

# Américas

AUGUST . . . . 1956

## HOUSES NOT NOVELS

by an Ecuadorean co-op

## THE GAIETY CURE

at Saratoga, New York

## A DEVILISH NIGHT

Short story by  
Fernán Silva Valdés  
of Uruguay

## MAN WHO WALKED ON THE WATERS

## SECRECY FOR LEARNING

25

cents

Mother and daughter. Scene from  
tragedy *A Moratória (Moratorium)*,  
Brazilian play of 1955, by Jorge  
Andrade (see page 8)



# LEGACY for LEARNING

**Former head of Pan American Union  
left his estate to help  
Latin American students**

**ALICIA ORTIZ**

SMILING, COURTEOUS, AND CORDIAL, he walked the two students out to the corridor to say goodbye, and then went back to his office to make some notes. The dull light of the rainy afternoon filtered through the wide windows of the austere room. It had been a busy day: meetings, letters, dictation, lunch in honor of the Paraguayan schoolteachers, the interview with the Venezuelan journalist. At the age of seventy-five, Leo S. Rowe found it hard to keep up the schedule he had set himself in 1920, when he had entered upon this work that afforded him the deepest satisfaction. Besides, this last visit naturally worried him. The case was just like many others, but he could not be indifferent to the plight of these two Ecuadorean students—intelligent, well educated, determined to win their doctorates at all costs but visibly anxious about the sudden cut-off of the allowances from home that supplemented their scholarships.

They had come by bus from Chicago to ask for help. The loan would be made discreetly, through the university, as so often before. Their only surety—and it was sufficient—was a recommendation from their dean and his own inner certainty that in the end his help would not be wasted. This had been proved by many of the hundreds of Latin American students with whom he had maintained a close friendship over the years. The likable Cuban, for example, bohemian and flighty but an ex-

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*ALICIA ORTIZ of Colombia, formerly a staff member of Semana magazine in Bogotá, has been in Washington for the past nine years as secretary to the Secretary General of the OAS.*

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*Dr. Leo S. Rowe as he examined coffee tree in PAU patio shortly before his death*

cellent painter, who was now contributing similarly to the support of an artist friend. Or the Chilean mathematician, whom he had met during the depression—a time when the situation of the Latin American students was truly alarming—and who was now lending a helping hand to his compatriots as they returned from study abroad so that they would not sink into professional anonymity.

Opposed as always to making people work overtime, he dismissed his chauffeur. As he left the marble building by the back door, the steady, icy rain struck his bare head. He would not be able to take his usual evening walk. So much the better: he could read further in Sumner Welles' *Where Are We Heading?*, which he had been thinking about since the night before. He hurried home, pursued by the echo of his footsteps on the gravel walk of the Aztec Garden. First of all, he must make sure what time the reception at the Bolivian Embassy was to be held. As he leafed through his calendar he realized with surprise that it was only nineteen days till Christmas 1946. In the morning he would telephone the University of Chicago and provide for a monthly sum to be given the two students until they got their degrees; then they could celebrate the holiday without worry.

He was sure that when the time came he would be indirectly repaid. Ever since his days as a professor at the University of Pennsylvania—when his best friends had been the Latin American students—he had been firmly convinced not only of their intellectual brilliance but also of their rectitude. He never suggested repayment of his loans, but the beneficiaries daily proved to him the unsuspected reach of his helping hand. At times their gratitude even seemed excessive. On his frequent trips to Latin America he had found glowing evidence of the achievements of his former protégés in each country.

The night seemed likely to continue stormy, and he took a taxi to the Embassy. During the ride, unable to take his mind off the embarrassment of the two Ecuadorean students, he was better satisfied than ever with that clause in his will, dated April 27, 1943. When it went into effect, not only would many of the emergencies afflicting Latin American students in the United States be eliminated, but very few scholarship holders would be condemned to hopeless failure; there would be fewer specialists working at mean jobs just for a living, more professionals financially able to carry out their research, more scientists with funds for experiments, and fewer graduates exiled in a jungle of strangers.

