



**THE ARKLETON TRUST**

**TO IMPROVE SPANISH FARMING  
WITHOUT HURTING SPANISH  
FARMERS**

*A report on agricultural development  
strategies in Spain*

*by*

**Tom Gjelten**

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## **PREFACE**

Tom Gjelten has been a rural educationist and free-lance writer. His professional career started with five years as a school teacher in a small community school on North Haven Island (Maine), the basis of his first book, "Schooling in Isolated Communities". His interest in rural education and development was then consolidated by his work with the Southern Appalachian Leadership Training Programme and as instructor at the University of Alaska. Shortly before the award of his Ernest Cook Fellowship he had written a series of case studies of education and local development activities in Spain, Finland, Sweden and the Western Isles of Scotland for an OECD project on that subject. Since completing his Fellowship study he has worked with NPR, the public radio network in the USA, where he is the Labour and Education Correspondent. In this capacity, he travels regularly across the United States and reports stories about work and life in a variety of communities. He is also a frequent visitor to Latin America where he follows issues of social and economic development.

That Tom is committed to a deeper understanding of the human aspects of rural change shines through this report as in his other work. Added to this cardinal virtue is his clarity of thought and expression. Spain is on the threshold of EEC entry; from this report we get an excellent introduction to the human and policy dilemmas inherent in the process of agrarian change which seems likely to become more rapid in the years ahead, and an insight into some of the institutional developments (such as the 'Escuelas Campesinas') which have coalesced around these dilemmas.

John Bryden  
Programme Director

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

During April and early May 1983, I visited Spain as an Ernest Cook fellow in order to study agricultural education, training, and development activities. I have observed and written about such activities in the United States and wished to investigate them in a country with a very different agricultural history and a unique set of development needs. With the resources afforded me by the Cook fellowship, I was able to travel from northern Spain to southern Spain, visiting seven provinces and observing first-hand the diversity of climate and agricultural orientation that make Spanish farming such a fascinating subject. I interviewed farmers, agricultural union leaders, educators, rural community activists, extension agents, agricultural economists, and officials in the Ministry of Agriculture. The following report is based on the generous assistance of many people, but the views expressed are entirely my own, and I bear full responsibility for any shortcomings. With this report, I offer my gratitude to both the Arkleton Trust and the Ernest Cook Trust, and to friends and colleagues in Spain who made my stay there so pleasant.

## INTRODUCTION

Ten or fifteen years ago, Spanish agriculture was widely regarded with some disdain, symbolizing as it did the country's lack of development. Today, Spanish agriculture is the focus of international attention. Modernization and productive growth have occurred in the sector over the years, but this does not explain the change of attitude. It is instead the prospect of Spain's entry into the European Economic Community (EEC), which is now expected in late 1985 or early 1986. Agriculture is and always has been an important part of the Spanish economy, and it is through its agricultural production and trade that Spain will make its economic presence in Europe most noticeable. There is fear among southern European nations that cheaper Spanish wine, fruits, vegetables, and olive oil will flood the European market and crowd out their own products. Among Spanish economists, meanwhile, there is speculation about the development potential of Spanish agriculture and the possible contribution of that sector to an improvement in the country's economic situation. Currently, the country is suffering from a combination of high unemployment and inflation, a rising government budgetary deficit, an unfavourable balance of trade, and minimal economic growth.

It is clear that for agriculture (as for the economy as a whole) EEC membership has both advantages and disadvantages. Spain is, indeed, highly competitive in its Mediterranean oriented agricultural production. It is in a much weaker position, however, with respect to feed grains, vegetable oils, dairy products, and beef, and in those areas, Spanish producers would be hurt by European competition. Until now, productivity differences within the agricultural sector have been minimized by agricultural and trade policies that have the effect of subsidizing weak operations and restraining strong ones. When Spain joins the Common Market, barriers to the import of agricultural products from other European countries will be removed, and Spanish producers of those products will probably suffer. On the other hand, Spanish exports of wine, olive oil, and horticultural products will presumably rise. Unproductive parts of the agricultural sector, therefore, will lose, while the productive parts should benefit. Whether the current agricultural trade deficit will be reduced or disappear is not yet clear, but the net effect of EEC membership will certainly be to increase significantly the press-

ure on the agricultural sector to perform more efficiently. The severity of Spain's current economic condition will contribute further to this pressure, since the trade deficit has become more problematic and less tolerable.

Under these influences, agricultural development issues in Spain have become a top priority and a matter of national concern. In fact, they have always been prominent; Spain has a strong agricultural tradition, and "la cuestión agraria" has helped to frame public debate for at least two centuries. But in the last twenty years, rural concerns have been neglected, and it has taken a socio-economic crisis in the rural zone and the expectation of Spain's entry into the Common Market to bring them back to national attention. It is thus an ideal time to examine agricultural development strategies here in their full context and to identify the lessons that this story has for other countries. In this report, I begin by describing the challenge of rural development in Spain, with special attention to the problems facing small farmers. In the second half, I report on the institutions and strategies for meeting that challenge.



## PART I THE DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGE IN RURAL SPAIN

The story of Spanish agriculture shows above all else the extent to which Spain is a disadvantaged country. Until 25 or 30 years ago, agriculture dominated the Spanish economy. Work in the agricultural sector in the late 1950s occupied almost half of the economically active population, and agricultural production accounted for about a fourth of the Gross Domestic Product and two-thirds of total exports. All this, however, reveals more about the weakness of the Spanish economy than about the strength of its agricultural sector. Logically, agriculture should be less important than it is. Only about half of the total land area is considered to have agricultural potential, and that potential is not great. Spain has the lowest rainfall and the poorest soil in Western Europe. Wheat is one of its most important crops, yet the yields tend to be about half those of France, England, or Germany — and then only when the land can be sown. Historically, the need for fallowing has been so great in Spain that only about half the land can be sown each year, while in other European countries, the percent of fallow grain lands has averaged about 10 or 20 percent. Spanish wheat crops, therefore, may be only a fourth or a fifth of what other European nations are able to produce.

Moreover, the problems of Spanish agriculture are not only climatological. Most of the country is dry, true, but there is also a rainy Spain — the northern coastal areas, especially Galicia and the Basque region, and along the slopes of the Pyrenees and the Cantabrian mountain chains. This is basically a green country, with heavily forested areas. It is the region most similar to northern Europe, and the agriculture of the area could be described as having an Atlantic orientation, with an emphasis on livestock and dairy production. Indeed, the diversity of Spanish agriculture is one of its most striking features, and to understand the dimensions of the problems facing the sector, it is necessary to consider a complex of climatological and historical factors.

The arrangement of land tenure, to begin with, is unusually polarized in Spain. Historically, two forms of landholding have predominated: huge estates called *latifundios*, often comprising a thousand hectares or more, and tiny micro-farms of fewer than five hectares. The latter, often called *minifundios* for purposes of

contrast, may not even consist of a single holding but rather an assortment of small parcels, some not more than 50 metres square and often widely scattered. Farms in the mid-range, capable of supporting a family, have become more common in the last two decades, but they are not yet as well established in Spain as in other European countries.

To an extent, the arrangement of land tenure in Spain parallels climatic patterns, with the minifundio concentrated in the North and the latifundio in the South. Most agricultural historians, however, contend that the minifundio-latifundio distinction derives not from climatic variation but from historical factors related to the reconquest of the peninsula from the Moorish invaders. The northern and central portions of the peninsula were the first to be taken, and they were largely depopulated at the time. Small settlers were allowed to take possession of the land in return for their allegiance to some royal lord, and a tradition of peasant independence was established which has survived to this day. In the South, meanwhile, a feudalistic structure developed, and the circumstances of the reconquest there meant that large landholdings merely changed from one owner to another.

In any case, the property structure of rural Spain today is similar in many respects to the one established centuries ago. Not surprisingly, agricultural practices have also been slow to change, and this has been true for large and small farms alike. Paradoxically, the operation of minifundios and latifundios have had some features in common through their development. Both types of exploitation have traditionally depended heavily on the input of manual labour. The minifundio has been worked intensively by the family that lived on it. The latifundio has also been worked primarily by human labour, hired in this case and paid a meager wage. Both types of enterprises have historically suffered from under-capitalization: the peasant farmer, or *campesino*, has not been able to afford to buy agricultural equipment, and the *latifundista* has often chosen to spend his profits elsewhere.

The continuation of old ways in Spanish agriculture, in fact, has given rise to a whole set of problems: a lack of irrigation and mechanization, overcultivation, poor crop selection, and an inefficient use of energy. They are compounded by the fact that social change in rural Spain has been retarded by a number of factors, and as a consequence the farming population has not

been rejuvenating. Taken together, all these issues define what has been widely called the deficiency of "traditional agriculture", and it is the persistence of this complex phenomenon, on top of generally unsuitable natural conditions, that constitutes the central challenge facing the planners of agricultural development in Spain today.

