

## INSTITUTE OF CURRENT WORLD AFFAIRS

WHM - 24  
CREAS II: Problems  
and Progress

Casilla 208  
Arequipa, Perú  
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Institute of Current World Affairs  
522 Fifth Avenue  
New York 36, New York

Dear Mr. Rogers:

When Charles Bunch and his staff first moved into the district of Chinchero, they found what they had expected to find - an atmosphere of suspicion and outright hostility. It was rumored in the twelve ayllus of the district that CREAS was an agent of the Government sent into Chinchero to grab land from the Indians. Speeches and promises of agricultural aid made little if any impression on the campesinos, who for generations had been slow to accept the word of any mestizo or white man. Four centuries of deception and oppression had all but wiped out any inclination to trust the mistis.

Realizing that the Indians had to see with their own eyes the benefits of the agricultural credit program before they would even think of accepting it, CREAS' first step in Chinchero was to obtain a few small fields for demonstration purposes. Curiosity was aroused by the new implements and methods used, and a few campesinos became sufficiently interested in the program to start asking questions. The district authorities saw the advantages which CREAS would bring to the ayllus (and hence to themselves) and boosted the program whenever possible.

Actively opposed to CREAS and its program were the women of the community, the most conservative element in the society of most Indian villages. Wives gave their men a dressing down every time they suspected them of trafficking with the strangers. It became necessary, therefore, to approach loan applicants away from their houses, at times in the home of the local mayor. In this way a little official pressure could be brought to bear on the individual.

The campesinos had seen the demonstrations and were impressed. However, when CREAS asked them to engage in a few basic projects to improve their land, the old hostility returned. One project which was turned down flat in some ayllus was the clearing of several silted-up stream beds which were responsible for much of the flooding of farm land during the periods of heavy rains. The reasons given for refusing to cooperate with CREAS in this venture illustrate the basic and widespread distrust of the central government which prevails in isolated Indian villages throughout the sierra. Eucalyptus trees supplied by the Ministry of Agriculture were to be planted along the banks of the deepened streams to hold the soil and prevent further erosion. Fine, said the campesinos, but what will happen when the trees are mature? The Government will take them away in the usual manner (without paying the campesinos for their care of the trees). There was another worry too; according to rumor, the Government would confiscate any cattle who ate the foliage of the young trees and force their owners to pay for the damages. Eventually work was started

on the stream beds, but not before CREAS had convinced the recalcitrant communities that the Government had no intention of expropriating trees and wayward cattle.

Even though the campesinos were being won over to some of the basic ideas of the agricultural credit program, the formidable barrier of their customs and beliefs still remained to be surmounted. Many agricultural activities were tied in with fiestas and religious ceremonies. Sheep shearing, for instance, was part of the mixed pagan and Catholic celebration of Carnaval (WHM-6); any suggestions on the part of the technicians that the shearing processes be modernized would have been considered blasphemous by the campesinos.

Another practice, albeit one which arose out of economic need rather than superstition, was that of deserting the farms to work on the roads or on neighboring haciendas. Road gang pay was low (about 2.5 U.S. cents per day in 1953) but attractive enough to draw large numbers of campesinos away from their already ill-tended fields. It was only with the greatest difficulty that CREAS was able to persuade the footloose villagers to stay put. After all, wages earned outside the ayllu, however small, represented hard money; the poor land of the communities could offer nothing more than a gamblers' chance of producing a profit at harvest time, God and the hail storms willing.

Despite the rigid network of superstition, the absenteeism of ayllu farmers, and the many working days lost through prolonged, alcoholic fiestas, CREAS made progress during the first months of 1954. On land donated by the local school, a \$3,250 building was erected. There were offices for the local staff, a room for the social assistant containing medical and home demonstration supplies, and living

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Toothache or not, social  
assistance worker visits  
borrowers' families  
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quarters for the resident specialists. There were sheds for the storage of potato seed, disinfecting equipment, fertilizer, threshing machines and tractors. A dipping tank to combat skin parasites and diseases among the livestock was built behind the sheds. The local spring was tapped and water pumped up to a tank; the community was thus assured of a daily supply of safe drinking water. A weather station was installed, and a nursery of eucalyptus, pine and cedar seedlings was planted behind the main building.