There would be a permanent, revolving fund for the exclusive use of Latin Americans eager to learn more, which would open to them the doors of the prodigious U.S. progress in every field. It would benefit whole generations, for as each loan was repaid, the money would become available for another student. Several of his friends on the Pan American Union Governing Board, as the OAS Council was then called, knew of his plans, purposely limited to the Western Hemisphere. They also knew of the ambitious dream behind them—friendship between the studious young people of North and South

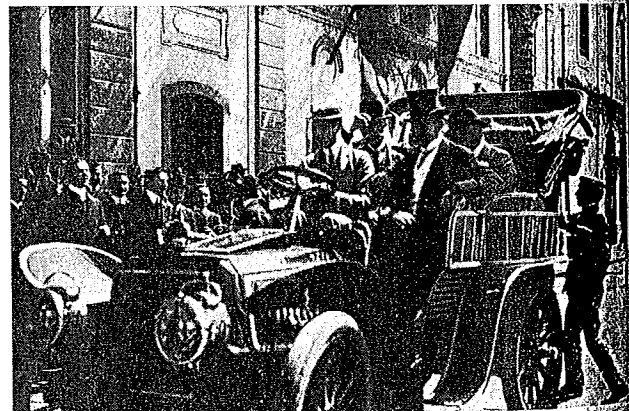
*In 1936 PAU Director General, (under [an] visited Veritas publishing house in Buenos Aires; at his left, William Manger, now OAS Assistant Secretary General*



*Before World War I Dr. Rowe went to Argentina three times via Europe, as was customary in those days. Here he prepares maté in his room at the University of La Plata*



*Posing with the students in the dormitory at La Plata*



*In 1906 Dr. Rowe (in opera hat) arrived at the University of São Paulo Law School*





America—based on his faith in the moral integrity of the Latin Americans.

Under the ceaseless rain, the bare branches bent low in the fog that enveloped Massachusetts Avenue. As the taxi drew up opposite the Embassy, he saw he was late—it was 7:20—and he told the driver not to bother turning around to let him out at the door. He got out hastily and started across the street. The cars sped by, unseeing.

A few moments later there were hurried steps, questions and answers in several languages, then a growing, unmistakable silence.

Two months later, at the Pan American Union, the homage of the entire continent was rendered to its late Director General, the "Citizen of America." His exceptional spirit, the essence of his thought, his pleasure in the cause of Pan Americanism had been expressed in his many writings. All this, the extreme simplicity of his life, his methodical saving, his indifference to luxury, were summed up in Item XXVI of his will:

And the entire remainder [I give and bequeath] unto the Pan American Union, . . . to be administered by the Governing Board of the Pan American Union as a Revolving Fund to be used under such conditions as the Governing Board may determine as a Loan Fund for Latin American students who may desire to study in the universities or colleges of the United States.

While word of this message from their North American friend spread to all the young people of the Hemisphere, the OAS Council named a Permanent Committee to administer the Leo S. Rowe Fund. First of all, the Committee, an executor of a legacy of more than four hundred thousand dollars (since then the sum has doubled as a result of careful investment. Loans are made only from the interest; the principal remains untouched) settled upon a fiduciary formula that would guarantee faithful execution of the testator's desires. To help in carrying out Dr. Rowe's aim of "forming Latin American young people better equipped to serve their countries," the Fund Regulations were announced throughout the continent as soon as they had been approved, by means of the press, the radio, university journals, student counsellors, professors, and associations of various kinds.

The same clear and simple rules are in effect today, with a few modifications to adjust them to the actual needs of students in the United States. There is a minimum number of prerequisites: help from the Fund is supplementary, not total; no interest is charged, and the repayment of loans depends chiefly on the beneficiary's sense of moral obligation; in order that others may benefit, the loans should be repaid within five years after the study, work, or project in the United States is completed; repayment may be made in installments and, in order not to burden the borrowers, annual, semi-annual, quarterly, or monthly payments are preferred.

Three classes of students may apply for Rowe Fund loans: first, those who have finished their professional or technical studies and wish to come to the United States to specialize or to pursue scientific or technical research; second, those already studying or doing research in the United States who need help to complete their work or

to meet some emergency; third, those who have obtained scholarships, or have funds of their own for study in the United States, but cannot cover expenses without more money.

Loans are made only to those who plan to return to their own countries after completing their studies and who can finish up their graduate work within two years. In exceptional cases they are made to specialists carrying on independent research in a U.S. educational center.

On the basis of eight years' experience with the needs of Latin American students in the United States, the Fund grants loans of five hundred to a thousand dollars, renewable the following year at the beneficiary's request. If the candidate has not yet left his home country, the initial loan is increased to help him meet his traveling expenses.

The Rowe Fund is administered by the Committee, comprising four members of the OAS Council, elected in rotation, and the Secretary General. Since its establishment in 1948, the Committee has had two chairmen: Ambassador Héctor David Castro of El Salvador, who served for a year, and Ambassador Juan Bautista de Lavalle of Peru, who has been reelected seven times. The Committee feels deeply its responsibility for distributing loans equitably and on as wide a geographic basis as possible, and for examining each case carefully yet cordially. When an emergency occurs—when an applicant would suffer if approval of his loan were delayed till the regular weekly meeting, or when the university adds its appeal to the student's to meet a pressing need—the Committee gathers at once or takes a vote by telephone and relays it to the Fund Secretariat.

