote particular projects. Marco Antonio made that point in response to me asking him if local power existed in Puruhlá. He said that, yes, it did but

> ... I am conscious of the need to make more efforts to articulate that power. There are different committees but as they tend to pull their own way at times they represent specific projects and they can't be seen as a political project, as a strategy, but rather they work at the level of satisfying the needs of the people. Thus the effort [must be made] to articulate this power, to bring it together, to make it something stronger. (Interview with Marco Antonio Pérez, July 11, 2000).

This I believe touches on the issue that everyone engaged in transformatory as opposed to simply cumulative development has to ask themselves. To what extent has the sum total of these efforts that have led to so many kilometres of road, so many new classrooms, so many hundreds or thousands of square meters of irrigation, etc. contributed, as well, to empowerment or contributed to the capacity of this community and of the individuals who make it up to effect an ever increasing measure of control over their destinies? If the financial and technical resources are available, it is relatively easy to effect cumulative development. Effecting participation, creating democracy, building local power, is an entirely different thing although these latter phenomena are closely related – you can't build democratic practices out of thin air. It requires, for example, a Pro Clean Water Committee in which to practice democracy, to develop conflict resolution skills and to learn the literacy, numeric and administrative skills necessary to plan the project, write the proposal, calculate the budget and to implement it once the project is approved as well as to maintain it after it is installed.

Olga Pérez of INCIDE reminds us of the challenges facing those who would build local power in Guatemala. She defines local power in terms that put the municipality much closer to the centre of the equation than do the PRODESSA informants. She says that INCIDE sees

> ... local power articulated with the [local] public power. Obviously we see local power as constituted by a multiplicity of social actors that in the municipality and the micro-region interact to bring about new forms of government and, of course, we see this articulated with the municipality which ... is the constitutionally mandated form of local government. (Interview with Olga Pérez, August 1, 2000).

The challenge with effecting this, or any other form of local power that places less emphasis on the municipality, is that since the 1954 counter-revolution there has been

virtually no democracy in Guatemala and certainly none at the local level. This is the case because the 1954 coup brought in "a state policy which would weaken the civil power, including the municipalities ...(and) in this sense really municipal government in Guatemala didn't exist." (Interview with Olga Pérez, August 1, 2000). This, she argues, began to change with the signing of the Peace Accords which provided for "new options, new forms, new models of democratic municipal management" which "emerged with social participation and also with a new form of state involvement." (Interview with Olga Pérez, August 1, 2000).

Once again, the Peace Accords can be seen as having opened doors but they didn't very often lead to big changes, or frequently, to any change at all. Marco Antonio's comment about the lack of clear thinking in this issue is the quite understandable confusion about how to bring about this transformation in practice when faced with scepticism and passivity arising from historical circumstances and lack of resources and the extreme poverty of the population. Under such circumstances, slow progress is a big achievement while some confusion about the proper relationship to have with a given municipal government can hardly be considered a major problem.

It is not possible to conclude this discussion without reference to the decentralisation of central government powers. This is an important issue for the practitioners of transformatory community development in Guatemala and elsewhere. While decentralisation far from guarantees local, democratic participation, it is safe to say that the more that decision-making and implementation are decentralised the greater will be the *possibility* that ordinary citizens will be involved with the decision-making about the use of scarce resources on behalf of their community. Marco Antonio Pérez made exactly this point:

> I believe that [decentralisation] is the complement of local power because it gives more authority to the people who are immersed in the local power to make decisions and to take better advantage of the resources that are there. (Interview with Marco Antonio Pérez, July 11, 2000).

Most of the people that I interviewed equated the formal process of government decentralisation with what they called *municipalisación*. Olga Pérez of INCIDE even noted the "constitutional mandate" of the municipalities with respect to exercising certain functions. Furthermore, all the work that PRODESSA does in the micro-regions focuses on the municipality, but not the municipality as the *authority*, or as the *structure*, but rather as the geographic space in which they work.

Clearly, and this takes us back to Veltmeyer's cautionary comments, there is room for confusion here and organisations committed to transformatory change, like PRODESSA, have to work on supporting the construction of local power, with their eyes wide open to the traps that *municipalisación* present while taking advantage of the opportunities that it offers.

Regional Autonomy

I had gone to Guatemala with my head full of theory relating to the concept of Regional Autonomy. My work between 1996 and 1999 in the two regionally autonomous zones of Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast plus my reading of such works as Héctor Díaz-Polanco's Autonomía regional: la autodeterminación de los pueblos indios had predisposed me to assuming that regional autonomy would be very much on the agenda in Guatemala. This was reinforced by the fact that I was aware that COPMAGUA, for example, the main Maya co-ordinating body through which the Maya position was transmitted to the negotiators at the peace process, advocated regional autonomy. I first began to suspect that this issue was not a priority when, during my field trip to the micro-regions, virtually no

one could speak to me about regional autonomy. On local power, everyone, as Marco Antonio pointed out, had an opinion, but when I raised the issue of regional autonomy, I basically heard the same answer that I got for local power. Later in Guatemala City I put the issue of regional autonomy to Juan Pú Hernández, a leader of COPMAGUA, and he admitted that it was off the agenda because the political conditions did not favour advancing this concept. (Interview with Juan Pú Hernández, July 25, 2000).

CNEM, however, the National Council for Maya Education, is looking to the day when regional autonomy and a related form of local power would be established upon linguistic lines. Daniel Domingo, the former General Co-ordinator of ESEDIR and presently the Deputy Director of PRODESSA responsible for education, and the delegate of PRODESSA to CNEM, spoke of the decentralisation proposed by CNEM as it relates to education.

> ... we have proposed something that goes beyond municipalisation. Certainly the municipality is where (decentralisation) is concretised politically but we have proposed that decentralisation must have cultural and linguistic characteristics. For this reason, for us, decentralisation means having regions that correspond to the linguistic communities ... because to organise Maya representation, only at the municipal level according to ethnicity leaves us divided. (Interview with Daniel Domingo, July 28, 2000).

Domingo gave the specific example of his own linguistic community, the Mam.

> I am Mam, my community is Mam. My people, the Mam are divided into 3 departments: Huehuetenango, San Marcos and Quetzaltenango. Thus, if we reduce municipalisation to the (level of the) municipality, we will remain divided. Therefore, we add on to this a decentralised regionalisation by linguistic community which gives coherence and articulation to education with cultural pertinence. (Interview with Daniel Domingo, July 28, 2000).

When pressed on the feasibility of this option given that all energies now seem to be oriented towards manifesting local power at the municipal level (including that of his

own organisation, PRODESSA), and keeping in mind the comment of the COPMAGUA representative, Juan Pú Hernández, Domingo said that there is a risk that "political debate [on this issue] is fundamentally changing" but he asserts "we must always insist ... perhaps not on regional autonomy, but on this territorial demarcation based on linguistic communities ..." He went on to somewhat modify his position by noting that

> Dr. Cotji used to insist a lot on the construction of a federal state where each Maya nation would have its autonomous government but it seems to us that this goes a bit far. We must go through some softer stages to perhaps be able to get to this plan in the very long term. (Interview with Daniel Domingo, July 28, 2000).

When I asked Dr. Solares, the social scientist at FLACSO who has studied Ladino – Maya relations for many years, about the notion of regional autonomy he argued that it was a demand that came from certain Maya intellectuals in the early 1990s but that now the dominant thinking within the Maya movement was one related to reforming the state structure and finding a bigger voice for Mayas in that reformed state. (Interview with Dr. Jorge Solares, July 31, 2000). He spoke of the fact that the demand for regional autonomy was inspired by the Nicaraguan experience where autonomy had been negotiated between the insurgent Miskitos and the Sandanista government but that the big difference between Nicaragua and Guatemala is that in Nicaragua the cultural communities are a numerical minority and are concentrated in what he called peripheral regions of the country whereas in Guatemala they are 50% of the population and live "at the heart of the country." (Interview with Dr. Jorge Solares, July 31, 2000).

In a country where the decentralisation of government programs to the municipal level face the political and administrative obstacles that I have described; where the most elementary tax reform and tax collection to fund basic social programs and other government core activities seems virtually impossible; it is hard to imagine how an

agreement could be reached that would not only decentralise government programs but do so in a way that crossed departmental boundaries and corresponded to language communities and to do so in a participatory democratic manner. It would be presumptuous of me to predict as to whether the CNEM model will ever be implemented but one thing is certain: decentralisation of government services will occur and local citizens, organised through a growing network of community associations, will demand to participate. What specific form this takes remains to be seen but the process of bringing about this decentralisation, and the process of preparing the community for it, will lead to opportunities, or to space, within which PRODESSA, ESEDIR and like-minded organisations can encourage the people they work with to take full advantage of the openings that this process will create. Where the proper community work has been done, this can only lead to more responsive local government and a vigorous civil society.

Summary Observations on Local Power

For its neo-liberal advocates, local power and citizen participation is aimed at integrating local opinion leaders into the dominant socio-economic system thereby reducing disaffection with the system. For the advocates of transformatory social change, however, local power is something very different. It is *empowerment* achieved through *participation* for "the construction of participatory democracy from below and, in the case of Guatemala, the construction of a multicultural and inclusive nation." (Macleod, 1998, 207).

Such an approach has become a part of the approach to development taken by many non-governmental development organisations. Oxfam captures the essence of transformatory development work as follows:

> To strengthen the capacity of people to define their own values and priorities, and organise themselves to promote these, constitutes the base of development. Development means that women and men achieve their

> potential (empowerment) to achieve positive changes in their lives in relation to their personal growth and their participation in public activities. It involves as much the process as the result in the struggle to overcome poverty, oppression and discrimination; it also involves the realisation of human potential through social and economic justice. Above all, it involves a process of transforming lives and societies. (Oxfam, 1995, 9).

Today, many organisations advocate concepts such as participation, empowerment, democracy, inclusiveness, etc. It is, of course, one thing to speak of it, it is another thing to practice it. This underscores the importance of examining the practice in the communities where they work of those organisations, both local and those "from away." Do they achieve the "methodological challenge" of community work which is

> ... to pass from the basic consciousness of the need for infrastructure and services (roads, schools, health clinics, etc.) to a more global comprehension of the extent of social exclusion and to create mechanisms to facilitate the transformation of the totality of socio-economic, cultural, spiritual and political conditions in the lives of all members of the community. (Macleod, 1998, 207 – 208).

The other challenge is to effectively link this growing consciousness and local power to a national agenda. This is so because if the struggle to create local power and to resolve pressing community problems is not combined with a vision of social change at the national level the local power phenomenon is almost certainly destined to become stuck in the neo-liberal logic of decentralisation and privatisation of the state's functions.

The advocates of transformatory social change cannot allow themselves the luxury of indulging in a simple anti-statism. Rather they have to insist on a proactive role for the state in many spheres of national life including social and economic development. This concept of the role of the state is based on the observation that no matter how vigorous and participatory they are, local initiatives do not add up to a national strategy for job and infrastructure creation, for example, or for a program of national economic growth. There is in Guatemala, according to Macleod, a real danger that the civil society might

inadvertently contribute to the privatisation of functions that should legitimately be performed by the state. (Macleod, 1998, 215). The strategy, then, should be one of identifying the essential role that the state must play in national planning and program delivery, albeit not necessarily using the same logic or mechanisms that has traditionally been the case, and insist that this role be played and not abandoned. This, too, is linked with having a national vision and a national strategy for transformatory change.

PRODESSA, seems to be defining, in the field, a practice that strikes a balance between the right and, indeed, the duty of the municipality to be involved in local development and the right of the people also to be involved through the organisations of civil society that they create for that purpose. The challenge for PRODESSA is to define exactly what kind of relationship to develop with municipalities of different stripes, all the while maintaining organisational autonomy from the local government.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Work of ESEDIR and PRODESSA at the Local Level

Part 1: The Community Analysis

Introduction

On December 29, 1996 the Peace Accords came into effect. As I have shown, these Agreements promised much but to what extent have these changed people's daily lives? To what extent have they been implemented? In considering this question it is important to remind ourselves of a point made by Susanne Jonas (2000) as commented on earlier in this work. In her analysis of the Accords Jonas warned us not to have overly high expectations with respect to specific changes that might emerge in the short run from these Agreements. Said another way, in effect she cautions us to judge the impact of the Peace Accords in light of the balance of political forces existing in Guatemala and not to judge them on the basis of what we might, ideally, have liked to have seen them achieve if they were to be considered in isolation. We cannot forget a central point she made repeatedly - that there are powerful "peace resisters" in Guatemalan society who are well positioned to throw up obstacles to the implementation of specific provisions contained in the various Agreements.

FLACSO's Dr. Jorge Solares, told me that he has the impression that most Guatemalans were very interested in peace but not so interested in the content of the Peace Accords. This is consistent with the results of the Consulta Popular, discussed in Chapter 4, in which the constitutional amendments that flowed from the Accords were defeated in a referendum. Recalling recent UN monitoring reports on the implementation of the Peace Plan, Dr. Solares suggested that as of early 2000 perhaps 20% of the provisions had been implemented and this 20% includes what he called the operational agreements:

demobilisation of the guerrilla, their incorporation into society and the disbanding of certain military units. All in all he concluded that "I don't believe we have advanced very much, in fact I would say hardly nothing at all." (interview with Dr. Jorge Solares, July 31, 2000).

My ESEDIR/PRODESSA informants who work at the level of the local community seem to be less concerned about this issue than Dr. Solares. They seem to be saying, in effect, that because of the Peace Accords we can do our community development work, we can promote our Maya culture, we can organise without fear and this constitutes a very important change from the period before 1996 when to do such work meant that you were literally courting death.

Pablo Orozco, the PRODESSA co-ordinator in the Cabricán micro-region told me

> ... if we compare life in Cabricán two, three or four years before the signing of the Peace Agreements with the situation now, I believe that it has improved a lot. [The people] tell us that they are not afraid to participate, that they are not afraid to go to training workshops, that there isn't pressure. So I think that there will be many changes because the people feel free. There is more opportunity to participate, to talk... I believe there are other problems, [of aspects] that haven't been implemented but if there is the opportunity to participate and speak, I think that we can find [solutions]. (Interview with Pablo Orozco, July 31, 2000).[103]

Candido Lorenzo Carrillo, a field staff worker in Concepción, Tutuapa, San Marcos, speaking of the cultural work done by PRODESSA, other NGOs, and the local schools in his community, commented that 10 or 15 years ago, e.g., well before the Peace Accords

[103] What makes this comment particularly note-worthy is that Cabricán was not in a war zone and yet, because of the general climate of fear and repression in the country as a whole, work of the sort PRODESSA now does was not possible even in that community. The impact of peace on those micro-regions in which PRODESSA works that were in the war zone (e.g., Purulhá, Baja Verapaz and San Cristóbal, Alta Verapaz) would be even greater.

> ... they didn't give us the opportunity or the opportunity to the students. They taught us a lot in Spanish and we were losing our language, customs, Maya culture but, thank God, now ... there are NGOs that are fighting to ensure that we don't lose [our culture]. (Interview with Cándido Lorenzo Carrillo C., July 18, 2000).

It is of course true that there is a wide gap between the provisions contained the Peace Accords as outlined in Chapter 4 and saying simply that the Peace Accords have brought, albeit imperfectly, a number of basic freedoms and a measure of political democracy. While such benefits are important, it is certainly true that the parties to the agreement, and the parties behind the agreement (including the popular sectors and the Pan Maya movement organised through the Asamblea de la Sociedad Civil), were bargaining for much more than political space within which to operate. At the same time it would be a mistake to understate the importance of this achievement.

Indeed, Dr. Solares made this point when he addressed the issue of the extent to which democracy had been extended (or is being extended) as a result of the Peace Accords. He said that the progress is this regard is limited but he recognised that compared to 10 and 20 years ago "we are better off ... not as good as we would have liked but we have advanced a bit." He then went on to make a very important point: "... democratisation (is) more than an official process, it is a change in attitude, it is a re-education of society ..." This is so, he argues, because "the lack of democracy in the country is not due exclusively to the internal war but rather has more profound roots which go back, I believe, to the beginning of the 20th Century, indeed to the 19th Century and constitute an enormous historical obstacle which has to be overcome." (Interview with Dr. Jorge Solares, July 31, 2000).

Mario Recancoj, the General Coordinator of ESEDIR said much the same thing in a workshop held on August 3, 2000 at ESEDIR when I presented my thesis proposal to the

ESEDIR staff for their comments. He said his generation grew up in a militarised society where every aspect of life, from schooling to community life, was affected by the military doctrine that permeated the whole of Guatemalan society and that it is little wonder that promoting participation in the communities is a frustrating exercise. People of his generation – in his case people in their 40s – simply don't have a tradition of the give and take of democracy and an internalised sense of the duties and responsibilities of democratic practices. It is for that reason he suggested that the priority work had to be with the youth and by implication the achievements that could be expected under such circumstances would be realised over the long term. (Comments made by Mario Recancoj at an ESEDIR staff workshop, August 3, 2000).

Within that context, then, I find myself being simultaneously sombre in my analysis of the achievements to date with respect to implementing the specific provisions of the Accords while being (moderately) optimistic about the prospects for the future.

In short, it would seem necessary to accept that in practice the main achievement of the peace process was the putting of an end to the war and the creation of the necessary political space in which to build the basis for a future democratisation and a future transformation of Guatemalan society. In that spirit then, I shall now turn to what the ESEDIR graduates and the PRODESSA staff do in practice at the local level to achieve the goals that are embodied in the Peace Accords in the face of official indifference, the lack of an organised public support and the obstacles thrown up by the "peace resisters."

The first step in reviewing this field work is to examine the *diagnósticos* or community analysis that PRODESSA did in 1997 following their decision to *micro-regionalise* their field work, that is to concentrate their efforts on eight micro-regions,

selected in part on the basis of a in-depth study of the social and economic conditions prevailing in these areas.

Characteristics of Four PRODESSA Micro-regions[104]

I visited four PRODESSA micro-regions during my field trip in July/August, 2000. Two of these, San Cristóbal in the department of Alta Verapaz (AVP) and Purulhá in the department of Baja Verapaz (BVP) are situated well north of Guatemala City, about a half day's drive by car from the capital on the road to Cobán, a major urban centre further to the north.[105] What these communities have in common is that they are all new settlements, the oldest of which was established in 1960 and the most recent was established in 1996. The other two micro-regions that I visited, Cabricán in the department of Quetzaltenango and Concepción, Tutuapa in the department of San Marcos,[106] are situated many arduous hours to the west of the capital, a very long trip even in a private vehicle over roads that at some points require four wheel drive. These communities are far older than those of the San Cristóbal and Purulhá micro-regions and date back well over 100 years. Unlike Purulhá and San Cristóbal which are separated from each other by paved road and a relatively short drive, Carbricán and Concepción, although probably not much further apart from each other

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[104] All of the information for this section is gleaned from the four micro-regional diagnostic documents produced by PRODESSA in 1997 as part of their strategic planning process. These documents are cited in the bibliography as PRODESSA, 1997 [a], [b], [c], and [d]. Unfortunately because of the quality of the photocopying, the page numbers of these documents, all of which are about 100 pages each, do not appear on my copies, thereby complicating citations. Since all the information cited in this discussion about a particular micro-region is taken from the document analysing that area, I have referenced particular information as coming from PRODESS, 1997, [a], [b], [c], or [d] without reference to the missing page numbers.

[105] I mention *by car* because travel by car is considerably shorter than travel by bus or worse, in the back of a truck, the means by which most Guatemalans get around. Distances in Guatemala are better measured by the time it takes to get there by whatever conveyance rather than by kilometres. For example, when you look at a local map, the distance between San Cristóbal, the local urban centre where the PRODESSA office is located, and Vista Hermosa, by far the smallest settlement they serve, appears to be very short until you are told that to go there requires a four hour walk.

[106] As there is more than one Concepción in San Marcos, everyone refers to the micro-region as Concepción, Tutuapa, however, to simplyfy matters I will refer to it simply as Concepción.

than the former two, are a full day's drive from each other as it is necessary to go hours out of your way to pick up the road to the other community.

I will present these *microregiones* as contrasting pairs, first Purulhá and San Cristóbal and then Cabricán and Concepción.

Case 1: The New Communities: Micro-regional Analysis of San Cristóbal and Purulhá[107]

Population

The total population in 1991 of the communities served by PRODESSA and ESEDIR in San Cristóbal, was 4,233 living in an area of 192 km^2 while in Purulhá it was only 1,184 living in an area of 248 km^2. All of these communities are made up of Mayas known as the Poqomchi and the Queqchi peoples and, as mentioned, were established quite recently, the earliest in 1960 and the most recent in 1996. In some cases, this resettlement resulted from the growth of local population which forced families to leave their community of origin and seek land elsewhere or, in other cases, the motivation was political, as tensions related to participation in the Civil Patrols led to splits in the community leading to a move away from the home community by the ex Civil Patrollers. In San Cristóbal the population is grouped into 6 *aldeas* or *caseríos* (settlements) while in Purulhá, the population lives in 5 communities. These are broken down as follows:

[107] All four of these PRODESSA documents were written in 1997 and consequently all the data is at the time of writing, almost four years old. Much will have changed since 1997 including such things as the number of services offered in the villages, the number of agencies working there and the specifics of the economy. Much, however, despite valient efforts by community members and NGOs like PRODESSA, will be more or less, the same. The picture given here is basically what the communities and PRODESSA were facing at the beginning of this process. Because the documents describe the situation in 1997, I have written this section in the past tense even though many of the conditions described continue to be true.

Table 7.1
Population Distribution of Villages Served by PRODESSA
San Cristóbal, AVP (1997)

Founded	**Community**	**Women**	**Men**	**Total**
1979	Aquil Grande	750	525	1,275
1983	Los Arrugas	1,500	520	2,020
1970	Pamboncito	106	95	201
1996	Panhux	77	75	152
1986	El Zacatón	205	225	430
1991	Vista Hermosa	80	75	155
	Total	2,718	1,515	4,233

Source: PRODESSA, 1997 [c]

Table 7.2
Population Distribution of Villages Served by PRODESSA
Purulhá, BVP (1997)

Founded	**Community**	**Women**	**Men**	**Total**
1993	Eben Ezer	70	190	260
1960	El Jute	40	67	107
1960	Repollal 1	120	171	291
1960	Repollal 11	75	151	291
1985	El Durazno	130	170	300
	Total	435	749	1,184

Source: PRODESSA, 1997 [c]

One cannot but be perplexed by the disparity between male and female populations and the fact that the situation is reversed between the two micro-regions. In Purulhá the men outnumber the women by almost 2:1 while in San Cristóbal, the women significantly, if not quite as dramatically, outnumber the men 56% to 44%. Given that this is an area that was deeply touched by the war, one might expect that the male population would have been lowered by the hostilities but no such explanation is offered by the PRODESSA researchers and furthermore doesn't explain the opposite situation prevailing in the two areas, both of

which were war zones. Indeed, other than to note the imbalance, no analysis whatsoever with respect to this situation is offered by the researchers.

Basic Services in the Communities

In 1997, when the reports were written, basically these communities had nothing in the way of basic services: no community hall, in many cases, no school, no pharmacies, no clean water, no irrigation, no electricity, no health clinic, insecure markets for their crops and handicrafts, few if any stores. In short, the vast majority of these people lived in extreme poverty with few or no amenities.

Land Ownership and Agricultural Production

In the villages of San Cristóbal, 100% of the land is divided into privately owned lots. In four of the communities no wage labour was hired to work this land as family labour was all that was required to maintain them. In two of the communities, however, Pamboncito and Panhux, some of the peasants owned enough land that they hired outside labour from time to time. In the micro-region of Purulhá, in three of the communities land ownership was communal while in two it consisted of private plots. Of the four micro-regions visited, Purulhá was the only one with any communal ownership of agricultural land. No explanation of this apparent anomaly is offered in the PRODESSA documents.

In San Cristóbal rice and beans were grown for domestic use and hens were kept for family consumption of the eggs and the meat. Three crops were produced for sale in the local or national market: coffee, cardamom, mandarins and oranges. Cows and pigs were kept in small number and were invariably sold, not used for domestic consumption.

Maguey is also grown in the area. Maguey, when dried, can be used to make baskets, mats and other woven handicrafts, an activity which occupied many of the women although prices were so low they often did not recoup the cost of production.

Marketing any product grown in the micro-region was complicated because of the difficulties of getting vehicles into the villages because of the condition of the roads. Often products were carried out on the back of the producers or handed over to middle-men at very unfavourable prices.

In the villages of the Purulhá micro-region, rice and beans were produced for domestic consumption and hens, too, were kept for family use. The main crop produced for sale is the potato and, to a much lesser extent, vegetables such as tomatoes and onions. As in San Cristóbal, a few cows and pigs were raised for sale. Pest control, both those affecting crops and those affecting animals, was identified as a problem in Purulhá as was marketing. Once again, bad roads and middlemen who pay very low prices create these marketing problems.

Deforestation

Deforestation was a problem in both communities because some previously wooded land was cleared for agricultural production while other wooded areas were cut for firewood.

Latrines

The lack of latrines in both micro-regions was almost absolute. In San Cristóbal at most 25% of the homes in the villages had latrines and in one village, only three homes had latrines, leaving the rest of the population, as the PRODESSA report puts it "to defecate in the open air" with the attendant health problems that arises from that. In Purulhá the situation was even worse with no latrines existing in any of the 5 settlements.

Health

None of the communities in these two micro-regions had clean water or a health clinic at the time the field report was written, although one clinic was under construction.

Potable water was not available in any of the villages and predictably health problems in the communities included diarrhoea, a life threatening condition for small children.

Religious Affiliation

The following charts tell the story of religious affiliation, as reported to the PRODESSA investigators by the villagers themselves. The figures reflect the tremendous penetration of the evangelical churches into the traditionally Catholic Maya communities.

Table 7.3
Religious Preferences of the Villages of the Micro-region of San Cristóbal, AVP (1997)

Community	Percentage Catholic	Percentage Evangelical
Aquil Grande	20	80
Las Arrugas	25	75
Pamboncito	75	25
Panhux	90	10
Zacatón	25	75
Vista Hermosa	100	0
Average	56	44

Source: PRODESSA, 1997, [c].

Table 7.4
Religious Preferences of the villages of the Micro-region of Purulhá, BVP (1997)

Community	Percentage Catholic	Percentage Evangelical
Eben Ezer	0	100
El Jute	10	90
El Repollal 1	10	90
El Repollal 11	100	0
El Durazno	0	100

Source: PRODESSA, 1997, [d]

The issue of religion, as with politics, which frequently go hand in hand, is very divisive in Guatemala and clearly these communities have not been spared those divisions.

Political Preferences

The dominant right and centre-right parties were well represented in the communities of San Cristóbal with the PAN strong in the three largest communities. There was some FRG support in Las Arrugas. There is no organised political presence in the villages of Purulhá and the parties of the left did not appear at all in these two areas.

Community Organisation and Local Participation

A number of local community organisations and non governmental and governmental organisations were working in the two areas in 1997. The local community groups were of the sort that meet the basic needs of the local people and are summarised in the following two tables.

Table 7.5
Local Community Organisations
Micro-region of San Cristóbal, AVP (1997)

Type of organisation	No.	Objective	Beneficiaries
Committee on behalf of community improvement	4	To initiate projects for community betterment	The four communities in which they operate.
Development Committee	3	To initiative community development projects	The three communities in which they operate
Council of Elders	1	To orient and guide the community	The one community in which it operates
Widows and Orphans Committee	1	To benefit widows and orphans in their social development	Widows and orphans in all the communities served by the Committee.
Parents' Committee	2	To promote education and local participation in it.	The two communities in which they operate.
Religious Observances Committee	1	To organise to celebrate the Saint's Day in the community	The one community in which it operates.
Committee of Mothers	1	To promote the education and run the school	The students of the one community in which is operates
The marketing co-operative	1	To support the coffee and promote community development	The one community in which it is present.

Source: PRODESSA, 1997, [c]

Table 7.6
Local Community Organisations
Micro-region of Purulhá, BVP (1997)

Type of organisation	No.	Objective	Beneficiaries
Committee on behalf of community improvement	3	To initiate projects for community betterment	The four communities in which they operate.
Development Committee	1	To promote agricultural projects	In the one community in which they operate
Council of Elders	1	To orient and guide the community	The one community in which it operates.
Parents' Committee	1	To promote education and local participation in it.	In the one community in which it operates.
Committee of Women	2	Nutrition and hygiene	The students of the one community in which is operates

Source: PRODESSA, 1997 [d].

With respect to who was participating in community activities, the authors of the San Cristóbal report note that 34% of the "social actors" are women (women represent 56% of the population) and 56% of the social actors are men (and men represent 44% of the population).

Those who are socially active tend to be the adults (defined as those between the ages of 19 and 49) and the seniors (those 50 and over). They conclude that women and children under 19 tend not to participate directly in community development but rather they do domestic chores, make handicrafts and participate in *communal endeavours* by which I presume is meant endeavours of a productive nature.

Less precise information is given in the Purulhá report with respect to participation. They note only that women's participation is said to be "good" with women's committees existing in two of the villages.

Actual participation by the community in community assemblies varies throughout the San Cristóbal micro-region, however, on average the surveys reveal that on average about 15% of the community participates in these assemblies.

The communities of the Purulhá micro-region are said to have a good level of organisation and there is a micro-regional co-ordinating committee.