### **Spanish agriculture in its historical context**

Public awareness of problems in the agricultural sector in Spain goes at least as far back as the 19th century, when the *campesinos* and the *jornaleros*, or day labourers, together comprised an agricultural underclass that was rapidly becoming restless. They were forced to accept an abysmally low standard of living, while the big landowners lived a life of extravagant wealth and conspicuous consumption. But it was not until 1931 that a serious attempt at agrarian reform in Spain was attempted. In that year, the monarchy of Alfonso XIII was overthrown, and a Republican government succeeded to power. It proclaimed as its purpose the regeneration of Spain after many years of strife, and it set out to conciliate the peasantry.

In 1932, a modest agrarian reform law was passed by the Spanish parliament. It called for the expropriation (with compensation) of any agricultural land that was not being cultivated or irrigated but had such potential, and for the division of farms above a certain size. The idea was to redistribute the land from the *latifundistas* to the people who were actually working on it, both for justice and for greater productivity. An irrigation law was also passed that year, the thrust of which was to authorize the state to construct the secondary works necessary to bring water from primary canals to the farms themselves. Both reform efforts ultimately failed, primarily because of a lack of cash and political strength to implement them. The government that enacted the reforms was defeated in a general election less than a year later, being replaced by a conservative government not committed to the reform effort.

Four years later, civil war broke out in Spain between the Republicans and the Nationalist followers of General Francisco Franco. The war divided the rural population, with the farm labourers of Andalusia and Extremadura generally supporting the Republican side, and the *campesinos*, at least those from the

region of Old Castile in central Spain, supporting the Nationalists. The agrarian reform proposals of the Republican government would not have done much for the landed peasants, and the instinctive conservatism of the Castilians made them susceptible to the propaganda of the Nationalists, with its emphasis on stability, the sanctity of property rights, and the need to re-establish the authority of the Catholic church. The Francoist political formula, in fact, assigned a major role to the landed peasantry, along the lines of an agrarian fascism. Its propaganda praised the countryside as the bastion of decency and traditional values, and its ideology presented agriculture not merely as economic activity, but as a superior form of existence. The peasantry was supported as the guardian of Spain's virtue.

After the war, the Franco regime announced it was ready to put some of its ideals into practice through an agrarian reform programme of its own design. An Instituto Nacional de Colonización (INC), or National Institute of Land Settlement, was founded in 1939. Its declared aim was to expand the Spanish peasantry by creating thousands of family plots through the purchase of land from big landowners, thereby breaking up some of the latifundios. In addition, the INC was supposed to undertake a number of technical activities designed to improve the agricultural infrastructure, including irrigation and rural electrification. In reality, little was accomplished in either area. The INC was used primarily to administer the return to original owners of land expropriated under the agrarian reform of the Republic. Since the regime owed its existence to the large landowners, repaying them had to be its top priority. As it turned out, there was not enough money to do much more.

The truth is that, between its glorification of the campesino farmer and its subservience to the latifundista, the Franco regime was politically and ideologically committed to the maintenance of the existing socio-economic order in rural areas, and the record of its rural policies from 1939 onward makes that clear. Generally, it could be said that the primary effect of those policies was to reinforce the practice of traditional agriculture in Spain and to preserve the social structure upon which traditional agriculture was built. Migration to urban areas was discouraged through both implicit and explicit means. Campesinos and farm labourers, for example, needed a statement from the local authorities testifying to their "good conduct" before they were

allowed to travel. The farm labourers, whose revolutionary instincts had been a problem in the past, were singled out for especially brutal repression, so as to be sure they were kept firmly in their place. One of the major tasks of the Civil Guard, the state's police force, was to maintain control over the farm workers.

Specifically agricultural policies, meanwhile, seem also to have been designed to block change and perpetuate old practices. Although the minifundio/latifundio dichotomy had long been recognized as a problematic and inefficient tenure arrangement, the Franco regime seemed to be more interested in keeping it than in changing it. No effort to do anything about the problems of the minifundio, for example, was made until 1952, when the Servicio Nacional de Concentración Parcelaria (SNCP), or National Plot Concentration Service, was established. It was the task of this agency to consolidate the landholdings of the peasant farmer, which were often highly fragmented. A typical Castilian or Galician campesino probably had ten or fifteen separately fenced parcels of about a quarter hectare each. The SNCP would come into a village, survey the land, and reassign the plots in a more practical manner.

But the agency was largely ineffective. Their work proceeded very slowly, and it hardly improved the peasants' situation. Even after the amalgamation, the peasants typically were left with three or four separate plots, not one. Moreover, the entire exercise was in many ways irrelevant. It avoided the fundamental problem of the minifundio, which is that two, three, or four hectares of land, divided or not, is simply not enough to support a family adequately. Because no latifundio was touched by the SNCP and no new land turned over to peasants, the net change was minimal; the programme was instead seen as an indication that the government was legitimatizing the minifundio/latifundio disparity.

A second example of the Franco's regime blockage of modern agricultural development in Spain was its policy of protectionist interventionism in the agricultural market. Through a combination of high import tariffs and guaranteed prices, the regime managed to ensure that neither the minifundista nor the latifundista needed to be overly concerned about having a modern, competitive, operation. Furthermore, the fact that the price supports focused on particular crops, notably wheat, that were

important primarily to the Castilian peasant and the Andalusian landowner, seems to indicate that the intent behind the policy was primarily political.

The regime also contributed to the perpetuation of traditional agriculture by failing to encourage agricultural investment. Throughout the 1940s and into the 1950s, during a period when all of Spanish agriculture was seriously undercapitalized, agricultural income was channelled out of agriculture and into other sectors. The government did virtually nothing about this problem, either by providing incentives for agricultural investment or by extending credit to farmers who needed it.

One positive step was taken in 1956 with the establishment of the Servicio de Extensión Agraria (SEA), or Agricultural Extension Service. The SEA was modelled after the County Extension Service of the US Department of Agriculture, with a system of regional and local offices staffed by agricultural education specialists. Field agents were assigned to work directly with the agricultural population, providing farm families with technical advice and encouraging them to adopt a modern outlook. The Extensión Agraria met with little success, however, at least in its first few years. Many of the agents had a tendency to evangelize, and SEA accounts of its work during that period reveal a distinctly paternalistic attitude that probably limited the agency's effectiveness.<sup>1</sup>

The failure of the Franco regime to support agricultural modernization was, until the 1950s, consistent with its general economic policy. For its first fifteen years, the regime followed a line of isolationism and autarky that impeded normal capitalist development. With severe restrictions on foreign trade and a super-nationalistic monetary policy, industrial growth was minimal. Beginning in the 1950s, however, the regime began to fall under the influence of business interests who urged that modernization was needed. A military alliance with the US, meanwhile, reopened Spain to the rest of the world and, especially, to foreign investment. More liberal economic policies were soon introduced in the industrial sector, culminating in a "Stabilization Plan" in 1959. Foreign trade grew rapidly, and a period of dramatic industrial growth began.

The new economic policies, however, were not accompanied by adjustments in agricultural policy, which continued to support the maintenance of the traditional system. It may be that

there was a conflict between old fascists and new technocrats within the Franco government. Or it could be that Franco believed that the old rural socio-economic structure had to be preserved as long as possible, because it was such an important part of his power base. In any case, there was a clear contradiction between agricultural and economic policies during this period, and it essentially meant that the agricultural sector was being set up for a bruising blow.

Liberal economic policies and industrial development would inevitably precipitate a grave crisis for traditional agriculture. First, the removal of some of the import tariffs would bring in agricultural goods from outside the country, thereby lowering prices and farm income. More importantly, industrialization would necessitate a shift of labour from the agricultural to the industrial sector. This had to be apparent to the Franco regime. Yet it did almost nothing to prepare the agricultural sector for change, as evidenced by the government's failure throughout the 1950s and early 1960s to encourage greater capitalization of farm enterprises through an agricultural investment policy. Thus, even as the Spanish economy was geared up for massive industrial growth, Spanish agriculture remained fundamentally unchanged in both its structure and orientation.

As a result of this failure to coordinate agricultural and industrial development, the inevitable rural-to-urban shift came with a shocking jolt. To be sure, the first signs of a crisis in the agricultural sector were apparent in the 1950s, when agricultural labourers began to drift off the land in increasing numbers. But the "take-off" point, when the economy fully ignited, came quite suddenly about 1962. The results were impressive. For the next decade, the Spanish economy grew at an annual rate of more than seven percent. And the agricultural population, living as they were in an environment that had changed only slightly since the beginning of the century, abandoned the countryside in droves. The gap between urban and rural regions, widened by the contradictory policies of the Franco regime, precipitated a wave of emigration without parallel in modern European history.

By the time the emigration had largely run its course in 1975, about 40 percent of the rural population had left the countryside. Whereas in 1950 about one of two economically active persons in Spain worked in the agricultural sector, by 1975 only one of five was so employed. A major population shift is traumatic under

any conditions; when it happens as rapidly as it did in Spain, the social costs are compounded. Families were torn apart, entire villages were abandoned, and the cultural shock was incalculable.

Moreover, serious steps to ameliorate the rural crisis were never taken. In line with the new pro-development spirit, the government did increase its support for agricultural modernization; irrigation networks were considerably expanded, and a rural development service — the Servicio de Ordenación Rural, or SOR — was instituted. Like other such operations in other countries, the SOR concentrated its efforts in selected “rural development zones” that were identified as having severe needs. The agency would draw up a comprehensive plan for the region, then coordinate development activities from several ministries and government agencies in such areas as education, health, transportation, and communication. The various actions, however, were of little consequence for the vast majority of farmers. The irrigation programmes were aimed mainly at the large landowners, and the SOR came too late and did too little to make much of a difference.

