

INSTITUTE OF CURRENT WORLD AFFAIRS

CRT-5

The Southern Andes of Peru:  
Cuzco and Environs

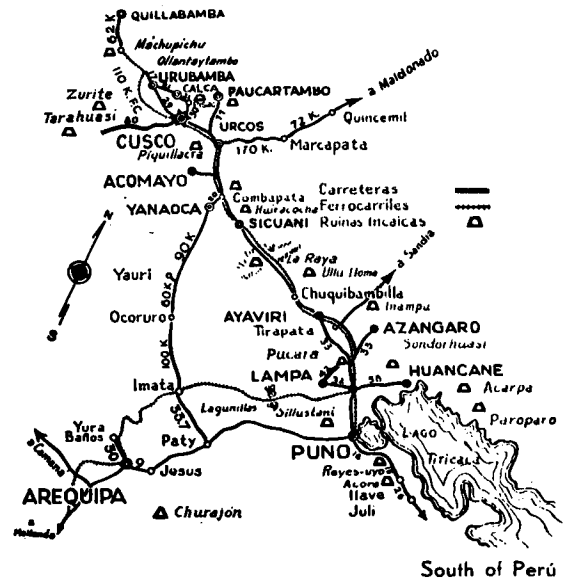
Hotel Continental  
Cuzco  
Peru  
October 2, 1955

Mr. Walter S. Rogers  
Institute of Current World Affairs  
522 Fifth Avenue  
New York 36, New York

Dear Mr. Rogers:

The southern Andes of Peru, excepting the city of Arequipa, have long had but two areas of concentrated settlement. The first of these centers around the city of Cuzco, over 11,000 feet high and the onetime capital of the Inca empire. It includes the Cuzco and Anta Basins (the latter lying to the west of the city) and the Urubamba Valley (lying to the north and east). The second area lies along the shores of Lake Titicaca and spreads out through the Altiplano until it meets the first ranges of the Peruvian Andes, and is actually continuous with the settlements along the Bolivian side of the lake.

Crossing by the old but attractive steamer from Guaqui in Bolivia to Puno in Peru takes one across the border between the two countries. This frontier which runs approximately through the center of Titicaca is more a political convenience than a true border. There is little difference in the way of life between the Indians who live in one country or the other. As a matter of fact, in order to participate effectively in the heavy smuggling trade which takes place between Peru and Bolivia, the Indian in this area assumes whichever nationality is convenient to free movement: when he enters Bolivia he claims to be a citizen of that country; the reverse is true when he goes into Peruvian territory. Since identification papers are difficult to control and check on, the border patrols are hard put to deny entry to



any indian.

A police officer I met in Bolivia had served on the lake for two years during the early part of his career. One day he was confronted with a group of indians who wanted to enter Bolivia. When asked their nationality the leader replied: "For some years we were Peruvians, then the border was changed and we became Bolivians. We have all served in both armies. So we must be citizens of both countries." The officer saw no other solution but to let them pass.

From Puno I traveled by an excellent train toward Cuzco. For three hours or more we passed through the relentlessly monotonous Altiplano until we crossed the pass of La Raya and descended into the rich and fertile upper Urubamba Valley, and were regaled with the red of the earth, the green of winter wheat, alfalfa and corn, the innumerable stands of eucalyptus, and the adobe houses most of which are roofed with red tiles covered with dark yellow straw. Another pass brought the train into the Cuzco Basin proper, watered by a stream known locally as the Huatanai.

At last, early in the evening, the train pulled into Cuzco, probably one of the most described cities in the New World, and an important tourist goal for persons from all the Latin American countries as well as the United States. Suffice it to say here that it still has building foundations which were once part of Inca walls; that indians in full sierra dress walk its streets side by side with mestizos and whites in Western dress; that mule trains and herds of sheep pass along its narrow streets interfering with traffic; and that the visitor can enter a number of incomparable churches filled with colonial religious paintings.

These standard observations should be qualified: the city as it stands today is partly in ruins after the vicious earthquake in 1950. Many of its fallen buildings have been left untouched since that time while others are just now being rebuilt. This gives Cuzco a raw unfinished look despite the antiquity of many of the structures, and I felt that I had entered a frontier town rather than a city older than Rome.

Cuzco is the middleman in receiving and distributing the products of the surrounding farms while local industry is small and limited. As such it is greatly dependent upon agricultural production and the incomes of its citizens suffer accordingly in bad years. It has a hard commercial air in which even leisure time seems calculated, and frills in the form of parks or night clubs and movies are subordinated to the commercial process which offers little funds.

