

APPENDIX I

Social Conditions in Latin America

(Abstracted from Preliminary Report on World Social Conditions, United Nations Economic and Social Council, April, 1952.)

The Latin American nations share a common Iberian or Mediterranean heritage and many historical traditions, customs, institutions, and social values which give them a basis for common understanding. Furthermore, Latin America is part of the European culture sphere, sharing in the technological and ideological development of Europe from the colonial period up until the present.

This is particularly true of urban Latin America. The twenty Latin American cities of more than 200,000 inhabitants (1940) are in most respects like large cities in western Europe or in North America. They have similar modern commercial and residential districts, similar mass communication facilities (newspapers, magazines, and radios), and similar cultural and social institutions. In general, larger proportions of their populations live below the poverty line than in most cities of Europe, and the slums in which the poor live are less affected by enforcement of minimum standards of housing and sanitation. The social problems of the cities, however, broadly resemble those of European cities, and have been met, to varying degrees, by social legislation and welfare programmes similar to those of Europe.

Yet Latin America is essentially an area of rural inhabitants engaged in agriculture. It is in small communities and in the rural zones of each country in which the majority of Latin Americans live.^{1/} And, it

^{1/}"Argentina and Chile are the only Latin American countries where a majority of the population lives in areas classified as urban. In most other countries, the urban percentage ranges from about 26 to 27 per cent." (United Nations: Economic Survey of Latin America 1948, p.153) The percentages classified as urban, however, generally include small communities (In Argentina, those with 2,000 or more inhabitants) which resemble the rural villages more closely than they do the ~~the~~ urban centers described above.

is among these rural people that the social problems of Latin America are in general felt most intensely. Unlike the situation in the great cities, there are few medical doctors and other trained technicians in most rural districts of Latin America. There are low standards of comfort, few opportunities for education, few sanitary facilities, poor communications and transportation, and inadequate methods of social welfare in most of the rural hinterland.

Despite the common elements of cultural heritage in Latin America and the similarity of its metropolitan centers, there are great contrasts from one area to another in the rural countryside and in the traditional way of life of its inhabitants. There are differences in physical environment, in historical development, in the racial composition of the population, in economic pursuits, and in local customs and institutions.

In the mountainous area formed by the spiny backbone of the American continents, between the Valley of Mexico and northern Chile, and including Bolivia, Perú, Ecuador, Colombia, the Central American Republics and Mexico, the Spanish conquerors encountered a dense aboriginal population. Although the Indian was dominated by the Spaniard, and although his society was

communities. ...the way of life in these plantation communities differs in many important respects from that of the Indian and peasant communities of the western highlands.

In the eastern lowlands, however, there are numerous rural communities similar in many ways to the (non-Indian) peasant communities of the highlands. There are numerous subsistence farmers working their own small parcels of land; or cultivating land owned by some large landowner, through sharecropping or another form of tenancy. Many of these peasants work as seasonal labourers on plantations, and in vast districts they produce cash crops (such as coffee or tobacco) in addition to their subsistence products. But, in general, like the Indians and peasants of the highland region, the peasant population of the eastern lowlands participates only to a limited degree, either as producers or consumers, in the economic system of the nation.

The third region of Latin America is formed by Argentina, Uruguay, southern Brazil, Paraguay, and large portions of Chile. Here, a sparse but warlike aboriginal population of nomadic hunters was gradually pushed back into the interior. Cattle brought by the first European settlers ran wild and multiplied in the grasslands. Until the 19th Century, the large ranches of this southern region exploited only the tallow and the hides of these wild herds. In the 19th Century, however, as transportation was improved, ranch owners began to export fresh meat to Europe and herds were improved with high-quality beef animals. In addition, temperate zone crops were planted on a larger scale. The new prosperity of the region attracted European immigrants who arrived in large numbers during the last part of the 19th Century and during the first decades of the 20th Century.

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These recent immigrants strengthened the European tradition of the southern countries, producing a contemporary way of life more nearly European than that of the northern lowland countries, where African influences have been felt strongly, or than that of the highland countries, where the American Indian has been an important cultural influence.