Generally, it seemed as if the government, when it finally committed itself to the support of industrial development, was assuming that modernization meant urbanization, pure and simple. The first economic and social development plan, initiated in 1964, was aimed almost exclusively at urban areas. Relative to the attention given to urban industrialization schemes, rural development activities were virtually insignificant.

### **Rural Spain today: Stuck at an underdeveloped stage**

In 1975, Franco died, and Spain began its transition to a modern democratic government and conventional public policies. But in many ways it was already too late for rural Spain. By then, the country's explosive economic growth had largely subsided, as a result of the worldwide energy crisis. In the last half of the decade, an economic recession had set in, and firms began to lay off workers. People continued to move from the countryside to look for jobs in the city, however, and the result was that unemployment steadily rose. By the end of the decade, Spain's economic problems were among the worst in Europe. In 1983, about 17 percent of the workforce is unemployed. Double-digit



inflation, meanwhile, continues, and the peseta loses ground. Its value relative to the US dollar has dropped by about 55 percent in the last three years alone.

Under such stressful economic conditions, and with the government largely preoccupied by the challenge of the democratic transition, progress since 1975 in alleviating the effects of underdevelopment has been slow. Rural Spain today is one of the least developed regions of western Europe. The agricultural sector is still expected to support roughly a fifth of the population, even though its share of the Gross Domestic Product is only about eight percent. Clearly, this means a wide disparity between the incomes of rural and urban residents. In 1980, the average person employed in the agricultural sector of the economy earned only 37 percent of the national average income, and the rural-urban income gap was widening steadily.

Furthermore, the imbalance between urban and rural areas extends well beyond personal income. Educational services, for example, in rural areas are vastly inferior to those in urban areas, beginning with the physical condition of the schools themselves. Many of the schools are in disrepair, with broken windows and leaky roofs common. In a 1980 survey of rural school teachers in five provinces, 53 percent of the teachers reported that basic facilities (lighting and heating systems, washrooms and desks) in their schools were either "deficient" or "very deficient" and 60 percent of the teachers reported that their schools were unclean and poorly cared for.<sup>2</sup>

Similar findings could be expected with respect to other aspects of the rural environment. Roads in many rural areas are nothing more than dusty trails and are frequently impassable. Many villages, perhaps the majority in the less developed regions of the interior, are totally without telephone services. Basic utilities cannot even be taken for granted; a 1976 survey found that most of the households in rural Spain lacked running water.<sup>3</sup>

When the imbalance between an urban and rural area is so great, a mass exodus from the countryside to the city, as happened in Spain, is absolutely inevitable. But it has been a selective emigration; it is mostly the young who have left. As a consequence, rural Spain has become largely a land of old people. In 1981, 45 percent of the people working in agriculture were over fifty years of age, while in the workforce generally, only 26 percent fell into that age category. Thousands of villages are inhabited

exclusively by old people. The men, in their black berets and wooden canes, walk the cobblestone streets and gather on benches in the town square at midday to share stories and memories. The women, dressed identically in dark sweaters and wool skirts, keep mostly to themselves. Many do not leave their houses all day, except to go to mass.

The departure of young people from the countryside has become such a serious problem that local governments are re-evaluating their policies and programmes in order to determine how they might make their localities more attractive. The movement towards consolidation of village schools, for example, has slowed considerably because of a fear that once children began to lose attachment to their home village, they will never return.

Nowhere is the meaning of rural underdevelopment more apparent, however, than on the minifundio. In Galicia, the campesinos still cut hay by hand each morning to feed their cows. Most of them own just a hectare or two of land. Things are only slightly better for the poorest of Castilian peasants. They have had the advantage of government supported wheat prices, but they produce so little that it is of little help. Many have not mechanized their operation at all, and during the harvest season, they can be seen threshing the grain by hand. And the province of Extremadura (its name translates as "extremely harsh"), the sights of a campesino riding his burro down a dusty street, or of an old woman gathering firewood in a burlap sack, belong to another age entirely.

These are the extreme cases, but that only means they illustrate a bit more clearly the problems that are associated with all small farms in Spain. Such farms are significant not only in numbers, but in terms of the land they occupy. About a fourth of all the utilized farmland in Spain is taken up by farms of less than twenty hectares, a size which in almost any part of Spain would mean a marginal operation. The agriculture practiced on these farms is limited by several factors, and the net result is bad news for Spanish agriculture as a whole.

First, there is the problem of *land fragmentation*. This has been reduced in recent years due to the efforts of the SNCP; between 1962 and 1972 (the last years for which data are available), the number of farm plots fell from 39 million to 29 million. But it remains a serious problem. Even in 1972, the average farm

holding in Spain consisted of 14 separate plots. In many cases, each plot is bounded by a stone fence. The farmers inevitably spend much time walking from plot to plot or moving their livestock, and the efficient use of land is clearly diminished. A second problem on small farms is the *lack of mechanization*. While the use of tractors has increased dramatically in recent years (in 1957, there was one tractor for every 169 farm workers; by 1970, there was one for every 11), agricultural practices in general remain undermechanized, especially with respect to harvesting equipment. For lack of such equipment, many small farmers are forced to hire labourers to help them during the harvest season.

Related to the problem of mechanization is the *lack of irrigation systems* on small farms. In general, small farms are more likely to be irrigated than large farms, but this is due primarily to the fact that large farms tend to specialize in dry farming techniques. Small farmers are much more likely to be involved in the growing of cereal grains or other horticultural products and are more vulnerable to drought. Expanded irrigation, in fact, is probably the most critical need facing small farmers in Spain. But the small farmer is much less able to finance the development of an irrigation system on his own than the larger farmer would be. This is due not only to his low income, but to the *marginality* of his enterprise. The small farmer simply has less room for risk-taking than does the large farmer. While the large farmer can handle a large indebtedness, for example, the small farmer can take no such chances.

The small Spanish farmer is also handicapped by *diseconomies of scale*. This can be seen, for example, in the fact that many small Spanish farms are over-capitalized, in spite of being under-mechanized. In the village of La Carrera in Old Castile, for example, there are 30 tractors currently in use — on farms that total only about 300 hectares. A tractor may be the only piece of mechanical equipment a farmer has, but if his farm is only a few hectares, his total capital investment in machinery is probably more than is warranted by the size of his enterprise. The same problem exists in a slightly different form with respect to the purchase of other inputs, such as fertilizer, pesticides, and seeds, for which the unit cost is always higher when purchased in small quantities.

Small farms in Spain have also shown a tendency towards *over-cultivation* of their land, due to their desperate need for

additional income. A somewhat strange statistic in Spanish agriculture is that wheat production has occasionally increased when wheat prices are lowest. This seemingly illogical phenomenon is explained by the dependence of campesino farmers on wheat production. When prices are down, they may try to compensate for it by putting more land under cultivation, in an effort to raise production so their meagre income can be sustained. Such continued over-cultivation is bad for the land, and the poor quality of the soil in much of central Spain can be attributed in part to over-tilling and over-grazing.

Farm incomes have risen since agricultural practices began to be modernized in the late 1950s and early 1960s. But for the small farmer, modernization has in many ways weakened his position. Previously, small farmers produced mainly for their own consumption, rather than for the market. Under such conditions, they were not really in competition with the large farmers. But with the advent of modernization and cash crops, small Spanish farmers became more dependent on the market and were forced into more direct competition with large farmers. It leaves them in a vulnerable position. As one campesino remarked to me, "We're taking on all the disadvantages that the large farmer faces, but with none of his advantages."

The small farmer's ability to compete with large farmers, in fact, has declined since modernization made economies of scale more pronounced. As long as large farmers relied as much on manual labour in their operations as small farmers did, production costs did not vary significantly with the size of an operation. But when machinery began to be substituted for manpower, the cost differential between low production and high production was increased. The threshold of viability was raised, and the proportion of farms that were marginal increased significantly.

### **Agricultural development at an impasse**

Spanish agriculture therefore is facing some serious problems. Production growth in the sector is lower than for the economy as a whole. Agricultural imports continue to exceed exports. And agricultural investment remains low relative to investment in other sectors.

The fundamental challenge facing the sector is to improve its competitive position internationally, by increasing production

while reducing costs. This means the agricultural infrastructure (specifically, the irrigation system) needs to be expanded, and the sector needs to learn to deal successfully with the problem of high-priced energy inputs. But much more difficult problems underlie these. Ultimately, the only way to raise production and cut costs is to reform the basic structure of Spanish agriculture. Farmholdings must be consolidated, and the total number of farms must be reduced drastically, in order to eliminate the excess of small, inefficient farms. Finally, the farming population must be rejuvenated, in order that it be able and willing to carry out the many practical improvements that are necessary. Changes in agricultural practice will come very slowly as long as the average farmer is about 55 years old and impoverished.

