



I.I.A.A.

BUILDING A BETTER HEMISPHERE SERIES NO. 10

*We're Building
a Better Hemisphere*

By
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POINT 4 IN ACTION

THE INSTITUTE OF INTER-AMERICAN AFFAIRS

INTER-AMERICAN REGIONAL OFFICE

TECHNICAL COOPERATION ADMINISTRATION



Raimundo Vera, shown with family, is one of 570 starving men settled in Misiones Colony, Paraguay, two years ago. Now he's a happy landowner

ELVIN A. DUBERT

We're Building **A BETTER HEMISPHERE**

Living standards in Latin America have been boosted by a U.S. project that sets a pattern for our Point Four program

By JOHN W. WHITE

Children like these are being taught to read and to brush their teeth, and their illiterate, poverty-ridden parents are learning with them

Vocational schools established by Americans are teaching girls how to keep house and boys how to make a living. This one is in Bolivia



IF YOU knew that one small penny out of every hundred dollars you paid in taxes could speed the day of world peace, the chances are that your reluctant tilts with the tax collector would take on all the joyful aspects of a love feast.

The sensational fact is that—unknown to most Americans—a single tax cent from each of us is substantially advancing peace by helping change the face of almost an entire continent, one of key importance to us and at the same time of fierce interest to the Communists.

Thanks to a surprisingly low-cost U.S. program little publicized back home, myriads of hitherto half-starved, ragged and ill-housed Latin Americans in 16 of the 21 republics to the south of the United States, subsisting in the squalor and misery on which the Communist Lorelei battens, have won a spectacular new lease on life.

They have been cured of the malaria and other diseases which for centuries chained them to a sub-human level of existence.

They are growing as much as 50 per cent more food on the same acreage; for the first time, eating nourishing, vitamin-rich meals.

The little farmers are making money where they never did before. They are building clean, solid homes to replace the filthy hovels in which their families have always lived.

Their children, for the first time are going to school, their young men acquiring trades.

The grownups themselves are learning how to work, to profit more from their work, and to plan for the sensible spending of the money they earn.

People on the land—their kind comprises two thirds of Latin America—now have something to live for. The poorest, unhealthiest, unhappiest, most ignorant and neglected—and therefore the easiest of targets for Red sweet-talk—they have begun to see themselves as members of the property-owning system instead of its victims. They know that back of their new well-being are the *yanquis* they have been told are heartless imperialists. They are being converted into friends and followers of our capitalistic, democratic way of life.

In this remarkable new-world-in-the-making below the Rio Grande, the conversion process is as yet by no means complete. A continent is neither economically nor socially remade overnight. And the Kremlin's courtship goes on apace. But with the final outcome in our favor, credit will beyond question belong to a quiet, grass-roots operation directed by a fledgling U.S. government outfit, The Institute of Inter-American Affairs.

The institute, which last June was incorporated into the larger Point Four program, began its work south of the border, however, well before that program was even enunciated. The way in which it has furnished technical help to our underdeveloped hemisphere neighbors has provided Point Four with a model to be followed in underdeveloped areas elsewhere in the world. Point Four projects are getting under way in Afghanistan, Ceylon, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Egypt, Haiti, India, Iran, Mexico, Pakistan and Thailand. Logi-

cally enough, Nelson Rockefeller, who launched the institute, is now planning chief for Point Four.

Working in close harness with the governments concerned, the institute is engaged in a far-flung frontal assault on three major problems of Latin-American life: health and sanitation, food production and education. Unlike many a past program of betterment, it is minus the high-sounding platitudes and the experts who came, saw, wrote a report and went home. The institute's operation is a sleeves-rolled-up, follow-through affair. It is a prime example of America at its best—demonstrating know-how. And it has worked.

The institute has 25 separate projects going: health and sanitation projects in 14 republics, education in seven, food supply in four. Some of the countries have taken on two projects, and in Peru and here in Paraguay they are tackling all three at once.

The technique is simple. The institute sends American doctors, nurses, teachers, engineers and/or farm experts to the country that asks for help. This field party organizes and trains a team of local men and women. The team becomes a bureau in the host country's ministry of health, education or agriculture. The American field-party chief heads this bureau, and is responsible to the appropriate Cabinet minister as well as to institute headquarters in Washington.

Trainees Acquire American Know-How

Together the Americans and trainees study a particular problem. The Americans contribute know-how, the trainees their knowledge of local conditions, customs and prejudices. This pattern of co-operation has become known as a *servicio*, so called because the bureau is titled the *Servicio Co-operativo* of health, education or food supply, as the case may be.