Whatever structures might exist in one or other of the micro-regions, collective decision making does not come easily to these people. Not only have they had to rely on their own efforts and that of their family through incredibly hard times but the authors of the San Cristóbal document suggest that the arrival of the evangelical churches have complicated community life even further.

> It is important to keep in mind that the religious aspect affects the vision and/or concept of the world that the population accepts and this has implications on their way of living, organising themselves and participating. An element to note is the loss of values like solidarity, consulting, and collective work and others which have been substituted by an individualistic and competitive vision which limits the building of horizontal and democratic processes of participatory organisation. (PRODESSA, 1997 [C])

Outside Agencies

In addition to the local organisations mentioned above, in 1997 a number of government and non government agencies were working in the two areas although the number was very few. In San Cristóbal basically the list consisted of PRODESSA, which worked with CONALFA, the government's literacy program; PAIN, a government program which offers pre school care (in one community only); and the Ministry of Education in two of the six communities.

In Purulhá, the U.N. Verification Team (MINUGUA) worked on human rights issues in one community, El Jute, while CARE was also working there. PRODESSA was working in all of the six communities.

Given the lack of services noted above, clearly this work had either just begun or it was being done ineffectively.

Education

In San Cristóbal, the issue of access to education can be summarised in the following table.

Table 7.7
School Attendance in San Cristóbal (1997)

Village	Female Students	Male Students	Total	Number/types of Teacher
Aquil Grande (5 room school)	55	82	137	2 bilingual teachers 1 monolingual teacher
Las Arrugas (2 room school)	46	53	99	2 bilingual teachers 2 monolingual teachers
El Zacatón (4 room school)	No school for lack of teachers			
Pamboncito	No school			
Panhux	No school			
Vista Hermosa	No school			

Source: PRODESSA, 1997 [c].

The school that was not functioning for lack of teachers is worth noting. This was, and continues to be, a major problem in Guatemala. Either the Ministry, because of its top heavy bureaucracy simply fails to appoint teachers or, as is often the case, they haven't got enough teachers for all of their classrooms.

In addition to these very modest educational services, which are limited to the two largest of these six communities, there is pre-school available for 40 students from Las Arrugas.

In the two schools that operated in the two communities, there was an overall grade repetition rate of 30% and an 8% drop-out rate.

Less detailed figures about Purulhá are recorded in that analysis. All we are told is summarised in the following table:

Table 7.8
School Attendance in Purulhá (1997)

Village	Number of Students in Primary
Eben Ezer	52
El Jute	42
Repollol 1	Information not available
Repollol 11	75
El Durazno	Information not available

Source: PRODESSA, 1997 [d].

While the school attendance rates for those villages for which I have information in Purulhá would indicate that most primary aged children are attending school, there is certainly not the case in San Cristóbal. Furthermore, in both micro-regions the only schools offering grades 7 – 9 (much less schools offering post grade 9), are in the Municipalities of San Cristóbal[108] and Purulhá, effectively out of reach of the children of the villages even if they should finish grade 6.

[108] The Escuela Básica in San Cristóbal had 531 students in 1997. Of these, 319, or 60%, had failed at least once and they suffered a 12% drop-out rate.

PRODESSA's Strategic Priorities for these Micro-regions

It will be recalled that PRODESSA bases its work on 3 axes *organisation, production* and *education*, which are discussed at some length below. The analysis contained in these micro-regional diagnostics were grouped around these three axes as affected the priorities for PRODESSA's work in subsequent years. Such an exhaustive analysis opens the possibility for PRODESSA to focus in on exactly what activities will have the maximum impact in the community both with respect to meeting their immediate material needs and in enhancing their capacity for self-sustaining action in the future.

San Cristóbal

Based on their analysis of the immediate needs and long term organisational challenges facing the residents of the San Cristóbal micro-region, PRODESSA identified the following priorities for its six-year work plan in the area:

Agriculture:

- Preparation of organic fertiliser;
- Technical advice;
- Promote horticulture;
- Improved techniques in the production of coffee; and
- Offer credits.

Livestock production:

- Credits for encouraging the raising of animals;
- Technical assistance in the raising of animals;
- Training of peasant farmers.

Handicrafts:

- Access to credit and skill development;
- Find new markets; and
- Strengthen the organisational level of the artisans.

Marketing:

- Support the search for new markets;
- Training and enhance the organisational level of those marketing the products.

Organisation:

- Train leaders, promoters and members of the various committees;
- Create an organisational model that integrates the whole process of community development; and
- Create a Micro-regional Council that brings together representatives of all six communities in the micro-region.

Community Improvement:

- Latrines and drains;
- Improving the planning process;
- Community pharmacy;
- Community centres;
- Clean water;
- Improved road access;
- Corn mills.

Education:

- Increase and strengthen the process of bilingual literacy in the micro-region;
- Obtain scholarships for children and adolescents;
- Curricular reform in the schools and literacy centres; and
- Enhance inter-institutional co-ordination among those working in education.

Three Year Evaluation:

In an annex to the planning document, PRODESSA lists the accomplishments of working three years in the communities of the San Cristóbal micro-region guided by this plan. They report the following achievements:

Production

- Through the training of promoters the level of agricultural, livestock and forestry production has been improved as has the quality of life of the community members.

Environment

- Implementation of a reforestation project throughout the micro-region with the financial and technical assistance of the government's INAB program.

Marketing

- The training of a team of local people to support the consolidation of micro-regional teams dedicated to negotiating the terms of the marketing of agricultural, animal and handicraft production.

Organisation

- The Micro-regional Council has been legally established and it members are being trained to prepare them to play a leading role in the decision-making processes in their respective communities.

Education

- As a result of the literacy program, the rate of illiteracy has been reduced by 80% among the adult population;
- The literacy program has had the result of increasing the involvement of both men and women in the community development work of the area;
- Community leaders have been given technical training to a high level and are able to make proposals for development projects at the community and micro-regional level.

Purulhá

In Purulhá, as well, the field researchers were able to focus in on a series of precise activities that would address the issues they found in their analysis of the communities.

Production:

- Technical training in each community on horticultural production;
- Install a gravity irrigation system;
- Access to inputs such as seed and organic fertilisers;
- Reforestation of selected areas on both private and communal land; and
- Encourage the diversification of crops.

Education:

- Training workshops in Adult Bilingual Education;
- Obtain teaching materials for the adult literacy centres;
- Open new literacy centres;
- Scholarships to enable students to attend junior and senior high school.

Community Improvement:

- Support the introduction of electricity;
- Construct schools
- Broaden access to potable water.

Three Year Evaluation:

Unlike the other micro-regional documents, the Purulhá document does not contain a three year summary of achievements, but rather, lists expectations for the future.

Case 2: The Established Communities: Micro-regional Analysis of Cabricán and Concepción

Population

Unlike Purulhá and San Cristóbal, both of which were founded in recent years, Cabricán and Concepción have long histories, especially the former which was created in 1664. Concepción, was founded in 1870.

The 1996 population of the six villages that make up the Cabricán micro-region was 4,879 living in 6 villages over an area of only 60 km^2. Sixty percent of the population of the Muncipality of Cabricán are Mam speaking Mayas but this percentage would be much higher in the villages as the Ladino population would be concentrated primarily in the urban centre which, for purposes of PRODESSA's work, is not considered a part of the micro-region. The population of the villages of the micro-region is shown in the following table:

Table 7.9
Population Distribution of Villages Served by PRODSSA: Cabricán (1997)

Community	Population
La Ciénaga Grande	1,283
La Cienaga Chicita	1,120
Los Corrales	2,881
El Cerro	1,404
Chorjalé	576
La Grandeza	496
Total	4,879

Source: PRODESSA, 1997, [a].

The total population of the *Municipalidad* of Concepción in 1996 was 11,035 living in 166 km^2 but, in an important oversight, the authors of the field report for Concepción do not tell us what the population was of the rural area served by PRODESSA or break down the population of the seven villages that make up the micro-region. Ninety-seven percent of the population of this micro-region are Mam.

In Concepción the breakdown by gender and ethnic group is as follows:

Table 7.10
Classification of the Concepción, Tutuapa, San Marcos Population by Gender and Ethnic Group (1997)

Gender	No. of Inhabitants	Indigenous	Ladino	Percentage Indigenous	Percentage Ladino	Percent. Total
Women	6,124	5,886	237	53	2	55
Men	4,911	4,817	95	44	1	45
Total	11,035	10,703	332	97	3	100

Source: PRODESSA, 1997 [b].

Women constitute 55% of the population and men make up 45%. Once again, as with Purulhá and San Cristóbal, we cannot but be struck by this difference.

Basic Services in the Communities

The following two charts give an incomplete idea of the low level of basic services provided the communities in these two micro-regions:

Table 7.11
Basic Services in the Micro-region of Cabricán (1997)

Community	Community Hall	Health Clinic	School
Ciénaga Grande	0	1	2
Ciénaga Chicita	0	0	1
Los Corrales	0	0	3
El Cerro	1	1[109]	2
Chorjalé	0	0	1
La Grandeza	0	0	1

Source: PRODESSA, 1997, [a].

[109] There is a health clinic in El Cerro but it was not operational in 1997 and the residents had to travel to an operating clinic for services.

Table 7.12
Basic Services in the Micro-region of Concepción (1997)

Community	Community Hall	Health Clinic	School	Stores	Mills	Drug Stores
Timucá	1	1	*	3	1	1
Sichivilá	1	0	*	5	0	1
Tutuapa	1	1	*	12	2	4
Chipomal	1	0	*	8	2	0
Llano Grande	1	0	*	3	0	0
Lacandón Grande	0	0	*	3	0	0
Lacandón Chico	0	0	*	5	1	0

Source: PRODESSA, 1997, [b]. * We are only told that in the 7 communities there are 5 schools totalling 18 classrooms. No break-down is given.

This information points to a higher level of basic service, especially in Concepción, than that available to the two communities in the Verapases perhaps owning to the important fact that these are established communities that were not in the war zone.

Land Ownership and Agricultural Production

All of the agricultural land in both micro-regions is owned privately. In Cabricán the lots are small – 80% of them vary from 1 to 5 *cuerdas* (a *cuerda* is 424 m^2 or about 20 x 20 m). In Concepción the amount of land held per family is significantly greater as typically families in this region dedicate from 10 to 20 *cuerdas* to certain crops. Despite the relatively large amount of land per family under cultivation, the PRODESSA field report indicates that no farm labourers are hired to work in the micro-region.

In Cabricán 100% of the economically active residents of the micro-region work in agriculture. For their own consumption they grow corn, beans, lima beans, and fruit such as

apples and plums. They grow wheat and potatoes to sell. In the community of Ciénaga Chiquita, vegetables such as carrots, beets and cabbage are grown with the help of a mini-irrigation system that irrigates the land of thirty families. These latter products are sold in the local market in the urban centre, Cabricán.

In Concepción over 80% of the agricultural land is used for corn and beans. Given the amount of land dedicated to these crops in this area, much of this produce would find its way to the market. The remaining crops, wheat, lima beans, potatoes and fruit trees are almost entirely sold.

The following table shows the principle products grown in Concepción and the amount of land dedicated to their cultivation:

Table 7.13
Agricultural Production: Concepción (1997)

Community	Principal Products	Amount Of land	Other Products	Amount of land
Tiumucá	Corn, Beans	10 cuerdas/ family	Potatoes, beans	1 cuerda/ family
Sichivila	Corn	10 cuerdas/ family	Potatoes, beans	5 cuerdas/ family
Tutuapa	Corn	10 cuerdas/ family	Potatoes, beans, peaches, apples	10 cuerdeas/ family
Chipomal	Corn	15 cuerdas/ family	Wheat, Ayote (a fruit)	On the same 10 cuerdas as the corn.
Lacandón Chico	Corn, lima beans	10 cuerdas/ family	Wheat, potatoes	10 cuerdas/ family .
Lancandón Grande	No information available			
Llano Grande	Corn	20 cuerdas/ family	potatoes	2 cuerdas/ family

Source: PRODESSA, 1997 [b]

Problems facing agriculture identified in the report for Cabricán include the need to expand irrigation beyond the one community in which it is found, combating insects that attack the crops, replacing chemical fertilisers with organic ones, access to credit, more land for corn production, diversification of crops, reforestation and conservation measures.

In Concepción, problems included access to credit, the need for training in appropriate technology and crop diversification, irrigation, greater knowledge of the soil and how to conserve it; lack of technical support and the need to use organic fertilisers.

Livestock

In Cabricán they produce what is described in the report as "a minimal percentage of cattle, sheep and pigs." They also keep chickens for domestic consumption. Typically, the women and children are responsible for this activity. The wool from the sheep is sold but it fetches low prices because it cannot be processed before sale.

Difficulties associated with this activity include lack of pasture land, disease and little or no access to veterinary services.

In contrast with the small production in Cabricán, livestock production in Concepción is described as an activity "of great importance" to the families of the micro-region. The village of Chipomal has even developed a significant bee-keeping industry.

Unlike the other communities that I have surveyed where the keeping of poultry is primarily for domestic consumption, 55% of Concepción's poultry production is sold, an indicator of that micro-region's relative prosperity. Similarly, while none of the other micro-regional analyses indicate that a statistically significant amount of the beef or pork production is consumed domestically, in Concepción 20% of the beef production and 30% of the milk produced is kept for domestic consumption, as is 15% of the pork.

Difficulties associated with livestock production in Concepción include lack of capital to increase production; the cold climate mitigates against expanding poultry production; limits to pasture land; lack of knowledge about the science of livestock raising and related diseases.

Handicrafts

In Cabricán, several of the villages dedicate themselves to one degree or another to the production of handicrafts. In Ciénaga Grade some weaving, primarily to satisfy family requirements is done. They also produce baskets but these are described as being of low quality and they are hard to sell. In Ciénaga Chiquita they make bags, backpacks, shirts and sweaters while in La Grandeza they makes tiles and bricks.

The difficulties encountered with the handicrafts have to do with the quality of the product, the need to be competitive with respect to quality and the marketing which at the time of writing the report, was effected through intermediaries. The need for training and increased access to credits were also identified as priorities for this sector.

With respect to handicrafts in the Concepción area, there are three categories: pottery, carpentry and weaving.

The potters, most of whom are women, are found in 5 of the area's communities. They produce pots, jars, bowls and other items for domestic use in limited number (about 12 units per month per person). The weavers, exclusively women, are found in six villages, produce bags, ropes and nets for carrying heavy loads. These are produced in moderately large quantities.

The carpenters, who are always men, produce beds, chest of drawers, chairs, doors, tables, etc.

The difficulties faced in this sector are related such considerations as

- The high cost of production given the amount of labour time involved;
- The environmental cost of the potting which requires a great deal of firewood;
- Insufficient capital
- Lack of training to improve product quality to be able to compete in the market;
- Inferior quality of the product; and
- Lack of reliable access to trucks to transport their products to market.

Lime and Brick-making in Cabricán

As one drives around the mountainous areas of Guatemala, from time to time you come across huge excavations at the side of the road where the whiteness of the lime contrasts with the face of the mountain from which it is being extracted. Such deposits are found in the Cabricán micro-region where 5% of the population are involved in its extraction and processing. Because this is a relatively costly process, the numbers of people involved have declined over the years and today production is controlled by a Co-operative which produces 2,500 quintales/week (a quintal is 100 kg). The mining and processing of lime represents a significant activity in the micro-region and could be expanded although changes would have to be made. As it is presently practised, the processing of lime represents a serious threat to the environment because the process requires that it be heated at very high temperatures and this industry alone accounts for a significant percentage of the trees cut in the area.

Brick-making, too, is an important micro-industry and family run operations can be found in areas where the mud is right for the production of bricks. This activity also requires huge amounts of wood as the bricks must be fired for hours.

These two activities, coupled with the need for firewood for cooking, has meant that deforestation is a major problem in the Cabricán micro-region.

Deforestation

In addition to the pressure on forested areas because of the demand for fire wood for cooking, activities such as brick-making and tile and lime production, create an almost insatiable demand for wood. Thus the issue of deforestation in both of these micro-regions, but particularly in Cabricán, is very serious as are the attendant erosion problems.

Migration

Approximately 20% of the Cabricán population, men, women, and children migrate seasonally in search of wages. The majority of those that migrate go to the capital or to the plantations on the Pacific coast while others go to El Salvador and the United States.

This is also the case in Concepción. The report makes no attempt to quantify the extent of the migration from this area, however, the researchers devote several pages to an analysis of the migratory practices of the population including the fact that, in addition to those families who work on the plantations on the Guatemalan Pacific coast or on farms closer to home, there is also a significant movement of men, women and children from all 7 villages to the south-east of Mexico to harvest coffee, bananas and cotton.

The reasons that the field researchers give for this movement include the relative proximity of the micro-region to Mexico; the overpopulation of the micro-region; and the slightly higher pay and better working conditions in Mexico.

The benefits of migration are few and are limited to a modest increase in the family income. This minor benefit is more than offset by hardships placed on family life by migration, whether it be the hardship of separation when a husband leaves to work elsewhere or from the whole family suffering the difficult conditions on the farms should

the wife and children accompany the man; health problems related to living conditions on the farms; and social decomposition in the home community as the absences of the migrants disrupt communal life and efforts to organise for change.

Health

We have already noted that in 1997 there were only two community health clinics in each of the two micro-regions, and one of the Cabricán clinics wasn't functioning for lack of staff.

In Cabricán in 1996 the three leading causes of infant death were pneumonia, still-births and malnutrition. Other major infant health problems include parasites, amoebas and diarrhoea, all of which are closely related to socio-economic circumstances.

Health problems affecting Concepción children were similar to those in Cabricán. Reasons cited for infant mortality include the parental ignorance of infant disease and steps to be taken when illness strikes. Lack of access to medicines and nutritional problems arising from poverty were also cited as contributing to infant deaths in the micro-region.

In Concepción in 1997 two-thirds of the communities had access to potable water and 83% had installed latrines, basic precautions with respect to public health. No village in the micro-region, however, had drainage.

Religious Affiliation

Unfortunately no data are provided with respect to religious affiliation in Cabricán. It will be recalled that in San Cristóbal and Purulhá the communities were, for the most part, either almost entirely Catholic or almost entirely Evangelical. In Concepción there fewer evangelicals but, nonetheless, their penetration into those communities over the past 25 years is impressive. The following chart summarises the situation:

Table 7.14: Religious Affiliation in Cabricán (1997)

Community	Percentage Catholic	Percentage Evangelical	Percentage Maya
Tuimuca	48	50	2
Sichiuila	65	30	5
Tutuapa	60	40	0
Chipomal	35	40	15
Lancandón Chico	60	35	5
Lancandón Grande	Information not available		
Llano Grande	58	40	2
Average	55	39	6

Source: PRODESSA, 1997, [b].

Political Preferences:

As of 1997 the major political parties that had a presence in the micro-region were the PAN and the FRG. The Christian Democratic Party was also active in the area. At the time the local mayor was PAN but he would be defeated in 1999 by Bernardino Ramírez, the PRODESSA micro-regional director, who ran as the candidate of the local Civic Movement.

In Concepción, little information was provided with respect to political preferences. PAN and the FRG were present in one village as were a number of minor parties while the PAN and the Christian Democrats were present in another. The authors indicated "unknown" with respect to the other villages.

As with Purulhá and San Cristóbal, the left-wing parties are not present although the election of the reform oriented Civic Movement's candidate would indicate a shift to the

left in Cabricán.

Community Organisation and Local Participation

Cabricán's rural villages are quite well organised from the point of view of task-oriented committees working to get a specific job done. Six of the seven communities had Parents' Committees working with the schools and all seven communities had a Local Improvement Committee, a Committee for Road Improvement and a Committee for electrification. Unfortunately, the high degree of illiteracy, lack of leadership training, lack of co-ordination and internal disputes weakened or nullified the impact of these organisations.

Another factor that reduced the impact of local organisations was the exclusion of women from the decision-making. The women were not entirely absent from community organisations as they had joined organisations that related to their income generating activities but when it came to community decision-making, the report's authors note that overwhelmingly it was the men that made those decisions.

The villages of Concepción seemed to be more highly organised than Cabricán. The following table summarises the situation.

Table 7.15
Groups and Committees Operating in the Micro-region of Concepción (1997)

Type of Group	No.	Objective	Beneficiaries
Committee on Behalf of Community Improvement	5	To initiate projects for community betterment	The five communities in which they operate.
Committee on Behalf of Clean Water	4	To work towards the installation of clean water.	The four communities in which they operate.
Committee on Behalf of Electrification	2	To work towards the installation of electricity.	The two communities in which they are working.
Parents' Committee	4	To promote education and local participation in it.	The four communities in which they are working.
Parish Council	1	Church related pro development committee	The lay activists working in that parish.
CARITAS	1	Promotes social solidarity.	The parish in which it works.
Public Works Committee	2	Promotes the installation of community infrastructure.	The two communities in which they work.
Women's Committee	1	Work for the participation and organisation of women.	The members of the committee in the community of Chipomal.
Committee of Small Agricultural Producers	1	Work for unity among producers and improvement in production and marketing	The small producers of Llano Grande who are members.
Health Promoters	1	To improve community health	Community of Llano Grande.

Source: PRODESSA, 1997 [b].

Outside Agencies

A half dozen non governmental and governmental agencies from outside the community are also present in the Cabricán area. These include Servicios Comunitarios ABAJ, an NGO that works with the weavers; DIGESA, the government's Agricultural Service that assists with reforestation, soil preservation and technical assitance to the peasant farmers; INACOP, a government agency that works with Cooperatives; FIS, the Social Investment Fund of the government which provides financing for community-based projects; PRONADE and CONALFA, the former is working to extend primary education

in underserviced areas and the latter teaches adults literacy (see Chapter 9);[110] ACUMAM, a Mam cultural association which has a Mam language radio station in Cabricán; and FUNDAP, an organisation that provides credits to small producers in the handicraft, livestock and agricultural sectors.

As with Cabricán, Concepción was being served in 1997 by a number of agencies from outside of the community. These included INTERVIDA, an organisation that works on behalf of child welfare and they operated a school snack program in two communities while ADIAT, an organisation dedicated to promoting the use of natural medicines, was working with health promoters in Sichivilá. FONAPAZ, a government social fund was financing the construction of a school at Lacandón Chico and CARE was installing potable water and latrines in Llano Grande.

The authors of the Concepción study make an observation with respect to these outside organisations that also could be applied to the local community organisations.

> The objectives that they hope to realise are tied to resolving the immediate problems (an approach) which underscores the concept of development that sustains these organisations; to date they have managed to attenuate the socio-economic difficulties which confront the communities, but they have not addressed the issue of profound and progressive change. (PRODESSA, 1997 [a]).

Even at the level of the practical work of incremental development projects, the PRODESSA documents points out that these four external agencies weren't very effective because, with one exception, they only work in one community each, and undertake

[110] An indication of the increasing difficulties under which people are working in Guatemala is shown by the fact that the mandate of the FIS ends in 2001 and thus this source of funds for community development will no longer be available and PRONADE, as explained in Chapter 9, has been, for all intents and purposes, cancelled.

disconnected projects that are not situated within the framework of any micro-regional strategy.

Education

In 1997, in the six villages of Cabricán, there were 1,679 primary students and 105 junior high school students. In the village of Ciénaga Grande there was an Escuela Basica, a grade 7 to 9 school, which served these 105 students. The following table shows primary school enrolments at that time.

Table 7.16
Primary School Enrolments
Cabricán, (1997)

Community	No. of Male Students	Percentage Of Female Students	No. of Female Students	Percentage Of Female Students	Total Student Population
Ciénaga Grande	179	55	148	45	327
Ciénaga Chicita	91	48	99	52	190
Los Corrales	184	54	155	46	339
Chorjalé	115	56	91	42	206
La Grandeza	185	61	119	39	304
El Cerro	177	57	136	43	313
Total	931		748		1,679

Source: PRODESSA, 1997 [a].

The researchers established that the failure and drop-out rate among these students was between 10 and 15%. The main reason for not paying sufficient attention to their studies was the obligation to work on the family land.

Between 40 and 60% of all adults 16 years of each and over in each of the villages was illiterate in 1996.

In addition to the junior high school in Ciénaga Grande, with its 105 students in three classrooms, there are two high schools in the town of Cabricán with a total of 542 students.

Unfortunately, the authors of the Concepción document did not report the number of students studying in the micro-region either in total or broken down by community. We are told that the coverage is inadequate as 44% of the settlements do not have a school and that there is a high failure rate (10 – 15%). This is due to the migration factor and to the lack of interest on the part of parents to keep their children in school for the entire six year primary program because it is consider long and costly especially given the lack of employment opportunities in the communities even if the children persisted in getting an education.[111] It will be recalled that the failure rate in San Cristóbal was 30% and the drop-out rate was 8%. While the situation in the Cabricán area schools is bad, indeed, it is twice as bad in one of the other micro-regions.

The illiteracy rate in the micro-region is 60% for men and 80% for women, a situation that is being confronted by PRODESSA and CONALFA.

PRODESSA's Strategic Priorities For These Micro-regions

Cabricán:

The PRODESSA report for Cabricán identified a number of areas of concern arising out of this study that would have to be addressed as part of a micro-regional development strategy. The following Action Plan was adopted in 1997:

[111] At the time of writing there were four young men in the community with a full secondary education plus primary school teacher training. None of the four could find employment either as teachers or in some other professional capacity and were making their living in the informal economy. It is little wonder that such a situation breeds scepticism on the part of parents.

Organisation:

1. Share the conclusions of the analysis of the micro-region with the inhabitants, creating the conditions whereby they can reflect on the implications and begin to participate in suggesting steps to be taken to improve the situation;
2. Strengthen community organisation by encouraging the participation of women and the building of a micro-regional wide movement on behalf of local development;
3. Develop the technical, political and administrative capabilities of the local leadership to strengthen their ability to plan, negotiate and administer development projects; help them to develop a strategic vision of local development in the short-, medium- and long-run;
4. Work with the Catholic Church to take advantage of the community organisation that they have developed to promote local development;
5. Encourage the various existing organisations to engage in co-ordinated work based on common community priorities;
6. Identify and establish mechanisms that will allow local community members to work with each other and with the municipality to develop models of local participation and local development plans that reflect the particularities of each community;

Production:

- Promote individual and collective productive projects and increase the technical level of production in the micro-region;
- Study the production of lime with a view to introducing a more environmentally sound way of producing it;

Community Improvement:

- Encourage the Municipality and the local community organisations to pressure the governmental institutions to co-ordinate their activities among them and with the local authorities so that their work forms a part of local development plans;
- Encourage the municipality, the auxiliary mayors and the local committees to study the infrastructural needs of all the communities with a view to meet these needs in accordance with specifically elaborated priorities;

Education:

- Implement alternative programs of non formal education that meet the particular needs of learners in the micro-region; and
- Take advantage of local knowledge especially with respect to agriculture and medicine to promote organic farming and the use of traditional medicines.

Three Year Evaluation:

In an annex to the planning document, PRODESSA lists the accomplishments of working three years in the community guided by this plan. They report the following advances:

Adult Education:

- 1,000 adults achieved the literacy certificate corresponding to having completed primary education –representing 13.5% of the illiterate population of the micro-region;
- 15 literacy workers in the field;
- a functioning organisation of graduates of the literacy program is functioning.

Post Secondary Education

- a team of 9 leaders, both men and women who are graduates of ESEDIR, formed and working in their communities;
- Six young people being trained in technical careers relating to agriculture and livestock.

Local Power

- Formal legal status granted to the Council of Micro-regional Development;
- A network of local community organisations is functioning;
- Greater participation of both men and women in community decision-making
- An updated micro-regional analysis completed; and
- A Community Development proposal completed.

Marketing

- Six marketing projects established in local markets for local products;
- 90 people trained in marketing techniques; and
- Integration of local people into the Maya Network of Community Marketing.

Production and Environment

- 40 local people trained to work as promoters in forestry, agriculture and livestock;
- 20 reforestation demonstration plots;
- 30 local people trained and working to create awareness about environmental issues.

Concepción

The PRODESSA report for Concepción also identified a number of areas of concern that would have to be addressed as part of a micro-regional development strategy. The following Action Plan for Concepción was adopted in 1997.

Production

- Systematic training of promoters;
- Exchange of ideas;
- Co-ordination with other institutions offering support to producers in the area;
- Provision of credit to productive activities.

Environment

- Systematic training of promoters;
- Finance projects that promote conservation of the environment;
- Reforestation of both private and public lands;
- Conservation of soil, sources of water and reserved forest areas.

Marketing

- Systematic training of promoters;
- Financing of community stores;
- Co-ordinate organisations that are promoting community marketing.

Organisation

- Training with respect to organisational processes and citizenship;
- Meetings to allow leaders to exchange ideas and experiences within the micro-region and with leaders from other micro-regions;
- Co-ordination with all agencies working to enhance organisational capacities.

Community Improvement

- Co-ordinate the elaboration of projects at the micro-regional level;
- Seek financing for community improvement projects.

Education

- Training in popular pedagogy;
- Opening new literacy centres;
- Training and organisation of leaders as the post secondary level.