At the same time it is the home of one of the better universities in Peru with an especially good faculty in Anthropology. It remains, however, less a true urban center than a large provincial capital, although pretensions to rival Lima or Arequipa are current. (The city's mayor recently compared Cuzco with Rome and suggested that its destiny was not less than the grandeur which was Rome's.)

The department of which Cuzco is the administrative center contains an estimated population of 200,000 persons, almost all of whom are directly concerned with agriculture, although livestock raising supplements this to some degree. Maize, potatoes, wheat and barley are the important crops and the Urubamba Valley produces fruit in quantity. In the lower altitudes (approaching the montaña) coca, cacao, coffee and cane are raised.

The majority of the men who till the soil of this department are pure blooded indians who speak Quechua as a first language. They live under one of three kinds of landholding systems: either the ayllu (community) in which each member works lands owned by the group and the produce is distributed for everyone's benefit; or on a small privately owned piece of property of which the owner has the absolute disposition of the amount of land to be worked and the labor to be expended with the production going to satisfy the family's needs; or the hacienda on which the indian is a tenant farmer whose labor pattern is similar to the pre-1952 situation in Cliza Valley (CRT-3). The ayllu system accounts for nearly three-quarters of the land holdings in the Department of Cuzco.

Before coming to southern Peru I had put together a picture of the life and thought of the Quechua farmer from a variety of written and verbal sources, all of which were in remarkable agreement. One of the most compact statements along these lines of which I know was given by Dr. Oscar Núñez del Prado, one of Peru's leading ethnologists, in an article entitled "Anthropological Problems of the Andean Area" (Revista Universitaria, No. 104, P.S., 1953, p. 11), which runs as follows (my translation from the original Spanish):

"The Quechua of the Cuzco area shows two kinds of behavior depending upon the circumstances in which he finds himself. Confronted with the mestizo, he is suspicious, silent, hermetically sealed, almost inaccessible; he offers a systematic and passive resistance; is humble, shy and casual; reticent and evasive in his answers, indecisive in his attitudes; he represses and hides his emotions and rarely shows any disagreement although within he may not agree. Normally, he tends to avoid contacts with the white and doesn't like it

when the latter seeks him in his house - often even the children run terrified from the white's presence. At times he is obsequious but this implies a concrete interest, an immediate reward. Confronted with the indian he is frank, communicative, fond of joking; he gives open proof of his energies and is disposed toward cooperation; he shows his affections and states his opinions without reserve; he enjoys fiestas and is gay in them. When he is drunk he is impulsive and brave in fighting; grudge keeping and vengeful; sly and frequently a practical joker. Sparing and temperate in his sexual life; moderate in his diet and serene on most days."

Initial impressions accorded well with this portrait, although it had to be modified from time to time when individual variations were encountered. But, generally, it held true for the indian I saw in my travels throughout the Department of Cuzco, whether he was living in an ayllu, on his own land or in an hacienda.

Last month I made a trip into the high sierra with Bill MacLeish to visit an hacienda called Mollamarca. My experiences there were typical of what I found elsewhere with regard to the indian farmer around Cuzco, and I had a chance to see the classic style of hacienda in operation.

We left Cuzco in Bill's pickup truck early in the morning and spent three hours covering the hard packed dirt road to Paucartambo, about 65 miles north and west of Cuzco. This trip amply demonstrated that it is impossible to escape prehistory wherever one travels in Peru. As we made our way along the narrow road twisting around the mountain ranges each new view brought with it chullpas, small stone burial towers of the Inca; in another place was a fortress, fallen but mighty in its huge stones and monumental conception; and each indian settlement housed persons whose features differed little from those of their ancestors before the coming of the Spaniard.

Mixed randomly with these tokens of the far past were relics of Peru's colonial period: hacienda buildings raised in the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; ornate stone and adobe gates, now run down and sometimes half collapsed with age, marking the entrance to a large private property; and as we crossed into Paucartambo the bridge spanning the river running by the town was a graceful arch built during the reign of Charles III.