A major share of the credit for the success of the program belongs to David Heft, Secretary of the Fund and Chief of Educational Interchange at the PAU, and to his assistants, Marina Quiroga of Bolivia and María Gutiérrez of Colombia. They not only serve as a link between the beneficiaries and the universities and as an information center, but also maintain the personal contact impossible for the Committee, visiting the students at their universities or inviting them to the Pan American Union to learn about its problems and needs.

By the time each applicant is considered by the Committee, a detailed study has already been made by the Secretariat. The Secretariat still has headaches over the excessive delay affecting some loans because certain requirements are overlooked: evidence of admission to a U.S. university or other center of higher education; proof of the applicant's ability and good conduct; details on how the money requested is to be used; description of the work or research proposed; amount of the periodic payments to be made when the student returns to his own country; or proof that the loan will be a supplementary aid. In July 1955 a student wrote to inquire if his loan was under consideration. The Secretariat replied, "Yes. Only your photograph is missing. Please send it." In September: "I am wondering, will I be able to go in January?" The Secretariat: "Your picture has not arrived. Please send it." The Secretariat

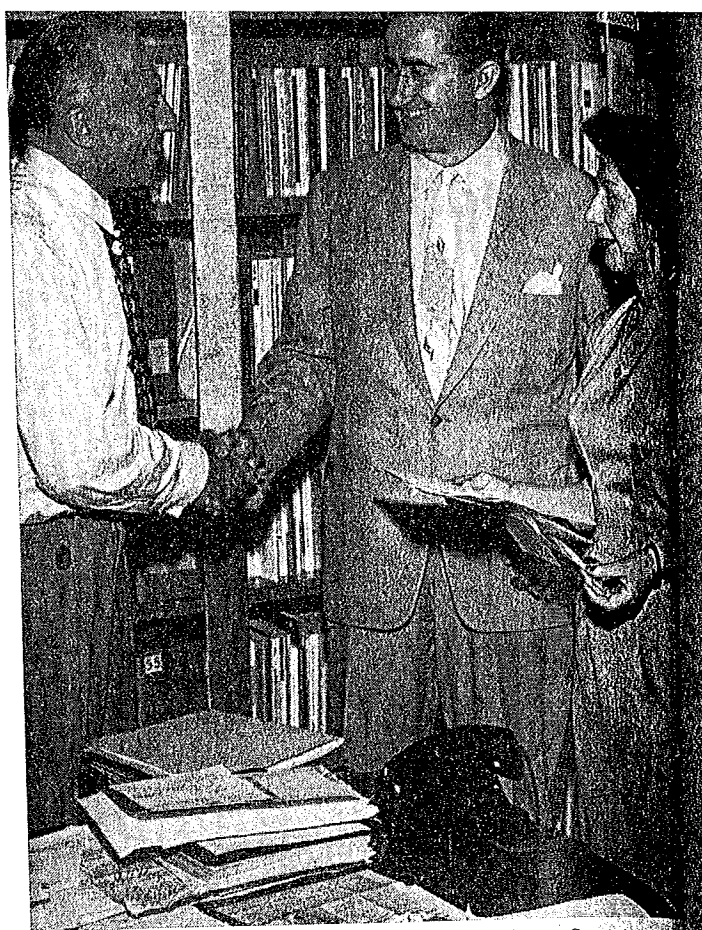
again, in October: "Did you receive our letters? We are waiting for your picture." In November, the student: "I changed my address and forgot about it. But today, by air mail, I am sending you one in street clothes plus my passport picture; I hope you like them."

Many students write in when their situation has reached an incredible extreme. There was the scholarship holder who, as the dean of the faculty reported, spent dinnertime reading away steadily in the library to take his mind off restaurants; the research scholar who was found in a New York park and spent three weeks in the hospital recovering from malnutrition; the agronomist who sold all his books in order to buy a winter overcoat. Others, who are not in want, write just to make sure that the benefits of the fund are real and attention is given to the applications. Still others, impatient to start their journey, send three or four letters a week: "What happened to my loan?" "Didn't Dr. Rowe allow for a case like mine?" "I am petrifying waiting for you to decide. Have you forgotten me?" "The courses at the Sorbonne begin next month. Will the money reach me in time?"

The Secretariat's replies tend to be routine: "You forgot to have the signature of your guarantor notarized." "Loans are not granted for the purchase of equipment." "The persons you listed as references have not answered our inquiries." "Loans are not granted for study in Europe."