In general, this southern region of Latin America is the most urbanized part of the whole area. It has the highest per-capita productivity. Although there are numerous subsistence farming peasants, the rural communities are more frequently modern trading towns, similar in many respects to small towns in the agricultural zones of the large commercial cattle ranches and large-scale wheat farms on which tenant farmers produce for a national and international market. These trading communities are more closely related to the economic trends and the political and cultural life of the nation. Such communities tend to be larger than peasant or Indian communities, for there is more commerce, a greater number of artisans, and even some processing industry to serve the commercial farming population around them. (Trading communities are, of course, not limited to this southern region for they exist throughout Latin America -- in northern Brazil, in Costa Rica, in Colombia, in Mexico, and elsewhere); but Indian and peasant communities are more characteristic of the highlands and the old plantation system of the eastern lowlands.

Two demographic facts stand out with relation to social conditions in Latin America. The first is the sparsity of population, relative to the total area. Sixteen per cent of the world's total land is contained in Latin America, but only about six per cent of the world's population. 2/

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UNITED NATIONS: Economic Survey of Latin America, 1948, New York,
1949, p. 140

The second is the uneven distribution of the population. There are areas of exceedingly dense population -- such as some of the Caribbean Islands and some of the valleys of the west coast highland countries. In contrast, there are great expanses of almost uninhabited land -- such as the Amazon lowlands, where population density is hardly more than 1 person per square mile.

The amount of territory put to economic use in most Latin American countries falls far below the actual area. In Chile, the deserts and forests occupy 76 per cent of the national territory. In the case of Brazil, an Atlantic coast strip about 500 kilometers wide contains 91 per cent of the entire railroad mileage, 70 per cent of the federal highway system, 89 per cent of the population, and approximately 95 per cent of the cultivated area and resultant production.^{3/} The Caribbean, even omit-

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UN Document E/CN.12/169/Add. 1, p. 13.

ting Puerto Rico and Jamaica, constitutes only 1 per cent of the total area of Latin America while containing 7 per cent of its population. El Salvador and Uruguay are actually the only countries in mainland Latin America which have effective national territories even approximating their respective total areas.

This uneven distribution of population in Latin America -- and the failure to make the most effective use of its total immense area -- is closely related to the systems of land use, of settlement and of land

tenure which prevail. Control of the land has traditionally been associated with political and economic power and social prestige. Large-scale organization of agricultural enterprise, with the control of work opportunities vested in the hands of a few land-owning families or corporations, is still characteristic of great areas. The land-holding classes of Latin America, schooled in the traditions of land as a symbol of prestige, are given to speculative production on the one hand, and to the practice of maintaining large tracts of idle but inaccessible land on the other. Land resources of the region have been diminishing for centuries, due to inefficient methods of cultivation, such as fire agriculture (brush-burning), lack of fertilizer, deforestation, erosion, etc. At the same time, the concentration in ownership, often without full use of the land, has aggravated the problem of land pressure. "In Latin America as a whole, about one and a half per cent of the individual landholdings exceed 15,000 acres. The total of these holdings constitutes about 50 per cent of all agricultural land. While much of the land is not suitable for crop production, a substantial proportion consists of idle lands that have been held for generations." ^{4/} "In Argentina, 85

^{4/} UNITED NATIONS: Land Reform; Defects in Agrarian Structure as Obstacles to Economic Development, Document E/2003/Rev. 1, 23 July 1951, p. 19.

per cent of the privately held land is in estates larger than 500 hectares (1,250 acres), while 80 per cent of the farm population own no land. ^{5/} In

^{5/} Ibid., p. 10, citing Wendell C. Gordon, The Economy of Latin America, New York, 1950, p. 35.

Brazil, according to the 1940 agricultural census, holdings of 1,000 hectares and over accounted for 48.3 per cent of the "area utilized for agricul-

ture"; only 2.8 per cent of the area of these large holdings, however, was actually cultivated. 6/ "In Chile 64 per cent of the privately owned

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6/ Ibid., p. 12

land is in estates of more than 5,000 hectares, which belong to only 750 proprietors. According to a recent study 43.3 per cent of the cultivated land is owned by 0.74 per cent of the landowners. In Venezuela (census of 1937) out of 108,761 farms, 43,263, or 40 per cent, were managed by landlords -- a relatively high percentage. In Uruguay, 16 landlords hold an area of 400,000 hectares, constituting practically half the cultivated land area of the country. 7/ In Bolivia, the most striking feature of

7/ Ricardo Marín Molina: Condiciones económico-sociales del campesino chileno, Santiago de Chile, 1947; and El Plan Frugoni de reforma agraria, Montevideo, 1944, p. 10, cited in ILO: Report of the Director-General to the Fifth Conference of American States Members of the International Labour Organization, p. 61.

farm property is the contrast between a relatively small number of vast estates, and tens of thousands of small farms which altogether probably cover no more than 10 per cent of the limited area under cultivation. 8/

8/ Document E/CH. 12/218/AUB. 2, p. 58. "Less than 2 per cent of Bolivia's total land is in cultivation." Report of United Nations Division of Technical Assistance to Bolivia, p. 53.