Three Year Evaluation:

In an annex to the planning document, PRODESSA lists the accomplishments of working three years in the community guided by this plan. They report the following advances:

Production and the Environment

- Community leaders trained as agricultural promoters;
- Enhanced capacity to analyse the local situation and seek productive alternatives as necessary;
- Promoters are encouraging new production techniques and forestation practices;
- Promoters in livestock production trained;
- Conservation practices improved on much of the land under cultivation as a result of the work of the promoters;
- Greater production of vegetables in the area thanks to the encouragement and assistance of the promoters;
- Diversification of crops;
- Improvement of family diets;
- Improving incomes as a result of productive activities;
- More equitable participation by men and women;
- Improved profitability of livestock production;

- Demonstration plots in each village showing the sustainable use of resources;
- Enhanced sustainability in the use of local resources;
- Diminished use of chemical products in the area;
- Existence of a micro-regional plan for the period 2002 – 2004.

Marketing

- Community members are now trained to co-ordinate and promote marketing activities;
- Existence of, and the ability to manage, a fund to promote the sale of local products;
- Management of the supply of items of daily necessity for the community;
- Enhanced negotiation skills;
- Enhanced product quality control over products being sent to the market;
- Seeking, with the support of the Maya Network of Community Marketing, of national markets for local products.

Education

- Considerable success with the literacy program;
- The ESEDIR graduates are organised in support of the micro-region.

Organisation

- The Micro-regional Development Council has been organised and is functioning;
- Each community has a community co-ordinator and specific commissions.

Community Improvement

- Each community has at least two projects of basic infrastructure.

Micro-regional Diagnostics: Look Before You Leap

It would be unfair to suggest that all agencies, whether they be in the non-governmental or the governmental sector, stumble into a community and inflict their

project on the local residents. Very few agencies, however, undertake in-depth analysis such as PRODESSA undertook in 1997 before committing itself to these communities for six or more years. The four studies that I have reviewed vary in their sophistication but all aim to achieve one thing – to combine a development strategy that both meets the pressing needs of the local population and prepares the community to assume responsibility for their own development (e.g., empowerment) so that, at the end of PRODESSA's involvement with their community, the people will not only better off materially but they will be able to continue, on their own, all aspects of the work that was begun with PRODESSA's support. I will now turn to a review of what the PRODESSA field staff do at the local level to achieve this goal.

CHAPTER EIGHT

The Work of ESEDIR and PRODESSA at the Local Level:

Part 2: The Field Work

How the Local Work is Viewed From the Centre

It is a major challenge to corner Daniel Domingo, the former General Co-ordinator of ESEDIR and presently PRODESSA's Deputy Director responsible for educational matters. He represents PRODESSA on a number of national committees including the Consejo Nacional de Educación Maya (CNEM), the Comisión Nacional Permanente de Reforma Educativa, and the Consejo de Organicaciones para el Desarrollo (COINDE). Consequently, he is rarely in his office at the ESEDIR/PRODESSA headquarters in Guatemala City and when he is there he is fully occupied with his many duties. My pestering finally paid off, however, and on the evening of July 28th, some three weeks after I first indicated my interest in a formal interview, we sat down to talk.

I met Daniel in August of 1998 when I made my first visit to ESEDIR. His broad vision and clarity of thought was quickly apparent as he oriented me to ESEDIR and it's philosophy and practice. The following year when I returned to Guatemala to conduct the impact study on the effectiveness of ESEDIR's work over the previous 10 years that he had invited me to do the year before, Daniel had left ESEDIR to work on national issues for PRODESSA. As a result, I saw little of him that summer. In one of our brief encounters that year, however, he did tell me that he was running for the position of mayor in his municipality and although he thought he had little chance of winning – an accurate prediction as it turns out – he saw it as an opportunity to raise political issues with the Maya people of his home region.

Because of his analytical mind and his work at the national level, Daniel is able to situate PRODESSA and ESEDIR'S local work in a broad context. He spoke to me, for example, of the resurgence of the Maya movement since the 1991 Second Continental Meeting for Indigenous, Black and Popular Resistance, discussed in Chapter 5, where the split between the *popular* Left and the Pan Maya leadership took place. During this period, he argues, the Maya movement has moved from the "paternalism" and "indigenismo" that characterised it in the past to being a movement that has developed an "integral cultural vision" and which seeks a social transformation of Guatemala that is consistent with that vision. (All references in this section from my interview with Daniel Domingo, July 28, 2000). It is within the framework of this Maya vision, and the Pan Maya Movement that gives it expression, that PRODESSA and ESEDIR work.

Domingo argues that PRODESSA's work at the local level "sustains" the work at the national level. This is not meant to denigrate the local work but it recognises that this work is enhanced and given broader significance as a result of the legitimacy it gives and the base it provides to the national work.

> It seems to me that PRODESSA has passed from the stage of doing very concrete projects with immediate results in communities to work of a national character. Now this doesn't mean we don't continue local work because that is what sustains our broader proposals ..." (Interview with Daniel Domingo, July 28, 2000).

By way of illustrating the relationship between the local and the national work, he commented on the efforts of PRODESSA to organise the residents of Mayan villages so that they are "able to take in their hands ... the decisions about the form of development that they want to achieve." This, in turn, poses the question of the relationship between "... the form of organisation and the means of doing politics that is needed to achieve this development." Domingo suggests that PRODESSA and ESEDIR are giving expression to

these new forms of development through such contributions as their ideas on education strategy which is reflected in the COPARE Educational Reform package discussed in Chapter 9. In short, the interplay between national work and local experiences have led to policy proposals which, in Domingo's words, "can be converted to public policies applicable to a multicultural ... nation that Guatemala should be."

PRODESSA's Three Axes of Community Development: Production, Organisation and Education

In order to give better focus to their work in the new post conflict era, PRODESSA entered into a strategic planning exercise[112] in 1996 – 97 which included the preparation of the diagnostic materials I have reviewed, PRODESSA defined its work as having three axes or pillars that have already been mentioned : production, education and organisation. As this is key to understanding how they set priorities in their community work it is important to pause here and reflect on these three points.

A number of informants helped me understand the content of these three axes and their usefulness as a guide to action in PRODESSA's local work.

(i) Production

PRODESSA Deputy Director Daniel Saquec who is responsible for orgnisational matters described what is meant by the production axis. It refers to the productive process in both the agricultural sector and to small-scale, or artesanal, production of goods. He noted that they are a long way from thinking in terms of industrial-scale production at the community level. This axis also includes marketing of surplus products and ensuring

[112] PRODESSA, like ESEDIR, is highly self-critical and open to evaluating their practices when these seem to need adjustment. PRODESSA's willingness to undertake a strategic planning exercise, as they did in 1996, their frequent staff workshops, and their painful decision to shut down field offices, are examples of this flexibility which serve to enhance their effectiveness. This openness also characterises ESEDIR and is what initially attracted me to them.

community access to items of basic necessity. This axis includes what Saquec calls concern for the entire "productive chain" although none of my informants spoke of any aspect other than that relating to family agricultural production. Many of PRODESSA's field workers are involved with providing technical and organisational support to various agricultural activities in their communities.

The following informants spoke of such involvement:

María Hernandez Pérez, Cunén, El Quiché; provides advice to women involved in the production of medicinal plants and hens.

Anonymous Male 1, Sololá; works with peasants through a local Catholic organisation to assemble land for unemployed landless farm workers through a government program. [113]

Demitrio Vinicio Dubón García, Purulhá, BVP; also collaborates with PRODESSA's efforts in his municipality to assemble more land for landless peasants and deals with the issue of peasant farming practices which have caused a deterioration of the land.

Karin Edith Cac Pacay, San Cristóbal, AVP; works with demonstration plots.

Candido Lorenzo Carrillo, Concepción, Tutuapa, San Marcos; gives technical advice to peasants through PRODESSA's support to peasant agricultural production.

Carlos Tomás Marcario, Concepción, Tutuapa, San Marcos; like Demitrio Vinicio in Purulhá, collaborates with PRODESSA's efforts to deal with farming practices which have caused a deterioration of the land.

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[113] Both Maria Hernandez and this anonymous male are ESEDIR graduates who live in areas where PRODESSA has no office and, of course, work through organisations other than PRODESSA. Both maintain close ties with PRODESSA and ESEDIR, however, and I met and interviewed them at a PRODESSA workshop in Guatemala City.

Arnoldo Rios Pérez; Cabrican, Huehuetenango; like Candido Lorenzo in Concepción, works as an agricultural technician to support PRODESSA's support to peasant agricultural production.

Some of these activists, like María Hernandez and her anonymous male counterpart, are full-time primary school teachers and do this agricultural work after their regular work hours while others, like Karin Edith and Candido Lorenzo work full-time for PRODESSA.

(ii) Organisation

With respect to organisation, Saquec understands this axis to involve enhancing the capacity of the people with respect to the management of resources whether these resources come from within the community or from the outside.

Edgar Robert García, the PRODESSA Director in Concepción, spoke of organisation involving the promotion of citizen participation in a range of activities including Maya culture, current events and municipal affairs. He spoke specifically of the support PRODESSA gives to the local development councils stressing that PRODESSA doesn't commit to working in an area unless the people show a willingness to organise themselves and enhance the exercise of local power.

The following informants spoke of their involvement in organisational activities:

María Hernandez Pérez, Cunén, El Quiché; through her support of the agricultural initiatives of women in her community, strengthens the organisational capacity of these women.

Karin Edith Cac Pacay, San Cristóbal, AVP; works as an adviser to the community councils in the outlying villages in her municipality.

Candido Lorenzo Carrillo, Concepción, Tutuapa, San Marcos; works as an adviser to the local Comité pro mujer, or local Women's Committee.

Marta Yolanda Agustin Morales, Concepción, Tutuapa, San Marcos; works as a full-time community organiser with a special interest in women's organisation and education.

Arnoldo Ríos Pérez; Cabrican, Huehuetenango; stresses the importance of organisation. He notes that the joint efforts of NGOs and the municipality, especially since the election of a former PRODESSA micro-regional coordinator, Bernadino Ramírez as Mayor of the municipality, has led to a reinforcing of their efforts. This, in turn, has led to many projects being approved including new schools, road and potable water.

I spoke to the Mayors in three of the four municipalities that I visited. One, as just noted, Bernadino Ramírez, had been in charge of the local PRODESSA office until his recent election while the others, Nolberto Ambrosio of Concepción and Sebastian Castro of Purulhá were "friends of PRODESSA" despite the fact that their party affiliation, PAN, is hardly the first party of choice for Guatemalan progressives. All three were very proud of their apparent successes at promoting community organisation since becoming mayor and all spoke highly of the collaboration with PRODESSA just as PRODESSA people spoke highly of them.

Bernadino Ramírez, Mayor, Cabrican, Huehuetenango; while frustrated by the lack of resources compared to local needs, is proud of the work that can be accomplished when the resources of the municipality are combined with those of the NGOs and cites successes such as those referred to by his former colleague at PRODESSA, Arnoldo Ríos.

Nolberto Ambrosio, Mayor, Concepción, Tutuapa, San Marcos; has emphasised the importance of organising women and notes that as a result of the joint efforts of the Municipality during his time in office and the NGOs working in the area, 59 Women's

Committees have been established. They in turn, with technical advice from the NGOs, have initiated many community development projects;

I will return to the observations of these three mayors in the section on the decentralisation of government services.

(iii) Education

Saquec defines education in terms of support for primary, secondary and post secondary education.

Support for primary education takes at least four forms: (a) many of the primary teachers in the Maya villages where PRODESSA works are trained at the Instituto Indígena Santiago, PRODESSA's sister organisation in the capital; (b) other primary school teachers are students in ESEDIR's teacher training program in Barrillas and the Ixcán where they combine in-service training in pedagogy with community development training; (c) ESEDIR and PRODESSA staff were very involved as experts to the COPARE Educational Reform Commission and are now involved in promoting the reforms and winning support for their implementation at the community level; (d) PRODESSA is the agency in a number of areas responsible for administering the government's CONAPE program to extend primary schools to unserviced or under-serviced areas, as discussed in Chapter 9.

The support for secondary education primarily takes the form of providing scholarships to Maya students who must attend secondary school in communities other than their own.

The support for post secondary education takes the form of helping select students for ESEDIR, working with them during their practica, and following their return to their

communities where many of them teach full-time and do their community work after their school day.

Then there is the very important non-formal adult education with community members. Edgar Roberto Garcia stressed PRODESSA's educational role in terms of informal education among the villagers. He noted that this educational work leads them to

> ... work in training for the areas of life that are most important to the people ... and given that in this micro-region basically the people are involved in agriculture, livestock and forestry, consequently we are implementing training related to those activities. We are forming the local human resources according to a systematic training plan ...(Interview with Edgar Roberto Garcia, July 19, 2000).[114]

Julio Pop of PRODESSA's San Cristóbal micro-region had yet another perspective. He closely linked PRODESSA's educational work with the organisational axis. Speaking of the role of the ESEDIR graduates in his area, he commented

> ... it is supposed that these people [e.g., the ESEDIR graduates – MO'S] are going to strengthen the structure of community organisation and thus it is connected to that axis – that is the area of leadership training. We also have a program of adult education and that is directed at training the community leaders with whom we work ... (Interview with Julio Pop, July 12, 2000).

A number of other informants spoke of their involvement in the educational axis:

[114] It is noteworthy that only one of my informants mentioned the literacy work that PRODESSA does as an example of work done within the framework of the educational axis. The exception is Karin Edith Cac Pacay, cited in Chapter 6 on this matter, reports some success in adult literacy in the area she is working in. PRODESSA holds contracts from the official Government agency responsible for literacy work, CONALFA, to deliver government mandated literacy programs in each of the micro-regions in which they work. With one possible exception, the front-line workers interviewed spoke of the very high drop out rates and resistance to the official literacy programs which they delivered (This was reflected in interviews with Demetrio Vincio Dubón Garcia and one of the anonymous male informants). Senior PRODESSA officials like Saquec and several of the micro-regional co-ordinators recognised the problem, admitted that the PRONADE officials were not very receptive to changing the content of the program to make it more relevant to Maya adult learners and justified PRODESSA's continued involvement with the program because of the income it

- Guillermo Morán Jom, a school principal in San Cristóbal, AVP; in addition to his duties at the school which was built as a result of a community initiative and with the support of international donors, volunteers as an advisor to the local Community Development Organisation (Organisación de desarrollo comunal) which is working to train community leaders in the theory and practice of sustainable development;
- Miguel Angel Camajá, Cunén, El Quiché, is the principal of the Escuela Diversificada Oscar Azmitia, named for Brother Oscar, the former General Co-ordinator of ESEDIR and now the Director of PRODESSA. The school offers the senior level of high school, a level not available in most Maya areas, and is a model school which is implementing the curriculum and pedagogy of the proposed Educational Reform.
- Brother Félix Lorenzo Valásquez of Cabrican, whose story I noted in Chapter 6, works with teachers in the schools in his muncipality to deepen the Mayan component of the education they are imparting to their students. Brother Félix was the first Mayan brother in the La Salle order, the order which founded the Institutio Indigena Santiago, ESEDIR and PRODESSA.
- Ana Morales is very much involved with the organisation's formal educational initiatives in her capacity as the co-ordinator of ESEDIR's residential program; as is
- Mateo Juan Simon of Victoria 20 de enero in the Ixcán. Mateo is a teacher who spent most of his childhood in a refugee camp in Mexico where, as a teenager, he began to teach. Upon the community's return to Guatemala, he was elected by his

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provides and the possibility that the literacy workers can do other, more pertinent tasks, financed by this income.

community to be a teacher and subsequently to attend the ESEDIR residential community development program. I met him in Purulhá, BVP where he was doing his practicum.

These five individuals, Guillermo Morán Jom, Miguel Angel Camajá, Brother Félix Lorenzo Valásquez, Ana Morales and Mateo Juan Simon represent an involvement with the formal aspect of education stressed by Daniel Saquec although most of them devote time after their regular work hours to non formal education in their communities.

The involvement of other informants was oriented more to education outside of the formal school setting, such as the work of one of the anonymous male informants who is involved with local literacy efforts for adults through the state sponsored CONALFA programme. Karin Edith Cac Pacay from San Cristóbal has, in addition to the electrification project with the previously mentioned group of war widows, succeeded in involving 38 of these 64 widows in a CONALFA literacy group.[115]

Two informants (Karin Edith in San Cristóbal and Cándido Lorenzo in Concepción) specifically mentioned supporting the CODEHUCA program of extending parent controlled schooling.

Other informants, while stressing their involvement in the organisational or production axes, nonetheless also mentioned the educational component of their work. In

[115] It is interesting to note that Karin Edith was more positive than her anonymous male colleague about the CONALFA literacy programme. While he was complaining about a 50% drop-out rate and the irrelevance of the programme, Karin Edith's experience with the 38 women who made up her literacy group – over half the population of war widows in this very special village – was more successful although admittedly at the time of the interview she was only into her third month with the programme. Karin Edith seems to have had at least early success by connecting her literacy efforts with the daily lives and aspiration of these women (in this case, getting electricity into the community) while her colleague seemed to be stuck with delivering a program that had little or no meaning to his students.

effect, all PRODESSA workers, whether they be full-time or volunteer, are working to one extent or another in the educational sector.

Cross Cutting Themes

Several informants spoke of what they referred to as "cross cutting" themes that touch on all axes. For PRODESSA Deputy Director Daniel Saquec, such cross cutting themes include citizen participation, and particularly the participation of women, in all aspects of community life while for Marco Antonio Pérez, the PRODESSA Co-ordinator in Purulhá, the cross cutting theme that he identified was the exercise of local power. Both of these themes have been dealt with at length in Chapter 6.

Maya Culture

Another cross cutting theme is Maya culture.[116] As PRODESSA Deputy Director Daniel Domingo pointed out in an already cited observation, what distinguishes PRODESSA and the other organisations working in support of the Maya movement, is precisely the fact that they are seeking to apply Maya values, Maya culture, to the task of building a new Guatemala.

Maya culture, for the men and woman of ESEDIR and PRODESSA, gives significant importance to the still widely spoken Maya languages, the religious practices, the history of the Maya people and, of course, the world view or *cosmovision* of the Maya people.

Some (Morales, 1998) have argued that there is no such thing as a Maya culture given that there are 21 language groups and significant differences historically in the

[116] Maya culture in Guatemala, and certainly in the world of those struggling for social transformation *from a Mayan perspective*, is taken as a given and spoken of as a shared concept. It is easy to forget that this is a highly contentious concept that for some has no validity whatsoever while for others is indispensable for understanding a given social formation. An excellent discussion of the issues raised by the concept of culture is found in Geertz (1995).

practices that characterised the collective lives of the various peoples that today are called Maya. The defenders of Pan Mayanism argue, however, that a Pan Maya culture is emerging that borrows from the various Maya traditions and, indeed, from the Ladino traditions as well. A clear example of that is religious practices among the Maya. While the origins of the religion retain their pre Colombian roots (see Warren, 1998), ceremonial practices are touched significantly by Catholic ritual. In short, the essence of Maya religiosity is decidedly non Catholic while the form is infused with Catholicism.

Similarly, the Maya world view or *cosmovision* is based on the sacred text of the Maya people, the Popol Vuh and the oral traditions that Warren describes as passing down and transforming memory, it too cannot but be touched by the modern world. Just as non Mayan religions and cultures evolve and in so doing both retain a connection with the past while renewing themselves, so too is this happening to the Maya culture.

The importance that PRODESSA places on Maya culture is found in another document that emerged from their strategic planning process. It is entitled *Principios de nuestro trabajo (Principles of Our Work).* That document states that "We work for integral development coherent with Maya culture"; and in a section entitled "Ideal Conditions" it is stated that ... we appropriate the values and principals of Maya culture" and "We are open to multiculturalism" (PRODESSA, n.d. [b], 1).

Maya history, culture and spirituality is taught and practised at ESEDIR. It infuses everything from the holding of Maya ceremonies on the sacred days of the Maya calendar to the content of courses and the way their work is analysed. In fact, when in August, 1999 I presented the findings of the Impact Study to a combined meeting of the ESEDIR and PRODESSA staff, the only criticism that was levelled at the study was the comment that it

lacked "a Maya perspective." This same approach also characterises PRODESSA's work. Maya values are infused in all aspects of their practice.

At the local level this generally is seen as taking the form of "rescuing" or "recovering" (rescatar in Spanish) Maya values, Maya language and Maya culture.[117] Among those who spoke most passionately about the role of PRODESSA with respect to this issue was Miguel Angel Camajá, a 1990 graduate of ESEDIR and now the Principal of the Escuela Politecnica Oscar Azmitia. Since 1986 he has been involved with the Cunén Association of Integral Development which, in addition to addressing problems related to the agricultural concerns of the peasants, promoted Maya culture, especially among youth. He became involved with the initiative to found the school of which he is now the principal, a school which offers a senior level of secondary education to Maya students from a Maya perspective. When asked about the concept of transformatory development he spoke of the need to "rescatar" Mayan values, combine them with certain Western values, and on this basis promote development. When asked about the relationship of the local work to a broader, national Maya movement he replied

> I believe that what we are doing ... is part of the Maya movement, Maya culture, Maya language ... We are working with an alternative methodology in co-ordination with other institutions, with other teacher training institutions, and we are providing direct services to the communities of the county, for example, we hope to extend the presence of [our school] to four [additional] communities ... (Interview with Miguel Angel Camajá, July 8, 2000).

[117] Virtually everyone I spoke to used the word "rescatar" (to rescue or recover) in reference to their role vis-à-vis Maya culture. One informant, Guillermo Morán Jom rejected this term (presumably in the sense of 'recover') on the basis that it implies that what is being recovered, in effect, no longer exists. He speaks, instead, of encouraging people to value their Mayan heritage – it's there, it simply needs to be practised (Interview with Guillermo Morán Jom, July 12, 2000).

With respect to the proposed educational reform, they are working on curriculum that is consistent with its proposals and even have developed a word processing program in K'ichee'." (Interview with Guillermo Morán Jom, July 12, 2000).

A number of informants spoke of the decline in the prominence of Maya culture in their local communities. This deterioration, as evidenced by little use of the language especially among young people and the widespread wearing of non-indigenous dress, seems to be particularly advanced in Concepción which, given its relatively close proximity to Mexico, provides, as we have seen, a steady source of labourers for Mexican plantations.

The informants ranged from optimistic to pessimistic about the possibility of strengthening Maya culture in Concepción. On the pessimistic side, one informant, a female PRODESSA fieldworker, commented that the migrations to Mexico, and El Salvador and to the United States for that matter, undermined the Maya culture and made the cultural work difficult. This was reflected in several of the interviews in this area including that with the local PRODESSA co-ordinator Edgar Roberto García.

On a more optimistic note, it will be recalled that at the beginning of this chapter, I cited the optimism of Cándido Lorenzo Carrillo, another PRODESSA field staff in Concepción, with respect to his views about the survival of Maya culture even in this micro-region where everyone raises the issue of a loss of culture as a major concern. In addition to the use of Mam, the local Maya language, in his children's schools, he comments that he and his wife speak Mam at home, that they work in agriculture which is the basis of Maya culture and that the kids are learning Maya culture in the schools.

This optimism, which arises from the gains that are being made, is what keeps people working in the face of obstacles. Of course, it would seem that if economic necessity force people to seek jobs in areas where Maya culture is not practised, or indeed

discouraged, then all the efforts at home or school to preserve it will fail without an economic development strategy that allows people to earn their living in their culture. That is why cultural action can't be separated from the other axes of PRODESSA's work.

The ESEDIR Graduates: What Actually Happens in the Field

For purposes of this analysis into the work of PRODESS and ESEDIR in addition to the visits to four of PRODESSA's six micro-regional offices during my July/August, 2000 field trip I also had the benefit of the data which I gathered for the 1999 Impact Study.

The data gathered by the student interviewers during the 1999 Impact Study is very revealing. Nine teams of three student interviewers from the ESEDIR class of 1999 each visited 9 towns or villages in four micro-regions in which at least 5 ESEDIR *egresados* or graduates lived. The teams conducted a total of 108 interviews; 64 of the interviewees were ESEDIR graduates and 44 were community leaders who were asked to comment on the quality of the community work of the ESEDIR graduates in their community.[118]

Of the 64 graduates interviewed, 46 had not completed the follow-up distance education program. One objective of the study that I was undertaking at the time was to determine why this program, designed to allow the students to upgrade their certificate to a diploma in community development by distance education, was not attracting the ESEDIR graduates for whom it was designed. With a 90% non-completion rate this program was clearly not meeting their perceived needs. Consequently information was gathered by the student interviewers about this sub-group of 46 with a view to determining not only why they did not complete the requirements for the additional qualification but also to see to

[118] Between 1988 and 1998 some 300 students had graduated from the ESEIDR residential community development programme. Many are living in areas no longer served by PRODESSA and so it was not possible in the timeframe I had available for the student teams to interview from a sample beyond the 64 who were living in the municipalities selected for inclusion in that study.

what extent, despite their apparent disinterest in further study, they were engaging in the community leadership activities expected of ESEDIR graduates. The data showed that of this group of 46 distance education "drop-outs", 11 (or 24%) reported that they were not engaged in community development work while the remaining 35 (76%) reported a significant engagement with their communities. The 46 respondents reported a total of 111 involvements among them in community organisations, or an average of 3.2 each. As reflected in the following table, these ranged from working with one or more Maya or popular organisations (56 cases) to volunteer work with parish committees (5 cases).

Table 8.1
Sectoral Involvements of ESEDIR Graduates:
Classes of 1989 to 1996

Activity by Sector	Number of ESEDIR graduates that participate
No involvement	(11)
Politics	7
Popular or Maya Organisations	52
Municipal Organisations	15
Work related or professional organisations	17
Church related organisations	5
Non governmental organisations	6
Total	111

Source: O'Sullivan, 1999, 9.

Respondents reported collaborating with a variety of institutions including working with "official" government and municipal development committees that undertook a range of activities such as providing potable water to building or up-grading roads. Other involvements included Women's Committees, Youth Committees, Sports Associations and

parish groups. Some worked full- or part-time for a development agency while most collaborated as volunteers with specific projects organised by one or other development agency. This was often, but not exclusively, PRODESSA as PRODESSA no longer worked in all of the areas where the graduates lived since the 1997 "micro-regionalisation" of its work.

It is my contention, despite the fact that 24 % of the graduates of their residential program reported no involvement in community activities was undoubtedly disappointing for the ESEDIR leadership, that nevertheless it is reasonable to speculate that many post secondary professional development programs can report that 76% of their students over a 10 year period are engaged in the activity for which they were specifically prepared. Furthermore, we cannot forget that for many ESEDIR graduates, most of whom returned to their paid employment as teachers or other professions, this is *volunteer* community work and, for those with professional and family responsibilities, difficult to sustain. Consequently, the level of the involvement of their graduates must be considered to be acceptably high and very encouraging. It seems very clear that the drop out rate in the distance education program was due to factors unrelated to the graduates' demonstrated commitment to their communities.[119]

Another point that should be mentioned is that this participation rate under-estimates the involvement of ESEDIR graduates in their community in the following sense. When I was tabulating the results to the question about community involvement I made the arbitrary decision that if an ESEDIR graduate who was a teacher (and it must be

[119] The data convinced me that three factors influenced the distance education program drop out rate: the cost of travel to the workshops, the time commitment which would take them away from family and employment, and the perception that the diploma awarded was not recognised for professional purposes and therefore not worth the time, effort and money required to get it (O'Sullivan, 1999, 13 – 24).

remembered that the vast majority are teachers) said that he or she confined his or her activity to teaching in the school where he or she was employed I put that down as non involvement in community organisations whereas if another respondent said that he or she worked for an NGO, I put that down as community involvement. I came to question this approach and attempted to move beyond it. Within the context of my role as someone who had to write and report and make recommendations to ESEDIR about its practice, what could I say about those teachers who, while certainly committed to the process of social change in their community as evidenced by taking 10 months to take the ESEDIR residential program, but who, nonetheless, gave priority to their professional work as educators? Surely this wasn't contradictory. The answer that occurred to me was related to the Educational Reform process. (See Chapter 9). PRODESSA, ESEDIR and scores of other Maya and non Mayan progressive organisations are working to implement the curriculum that is emerging from the Educational Reform process and to implement the progressive pedagogy that the Reform advocates. Parents and even teachers have to be convinced to buy into the Reform and working in the schools to bring this about must be viewed as a significant contribution to the process of social change in Guatemala.

As a result I made two recommendations relating to encouraging these teachers to work with their communities. First, they should advocate the values within the proposed Reform, and secondly that they should build support for its approval by Congress and its implementation. (O'Sullivan, 1999, 32). Such a campaign is central to the work that PRODESSA does in all the micro-regions. (See Chapter 9).

Not only are the graduates *involved* in community activities but, judging from the opinions of the leaders of those communities, their contribution is very positive.[120]

The following comments, which are representative of the feedback about the work of local ESEDIR *egresados* were made by community leaders. (O'Sullivan, 1999, 11 – 12):

- They participate well in all of the community's projects.
- They are oriented towards the Mayan culture.
- They have an excellent involvement in the community
- They promote community development.
- They are very active.
- They support the peasants.
- They promote the practice of Maya ceremonies.
- They have promoted community social change, motivated participation according to local needs and the employ various styles of work.