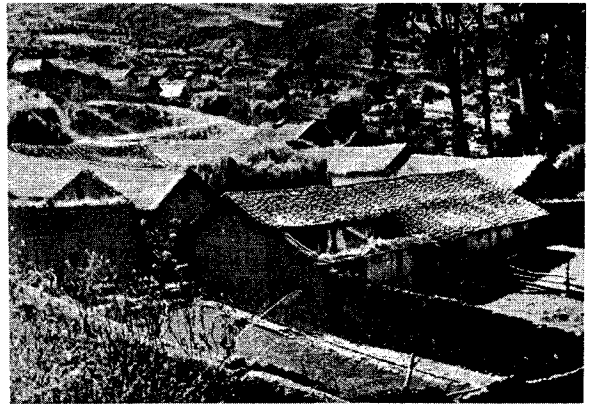
In Paucartambo we met our host and guide, Raul Figueroa Yábar, the owner of Mollamarca. Slight, modest and self effacing

it was hard at first to see Raul in the role of hacendado which, in the remoter districts, requires a combination of energy and toughness second to none. During the visit to Mollamarca, however, any doubts disappeared for he proved to be hard driving, durable and able without displaying any signs of fatigue or slowing down.

We left the pickup truck behind and took to horses for the final three hours to the hacienda. Most of this journey was across the puna, high lying mountain countryside nearly bare of vegetation except for a kind of broom speared grass called ichu. The trail was at first disturbingly narrow and rocky, with steep slopes falling away into valleys and gorges 4000 feet below, but the experienced and amazingly sure footed horses soon quieted any qualms I had. By the time we reached Mollamarca I was thoroughly chilled despite the hot sun from the wind which blew steadily across the yellow ichu.

The hacienda sprawls on the side of a mountain with the houses of the tenant farmers above, then Raul's house built around a cobbled patio in the center of which is a huge willow tree, and finally the gardens, corrals and the chapel. Fields under cultivation were sprinkled around this complex and scattered among the tenants' huts.

After dismounting I was greeted by an old wrinkled indian who embraced me and spoke a traditional Quechua greeting. I was intrigued because he addressed me as patrón (roughly "master"), a title which I had thought reserved for the hacendado. Raul explained that any white man was given this title, and also papa, papacito and tatai (all variations on father), and further that Viracocha, the name of the god-creator of the indians, is used as a term of reference for the white.



Mollamarca. Tree in center marks patio.

On the 10,000 hectares of Mollamarca the indians raise maize, wheat and barley and keep cattle, sheep and pigs. A curious thing is that the forty tenant families have the most fertile lands of the property for their own use. The reason behind this occupation is lost

somewhere in the past, and, despite the fact that Mollamarca would produce considerably more income for Raul if he were to have these lands, he cannot displace the indian tenant. Legally it is his right but the weight of usage and tradition is against any such action.

Each tenant family gives the labor of one member to the hacienda lands for twelve consecutive days and then has eight days at its disposal to till the family's plots (with two work free Sundays in this period). Each week one of the families gives its services to the hacendado's household performing various domestic duties (the custom called pongueaje), but, in the case of Mollamarca, if this week should coincide with a twelve day work period the seven days are subtracted from the latter.

Due to the small size of the family unit, averaging five members, less land is cultivated than is available since the production as it stands satisfies the family's needs. Raul has suggested to his tenants that they utilize this excess land since the sale of its produce would increase their cash income but they have been unwilling to do so. One tenant said to Raul: "What I do now is enough: why add more work to my day?"

As representative of the tenants of Mollamarca I think of Valentín Champi, a short barrel chested indian with a cheerful open smile. He is in his early fifties and the father of two boys and a girl. The family lives in a compound of three huts, one for storage, one for cooking and one for sleeping. The yard in the center of these huts is the area for work and recreation as well as the farm-yard.



The Chapel. Mollamarca.



Valentín Champi and Family.

The Champi family lives a life split equally between open air and indoors activity.

When the sun begins to set the family retires to one of the huts, usually the kitchen one, and thereafter refuses to go into the night except to cross the short distance to the sleeping quarters.

Not only does the group prefer the warmth of the cooking fire but also the night is peopled with demons and ghosts which must be avoided.



Valentín's interpersonal contacts are limited to the other tenants, Raul, his foreman and his wife, the occasional visitor to the hacienda, and the buyers of grain and livestock who visit Mollamarca periodically.

#### House Type. Mollamarca

Valentín may have made perhaps a half dozen trips to Paucartambo, either supervising the carrying of the hacienda's produce or to see the "city," but these have not inspired him to change his existence or his location.

His sense of local identification is strong: he is not a citizen of Peru, nor of Cuzco, nor of Paucartambo but only of Mollamarca. (In fact, he has no concept of "citizen" as such: he is a man who dwells in a certain house in a certain hacienda.) The problems which concern him are local and immediate ones: the yield of his land, the health of his children or the state of his plowing equipment or his huts. These concerns define his horizon and he is indifferent to changing the facts of this environment, for example, by introducing such things as metal pots or city clothes. When he returns from Paucartambo the things he may speak of (electric lights, trucks) are wonders useful to entertain his family and friends but not thought of as possible items for his or his community's consumption.