In Cuba, according to the 1946 census, 894 farm units of more than 1,000 hectares each, occupied 36 per cent of the total farm land, while farms of less than 25 hectares, though constituting 70 per cent of the total number of farm units, held only 11 per cent of the land. 9/ Most of the larger

9/ INTERNATIONAL BANK FOR RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT: Report on Cuba, p. 90.

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units in Cuba are sugar plantations, only a small part of the area of which is actually planted with cane; it has been estimated that the Cuban sugar mills could operate profitably with about 40 per cent of their present holdings.

Similar concentrations of land are found throughout Latin America, except in parts of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Haiti, and Mexico. In a number of cases, fertile valley land contained in these large holdings is used only for grazing, if at all, while most of the agricultural population is confined to uneconomically small hillside holdings of less fertile and less accessible land.^{10/}

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See II.) Report of the Director-General to the Fifth Conference of American States Members of the International Labor Organization, p. 85.

In the latter cases, extensive subdivision has pushed the average farm size far below standards of optimum individual farm productivity. The individual farmer generally cannot obtain sufficient credit for farm improvements, and with the inefficient methods of cultivation, these small plots are hardly sufficient for subsistence. The peasant is frequently forced to seek outside labour to supplement his income. Landowners generally maintain unaltered the area farmed for their own benefit, so that, increasing numbers of share farmers must support themselves on an ever-decreasing proportion of farm land. The unwillingness of the Aymará and Quechua Indian farm workers of Bolivia to migrate from the cold highlands to the subtropical lowlands - where they would have to cope with new conditions of life, and new diseases - intensified this problem.^{11/} In

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^{11/} Document E/CN.12/218/Ann.2, p. 7.

Costa Rica, only an estimated 10 per cent of the ten million arable acres in the country are under cultivation (1940). Most of this cultivated land lies on the Central plateau, where nearly 75 per cent of the country's population dwells. One-third of this land is put to coffee, including over 21,000 small coffee farms. But about 70 per cent of these small farms are less than 7.5 hectares in size and more than half are less than 1 hectare each. Such minifundios cannot support their owners, who must work part-time on big plantations to survive.

Latin America has been in recent years the fastest-growing major region of the world in terms of rates of natural increase.

Growth has been particularly rapid in the area of greatest overall density of population, the Caribbean.. The increase has been due to decreases in the death rates following upon improved health facilities, while birth rates have not decreased. Present indications are that population will continue to grow rapidly in the future; the rate of growth may even be accelerated. The result has been a problem of population pressure upon the land - in the Caribbean, in parts of Mexico, Central America and the Andean countries. Excess population in some areas does not counteract a shortage of manpower elsewhere.^{12/} The peasant who is

^{12/} UNITED NATIONS: Document E/CN.9/55, p. 140, Fifth Session Population Commission.

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underemployed and undernourished on a tiny subsistence plot does not migrate to underpopulated areas without planned assistance in credit, transport, and equipment, and without instruction in new types of farming.

Although stratification is less rigid in Latin-American society than the caste system of India or the caste-like hierarchy of Europeans and natives found in some colonial areas, it is nonetheless an important aspect of the social scene, fundamental in determining social conditions in the area. The present social classes of Latin America were formed mainly in the colonial period, when the present-day republics were governed by their European "mother countries". Relatively few Europeans came to the New World during the colonial epoch. Those who did, together with their descendants, often formed an aristocratic landowning class, which dominated the local scene politically, economically and socially. They were a minority of the population of the colonies; the great mass of the population in most cases was formed by the indigenous population (especially in the west) and by imported Negro slaves (especially in the Caribbean and in Brazil). Until the 19th Century, the Indians and Negroes were either peons, indentured laborers, slaves or "savages" living outside the orbit of national affairs. As slavery and debt bondage declined, and as the Indians were drawn more into national life, these groups entered the national society at the bottom of the social and economic hierarchy. They became peasants, plantation or mine wage-laborers, industrial workers, and unskilled manual laborers of all sorts. During the 19th and early 20th centuries, economic and social mobility has been too limited to allow the great majority of the descendants of these slaves, peons, and others substantially to improve their relative economic and social rank. In most countries, social upheavals and the influx