The instinctive conservatism of these farmers has been reinforced by the suffering they have experienced. They have known hunger, persecution, separation from their families, and the desolation of their communities, and they have been convinced that pain and scarcity are a natural part of being campesino. As an official in the Ministry of Agriculture told me, "Those who have stayed in the countryside and who remain on the farms today are not in a condition to change, nor are they committed to it." Many of them have learned, quite vividly, that taking risks does not usually pay. If changes are now necessary in Spanish agriculture, and they are, then old discouraged farmers must be replaced by young, energetic ones.

But this is the basic dilemma of Spanish agriculture today. The structural changes that are so necessary are, for the moment, out of the question. The 1.2 million Spanish farms smaller than five hectares currently serve an important function: they provide sustenance and even a meagre income for people who have virtually no other options. With an unemployment rate in Spain of 17 percent, neither emigration nor alternative local employment is feasible. And Spain's social welfare system is not so well developed that it can relieve the rural people of their concern over survival. So the campesinos have nowhere to go, and the State has nothing to offer them. On the other hand, the younger farmers who would presumably take over control of consolidated operations are themselves reluctant to stay in the countryside. With commercial and public services as undeveloped as they are in rural Spain, the enterprising members of the younger generation are still prone to emigrate. As a consequence, the

occupation of farming is failing to attract the well-trained workers it so urgently needs.

Rural social problems, in short, are blocking action on the structural problems in the agricultural sector, and agricultural development efforts in Spain are effectively at an impasse. There is in Spain today a widespread sense that it is unrealistic to expect a modernization of the agricultural sector in the short run, because of the intractability of the structural problems. The consensus among most development experts is that social and economic efforts must have priority over narrowly focused technical projects, and that agricultural issues can be addressed only under a comprehensive regional development programme.

In terms of agricultural policy, this means that the minifundio must be accepted, at least for the time being. Though it is recognized that a production unit of one or two hectares is inherently unviable, attention must still focus on raising whatever production capacity the farm may have. And care must be taken to ensure that the crops being grown are the ones likely to bring the operator the most income. The prospect of Spain's entry into the Common Market obviously raises some critical issues in this respect. Agricultural extension agents, for example, have been working hard in the last two years to prepare the campesinos for the implications of EEC membership. The fact that most campesinos currently raise livestock or cereal grains rather than citric fruit and vegetables is obviously problematic.

Most of the work of the agricultural extension service and other development agencies, however, is focusing on non-agricultural issues at the present time. Diversified economic development for rural areas and an expansion of the agricultural social security system are two of the main goals of the Ministry of Agriculture. And considerable attention is being paid to the phenomenon of part-time farming. Since the minifundio is unviable and irreplaceable at the same time, part-time farming would seem to be a promising possibility. It permits the maintenance of the minifundio, while giving additional income support to the minifundista.

While there is a consensus behind this approach for now, however, there is a debate over long term strategy. It is generally recognized that social development cannot be bypassed in favour of some more productivistic agricultural policy. Even if the government were to be so heartless as not to respond to the social

and economic problems of the rural population, it would find those problems impeding any movement on the structural problems in the sector. The disagreement comes over the extent to which social goals should influence development planning in the future. It is a debate that is fascinating to follow, and it is raised to urgency by the pressure of prospective membership in the Common Market. Traditional Spanish agricultur  is not good enough for the 1980s and beyond. But how much can it change without hurting Spanish farmers?

## **PART II REFORMING SPANISH AGRICULTURE: A REPORT ON RECENT ACTIVITIES**

The Franco regime did not accomplish much of lasting significance in the area of agricultural reform, but a development apparatus was established, and the agencies that were part of it continue to be responsible for most of the agricultural development and education work that is carried on in Spain today. The first, the National Institute for Land Settlement (INC), was created in 1939, immediately after the end of the Civil War. The second, the National Plot Concentration Service (SNCP), was established in 1953 to "solve" the minifundio problem. And in 1964, the Rural Development Service (SOR), was established as part of the national programme of economic and social development.

The three agencies were merged in 1971, with the establishment of the Instituto de Reforma y Desarrollo Agrario (IRYDA), or Institute of Agrarian Reform and Development. The IRYDA mission has been to carry on the structural reforms that were supposedly begun under its predecessors, with an emphasis on increasing the amount of farmland under irrigation and continuing with the amalgamation of fragmented farmholdings. Shortly after it was established, IRYDA was given the additional responsibility of identifying large estates where arable land was not being cultivated and then arranging for sale or rental of the land to farmers who needed it.

With the establishment of the Servicio de Extensión Agraria in 1956, the government went on record as supporting changes in the practice as well as the structure of agriculture. The SEA also had developmental aims in the social area. It directed its work at the family farm, and its social programme was intended to support the rural family unit. Each local office, for example, had a "housewife advisor" whose job it was to train women to carry out their domestic tasks more efficiently. The SEA also organized a wide variety of activities for rural youth, and it established and operated a network of agricultural training schools.

Between the INC, SOR, SNCP, IRYDA, and the SEA — at least from the mid 1960s onward — the rural development system in Spain was not unlike that found in other industrialized nations. There was an appropriate structure for the delivery of essential services, and the legislative mandates were broad



enough to authorize the work that needed to be done. Yet, the overall record of these agencies cannot be considered impressive. Rural Spain continues to be severely underdeveloped, and there is little evidence that the development agencies have been able to make any significant impact, as the persistence of an archaic system of land tenure and a lack of adequate infrastructural support testifies. The major problem has been that the development efforts have been carried out, until recently, in a political framework that was not generally accommodating of reform. In one way or another, all the development agencies were supposedly working for social change in rural Spain. But the regime under which they worked was obsessed with the need to maintain order and stability. As a result, the story of rural development work in Franco's Spain is full of contradictions between the appearance of reform and the reality of counter-reform.

Thus, the National Institute of Land Settlement, ostensibly created to distribute farmland to poor peasants, served instead to return the land to the owners from whom it had been expropriated during the second Republic. Similarly, when credits and subsidies were arranged for the improvement of marginal farm operations, the bulk of them went to large farmers. Contradictions such as these occurred because the strategy of the Franco regime was to create institutions and programmes that appeared to support change but functioned to hinder it. The Francoist "unions" are a classic example. Genuine trade unions, freely formed by their members, were illegal under the regime. In their place, the government created its own unions and required all workers to belong. In the case of farmers, the *Hermandades Sindicales de Labradores y Ganaderos*, or Fraternal Brotherhood of Farmers and Stockmen, was the official union.

The one function assigned to the *Hermandades* was to "advise" the government on the determination of agricultural prices. But the officers were all appointed by the regime, and instead of advancing their members' interests, the local affiliates served mainly to keep farmers from associating on their own. The case of agricultural cooperatives is also illustrative. Before the Civil War, agricultural cooperatives of all kinds existed in Spain, and the second Republic was moving toward an agrarian economy based on cooperatives and collective farming. Under the new regime, an official body was created to oversee the cooperative movement. The only legal cooperatives were those administered

under the supervision of the state organism, and the practical effect was that cooperative activity was brought under tight control and severely limited. It is not that rural assistance organizations were fraudulent; it is more accurate to say they were irrelevant. Under a regime that was founded on principles of agrarian fascism, the development agencies could hardly function normally or effectively. An in-depth look at one of the agencies makes this clear.

### **The Extensión Agraria and group agriculture**

The Servicio de Extensión Agraria is in many ways the agency with the greatest potential for contributing to rural development work in Spain. It is truly a decentralized administration, with over 750 local offices across the country, or one in virtually every major rural town. The field agents assigned to each office are expected to become integrated into the life and activities of the community in which they serve, by living among the farmers and joining in local activities. The agents are all university graduates with backgrounds in forestry, agricultural science, or veterinary medicine and additional professional training through the agency itself, and they are prepared to distribute among the farm population the latest information about modern farm production techniques and guide them in the improvement of their enterprises.

The agents are not, however, considered specialists and are generally not assumed to have technical knowledge in any single branch of agriculture. In fact, they are supposed to act as "promoters" of change rather than direct instigators; their assignment is to modify the attitudes of farmers and their families. Their preservice training is concentrated in the area of social sciences, with units in rural sociology, techniques of social communication, and community development. "The Extensión Agraria is not just an advisory service conceived to transmit to farmers the results of research or agricultural experimentation," in the words of an SEA report; "Farmers and their families themselves must be the active agents of their own development, and in this sense the contribution of the SEA is that of developing the initiative and self-reliance of the families in order that they may lead the way in the constant improvement of farming and the rural life."<sup>4</sup> In playing this role, the SEA intends to serve all

Spanish farmers, big and small, but the small family farm is clearly designated as the primary target of SEA services.

In addition to their nonformal educative role, the SEA has official responsibility for formal vocational agricultural training programmes. Unlike the situation in many other countries, where vocational agriculture is under the domain of the education authorities, vocational agriculture in Spain is carried out in special schools, operated exclusively by the *Extensión Agraria*. Two levels of training are provided. The lowest, lasting two years, is aimed at 14 year old students who have just completed the compulsory phase of public schooling. Basic instruction in agricultural subjects is provided. A second course, lasting three years, follows the first and covers more technical subjects. The SEA also offers courses for older students with no background in agricultural education and apprenticeship courses for young farmers already working in agriculture. In all cases, the instructors are SEA agents already working in the area. This is an advantageous situation in that the agents have personal contact with the students outside of school and are able to provide advice to them in the context of their own family farm as well as in the classroom.