In establishing its program in Chinchero, CREAS received cooperation and material aid from other organizations either working in or interested in the area. From the Point Four educational project of SECPANE came land, hand looms and a water pump to keep the new tank full. From the Peruvian ministries of Agriculture and

Public Health came tree seedlings and the equivalent of \$15,000 to finance a public health program in Cuzco. From UNICEF (a United Nations child welfare program) came powdered milk.

The distrust of the campesinos began to dwindle as the pro-CREAS propaganda campaign took effect. During religious ceremonies, the local priest urged his congregation to put their faith in the agricultural credit program, and during working hours CREAS officials visited homes and fields in an effort to win over the confidence of the Indians. In April, 1954, forty campesinos were taken to the State experimental farm at Kcaira to see the new implements and farming methods employed there. Their enthusiasm was an indication of the new climate of opinion in Chinchero. In May, the first two applications to be made out in the district were signed by campesinos Felix Callañaupa and Rafael Castro Monteagudo in the presence of high officials from Lima and Cuzco. The practical work of supervised agricultural credit had begun.

Felix Callañaupa, whose problems and personal life were discussed in James Maddox' 1954 report on Chinchero (AUFPS), lived up to the expectations of the CREAS specialists who handled his \$50 loan. Despite the fact that he spent so much time working for the nearby hacienda of Huaypo that he was unable to farm all of his land, he realized enough profit from the February, 1955 sale of his potatoes to pay off his loan in full. In March of 1955 he applied for a \$40 loan, received it, and by this time has amortized it. During the nineteen months that he has been receiving seed, equipment and advice from CREAS technicians, Callañaupa has changed his personal habits very little. His house is still dirty, although it now contains a CREAS-built privy. He agreed to paint the interior walls of his kitchen, and the meals his wife prepares for him are a bit more sanitary because of this improvement. But Callañaupa still leaves his land to work for cash in nearby districts. When I visited his house in July, I was told that he was working on a farm in the Urubamba valley and would not return for two weeks. Still, the fact that he accepted CREAS guidance and harvested a crop abundant enough to pay his debts is ample reward for the specialists who sweated him out from planting season to harvest time.

In the middle of 1954, CREAS put the experience gained in Chinchero to use in other areas. The high, desolate puna of Yanaoca and the potentially rich regions of Sicuani and Urcos were added to the list. CREAS tractors ploughed and harrowed community lands which for years had merely been scratched by the wooden implements of the campesinos. Other CREAS machines, available at low rents to borrowers, speeded up work which previously had been accomplished slowly and laboriously by hand. By July, 1955, the district chief of Chinchero could report 153 applicants and 70 processed loans totalling \$3,650 and involving 511 acres of land - all the result of the campaign of that period. Twenty thousand pounds of potato seed and six thousand eight hundred pounds of fertilizer had been distributed among the campesinos. The Allis Chalmers tractor had ploughed about thirteen acres of land belonging to fifteen borrowers, and the threshing machine had threshed 26,796 pounds of barley belonging to some twenty farmers. In addition, the social assistance worker had given baths to 133 babies, weaving and embroidery classes to the once suspicious womenfolk, and medical assistance to sixty-four

people. CREAS had come a long way from the days of hostility and distrust.

Perhaps more important than the material progress achieved in so short a time were the changes that the CREAS program had caused in the personal lives of the campesinos. Before the project became effective in Chinchero, the Indian farmers refused to spend money to improve their land, preferred to buy household necessities, coca and alcohol with the small profits obtained from their harvests. The CREAS people have succeeded in changing these shortsighted practices. Having seen what good seed, fertilizer and soil conservation have done for their fields, most campesinos are willing to invest money in their farming. What is more, with yearly earnings increased by the guidance of the technicians, the Indians are putting their money to good use by buying modern equipment and household utensils rather than wasting it on their favorite vices.