Once the *servicio* works out a solution to a problem it gets the Cabinet minister's go-ahead. A crew promptly goes out into the field to put the technical recommendations into effect. It is this local crew, guided by American experts, that is the key to institute success; past U.S. programs of technical aid to foreign countries failed because they hadn't the ground organization to follow through on the experts' advice. The institute withdraws the Americans as rapidly as the trainees learn our methods.

The lowly potato is a case in point of how such teamwork operates. Originally the potato came not from Ireland, but from the highlands of Peru. The method of growing it there was as ancient as the crop itself. To have tried direct contact between an American farm expert and the notoriously suspicious Peruvian farmer on ways to improve his output would have taken years.

So an American expert trained a Peruvian crewman in seed selection and spraying. The Peruvian journeyed into the back country and, talking the language of its reticent inhabitants, persuaded just three farmers to follow his instructions. That year they got five times as many potatoes per acre as the year before, with profits

The U.S. and the World

It was in his inaugural address of January, 1949, that President Truman first gave voice to the idea of the program now known as Point Four. Listing his foreign-policy aims, he cited as the fourth point a "bold new program" to provide American technical aid to the world's underdeveloped areas, to help those areas help themselves to a better life. The launching of this program, with its unique blend of realism and idealism, was fatefully timed. Point Four, which actively engaged us in the business of peace, was officially begun only a few weeks before Korea actively engaged us in the business of war.

Headed by Dr. Henry Garland Bennett, president of Oklahoma A&M College, with Nelson Rockefeller as planning chief, Point Four got a \$34,500,000 sendoff from Congress and now has projects under way in 39 countries throughout the world.

Necessarily long-range, this vast endeavor will not be ready to be judged on its achievements for some time to come. But we can get an idea of its potential from a smaller U.S. program, recently brought into the Point Four setup, which has been under way since 1943 in 16 of the 21 republics to the south of us. This Latin-American program, according to Dean Acheson, has been "the inspiration and the proving ground" for Point Four.

What the U.S. is doing below the border is, in effect, showing off its best side: quietly, without fanfare, spreading know-how, helping the common man of Latin America lift himself out of the misery of centuries, teaching him how to make his own country a better place to live. Proof of what Point Four can do for underdeveloped countries anywhere, this American effort—despite Red attempts to smear it as imperialism—has had but one motive: to give the neighbors a hand and thereby make the community—our one world—a happier place for us all.

To get the Latin-American story, Collier's sent John W. White on an extensive tour of the Southern continent. A leading authority on the lands below the Rio Grande, he worked as a newspaperman there for 25 years, 10 of them as chief South American correspondent for the New York Times. THE EDITORS

Peruvian Indians, shown threshing grain with flails, were told by farming experts they must abandon such methods to earn more money



Some Peruvian Indians still use ancient methods, but these farmers and many others rent U.S. equipment from a low-cost machinery pool





Students in Asuncion, Paraguay, learning the fundamentals of plumbing in the vocational school operated by the U.S.-Paraguayan Servicio.

respectively of \$195, \$310 and \$370 per acre. Their potato-growing neighbors lost an average of \$25 per acre. From such small but tangible beginnings it was not hard to spread the gospel of American farming methods.

The institute Americans do not stay closeted at their offices. They all spend plenty of time among the farmers, townspeople and Indians, with resulting esteem for the *yanquis*. One of the program's more notable achievements is that though it is fashioning what amounts to social revolution, it has roused no popular tensions or fears of dollar diplomacy, despite Red attempts to paint it as sinister imperialism.

When the Americans Are Gone

Of 300 Americans brought south by the institute, all but 140 have already gone home, their coaching mission accomplished. The remainder head up an organization of 15,000 local citizens, 1,500 of whom are now technicians themselves, superbly trained to take over when the last American leaves.

Financially, too, the keynote of the institute program is co-operation, not charity. The institute's yearly share of the cost has been about \$250,000 per republic, a total of \$5,000,000—or about one and a third cents per U.S. taxpayer. (Congress recently upped the appropriation to cover institute operations for the next five years and earmarked \$7,000,000 for the current fiscal year.) This relatively small sum, apart from the Americans' salaries, has been entirely spent in the U.S. for supplies.

On the other hand, each republic has put in five to 10 times as much money; the institute, in fact, does not put up its share until the host government does. For Brazil's educational program, for instance, we contributed \$125,000 up to June, 1949. Brazil itself put in \$489,000, spent another \$145,000 to train Brazilian teachers in the U.S., and another \$77,000 to buy school supplies in the U.S.