One of the informants commented that "… their work is not comparable to that of others. Their training facilitates their work with projects and with community organisations." Another said "their leadership qualities are notable." (O'Sullivan, 1999, 12). Not every comment about the graduates was positive. One community leader noted how certain ESEDIR graduates used their skills to improve their own personal circumstances, while other respondents couldn't comment on the work of the graduates in their community suggesting, perhaps, that their visibility in the community was not high. In light of this handful of negative responses, or responses that could be interpreted

[120] The student-interviewers were given the responsibility of determining who they would interview in the category "community leaders." During the training sessions to prepare them for the field work they were encouraged to think in terms of elected officials, leaders of community organisations and elders as falling into this category.

negatively, I asked the student interviewers during the debriefing session if, on the whole, they had a positive impression of the impact of the graduates on the communities in which they are working and they unanimously responded "yes."

In summary, the 1999 Impact Study showed that a significant percentage of ESEDIR graduates were active in community development and that their work was, on the whole, highly regarded. Furthermore, of the 76% who were active in the community, they were active in a number of ways. Quantitatively, then, ESEDIR's impact was significant. What about the qualitative impact of their work? This, of course, is less easy to determine but it is to that question that I now turn.

How the PRODESSA Field Workers Understand their Work

I was interested to learn to what extent, in practice, the distinction about development made in the ESEDIR *Proyecto Educativo* is being applied in the field by PRODESSA staff whether they be ESEDIR graduates or not.[121] I put the following question to my informants who work at the community level: *According to ESEDIR's Proyecto Educativo there are two types of development: development defined as an increase of goods such as more clinics, better roads, access to potable water, etc and development defined as a process of human, political and social transformation. Are you*

[121] It might well be asked how similar is the philosophy and practice of ESEDIR and PRODESSA. Can we assume that the philosophy and practice of one reflects that of the other? I have come to the conclusion that the answer is yes. ESEDIR is a project of PRODESSA. ESEDIR's residential and distance education program in the community development sector complements the local development work of PRODESSA. Many, although by no means all, of PRODESSA staff and volunteers are ESEDIR graduates and PRODESSA is actively involved in recruiting PRODESSA students and supervising their work placements. Brother Oscar Azmitia, a former General Co-ordinator of ESEDIR is now the Director of PRODESSA and his successor as General Co-ordinator is now the Deputy Director of PRODESSA. The cross fertilisation of personnel and ideas ensures that there is great congruity between the two organisations and consequently I feel confident that there exists no identifiable organisational differences between PRODESSA and ESEDIR with respect to the essential issues addressed in this work.

in agreement with this distinction and to what extent, in practice, does your work contribute to development as you define it?

Perhaps not surprisingly, especially given the centrality of the concept to the ESEDIR community development program and how it is woven throughout the PRODESSA diagnostic documents reviewed above, everyone interviewed about this issue agreed with the distinction and, indeed, declared themselves to be in favour of promoting both notions of development. The level of sophistication with respect to how to do this varied widely from informant to informant. One suggested that if one does what he called human development, the practical benefits of increased infra-structure will follow. Most suggested that given the poverty in the communities in which they work, transformatory development could only emerge within the context of working with the people to improve their daily lives in very practical ways.

Marco Antonio Pérez, the Director of PRODESSA's micro-region in Purulhá said that the two concepts complement each other and that his approach is to work to satisfy personal needs and in so doing create the preconditions for transformatory development. (Interview with Marco Antonio Pérez, July 11, 2000). His counter-part in Concepción, Edgar Roberto Garcia, said essentially the same thing: these two concepts cannot be separated. He argued that in order to get services like potable water, electric light or clinics, it is necessary to *prepare* (his word, my emphasis, MOS) the people so they can achieve these things. (Interview with Edgar Roberto García, July 19, 2000). The preparation that to which he refers involves a process of education and organisation which are, themselves, 'transformatory'.

Ana Morales reflected this same approach. Ana, an ESEDIR graduate and a former facilitator in ESEDIR's teacher training program in the Ixcán who is now the coordinator

responsible for ESEDIR's residential program, observed that you cannot promote education if people are dying of hunger and says that "it's necessary to attend to the production needs (of the community) and within this process of production it's necessary to promote organisation and that starts a process of education ..." (Interview with Ana Morales, July 10, 2000).

Julio Pop, the Director of the PRODESSA office in the micro-region of San Cristóbal, had very well developed ideas on this issue. He said, speaking of the incremental notion of development, that it "is what the people see as development: we want water, roads, schools ..." while the other, what he calls the "complement", refers to "the transformation of the individual."

> That is the most complicated (thing) for the people to understand because the first question when we arrive in a community is what are you going to give us ... a school, a road. That is what is seen as development, not the other part, not personal growth, not a strengthening of one's capacity to transform (one's reality), to be able to propose, to change structures within the community. That is more complicated. Within PRODESSA, we have tried to combine the two things. We work to contribute to the community structure, not as the most important thing but as a complement to the other because at this time the most important thing is to strengthen the ability of the people to empower themselves, to transform their reality. That for us is important. Personally I would say that for the people what is important is the structure.[122] I would say that of greater weight is their knowledge. ... (Interview with Julio Pop, July 12, 2000).

PRODESSA and ESEDIR, then, work on the basis of a concept of development that starts with basic needs (the incremental notion of development) and has developed a strategy that seeks to create the personal, social, cultural and political transformational component in their praxis that addresses these basic needs. Working as they are in traditional communities which were, in some cases, greatly affected by the war, this approach is not without its frustrations.

How the Villagers React to PRODESSA's Work in Their Communities

The answers that I received in response to the question *"What aspect of your work do you find to be the biggest challenge?"* are very consistent with the observation made by ESEDIR General Co-ordinator Mario Recancoj at the beginning of this chapter when he referred to the influence of the years of militarisation of Guatemalan society which actively discouraged democratic participation in community affairs. To this must be added two other considerations that contribute to an understandable reluctance to become engaged in the processes of civic involvement. One is that, despite their sense of community, the peasant as a social group is more accustomed to working the land as a family enterprise than he or she is in engaging in broader collective endeavours. As a result the rural community development worker, especially in a post conflict situation like that of Guatemala, is up against a long history of scepticism that will only be changed over time and in the face of very practical proof that participation in community affairs will benefit the individual and his or her family. The other, mentioned below by one respondent, is the top-down practices of some NGOs that reinforce this reluctance to become involved.

I was not particularly surprised at the response of my informants to this question. In August, 1998, during my first visit to ESEDIR, I observed a community meeting in a village (or *aldea*) near Cabricán. The topic of discussion at the meeting was the community analysis (or *diagnóstico)* done by three ESEDIR students who were doing their practicum in the municipality. There were approximately 30 community members present, about half of which were women. The students, all males, presented their analysis in the local Maya language, Mam, and attempted to engage those present in a dialogue.

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[122] By structure is meant infrastructure – capital goods such as schools, roads and clinics.

The men present responded but the women, except for short one-on one comments to each other, remained silent. During the break, however, the women discussed the issues among themselves. When the meeting reconvened, however, they once again fell silent. The students' frustration went beyond the difficulty of getting the women to participate because when it came time near the end of the meeting to form a committee to take action nobody, either male or female, readily volunteered to serve on this committee. It was only under a lot of pressure from a senior PRODESSA field worker that several of the men who had been only to happy to talk at the meeting reluctantly agreed to participate in the committee. No women could be convinced to volunteer.

Two years later, the situation had not changed. One PRODESSA micro-regional director commented to me that

> ... the most difficult challenge is to get people to participate. When I say 'participate' I am not referring to their simple presence in a meeting, that we can count on. I mean participation in the sense of 'proposing' of putting forward their ideas, a role that until now falls to the community leaders. The biggest challenge is the participation of the women because until now their participation hasn't been accepted. Now, if we have a meeting they come and if we ask them something they will answer but it's not spontaneous. In answer to questions they'll talk about what they are doing, what they would like to do but their participation (in the meetings) comes from provoking them to share their ideas and their concerns. (Interview with Marco Antonio Pérez, July 11, 2000).

Another PRODESSA micro-regional director who also identified participation as the major concern explained this situation as the result of the inertia that comes from what is seen as the inevitability of their situation.

> ... it is difficult that the people come to consciousness about their reality because of the level of illiteracy in all senses of the word: political, social, cultural. In all aspect of life there is a high level of illiteracy and so the people have become accustomed to live in a conformist way thinking that we were born in this situation and like this we will die. (Interview with Edgar Roberto Garcia, July 19, 2000).

Nor can the non-engagement of many people in community affairs in the face of the encouragement by PRODESSA, indeed their insistence, that people become involved be explained fully by the traditional culture of the villages. The "wait and see" attitude of the local people is reinforced by the paternalism of certain agencies, including NGOs, that substitute themselves for community involvement by simply providing services or promoting projects without insisting on local participation as a precondition for their intervention in the community. (Interview with Ana Morales, July 10, 2000). The government agencies are particularly notorious for this approach but, as Olga Pérez mentioned in her interview with me, many NGOs had become indistinguishable from the government agencies from which they accepted contracts, and it would seem, a style of work. This top-down or charitable approach add to the difficulties inherent in the rural situation for agencies like PRODESSA who set as a precondition for work in a community that the people organise themselves and become involved.

> ... the people always hope that [things] will be given to them. They don't have a much broader concept than that and so, when we arrive to discuss proposals and their sustainability in the framework of mutual co-operation, the people always wait [to see what we will do for them] and it's difficult to break this structure of paternalism ... (Interview with Julio Pop, July 12, 2000).

An additional factor that contributes to the difficulty in getting the villagers to take charge of their own development is the depth of poverty facing the communities which leads to migrations, sometimes of the men, other times of whole families, to the plantations during the harvest to work for wages thus disrupting educational programs and other

development activities in the home community.[123] (Interview with Julio Pop, July 12, 2000).

As for strategies to tackle this reluctance to participate, Ana Morales offers an interesting approach when she suggests that the solution to this problem is to be found "... in the *famous* diagnostics of the community."[124] Having reviewed the diagnostics of four micro-regions I can appreciate her point. It seems reasonable that it is only within the context of an overall understanding of the particularities of each community that the issue of what constitutes the best strategy to effect an acceptable but realistic level of participation by the villagers can be decided. Most people, whether they be middle-class Canadians or Guatemalan peasants, will not devote the time and energy required to do "community work" simply because they are asked to or are required to. People will be less reluctant to participate when they are convinced that it is an indispensable ingredient to achieving something they hold to be important. Clearly, to achieve such participation requires a well thought out and long term strategy such as that developed by PRODESSA for each of the areas in which it works.

With respect to using diagnostics as a strategy to prepare a community for a potential development initiative, Daniel Saquec, the Deputy Director of PRODESSA responsible for organisation, told me that this analytical work is done in collaboration with the local Community Councils that PRODESSA encourages and supports as it prepares the community for the development work to follow. The results of the analysis are shared with

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[123] An obvious solution to this problem of seasonal absenteeism would be to adjust the school year and the project cycle to take these predictable absences into account. For the most part the migrant workers are gone for a matter of weeks at the same time of the year.

[124] The use of the term *famous* undoubtedly refers to the PRODESSA/ESEDIR practise of analysing in-depth any situation to which they are considering committing themselves. This methodology has become a hall-make of their institutional practises.

the Council and an action plan is created which provides for a multi-year time frame that ends in the year 2004. This is because when PRODESSA "micro-regionalised" in 1997 – 98 they built in a six year process in each of the areas selected at the end of which they hope the local people will be able to take responsibility for their own development and that PRODESSA will be able to provide its support to another set of micro-regions.[125] (Mapa estratégico de PRODESSA, n.d. [c]).

As part of their program, as I have shown with the example of the three students who had run into difficulties at their community meeting, each ESEDIR student is taught to do "diagnostics." During their field placement each team of students present their collective analysis to a community meeting and offer suggestions, based on their research, as to development projects that the community might consider. On occasion, these suggestions are accepted and once the students return to the community they become advisers to the local people who are implementing the proposal. This contrasts with the approach of agencies that simply arrive with pre-packaged proposals for implementation.

Undoubtedly what the three students I observed in 1998 forgot was to define a strategy to encourage participation. They committed the error of doing an analysis for the community, defining a project for them and expecting spontaneous support, including participation, for their project. Of course, in fairness, they had the limited timeframe of a student placement and couldn't be expected to have covered all the bases but their experience is not that different than the practice of many development professionals.

[125] Not only did PRODESSA, and by extension, ESEDIR, micro-regionalise in 1996 – 97 but they developed a six-year plan wherein, by 2004, PRODESSA would leave each of the micro-regions in which they were working and support the develop efforts of another region. In short, they gave themselves six years to reach a point of sustainability in the work they were doing in these original micro-regions (Mapa estratégico de PRODESSA, n.d. [c]).

> There are people who arrive and offer. They see there is need but they don't see this need is the consequence of other ([eeds] and I believe it's necessary to see first the causes and know them well in order to be able to propose solutions. But these solutions, I believe, have to emerge from an involvement with the people so that [the people] will understand that it is necessary to work, not for a solution given to us that solves an immediate problem, rather to tackle the causes of our problems. (Interview with Ana Morales, July 10, 2000).

Olga Pérez, the Director of INCIDE who I cited in Chapter 6 on the issue of decentralisation, suggested that this approach by certain NGOs may well be explained by the fact that many NGOs, which in the past "accompanied the popular movement, now delivers services on behalf of the state." (Interview with Olga Pérez, August 1, 2000). Indeed, there are few large NGOs that do not accept contracts from the State. PRODESSA itself, as I will discuss in Chapter 9, is heavily involved in delivering a number of Ministry of Education programs. While I would hope that there is not a *necessary* contradiction between accepting such contracts and ignoring local participation, nonetheless, Pérez makes a connection between these two phenomena and I can certainly understand how the demands of meeting government imposed deadlines would make the option of simply going into a community and doing the project for, and not with, the people would be appealing. The issue, I think, is less one of whether to accept government contracts outright, but rather one of understanding how accepting these contracts affects the style of work of the organisation and its relationships with the community.

Summary Observations on ESEDIR and PRODESSA's Local Work

I did not do a formal evaluation of specific PRODESSA projects in any of the micro-regions and therefore cannot say with certainty that a particular initiative in such and such a micro-region has been a success according to specified criteria. My field observations were not designed to judge the merits of the development work being done by

PRODESSA and ESEDIR. Rather I was interviewing the participants who were working in a fascinating process of utilising the space provided by the Peace Accords to expand community level participatory democracy. There is undoubtedly a range of accomplishment represented by their activities. Evidence that the impact is significant is gleaned from the observations of the community leaders reported in the 1999 Impact Study and by the impressive level of engagement evidenced by the ESEDIR graduates on behalf of their local communities. It is evidenced by comments from Daniel Domingo who describes PRODESSA's work as "sustaining" or, in effect, providing the base for the legitimacy of the work at the national level and the comment made to me by Mario Silvestre, the former Director of IDESAC, one of Guatemala's leading NGOs and presently the representative of IBIS – Denmark who assured me during my first visit to ESEDIR in 1998 that PRODESSA was among Guatemala's most highly reputed development agencies. (Personal conversation with Mario Silvestre, August 18, 1998).

It is safe to say that, despite their limited resources and limited geographic projects, with ESEDIR acting as the institution that enhances the leadership potential of a growing number of community leaders, and PRODESSA in its role as the development agency that provides the institutional framework within which many of these leaders work, are two organisations are making a significant impact in their communities and are laying the basis for a process of democratisation and a process of social transformation that will in all liklihood take decades to fully realise. This process at the local community level is mirrored in the impact ESEDIR and PRODESSA are making at the national level and it is to that issue that I shall now turn.

CHAPTER NINE

Education and Educational Reform: Priority Work for ESEDIR and PRODESSA at the National Level[126]

Introduction

Daniel Domingo, in a previously cited remark, made the point that PRODESSA's local work sustains its national work. Nowhere is this more true than in the work that PRODESSA and ESEDIR have done, and continue to do, on behalf of educational reform in Guatemala. I reviewed ESEDIR's educational philosophy and its practice in its 10 month residential program. Their critique of "what is" and the vision for the future has found resonance in the *Design of the Educational Reform*, the report of the COPARE Commission on Educational Reform established by the Peace Accords with a mandate to develop a framework for the transformation of the country's educational system. Not only was one of the five non government COPARE Commissioners who were chosen from the indigenous organisations to sit on the 10 member panel an employee of ESEDIR but ESEDIR and PRODESSA personnel acted as advisers to the Commission and their influence can be readily appreciated in the final document. Furthermore, they are now working on revising curriculum, implementing the Reform and working as part of the on-going effort to win public support for the necessary changes to the educational system. Prior to examining the Reform, however, it is necessary to gain an appreciation of the shortcomings of the existing educational system, especially as it affects the Maya people and review the efforts of successive governments since 1985 to address these issues.

[126] As mentioned in Chapter One, my research focused on ESEDIR and PRODESSA's local work and while I have been able to provide an overview of their national work on educational reform, further research is required to bring out the full detail of the contribution of both organisations to this important topic.

The Mayas: Some Demographic Facts

Since the objective of the Educational Reform, as stated in the Peace Accords, is to develop a national educational vision and practice that reflects the needs and aspirations of the previously excluded indigenous population, it is important to have as clear a picture as possible of the community to be served. Unfortunately, given the rudimentary state of statistical gathering in Guatemala, I must settle for an approximation of the situation facing the indigenous peoples. The picture is so unclear that there is even controversy about just how many of Guatemala's inhabitants are Maya. Indeed, there is some controversy about what the total population of the country is. According to the 1994 census there were 8.3 million inhabitants. (Warner, 1998, 12). The Centro Latinoamericano de Demografia (CELADE), however, states that the population that year was 10.3 million. (Tay Coyoy, 1994, 19). With respect to the percentage of the Maya population, the census reported that 47% of Guatemalans, or 3.9 million people, were Maya, while published sources from a variety of sources put the Maya population at 60%, or some 5 million people.[127] Dr. Jorge Solares assumes that the Maya population represents 50% of the country's total population. (Interview with Dr. Jorge Solares, July 31, 2000).

While this variation represents a very important discrepancy, I do not have the means at hand to sort this matter out. I must therefore rely on the imprecise figures available to me and be content with the fact that such numbers at least agree to some degree or other on order of magnitude.

[127] A significant contributing factor to the confusion about who is Maya undoubtedly arises from the fact that this category is determined by the respondents self definition at the time of the census. Since many people who are ethnically Maya prefer Spanish over their Maya language, wear Western clothing and, as Bernardino Ramirez, the Mayor of Cabricán told me, even deny their Maya ancestry to obtain jobs where Mayas are not welcome, the under-reporting of the Maya population is easy to understand.

Tay Coyoy (1994) notes that all sources agree that the growth of the national population is about 2.7% a year and he suggests that the birth rate is higher in the rural and indigenous areas than in the urban and Ladino areas. (Tay Coyoy, 1994, 19). Furthermore, the Guatemalan population is a young population with 46% of the national population corresponding to young people 14 years of age and less. These facts have obvious implications for educational planners. So too does the distribution of the Maya population which represents 45% or more of the population of 11 of Guatemala's 22 departments.[128]

The 11 departments which have a majority, or near majority, of Mayas are listed in the following table:

Table 9.1
Percentage of Indigenous
Population by Department

Totonicapán	97%
Sololá	94
Alta Verapaz	89%
El Quiché	85%
Chimaltenango	80%
Huehuetenango	66%
Baja Verapaz	57%
Suchitipéquez	56%
San Marcos	48%
Sacatepéquez	47%

Word Bank, cited in COPARE, 1998, 129

[128] Guatemala is divided into 22 departments plus the capital city. The capital represents about one-third of the national population and is said to be 93% Ladino. (Tay Coyoy, 1994, 24),.

The remaining 11 departments and the capital have a majority Ladino population but many of these have very large indigenous populations such as Retalhuleu where 31% of the population is Maya, Jalapa with 33%, and Chiquimula with 35%.[129]

With the exception of Quetzaltenango, where Guatemala's second largest city is located, all of these predominantly Maya departments are, for all intents and purposes, rural. This is important to keep in mind as I cite figures about rural and urban education. While there are, of course, rural Ladino children, there is a strong correlation between rural and Maya populations and therefore there is a strong, albeit not exact, correlation between rural drop-out rates and Maya drop-out rates. Again, I must be content to work with imprecise figures that speak to magnitude or probability and not exact numbers.

Population Density in Maya Regions

For the most part, the indigenous population lives in densely populated regions of the country, a fact which for a people whose culture is traditionally based on agriculture, has serious implications for the viability of that culture as least in the form it presently takes. Compare the population densities of the following two groups of departments. The first group represents departments with large Mayan majorities, the second group represents areas largely inhabited by Ladinos.

[129] Saskatchewan, where 10% of the population is native, is the Canadian province with the highest percentage of indigenous people. Only 3 of Guatemala's 22 departments have less than 10% indigenous population. (COPARE, 1998, 129).

Table 9.2
Population Densities in Selected Departments (1995)

Maya Departments	Population/ km^2
Quetzaltenango	320
Tonocnicapán	314
Sololá	259
Chimaltenango	195
San Marcos	208
Ladino Departments	
Juiapa	120
Chiquimula	155
Jalapa	103
Zacapa	65

SEGEPLAN, cited in Tay Coyoy, 1994, 31

The population density of the country as a whole in 1995 was 98 people per km^2 but that figure includes the densely populated capital city. If that is removed from consideration the population density is 70 people per $km.^2$ (Macleod, 1998, 137).

Maya Languages

There are 22 (according to some, 21) Maya languages[130] of which four (K'ichee', Mam, Kaqchikel, and Q'eqchii') represents 80% of all Maya speakers with between 350,000 and one million speakers each. (Warren, 1998, 13). Fourteen of these languages have fewer than 100,000 speakers and four have 5,000 speakers or less. (Warren, 1998, 16). Clearly this wide range in the number of speakers of these languages creates political and policy difficulties with respect to offering education and other public services in all, or even most, of the indigenous languages.[131]

[130] Warren comments that "There is some controversy over how many Maya languages are spoken in Guatemala. If Achi is counted as a dialect of K'ichee', as OKMA advocates on linguistic grounds, the number is twenty, a sacred number of Maya cosmology and calendrics. If Achi is given separate status, as the ALMG has conventionally done in the 1990s, then the number is 21." (Warren, 1998, 224).

[131] In addition to the Maya languages there is also the almost extinct Xinca language that is spoken by a few hundred speakers and the Caribbean English spoken by the Garifuna peoples.

Poverty and the Maya People

It is estimated that 80% of the population live in poverty and 66% of those are categorised as living in extreme poverty. Of the population living in extreme poverty, 90% are indigenous peoples. (Galo de Lara, 1997 [a], 8).

The departments with the highest incidence of poverty and extreme poverty are, by logical extension, those which have a high percentage of Maya residents. These departments are El Quiché, Huehuetenango, Alta Verapaz, Baja Verapaz, San Marcos, Sololá and Totonicapán. It is worth noting that the PRODESSA micro-regions are in the first five of these 7 poorest departments.

Not surprisingly, this poverty corresponds to lower than average levels of formal education, a situation which negatively affects the entire country but which particularly affects the indigenous regions and impacts especially hard on indigenous women.

> The situation of the Maya people in this sense is grave: 1.3 years of schooling (the Maya men have an average of 1.8; and Maya women have 0.9), in contrast with an average of 4.5 among Ladinos. (Tay Coyoy, 1994, 32).

Tay Coyoy notes the strong correlation between educational achievement and income as well as the impact of gender and race in the following table:

Table 9.3
Income in Quetzales/month by Category, (1989)

Characteristics	Quetzales/ month	N
Global	235	11,924
Men	252	8,582
Women	195	3,342
Indigenous	121	3,347

Non Indigenous	280	8,557
Level of Schooling	Quetzales/ month	
No formal schooling	122	3,671
Incomplete primary school	180	3,914
Completed primary school	240	1,864
Incomplete Basic School	236	413
Completed Basic[132] School	365	401
Incompleted Diversified School[133]	431	349
Completed Diversified School	438	726
Incompleted University	583	298
Completed University	1,112	287

Source: Encuesta Nacional Sociodemográfica, 1989, Cited in Tay Coyoy, 1994, 33

Education and the Maya People: A National Overview

Tay Coyoy notes that because of what the government considers to be the "high cost of education"[134] the Ministry of Education has limited its efforts in the communities where the least economically advantaged live, providing only a primary education, and in many communities not even all six years of primary is offered. (Tay Coyoy, 1994, 34). Indeed, even at the time of writing, the official goal of the Ministry of Education is limited to providing only a grade 3 education to all communities (UN, 1999, 50).

The following table shows the fact that the level of Mayan students registered in the various levels of education in 1988 is consistently below that of Ladino students although it

[132] Basic school (escuela basica) corresponds to junior high school or grades 7 to 9.
[133] Diversified school (escuela diversificada) corresponds to senior high school or grades 10 to 12.

must be pointed out that the statistics for Ladino students with, for example, only 26.7% of Ladinos of secondary school age (medio) taking classes, is a national disgrace.

Table 9.4
Shortfall in Access to Schools by Educational Levels, in Percentages by Ethnic Group, (1988)

Level	Percentage of Indigenous Enrolled	Deficit of Indigenous Enrolled	Percentage of Ladinos Enrolled	Deficit of Ladinos Enrolled
Preprimary	25	75	27	73
Primary	33	67	74	26
Secondary	7	93	27	73
Post Secondary	1	99	9	91

Source: Estadísticas educacionales 1988. SEGEPLAN y USIPE, cited by Tay Coyoy, 1994, 44

The pre-primary, or kindergarten year is actually guaranteed by the 1985 constitution and the level of non participation in that grade demonstrates starkly the distance between constitutional guarantees on the one hand, and reality on the other.

Primary school consists of six grades and is almost without exception the only school in the rural communities and in many communities that school often doesn't even offer all six grades.

An important factor other than the simple non-availability of primary schooling in the rural communities that contributes to the under-representation of Maya students in the primary grades is the drop-out rate from rural schools as depicted in the following table:

[134] The UN characterises Guatemala's educational expenditures as 'one of the lowest in Latin America.' (UN, 1999, 51). (See figures below for details).

Table 9.5
Percentage of Students by Grade in Urban and Rural Primary Schools, (1994)

Grade	Urban	Rural
Grade 1	30	70
Grade 2	36	64
Grade 3	43	57
Grade 4	49	51
Grade 5	55	45
Grade 6	59	41

Source: Galo de Lara, 1997 [a], 17.

Sixty-five percent of Guatemala's population is rural. (Galo de Lara [b], 37). As this table demonstrates, in Grade 1, 30% of the primary aged students are urban. With 70% of primary aged rural children enrolled in school, it would seem that these rural students are over represented. Little comfort should be taken from this, however, as by grade 4, only 51% of the students are rural and 49% are urban while by grade 6, the last year of primary school, and the last year that is offered in the vast majority of rural villages, only 41% of the students are rural children while the percentage of urban students has increased to 59%.

Not surprisingly, given that few rural villages have post primary schools, the figures for grades 7 to 9 (Escuela basica) are completely out of line with rural/urban population ratios. Eighty-nine percent of grade 7 – 9 students are urban and only 11% are rural. By grade 10 – 12 (Escuela diversificada), 98% of the students are urban and 2% are rural. (Galo de Lara, 1997 [b], 42).

Another problem facing rural students is the failure or grade repetition rate. In rural primary schools, 42.5% of the students fail at least one grade. The figure for urban primary schools is 23.7%. (Galo de Lara, 1997, 19).

The "basic" school, or junior high school, covers grades 7 to 9 and involves what is referred to as "general cultural studies" while the diversified school involves two or three additional years of specialised studies in the commercial sciences and technical studies. (Tay Coyoy, 1994, 47). Basic and diversified schools are found only in the larger urban centres and students who live in the rural villages have to commute significant distances or, more likely, live away from home to attend these schools, a fact which virtually guarantees that rural villagers rarely study beyond the sixth grade.

Despite a campaign carried out by a state agency CONALFA (and delivered by organisations such as PRODESSA) which has had some encouraging results in increasing literacy rates (an improvement of 7% between 1994 and 1998, or a 1.8% improvement per year), the legacy of the historical neglect of public education has resulted in Guatemala being second only to Haiti in the Americas with respect to illiteracy. (UN, 1999, 51). The rate of illiteracy in 1998 was 31.7%. The Ministry's objective was to reduce illiteracy to 30% by 2000.

Defeating illiteracy, however, has two components. The CONALFA program addresses adult illiteracy, those, in short, who the school system failed when they were young. The second is, of course, the ability of the primary school system to reach youngsters. So long as Guatemala's educational system fails to address the shortcomings of its grade 1 to 6 program, they won't fully address the problem of illiteracy. The following table ties illiteracy rates to educational expenditures:

Table 9.6
Illiteracy and Educational Expenditures

COUNTRY	LEVEL OF ILLITERACY	EDUCATON/GNP
Chile	06%	3.7%
Costa Rica	07%	4.6%
Panama	10%	5.5%
Mexico	13%	4.1%
Guatemala	36%	1.4%
Haiti	45%	1.8%

Source: ASIES. Education. XI Seminar on the National Reality. Development Strategy 1996 – 2000. Guatemala, 1995. Cited by Ibarra de Cálix, 1997, 311

Galo de Lara, writing in 1997, makes this link between the need to supplement adult literacy with the universal access to primary school education and the problems that will remain if that doesn't happen. Writing about the efforts to extend primary education during the first seven years of the 1990s she states

> In general we can conclude that the primary level school system has grown in these past seven years although that growth has been insufficient to avoid the formation of new contingents of the illiterate that, each year, increase the number of the population in those conditions despite the activities undertaken to reduce their number. The lessening of the percentage of [adult illiteracy] shows that a considerable and effective effort has been made, but so long as the simultaneous broadening of the coverage of primary education is not realised, the number of illiterates will continue to increase each year. (Galo de Lara, 1997 [a], 26).