With their broad, well developed network of field agents, therefore, and their control over the public agricultural education system in Spain, the *Extensión Agraria* is clearly in a position to help bring about improvements in Spanish agriculture. What can be accomplished, to be sure, is limited by the structural problems. No amount of technical assistance can make a *minifundio* into a viable farm unit. But even here they have an important role. They can advise the small farmer on those steps that can be taken to maximize production and minimize costs, and they can encourage him, his family, and his neighbours to push for the development of stronger community institutions and better services.

Along this line, the SEA moved a few years after it was established to promote cooperative ventures among small farmers, and this goal soon became one of its top priorities. It was a logical step. The modernization of the Spanish economy brought problems for the Spanish farmer in two areas especially: the purchasing of inputs and the marketing of products. Small farmers were badly disadvantaged in both cases — by high prices in the first and low prices in the second — and the formation of

cooperatives was one way by which they could strengthen their competitive position. Furthermore, the cooperative movement was already established in Spain and had been for a long time. But SEA support and involvement meant a new infusion of government credit and subsidies, and, by 1972, a relaxation of the government regulation of cooperative activity.

Given the characteristics of Spanish agriculture, the move by the SEA to promote cooperative organization was one of the most useful it could have made, and it has won widespread praise for the agency. Especially notable here have been its achievements in support of group farming, which might be considered as one part of the larger cooperative movement. Group farming is more developed in Spain than in any other European country, and articles on the problems and potential of Spanish agriculture invariably make references to it. The record of the Extensión Agraria in this regard is especially impressive in the Aranda de Duero district, an area of historic poverty in the province of Leon. The SEA has been working extensively in this area for 25 years, concentrating on the conversion of small, unviable, individually owned farms into large, viable cooperative production units. They have succeeded in the integration of more than 1,500 family units into 35 cooperatives, with a total area of more than 21,000 hectares. Family farms with an average size of 14 hectares, in other words, have been turned into units of about 600 hectares. The increase in mechanization that this has made possible have been considerable, and the average productivity of the labour input has increased six-fold. Crop yields have increased by 30 percent, and the extension agents have assisted the farmers in experimental ventures with a wide variety of crops.

There are several thousand joint cultivation groups in operation across Spain today. They are concentrated in the central part of the country, and most are concerned with grain growing, though some of the most successful ventures involve stock farming, a type of agriculture singularly unsuited to small scale production units. The group farms are of a wide variety of sizes and internal structures. Not all are cooperatives in the strict sense. The small groups are often constituted as syndicates; in this case, individuals often retain their title to their land, and the enterprise resembles a partnership more than a collective.

A 1974 OECD survey of agricultural policy in Spain made note of the joint cultivation groups and concluded on a hopeful

note, "The economic achievements of these groups appear most encouraging on the whole . . . It may therefore be hoped that these groups will make a significant contribution to the requisite development of stockfarming in the future."<sup>5</sup> After a study visit to Spain five years later, a French agricultural scientist, Denis Bergmann, also observed a number of group farming ventures, but arrived at a different conclusion. He observed that the cooperatives made "a fascinating theme for discussions" but said they were "difficult to implement" and predicted that their share of total production "will remain insignificant in the foreseeable future."<sup>6</sup>

My own visit has led me to believe that Bergmann's conclusion was the more accurate. I found very little evidence of expanded practice of group agriculture, and I heard little about its promise as a solution to Spanish agricultural problems. It is possible there has been some retreat from the emphasis on group agriculture in recent years. As Jesus Alvarez of the SEA in Valladolid told me, "The situation has changed. It's not so much getting the farmers to share mechanization, but to work on better commercialization these days, and to prepare for the impact of the Common Market on our agriculture." I suspect that the most important barrier to the development of cooperative agriculture is an attitudinal one: it has been hard to get the farmers to work together. This is exemplified most clearly in the Castilian region. "This area is called 'Castilla' because of all the castles here," Jesus Alvarez says. "And the castle is a symbol of individualism. One separates himself from the world. There's this heritage of individualism here that makes cooperatives difficult to establish."

The slowness of cooperative development in Spain inevitably raises questions about the effectiveness of the SEA. In his study, Bergmann observed that the greatest need in the area of group agriculture in Spain was for better support services, particularly advice and training in management practices. But it is with respect to the SEA record in this educative area that I heard the most critical comments in Spain. Jose Romero, a priest and agricultural scientist teaching in the Escuela Tecnica de Empresarial Agricola in Córdoba, for example, says that the SEA is "excessively technical" in the orientation of its work and tends to neglect its educative role.

And there have been more general criticisms that the Extensión Agraria has been largely ineffective in its social and com-

munity development activities, particularly where they have involved efforts to get the farmers themselves to take the initiative in improvement efforts and to participate in development planning — exactly the capacities that must underlie a successful expansion of cooperative activity. The reason, according to Jose Antonio Rodriguez, a high ranking SEA official currently serving in the Ministry of Agriculture, is that the farmers' experience with the *Hermandades* left them uneasy about taking any initiatives that might be considered political.

In a candid paper that addresses many of the shortcomings of the Extensión Agraria in recent years, Rodriguez reported that the "weak foundations of rural society" resulting from the legacy of Francoism have hampered the socially oriented work of the agency. "The level of participation by rural people in development planning depends heavily on the existence of appropriate local organizations," he wrote. "The virtual nonexistence of representative professional and syndical organizations during our recent history meant a lack of opportunity for participatory action, inasmuch as this necessarily involves a sharing of power between people and institutions."<sup>7</sup>

### **Agricultural education in a politicized countryside**

If the SEA has, indeed, been overly technical in its work and unable to play the facilitative and educative roles so clearly defined in its own literature, the failure is almost certainly due to its linkage with a regime that did not value popular participation and genuine community organization. One cannot really comprehend what has happened in Spain in the realm of rural development, and why, outside of the historical context. Since the death of Franco in 1975, much of the activity in rural development has changed dramatically.

Franco died at the moment when the period of rapid industrial growth was coming to an end, due to the energy crisis and the worldwide recession. Since then, the Spanish economy has not been able to employ its surplus of rural workers, and emigration, either to urban areas or foreign countries, has ceased to be the safety valve it was during the growth period. Furthermore, the economic changes at the end of the Franco period occurred simultaneously with important political changes: the legalization of opposition political parties and genuine trade unions, the loosening of the grip of the Civil Guard, and the widened

opportunity for a free flow and discussion of critical ideas. As a result of all these changes, rural Spain today is a land in ferment. Rural development has become the political issue that for 40 years it was not allowed to be. The divergence of economic interests is now openly recognized, and sectoral and regional policies are the focus of vigorous debate.

Independent agricultural unions, for example, are a major force in the country. Many trace their origins to an informally organized tractor strike in 1977, when farmers spontaneously and collectively took to the highways in massive convoys to draw attention to their problems. There are at present five major federations, distinguished primarily by their ideological orientation. Those representing small farmers are the most militant and forceful advocates of new government policies for the agricultural sectors. The old farmers' unions kept themselves primarily to work on behalf of higher price supports. Those goals are still important, but the unions talk more these days about the need to guarantee a minimum income for farmers and to provide credit assistance and other aid programmes to help farmers improve marginal operations. Most of the agricultural unions are experiencing a growth in membership these days, but the conservatism and independence of Spanish farmers is still an impediment to their unionization, and the federations together represent only about 15 percent of all Spanish farmers.

Gerardo Garcia Machado, president of the Union de Campesinos de Leon or UCL, predicts that within twenty years Spanish farmers will have improved their positions enough to have reached a level comparable to that of other European farmers. But he says it will be a difficult struggle. "The Franco regime ran the economy on the backs for the farmers because they were the ones who never protested," he says. "Since then, there's been the energy crisis, dramatic increases in the prices of all the inputs, and then devaluation. The only way out of our problems is to be united and claim what is rightfully ours."

At a broader level, there is increasing pressure that the social aspects of Spanish agricultural problems be acknowledged, and that rural development efforts be linked more closely to comprehensive social change. It is not a radical idea, and it is not always expressed in political terms. But discussions of possible improvements in the rural environment inevitably raise political issues, inasmuch as government programmes and public ex-

penditures are involved and the records of past administrations subjected to scrutiny.

The more vigorous this debate has become, the more it has exposed the old contradictions in the State's development apparatus and increased pressure on the official institutions to broaden their programmes. The agricultural reform agency, IRYDA, has been criticized for emphasizing expensive infrastructural improvements such as bridge building to the exclusion of basic reforms in the sector. And farmers' associations and rural interest groups continue to berate the Extensión Agraria for being insufficiently willing to tackle serious social change issues.

Many rural groups, in fact, say the SEA is useful only for a limited purpose — advising farmers on better production techniques — and they argue that independent institutions must carry out the broader activities of development. Gerardo Garcia of the UCL says the SEA should spend less time talking to farmers about the commercialization of their enterprises and leave that to the unions. And with respect to education, a variety of new institutions have sprung up to train rural youth and adults, in both formal and nonformal ways. Like the SEA, they say they provide "agricultural education," but they focus precisely on what the Extensión Agraria has tended to avoid: the broader social and political context in which Spanish agriculture is practiced. Their viewpoint is explicitly activist: they say that "development" in Spain has favoured some groups and neglected others, and that the affected groups must take action to claim their due share of the benefits of development.