Furthermore, those at home who view all our foreign-aid ventures as money poured down a rathole might note this: U.S. exports of farm machinery and tools alone to the four republics with food-production programs rose from \$976,000 in 1944 to \$5,107,000 last year. Thus a far from minor by-product of the institute operation has been the building of a new and profitable market for U.S. manufacturers.

The institute program had its roots in World War II, when we sent down farm experts, doctors and nurses to provide foodstuffs for GIs at our South and Central American bases and guard the health of jungle workers looking for rubber, balsa wood and other war materials. After V-J day, all the republics except Argentina and Cuba appealed to Washington to keep the program going for the benefit of their own underprivileged.

The job begun by Nelson Rockefeller as Co-ordinator of Inter-American Affairs was handed over to a newly created Institute of Inter-American Affairs, functioning as an autonomous government corporation under the State Department. Originally the institute took on 18 of the republics, but its technicians have, since finished up in Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic and wholly turned over their work there to these countries.

That the institute has succeeded brilliantly was plainly evident to me in a 7,000-mile swing by air, boat, car and on foot through South and Central America. You would have to know what life was like in the interior of these republics 10 or 20 years ago—as I did as a working newspaperman—to get a full understanding of what an astounding change has already taken place.

People down here are not only living differently, they are thinking differently. They even look better, and not just because of their new clothes. Much of their new look is in their faces. Today they laugh and joke as they go about their daily chores for no reason except that they are healthy and happy. Ten years ago, more than half

the babies of South America died at birth or a few months later. Now they are growing into noisy, rollicking youngsters like our own.

Even the land looks changed as you drive along the highways. In Peru, cornfields used to be planted in bunches; now they're planted in neat rows. Orchards look like orchards instead of like patches of jungle brush with the trees smothered by weeds. Tomatoes, figs and oranges used to be only for the wealthy; today they are on the tables of workmen all through the year.

Altogether, it's a bright new world that didn't exist even in the Latin Americans' dreams a decade ago—they just didn't know how to dream that way.

One particularly bright chapter in the institute story is what it is doing for young boys otherwise slated for unemployment or wretched poverty on the land. In Bolivia, Brazil, Ecuador, Panama, Paraguay and Peru, institute experts are directing vocational schools—and teaching local teachers how to run them—at which thousands of teen-agers are learning plumbing, carpentry, auto and radio repair, and other trades which will earn them good wages. American textbooks have been translated into Spanish and Portuguese, and shopwork standards are those required in the U.S. These schools have spent more for American-made equipment than the U.S. has spent on the educational program.

At the institute vocational school in Panama I saw boys at work in a home-building course which has already borne fruit in replacing the primitive huts of the Isthmus with clean, modern houses. Here in Asunción I watched young enthusiasts absorbing the fundamentals of electricity and plumbing; they had installed all the fittings for the orphanage that the institute's health division built to isolate children from parents afflicted with leprosy. In Bolivia and Brazil I watched vocational students—using made-in-U.S.A. hammers, saws, planes and lathes—making desks and seats for the institute's rural schools.

These rural schools are the other major aspect of the institute's educational program. Their effectiveness—particularly on the great high plateau of South America known as the Altiplano—is one of the most dramatic educational achievements in all human history.

The Altiplano, 1,500 miles long, as far as from Miami to Minneapolis, lies between the two towering main ranges of the Andes, and forms an important part of Bolivia, Peru and Ecuador. Few Americans ever set foot on it. It is one of the dreariest, most remote, and least inviting stretches on earth. On it live about 5,000,000 Quechua and Aymara Indians, descendants of the mighty Incas.

For over 400 years, ever since the Spaniards came, these Indians have lived in rat-ridden, smoke-filled hovels without windows or chimneys, sleeping on dirt floors in close proximity with pigs and goats, cooking over fires of llama dung. The whites treated them worse than animals. If your car killed an Indian and his pack donkey, you were fined more for kill-

ing the donkey than for killing the Indian. Donkeys are scarce—Indians plentiful.

Under these conditions it was not surprising that the Indians were stubbornly deaf to white suggestions about self-improvement. But in the past five years, through the schooling of their young, the institute is helping incorporate them into the national life, educating them to be citizens of their own countries. Little Jorge and Rosita take home the lessons they learn; papa and mama finally weaken when the kids, aided by a few classmates, clean up the house on a home project outlined by the institute teacher.