Up to July of this year, the Secretariat of the Fund had received 1,050 applications and the Committee had granted 552 loans, distributed among all the Latin American countries, for study in twenty-six different U.S. states. The borrowers were 118 Colombians, 77 Peruvians, 58 Argentines, 46 Chileans, 37 Brazilians, 37 Bolivians, 29 Costa Ricans, 28 Panamanians, 17 Mexicans, 17 Ecuadoreans, 14 Nicaraguans, 12 Uruguayans, 12 Salvadoreans, 12 Guatemalans, 10 Haitians, 8 Venezuelans, 7 Cubans, 6 Paraguayans, 4 Dominicans, and 3 Hondurans.

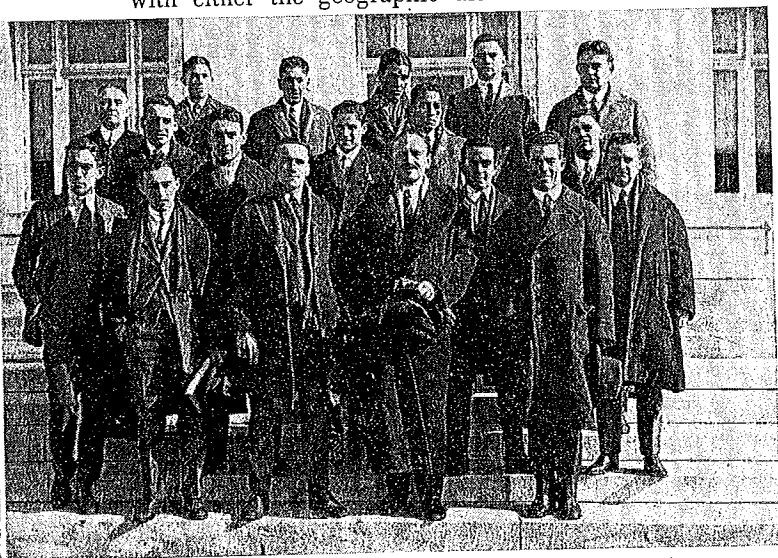
Nevertheless, the Committee is not completely satisfied with either the geographic distribution or the number



David Heft (left), Chief of PAU Educational Interchange Section, and Marina Quiroga, both of Rowe Fund Secretariat, greet beneficiary

of the loans. It is sure that among the nearly ten thousand Latin Americans who study in the United States each year there must be many more worthy candidates who could benefit from the Rowe Fund, and an even larger number of competent Latin Americans who have been unable to leave their countries. A frequent cause for the denial of a loan is the unfortunate one that the applicant is receiving no additional help and his personal funds, if any, are so limited that a loan such as the Fund can offer, instead of helping, would actually hinder. The Pan American Union hopes to coordinate aid from governments and their administrative and technical agencies, and private firms, so that select candidates who apply for Rowe Fund loans and have no other support will be able to study in the United States. Obviously, too, the beneficiaries will be less apprehensive about meeting the requirement that they return to their own countries if they have some assurance that they will be able to put their experience to use and thus be in a position to meet the payments on the loan. The Colombians, who have always led in the number of applications and loans secured, have coordinated their use of the fund with assistance provided through ICETEX (the Colombian Institute for Specialized Training Abroad).

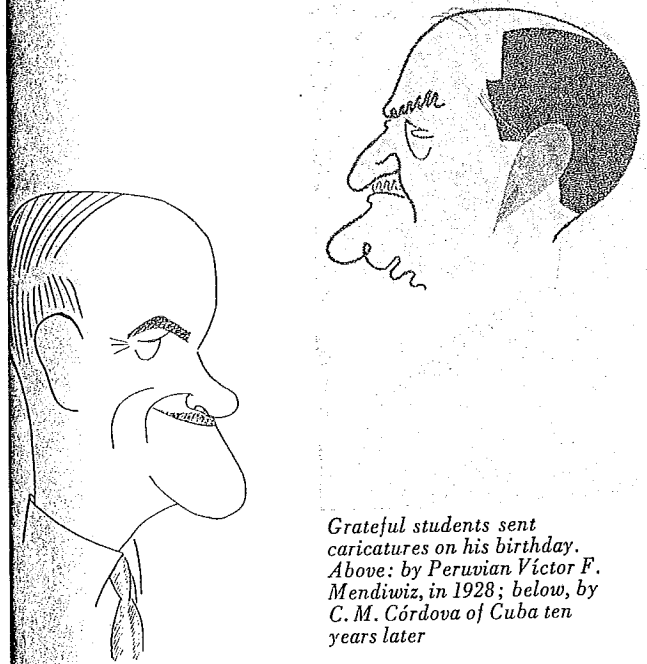
The vast majority of the beneficiaries have fully met the expectations of the Fund. Sixty-seven per cent of the loans have been repaid in full within the specified time. Some exemplary students even strive to pay their debt ahead of time. For example, Eduardo Mulánovich Mac