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of European immigrants have changed the composition of the upper classes -- descendants of the colonial aristocrats are now only one of several components -- but their size relative to the rest of the population has not increased, and the gap between the ways of life has remained wide. In most localities only small groups exist which are comparable to the large middle classes of Europe and Northern America, although there are present indications that these middle class groups are increasing in size.^{13/}

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See: Materiales para el Estudio de la Clase Media en America Latina, Edición y Recopilación de The R. Cravenna, Union Panamericana, Washington, 1950, Vols. 1 - V. Many of the articles and monographs included in this collection begin or conclude by indicating the limited nature of the middle class in the Latin American nations.

Acknowledgement of these important class differences is essential in considering the levels of income and consumption in Latin America. A great discrepancy between the material way of life of the so-called upper class and that of the lower groups is known to exist, but precise statistics bearing on this subject are generally lacking. A 1947 estimate of the distribution of personal income for Colombia is suggestive of the general pattern in wide areas of Latin America: 2.6 per cent of income earners earned 29.9 per cent of the total; 13.2 per cent earned 9.7 per cent; and the remaining 87.7 per cent earned 56.9 per cent of the total. The first two groups were predominantly urban and the third predominantly rural. The average income for members of the first group (.6 per cent), was 12,307 pesos (U.S. \$7,032) per year; for the second group (1.2 per cent), it was 1,457 pesos (U.S. \$833); while the predominantly rural group comprising the bulk of the wage earners had only 696.5 pesos per year (U.S. \$39) on the average.^{14/}

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14/ INTERNATIONAL BANK FOR RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT: The Basis of a Development Program for Colombia, Washington, 1950, pp. 34-35.

A farmer in the most depressed agricultural areas earned less than 400 pesos per year. "Since each income earner [in these depressed areas] was in turn supporting an average of four people, large groups of the population had to survive on an average of only 100 pesos which was equivalent at the existing exchange rate to less than U.S. \$5.80 per year."^{15/}

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Ibid

Other studies of income in Latin-American countries have indicated similar wide discrepancies between occupational groups, the annual average income of agricultural wage-earners in the country often falling below \$150.

Much of Latin American life goes on outside the money economy. In rural districts the daily economic life may be carried on to a considerable extent, via barter -- the exchange of labour and services without payment -- and by traditional arrangements for payment of service in kind rather than cash. An Indian family in the Guatemalan highlands or in the Peruvian Andes or a peasant in Haiti or Brazil raises what he eats and exchanges produce or labour for other locally produced necessities. It cannot be said that such people live totally outside the money economy, for the Haitian peasant and the Guatemalan Indian make use of money for local trading and calculate their produce in monetary terms; but the amount of cash income which goes through their hands is generally very small. Systems of tenancy and agricultural labour on the old-style haciendas frequently do

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not involve cash transactions. Indian tenants in particular are likely to pay rent in labour, working a specified number of days a week in exchange for a subsistence plot; many combinations of this system with share cropping and wage labour are also found. There is also an emphasis upon exchange of goods and services among the workers on plantations and in mines, even though such workers are generally paid wages. These workers seldom actually deal in cash, since they are given wages in credit, which they draw upon for food and other necessities at the plantation or mine store.