I saw whole communities rebuilt with houses which have windows, and bright blue tile roofs instead of lice-filled thatches. Cooking and eating utensils have been taken away from the rats on the floor and stored in niches built into the wall. The incredible stench is gone.

Using a school system originated in Bolivia but permitted through various changes of government to go to seed, institute experts and the teachers and supervisors they locally trained started on the premise that the three R's were a minor problem. Before any attempt was made to teach the children letters, they were taught how to bathe, wash their hands, comb their hair. They had never seen soap; now they make it at school and show their parents how to use it. At school, they prepare and eat a nutritious midday meal, sitting on adobe benches at adobe tables instead of eating off the floor. This novelty has put tables and benches into their own homes.

Seen in an Indian Village

I visited the sunny little Indian village of Kalaque, on the shores of Lake Titicaca, two and a half miles above sea level on the Altiplano. The blades of a wind charger made in Clarinda, Iowa, spun a shimmering pattern above the school roof, charging the batteries for the children's American-made radio. Other things in Kalaque were no less incongruous. American teaching methods are being successfully used by teachers who can't speak a syllable of English. Textbooks have been translated into two Indian languages — Aymara and Quechua — in which symbols were used as words.

The Kalaque school has, in addition to four teachers, three specialists. One shows the pupils how to keep clean and well, with soap, towel and comb. The second shows them how to raise vegetables in home gardens, and teaches older boys how to get better crops in the field. The third, a home-economics technician, shows the youngsters how to keep house and prepare meals.

Half a dozen of these bright-eyed children proudly took me through their homes. They had cut niches in the walls for dishes; painted and papered; put magazine pictures where the soot had been; cut windows to let in light and air; laid wooden floors. Kalaque's youngsters are growing better corn than their fathers raised, and the boys, instructed in animal breeding, are getting six pounds of wool per sheep where their elders got one pound.



Animal breeding instructions have resulted in an increase of an average one pound of wool per sheep to six pounds of a superior grade.

The grownups are so impressed that they regard the schoolhouse as a sort of temple, and tip their hats whenever they pass by.

No less startling than this integration of the Altiplano Indians into society is the change wrought by an entirely separate institute program—food production—on an entirely different but equally tough-to-crack sector of South Americans, the little farmers of Peru.

Nowhere in the world were farmers more suspicious of their neighbors. Each man, using his wooden plow, his bullock, his primitive farming methods inherited from his ancestors, was a complete isolationist. Everything he did was jealously guarded from his neighbor.

Then, somehow, the Peruvian hinterlander began to hear and see evidences of what the institute's farm-extension agents were teaching. Even the most illiterate knew that one agent couldn't possibly see each man in his district once a year. So each district's farmers got together, organized an association, and elected a small committee to attend the agent's demonstrations and pass along what was learned to the folks back in the interior.

Institute Agents at Work

Unwittingly, these committees have become centers of democratic action. Farmers have learned to air all their problems among themselves and adopt the decision that gets the majority vote. And along with this tiny seed of democracy has come a revolution in farming. In 1949 alone the institute's 30 agents in Peru demonstrated American know-how to 800,000 farmers through 123 rural committees. Missionaries of a new life, the agents wander along country roads with machetes in their belts, pruning shears in their hands, insecticide sprays over their shoulders, pruning, spraying, clearing away the undergrowth.

The institute imported a lot of U.S. farm machinery, organized it into 19 pools, and made it available to the Peruvians at low

cost. Its technicians rehabilitated 63,000 acres of abandoned farms; they persuaded farmers to dig up their perennial cotton and instead plant a high-yield annual type known as Pima, following it with food crops like beans and potatoes. Scientific spraying has increased alfalfa production from four tons an acre to six. The rice crop has been increased by half.

