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**GEHEIM**

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Aan Zijne Excellentie Prof. Dr L.J.M. BEEL  
Minister-President

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REVIEW: UNREST IN PERU

GEHEIM

Rising unrest among Peru's 5,000,000 Indians--who make up half the population--is suggested by recent violence among the long-domicile Indian miners and by the increasingly frequent attempts of predominantly Indian mobs to seize land. Factors contributing to the unrest are Communist agitation, increasing contacts between the poverty-stricken Indians and the relatively wealthy coastal dwellers, and depressed conditions in mining and agriculture, the principal occupations in the Indians' Andean homeland.

Peru's Indian population is concentrated in the Sierra--the Andean regions above 9,000 feet. Most speak no Spanish, are illiterate in any language, and have thus far played no role in Peru's political life. Some are employed in copper, lead, and zinc mines, which have been adversely affected by the depressed market for nonferrous metals. Most still engage in subsistence farming, but this has been made more difficult in recent years by repeated devastating droughts. Many are migrating to the coastal cities, attracted by the much higher standard of living there.

One of the first moves of the incumbent conservative government on taking power in 1956 was to appoint a commission to draw up a program for housing and agrarian reform. Since then a progressive weakening of the government has eliminated any prospect for effective leadership from the top in either field. Consequently, groups of discontented and poverty-stricken people have recently forced the government to help them by taking direct action.

Continued failure of the governing class in Peru to provide for the political, social, and economic evolution of the Indians may cause this unorganized and leaderless mass to coalesce and take effective revolutionary action. The Indians would probably find eager leaders among the increasingly able Peruvian Communists, whose strength is estimated at 6,000. With a reawakened sense of unity among Peru's Indian population, revolutionary action would be difficult to contain since most enlisted men in the Peruvian Army are Indians.

Agitation Among Miners: In both Peru and Bolivia, work in the mines of the Andes has always been an exclusive province of the Indians, since only they are accustomed to hard labor at altitudes between 9,000 and 16,000 feet. A sharp contrast between the Bolivian and Peruvian Indians, however, has often been noted in recent decades. Whereas in Bolivia deaths of both miners and supervisors in violent riots have been almost commonplace, the Indian miner in Peru has been noted for his docility. Nationalization of the mines has long been a rallying cry for Bolivia's miners but has only recently begun to gain currency in Peru. The Peruvian Indian's docility now has disappeared, opening a promising field for Communist exploitation.

Communist success in exploiting unrest among the Indian miners was first clearly evident at the Toquepala copper installation in southern Peru, site of a \$230,000,000 US

investment scheduled to bring Peru's 1960 copper exports to almost half those of Chile. A Communist-led strike of 6,000 workers in November 1957 led to two deaths and considerable violence, forcing the government to send troops and to suspend constitutional guarantees throughout the nation. The known Communist organizers were subsequently discharged, but at present a covert union organization there is reported under Communist control.

At the headquarters of the large US-owned Cerro de Pasco copper mines in central Peru--where Communist influence among miners has long been strong--a riot last November resulted in serious injuries to four dependents of US and Canadian management personnel. Government troops were again sent in. In anticipation of continuing trouble--borne out by the strike which began 18 February--the company recently purchased a building near the principal shaft as permanent quarters for government troops.

At San Cristobal, an installation of the Cerro de Pasco company, a mob of several hundred miners on 27 January seized a former union official employed in the mine office and the mine superintendent, beat them, and forced them to sign resignations from their jobs. A ranking official of the Cerro de Pasco corporation stated on 29 January that agitation, "presumably Communist," had been behind the incident and that the San Cristobal mine and nearby concentrating plant would suspend operations until the police arrested the persons responsible.

Communist-linked agitation against management does not seem to be directed exclusively against US-owned companies. Incidents at the largest Peruvian-owned mine, where the union's secretary general is apparently a Communist, recently prompted management there to move the families of the staff to Lima.

Mass Attempts to Seize Land: Indian attempts to seize land by mass action have become increasingly frequent over the past year. Poor crops in the Sierra have prompted seizures of agriculture land. A rapid population growth combined with a stepped-up migration to the cities--which has created an explosive housing problem throughout Latin America--has in Peru resulted in mass seizures of suburban land.

A government commission recently settled a violent dispute over agricultural land in favor of the peasants by giving them 33,000 acres of fertile land. The decision followed Peru's first outbreak of open violence over agrarian reform, when a mob of 2,000 which assaulted police headquarters was driven off with tear gas, cavalry and gunfire, leaving three dead and 15 wounded.

Three recent invasions of suburban property by squatters in widely separated cities highlight the housing problem. In Arequipa, Peru's second largest city, several thousand people recently hired a fleet of trucks, taxis, and horsecarts to transport themselves and all their possessions during one night to a plot of unused private land. They had begun to construct ramshackle shelters and hovels, when a large contingent of armed police forced them to leave.

In the northern coastal city of Chimbote, some 1,500 families were squatters, mostly on private land. The government now has allocated an old government-owned airfield to their use.

In Lima, where a mass nighttime migration to win land was successful three years ago, some 300 families recently took over an old sandpit, claiming that the site belonged to the state and therefore was available for "colonization." Even police threats to set fire to their shacks failed to move the invaders.

Peruvian Communists have already persuaded some Indians that a Communist regime would restore the communal life maintained under the Incas prior to the Spanish conquest. Communists have also encouraged the Indians' belief that US drought relief has been prompted by a desire to fatten them, as human fat is preferred in the United States for greasing machinery. The resourcefulness displayed thus far by the Communists in Peru suggests that they might one day be able to organize a violent revolutionary upheaval.