Even isolating CONALFA's efforts for a moment, that effort is not without its problems, however, and one wonders if CONALFA will be able to significantly reduce the rate of adult illiteracy below the 30% level without making significant changes in their approach. As reported in Chapter 8, in my interviews with PRODESSA literacy workers

who deliver the CONALFA program in a number of micro-regions, they report very few successes, citing a drop-out rate which easily reaches 50% or more because of the cultural irrelevance of the teaching materials and the work related demands on the participants including the need to search for employment outside of their area. This finding is reinforced in the UN analysis of the issue of rural literacy. (UN, 1999, 54).[135]

Education Budget

With respect to benchmarks by which to judge the performance of the Guatemalan state over the years with respect to educational expenditures, on the whole

> ... for Latin America, 6% has been considered the optimal ratio between the education budget and the Gross Domestic Product (GNP). In the Guatemalan case between 1971 and 1993, the percentage is far from the ideal. The best of these years was 1980 with [the educational budget representing] 2.4% [of GNP] and the worst, in 1991, it was 1.29%. (Tay Coyoy, 1996, 48).

As a percentage of the total governmental budget, the other Central American countries dedicate approximately 16% of their budgets to education. Until recently Guatemala has been losing ground in this respect. In 1985, 14.47% of the budget went to Education. By 1992 this had dropped to 11.55%. Since then there has been some Progress. By 1998 Guatemala's education budget represented 16.34% of the national budget or 2.15% of the GNP, still a long, long way from 6 % or even 3%, long cited as a short-term, realisable goal. Furthermore, given the under-funding of the Guatemalan state, an issue raised by Jonas (see chapter 4), 16% of an inadequate overall budget results in a woefully inadequate educational budget especially considering the challenges represented by the figures that I have cited.

[135] For a full treatment of the challenge of getting adults to participate in rural literacy programs see Cutz (1997).

Not only is the Guatemalan budget low by all standard criteria, there are problems within that budget. For example, administrative costs are increasing at an alarming rate meaning that an ever-decreasing proportion of the already inadequate budget reaches the classroom. Ironically, these increases in the administrative component of the budget are attributed to what should be a progressive move that should be cost effective: the decentralisation of many of the Ministry's functions to the eight development regions into which the country was divided in 1986. I shall turn briefly to the issue of the decentralisation of the Ministry of Education given our discussion in Chapter 6 of the importance of this issue to the process of democratisation in Guatemala.

Decentralisation of the Ministry of Education

Educational decentralisation was mandated in 1985, long before the reforms envisioned in the Peace Accords were contemplated. In 1986 Guatemala was divided into 8 development regions. The Ministry issued guidelines both for the administrative-technical decentralisation of its functions and provided for advisory councils of parents, school principals and municipal leaders at the regional, departmental and local levels.

> The process of regionalisation has advanced with respect to the *deconcentration*[136] of functions and tasks but not with respect to the decentralisation of decision-making or of community participation. In the Education Law of 1991 there was no mention of participatory community structures to support the regionalisation process. (Galo de Lara, 1997 [c], 115).

In a 1995 evaluation done by ASIES of the educational decentralisation they listed achievements and shortcomings. The achievements strike the reader as being more of form rather than substance and to the extent that they can be seen as being substantive, they are

[136] It will be recalled that *deconcentración* was defined in Chapter 2 as "an administrative restructuring that disperses some decision-making geographically but keeps it firmly in the hands of government decision-makers."

of the sort that require unreserved political will from the most senior authorities to fully realise. The achievements cited by the evaluators include (i) the elaboration of regional plans consistent with the socio-cultural characteristics of the area; (ii) co-ordination in two or more regions of a total of 85 multi-region projects and programs and the seeking of financing for them; (iii) creation of offices of pedagogical support and creation of locally pertinent curricula; (iv) *deconcentration* of a number of administrative functions to the regional director.

The obstacles are listed as follows: (i) centralised hiring, including of teachers, a process that creates a tremendous backlog that impacts on service delivery in the communities; (ii) central planning and centralised budgeting which does not allow for regional initiatives or flexibility; (iii) lack of political will to fully implement the decentralisation; and (iv) failure to institute regulations to guide the process of decentralisation provided for in the Constitution of 1985 and the National Educational Law. To the extent that there are laws and regulations, many are in conflict with each other.

This very unwieldy system, not surprisingly, is not cost efficient. Galo de Lara reports that the administrative costs of the Ministry rose from 3.9% of the education budget in 1985 to 8.1% in 1993 "as a result of the creation of Regional Educational Offices without having diminished the central administrative apparatus." (Galo de Lara, 1997 [a], 22). Decentralisation, rather than diminishing bureaucracy, has simply created new layers and

> The administration of the Ministry of Education is characterised by the centralisation in the taking of decisions, a chaos of legal dispositions that lead to a multiplicity of disperse contradictory norms and a static bureaucracy that remains because of inertia. (Galo de Lara, 1997 [a], 22).

This, then, is a clear example of decentralisation that never had a chance. Where there is a formal requirement to decentralise but no political will at the top, coupled with a fierce resistance by the central bureaucrats to let go of any of their power, the result will look like this – a new layer of bureaucracy with little or no authority and a cost attached that takes money away from programming.

We have summarised a number of the serious shortcomings to the delivery of appropriate educational services to the local level and the resulting social problems these have created. I have also mentioned in passing one initiative, the CONALFA literacy program, which has with a certain degree of success, attempted to confront this situation. I will now review two other programs, one which clearly predates the Peace Accords and another which can be seen as flowing from the peace process, which have been established to address Guatemala's educational deficit.

National Bilingual Education (PRONEBI/DIGEBI)

A clear example of what should be an innovative program that meets the educational needs of the least-served sector in Guatemala - Maya primary school aged children – is DIGEBI (Dirección nacional bilingüe), the successor to PRONEBI, the National Bilingual Education Program, established in 1984 with a mandate to offer Spanish/Maya language instruction in local schools. Given that around 50% of the country's population is Maya, one might presume that the budget of the Ministry of Education would reflect the needs of that population. The need to teach children in their own language while also ensuring their Spanish language skills should constitute an obvious priority for the Ministry. This has not proven to be the case, however.

Sazo de Mendez notes that the efforts of PRONEBI

> … have not been sufficient to satisfactorily respond to the linguistic and cultural reality of the Maya … difficulties [that explain this are] related to budget, bureaucracy and a lack of qualified teachers who speak the language of the communites that are needed to meet the demand. [Sazo de Mendez, 1997, 79].

With respect to the budgetary issue, in the early years of the 1990s the Ministry dedicated, on average, only 3.6% of its budget to Bilingual education. (Tay Coyoy, 1996, 51). By mid decade, over 10 years after it was established, the PRONEBI program was only offered in 3.7% of the nation's schools. (Galo de Lara, 1997 [a], 20).

Furthermore, and this speaks both to the question of bureaucracy and questionable budgetary priorities, even that small percentage of PRONEBI's tiny budget allocation was not effectively spent on program. The following analysis emerged from a study of the 1991 budget for the National Bilingual Education Program:

> The metropolitan region received 62.5% (of the total PRONEBI budget) while the southern and north-western regions got 12.4 and 18.5% respectively. Despite their high Maya population Sololá, Totonicapán, Quetzaltenango, Suchitipéquez, Retalhuleu, San Marcos (departments which make up the south western region); and Huehuetenago and Quiché (which make up the north western region) received small budgetary allocations from the bilingual education budget in contrast with the metropolitan region the population of which is largely ladino. The explanation for this high expenditure in the capital is the cost of maintaining the program's head office there. (Tay Coyoy, 1996, 52).

Tay Coyoy comments that these spending patterns show evidence of "the disinterest that the Ministry of Education and the Guatemalan state has had with respect to the education of the Maya people and their human rights." (Tay Coyoy, 1996, 52).

With respect to the other issue that Saso de Mendez cited, a lack of qualified bilingual teachers, she describes the training of bilingual, intercultural teachers as "representing one of the most critical areas in Guatemalan primary education." (Sazo de Mendez, 1997, 79). There are 108 primary teacher training institutions in the country, an

impressive number in a small country until one realises that, despite the fact that Guatemala is a predominantly rural society, of the 108 normal schools, 102 train teachers to work in the urban areas and only 6 train teachers to work in the rural areas. (Galo de Lara, 1997 [b], 52). Two of these six were state run institutions and four were private. The Instituto Indígena Santiago (IIS), formed in 1956 by ESEDIR founder, Brother Sebastian, is one of these four private rural teacher training institutions.[137]

Galo de Lara documents the need to train teachers for the Maya villages and shows how sending teachers trained for work in an urban area simply quite literally given the figures on drop-outs and grade repetition that I have cited, sets them, and their students, up for failure. Following a study of the predominately Ladino teachers in rural schools, Galo de Lara developed the following profile of the urban-trained teacher working in a rural school.

- He/she does not have the training necessary to exercise his/her duties in the rural area;
- His/her attitude and conduct in the classroom is predominately directive;
- In the teaching/learning process, he/she does not incorporate elements from either the physical surroundings nor the socio-cultural context in which the school is immersed;

[137] Since 1994 ESEDIR has established the two distance education programs in Barillas and the Ixcán, a fact which attests to the important role that PRODESSA, ESEDIR and the IIS play at the practical level of offering educational services and at the national level of providing an alternative model for Guatemalan education. The IIS does not figure more prominently in this study because, to be honest, its theory and practice cannot be considered transformatory although the positive influence of this rather conservative Catholic all-male normal school should not be under-estimated. The IIS takes in about 200 very poor young Maya men and provides them with the last years of a high school education plus primary school teacher training. These young men then return to their communities where they assume teaching positions in the bilingual schools and often become community leaders, a few even return to study at ESEDIR. A number of people have commented to me that many local and national Pan Maya leaders are graduates of the IIS and that the Institute is very well thought of for the chance they gave to these poor Mayas who otherwise never would have received an education.

- He/she does not make the curriculum relevant to the local reality;
- He/she does not take into account the expectations of the parents, student and the community with respect to the role of the school; and
- He/she is not involved with the development of the community in which he/she works. (Galo de Lara, 1997 [b], 55).[138]

Galo de Lara then studies the socio-cultural particularities of the rural Maya child who would typically be found in the classroom of such a teacher. She notes that this student typically

- Lives far from the school;
- Has his/her own indigenous culture;
- Has little or no access to essential services including water, health, and electricity;
- Works as part of a family production unit from the age of 7;
- Because of this necessity to work, has experienced autonomy and responsibility in doing that work;
- Has a concept of time based, not on the clock, but on getting tasks done;
- Thinks concretely, not symbolically or abstractly and learns prescriptively through examples and by imitating;
- He/she values group solidarity; and despite the fact it is often not reciprocated
- He/she respects the school and the teacher. (Galo de Lara, 1997 [b], 56 – 65).

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[138] As I noted in my discussion, below, of the Nueva Escuela Unitaria (NEU) experience in Guatemala, some of these problems can be overcome with appropriate in-service training of open-minded Ladino teachers who are working in Maya rural schools. However, such training, while apparently positively addressing some issues, such as retention rates, pass rates, etc. do not address the cultural agenda of the Pan Maya movement.

Galo de Lara notes that this profile of the rural student has implications for teacher training, implications that cannot be met in a teacher training facility designed to prepare teachers for urban students in the urban environment. Given the fact that many of the points in this profile arise from the students' Maya culture, it underscore the importance, too, of drawing student teachers from these cultural communities as do IIS and ESEDIR.

To be fair, the main criticism of PRONEBI/DIGEBI is that its impact has been limited because it only reaches a fraction of the Maya communities where its bilingual services are needed. There is some evidence that where PRONEBI/DIGEBI has implemented its programs, it has met with success. This, of course, is good news to educational reformers because it shows that there is a model that works and the issue becomes one of extending the existing model in its present or somewhat modified form. This is a somewhat easier task than having to re-invent the program from the bottom up. The indication that the program has merit is provided by Sazo de Mesa who notes that

> From the beginning, the program gave priority to the professional development of Maya men and women in disciplines necessary to promote bilingual education. Among these: linguistics, statistics, educational research, evaluation, curricular design, pedagogy, planning, creation of teaching materials, school administration. In addition it trained 806 bilingual community facilitators and 50 supervisors of bilingual education. (Sanzo de Mendez, 1997, 89).

Ironically, the formal government system mandated to offer bilingual primary education has not benefited from this human resource development component of the program because "the majority of these professionals and technicians work now for NGOs or in one of the many Maya organisations that have been formed to advance the educational aspirations of their people." (Sanzo de Mendez, 1997, 89).

Clearly educators who are seriously committed to extending effective and efficient educational services to all the Guatemala's cultural communities face many challenges, not the least of which, especially with Ministry programs, relates to finding the budget and assuring the political will to offer a particular service. As recently as 1998, the Report of the Educational Reform Commission (COPARE), in its overview of educational services, noted that the body that is responsible for the delivery of bilingual education, covers "at the present time 1476 schools in 14 linguistic communities in 11 departments which is insufficient given the great demand for bilingual educational services in the country." (COPARE, 1998, 26).

PRODESSA Deputy Director responsible for educational matters, Daniel Domingo, when analysing the reluctance of the government to promote change in the educational system, comments that the DIGEBI officials in the Ministry, the very ones who are responsible for bilingual education, are "isolated and forgotten within the administrative apparatus" of the Ministry, a fact which, he notes, affects their ability to perform effectively. (Interview with Daniel Domingo, July 28, 2000).

This shows that the work to be done to advance educational reform is as much political as it is professional.

National Program of Self-Management For Educational Development (PRONADE)

A program that has been more successful in achieving its objectives is PRONADE, the National Program of Self-Management for Educational Development.[139] PRONADE

[139] On March 15, 2001 while I was attending the Annual Meeting of the Comparative and International Education Society (CIES) in Washington, D. C., I was informed by Dr. Joshua Muskin, the Senior Educational Advisor with the World Learning organisation which has a major presence in Guatemala, that the PRONADE program had, for all intents and purposes, been ended by the Portillo government. This decision was taken, according to him, because the Government was unable to control the NGOs that acted as ISEs (Instituciones de servicios educativos – see below), which serve as technical support providers or advisors to the community councils (COEDUCAs) which run the schools. I checked the Ministry of Education's web-

was launched in 1995 to provide primary education to those regions of the country that have received the least attention historically. I have mentioned that the Ministry has given priority to offering at least the first three years of primary education to all students. This has taken the form of targeting under-serviced areas. As the Ministry puts it they follow "an inverse criteria to the present state of service coverage, that is, those departments with the best coverage received fewer new (teaching) posts and those with the greatest service deficit received the most new posts." (Ministry of Education, 2000, 1).

PRONADI was established in the same year that the *Agreement on the Identity and Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (AIDPI) was negotiated and can legitimately be seen as part of the government response to the obligations arising from the Peace Accords.

In the words of a United Nations' report

> Through PRONADE (the Ministry) has sought to promote to develop self-managed schools in the communities of the rural areas which have not had coverage for school aged children. Priority has been assigned to ensuring the attendance of all boy and girls in the first three years of primary school as the minimum educational standard and a policy of decentralisation based on an alliance between the various participants of civil society. (UN, 1999, 50).

Not only does PRONADE provide coverage to previously under-serviced or even unserviced communities but is doing so in a way that mobilises local people to participate, with the support of non governmental organisations contracted to accompany this process, in the education of their children. The four objectives of PRONADE are

site (March 19, 2001) and PRONADE is still listed as a current programme and is described there in glowing terms. Dr. Muskin, a frequent visitor to Guatemala and the person responsible for a major joint USAID/ Ministry of Education primary school program in El Quiché, is in a position to know the fate of this programme. In the absence of documentary evidence of the termination of this programme, I will continue to use the present tense to describe it and PRODESSA's relationship to it.

- To promote the participation of parents in the responsibility of educating their sons and daughters;
- To strengthen local organisation, to achieve the development of the communities;
- To decentralise educational services; and
- To distribute the functions and share the responsibilities with the COEDUCAS, the ISEs and other dependencies of the Ministry of Education. (Ministerio de Educación, n.d (b) , 1).

The COEDUCA, or Comité Educativa, is created to give leadership to the community in matters related to education and is made up of a General Assembly and a popularly elected Junta Directiva, or executive committee. The COEDUCA has the responsibility, working through its Executive, to find a place to hold classes, approve the annual work plan and run educational services in the community.

Because properly exercising these functions would be beyond most communities without support and training, PRONADE provides for the contracting of Instituciones de Servicios Educativos - ISEs – to provide training and support to the local COEDUCA. PRODESSA plays this role in some of its micro-regions. The ISE has a number of responsibilities: identify communities that require a school; train the elected executive committee so that it can successfully execute its financial and administrative responsibilities; provide 22 days of training a year to the local teachers; and keep statistics on the schools for which they are responsible which are to be forwarded to departmental offices of the Ministry of Education. (Ministerio de Educación, n.d (b), 3 – 4).

Since its inception in 1995, when it provided educational services to 2,709 students, PRONADE grew to serve 175,333 primary school students in 2,841 communities in 20 of the country's 22 departments in 1998. In that year, PRONADE also served 8,903 preprimary or nursery school students in a new initiative begun that year. (UN, 1999, 50)

There is little doubt that educational services are reaching previously unserviced areas although there is still much to be done to ensure that all children have access to the full six years of primary education, something which, given limited resources, isn't even a goal of the Ministry of Education in the present period. How many years it will take to make even this limited goal a reality remains to be seen and, as for making the first three years of secondary school (Escuela basica) universally available, no one is even talking about that as a goal in the foreseeable future.

With respect to the Ministry's accomplishments, they offer the following Table which gives the total number of students enrolled in pre-primary, primary and secondary education in all sectors (public and private, municipal and co-operative) of education.

Table 9.7
Total Number of Students Enrolled
By Educational Level (1995 - 1998)

Educational Level	1995	1996	1997	1998
Pre-primary	212,297	233,368	266,670	383,240
Primary school	1,495,122	1,549,493	1,627,640	1,790,400
Secondary school	372,303	375,672	384,729	421,012
TOTAL	2,079,722	2,158,533	2,279,039	2,594,652

Source: Ministerio de Educación, n.d (a), 2.

Lack of Educational Coverage: The Magnitude of the Problem

The percentage of indigenous population in each department and the average number of years of schooling for the population is strongly related as is the percentage of children between the ages of 7 to 14 who had schools in their communities.[140]

Table 9.8
Indigenous Population,
Average Years of Education and School Access
of the 7 – 14 Age Population by Department, (1995)
Departments with a Majority or Near Majority
Indigenous Population

Department	Percentage of Indigenous Population	Average years of School attendance	Coverage of the 7 – 14 year range 1995
Totonicapán	97%	1.5	56%
Sololá	94%	2.0	59%
Alta Verapaz	89%	1.0	36%
El Quiché	85%	1.1	40%
Chimaltenango	80%	2.8	63%
Huehuetenango	66%	1.8	49%
Quetzaltenango	61%	3.4	76%
Baja Verapaz	57%	2.3	59%
Suchitepéquez	56%	2.6	64%
San Marcos	48%	1.9	67%
Sacatepéquez	47%	3.6	70%

Source: World Bank, Guatemala Basic Education Strategy, 1995, cited in COPARE, 1996, 129

[140] Figures are not available for the capital. The notation "Guatemala" in this chart refers to the Department of Guatemala, not the capital city.

Table 9.9
Indigenous Population,
Average Years of Education and School Access
of the 7 – 14 Age Population by Department, (1995)
Departments with a Majority Ladino Population

Department	Percentage of Indigenous Population	Average years of School attendance	Coverage of the 7 – 14 year range 1995
Chiquimula	33%	1.7	61%
Jalapa	33%	2.3	65%
Retalhuleu	31%	2.8	67%
Santa Rosa	26%	3.1	77%
El Petén	23%	2.6	60%
Isabal	23%	2.9	61%
Guatemala	12%	5.3	79%
Escuintla	10%	2.7	67%
Jutialpa	8%	2.6	71%
Zacapa	3%	2.6	71%
El Progreso	1%	3.2	83%

Source: World Bank, Guatemala Basic Education Strategy, 1995, cited in COPARE, 1996, 129

These charts show a discrepancy between coverage of school aged children between the 11 departments that are majority or near-majority Maya and the 11 departments that are majority Ladino. In the "Maya" departments the average coverage in 1996 was 58% and the average number of years of completed education was 2.2 while in the "Ladino" departments the average coverage was 70% and the average number of years of completed

education was 3.0 years. As we have already seen, if we consider educational achievement by ethnic origin the difference becomes 1.3 years for Mayas and 4.2 for Ladinos.

Keeping in mind the deficit in Maya students at the pre-primary, primary and secondary level cited by Tay Coyoy (75, 67 and 92% respectively) and the corresponding figures for Ladino students (72, 26 and 73%) any improvement in the enrolment figures is positive. However, the increases must keep in mind the magnitude of the problem. For example, the increase in enrolment for the primary level between 1995 and 1998 was 19.7%. In a country with a deficit of Maya students of 67% at the primary level and a deficit of 26% at the same level among Ladino students, at best this can only be considered the first steps of a long journey. The Ministry enjoyed considerably more success extending the pre-primary program over the same period (an 80% increase in coverage) but this is only a one-year program and the deficit rates for this level (75 and 72% for Maya and Ladino students) indicates the low starting point. It is interesting to note that secondary school coverage, the extension of which is not a priority for the government, expanded by 13% over the 1995 – 98 period presumably as the result of natural growth based on a demand that was not stimulated by any special programs. This "natural increase" of 13% is not that far from the 19.7% growth experienced in the targeted area - primary education - which enjoyed the support of a special effort.

The increase in secondary education even without a special program in place (e.g., growth based on demand) coupled with the rapid increase of coverage and consequently of school attendance at the pre-primary and primary school levels (e.g., growth based on supply) indicates a desire on the part of growing numbers of Guatemalan parents to educate their children. Once the students are in school they face significant difficulties from inappropriately trained teachers and culturally insensitive curriculum to the daily problems

occasioned by extreme poverty and the resulting need for the children to work on their parent's land. This brings us to the qualitative issues facing access to education, a point that I will now address.

From the mid 1980s to the mid 1990s, the Ministry of Education has attempted, with varying degrees of commitment and varying degrees of success, to implement programs that address one or other aspect of the shortcomings of the Guatemalan educational system. The CONAFLA literacy program, whatever its shortcomings, has apparently reduced adult literacy rates significantly since its inception. PRONADE, too, seems to be a progressive program with potential not only to extend educational services to underserviced areas, but to do so in a participatory manner. Other programs, like PRONEBI/DIGEGI, are more problematic at least insofar as their coverage is concerned.

The Need to Improve the Quality of Education

The other issue that cannot be ignored is that, as I have noted, ESEDIR has a radical critique of the adequacy of the Guatemalan school system even when it is reaching the children it is supposed to reach. This critique is echoed in the educational reform proposals of COPARE, the Commission on Educational Reform, which stressed not only the need to expand educational services but to significantly reform the pedagogy and the curricular content so as to include the history, language and values of the indigenous peoples.

ESEDIR and PRODESSA are deeply involved with effecting social change through education. They work both within the formal educational system and outside of it.

PRODESSA, for example, delivers the CONALFA literacy program in the micro-region within which it works and is an ISE (Institución de Servicio Educativo) to the CODEUCA process of extending schools to under-serviced areas. They also have built

adult education built into many of their economically productive projects and projects of community organisation which are unconnected to the Ministry's work.

ESEDIR has its two teacher training programs that simultaneously prepare in-service teachers for their classroom duties as well preparing them in community leadership skills. It also offers its 10 month residential program in community development from a Maya perspective to student population that is made up mostly of teachers.

Both ESEDIR and PRODESSA provide advice and technical assistance to a range of institutions including the former Commission on Educational Reform (COPARE); the Consultative Commission on Educational Reform, which is the body set up following the release of the COPARE Report which is responsible for implementation; a number of special committees including the one responsible for community consultation on the Educational Reform; and CNEM, the National Maya Council on Education.

Prior to reviewing these activities, however, I would be remiss if I did not review another important program that is working to achieve many of the reforms advocated by PRODESSA and ESEDIR, the *Nueva Escuela Unitaria*, Unified New School, initiative.

The *Nueva Escuela Unitaria* of Guatemala

The concept of the *Nueva Escuela* originated in Colombia almost 25 years ago. It has enjoyed well documented successes (Colbert, 1999; Schiefelbein, 1991, 1992; Torres, 1991) in promoting enhanced academic achievement and "democratic decision-making, student leadership, and empowerment of the total community" based on "teacher empowerment, active pedagogy, reflective teaching, co-operative learning, and

constructivist philosophy." (Kraft, 1998, 2) These successes have led to a great deal of interest in applying the model in other countries, including Guatemala.[141]

As part of it social responsibilities arising out of the Central American Peace Accords, the Ministry of Education during the Christian Democratic Government of Vincio Cerezo contracted with a U. S. foundation, the Academy for Educational Development, to implement pilot projects of the Nueva Escuela Unitaria (NEU), as it was called in Guatemala, in two regions that included Alta and Baja Verapaz.[142]

The issues that NEU was designed to address are many of those very same problems cited above ranging from an irrelevant curriculum, high failure and drop-out rates, issues related to bilingual education and the special problems facing girls in the primary grades. From the original 100 NEU pilot schools, by 1998 more than 1300 schools had adopted the programme. Despite their formal support of the initiative, the Ministry's ambivalent attitude is demonstrated by the fact that less than 300 of those 1300 schools were public schools, the rest were privately funded.

The commitment to school reform is indicated by the following key characteristics of the NEU system:

- teachers as learning system specialists and facilitators;
- individualised instruction;
- teacher empowerment;
- democratic education
- shared decision-making

[141] The following account of Guatemala's NEU is taken from Kraft, 1998.
[142] Although PRODESSA and ESEDIR work in these two departments (see Chapter 7), no NEU schools are found in the specific communities in which they work.

- peer and cross-age tutoring
- teachers training teachers;
- small-group instruction;
- cultural sensitivity;
- co-operative learning;
- flexible promotion;
- active learning;
- local content;
- self-managed learning; and
- democratic student leadership.

Kraft argues that, consistent with the Colombian experience, the Guatemalan NEU "is providing evidence that these ideas can work even in the most challenging and poverty-stricken rural communities." (Kraft, 1998, 5). He goes on to say that

> It is not difficult to see the influence of John Dewey in many aspects of the NEU schools, but particularly in their emphasis on democratic participation, community involvement, and experiential learning. While both NEU and the Colombia Escuela Nueva have somehow avoided being labelled "radical," such Freireian concepts as respect for and empowerment of the poor, locally developed content , and community control have been developed more fully in these schools than in many avowedly experimental or radical educational reforms. (Kraft, 1998, 5).

As with the ESEDIR approach to the role of teachers, "NEU teachers in effect become community-development specialists" in that, as they enter the program, "teachers receive intensive workshop training to equip them with straightforward procedures and techniques for systematically incorporating the community into the support and management of the school." (Kraft, 1998, 6). This approach is taken with a view to creating "a close, durable relationship between school and community" which is seen as

being the key to "successful school management, operation, and maintenance." (Kraft 1998, 6).

Teachers have bought into the NEU system because they have been empowered by its methodology. This support in contrast to the teacher resistance, which will be documented below, to the proposed Educational Reform, which incorporates many of these principles.

> The NEU experience begins by assuming the full intellectual self-sufficiency and resourcefulness of rural teachers. NEU's rigorously constructivist training workshops assume that, given appropriate tools, most teachers in any system, including the most impoverished and poorly prepared, will be able to recognise and diagnose problems, consider alternatives, arrive at solutions, and effect appropriate change. (Kraft, 1998, 8).

The assumptions behind NEU's approach to teacher training addresses a number of the issues that I have identified as being problematic in the Guatemalan primary schools. For example, the teacher-training module is one that prioritises in-service training of rural teachers, noting that sending "reluctant, non adaptive urban teachers" to teach in rural schools "is a recipe for disaster." (Kraft, 1998, 10).

Just as the vast majority of schools to embrace the NEU pedagogy are not in the public sector, Kraft notes that the publicly funded normal schools have been less involved in accepting the NEU reforms than have the privately funded and religious normal schools. This resistance to the NEU approach by the public sector is all the more alarming when one considers the documented successes experienced by NEU schools such as its superior retention rates and pass rates for girls and Maya students. (Kraft, 1998, 18).

Because the NEU values multi-grade classrooms (three or more grades) and peer tutoring, teachers involved with the program have developed self-teaching instructional

materials which allow the teacher to effectively deal with up to six grades in a single classroom.

Characteristics of the NEU curriculum include:

- flexibility: students move at their own pace, permitting genuine "flexible promotion."
- Individualised: by using the student workbooks, the NEU curriculum manages to individualise instruction and promote co-operative learning;
- Cultural and local relevance: NEU seeks to achieve local relevance through its decentralised structure and involvement of local teachers in materials development;
- Bilingual adaptations: NEU has developed bilingual and mother-tongue materials for the two principal north-central highlands Mayan language communities. (Kraft, 1998, 13).

