

MARKSCHEME

May 2006

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Standard Level

Paper 1

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1. What was the relationship between hierarchy and ethnicity on the plantation? [6 marks]

There are several descriptive examples to choose from in the passage and these begin with the pragmatic outlining of the hierarchically organised ethnic groups in relation to labour practice on the plantation. This then leads on to the discussion of the rationale for the labour hierarchy and the implications and outcomes of such ranking according to ethnicity.

Clearly, there is a hierarchy of ethnicity based on subsistence with the hunter-gatherer Toba at the bottom of the scale and the Chiriguano slash and burn horticulturalists above them. The Toba are seasonal migrant workers and are therefore expected to have alternative sources of income when the plantation does not require their labour. The Criollos are permanent workers on the plantation and can be assumed to be considered ethnically superior to the other groups on the plantation (some students might guess that they are peasants). The Criollos work indoors in the factory while the Toba and Chiriguano work outdoors in the fields. The ethnic hierarchy established at the plantation equates subsistence patterns with supposed skills and cultural abilities and ranks groups according to this. Pay differentials follow this ranking and the outcome is a form of institutionalised discrimination against certain groups because of their assumed abilities, or lack of them, on the basis of their traditional forms of subsistence and ethnicity. Such an organisation of labour keeps workers divided along ethnic lines and prevents a collective union of workers against harsh working conditions. Some candidates might also mention that the harsher working conditions of the seasonal field labourers also took a heavier toll on them in terms of disease and death. The lower down the ethnic and labour hierarchy one was the greater the likelihood of disease and death. The poorer one was to begin with the worse the chances of survival and well-being.

Another aspect of the inferior labour position of the Toba on the plantation was their internalisation of this situation in their beliefs that the cannibal *KiyaGaikpi* would not find their flesh tasty because the Toba did not eat the nice food of the whites. In this instance relative poverty reflected in poorer diet may have worked, as far as the Toba were concerned, to their advantage when confronted by cannibals.

Candidates may choose to highlight and discuss a range of materials from the text and better answers will demonstrate an ability to select and discuss relevant examples in a well-ordered fashion rather than simply providing a checklist.

2. What is the relationship between Toba beliefs about disease and death and their work conditions as seasonal labourers? [6 marks]

This question requires candidates to move from the more clearly descriptive answer of question 1 to consider the nature of beliefs in devils and cannibals and how these relate to the working conditions on the plantations. The plantation itself is located in the vicinity of devils who can descend from the nearby mountains to spread disease and death. In this way the place of work in a capitalist system is also a place of death and this is reinforced by the descriptions of the bones of deceased Toba buried in the cane fields. The death caused by devils arouses fear which encompasses the future as well as the present as the deaths of children compromise the Toba's ability to reproduce themselves in the future. The belief in devils, however, reflects the brutality of the working conditions and the fear these aroused but does so in a manner which deflects blame for the working conditions from the plantation

owners to the devils. In this way brutal working conditions become naturalised and beyond the scope of human intervention to alter.

The belief in the cannibal *KiyaGaikpi* adds a further dimension to the Toba conceptualisation of their position on the plantation. They are commodified in the most basic way – literally becoming food for consumption or no more than meat body-parts for exchange. However, the low social position of the Toba on the plantation is internalised by them and reflected in their belief that the *KiyaGaikpi* do not find Toba flesh tasty. This is because, as poor labourers, the Toba do not eat good food and so they do not taste as nice as the whites who eat the best food. Although a reflection of the way in which they are despised and subjected to the worst of everything on the plantation, this Toba belief is also a way of finding some advantage in their lowly position. Other examples could also be chosen from the text to answer this question.

Strong answers will incorporate examples from the text in order to present coherent and well-argued discussions revealing some of the complexities of belief in relation to social context.

3. Compare the work experience of the Toba on the plantation with the work experience of *one* other group you have studied in detail. [8 marks]

The target societies for this comparative question are varied and many. The question requires candidates to demonstrate an understanding of capitalist labour practice as a force which does not impact uniformly on all members of a society. While the Toba find ways of expressing and understanding the impacts of exploitative working conditions through beliefs in devils and cannibals, other social groups may have alternative ways of conceptualising the impacts of capitalism on their social order. The ethnic inequalities that the passage highlights may be compared to class or gender inequalities in relation to work practices found in other social systems. Better answers will be able to demonstrate the variable impacts of labour conditions on different segments within a given society.

In order to obtain full marks answers must be organised in a clear manner, highlighting similarities, differences and generalizations. Candidates must situate the comparative case in terms of group, place, author, and ethnographic context to gain more than [4 marks].