Like the agricultural and industrial wage earners, the Indian and non-Indian peasants are able to purchase very few manufactured articles and imported foods, but they may have a more secure source of food supply, since they are essentially subsistence farmers and often they are almost self-sufficient in regard to clothing,^{16/} which they spin and weave from

^{16/} Report of the United Nations Mission of Technical Assistance to Bolivia p. 91. It is notable, however, that the clothing standards of many Indians or peasants often do not include shoes. These people go bare-footed or wear sandals, which makes them vulnerable to hookworm and other parasites.

wool from their own sheep. Living as they do on the margin of the national economy, these Indians and peasants have necessities and desires determined by their own culture and quite distinct from those of urbanites and wage earners on plantations and in mines. The numerous fiestas on religious holidays and on other occasions, which are so common throughout Latin America, are an example of such distinctive cultural preferences. In Bolivia, it is reported that family expenditures on a single fiesta may amount to as much as 20,000 to 30,000 Bolivianos (U.S.\$200-300),^{17/} and among the

^{17/} Report of the U.N. Mission of Technical Assistance to Bolivia, p. 91

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populations of lowland Brazil a couple with a cash income of only 300 cruzeiros per month (US\$ 16) may go into debt, spending as much as 2000 cruzeiros (US\$ 108), as the sponsor of a "fiesta" in honor of a Saint.^{18/}

^{18/}
UNESCO Document NS/YIHA/14, p. 19.

Such expenditures seem excessive and difficult to understand from the point of view of the outside observer - and costs of this kind do indeed use up cash that might be expended on food, clothing, medicine, and other material necessities. But it must be remembered that a "fiesta" serves significant social, cultural, and religious ends, and is often an important aspect of community solidarity and integration.

The houses in which Latin Americans live range from the simple wattle-and-daub huts of the Indians and peasants and the barrack-like dwellings on many plantations, to the modern apartment houses of the great Latin American cities and the elaborate country homes of plantation owners. Housing statistics can hardly reflect these great contrasts for it is not a simple problem of overcrowding but of general substandard homes for the majority of the rural population and of crowded and substandard conditions for the low-income families in the cities.

Given existing income levels, urban and rural housing can be improved only by very extensive government and private housing projects, and these are feasible only to the extent that cheap and durable methods of construction are developed. Low-cost housing developments up to the present have frequently reached only the lower middle class and skilled workers; the

dwellers in the worst slums could not pay even slightly higher rents without cutting down food consumption, and have sometimes resisted clearance of their hovels because they feared the new housing would cost more and that they would have nowhere to go once their existing community was destroyed.^{19/}

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In Colombia, "the average dwelling of about 20 square meters (10 feet by 20 feet) shelters 6.4 people. Some 200,000 shelters are estimated to be under 12 square meters (9 feet by 12 feet), an indication of shocking overcrowding! At the same time, "the average Colombian farmer, urban laborer, and white collar worker cannot use more than 10 to 15 per cent of his earnings for housing". Only 10 per cent of the population can afford the allocation for rent (about 20 per cent of earnings) usual in the more developed countries. International Bank for Reconstruction and Development: The Basis of a Development Program for Colombia, p. 235.

In urban areas, the housing problem is aggravated by the rapid rate of population growth. In rural areas, widespread improvement in housing appears at present to be more readily attainable in large-scale plantations and mines, to the extent that the administrators and regulating bodies of the government concerned actually set minimum standards and see to their enforcement.

The diets of the Latin American peoples traditionally depend on a limited number of staple foods. Some of these staples derive from the food patterns of the pre-conquest population, others from those of the conquerors, still others from the search for the cheapest energy-producing foods for slaves. These patterns have changed and intermingled to some extent over the centuries, but there has been a remarkable stability. The highland Indian still depends on maize or potatoes, the peasant of

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the Brazilian interior on manioc (also called cassava or yuca), the Caribbean plantation worker on rice, beans, and dried codfish. The staple diets are frequently inadequate even in content of calories, and are almost always deficient in vitamins and other nutrients. Production of the staple foods, due to low productivity of the peasants and haciendas and the concentration on commercial export crops, is usually barely adequate for the present low level of consumption. Several countries - particularly Bolivia and Venezuela - in which the majority of the population are cultivators, must import much of their food.

Unfortunately, exchange of foods among the Latin-American countries is minimal. There is a surplus of beef in one country, a surplus of sugar in another, a surplus of coffee in a third, but difficulties of transportation and monetary exchange prevent these from reaching areas with shortages.

Much has been made of the difficulties which culturally-determined food habits present to efforts to improve diets. There is no doubt that such preferences are deep-seated and difficult to change. But there is also no doubt that, in Latin America, the problem is at least as much one of lack of choice as of cultural resistance. A peasant woman will prefer to sell two eggs in order to buy rice; she may be able to feed five children with the rice, but not with the two eggs. As one of Latin America's best known authorities on nutrition put it: "Dietetics does not teach how to earn the money necessary to buy better food." ^{20/}

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Pedro Escuder : Alimentación, Buenos Aires, 1934, p. 253.