Another factor, noted earlier in this chapter, that negatively affects drop-out and repetition rates of Mayan students is the issue of absenteeism due to the necessity to be away from school to work on their parents land or to follow their parents to seasonal wage labour out of the community. To minimise the impact of this situation

> In NEU, students advance through their modular learning units, not through an annual grade system. When a student completes a unit in the "self-teaching" workbooks or modules, the teacher evaluates his or her work and either passes the student to the next unit or assigns additional or remedial work...Absences due to sickness or to work at home or in the fields do not result in repeating the grade. Rather, students return to the classroom and simply begin again where they left off. Teachers are assisted by older students in managing many classroom activities. NEU teachers also use peer- and cross-age tutoring to help students having difficulty. (Kraft, 1998, 16).

While the strictly academic benefits of the Nueva Escuela programme should not be underestimated, in summarising the impact of NEU in Guatemala, one regional education supervisor is quoted as saying "the most important aspect of the NEU schools is the training of future community and national leaders in democracy." (Kraft, 1998, 14). Given what we know about Guatemala's weak democratic traditions, this is vitally important. With respect to the issue of civic education, Kraft (1998, 15) notes the following achievements:

- Leadership: NEU schools place considerable confidence in the children to conduct a wide variety of tasks. Student-run, all-school meetings offer opportunities for student leaders.
- Democratic behaviour: Students in NEU schools learn grassroots democratic behaviour. Voting, consensus, hearing others' opinions, participating in decisions affecting the whole school community, and involvement in community-wide activities are all part of student governance.
- Discipline: Students in NEU schools help set school rules and regulations. NEU classrooms are lively but not disorderly places. Most observers are struck by the self-regulated, orderly behaviour of NEU children.

Guatemala's *Nueva Escuela Unitaria* is undoubtedly making a significant contribution to addressing Guatemala's educational deficit all the while demonstrating the Ministry's reluctance to whole-heartedly embrace such innovative approaches in its own primary schools and teacher-training facilities. What is not at all clear is to what extent the *Escuela Nueva Unitaria* deals with the issue bilingual education and the lack of relevance of curriculum to Maya communities.

With respect to bilingual education, Kraft notes that project schools had more Mayan speaking teachers than non project schools, "only 20 percent of the interactions with students were in Mayan languages, compared with 10 percent in other schools." (Kraft, 1998, 20). This is not encouraging except, of course, for the unilingual Spanish speaker teachers who can take comfort in the observation that the "bilingual ability of teachers did not significantly affect the retention of Mayan students in school." (Kraft, 1998, 20). It may not have affected their retention rate but it cannot have contributed to enhancing the literacy rate of Mayan young people in their own language, an important issue for the Pan Maya movement.[143]

As for curriculum, to the extent that non Maya teachers are producing "locally relevant" curriculum for use in their schools, it raises the question of the specific relevance of that curriculum to Mayan students. Kraft makes no mention of the integration of the Mayan values or Mayan history into NEU schools.

This said, the NEU experience is a positive one much of which educational reformers *from a Mayan perspective* could embrace and enrich with their own unique cultural contribution.

Educational Reform Arising from the Peace Accords

COPARE: Mandate, Composition and Premises

The Bipartate Commission on Educational Reform – COPARE – was established by the Government of Guatemala on March 20, 1997, less than three months after the signing of the final Peace Accords in late December of the previous year which provided for its

[143] Clearly this is an important area for further research in Guatemala. Many of the studies published I the ASIES & PREAL (1997) text assume that cultural relevance is a precondition to improving Maya retention rates. The NEU experience calls this into question. Of course, higher retention rates of Maya students in Ladino dominated schools is just another way of accelerating assimilation and so constitutes a very problematic solution.

creation. Its mandate, according to the government decree that brought it into existence, was to "design a reform of the educational system which takes into account the content of the Peace Accords."[144] (COPARE, 1998, 11). Specifically, in the opinion of former Vice Minister of Education Manual Salazar, the Educational Reform has two orientations: "the orientation towards modernisation with decentralisation (of educational services) ... (and incorporating into the system of education) ... new concepts of the identity of Guatemala as a nation and the identity of the peoples that make it up ..." (Interview with Manual Salazar, July 28, 2000).

The Commission began its work in April, 1997. It was composed of 10 commissioners, five appointed by the Government and five appointed by indigenous organisations. The Government appointees included Egil Galindo, representing the teacher associations. In February, 1998, he would leave the Commission in protest over the emerging reforms, signalling an ongoing teacher opposition to what they consider to be unacceptable Maya centric reforms and labour-related issues with respect to retraining and possible redeployment, an opposition which continues to this day. The non governmental appointees included Demetrio Cojti, the Pan Maya intellectual frequently cited in this work and, at the time of writing, the Vice Minister of Education, and Pedro Guorón of PRODESSA.[145]

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[144] Specifically COPARE's mandate refers them to Article 2 of subsection G, Educational Reform, in Chapter 3, Cultural Rights, of The Agreement on the Identity and Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

[145] The ten Commissioners were: for the government, Lic. Roberto Moreno, Vice Minister of Education,; Licda. Floridalma Meza, the Director of CONALFA, the literacy program, and the Ministry official responsible for complaince with the Peace Accords; Licda. Eva Sazo de Méndez, Adviser to PRONADE, the agency responsible for extending educational services to underserviced areas; Lic. Virgilio Alvarado Ajanel, National Director of PROMEM, a UNESCO educational program; and Prof. Egil Galindo, the representative of the national teachers' organisations. For the Maya organisations: Sr. Domingo Sánchez of Majawil Q'ij representing MENMAGUA, la Mesa Nacional Maya de Guatemala; Prof. Pedro Guorón of PRODESSA; Dr. Demetrio Cojti of CNEM, the National Council of Maya Education; Prof. Maura Luz Leiva, representing the Garifuna people; and Sr. Ruperto Montejo of the Maya co-ordinating body, Chuj-Kanjobal. (PRODESSA, 2000, 9 – 10).

COPARE based what they would come to call their *design* for Educational Reform on the following four premises. (see COPARE, 1998, 11):

(a) The Reform would be national in scope. In other words, despite the primary mandate, reflected in The Agreement on the Identity and Rights of Indigenous Peoples, to include the previously excluded language, culture and history of the Maya people in the national curriculum, that this curriculum would be reflective of all the people of Guatemala including the Ladino people whose history, language and culture have been at the heart of the old curriculum. A revised national core curriculum would be taught throughout the entire country. The national curriculum would be supplemented by locally developed curricula designed to reflect the reality of local cultural communities and delivered in the schools of those communities in the local language.

(b) The Reform would respond to the needs of a multiethnic, multicultural and multilingual country;

(c) The process of bringing the Reform into being would be participatory and involve input from a broad spectrum of community organisations and social sectors; and

(d) The Reform would have for an objective realising the right of all to a quality education with cultural and linguistic pertinence.

In June, 1998, slightly more than a year after they begin their deliberations, COPARE issued its report entitled Design for Educational Reform (*Diseño de Reforma Educativa*). The title is revealing. The COPARE Report does not constitute a comprehensive package of specific proposed educational reforms. Rather, this slim 97 page Report is basically a statement of the principles that should for the basis of the actual reform and it outlines 11 "areas of transformation" the details of which are to be worked out by specialised Sub-Commissions which are to be co-ordinated by a Consultative Commission over the course of a three stage implementation process ending in 2008.[146]

[146] These 11 "areas of transformation" are (i) pedagogy, (ii) administration, (iii) human resources, (iv) educational law, (v) public policy, (vi) budget, (vii) language of instruction, (viii) culture, (ix) communication, (x) job market, and (xi) infrastructure.

Educational Reform as a Process

COPARE characterises the Educational Reform as a *political, technical, scientific and cultural* process. A political process in the sense that it is highly participatory, staged, and organised; and technical, scientific and cultural in that it has a mandate to touch on all of these issues as they relate to education.

The process is also seen as being *integral, gradual and permanent*. Integral means that it involves changes on a wide variety of fronts within and beyond the educational system including significant public policy changes, as well as the necessary legal, administrative and financial adjustments which will be required to achieve the goals of the educational reform.

Finally it is seen as being *flexible, measurable, futuristic, doable and cumulative*. Flexible in the sense of adapting to the rhythms of the local community; measurable in the sense that it involves implementing clearly defined programs capable of being verified; futuristic in the sense of preparing Guatemalans for full participation in an increasingly globalised world; and cumulative in the sense of not starting at zero but building on the lessons of the past. (COPARE, 1998, 50 – 52).

The Four Axes of Curricular Reform

The four axes of the Educational Reform are defined as

- life in a democracy and a culture of peace;
- unity in diversity;
- sustainable integral development, and
- science and technology.

The axes are defined as "concepts, principles, values, capacities and ideas that, once integrated, give direction to the reform of the system and to the educational sector." (COPARE, 1998, 52). All four seem to fit more comfortably into the *orientation* that Manual Salazar describes as contributing to "new concepts of the identity of Guatemala as a nation" than they do into the modernisation orientation with the possible exception of Science and Technology.

All the axes correspond to the pressing needs of Guatemala society implicitly defined as a post-war underdeveloped society characterised by little or no democratic tradition, little or no tolerance for difference, and deeply rooted social disparities. Each one seems to correspond to a vision of society that can be identified as universal or sectoral.

(i) The First Axis: Life in a Democracy and a Culture of Peace

The first axis, Life in a Democracy and a Culture of Peace, would seem to represent a value universally shared by all Guatemalans in the post-conflict era except perhaps the most die-hard "peace resisters." The COPARE Commissioners give expression to the link between certain human qualities and the ability of a society to live democratically and in peace.

> With respect to personal development and that of the community, there is a necessary congruence between the society and a democratic culture and peace on the one hand, and the democratic and peaceful citizen, on the other. A democratic and peaceful society can neither be constituted nor maintained without developing, at the same time, generations of citizens who are pluralistic, generous, respectful and sharing. Nor can a culturally respectful, democratic and peaceful social climate be guaranteed if its basic institutions are not themselves pluralistic, generous, respectful and sharing, above all in a multicultural, multiethnic and multilingual society. A democratic and legitimate state will only be possible under such circumstances. (COPARE, 1998, 52).

The link of this axis to education is that educational processes are seen as "permitting the knowing and valuing of different cultures and forms of social organisation

in the country" which, it is argued, if combined with appropriate educational practices, can contribute to learning "the practice of dialogue, consensus, the peaceful resolution of conflict ... and the internalisation of democratic values ...." (COPARE, 1998, 52).

(ii) The Second Axis: Unity in Diversity

The axis "Unity in Diversity" would seem to correspond to the concerns of the Pan Maya movement. The Commissioners argue that

> National unity manifests itself in the existence of principles, values and common traditions that are enriched by cultural differences ... The unity in diversity is sustained by respect for and the exercise of social, political, cultural, economic and spiritual rights of all Guatemalans. (COPARE, 1998, 53).

In order to achieve this, the educational system is assigned an important role in "constructing pluralism and strengthening interethnic co-existence" all the while "creating and recreating each cultural community's identity and the reciprocal knowledge and recognition (of all cultural communities) to consolidate a culture of peace and promote integral development with social justice and ethnic and gender equality." (COPARE, 1998 53).

(iii) The Third Axis: Sustainable Integral Development

The third axis entitled "Sustainable Integral Development" somewhat uneasily combines a social democratic or social justice orientation which would correspond to the values of the *popular* Left and the socially progressive sectors of the Pan Maya movement and more conventional, private sector notions of development. This section argues that sustainable development is "the constant and progressive improvement of all human activity with respect to the material, social, economic, educational, political, cultural, artistic and moral (aspects of life)." It calls for "a better distribution of the riches, of the rational use of the resources ... and not compromising the well-being of future

generations." It also calls for "the elimination of poverty, care of health and of the environment ... in short, the improvement of the quality of life within the framework of justice, legality and social equity." (COPARE, 1998, 53). This is the social justice expression of this axis.

The private sector "code words" in this section are found in the following passage which state that this axis

> ... articulates education, culture and civic spirit with economic growth, integral development and social equality and solidarity. It also recognises the importance of competitiveness, equal opportunity and of co-operation based on the knowledge and appropriation of indigenous and modern science and technology...(COPARE, 1998, 54).

(iv) The Fourth Axis: Science and Technology

The last of the four axes, "Science and Technology", represents an undoubtedly broadly shared, or universal, value in Guatemalan society but does so with a particular Maya "flavour." It advocates the appropriation of science and technology for sustainable development but within "an ethical framework of (its) critical and rational use ... for the common good." In this sense, in Guatemala, science and technology "should be instruments which contribution to resolving the national problem, increase production and combat poverty." (COPARE, 1998, 54).

The COPARE report states that, while Western science and technology have played a privileged role in Guatemala,

> ... there exists a rich abundance of indigenous science and technology which requires a process of recovery, systematisation, strengthening, development, diffusion and critical appropriation, as a contribution to Guatemalan society and to universal knowledge. (COPARE, 1998, 54).

Needless to say, the COPARE Commissioners attach an important role to the schools with respect this theme especially given the need to "accelerate" the appropriation

of such knowledge in order to address "socio-economic alternatives, which would allow all Guatemalan a better quality of life in a globalised world." (COPARE, 1998, 55).

Given what we know about the modest achievements of the Guatemalan educational system to date and its pro Ladino bias, the four axes upon which the COPARE Commissioners base their proposals are far reaching in their potential implications. How did the Commissioners see their proposals being carried out?

Specific Aspects to be Addressed in the Educational Reform

COPARE has identified six headings, or areas, under which it has grouped the proposed reforms. These are the areas of

(i) social mobilisation on behalf of the educational reform;

(ii) finance;

(iii) curricular transformation;

(iv) human resources;

(v) equity; and

(vi) multi- and interculturalism.

All of these aspects are important. The financial area is, of course, key to the success of all other aspects. If the Ministry of Education fails to significantly increase per capita spending to at least bring Guatemala's educational budget up to the recommended levels of expenditure as a share of the GNP, the educational deficit, expressed both qualitatively and quantitatively will remain indefinitely.

Of great importance, too, are the equity and multicultural issues which lie at the heart of the effort to make the learning experience more pertinent for girls and for young Mayas of whatever gender. The area of human resources addresses the preparedness of the

teaching profession to meet the challenges of providing a modern, multicultural education to its students.

Despite the importance of these and other aspects of the educational reform, it is not possible to explore every area of the proposed reform in detail. Certain issues, however, especially those that are either unique to Guatemala or associated with the work of ESEDIR and/or PRODESSA, should be mentioned.

Social Mobilisation on Behalf of the Educational Reform

This can be considered a unique category. Most Commissions submit their reports to government and the agency that is officially responsible for the matter under study then deals with the recommendations as their political masters see fit. Anticipating, perhaps, that this traditional approach was likely to lead to a shelving of the Report or, at best, lead to a process in which the government would pick and choose what it chose to implement, the Peace Accords provided for a commission, The Consultative Commission on the Educational Reform, operating outside of the government and the Ministry of Education, to take responsibility for giving content to the generalisations of the COPARE Report and for co-ordinating and supervising the process of implementation.

The issues that the COPARE Commissioners handed over to this Consultative Commission are

- planning, implementation and follow-up to the Educational Reform;
- educational legislation;
- social communication;
- social participation in education; and
- the co-ordination of national and international co-operation.

Briefly what is contemplated by these five issues can be summarised as follows. Educational Reform is a gradual and progressive process that touches upon a number of areas that require change. This will occur in three stages. The first of these is educating the population of the need for the reform; the second is encouraging broad-based participation in planning and carrying out the reforms and the third phase is institutionalising the reforms. The issue of institutionalisation raises the need to reform the laws of the country that regulate education. Finally, the model of education envisioned is participatory and it is recognised that there is little experience of such participation in Guatemala and strategies to promote it will have to be developed. (Summary of the points made in COPARE, 1998, 61 – 62).

The Consultative Commission on the Educational Reform had been established in October, 1997 although its mandate didn't start until the COPARE Report was made public in June the following year. The new Commission was made up of the representatives of 17 institutions including the government, a number of Maya organisations, the central bodies of the main religious denominations, the teachers, private enterprise and the universities. (PRODESSA, 2000, 10).

This Commission would establish a half-dozen sub-commissions to do the specialised work required to flesh out the Educational Reform. They are

- the judicial sub-commission responsible for studying necessary changes in the law;
- the sub-commission on curricular change;
- the sub-commission on multiculturalism;
- the sub-commission on human resources;

- the sub-commission responsible for co-ordinating the work of the Commission with the Ministry of Education; and
- the sub-commission on the National Educational Plan.

This latter sub-commission, with input from the other sub-commissions, is responsible for the elaboration of a National Educational Plan which operationalises the COPARE Report and outlining the steps to be taken to the year 2020. (PRODESSA, 2000, 10 – 11). A draft of this Report has been prepared and is serving as the basis for a national debate facilitated, in part, by PRODESSA.

Curricular Transformation

Curricular transformation is at the heart of the educational reform. It involves

- strengthening the values of democracy, a culture of peace and sustainable development;
- curricular renewal;
- promoting a quality education;
- promoting non formal educational activities; and
- values education.

With respect to the key issue of promoting the values and practices of democracy, peace and sustainable development, the COPARE Report states that "peace is based on democracy, universal human rights, equality and social, ethnic justice and equality of the sexes." Clearly then curricular content has to include these values and practices and address all the four axes upon which the proposed reform rests. To enhance the quality of education a variety of steps must be taken ranging from the better collection and use of statistical information, to ensuring that quality texts and other resources, are made available

to students, to ensuring effective teacher training that is based on research into effectiveness. In the spirit of democratisation, both the administration of schools and the generation of curricular content should be decentralised with, in the case of local curriculum, a balance struck between national content taught in every school in the country and content which reflects local conditions. The COPARE Commissioners recognise that such phenomena as migrant workers taking their whole families from their highland communities to the plantations on the coast, means that education is disrupted and that provision has to be made for meeting the needs of such students and finally, recognising what they call the "social clamour" for values education, they propose moral, civic and family education. (Summary of the points made in COPARE, 1998, 67 – 68).

Human Resources

As I have noted in the context of our discussion of the PRONEBI, there is a significant deficit, both quantitatively and qualitatively, of teachers in Guatemala. The absolute numerical shortage of teachers is attested to by the continued lack of service coverage in many indigenous areas, or often, where there are schools, students find themselves in very large classes. The qualitative shortage has to do with the inability of many Ladino teachers now placed in Maya villages to appreciate the culture, to teach in the local Maya language or to feel comfortable with certain aspects of the emerging new curriculum. It is necessary to train bilingual Spanish-Maya speaking teachers and reassign unilingual Spanish speaking teachers to schools or situations where Maya language skills are not needed. COPARE proposed resolving the teacher shortage by 2003 through a combination of establishing new teacher training facilities and enhancing the capability of existing ones. Other proposals include upgrading in-service teachers to bring their training in conformity with the tasks contemplated by the educational reform. COPARE also

proposes an inventory of teacher skills and a redeployment, as required, of teachers to areas where their skills match the needs of the local school. They also propose an enhanced professionalisation of the teaching profession with higher salaries and better working conditions accompanying the increase in qualifications demanded. (Summary of the points made in COPARE, 1998, 71 – 72).

As mentioned in the paragraph on the membership of the COPARE Educational Reform Commission, Egil Galindo, the teachers' representative, left the Commission in protest in February, 1998, several months before the final report was released but at which time its child-centred and multicultural, multiethnic and multilingual orientation was apparent. This would be the first act in an ongoing drama that has pitted the teacher organisations, although by no means all individual teachers, the vast majority of whom are Ladinos, against the Reform. There are basically two categories of concern: the alleged pro Maya bias of the Reform[147] and the fear that to keep their jobs they will have to learn a Mayan language and master content that is foreign to their own world view. In my interview with him, former Deputy Education Minister Salazar mentioned two incidents where leaders of the teachers associations either burned the entire COPARE report, in the case of an incident in Quetzaltenango, or tore out the pages dealing with particular issues they were concerned about, in the case of an incident in Chiquimula. (Interview with Lic. Manuel Salazar, July 28, 2000).

[147] Daniel Domingo of ESEDIR stressed his opinion that the teachers that oppose the Reforms are reacting, not as professionals but as Ladinos caught up in the negative, indeed race-based, campaign against the Peace Accords and reforms arising out of them. (Interview with Daniel Domingo, July 28, 2000).

The importance of ESEDIR and PRODESSA's work with teachers becomes apparent in a situation like this because wide-spread teacher opposition to the reforms would provide an excuse to those who oppose them philosophically to block their approval and/or their implementation should they be approved. In Cabricán I had been told that a number of Ladino teachers in one school I visited had been very hostile to the educational Reform feeling threatened in that specific case by their fear that they would have to learn Mam. Over the course of the academic year, however, as a result of the patient work by their ESEDIR trained fellow teachers, they had come to realise that even in their predominately Maya community, there was a role for them even as they came to recognise how well their students responded to their Mam speaking colleagues. By the time I met these Ladino teachers, they assured me that their fears were well behind them (Interviews with Enrique Francisco Ramos Bates and Conrado Marco Antonio Pérez, July 21, 2000).

I take the view that the best strategy for winning the majority of teachers to the Reform and isolating the more ideological opponents in the profession is continued work with the communities to win community support, including local teacher support, for the proposed changes while lobbying to ensure ministry support. Nothing will encourage recalcitrant teachers more than the perception that the ministry is not committed to the changes. In addition, and this is far from certain, given the lack of Ministry resources, increased expectations of teachers, including expectations about achieving higher degrees of professional competence must, as the COPARE report points out, be accompanied by higher salaries and better working conditions. (COPARE, 1998, 71 – 72).

Implementing the Educational Reform

In the brief chapter outlining the stages they envision to implement the necessary reforms to Guatemala's educational system, the COPARE Commissioners state the

magnitude of the issues to be faced. They note the "great scale" of the structural transformation that must take place and reiterate the need to reorient the curriculum so that it is culturally and linguistically pertinent. They note the poverty of the great majority of the people and the fact that most of the economically active population works in agriculture and are unskilled. Furthermore, they point out that Guatemala cannot be considered to be an "inclusive democracy" and thus the educational system must "reflect and reproduce the multilingual and multicultural nature of the country and contribute to the democratic training and practices of Guatemalans." (COPARE, 1998, 91).

In order to achieve this transformation in the theory and practice of education, the Commissioners conceived of a three phrase process of implementation.

> To operationalise the Educational Reform, two approaches have been identified: one of rigid stages and another of fluid stages. The first recognises that structural educational changes require long periods of time and thus must be implemented in stages; while the second recognises that the processes (undertaken) can not always be respected (as originally thought out) nor always be implemented sequentially, given that the process of the Reform's implementation will include unforeseen circumstances, obstacles or the possibility of initiating one stage prior to [initiating] another. (COPARE, 1998, 91).

The first stage which was contemplated for the period 1998 to 2000 included the following activities:

- define the means to operationalise the provisions for the participation in and mobilisation on behalf of the Educational Reform;
- reform of the laws necessary to achieve the objectives of this stage;
- a review of Ministry practices in light of the COPARE Report;
- the field validation of the COPARE Report;
- regionalisation of educational services on a linguistic basis;

- the creation of the Maya University; and,
- providing the finances for all of these activities.

Phase Two (2001 – 2004) and Phase Three (2005 to 2008) were meant to deepen and expand the process begun in Phase 1. Since, however, the task of implementation has been handed over to the Consultative Commission on the Educational Reform and the specific phases have been overtaken by events, we should turn to the work of the Consultative Commission and its draft National Educational Plan.

Role of PRODESSA and ESEDIR in Implementing the Educational Reform

The is no doubt that little progress has been made in implementing the Educational Reform, however, there have been some successes. I have noted the work of PRONADE, CONALFA and PRONEBI, three Ministry initiatives that have had varying degrees of success in fulfilling their mandates. I have also reviewed the impact of the *Nueva Escuela Unitaria* programme. Even those initiatives whose roots predate the Peace Accords and the COPARE Report have to be considered part of the Educational Reform initiative as their practices are now more or less in conformity with the spirit of that Reform. The Directors of two of these programs - PRONADE and CONALFA - were actually COPARE Commissioners.

Another area of progress was reflected in a comment made to me by Lic. Salazar, the former Vice Minister of Education when he said, "there is an optimism that the new concepts of the nation and of culture (contained in the Educational Reform) will influence the new text books and the curriculum."[148] The other point of optimism is that the

[148] Even here, however, there is difficulty as Daniel Domingo reports that recently texts were issued that did not meet the standard of avoiding stereotypes. (See below).

educational system "is now less interfered with by the political party in power, unlike the situation in the past." (Interview with Manuel Salazar, July 28, 2000).

ESEDIR and PRODESSA, ever ready to take advantage of spaces created for their work in the political sphere, are very involved in the work to give definition to the content of the educational reform, in the effort to implement new curriculum and pedagogy and in the effort to win political support for it at the community level.

In getting involved in this way both ESEDIR and PRODESSA are working to put their stamp on the Educational Reform. In fact they specifically address the issue of what they can achieve through such involvement. In its internal document on the educational reform, PRODESSA asks the question "Is it possible to enrich the Educational Reform Design?" They answer their own question in the affirmative pointing out that the Design as the COPARE document is known, is only one instrument in the overall process of reform and that, for example, the National Educational Plan is another tool. What needs to be done now, they suggest, is making these documents public to encourage discussion and participation in the process. (PRODESSA, 2000, 12). This is precisely one way, among many, that PRODESSA and ESEDIR are assisting this process.

The agency designated by the Peace Accords to promote Maya education is the Consejo Nacional de Educación Maya (CNEM)[149] and Daniel Domingo, PRODESSA's Deputy Director for Education, has been deeply involved with their work for years. Daniel is also on a committee studying the establishment of a Maya University and one of the official publications of that initiative includes a 15 page document on the work of ESEDIR as a model for that proposed university. (Ministerio de Educación, 1995, 43 – 59).

ESEDIR's contribution, of course, is its two teacher training programs in Barrillas and the Ixcán. These programmes bring together critical pedagogy with community development practices which, in a very practical way, combine many of the elements proposed in COPARE's Educational Reform proposals and the daily practice of ESEDIR's residential Program in Community Development From a Maya Perspective.

The National Consultation

There are 331 *Municipalidades* in Guatemala. Each *Municipalidad* has a municipal seat which is an urban centre of some size and associated rural villages (or aldeas). The Consultative Commission charged a special committee composed, among others, of three PRODESSA people, Director Brother Ocar Azmitia, Pedro Guorón, who had been a COPARE Commissioner, and Francisco Cabrera, who is actually a member of the Consultative Commission, with holding two-day consultations in each of the municipal seats. Three hundred and thirty-one facilitators, one for each municipality, of which 40 were from PRODESSA, were selected and trained and at the time I was last in the country, were poised to conduct their visits as stage one of a multi step consultation culminating with a national dialogue on the educational reform. (Interview with Daniel Domingo, July 28, 2000).

> The facilitator will go to the municipal meeting. In that municipal meeting people from the rural communities will come in representation of the parents' organisations, etc. The facilitator will [encourage a] dialogue with certain results. Later, after this process there is a departmental meeting – a departmental dialogue where representatives of the various municipalities of each department will go. There will be 22 departmental meetings and finally there will be a national meeting with representatives of each department. (Interview with Daniel Domingo, July 28, 2000).

[149] CNEM co-ordinates the work of the Maya organisations on the issue of Maya education. It is composed of 19 organisations including PRODESSA and CDRO. The latter organisation was highlighted in our analysis of local power.

When I asked about more "popular", less top-down approaches to winning support for the educational reform, Daniel commented that

> In effect this is a task that has been realised practically since the Design of the Educational Reform was made public. It is work that corresponds to the government, to the state, but neither of them have done it. Rather it has been a job undertaken by indigenous organisations like PRODESSA and the organisations affiliated with CNEM, and CNEM itself. COPMAGUA[150] has gone to various communities to explain what the educational reform is about ... (Interview with Daniel Domingo, July 28, 2000).

In the case of PRODESSA, this support takes the form of organising whole communities on the need for Educational Reform and specifically includes the publication of booklets that their facilitators and collaborators in the micro-regions can use to do popular education to this end.

In the 16 page booklet entitled ¡Pongamos la reforma educativa en movimiento! (Let's Make a Movement of the Educational Reform!), a document prepared for use in the communities where PRODESSA works, they write

> An educational reform elaborated only by specialists with new ideas and prepared only with a view to be implemented will fail regardless of how well it is designed.
>
> Without a broad process of participation, the population will not understand why and for what purpose the changes have been proposed and it is certain they will see these as something imposed [on them] ...
>
> It is necessary to have an educational reform that allows for a broad participation of the people in the analysis of the situation, in a discussion of alternatives and in putting forward proposals that reflect their reality, needs and demands. (PRODESSA, n.d. [a], 4 - 5).

[150] COPMAGUA is the Coordinación de Organisaciones del Pueblo Maya de Guatemala, one of the fourth level Maya organisations which is composed of five member organisations. In short, these organisations have a considerable capacity to mobilise support for an issue.

The same documents proposes a participatory process to occur in the communities – a process, which it is important to note, is designed to complement, and not compete with, the process begun by COPARE and now assumed by the Consultative Commission.