Some of the most important examples fit into what is loosely called the *Movimiento de Escuelas Campesinas* or Peasant School Movement. Their notion of a "peasant school", however, is broad. According to one definition, a peasant school is "a meeting place where there is a convergence of the various hopes and fears of those men and women who are seeking a new model of agricultural development, more human and rational, in order that one day they will be able to feel proud to be a campesino."<sup>8</sup>

The movement originated in Avila in 1978, where a priest, Tomas Diaz, began organizing informal seminars for campesinos in several villages. He was soon joined by another priest, Jose Luis Garcia, and the operation has since expanded considerably. About a dozen volunteer "instructors" now work in villages across the province, and the operation has served as an inspira-



tion for similar operations in eight other rural provinces across Spain. The basic model is to hold regular meetings, weekly or more often, where campesinos and instructors discuss issues that concern them.

But these topics are discussed informally, always within the context of the lives and personal experience of the campesinos, and with reference to the political realities they know so well. Diaz says the role of himself and other teachers is not to direct the education of the campesinos, but to "animate" it. The campesinos agree. What they need most, says one, is *acompanimiento*. "We know what we want," he says, "but we need someone to come with us." A syllabus from a recent programme showed that meetings were planned to discuss the agricultural census (how and why it is taken and what it means for campesinos); the municipal elections (how to analyze a candidate's position); cooperativism as a route for rural development; plot amalgamation; political formation; communal pastures; tourism and rural society; and taxes.

The schools are also linked closely to other institutions in the peasants' lives, such as the Unión de Campesinos de Avila, the local farmers' union. The Escuelas Campesinas have been called the "educational arm" of the union, and virtually the same people are involved in both organizations. While the union will work to achieve higher prices for local products, for example, the schools will educate farmers on the structure of the market and the determination of prices. The farmers of the area have also established some cooperatives, and one branch of the peasant schools has been formally organized as a "centre for cooperative training." The basic course in the programme is a comprehensive investigation and exploration of the cooperative movement, its role in rural development, and the basic functioning of a cooperative.

Tomas Diaz and Jose Luis Garcia, the two priests who direct the schools, live among the campesinos at approximately the same standard of living as the campesinos experience. They are involved in all aspects of their lives, and their relations with each of the campesinos who attend the meetings are close and personal. Over the five years the schools have been in operation, they have developed some strong local leaders, such as Antonio Gomez, who has become active in local politics and serves as a discussion leader at most of the meetings that focus on political

issues. He was elected mayor of his village in the municipal elections of May 1983. Indeed, the Escuelas Campesinas seem to be playing a role very similar to the one defined for agricultural extension agents. After all, the agents' "fundamental task", according to the SEA, is "to assist the farmers in order that they may become capable of directing and controlling the change process currently underway in the rural sector, a change process in which they ought to play a leading role."<sup>9</sup>

The problem for the SEA agent is that the social and economic change process in rural areas is, as it has always been, a controversial one. It involves struggle, political conflict, and occasionally confrontation. It is naive in the extreme to expect that an extension agent would be able to assist farmers in taking control of rural social change without being touched by controversy. The agents know that; they also know that until very recently an involvement in controversy might well have ended their career as a SEA agent, which could explain why the SEA has tended to avoid the thornier issues in its community development and organizational work.

Similar contrasts between government operations and independent alternatives exist in the area of formal agricultural education programmes aimed at rural Spanish youth. Here, the official programmes are offered at the agricultural training schools of the Extensión Agraria. Alternative programmes are offered at the Colegios Familiares Rurales, or Family Rural Schools, run by private groups loosely affiliated with the Catholic church. Both programmes result in the same diploma — a "first grade professional training certificate" — and both are state supported. But their educative philosophies and strategies vary significantly.

An especially picturesque but otherwise typical SEA school is the one at Santa Espina in the province of Valladolid. Situated in a restored 12th century monastery, nestled in the green hills, the setting is truly remarkable. Attached to the school is a farm of about 1,100 hectares, about 25 of which are arable. The school was established to provide 14 year old boys with the preparation for work on a farm. It is a residential programme; students live in dormitories and take their meals in a school cafeteria. Their daily regime consists of "theoretical" classes in the morning, consisting primarily of classroom lectures with accompanying written work, followed by several hours of practical assignments in the

afternoon. The practical assignments may include anything from conducting a soil analysis to working on the farm machinery or picking potatoes. The farm produces several cereal crops, plus sugar beets and vegetables and includes an extensive dairy cattle and sheep operation. The production orientation is characteristic of the region. The students themselves, under close supervision, do much of the work on the farm, and they consume the produce in the cafeteria. The excess is sold on the market.

The school was built to accommodate 150 students, but has currently enrolled only about 50 in the 14-16 age bracket. In order to remain open, the school has had to add an additional programme for older agricultural students. The problem, according to Jose Lopez, a school official, is that students don't want to come here. "Every day it gets harder to attract them," he says. "We get our students from the farm families around here, but a lot of the youngsters don't want to have anything to do with agriculture." He is concerned that the future of agriculture in his region is being adversely affected by a shortage of well trained young farmers.

The main alternative to the SEA schools in northern Spain, the Rural Family Schools, number about twenty. The curriculum is similar in both sets of schools, since it is dictated by the government. The basic difference between the two, apart from their public/private structural difference, is that the Family Schools do not educate students in isolation from their families and communities, as the SEA schools do. The key element in the Family Schools is *alternancia*, by which is meant the alternation of one week in school and one week at home, working on the family farm. In this way, the schools are able to ground their instruction in the concrete experience of the students. The objective, according to Jose Maria Leon, one of the founders of the schools in Spain, is to educate the "whole" student. "We are training people, not technicians," he says.

Like the SEA schools, the family schools aim at the training of young farmers, and they include much of the technical material covered in the SEA schools. But their spokesmen argue that a technical training is not sufficient to prepare a farmer. "A small independent farmer has to know a lot of things," says Leon, "not just how fertilizers are formed, but how to present himself, how to speak in public and be interviewed, things about rural living." Each of the Family Schools is governed by a "parents' associa-

tion", and school/family relations are given much attention. Each family meets with the school staff once a week. Moreover, the school is unafraid to intervene in family affairs. In the case of a conflict between a father and son over how their farm should be run, for example, the school may counsel both family members.

In some of the Family Schools, separate courses are held for parents and other adults of the local community. The Escuelas Campesinas of Avila, for example, got started when Tomas Diaz was directing the nonformal adult education side of a Family School in his district. The close school/family and school/community relations make the model of the Family Schools especially appropriate for the needs of rural Spain, according to Leon. The SEA schools may be helpless to do anything about stopping the drift of rural youth away from the countryside. But because the Family School is so deeply involved in youths' families and communities, it is in a better position to influence youth to stay, Leon says. As part of their strategy to convince rural youth to remain in the countryside, the Family Schools supplement their agricultural education programme with vocational training in nonfarm subjects, such as auto mechanics, in which there is also employment potential in the countryside.

Furthermore, through their adult and community education programme, the schools are able to work on community improvement projects. In a recent example, one of the Family Schools hosted a "cultural week" in the local community. Special events were held, musical and cultural programmes featured local talent and spotlighted the area's heritage, and public meetings focused attention on the community's past and future. Discussions were held, for example, on what the entry of Spain into the EEC will mean for the community. "The Family School is more than an educational institution," says Leon. "It's a centre for rural development." In making that statement, Leon is referring not only to social and cultural activities in which the schools are involved, but to other aspects of local affairs that are considerably more political. In their educational discussions, both among students and adults, school leaders do not shy away from attempts to understand and analyze the social conditions of the area and the political and economic forces that are at play. As centres of strategic discussions and organizing, the schools have been the birthplace of several of the major farmers' unions in northern Spain in the past few years. The school offices in

Valladolid are shared with those of a local campesinos' union.

Until very recently, the Escuelas Campesinas and the Colegios Familiares Rurales were clearly at odds with the official authorities in Spain. Their criticisms of government programmes and policies had virtually institutionalized them as part of the opposition movement in Spain. But the election of a Socialist government in October 1982 has introduced a new twist in the story of change in rural Spain. The Partido Socialista de Obreros Españoles (PSOE), or Spanish Socialist Workers' Party, is an old institution, dating back to the 19th century. It was the ruling party during the second Republic, and in some ways its ascendancy represents a return to power of the Republican forces that were defeated in the Civil War (although this could be overstated, since the new PSOE leadership is young and without close ties to the old Republicans). Its natural power base is not in the official institutions of the old regime, but in the labour unions and academic and professional circles that had formed the basis of the opposition movement.

As a result, institutions like the SEA do not have the full weight of the government administration behind them as they once did and are now under pressure to cooperate with the very groups that until recently were so critical of them. A high ranking Ministry of Education official appeared on television with Tomas Díaz recently and said that he considered the Escuelas Campesinas to be the model for nonformal adult education in his own programmes. And a new Ministry of Agricultural policy is that the Extensión Agraria should establish working relationships with the agricultural unions and build them into their local development activity, according to Cristobal Sanchez, a SEA sociologist working under a Ministry assignment.