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To a large extent, rural Latin Americans and the poorer urban groups depend on strong beverages or drugs to compensate for the inadequacy and monotony of their diet. In many regions, black coffee with sugar is an important part of each meal; the food value is small, but it deadens hunger. Among highland Indian groups, alcohol, often in combination with coca, serves a similar function. Until recently, these substances were frequently dispensed as part of wages in many mines and plantations. Coca is said to anesthetize taste and digestive nerves; the question of whether it causes serious harm if used in moderation is still in dispute,^{21/} but

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Cf. UNITED NATIONS: Report of the Commission of Inquiry on the Coca Leaf, Special Supplement, No. 1, May 1950.

there is no doubt that its use coincides with malnutrition and the need to maintain working energy on inadequate diets.

Latin-American health patterns follow the lines which are to be expected in an area of low life expectancies, low income levels, and predominance of rural workers and subsistence farmers. There are few available statistics on causes of death, except for the cities, since most rural deaths occur without medical attendance; but it is clear that tuberculosis, malaria, intestinal infections and parasites, venereal diseases, and various diet-deficiency diseases act in combination to weaken most of the rural population, as well as the poorer urban groups.

Yellow fever and other pestilential diseases, once major causes of death, have already been reduced to medical curiosities. DDT extermination of insect carriers, and new drugs that can be used to cure large

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numbers of people rapidly and inexpensively give promise of eliminating malaria and yaws. The complete elimination of debilitating diseases, however, demands not only further development of public health campaigns, construction of safe water supplies and sanitation systems, and health education, but radical improvements in levels of living, more and better food, more substantial and larger houses, shoes to prevent hookworm.

Medicine is one of the traditional high-prestige fields of university education, and in most Latin American countries there are more graduates in medicine annually than in any other profession except law. Nevertheless, the number of medical doctors is small in relation to the populations concerned, and most of them remain in the cities, where they can hope for lucrative private practices or positions on the staffs of government hospitals or health services. The cities thus frequently have so many physicians in relation to the number of patients who can afford to pay fees that the competition forces some of them into other careers, while the rural areas have practically none. Thus, in one country it is reported that "almost two-thirds of the physicians are located in departmental capitals which, with their surrounding municipalities, contain about 12 per cent of the population. Slightly more than one half of the municipalities have no physicians."^{22/}

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INTERNATIONAL BANK FOR RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT: The Basis of a Development Program for Colombia, p. 193.

The maldistribution and generally inadequate number of practicing

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physicians is due primarily to the low income levels of the rural population, who usually cannot support a physician in private practice at the standard of living traditionally suitable to his profession. Most rural villagers try to heal themselves and their children through a combination of domestic remedies and techniques with a few items purchased from the pharmacist in the nearest town.

Public health programs aimed at the rural populations are now in operation in most Latin-American countries, and various expedients have been adopted to direct medical personnel to the villages. Trained nurses, public health specialists, sanitary engineers, and other auxiliary personnel, however, are much more inadequate in numbers than physicians,^{23/} and the

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For example, in Brazil in 1949, only 170 graduate nurses registered their diplomas, despite the recent establishment of several new schools of nursing: a number totally inadequate for a country of more than 50,000,000 people.

populations to be served are frequently thinly scattered over mountainous or lowland forest areas without roads. The low salaries usually paid to government public health personnel, combined with discomforts of living in isolated rural communities, make it difficult - as in the case of rural school teachers) - to recruit them.

Thus, the major health problems of Latin America result in large part from inadequate levels of income and consumption, lack of knowledge of the principles of contagion, overwork, too-frequent childbearing, as well as other factors only indirectly related to the etiology of the principal diseases. Public health measures and wider availability of medical care cannot be permanently successful unless they are accompanied by higher levels of living and education.

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Although statistics ^{are} ~~are~~ incomplete, it is quite apparent that the lowest levels of education in Latin America are to be found in the rural districts. It is exactly in those areas where urbanization has taken greatest strides that the literacy rate is highest. Thus, Argentina and Uruguay, the two most urbanized countries in Latin America, have the highest rates of literacy.