> We propose taking the debate on the educational reform to the base so that the population participates in the analysis and discussion of the changes in education. This does not mean substituting the work of the representatives of the organisations and the specialists in education. On the contrary it means enriching and complementing their work to arrive at a consensus and at a social and ethnic contract. (PRODESSA, n.d. [a], 6).

The PRODESSA booklet then outlines a multi-stage plan starting with making the public aware of the issues and their importance; studying *base documents* written by experts but for a popular audience,[151] about the various aspects of the educational reform and proposing changes appropriate for the local situation; implement all aspects of the reform locally, based on *Regional Curricular Guides*. These *Regional Curriculum Guides* will emerge from combining the local concerns with the national curriculum as expressed in the *base documents*. By region is mean linguistic region respecting the linguistic and cultural norms of each distinct area of the country.

The booklet proposes that local people be trained as Educational Reform promoters and that they undertake the responsibility of building democratic consultative structures at the local level to promote this participation. (PRODESSA, n.d. [a], 13 – 14).

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[151] The question may well be raised, with the level of illiteracy cited in this chapter, just how effective the use of any documents are in communities, particularly Maya communities where not only is basic literacy an issue but literacy in what language? Spanish? The local Maya language? This is clearly one of the challenges that ESEDIR and PRODESSA faces. I have seen both Spanish language and Maya language publications used in the communities, and certainly the above cited ¡Pongamos la reforma educative en movimiento! is a good example. It is very simple, includes a lot of illustrations, and is published in large print. I can only presume, given ESEDIR and PRODESSA's educational vocation, their experience in the communities and their work on educational reform at the national level, that *popular* education publications, coupled with their literacy work in the communities ensures that these documents are useful and appropriately written.

In another booklet designed for the use of the local educational reform promoters, we see the strategy for how to establish a Local Council for Educational Reform. The promoters are advised to establish such a council at each school and to include parents, teachers and students. The task of this Council is to teach people about the need for educational reform and to follow the steps alluded to above with a view to including all members of the educational community: teachers, parents and students in the process so that it has deep roots and support and understanding. (PRODESSA, n.d. [b], 11 – 12).

The booklet warns the promoters that there will be resistance to change and as we have already seen, the teachers' unions oppose the Reform so involving the teachers is an important strategy in winning individual teachers over as seems to be the case in Cabricán.

Summary Observations on the Educational Reform

The COPARE Commissioners contemplated a 10 year plan in three stages (1998 – 2008). The Consultative Commission extended that an additional 12 years, to 2020. The issue, of course, is not so much how much time has been set aside to achieve the reform but rather the movement that is occurring in government, in the world of professional educators, including teachers and in the civil society, with respect to implementation.

Former Vice Minister Salazar was not optimistic in July, 2000 about implementation ("the achievement of this is another thing") but, as I have already noted, he took comfort in the existence of "a conceptual framework, both in the [COPARE] document ... and in the National Education Plan which gives us a long range view, 2000 – 2020." (Interview with Manual Salazar, July 28, 2000).

The laws regulating education have not been amended nor has the Ministry's budget been increased nor has its educational priorities been significantly altered. This said, there is, as Lic. Salazar said, a new framework for education in Guatemala, one that is

modern in is conception and multicultural, multiethnic and multilingual as well as democratic in it aspirations. Just as other aspects of the Peace Accords will have to be implemented in whole or in part in the face of reluctance on the part of the government and the opposition of the peace resisters in the larger society, so too will the educational reform be the subject of major struggles between passionate advocates, like the men and women of ESEDIR and PRODESSA and their opponents including, unfortunately, although perhaps not surprisingly, many although by no means all Ladino teachers.

On balance, however, an Educational Reform that has the twin objectives of modernising the school system and the inclusion of the country's majority population, cannot for long fail to win the support of the people, especially when the Reform's advocates are as rooted in their communities. This has happened in villages where PRODESSA and ESEDIR are promoting the reform both in the schools and in the community. Nor can we forget the activities of other reformers such as those associated with the large network of *Nueva Escuela* schools where community support is widespread for new ways of delivering new forms of education.

It is, therefore reasonable to be optimistic that over time, the most vociferous opponents of educational reform will loose their audience and the reformers will be able to move the Guatemalan educational system steadily if slowly in the direction of serving the needs of all school aged children, both Maya and Ladino, boys and girls.

Chapter Ten

Conclusions

Introduction

The struggle to create a democratic and socially just multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, multi-linguistic state in Guatemala is an unfinished story of which many of the component parts are being written simultaneously. Only some of these components have been touched upon in this study.

The chapters that constitute this story continue to be written by ordinary men and women who, at both the local and the national level, are working to transform Guatemala's authoritarian political culture, hierarchical social structure, and unjust economic practices so as to include the previously excluded majority of the population: the Maya people.

Guatemala, as noted in Chapter 3, is a land of stories which not only demand to be told, they demand to be theorised with a view to developing an appreciation of exactly what is occurring in Guatemala in this post-conflict era and to distinguish between that which is unique to that particular situation and that which is the Guatemalan expression of a more universal phenomenon.

We have analysed the Guatemalan situation through a number of lenses:

- The emergence of a new social movement, the Pan Maya movement, as the principal protagonist for a form of "radical reformist" social change that works simultaneously within the state structure and outside of, and largely without reference to, the state structure. This approach, in Guatemala and elsewhere, has replaced the orthodox Leninist vanguard form of organisation with its strategies designed to achieve the revolutionary transformation of the state and

society and has certainly challenged the traditional social democratic approach with its reliance on coming to power electorally with a view to working through the existing state as the preferred tool for implementing its reform policies.[152]

- The emergence of the creation of *local power* as the preferred strategy for popular empowerment and the local community as the preferred site for exercising this popular power, all the while not abandoning political work at the national level.
- The emergence of an invigorated civil society involving the creation and/or strengthening of a large number of non governmental and community voluntary organisations, of which PRODESSA and ESEDIR are two examples of the former. These organisations constitute the organisational expression of the Pan Maya movement.
- These organisations of the civil society address a wide range of objectives. Some, like PRODESSA and ESEDIR, have a practice in the communities, and enter into a knowledge-creating relationship with the local people where certain values, skills and knowledge associated with the outside world of development come into contact with the values, skills and knowledge of the Maya communities creating a new synthesis that not only enriches the work being done at the community level but, given their knowledge of the reality in many communities, allows PRODESSA, ESEDIR and like-minded organisations, to work more effectively at the national level on issues such as educational reform.

[152] This certainly seems to be true in Canada where the social democratic party, the NDP, is having difficulty winning support from young people who are involved in struggles such as the anti FTAA movement. At best, these movement-oriented young people look at the NDP with scepticism and, at worst, with thinly veiled contempt.

The Theoretical and Programmatic Crisis of the Left and New Social Movements

With respect to the first lens, the emergence of a new social movement, the Pan Maya movement, as the principal protagonist for a form of "radical reformist" social change, the data we have gathered strongly suggests that ESEDIR and PRODESSA constitute examples of this phenomenon.

I suggested that our ability to comprehend the changes occurring in Guatemala can no longer be based upon the simple dichotomy of reform or revolution. Rather, what is required is a new paradigm that emerges within the context of the daily reality lived by those struggling for far-reaching change in Guatemala in what I have called the *post-orthodox* period or what Marta Harnecker (1999, 2000) would call the era of the left's theoretical and programmatic crisis. The response to the resulting political uncertainty has been the emergence of social movements that struggle for social inclusion, political reform and economic justice which is occurring at the community and national levels within both the explicitly political sphere and within the civil society.

In contrast to the old orthodoxies noted above, and analysed at length in Chapter 3, the new social movement strategy is one of creating a democratic political culture where one did not exist before – a culture that encourages participation in public affairs at the local level and prepares ordinary citizens, through their organisations, to make demands on the state that it collaborate in responding to the pressing needs of the population. This objective is promoted through the creation of a vibrant and democratic civil society.

Furthermore, this process of making the state more responsive to social needs and insisting on democracy within the organisations of civil society is not just a tactical question to be set aside once the left comes to power. Rather it is a commitment to firmly entrenching such practices and rights so that democracy is expanded and takes root in the

society thereby giving the civil society a vital role to play regardless of the political orientation of the party in power.

In Chapter 5, based on the work of authors such as Gálvez, et. al (1997) and Warren (1998), I analysed the emergence of the Pan Maya movement. While its origins date back to the early 1980s, the Pan Maya movement came into its own as a result of the split with the *popular* Left, including with the Maya *Popular* Left, which occurred in 1991 at the Continental Meeting for Indigenous, Black, and Popular Resistance. Its rapid growth was greatly assisted by the creation, as a result of one of the provisions of the 1994 *Framework Agreement* (see Chapter 4), of the Assembly of Civil Society which gave the Movement the opportunity to articulate its demands to the peace negotiators. (Jonas, 2000).

A number of issues led to that 1991 split. One was racism and paternalism that the Pan Maya leadership felt characterised the old Left and non Maya popular movement towards the Maya movement and its aspirations. Another was the desire by the old Left to subsume the Maya movement and its demands as a subordinate part of the broader popular movement. The third was the emphasis that the Pan Maya leadership put on cultural issues as opposed to social justice and/or class questions – issues which the old Left had trouble taking seriously as priority issues. Of course, it was precisely this latter point that qualifies the Pan Maya movement as a New Social Movement, a phenomenon that is characterised as being both socially conflictive and culturally oriented.

My research shows that PRODESSA and ESEDIR, consistent with this first lens through which I analysed the social change movement in Guatemala, are Maya organisations that advocate what can be seen as a "radical reformist" vision of social change. They work comfortably both within the state structure and outside the state structure, depending upon the issue in question. They follow neither a vanguard political

model of social action in that it is highly respectful of the local people with whom they work and their methodology is designed to encourage leadership at the local level rather than provide leadership to them, nor do they follow an electoral strategy designed to accumulate sufficient strength to win state power by a particular party or a coalition of parties. In this ESEDIR and PRODESSA are representative of all the major organisations in the Pan Maya movement.

This said, it is important to say that I am not precluding future developments that would bring one or other combination of the old Left, the *popular* Left, the Maya *popular* Left and/or the social democratic left together in alliance with the Pan Maya movement. It is simply not possible at this juncture to predict what future alliances might emerge. I have made it clear that in my view, and in the view of observers such as Jorge Solares, Ladino/Maya alliances of one sort or another are necessary to push the reform agenda towards a political solution. Certainly, whatever resistance to such alliances has existed in the past, none of these forces is static and they will evolve with time and as circumstances change in Guatemala. Furthermore, the seeds for such collaboration in the future exist. The very existence of the Maya *popular* Left and the existence within the Pan Maya movement of organisations like PRODESSA, which attach great importance to social issues, give us reason to believe that the necessary alliances can be affected that will bring together in a working relationship organisations concerned primarily with social issues and others concerned primarily with cultural issues. As Cotjí himself says, these differences are really differences of emphasis. (Cotjí, 1997, 39). The precondition for bringing about such alliances is, as suggested in Chapter 4, an understanding of the mutual benefit that will result from such efforts and, of course, a respectful attitude of each party to the other social actors with which they will have to make their peace.

With respect to how electoral politics might come to play a role in the over all social change strategy, the issue of electoral politics remains problematic. As recently as 1999, the turn-out for the Consulta Popular was only 18.5% of the eligible electorate, a figure that indicates that electoral politics is hardly a mass phenomenon in that country. It would seem that the slow work of building community organisations and preparing people for political participation must continue before the big questions of national strategies, including an electoral component, and political alliances can reasonably be posed. This is consistent with Marta Harnecker's analysis of the need for the popular forces to engage in a strategy of constructing "anti systemic social forces" before they take up the issue of power (Harnecker, 2000, 5). In the Guatemalan context I have demonstrated that the Pan Maya movement, through organisations like ESEDIR and PRODESSA, is preparing the terrain for future struggles the details of which cannot be predicted at this time.

As for the radical reformist element of this first explanatory lens, a number of ESEDIR and PRODESSA's practices can be considered to be defined in this way. An example of this is ESEDIR's radical critique of the present educational system (see Chapter 5) and its vision for educational reform. They argue that it is "uncreative", that it is one where the student "wastes his time" and that it "does not recognise cultural diversity" and that it "advances an authoritarian model." The reformist element comes in ESEDIR's work, described in Chapter 9, to create, within the present social order, an alternative educational system both through establishing its own educational institutions that mirror an alternative, Maya-oriented vision, while working as advocates and technical advisers to the educational reform process flowing from the Peace Accords. PRODESSA, too, is very involved with the process of educational reform as demonstrated in the previous chapter.

PRODESSA and ESEDIR both have a relationship with the state that reflects the two 'options' noted above. With respect to working within the state, PRODESSA works as service delivery institutions for two of the Ministry's programs, CONALFA, the adult literacy program, and PRONADE, the program that extends schools to presently unserviced or underserviced areas. ESEDIR has negotiated recognition by the Ministry of Education of its residential program *Community Development from a Mayan Perspective* so that its students who are primary teachers can take a year off work to attend the program and get a pay increase when they graduate. Both organisations are very involved with the educational reform process which, because it emerges from the Peace Accords, is not strictly speaking, a government initiative. The educational reform process, first through COPARE, and now through the Consultative Commission, has a life of its own, but it is, nonetheless, closely tied in to the government and its success is ultimately linked to the Ministry of Education's (e.g., the Government's) willingness to finance and implement it.

Even ESEDIR and PRODESSA's community organising and lobbying on behalf of the educational reform, which might be interpreted as operating against the state is, in fact, a simple demand that the state assume its responsibilities with respect to public education.

With respect to working outside of, and without reference to, the state structure, much of PRODESSA's local work can be seen as doing precisely that. The encouragement and strengthening of local development committees, the training of local leaders, the raising of the cultural level in the communities through discussions of Maya history and practising Maya religious rites is an important part of PRODESSA's work which has nothing to do with the state although the intersection with the state will come as these community members put demands on the state to work with them to solve their pressing problems.

Local Power and National Work

The Pan Maya movement works at both the national level to effect political reforms and at the local level to strengthen its base and improve the daily lives of the Maya people socially, economically and culturally. What makes ESEDIR and PRODESSA unique is that unlike most organisations that work either at the national level or the local level, they work effectively at both and indeed, as PRODESSA Deputy Director Daniel Domingo noted, their national work is "sustained" or enriched by their local work. This local work, he suggested, poses the question of the relationship between the form of organisation emerging locally and developments occurring at the national level such as those related to the ideas that PRODESSA and ESEDIR are contributing to the Educational Reform.

PRODESSA's work at the local level has been documented in Chapters 7 and 8. Its objective is the creation of local power defined, as we saw in Chapter 6, as the ability of the community to take charge of its own development. For PRODESSA, this takes the form of working on giving support to the emerging community organisations and directly, or indirectly through ESEDIR, training community leaders to assume greater levels of responsibility. It also entails such practical work, as I have documented, as endeavouring to improve agricultural and livestock production, the improvement of the quality of locally produced handicrafts and the marketing of the resulting production so as to increase the standard of living of the community. Their work also involves using a variety of strategies to promote education at the local level, both formal and informal, technical and cultural, for adults and children.

This work, too, occurs within, or disconnected from, the state structure, depending upon the activity. In every case, however, PRODESSA encourages the villagers it is working with to make demands on the municipality to meet the needs of their communities

but in no case, even in Cabricán where the Mayor is the former local PRODESSA director, does PRODESSA suggest that the local organisations subordinate themselves to, or otherwise become dependent upon, the municipal or national government. The strategy is one of creating self-sustaining organisations that can outline development strategies for their community, respond to initiatives from the state, initiate their own activities and seek funding for these where such funding might be available. Where the Mayor and council are open to working with the organisations of the community, so much the better, as this increases the possibility of co-operation that will benefit the communities. Where such collaboration is non existent, or begrudging, then the strategy is essentially the same – strengthen community organisations and take advantage of whatever funding and other supports can be identified. The net result has been a modest flow of benefits to the community such as those described in the three year reviews cited in Chapter 7 and an increase in the organisational capacity of local community organisations. While of the two organisations, it is PRODESSA that is playing the lead role in this community level work, they are frequently assisted in much of this work by the ESEDIR graduates living in those communities.

These experiences contribute to the ability of both organisations to work at the national level. The importance of the knowledge gained from the work and credibility that arises from it cannot be over-stated. Again, the national work, which takes the form of promoting educational reform, has been documented in Chapter 9. Even this national work has a local component as ESEDIR is involved with teacher training through a distance education program in Barrillas and the Ixcán which keeps them in touch with the reality of the local rural schools through their in-service teacher/students. Their residential community development program and distance education follow-up program keeps them in

touch with community development practices through their courses and the field placements that their students do as part of their programme of studies. PRODESSA's involvement with the national educational reform is grounded in their work with PRONADE, CONALFA and the establishment of local Educational Reform Committees and their advocacy work at the community level on behalf of this initiative.

The net result of this symbiotic relationship between the national work and the local work has allowed both organisations to make significant contributions to both the COPARE Commission and the follow-up Consultative Commission. Not only have both organisations contributed a conceptual framework which found echo in the COPARE Report but they are active in generating curriculum that meets the needs of Maya students and in encouraging the testing of the provisions emerging from the reform process in the many schools in which they have influence. Not only are ESEDIR graduates steeped in this approach as they go back to their classrooms but, as noted in Chapter 6, PRODESSA collaborators like Brother Félix Velásquez Saquic work with local teachers in Cabricán assisting them to incorporate Maya history, culture and values into their teaching.

It is difficult to overstate the importance of this local work and the way in which it is done by PRODESSA. The objective is clear: the creation of the capacity of local people to articulate their collective aspirations, define their most pressing needs and direct their own development. Unlike many agencies working in the field, they do not limit their efforts to implementing projects, rather they direct their energies to what is referred to in the literature as human resource development but it is human resource development designed to encourage the emergence of self-aware and self-directing citizens who will carry on this work once PRODESSA leaves the community and begins to work elsewhere.

The Role of the NGOs and the Civil Society:

The third lens through which I viewed developments in Guatemala involved the emergence of a large number of non government organisations, of which PRODESSA and ESEDIR are examples, which form part of an invigorated civil society and constitute the organisational expression of the Pan Maya movement.

The existence of organisations of the civil society is not a new phenomenon in Guatemala. What is new is that since their creation as part of the Assembly of the Civil Society and the granting to the ACS the status as interlocutor in the peace negotiations, the organisations of the civil society, and particularly the Maya organisations, have become important players at the local, regional and national level in representing the interests of their members. CACIF, the organisation of the most economically powerful interests of Guatemalan society, always enjoyed this status but they have been joined by a multiplicity of organisations which challenge their world view and special interests.

The other thing that has changed is that in the recent past, basically since the 1954 counter-revolution, is the ability of the popular organisations of the civil society to intervene in the politics and the socio-economic development of their communities. During the war there were NGOs operating throughout the country but there were entire regions where they simply could not work and in those areas that they were allowed to work, they had to do so in a way that the military could not interpret it as being in anyway threatening to them or supportive of what they considered to be subversive. Some progressive organisations developed creative subterfuges and did continue to work during this era but at

great risk and these examples have to be considered exceptions to the rule.[153]

Today community development workers and social activists run less risk of death or injury although it should be said that there are enough incidents where community workers are harassed or threatened to suspect that there is a real danger that the peace resisters are testing what they can get away with especially with respect to organisations that work in the area of human rights.

An issue of some importance, both practical and theoretical, is the relationship of the work being done by the organisations of civil society, whether these be more or less traditional development NGOs or local community organisations, and the responsibility of the state. Reform liberals and the Left have historically taken the position that the state has the responsibility to provide physical infrastructure (schools, clinics, roads, community centres, etc); legal infrastructure (enabling laws); and a wide range of basic services to the population. In the advanced capitalist countries, this reached its apex with the Keynesian welfare state in the 30 years following World War 11. Poultanzas, as we saw in Chapter 3, critiqued this situation, describing it as social engineering, and suggested that this was neither desirable nor realisable for practical reasons. He talked about *un Etat moindre* which I have come to think of as an *enabling* state. In this conception, the state still has an important role to play in providing physical and legal infrastructure and services but the level of state support that is desirable and realisable will lie somewhere between the

[153] PRODESSA and ESEDIR were not exempt from the repression typical of the era. A bomb exploded at the PRODESSA/ESEDIR campus in Guatemala City in the early 1990s and Brother Oscar, the then head of ESEDIR and now the Director of PRODESSA, was on a death list, along with other prominent NGO leaders, that was circulated by a well known right wing terrorist organisation. In 1987 I recall visiting the home in Guatemala City of the head of another NGO activist and he explained that he had built a wall between his front window and the street to reduce the danger of being shot from the street by snipers. Of course such measures would not help much if you were truly a priority target as the unimaginably long list of victims of the terror attest.

Keynesian advanced capitalist welfare state and the parsimonious Guatemalan state. It is definitely beyond the scope of this work to explore this relationship fully but leaving aside the desirability of such an *Etat providence,* even at the pragmatic level, it is obvious that the Guatemalan state will never be able to provide the level of public services that we associate with countries such as Sweden, Canada, Britain, France and Germany during the post-war Fordist era. The question for me is to what extent do the organisations of the civil society demand that the state provide basic services and to what extent do they demand that the state collaborate with civil organisations so that they can either provide these services on their own or do it within the context of a negotiated division of labour between state and civil society? Bonamusa's discussion of the various roles assumed by NGOs in Chapter 3 is a useful starting point for this reflection.

Ultimately, only the state has the resources and the authority to do certain projects ranging from providing adequate health and education systems to building roads and providing public security. To ask local communities to pay for these things is tantamount to denying these services to them or denying the quantity and quality of service delivery that can be expected. Certainly, too, only the state can provide national legal framework that establishes standards (labour law, public health, public education, criminal and civil law) that the public can rightfully expect in a modern society. Within that minimum set of expectations there is plenty of room to involve the community in decision-making, supervision and even the execution of projects that ensures that local input is respected without imposing an undue burden on the community.

The issue of the role of the state in the provision of services in this, the post Keynesian era, and by extension, the role of community and non governmental organisations in service provision is a particularly difficult one. In a not too distant past it

seemed simple – social reformers always demanded that the state do more. Today it is not so simple. In the North, progressives are divided on how to respond to downsizing. Some continue to demand that the state provide the same, or even higher, levels of services as in the past while others, having accepted the Left critique of the welfare state, seek a yet to be defined alternative that usually involves a balance between the role for the state and for the civil society. In the South progressives come to the issue from the opposite end of the problem – what demands should be put on a state that historically never provided such services? In practice, in Guatemala, for example, NGOs and community organisations are delivering services that in the North we expect, even today in the era of cutbacks, government to provide.

My reading of documents such as the diagnostic reports cited in Chapter 7 and my observations of the practice of PRODESSA at the micro-regional level, have led me to believe that there is an implicit notion in Guatemala that the state has a major role to play in national development but that this role will not be realised without the vigorous assertion of the will of the people organised through its local, regional and national organisations. Creating that situation is at the heart of PRODESSA and ESEDIR's work.

In effect the organisations of civil society, just as they did in their interventions during the negotiation of the Peace Accords, are working to influence the state's priorities while winning the confidence of the people they purport to represent by helping the community to resolve its most pressing problems with or without state support. Certainly, for example, PRODESSA's work to address the educational deficit through its participation in the CONALFA and PRONADE programs is an example of working with state support, while their work in encouraging public health through the provision of potable water and the installation of latrines in isolated communities is occurring without any, or only a

modicum, of state support. The entire strategy in favour of educational reform is, in effect, a strategy to get the state to assume its responsibilities for providing a pertinent, modern and culturally sensitive national education system with a large component of public involvement.

The sum total of this approach constitutes, I would argue, an implicit strategy of encouraging the evolution in Guatemala of an *Etat moindre* that is responsive to public needs while recognising the centrality of public involvement at all levels of decision-making and on-going administration. This is consistent with Poulantzas' concern when he postulated a dynamic relationship between electoral democracy, mass movements, the organisations of civil society and the preservation and extension of democratic rights, developed in Chapter 3. Clearly such a conception grants a role to the civil society of monitoring government decision-making and monitoring the provision of public services once these services are in place. Indeed, the role of monitoring government services is taking place through ESEDIR and PRODESSA's work in the educational sector, not to mention the work of a long list of Maya organisations, starting with the CNEM (the National Mayan Council on Education), that also work in this sector.

These kinds of considerations take us back to the notion of "radical reformism."

Knowledge Creation

The final lens through which I have attempted to come to an understanding of what is happening in Guatemala is one that has been dealt with rather more implicitly than explicitly, and that is the issue of knowledge creation.

In Chapter 3 I reviewed Gramsci's well-known observations about how the hegemony of the dominant ideology is organised and how many of the institutions, not only of the political society, but also of the civil society, reflect and reproduce what Karl Marx

called the "ideas of the ruling class." Certainly the schools are invariably transmitters of the dominant ideology as one would expect of such a strategically important institution that is controlled by the state. The Church, or churches, too, are frequently such institutions as was the case in Gramsci's Italy. One of Gramsci's important contributions to social theory is his critique of the role of these organisations of the civil society in ensuring that the subordinate classes embrace those ideas which cause them to accept, or at least acquiesce in, their role in society. He didn't stop with a critique, however, and he developed the notion of creating organisations of civil society to promote the culture and ideology of the subordinate classes and of the popular movements.

Cohen and Arato developed this idea and argued that in recent years in the West it has been the women's movement that was the first mass movement to effectively use the organisations of the civil society that it established to reflect and to propagate an alternative world view. This gave organisational expression to an alternative ideology, the feminist ideology, and turned it into a political force to be reckoned with. (Cohen and Arato, 1992, 529).

Whereas Gramsci limited his observations to the role of popular sector organisations of civil society in counteracting the domination of the ideology of the ruling class and thus conceptualised the civil society as the terrain upon which to struggle for ideological dominance, Poulantzas went a step further and included the state as a site of such struggle and argued, in effect, that state sponsored institutions like the schools could be a site of ideological struggle. Gramsci would not have considered this possibility as he never questioned the orthodox Marxist assumption that the state was inevitably an instrument of the ruling class and thus impervious to being *won*, in whole or in part, by the popular classes.

PRODESSA and ESEDIR, I suggest, are engaging in a two pronged strategy to address the issue of the hold that the dominant ideology has on the Maya population. On the one hand they are popularising Many of the practices associated with the Maya cosmovision through the organisations that they work with at the local level. Whether the organisation is a community development council, a women's organisation or a literacy group, the discussion of Maya history, values and traditions form a part, formally or informally, of their work. I cited in Chapter 8, for example, the favourable comments of community leaders during the 1999 Impact Study, about the role of the ESEDIR graduates in promoting Maya culture in their communities as a part of their community work. Certainly, instilling pride in one's Maya heritage and encouraging the community to live by their Maya values is part of a process of self-affirmation and contributes to reducing the influence of the anti-Maya dominant ideology on these community members. ESEDIR, too, operates on the basis of this world view within its own organisation, and in its curriculum, pedagogy and practices in its own school and teacher training programmes. In this way, it models how Mayan values can be practised in the world beyond the rural communities.

At the same time, and with respect to the other "prong", and consistent with Poulantzas' theoretical contribution, PRODESSA and ESEDIR are part of a much larger movement that is challenging the state institutions to include aspects of the Maya cosmovision as an integral part of the larger Guatemalan multicultural reality. This is what their work in educational reform is all about.

It is, of course, a big step from understanding the concept of what constitutes the Maya cosmovision and practising it organisationally in daily life. Macleod (1997) convincingly argues that the CDRO has gone a long way towards achieving this in its community work and have even applied it to a banking institution. (See Chapter 6). I am

equally convinced, based on my observations of ESEDIR's practices within the framework of their residential program on *Community Development From a Mayan Perspective,* that they have successfully incorporated this value system into their organisational culture and their educational practice.

Just what constitutes the integration of the Maya cosmovision into modern organisations will involve a constant process of evolution and negotiation. It is a big jump from the traditional villages in the Cabricán micro-region to the modern, if modest, offices of PRODESSA and ESEDIR in the capital, just as it is a big jump from a one-room village school in the micro-region of Purulhá to the highly sophisticated offices that serve as headquarters to the CNEM, the Maya National Commission on Education. Is CNEM any less Mayan than the one-room school for all its computers and sophisticated tele-communications systems?

How this issue will be handled will emerge over time in practice and undoubtedly be reconsidered constantly, just as many of the complex issues that face the Pan Maya movement, from its relations with the Ladino community to the role of electoral politics, will emerge over time in practice and be subject to reconsideration.

Hillary Wainwright (1994), building upon the experience of the women's movement and of the oppositional movements that emerged prior to the fall of the socialist regimes of Eastern Europe, spoke of knowledge creation emerging from the struggle for social justice and social transformation. Just as no one could predict what the post socialist reality would look like, or even if there would be a post socialist reality, when the Eastern European civil movements began to appear, no one can say with certainty what the future of Guatemala holds although, through the practice of organisations like PRODESSA and ESEDIR, certain values related to democratic practices, popular participation and non-

violent solutions to differences are being put into practice. It is this practice which it is important to systematise, theorise and make a part of explicit strategies of social change.

Some Final Remarks:

It is difficult to draw definitive conclusions about something as fluid and contradictory as the movement for social change in Guatemala in this, the post-conflict era. The truth of Susanne Jonas' observation, first cited in Chapter 4, that nothing is simple in Guatemala, is as true for me now as it was at the beginning of my study. I am wise enough not to make specific predictions about what will happen in the course of the remaining months of this year, 2001, or in the next 5 or 10 years. It is impossible to say.