The result is that there has been a greater politicization of the agencies. "It's a fever," says Wistremundo de Loma-Ossorio, director of the central training school of the SEA and a long time SEA official. He says that it won't be easy. "The people of the Extensión Agraria are mostly from the Right," he says. "It will be hard for them to work with people who have leftist ideas." Some officials from the SEA and IRYDA are so strongly opposed to the new government that in the 1983 municipal elections they stood as candidates of the Alianza Popular, the right wing party led by Manuel Fraga, a former Franco minister. De Loma-Ossorio doesn't approve. "We're in a moment when

everything is political," he says. "People are putting their politics ahead of their work." De Loma-Ossorio says he keeps his ideology to himself. "We need to be apolitical to attend to our business properly," he says.

### **The part-time farming phenomenon: implications for rural development policy**

In all likelihood, the "fever" of Spanish rural politics will soon subside, however. It would be easy to overestimate PSOE's support for radical change. The real significance of the change in government, so far as the farming population is concerned, is that it is making possible an opportunity to re-think the aims of rural development policy in Spain. There seems to be a willingness to at least consider some alternative routes to modernization, ones that are both humane and practical.

The dimensions of the challenge are as humbling as ever. The failure of the official agencies over several decades to reform the archaic system of land tenure in Spain, and the near impossibility of doing anything about it once economic growth was replaced by stagnation and high unemployment, has meant the problem of the minifundio will continue indefinitely. The attention has shifted from discussion of ways to eliminate the tiny farms to discussion of ways to cope with them. Here, the initiatives have clearly come from the campesino class itself, although government actions have been of secondary importance.

The initial and most dramatic campesino response to the changes brought about by industrialization was a class response: emigration. The extent and speed of the emigration is ample evidence that the agricultural lifestyle by itself was not a viable one in modern Spain for most people. Among those who remained, however, two other reactions to the agricultural crisis are notable: the expansion of cooperatives and group agriculture, which has already been discussed, and a shift to farming on a part-time basis. In the first case, government support and assistance has been available. The second has been almost entirely an unassisted development. But in the search for ways to supplement the income of small farmers, there is suddenly new interest in the potential of part-time farming and new consideration of the possibility of supporting it on a long-term basis.

Examples of this phenomenon are abundant. Among many others, they include small farmers who take a job in a factory in a

nearby town, who work as bellhops or porters in a hotel, or who buy a taxi and work on their own. It is widely assumed in Spain that part-time farming has grown considerably in recent years. But since 1972 was the first year in which a question about part-time farming was asked in the agrarian census, and since the 1982 data are not yet available, it is impossible to say with certainty whether the number of part-time farmers is increasing or decreasing. In 1972, about half (48 percent) of all those who said they were farmers reported that their principal source of income was outside the agricultural sector. Some of these so-called farmers may in reality be absentee landowners who live and work in an urban area, so the percentage of "genuine" part-time farmers, for whom farming is a serious occupational activity, is presumably less, but the phenomenon is still significant.

There is nothing new about part-time farming in Spain. During the 19th century, farmers typically produced all the goods they needed in their own homes. Because they sold their surplus handicrafts on the market, they received an outside cash income. Part-time farming has also occurred on a widespread basis where there has been a seasonal need for extra labour, such as during the fruit harvest along the coast and during the grain harvest in the interior. Finally, some of the labourers who have worked on latifundios have had minifundios of their own which they exploited in their spare time and during those periods when they were not needed on the estate. Because of these various situations, Spanish agriculture has always included a significant number of part-time farmers, due to the constant search by peasant families for a higher level of income and a more secure existence.

While it is possible, therefore, that the incidence of part-time farming has not increased in recent years, it is certain that this phenomenon has gone through a major qualitative change. The contemporary practice of part-time farming in Spain is largely a product of industrialization. Many of the farmers who have an outside income today are not unlike those who left the countryside and emigrated to urban areas to find a new job; the difference is that today's part-time farmers lived relatively closer to town and were able to take a new job without leaving home. In the past, part-time farming was practiced primarily in those areas where agricultural production necessitated a seasonal demand for

extra labour; in its current manifestation, it is practiced mainly on the fringe of industrialized zones and in other rural areas where there is an abundance of nonfarm employment, such as in popular tourist zones.

In contemporary Spain, part-time farming represents a kind of double insurance. For the small farmer, fearful of the dreadful consequences of a bad harvest and always limited by the inherent unviability of his enterprise, an outside income may be all that allows him to continue in operation. But industrial work can also be insecure, as those who have left farming and moved to town have often found out. I interviewed a worker in Vejer de la Frontera who was a campesino before taking his factory job. For a time, he continued to live in the countryside, but he soon moved his family into town. Since then, he has been laid off. Now he wishes he'd kept the farm as a sideline . . . and for protection against exactly the problems he now faces. In the countryside, his family could always exist on vegetables, and they were satisfied. "But now that they've tasted city life," he says, "they always want meat — and now we don't even have vegetables."

The widespread practice of part-time farming in Spain has resulted, albeit only lately, in a flurry of professional interest in the subject and considerable public debate. At issue is whether the importance of part-time farming is transitory or permanent and whether it represents a positive factor in rural development. Some see part-time farming only as an intermediate stage in the gradual abandonment of small, unviable farms. Those who see it as of permanent importance have in mind a vision of rural economic growth that is not simply an industrialization of the agricultural sector, but a softer, more diversified process that offers a wide variety of employment opportunities and preserves rural society in more or less its present form.

Both social and economic questions are raised in the debate. It is clear to any observer that the rural-to-urban adjustment in Spain has been painful and costly, both for the people involved and for the nation as a whole. Because part-time farming moderates that shift, inasmuch as the part-time farmer lives simultaneously in the world of agriculture and the world of industry and services, it is seen as a good thing. And with almost one out of five workers in Spain currently out of work, any phenomenon that mitigates the effects of mass unemployment is welcome.



The disagreements come when part-time farming is viewed over the long run. Those who believe it should continue and receive the support of rural development planners argue that it allows people to remain on the land and thus serves as the basis for a uniquely rural pattern of economic development.

Planners who are concerned above all with the productivity of Spanish agriculture tend to see part-time farming in a more negative light. They say that the part-time farmer cultivates his land less carefully, is slower to adopt new technologies, is less efficient, and in general produces less than his full-time counterpart. Moreover, his decisions about which type of agriculture to practice will be motivated by time concerns rather than commercial concerns; the widespread practice of part-time farming could lead to an excess of those crops that are produced easily. Agriculture is an industry, not a hobby, they insist, and deserves the attention of a full-time professional farmer.

Miren Etxezarreta of the Universidad Autonoma de Barcelona has devoted considerable research to the study of part-time farming in Spain and warns that it is important not to underestimate the hardships facing the part-time farmer. She observes that the part-time farmer receives a double salary, but that both salaries tend to be very low, and that both are usually needed in order to ensure a minimum standard of living. On the basis of her research, Etxezarreta is convinced that the vast majority of part-time farmers are motivated by economic concerns, and she says that the farming operation is almost always discontinued as soon as the outside income becomes sufficient to guarantee a minimum of security. There is no evidence, she says of any families practicing part-time farming in the second generation.<sup>10</sup>

Etxezarreta emphasizes that a double career of farming and outside work in most cases involves very hard work and long hours. Moreover, a switch to part-time farming must be seen as a family response, she says, because much of the work originally done by the farm operator must be shared by family members after he takes an outside job. "Consequently," she writes, "family life is converted into feverish activity where there is only time for the rest that is necessary for physical recuperation. Free time and leisure disappear entirely, and the family unit becomes a money-making machine. In numerous interviews with part-time farmers, there was one constant complaint: 'We have money, but what good is it if we don't have time to spend it?'"<sup>11</sup>

According to Jesus Alvarez of the SEA in Valladolid, full-time farmers tend to see the rise of part-time farming as bad news. "It's a different type of agriculture," he told me, "because the part-time farmer already has the safety of an outside salary and doesn't work under the same circumstances. He can hurt the classic farmer." Alvarez says that farmers who depend on agriculture for their entire income think that part-timers undermine the political power of farmers, largely because they are less involved in the agricultural unions.

Industrial workers in semi-rural areas have also been concerned about part-time farming, for reasons that parallel the farmers'. They worry that the worker/farmer is willing to work for lower wages than a full-time worker and is more susceptible to exploitation. They cite the example of migrant workers, whose presence in the workforce, they argue, has resulted in a lowering of the prevailing wage rate in an area. The unions say that the increasing attention being given to part-time farming is due to its popularity with profit-minded industrialists and with city planners who see worker/farmers as a cheap labour force who make no demands on an urban infrastructure because they go back home each night.

All these discussions posit the combination of part-time farming with full-time, industry based employment. But in many rural areas the part-time farmer is self-employed. In Cadiz, for example, I visited with two part-time farmers who had begun their own businesses. One had opened a small roadside restaurant; all the food he sells is grown on his own farm. The other farmer, who keeps livestock, had a reputation for being an excellent butcher. He gradually began taking on butchering jobs for other farmers, and now he has his own *carnicería* on his farm. These examples illustrate the softer side of part-time farming, because the nonfarm activities are more flexible and less time demanding than employment in a large firm would be. They also show that part-time agriculture can play a supportive role with respect to entrepreneurial activity, because it provides both a minimum income and, in these cases, a springboard for a related commercial activity.