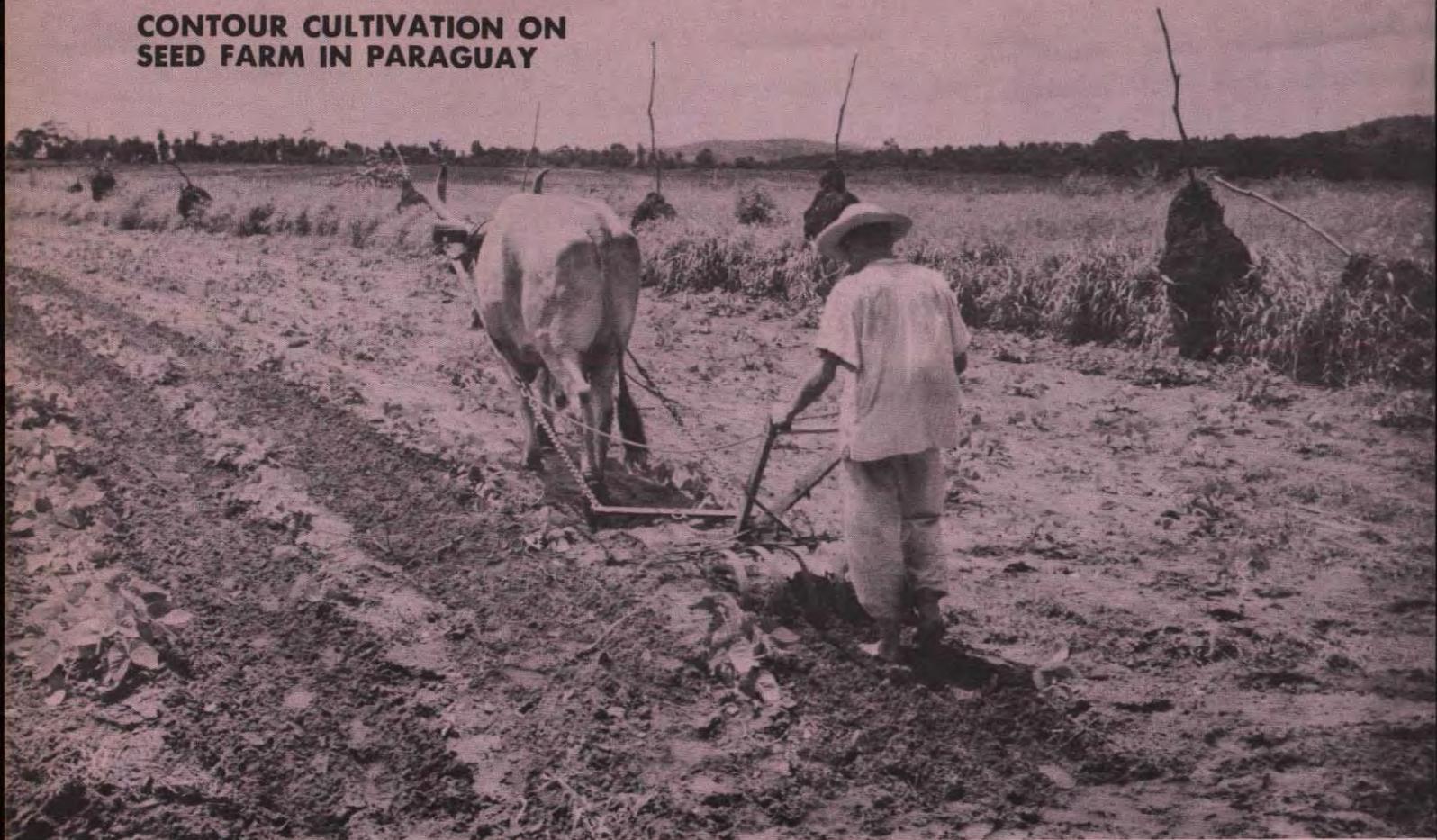
Last year, with 10 per cent less land under cultivation, Peru's farmers produced 30 per cent more food crops and sold them for three times as much money as in 1943, the year the Americans came in. For the first time in the nation's history, farming has become actually a desirable way to live.

Of all institute achievements throughout the republics, however, none has made more of a dent on the entire economy of a nation than its work right here in Paraguay. This landlocked country at the center of the South American continent, about the size of Montana, with a population of 1,200,000, has had the benefit of all three institute operations—health and sanitation, food supply and education. The result has been a hopeful preview of what can happen wherever whole underdeveloped areas get a chance.

Paraguay's has been a subsistence economy, almost exclusively agricultural. Only 100 farmers in all the republic had had more than 50 acres; 65 per cent of the farm population were squatters, undernourished, living in dirty one-room huts. Under a supervised farm-credit system copied after our own, the institute is turning Paraguay into a money-making economy, raising the standard of living and making property owners out of have-nots.

Institute technicians began in 1946 by settling 35 hand-picked families on a pilot colony at Pirareta, near Asuncion. Each received 57 acres on easy payments. The Americans showed them how to lay out their land in money crops, pasturage for work animals and a cow or two, and vegetable gardens to raise their own food. The experts tested some 2,000 types of seeds of

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