The resolve of the men and women of PRODESSA and ESEDIR, and the countless other organisations that are struggling to transform Guatemala, is tested every day by daunting circumstances and formidable foes. These circumstances and these foes have clearly slowed the pace of reform to a crawl. If anyone, for example, thought in December, 1996 when the final Peace Accords were signed, that in five years, by December, 2001 the provisions they contained would be implemented, then they will be disappointed. Jorge Solares is right when he notes that very little progress with respect to the formal process of implementation has been made. And yet, there is a process of nation building occurring in Guatemala that would have been unimaginable twenty, or even ten, years ago. Twenty years ago the military massacred with impunity daring even, in 1980, to burn the Spanish Embassy killing the ambassador and a number of Maya protesters who were conducting a sit-in at the embassy to draw international attention to their plight. Ten years ago, in the incident recalled in Chapter 1, and reflected in the title of this study, the military still thought they could kidnap with impunity but the people of Santiago, Atitlán said *basta*, enough, and spontaneously began a process which, symbolically at least, if not literally, led

to the peace negotiations, the resulting Accords, and created the conditions which makes possible the work described in this study. When one feels demoralised at the slow pace of change it is often instructive to cast back 10 or 20 years and to measure progress and then take a deep breath as one contemplates what is left to be done.

Even recognising the short-comings of the process of implementation, however, I cannot agree with those who look at the situation in Guatemala almost five years after the signing of the Accords and say that the revolutionary forces made a mistake in giving up the armed struggle in the hope that many of their goals would be achieved through the negotiated agreements.[154] The URNG, as I have pointed out, had less than 4,000 men and women under arms by the mid 1990s and they were fighting a force in excess of 40,000. The toll of the war on civilians, especially the Maya population, was appalling, and no military victory was in sight. The peace negotiations snatched significant advantage from a deadly stalemate and, as I have argued, created the preconditions for, and legitimised, the work of those who work for social change in Guatemala.

As an educator there is much to be learned from the Guatemalan situation. ESEDIR is a tiny organisation which until quite recently only offered a program to 30 students a year but in so doing, they not only trained about 300 community activists in the 1988 – 2000 period, and this work continues, but their real influence goes beyond these numbers. They have significantly contributed to the emergence of, and given organisational expression to, a Maya educational philosophy that simultaneously honours the past while

[154] At the Washington, D. C. CIES meeting referred to in Chapter 9, a participant told me that contacts of his in one of the Colombian armed organisations told him that they could not enter into a peace agreement with the Colombian government because of the lessons of the Guatemalan peace process and its aftermath. Such a position both under-estimates what was objectively possible to achieve through negotiations in Guatemala in the mid 1990s and assumes that the same history would be repeated in Colombia where the conditions are very different.

providing a pedagogy that paves the way for the construction of a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and multi-linguistic school system that will serve all Guatemalan children of whatever ethnic origin. ESEDIR is truly an educational institution at the service of social transformation.

As for our ability to generalise from the Guatemalan situation, I am convinced that what is happening there can serve as a case study of interest, not only to post conflict societies, but of societies with very different histories as well. It is worth noting, for example, that much of the theory I used to provide my 'lenses' through which I have worked to explain the Pan Maya movement and the work of ESEDIR and PRODESSA emerged from very different circumstances to those prevailing in Guatemala. Wainwright (1994) studied oppositional movements in Eastern Europe; Poulantzas (1973, 1978, 1983) studied Europe and, in particular, France; Cohen and Arato (1992) studied Western Europe and the United States. Other theorists upon whom I have relied developed their theory in Guatemala. These include Gálvez (1997, 1998); Macleod (1997); Warren (1998); and Jonas (2000). The framework within which this latter group works is not, I would argue, in any way inconsistent with that of the former group. In short, Guatemala constitutes a part of an international social change experience involving a proactive role for the organisations of the civil society many of which adhere to a new social movement. This movement for social change is occurring in the absence of an agreed-upon political strategy. In this sense the conditions affecting the forces of social change in Guatemala are not unique or, perhaps more accurately, their uniqueness does not take away from the general characteristics that they share with the experience of a wide range of countries, an issue taken up by Marta Harnecker (1999, 2000) in her recent reflections on the theoretical and programmatic crisis facing the forces of social change in Latin America as a whole.

As I have repeatedly said, this study only tells part of the story of the struggle in Guatemala to implement both the spirit and many of the details of the Peace Accords. There are many themes that could well be the subject of further study. These would include:

- corresponding developments within the Ladino popular sectors with a view to understanding how Maya/Ladino alliances might be affected;
- contradictions within the Maya movement including gender issues that might forecast future realignments and new agendas for change;
- the issue of agency and the role of existing or future parties of the left in Guatemala;
- the validity of keeping the Peace Accords as the main political point of reference for the Maya movement; and
- the role of the Guatemalan state in providing basic services in the post Keynesian era.

I began this final section by noting that it is difficult to know how to conclude a study of such a fluid and contradictory process such as that which is unfolding in Guatemala. In her concluding remarks, Susanne Jonas reminded us, consistent with her view that, whatever their shortcomings, the Peace Accords opened doors that had been closed for decades. They prepare the terrain for future struggles which will undoubtedly take a very different form that that which is unfolding today in Guatemala. This will not be an easy or quick struggle and Jonas observes that "the Guatemalan experience is a painful reminder that anything worth doing involves endless struggle." (Jonas, 2000, 245).

She closes by citing FLACSO's Dr. Jorge Solares' reflections on his visit to the Gallery of the Academy of Fine Arts in Florence.

> At the end of a half-lit corridor, a cascade of brilliant light falls from the dome over the perfectly finished white sculpture of David by the genius sculptor Michelangelo. As if guarding both sides of the gallery and in the shadow, are enormous stones of unpolished marble – from which, struggling to emerge with titanic boldness ... are the unfinished, tragic, colossal and unresolved figures of four prisoners, struggling to get out of the prison of the unfinished rock.
>
> One has the feeling that the great Michelangelo was suggesting that any birth of a free and dignified existence is a difficult process, in which nothing can be taken for granted and nothing is gratuitously conceded. Any struggle for dignity and liberty bears the face of the pain and the passion contained in these marble figures by the genius of Florence. The Maya movement, as the counterpart in jade, is struggling to free itself from the unpolished stone that the centuries of mistreatment and exploitation represent. We can only hope that on this path will be found a resolution as brilliant as that which triumphs in that famous museum in Florence. (Solares, cited in Jonas, 2000, 245).

The enormous stones of unpolished marble can be thought of as having been quarried in Santiago, Atitlán in early December, 1990. Since then, thousands of pairs of hands representing the hopes and aspirations of literally millions of Guatemalan Maya in the *aldeas, municipalidades* and *departamentos* of the highlands have worked, and continue working to fashion, the final product. The stone, we can never forget, is stained by the blood of many of those who have worked in its transformation, but it is also a work representing creativity and hope, not just of a single artist, but of a whole people.

APPENDICES

Interviews Effected in Guatemala

Ordered Chronologically

	Name	M/F	Community
01.	María Hernandez Pérez	F	Cunén, El Quiché
02.	Anonymous Male	M	San Lucas Tolimán, Sololá
03.	Miguel Angel Camajá	M	Cunén, El Quiché
04.	Ana Morales C.	F	Guatemala City
05.	Vinicio Dubón García	M	Purulhá, Alta Verapaz
06.	Marco Antonio Pérez	M	Purulhá, Alta Verapaz
07.	Sebastian Castro García	M	Purulhá, Alta Verapaz
08.	Anonymous Male	M	Zuril, Ixcán, El Quiché
09.	Mateo Juan Simón	M	Victoria 20 de Enero, Ixcán
10.	José Yac Naj	M	Guatemala City
11.	Guillermo Morán Jom	M	San Cristóbal, Alta Verapaz
12.	Anonymous Male	M	San Cristóbal, Alta Verapaz
13.	Julio Pop	M	San Cristóbal, Alta Verapaz
14.	Karin Edith Cac Pacay	F	San Cristóbal, Alta Verapaz
15.	Bernardino Ramírez	M	Cabricán, Quetzaltenango
16.	Hno Félix Velásquez Saquic	M	Cabricán, Quetzaltenango
17.	Arnoldo Ríos Pérez	M	Cabricán, Quetzaltenango
18.	Enrique Francisco Ramos Bates	M	Cabricán, Quetzaltenango
19.	Conrado Marco Antonio Pérez	M	Cabricán, Quetzaltenango
20.	Maximiliano Rojas Ramírez	M	Cabricán, Quetzaltenango
21.	Pablo Orozco	M	Cabricán, Quetzaltenango
22.	Juan Pú Hernandez	M	Guatemala City
23.	Santos Matéas Tomás	M	Concepción, Tutuapa, San Marcos
24.	Cresencio Ramírez Juarez	M	Concepción, Tutuapa, San Marcos
25.	Diomila Simón Roblano	F	Concepción, Tutuapa, San Marcos
26.	Anonymous Male	M	Concepción, Tutuapa, San Marcos
27.	Cándido Lorenzo Carrillo C.	M	Concepción, Tutuapa, San Marcos
28.	Walter Nelson Rolando Julujuj S.	M	Concepción, Tutuapa, San Marcos
29.	Carlos Tomás Marcario	M	Concepción, Tutuapa, San Marcos
30.	Anonymous Female	F	Concepción, Tutuapa, San Marcos
31.	Nolberto Ambrosio	M	Concepción, Tutuapa, San Marcos
32.	Edgar Roberto García	M	Concepción, Tutuapa, San Marcos
33.	Daniel Saquec	M	Guatemala City
34.	Lic. Miguel Salazar	M	Guatemala City
35.	Daniel Domingo	M	Guatemala City
36.	Dr. Jorge Solares	M	Guatemala City
37.	Olga Pérez	M	Guatemala City
38.	Rudy López	M	Guatemala City
39.	Mario Recancoj	M	Guatemala City
40.	Feliciana Mendoza	F	Guatemala City

Interviews Effected in Guatemala

Names, Profession, Dates Interviewed

Ordered Alphabetically by First Family Name

Nolberto Ambrosio,
Mayor,
Concepción, Tutuapa, San Marcos
Interviewed July 18, 2000

Anonymous Female,
Promoter, Community Organisation,
PRODESSA,
ESEDIR graduate, 1998
Concepción, Tutuapa, San Marcos
Interviewed July 18, 2000

Anonymous Male,
Primary Teacher (Active),
Part-time Social Promoter,
Local community organisation,
ESEDIR graduate, 1999
San Lucas Tolimán, Sololá
Interviewed July 8, 2000

Anonymous Male,
Primary Teacher (Active),
Adult Education Co-ordinator,
PRODESSA,
ESEDIR graduate, 1995,
San Cristóbal, Alta Verapaz
Interviewed July 12, 2000

Anonymous Male,
Adult Education Promoter,
PRODESSA,
ESEDIR graduate, 1999,
Concepción, Tutuapa, San Marcos
Interviewed July 18, 2000

Anonymous Male,
Primary Teacher (Active),
Part-time social promoter,
Currently ESEDIR student,
Interviewed July 11, 2000

Karin Edith Cac Pacay,
Primary Teacher,
Co-ordinator, Women's Organisation,
PRODESSA,
San Cristóbal, Alta Verapaz,
Interviewed July 13, 2000

Miguel Angel Camajá,
Principal, Primary School,
ESEDIR graduate, 1990,
Cunén, El Quiché,
Interviewed July 8, 2000

Cándido Lorenzo Caririllo C.,
Livestock promoter,
PRODESSA,
Concepción, Tutuapa, San Marcos,
Interviewed July 18, 2000

Sebastian Castro Garcia,
Mayor,
Purulhá, BajaVerapaz,
Interviewed July 11, 2000

Daniel Domingo L.,
Deputy Director, Education
PRODESSA,
ESEDIR graduate, 1992
Guatemala City,
Interviewed July 28, 2000

Vinicio Dubón García,
Primary Teachers,
Unemployed,
Community Activist,
ESEDIR graduate, 1998,
Purulhá, Baja Verapaz,
Interviewed July 11, 2000

Edgar Roberto García Tax,
Co-ordinator, Microregion,
PRODESSA,
Concepción, Tutuapa, San Marcos,
Interviewed July 19, 2000

María Hernandez Pérez,
Primary Teacher (Active),
Part-time Social Promoter,
ESEDIR graduate, 1997
Cunén, El Quiché,
Interviewed July 8, 2000

Mateo Juan Simón,
Primary Teacher (Active),
Part-time Social Promoter,
Currently ESEDIR student,
Victoria 20 de Enero, Ixcán,
Interviewed July 21, 2000

Walter Nelson Rolando Julajuj Sunún,
Facilitator Community Economic
Development,
PRODESSA,
ESEDIR graduate, 1995,
Concepción, Tutuapa, San Marcos
Interviewed July 21, 2000

Rudy López,
Executive Director,
Association of Guatemalan
Municipalities,
Guatemala City,
Interviewed August 1, 2000

Carlos Tomás Macario,
Facilitator, Community Organisation,
PRODESSA,
Concepción, Tutuapa, San Marcos
Interviewed July 18, 2000

Santos Matéas Tomás,
Community Leader,
Rural villages in Microregion of
Concepción, Tutuapa, San Marcos,
Interviewed July 19, 2000

Feliciana Mendoza,
Representative of the
Rigoberta Menchu Foundation,
at the National Council of Mayan
Education,
ESEDIR graduate, 1991,
Guatemala City,
Interviewed August 3, 2000

Ana Morales C.,
Primary Teacher,
ESEDIR staff in Guatemala City,
ESEDIR graduate, 1991,
Formerly Co-ordinator, Adult
Education, ESEDIR, Ixcán,
Interviewed July 10, 2000

Guillermo Morán Jom,
Principal, Primary School,
Community Activist,
Maya Priest (in training),
ESEDIR graduate, 1992,
San Cristóbal, Alta Verpaz,
Interviewed July 12, 2000

Pablo Orozco (Papul),
Co-ordinator, Microregion
PRODESSA,
Cabricán, Quetzaltenango,
Interviewed July 31, 2000

Conrado Marco Antonio Pérez,
Primary Teacher (Active),
ESEDIR graduate, 1996,
Cabricán, Quetzaltenango,
Interviewed July 21, 2000

Marco Antonio Pérez,
Co-ordinator, Microregion,
PRODESSA,
Purulhá, Baja Verapaz,
Interviewed July 11, 2000

Olga Pérez,
Director,
INCIDE,
Guatemala City,
Interviewed August 1, 2000

Julio Pop,
Co-ordinator, Microregion,
PRODESSA,
San Cristóbal, Alta Verapaz
Interviewed July 12, 2000

Juan Pú Hernandez,
Co-ordinating Council,
COPMAGUA,
Guatemala City,
Interviewed July 25, 2000

Bernadino Ramírez,
Mayor,
ESEDIR graduate, 1995,
Former Co-ordinator,
PRODESSA, Micro-region
Cabricán, Quetzaltenango,
Interviewed July 18, 2000

Cresencio Ramírez,
Community Leader,
Rural villages in Microregion of
Concepción, Tutuapa, San Marcos,
Interviewed July 19, 2000

Enrique Francisco Ramos Bates,
Primary teacher (Active),
ESEDIR graduate, 1997,
Cabricán, Quetzaltenango,
Interviewed July 21, 2000

Mario Recancoj Mendoza,
Coordinador-General,
ESEDIR,
Guatemala City,
Interviewed August 2, 2000

Arnoldo Ríos Pérez,
Livestock promoter,
PRODESSA,
Cabricán, Quetzaltenango,
Interviewed July 25, 2000

Maximiliano Rojas Ramírez,
Primary teacher (Active),
ESEDIR graduate, 1995
Cabricán, Quetzaltenango,
Interviewed July 21, 2000

Lic. Manuel Salazar T.,
Counsellor, UNESCO,
Former Vice-Minister, Education and
Government Negotiator, Peace Plan,
Guatemala City,
Interviewed July 28, 2000

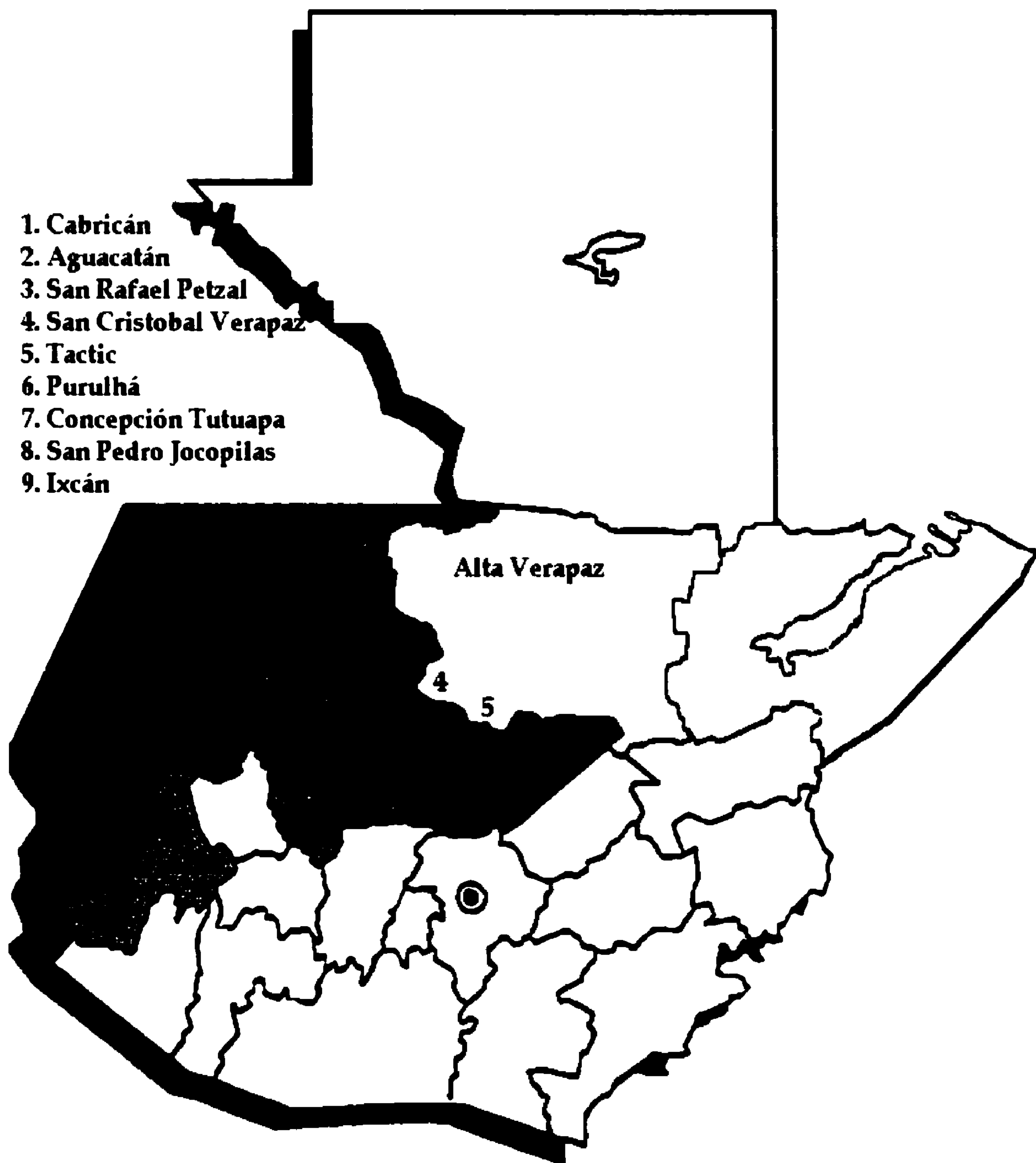
Daniel Saquec,
Deputy-director, Organisation,
PRODESSA,
Guatemala City,
Interviewed July 27, 2000

Diomila Simón Roblano,
Community Leader,
Rural villages in Microregion of
Concepción, Tutuapa, San Marcos,
Interviewed July 19, 2000

Dr. Juan Solares,
Co-ordinator, Ethnic Studies,
FLACSO,
Guatemala City,
Interviewed July 31, 2000

Hno Félix Lorenzo Velásquez Saquic,
Promoter, Community Education,
PRODESSA,
Cabricán, Quetzaltenango,
Interviewed July 25, 2000

José Yac N.,
ESEDIR Staff,
Distance Education Program,
Guatemala City,
Interviewed July 12, 2000


MICROREGIONES
PRODESSA
1. Cabricán
2. Aguacatán
3. San Rafael Petzal
4. San Cristobal Verapaz
5. Tactic
6. Purulhá
7. Concepción Tutuapa
8. San Pedro Jocopilas
9. Ixcán
Alta Verapaz
4
5

SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL OF MICHAEL O'SULLIVAN

translation of

RESUMEN DE LA PROPUESTA DE INVESTIGACION DE MICHAEL O'SULLIVAN

I am a student registered in a post graduate program of the University of Toronto in Canada. This research project, including this interview, will be a part of my thesis which will be presented to the university as a requirement leading to graduation.

My research will focus on the process by the residents of creating local power in the Mayan communities of the highlands and specifically I will study the role that ESEDIR plays in supporting these initiatives. I am also interested in studying how ESEDIR contributes to the strengthening of the national Maya movement and its efforts to achieve the political, social, cultural and economic aspirations in accordance with how they were defined in the various Peace Accords which led to the end of the Civil War.

I am interested in the relationship between the ESEDIR educational program of preparing promoters in community development from a Mayan perspective and the emergence of Maya consciousness and organisation. Finally I would like to be able to comment on the nature of the contribution of this post secondary institution on the theme of the empowering of the Maya people in this, the post conflict era.

Student/Investigator

Michael O'Sullivan, CIDEC
Researcher,
10th Floor, Ontario Institute for
Studies in Education (OISE)
252 Bloor Street West
Toronto, Ontario, M5S 1V6

Tel: (Canada) 416 422 2717
Email: (Canada) 7micosul@sympatico.ca

Research Supervisor

Dr. Joseph Farrell, Director of
CIDEC,
10th Floor, Ontario Institute for
Studies in Education (OISE)
252 Bloor Street West
Toronto, Ontario, M5S 1V6

Tel: 416 486 2361
Email: jfarrell@oise.utoronto.ca

RESUMEN DE LA PROPUESTA DE INVESTIGACION DE MICHAEL O'SULLIVAN

Yo soy un estudiante matriculado en un programa de postgrado en la Universidad de Toronto, en Canadá. Este proyecto de investigación, incluyendo esta entrevista, será parte de mi tesis, la cual es un estudio avanzado que será presentado a la universidad para el cumplimiento de uno de los requisitos para titularme.

Mi investigación se enfocará en el proceso de alcance del poder local en las comunidades del altiplano maya por los residentes locales y específicamente estudiaré el rol que ESEDIR cumple apoyando estas iniciativas. También estoy interesado en estudiar como lo anterior contribuye al fortalecimiento de movimiento nacional maya y sus esfuerzos para lograr sus aspiraciones políticas, sociales, culturales y económicas, de acuerdo como fueron articuladas en los distintos acuerdos de paz firmados que llevaron al fin de la Guerra Civil.

Estoy interesado en la relación del programa de educación de ESEDIR y su capacitación de promotores para el desarrollo comunitario (desde una perspectiva maya); y la emergencia de la conciencia y organización mayas. Finalmente quiero ser capaz de comentar sobre la naturaleza de la contribución de esta institución de educación post secundaria al tema del empoderamiento del pueblo maya en esta era de post conflicto.

Estudiante/investigador

Michael O'Sullivan, investigador de Proyectos CIDEC
Piso 10, Instituto para el estudio de la educación de Ontario
252 Bloor Street West
Toronto, Ontario, M5S 1V6

Tel: (Canadá) 416 422 2717
Email: (Canadá) 7micosul@sympatico.ca

Supervisor de investigaciones

Dr. Joseph Farrell, supervisor de CIDEC
Piso 10, Instituto para el estudio de la educación de Ontario
252 Bloor Street West
Toronto, Ontario, M5S 1V6

Tel: 416 486 2361
Email: jfarrell@oise.utoronto.ca

CARTA DE CONSENIMIENTO INFORMADO

Guatemala

He leído el resumen adjunto, de la propuesta de investigación que está siendo realizada por Michael O'Sullivan con respecto a su tesis para el doctorado en la Universidad de Toronto, y estoy de acuerdo en ser entrevistado por él sobre asuntos relacionados a este proyecto de investigación.

Estoy de acuerdo en que esta entrevista sea grabada.

He sido informado que mi nombre no aparecerá en ningún material escrito que él produzca y, en caso que necesite citarme, yo seré mencionado con un seudónimo. También he sido informado que, en su material escrito, la municipalidad donde yo trabajo y/o vivo no será identificada con su nombre real.

Se me ha indicado también de que, si en caso que yo no desee que la información que yo haya provisto en esta entrevista sea utilizada en este proyecto de investigación, yo tengo la opción de retirar mi consentimiento. El plazo para hacerlo es antes del 30 de abril del 2001, y debo hacerlo ya sea informando al Sr. O'sullivan directamente o a un miembro del personal de ESEDIR quien le comunicará esto al Sr. O'Sullivan. Entiendo que, después del 30 de abril, el Sr. O'Sullivan ya habría defendido su tesis y sería demasiado tarde para retirar mi autorización.

Firmado en ___________________, Guatemala, el de _____ de ______ del año 2000.

Firma: ______________________

LETTER OF INFORMED CONSENT

translation of

CARTA DE CONSENIMIENTO INFORMADO

Guatemala

I have read the attached summary of the research proposal that is being done by Michael O'Sullivan with respect to his doctoral thesis at the University of Toronto and I agree to being interviewed by him on various matters related to this research project.

I agree that this interview be tape recorded.

I have been informed that my name will not appear in any written material that he produces and in the case where he must cite me, I will be given a pseudonym. I have also been informed that, in his written material, the municipality where I work and/or live will not be identified by its real name.

I have also been informed that, in the case where I do not wish that the information that I have provided in this interview be used in this research project, I have the option of withdrawing my consent. The deadline for during this is before April 30, 2001 and I must do so by informing Mr. O'Sullivan directly or by telling a member of the ESEDIR staff who will communicate this to Mr. O'Sullivan. I understand that after April 30, Mr. O'Sullivan may have defended his thesis and it will be to late to withdraw my authorization.

Signed in ______________________, Guatemala, on the _____ of ______, 2000.

Signature: ______________________

PRODESSA STRATEGIC MAP
(TRANSLATION OF Mapa Estratégico de PRODESSA)

2002

- The groups and rural communities have a greater ability at self management and planning and have strengthened their networks and their ability to intervene at the local level
- PRODESSA is defined, and functions, as a Maya organisation and has a high level of equitable participation; the relations into which it enters and the actions which is undertakes are based on Mayan principles and values. It is partially sustainable.

Vision 2004

PRODESSA is a consolidated Maya organisation that is highly sustainable and which, through self-management in education, organisation and production, efficiently strengthen the organisations and rural communities, especially Maya organisations and communities, in order that they constantly improve their quality of life and together we intervene in the political decision-making of the country.

2000

- The groups and rural communities are better organised, are involved in networks with defined structures and work to better their conditions of life and participate more critically in the exercise of popular power.
- PRODESSA has been strengthened as a Maya organisation and has Initiated a systematic process towards achieving sustainability.

Mission

Inspired by our Mayan culture, we work in solidarity with the rural Communities to achieve a community development and to contribute to the construction of an equitable and just multicultural society.

1998

- The groups and rural communities are engaged in a process of Community organisation with a view to achieving local development.
- PRODESSA has initiated a systematic process of appropriating the principles and values of the Maya cosmovision and has established a structure congruent with them and with a view to creating a proactive presence.

MAPA ESTRATÉGICO DE PRODESSA

VISIÓN 2004

PRODESSA es una organización maya consolidada altamente sostenible que a través de la educación, organización y producción en la línea de la autogestión, fortalece eficientemente a las organizaciones y comunidades rurales articuladas, especialmente mayas, para que constantemente mejore su calidad de vida y juntos incidamos en las decisiones políticas del país.

2002

- **Los grupos y comunidades rurales poseen mayor capacidad autogestiva y propositiva y han fortalecido sus redes e inciden a nivel local.**
- **PRODESSA esta definido y funciona como una organización maya, cuenta con un alto nivel de participación equitativa, las relaciones y acciones están basadas en las vivencias de los principios y valores mayas. Es parcialmente sostenible.**

2000

- **Los grupos y comunidades rurales están mejor organizados, articulados en redes con estructuras definidas mejoran sus condiciones de vida y participan más críticamente en el ejercicio del poder local.**
- **PRODESSA se ha fortalecido como organización maya y ha iniciado un proceso sistemático hacia la sostenibilidad.**

MISIÓN

Inspirados en nuestra cultura maya, trabajamos solidariamente con las comunidades rurales por un desarrollo comunitario y contribuimos a la construcción de una sociedad intercultural, equitativa y justa.

1998

- **Los grupos y comunidades rurales están en proceso de organización comunitaria en la línea del desarrollo local.**
- **PRODESSA ha iniciado un proceso sistemático de apropiación de los principios y valores de la cosmovisión maya, ha establecido una estructura congruente con los mismos y con capacidad propositiva.**

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