The low rates of literacy in the rural areas of Latin America relate directly to the availability in general of educational facilities. They are related also to the lower income level of the rural people as compared to that of the urbanites; and in some regions of Latin America, especially in the regions of indigenous population, they are related to linguistic and cultural differences between the rural inhabitants and the urban population. In rural Latin America, a large proportion of the population lives scattered over the countryside, and the town or village is a center to which people come periodically for marketing and for political and social reasons. Lacking roads and modern vehicles, transportation is slow and arduous. A school placed in the village or town might be several hours away for a rural child and even when schools are placed strategically in the countryside, they are near only a small part of the scattered homesteads. Latin American governments have recognized this difficulty by exempting children living at a certain distance from schools from compulsory attendance. Furthermore, even where schools are available in rural districts, they usually offer only 2 to 4 years of instruction and are poorly staffed and equipped.

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In addition, rural schools must compete with the family's need for the labour of its children and sometimes with a skepticism on the part of adults as to the practical benefits to be derived from such education. In an isolated peasant village or in a Peruvian Indian ayllu it may be difficult for parents to see the direct utility of literacy which they have not themselves found necessary in their normal pursuits.

In general, in many localities of Latin America, the traditional institutions and patterns of human relations are gradually disappearing without being replaced by new bases for individual and group security. The tendency for the Indian comunidades to sell their land often results in the loss of community cohesion. As the subsistence farmer begins to produce for regional or national markets and his income is calculated more in terms of cash, traditional units of neighborhood co-operation are likely to disappear. As plantations become larger and are administered by the employees of large commercial corporations, the relationship between the agricultural worker and his employer tend to become impersonal and more strictly economic. As communications improve, people move about more frequently, seeking to better their economic situation, and they are moving in Latin America from small towns into the great cities. In commercial plantations and in mining communities, there are numerous male workers who have come seeking temporary employment, leaving their families behind in agricultural regions. Such increased mobility and internal migration has modified the traditional family organization of many Latin Americans, bringing about a dispersal of relatives and a fragmenting of large kinship circles. As economic development penetrates

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the isolated rural areas of Latin America, social welfare services and the enforcement of labour laws and other forms of social legislation must be substituted for the older mechanics of individual and group security, which will almost inevitably disappear. Economic development in Latin America is therefore marked by a breakdown of customary social usages, and their replacement by a body of law and formal institutional practice. This transition is a difficult one, as it has been in other parts of the world, in which local populations may be bereft of traditional protection, before social legislation is effectively extended to these groups.

One of the most crucial problems affecting social development in Latin America is the lack of an adequate system of communications and transportation. As stated earlier, it seriously hampers the improvement of the educational level of the rural populations. It is also one of the reasons for persisting poor health and malnutrition; without communication and transportation, health facilities and medical attention cannot be provided, and an efficient distribution of food supplies from surplus areas to deficit areas is impossible.

In most Latin-American countries, there are extensive territories isolated from the economic and cultural centres. In these territories, manufactured articles are expensive, food commodities are limited mainly to those locally produced, and educational and health facilities are generally inadequate. Such isolated areas maintain themselves outside of the main stream of national life. One of the central needs in Latin America is to bring such areas and their populations into the orbit of the economic and social life of the nation.

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Environmental factors have decidedly limited the spread of transport and communication facilities. Yet the prime obstacle is not environmental, but economic; wherever and whenever successful economic use of a key area has seemed possible, avenues of transportation and communication have developed simultaneously with this exploitation.

Adequate transportation and communication facilities are essential to the provision of institutionalized services of all kinds. But such facilities do not spring up by themselves, and their costs can rarely, if ever, be borne by local populations. Road repair may be carried out co-operatively, as in the case of the comunidades of the Andean highlands. ^{24/} Or governments in countries where the co-operative labour

^{24/}
ILO: Conditions of Life and Work of Indigenous Populations of Latin American Countries, Report II, Geneva, 1949, p. 61.

tradition is strong may be able to foster collective work projects to improve roads, build bridges, and other means of communication. But, by and large, modern means of transportation - roads, railroads and modern vehicles - must come as the result of economic development in pioneer areas, coupled with the governmental extension of controls and services into these newly opened zones.

Various types of mobile health, educational, religious, agricultural and medical units are found to a limited extent in Latin America. Such mobile units are probably the best possible technique for extending service to outlying rural areas, at least until it is possible to establish permanent centres.

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