Dr. Rowe with Mexican YMCA basketball team in 1924

Lean, of the Colegio de Santa María in Lima, Peru, who won a scholarship to study mechanical engineering at the University of Dayton, Ohio, and the John McMullen scholarship of Cornell University. He took out two loans, one in 1952 and another in 1953, and began repaying them in 1954. From Talara, Peru, he wrote: "Now I can breathe easier. What I thought were supposed to be monthly payments turned out to be annual ones. I shall pay my debt in advance." In March 1955 he reported: "It is with great relief that I am sending you my final payment. Thanks again for the opportunity you have given me."

Gerardo Tamayo Peña is a Colombian who graduated in agricultural sciences at the University of Puerto Rico. He took a master's degree in agricultural education at the University of Pennsylvania and won a scholarship to Michigan State College, where he got his M.A. in rural sociology. He obtained a loan in 1952 and another



Grateful students sent caricatures on his birthday. Above: by Peruvian Víctor F. Mendiwiz, in 1928; below, by C. M. Córdova of Cuba ten years later

in 1953 and paid off in three years. Last May he wrote: "I enclose my last remittance, but my debt of gratitude will never cease. Perhaps I can pay it by serving my country and the cause of Pan Americanism."

Occasionally beneficiaries pay their debt with something extra. Mexican Ernesto Lobato: "... as a personal contribution to the growth of this worthy fund." Raúl Rivero of Peru: "... as a modest contribution to the Fund that will always aid those who deserve it."

In cases of necessity, the Committee can also lend to holders of the Leo S. Rowe Commemorative Fellowship—established in 1948 by the Pan American Society of New York. This fellowship carries a stipend of \$1,500 and free tuition at the University of Pennsylvania for postgraduate studies in political, social, or economic sciences. Seven students of different nationalities have held it. Applications must be submitted through the PAU

Division of Education before May 1 of each year.

Eighteen per cent of the Rowe Fund beneficiaries are repaying their loans slowly, because of difficulties verified by the Secretariat. In emergency cases the Committee will extend the period of the loan or reduce the periodic quotas, as long as repayment can be completed in five years. A delay is usually caused by the scarcity of foreign exchange and by the low salaries earned by technicians and specialists. The Committee reduced by half the annual payments of an agronomist who studied at the University of Wisconsin. He wrote from his country, last January, "My monthly salary is 133,400 pesos, and the current rate of exchange is 4,350 pesos to the dollar. . . . I have made several unsuccessful applications for foreign exchange. But since I receive an extra month's salary at the end of every year, in addition to the Christmas bonus, I will be able to buy the fifty dollars to pay my debt."

Although the difficulties some countries face in the matter of foreign exchange are obvious, the only solution for such cases lies in the hands of the governments—by permitting the borrowers from the Rowe Fund to send their remittances in dollars at the official rate. Considering the number of borrowers in each country, the respective national treasuries would scarcely be affected by this measure. At the same time it would be an important contribution to the borrowers and advantageous to the Fund, which would use the repaid money for another student. In the past, Brazil, Ecuador, and Argentina have authorized this procedure.

Among borrowers from the Rowe Fund are some who are careless, indifferent, or merely forgetful. Although, in view of the overwhelming number who repay their loans, these exceptions do not alarm the Committee, they do add up to 15 per cent, and these "bad debts" represent \$31,001. The Secretariat exercises eternal vigilance everywhere to remind the beneficiaries of their moral obligation—it prefers to reserve legal action to the very last—and, like a bill collector, tirelessly follows the tracks of tardy debtors. Still it has not been able to locate these lost sheep, many of whom disappear without leaving a trace.

Nevertheless, this excellent legacy will not suffer from wear and tear as long as frank and honest letters like the following continue to come in. Taken at random from the files of the Fund Secretariat, it was written by an agricultural engineer, a graduate of the University of Michigan, at Christmastime in 1953: "First of all MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR! As the saying goes, BETTER LATE THAN NEVER! I got behind in my payments because I leave everything for TOMORROW, and days pass, and weeks, and years, always waiting for the blessed TOMORROW. Today, however, fearful that 1954 would arrive with me still in debt, I hurried to buy a draft for one hundred dollars to *pay off my debt*. My eternal gratitude to the Rowe Fund, which made possible my stay in the United States, where I have my best *friends*."

The italics and capitals are as in the original.