In his relationships with Raul he accedes to the paternalism of the hacendado but with some reservations. For example, although Raul may marry him, treat him for an illness or judge a dispute in which he is involved, Valentín will not let Raul sell the family's surplus crops to the buyers from the towns and cities, even though he is usually cheated since he has no idea of current prices, "because the patrón might demand part of the crop if he knew just how much it was."

Valentín votes for the various officials in the village - the mayor (alcalde), the police officers (alguaciles) - and expects them to run the affairs of the community unless some incident comes up which has to be referred to Raul because of its gravity.

For diversion he gives and participates in the many fiestas relating to marriages, births and the feast days of important saints and during them is apt to get roaring drunk on cheap aguardiente or chicha. This may lead to fights in which serious wounds are inflicted but he accepts this as part of living.



Training a Bull to the Plow.  
Mollamarca.

In short, Valentín is a member of a self contained community which includes within itself techniques for satisfying the various drives to which a human being is subject. The isolation of Mollamarca helps to perpetuate this state of affairs and to inhibit fundamental changes in the life of Valentín and his children. But more than this, his behavior is arbitrated and sanctioned by tradition which is hundreds of years old and which he imbibed with his first breath. This tradition is not only a schedule of behavior for a man born in the community but it also acts as a cohesive force to perpetuate this same behavior. It is further strengthened since it acts as a defense against the exploitation of outsiders, such as the mestizo whom Valentín dislikes and distrusts, and even to some degree Against Raul himself.

For Valentín, then, the outside world exists but it is not for him and he must be prepared to defend himself from it on occasion. In terms of his potential function as an effective citizen of Peru this poses a problem (if the government should be disposed to integrate his activities into a larger frame of reference) which has no easy solution. As previous experience in many parts of the world has shown, to shatter the traditional mold of the primitive's existence without the stimulus to change coming from him is to debase and render inefficient his participation in a life outside his community.

As I mentioned in my letter concerning the campesinos of



Cochabamba Valley in Bolivia (CRT-3) their vigorous response to the agrarian reform promulgated by the government of Paz Estenssoro and to the social changes which it entailed did not just happen because a formal program was instituted. Prior to 1952 the campesino was already thinking in terms of change and in some cases was taking steps to bring it about. Alterations in the traditional horizon arising from desires and needs foreign to the basic pattern (which was very much like that of Valentín Champi) had already occurred, and the agrarian reform provided the means to confirm them.

When I asked Raul about the future of Valentín and his fellow villagers he was neither sanguine nor pessimistic. His primary feeling was that it will take a long time to alter Valentín's present conception of his status and role in life, but that this could nonetheless be achieved by a planned program of education (sponsored by the government) which would not only turn his attention to a life beyond Mollamarca but would also encourage him to become a more diversified consumer. This process would have a cumulative effect so that, if not Valentín himself, then his sons would be more responsive to concepts of region and nation which would qualify them as and make them want to be members of an electorate.

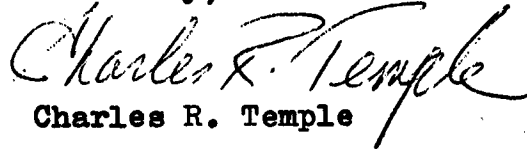
It is significant that even while proposing this method of integrating the Valentín Champis into national life, Raul held that the end was to fit the indian for "his station in life." In this he was responding to his own culturally bred habits of thought, which in Peru make a sharp distinction between the individual with no indian blood and the mestizos and indians. The first is always thought of as the leader, the ruler, the patrón, whereas the other two are the followers, the ruled and the workers. It was refreshing, however, to find in Raul a Peruvian who would admit that the indian was capable of a wider scope of activity than he has at present. Many others whom I have met simply tick off the 7,000,000 indians of the country as perpetual drones.

Because of its isolation the indians of Mollamarca might be thought of as atypical of the Cuzco area in general. But, in the ayllus which constitute the principal kind of farming community and which are quite often located near large towns in relatively accessible areas, the same phenomenon of the closed integrated indian community occurs.

It is true that some of the ayllus offer a greater diversity of characteristics than Mollamarca. For example, dungarees rather than homespun trousers may be worn by the man, and visiting a nearby town may be a fixed rather than an irregular occurrence.

The central pattern, however, as seen in Mollamarca, with its accompanying set of attitudes and opinions remains clearly distinguishable, and impressed me above all with its durability and high degree of resistance to change.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Charles R. Temple". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Charles R. Temple

Received New York 10/28/55.