As the basic program progressed, CREAS planned and executed projects designed to improve areas larger than ayllus and isolated communities. Engineers surveyed extensive pampa regions and studied methods of draining them of their swamps and useless ponds. Work is already progressing in the swampy land near Chinchero, and more projects of similar nature will be undertaken as the program expands. A vocational training center is being constructed in Chinchero with funds provided by David Rockefeller; the first shipment of tools for the center arrived last August. If the project is successful in Chinchero, more vocational centers will be set up in the Cuzco region. In another effort to improve the Indian's standard of living, architects have designed a simple, low-cost home which represents a considerable advancement in sanitation and ventilation over the primitive huts of the ayllus. At the same time, the design is

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CREAS tractor harrows  
borrower's land.  
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simple enough to satisfy the most conservative of the campesinos. Plans and loans will be made available to the Indians who are attracted by the model home and wish to build one like it. This self-help housing program is a radical one in that the design of Indian houses has not changed for centuries. If accepted in Chinchero, however, the program will greatly reduce the disease rate of the community.

Perhaps the most significant change in Chinchero today lies in the field of land tenure. Before I left Cuzco, Charley Bunch told me that an offer had been made to rent the hacienda of Huaypo to CREAS. If the offer becomes a reality, the hacienda will be divided into lots, distributed among the Indians, and included in the program of supervised agricultural credit. Smaller haciendas in different parts of the Department of Cuzco have been offered to CREAS, but the renting of Huaypo

(the property of Cuzco's convent of La Merced) will mean a sharp change in the lives of Chinchero campesinos. True, a source of cash income will have been destroyed; but - more important - the expenses and work days involved in renting Huaypo land for grazing and farming purposes will have been abolished. A few years ago, four hectares of rented Huaypo land cost the Indian 144 days of labor for the hacienda. Each year he gave the hacendado 10% of the animals that had grazed on hacienda land. With the division of Huaypo into productive lots, the feudal influence of Chinchero's neighbor will have disappeared.

In twenty-two months of operation, CREAS has built up a reputation of being a hard working organization which sponsors and administers a practical, valuable program. There is very little publicity connected with the work, and for that reason there are many cuzqueños who have only the fuzziest idea of what the program entails. However, for every diehard conservative who by his nature is against any plan for the improvement of the Indian, there are many more modern-minded citizens who have long since realized the necessity of bringing the ayllu into national society and economy. These men have demonstrated their approval of CREAS by word of mouth in most cases, but the powerful Rotary and Lions clubs of Cuzco have followed words with deeds; recently they gave CREAS materials for the Chinchero vocational training center.

Luckily, CREAS seems to have escaped the criticism leveled against one of its parent organizations, the Council for the Reconstruction and Industrial Development of Cuzco, perhaps because of the fact that it is not connected in the public mind with local and national politics. Although there are several reconstructed churches and modern concrete avenues to attest to the work accomplished by the Council in the five years since the great Cuzco earthquake, many cuzqueños are vociferous in their complaints. Sorest point of all, of course, is that Lima has too much to say about the conduct of the reconstruction campaign. There is also talk about mismanagement of funds and graft, a common enough charge in this country, but one which is almost impossible to prove. In a city which is provincially individualistic and resentful of any "interference" from Lima, it is to the credit of Charley Bunch and his staff that the agricultural credit program has been accepted in full by the local citizens.

If CREAS is thought well of in Cuzco, however, approval is greatest in the areas where the organization has been working for several months. Bunch told me recently that a group of campesinos near Sicuani had asked if they could buy a tractor with communal funds. CREAS had shown them that they could better themselves and their land by the use of modern farming methods and machinery. The fact that they wanted to go ahead on their own and work their farms according to the instructions previously received from CREAS technicians is ample proof of the practical success of the program. The Peruvian government appears to have as much faith as the tractor-minded campesinos in CREAS. The \$65,000 sum allotted for the support of the program in 1955 was more than double the 1954 figure and more than triple the 1955 donation of the United Nations.

Sincerely,  
*William H. MacLeish*  
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