The debate over the value and importance of part-time farming would be essentially academic but for the possibility of either encouraging it or discouraging it through public policy. Generally, the governmental position in Spain over the last decade has

been to provide the part-time farmer with a few aids and credits in order to support his enterprise, but without a larger commitment to the support of part-time farming as a permanent part of its rural development policy. The position of the Extensión Agraria reflects this. Generally, the SEA is sympathetic to part-time farmers because of its commitment to a maintenance of family farming wherever possible. It offers a course on part-time farming once or twice a year at its central training school as part of its ongoing inservice education programme for field agents. There is substantial interest in the course, according to Martin Segovia, who directs it. The purpose, he says, is to give agents a broader understanding of part-time farming in order to prepare them to provide better assistance to those engaged in it, including advice about the variety of government aids that are available.

Within the SEA, however, there is a widespread consensus that part-time farming is a transitional phenomenon only and will not continue indefinitely to be important in Spain, and generally the Ministry of Agriculture has done nothing to encourage its expansion. There are, for example, no training programmes aimed either at helping farmers who want to move into nonfarm work or at nonfarmers who want to begin a part-time agricultural enterprise.

The part-time farming issue represents clearly some larger questions about rural development policy in Spain. On the surface, the part-time farming debate separates development strategists in two camps: those who favour an efficiency model, emphasizing productivistic goals above all others, and those who favour an alternative model that incorporates a broader range of social objectives. One of the unfortunate facts of development planning is that accounting methods as currently applied to public policy decisions are almost wholly unable to show the importance of noneconomic benefits. Stable rural communities and balanced development patterns (in a regional and local sense) are highly important outcomes, yet largely unmeasured by methods that emphasize aggregate economic targets. Part-time farming may, in fact, be detrimental to agricultural development in Spain; but it would be unfair to draw conclusions about its overall usefulness without considering other factors.

There is more, however, to the part-time farming debate than this opposition of productivistic and process orientations in development planning. Those who have laboured for greater

social and economic justice in rural Spain emphasize above all the need for social *change*. There is not in Spain the challenge of preserving healthy rural communities that might exist in other countries; there is great misery in rural Spain, and there has been for many years. Any rural development model with humanistic goals must have as its highest priority the alleviation of this misery. In many cases, the practice of part-time farming is embedded in a life of great hardship and exploitation. Great care must be taken to ensure that encouragement for the phenomenon of part-time farming does not mean support for the continuation of the larger socio-economic system of injustice in which the phenomenon is practiced.

With democratic government less than ten years old in Spain, and with a new Socialist administration holding office for just one year, most of the issues of rural development are still unresolved. Some trends established early are moving ahead with unstoppable momentum. The most important is the decentralization of government authority. Spain is now divided into 16 relatively autonomous regions, each with its own parliament. And local government is functioning effectively for the first time in 50 years. Balanced urban/rural development would almost certainly be a corollary of these policies; yet it remains to be seen what specific vision of rural development is held by those currently in office.

### PART III SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

When almost no rain fell on desolated regions of central and southern Spain during the spring of 1983, it meant that farmers in those areas had suffered three consecutive years of drought. Pastures turned brown, and the flocks of sheep and cattle that grazed on them had to be given supplemental feedings. Crop harvests were poor throughout the country, and farm income suffered another decline. Farmers' unions and associations sent delegations to provincial, regional, and national administrations and pleaded for help. They asked for moratoria on land foreclosures, better distribution of feed grains, and an extension of credit.

Such assistance would have given them only short term relief, however. What the farmers really needed was an expanded system of crop irrigation. The shortage of rainfall in the last few years has been more serious than in other years, but Spain is always dry. It is only with the widened use of irrigation that Spanish farmland has borne produce at competitive prices. Where the land has been watered, yields have increased by between 100 and 200 percent, and in exceptional cases by as much as 300 percent. Its importance is such that irrigation virtually symbolizes the task of agricultural improvement: a Spanish farm is always described in two ways — by its size, and by whether it's *de secano* (dry) or *en regadio* (irrigated).

But just as the example of irrigation illustrates the need for agricultural development in Spain, it also highlights some of the major problems that are faced by development efforts. For irrigation systems to be established and put to effective use, farmholdings should be of a viable size. Irrigation is by nature a large scale enterprise, and the water is used most efficiently on relatively large scale cultivations. Even where an irrigation system has been installed with government funds, the maintenance and use of it will require considerable private expense and technical knowledge. But most Spanish farmers are old and poor. Two out of three are campesinos with less than five hectares of badly fragmented land, and their average age is about 55. They have neither the money nor the energy to pursue a programme of modernization. In all likelihood, therefore, the use of irrigation systems will not spread throughout the sector until the structure of Spanish agriculture has changed significant-

ly, with bigger farms and younger operators.

That is not about to happen, however, because the social and economic conditions do not favour such a development. There is at present nowhere for the 1.5 million minifundio operators to go, and the towns and villages of rural Spain are so decrepit and undeveloped that energetic young people don't want to live there. So in this case, it all must change together. Spanish agriculture will become a modern industry when rural Spain becomes a developed society, with economic opportunity, a decent standard of living, and reliable public services. Agricultural change cannot be separated from social change, because the sector cannot be separated from the people who work in it.

There is one word I heard over and over again to describe the condition from which rural Spain suffers: *marginalidad*. People in the countryside often feel that they live on the margin of Spanish society, that the benefits of being part of the nation are not fully theirs, and that commercial and cultural life is somehow going on without them. It was this sense, deeply felt, that compelled 40 percent of the rural people to abandon the countryside in just two decades' time, and it still lingers. But it is not just the rural population that is marginal; it is also the whole rural economy. Spanish agriculture is behind the times and out of step, I was often told. It doesn't produce enough, it doesn't do a good job of selling what it produces, and it's always disadvantaged.

A comprehensive modernization of agriculture and the agricultural society is obviously needed. But it's not entirely clear what that means. Many people here feel tied to the land, even those whose income is barely adequate to meet their basic needs. As a campesino told me when I was on a visit here three years ago, "I might work in cow manure all day long, but my work is clean. It's pure." He thinks he would have less pride in his work if he moved to the city. But he is often tempted, and he says he would probably have already moved were it not for the unemployment there. The circumstances under which he must live in the countryside are simply unacceptable.

His dilemma is common, and the unfortunate truth is that there is no easy way to resolve it. One certain thing is that agriculture cannot support all the people that are working in it. It doesn't have the productive potential. For the standard of living to rise in rural areas, rural people will have to be put to work doing something besides farming. The ideal arrangement, un-

doubtedly, would be for people to leave on a part-time basis, so rural communities could be preserved even while they are being improved.

Perhaps that is possible. But it is important to be realistic. The minifundio is not a viable economic unit; Spanish agriculture as a whole is less viable because there are too many minifundia, and the rural economy, diversified or not, cannot really grow until its major sector is made more profitable. Just as it is not possible to modernize agriculture without modernizing rural society, it is probably not possible to develop rural society without also developing agriculture, and that means the end of tiny farms and high levels of manual labour.

On the other hand, rural Spain could be made modern without being made urban. There are alternatives. Spanish agriculture could be developed without it being corporatized, as the example of group farming has shown. It is probably in the end a political issue as much as anything else, a question of who defines development. I was impressed on this trip by change in the outlook of the Escuelas Campesinas since my trip here in 1980. At that time, I heard the slogan, "Ser campesino es hermoso", repeated often — Being a peasant is beautiful. I was bothered by that a bit, because of its eerie resemblance to the agrarian fascism of the younger Franco. I was also confused by it, because so much of what the Escuelas Campesinas were advocating involved social change. There was clearly something about being campesino that was not beautiful.

I did not hear that slogan on this trip. Instead, I found the Escuelas Campesinas deeply involved in an analysis of the position of the candidates in the municipal elections and engaged in the laborious task of building a strong union and an active cooperative movement. They were no less committed to the defence of what they felt was their own, but they had a better sense of what had to change, and they seemed more anxious to bring change about. There is a danger, I believe, that faces everyone who works for greater equity in rural areas; it is that anger against the injustice of uneven development will come out as anger against development. The risk is greatest when urban and rural interests are opposed, because "urban" is so often equated with change and "rural" with stability. There is, perhaps, too much emphasis on preserving what is supposedly rural and not enough on fighting for something better.

Because the stakes in the struggle against marginality in rural Spain are high, perhaps higher than in any other Western European nation with the exception of Portugal, some key points about that struggle stand out even more clearly than they do in other places. If rural Spain, and the agricultural sector specifically, are to move away from marginality, major changes are necessary — in the structure of agriculture and in the composition of rural society. The unique circumstances in this situation allow no other course; an archaic system has been continued long after it should have disappeared. It is harder to generalize from the Spanish case because it is so special, but it does serve to remind us that there are no magic solutions in the realm of rural development. To make society better, society must sometimes be changed, and that is never easy.



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